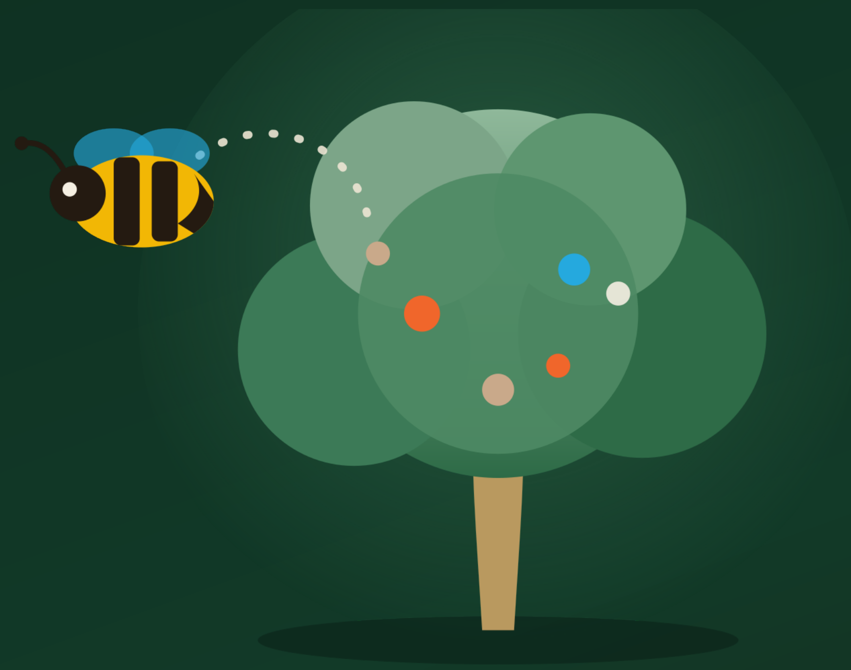

It's not just bees and trees.

Sustainability is innovation. Sustainability is resilience.

#1

Predictor of project success across 10,000+ professionals — ahead of methodology and governance.

53%

Of projects worldwide are already hit by climate risk. It's on your risk register now.

2×

Green-skills demand is growing at twice the rate of supply. The bench isn't there yet.

A one-sitting brief for the leaders deciding whether to build a sustainable-project bench — or keep getting out-competed by the teams that already did.

THE REFRAME

The room has been arguing about the wrong word.

Say "sustainability" in a boardroom and half the table pictures polar bears and press releases — a nice-to-have, a compliance chore, someone else's department. That reflex was defensible a decade ago. Today it's a blind spot, and it's expensive.

Because while the room debated whether sustainability was worth the effort, the people who study what actually makes projects succeed quietly settled the question. Their answer reframes everything that follows.

> **PMI surveyed 10,000+ project professionals to find the single strongest predictor of success. It wasn't methodology. It wasn't governance. It was sustainability and social impact — ahead of every traditional delivery factor.**
>
> PMI, MAXIMIZING PROJECT SUCCESS (2025) — SURVEY OF 10,000+ PROFESSIONALS & STAKEHOLDERS [1]

THE OLD FRAME

A compliance cost. A CSR line item. Something a dedicated department owns, bolted on after delivery, that makes projects slower and pricier. **58%** of practitioners still say it adds cost; **36%** treat it as pure compliance burden.[7] Those perceptions are real — and they're the reason the value gets left on the table.

→

WHAT THE DATA SHOWS

The variable your delivery discipline is now measured against. Regeneration — designing for resilience, circularity and trust — is where competitive advantage, innovation and differentiation are actually being built this decade.[10] The job didn't change. The conditions it runs under did.

Same discipline. A new scoreboard.

Everything that made a project "good" still counts — scope, schedule, budget, risk. Sustainability is simply the factor it's now scored against, and the one most teams can't yet evidence. The next three pages are the part that costs money to ignore.

THE NUMBERS · SHOCK & AWE

Nine facts that end the debate.

29.8M

Project professionals the world will be short of by 2035. Employers won't wait for a PMP and a sustainability background to arrive separately.

[2] PMI, GLOBAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT TALENT GAP (2025)

60%

Of global GDP is now covered by ISSB-aligned disclosure mandates — across roughly 40 jurisdictions. The evidence is generated inside project lifecycles.

[9] A&O SHEARMAN; S&P GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE1 (2025)

2×

The rate at which green-skills demand outpaces supply. Training the people you have is a retention lever, not a flight risk.

[3] LINKEDIN ECONOMIC GRAPH (2025)

53%

Of projects globally are affected by climate change — healthcare and construction most exposed. Floods and heat are schedule and cost risks now.

[4] PMI, PROJECT MANAGEMENT 2024 OUTLOOK

26%

CO_2 reduction achieved by leaders who integrate sustainability with AI — versus just **3%** for laggards. Same goal, roughly 8× the result.

