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MAKING THE GREEN TRANSITION WORK FOR PROJECTS, PEOPLE, AND PERFORMANCE



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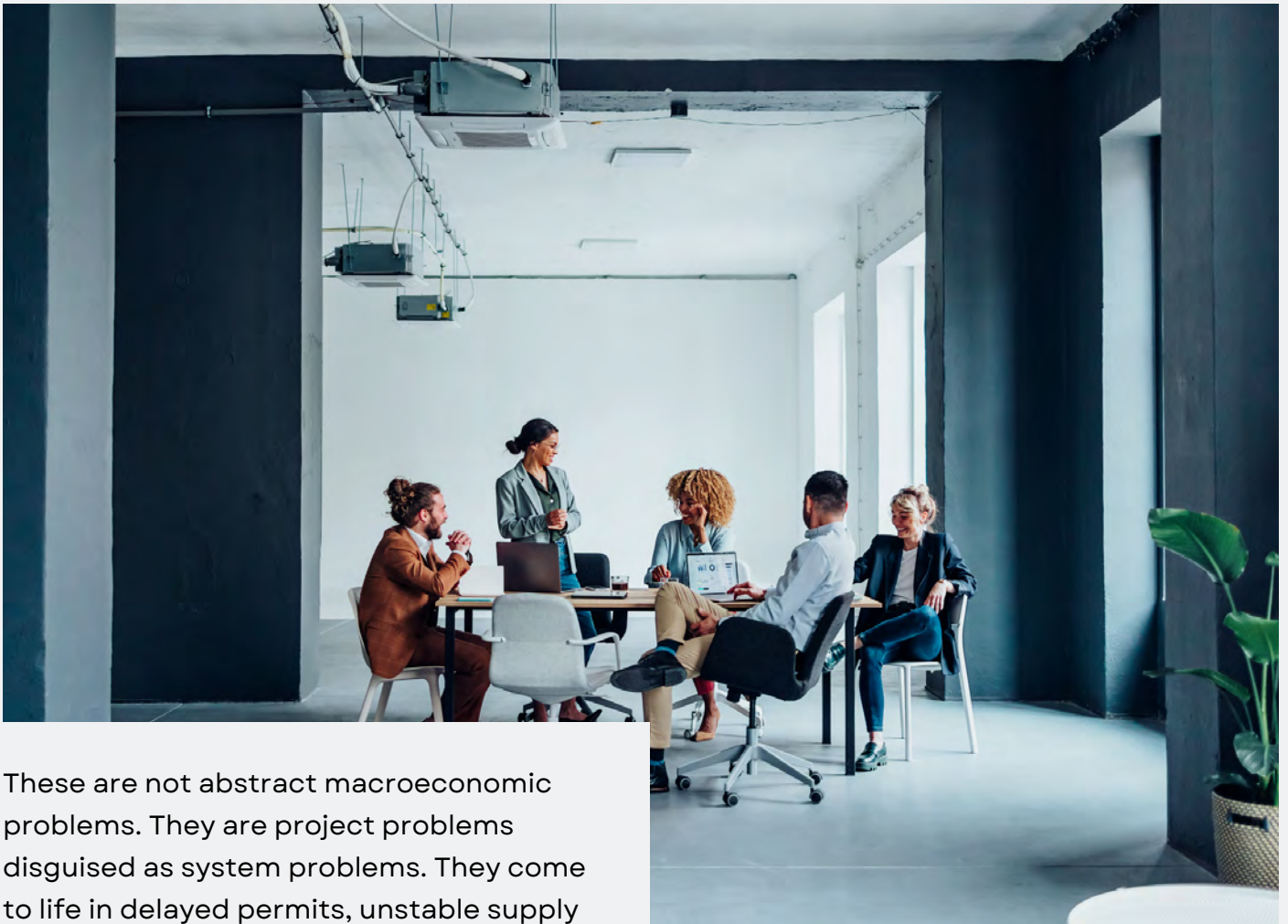
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Why the PMI-GPM GPM-b™ Certification Matters Now

The green transition is no longer a distant aspiration debated in multilateral forums and annual reports. It is the operating context in which every major portfolio now sits. Boards are approving decarbonization programs, resilience upgrades, digital infrastructure, and circularity initiatives at a scale that would have been unthinkable a decade ago. Governments are tightening regulations and linking industrial strategy to climate commitments. Investors are reshaping portfolios around transition risk. Communities are asking, bluntly, who will pay and who will benefit.

Amid this momentum, a stubborn reality is emerging: **the transition lives or dies in projects.** That is where capital is allocated, contracts are signed, communities are consulted, and assets are built or retired. It is also where the friction shows up first. The World Economic Forum's recent work with McKinsey shows that while almost 80 percent of executives expect the green transition to have a positive impact on their national economies, a large share are already hitting the same set of barriers: higher energy and commodity costs, regulatory uncertainty and compliance burdens, slow returns on investment, and concerns about affordability and equity for households and small businesses.





These are not abstract macroeconomic problems. They are project problems disguised as system problems. They come to life in delayed permits, unstable supply chains, poorly understood social impacts, and project teams that were never trained to handle sustainability as anything more than a risk register entry.

At the same time, the profession that is supposed to carry this work is under pressure. PMI's **Global Project Management Talent Gap** report estimates that the world will need up to **65.4 million project professionals by 2035**, with a potential shortfall of as many as **29.8 million** if current workforce trends continue.

Demand growth is highest in transition-intensive regions such as China, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa, where infrastructure and energy systems are expanding and being re-tooled simultaneously. LinkedIn's **Global Green Skills Stocktake** adds another layer:

hiring for green talent is growing at **twice the rate** of green skills in the workforce—eight percent versus four percent—while nearly **44 percent** of workers say they are not receiving any green training from their employers and almost one in three say they do not yet have the skills to access climate-related opportunities.

On top of that, PMI's **Maximizing Project Success** research has quietly redrawn what success looks like. Across more than 10,000 project professionals and stakeholders, the strongest predictor of perceived project success is not schedule adherence or budget accuracy, but **sustainability and social impact**, which scored 257 on PMI's predictive index—far above the average of 100 and higher than any traditional performance theme.



Projects that align with social good—proxied in the study by linkage to the UN Sustainable Development Goals—achieve a Net Project Success Score far above those that do not.

Put together, the picture is stark and surprisingly coherent. The world is betting its economic and social future on a green transition. Executives believe it can be a growth engine but are bumping against hard delivery constraints. There are not enough project professionals, and too few of those have meaningful sustainability skills. And the projects that do integrate sustainability are significantly more successful by the very metrics executives care about: value, outcomes, and stakeholder perception.

This is the context in which the **PMI-GPM GPM-b™ certification** sits. It is not a nice-to-have add-on for interested specialists. It is a structured way to build the capabilities that global evidence now says are decisive: the ability to treat sustainability as a delivery discipline, not an afterthought; to integrate it into planning, governance, risk, procurement, and benefits; and to produce credible data that feeds straight into sustainability and financial reporting.

The rest of this paper unpacks that story. It explains why the green transition has become, at its core, a project delivery challenge; how the talent and skills gaps are emerging as structural risks; why governance, measurement, and reporting must evolve; and how a sustainability-integrated project capability—signaled and reinforced by GPM-b™—can give organizations a real advantage in a transition economy that is still learning how to execute what it has promised.

Projects that align with social good—proxied in the study by linkage to the UN Sustainable Development Goals—achieve a Net Project Success Score far above those that do not.