[5] BRIGHTLINE, SUSTAINABILITY IN THE AGE OF AI (650+ ORGS)

80%

Of companies already use AI; 16% plan to point it at emissions reporting by 2026. Ungoverned, it produces numbers that look authoritative and fail audit.

[8] DELOITTE (2026); LATHAM & WATKINS

90/25

90% of executives call sustainability important. Only **25%** believe their organization is positioned to deliver on it.

[6] BRIGHTLINE, SUSTAINABILITY AT A CROSSROADS

79%

Say sustainability positions their organization for long-term success — but only **41%** have it fully integrated across projects. The gap is the opportunity.

[7] PMI, EXECUTING SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY (2025)

#1

Sustainability & social impact: the strongest predictor of perceived project success across every stakeholder group PMI surveyed.

[1] PMI, MAXIMIZING PROJECT SUCCESS (2025); N = 10,000+

THE UNCOMFORTABLE PART

This isn't about the planet. It's about your P&L.

Every objection to sustainability collapses into the same three myths. Each one feels like prudence. Each one is quietly costing you — in business you aren't winning, efficiency you aren't realizing, and talent you aren't keeping.

THE MYTH

"It's a ~~compliance cost.~~"

THE BUSINESS YOU AREN'T WINNING

Enterprises, governments and lenders now write sustainability requirements straight into supplier evaluations, JV agreements and capital-program qualification. Teams that can carry credible evidence win the work. Teams that can't are screened out before scope or price is ever discussed. Every bid your competitors qualify for and you don't is revenue you never see — and never knew you lost.

PROOF: 60% OF GLOBAL GDP NOW SITS UNDER ISSB-ALIGNED DISCLOSURE MANDATES [9]

THE MYTH

"It ~~slows delivery~~ down."

THE EFFICIENCY YOU AREN'T REALIZING

The opposite is measured. Organizations that integrate sustainability with AI and operations cut CO_2 by 26% — against 3% for the laggards who treat it as a separate workstream. Same goal, roughly eight times the result. Kyndryl's Global Sustainability Barometer finds the same pattern at enterprise scale: integration-focused organizations embed sustainability into innovation and cost savings at nearly twice the rate of everyone else (62% vs 34%) — and their top reason for accelerating isn't regulation. It's measurable ROI. Done with method, sustainability isn't drag — it's where the operational efficiencies were hiding all along.

PROOF: 26% CO_2 REDUCTION FOR LEADERS VS 3% FOR LAGGARDS [5] · 62% VS 34% EMBED IT IN INNOVATION & COST SAVINGS [13]

THE MYTH

"It's a ~~specialist's job.~~"

THE TALENT YOU AREN'T KEEPING

Green-skills demand is growing at twice the rate of supply — into a market already short 29.8 million project professionals by 2035. The people who can do this work are exactly who recruiters, lenders and procurement actively source. Train them and they stay; investing in a credential they want is a retention lever, not a flight risk. Refuse to, and you watch them get hired away by the firms that will.

PROOF: 2× GREEN-SKILLS DEMAND VS SUPPLY [3] · 29.8M SHORTFALL BY 2035 [2]

None of this is about caring more. It's about being in the pipelines, running leaner, and keeping the people who can do the work. Sources: A&O Shearman · S&P Global; Brightline (650+ orgs); LinkedIn Economic Graph; PMI Global Talent Gap 2025.

WHY IT STALLS

Everyone agrees. Almost no one is ready.

The ambition is set at the top. The capability is missing where the work actually happens — and two independent studies find the exact same collapse.

INSIDE THE ORG CHART — PMI [7]

85%	43%	20%
EXECS CONFIDENT IN GOALS	PMO LEADERS AGREE	PROJECT PROS CONFIDENT

ACROSS THE MARKET — KYNDRYL · MICROSOFT · ECOSYSTM [13]

85%	50%	17%
CALL IT A TOP STRATEGIC PRIORITY	ACT PROACTIVELY & CONSISTENTLY	EMBED IT AS A CORE DRIVER OF INNOVATION

The same 85% ambition, measured two ways — and it collapses both inside the org chart and across the global market. PMI finds a 65-point confidence drop from the C-suite to the delivery line; Kyndryl's Global Sustainability Barometer finds only 17% of organizations have turned that priority into a core driver of innovation, cost savings and resilience. That is not a values problem. It's a capability problem — and capability is a training decision, not a mindset campaign.

Where it breaks: the disclosure line

Enterprise sustainability reporting either holds together or falls apart at the project level — because that's where the underlying data is actually generated. When project teams don't have the method, three costs show up on someone's desk later, larger.

AUDIT & DISCLOSURE RISK [10]

Trained PMs generate audit-ready evidence — dual-materiality, threshold-based reporting — the first time, inside the lifecycle. The alternative is reconstructing it under pressure when auditors arrive. Remediation always costs more than the training.

LOST PIPELINES [11]

Procurement- and financing-gated work increasingly requires sustainability evidence just to qualify. Certifying your bench is one of the lowest-cost ways to stay in bids you're otherwise filtered out of before they start.

AI DISCLOSURE EXPOSURE [8]

AI is being pushed into emissions reporting faster than governance can absorb it. PMs who can interrogate data lineage and materiality own the trust; the ones who rubber-stamp own the failed audit.

The fix isn't more ambition.

It's capability — and capability is the one variable on this page you can change this quarter. The organizations that close the gap first are the ones that turn every stat in this brief into their advantage instead of their exposure.

THE ANSWER · NOW AVAILABLE

PMI-GPM

One credential. Built for the project, not the press release.

The Certified Sustainable Project Professional (CSPP™) launched in June 2026 as the first credential built specifically for project practitioners — not corporate ESG with a PM module bolted on. It teaches the method for carrying sustainability through the lifecycle without breaking delivery. It is live now.

FOR THE EXECUTIVE

Higher win rates in gated work, fewer disclosure gaps, lower audit risk, and a bench that turns climate exposure into managed risk. Resilience you can put on a balance sheet.

FOR L&D

A high-leverage, low-cost play: 12 hours of education for PMP holders, 20 for others — inside the learning model you already run. Training people in a credential they want is retention, not risk.

CREDENTIAL	**CSPP™ — Certified Sustainable Project Professional** LAUNCHED
ISSUING BODY	**PMI · live now (successor to GPM-b)**
PMP REQUIRED?	**No. PMP holders take a meaningfully shorter exam.**
TIME TO READY	**12 hrs of education (PMP holders) · 20 hrs (non-certified)**
RENEWAL	**30 PDUs every 3 years · counts as business-acumen toward PMP CCR**
STANDARDS	**P5 Standard · Sustainable PM Practice Guide · free for PMI members**

This certification is so much more than a badge.

pmi.org/learning/sustainability

Talk to your PMI key account team about a team cohort.

SOURCES & NOTES

Every number in this brief, traced to its source.

Figures are drawn from PMI and PMI–GPM research and the cited third-party studies, compiled as of the CSPP™ launch in June 2026. Bracketed markers throughout the brief map to the references below.

1 **PMI, Maximizing Project Success** (2025). Global study; survey of 10,000+ project professionals and stakeholders. Finding: sustainability and social impact is the strongest predictor of perceived project success, ahead of methodology and governance.

2 **PMI, Global Project Management Talent Gap** (2025). Projected shortfall of up to 29.8 million project professionals worldwide by 2035.

3 **LinkedIn Economic Graph** (2025). Green-skills demand growing at roughly twice the rate of supply.

4 **PMI, Project Management 2024 Outlook.** Climate change affects approximately 53% of projects globally; healthcare and construction most exposed.

5 **Brightline Initiative (PMI), Sustainability in the Age of AI: The Integration Imperative.** Analysis of 650+ organizations; leaders achieve a 26% CO_2 reduction vs 3% for laggards.

6 **Brightline Initiative (PMI), Sustainability at a Crossroads.** 90% of executives rate sustainability important; 60% have incorporated it into strategy; 25% feel well-positioned to deliver.

7 **PMI, Executing Sustainability Strategy: When Ambition Meets Reality** (2025). Confidence gap of 85% / 43% / 20%; 79% see long-term success vs 41% fully integrated; 58% costlier, 48% more complex, 36% compliance burden.

8 **Deloitte** (2026), via Breathe ESG and Latham & Watkins. More than 80% of companies use AI; 16% plan AI-based emissions monitoring by 2026.

9 **A&O Shearman; S&P Global Sustainable1; ESG Dive** (2025). ISSB-aligned disclosure mandates across roughly 40 jurisdictions covering nearly 60% of global GDP.

10 **The P5™ Standard for Sustainability in Project Management; Project Sustainability Reporting Guide** (PMI–GPM). Dual-materiality and threshold-based, audit-ready project reporting.

11 **World Economic Forum, Making the Green Transition Work** (2025). Sustainability requirements embedded in supplier evaluations, joint-venture agreements, and capital-program qualification.

12 **PMI–GPM, CSPP™ Exam Content Outline** (Feb 2026). Credential structure, exam specifications, and PDU cadence.

13 **Ecosystm, in collaboration with Kyndryl and Microsoft, Global Sustainability Barometer Study** (3rd edition). 85% of organizations rate environmental sustainability a top strategic priority; 50% drive it through proactive or consistent initiatives; 17% have embedded it as a core driver of innovation, cost savings, and long-term resilience. Integration-focused organizations embed sustainability into innovation and cost savings at 62% vs 34% for others, and cite measurable ROI as their top reason for accelerating.

A note on method. This brief compiles independently published research to make a single argument for the project-management audience; it is not itself a peer-reviewed study. Percentages are reported as stated in the underlying sources and rounded where those sources round. Where a figure combines two studies (e.g., regulatory coverage), both are cited. For the primary standards and the full CSPP™ exam outline, see pmi.org/learning/sustainability.