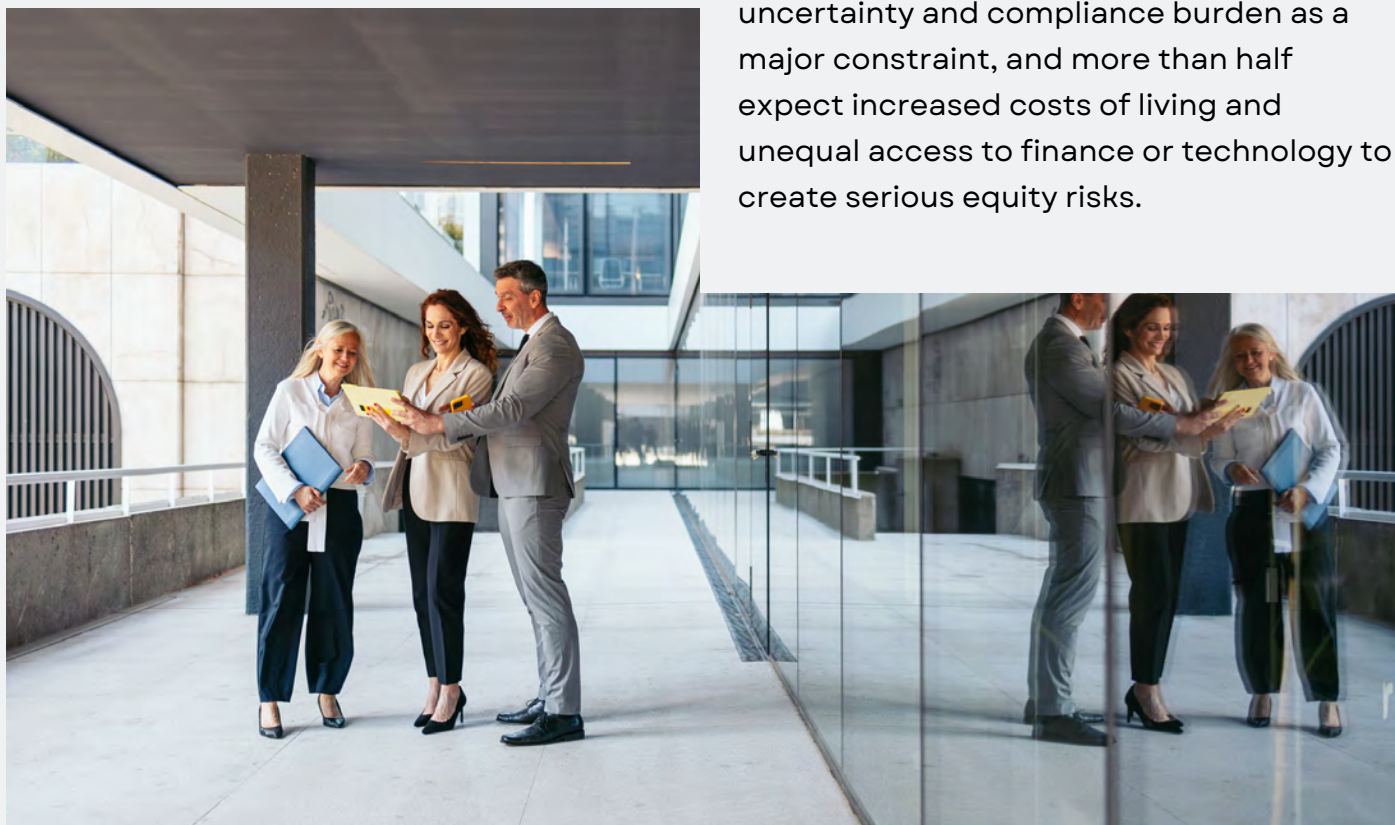
01

The Green Transition Has Become a Project Delivery Problem

If you strip away the rhetoric and look at what the transition actually requires, a simple pattern emerges. Governments need to reshape energy systems, build new infrastructure, and adapt existing assets. Companies need to re-engineer supply chains, retrofit facilities, digitize processes, and bring new products and services to market. Investors need bankable pipelines that withstand regulatory and social scrutiny. Communities want jobs, affordable services, and a say in how change unfolds.

None of that happens through statements or strategies. It happens through **projects**.

The World Economic Forum's Making the Green Transition Work for People and the Economy makes this painfully clear. Executives surveyed in more than 110 countries acknowledge that decarbonization and climate action are now central to economic security and competitiveness. Yet **37 percent** of them already identify higher energy and key commodity costs as a barrier to remaining competitive, **36 percent** point to regulatory uncertainty and compliance burden as a major constraint, and more than half expect increased costs of living and unequal access to finance or technology to create serious equity risks.



These pressures converge at project level. When energy prices spike, it is project budgets and business cases that strain. When regulations change mid-stream, it is project teams that scramble to adjust designs, permits, and documentation. When communities feel shut out or disadvantaged, it is project timelines that slip or collapse. When financing conditions tighten, it is project portfolios that are reprioritized or cancelled.

Traditionally, many organizations have treated sustainability as something that lives in corporate functions—strategy, ESG, risk, or communications. The WEF data suggests that posture is now untenable. The obstacles executives describe are not abstract policy issues; they are delivery issues. And they can only be addressed reliably when sustainability is integrated into the way projects are conceived, governed, staffed, and measured.

This is why PMI's Maximizing Project Success report is so important. After reviewing fifty years of literature and conducting a large-scale global study, PMI concluded that project success can no longer be defined narrowly as hitting cost, time, and scope. Instead, success is now best understood as the consensus that a project "delivered value that was worth the effort and expense."

That definition explicitly blends execution and outcomes—and it immediately elevates sustainability from a side concern to a central part of how value is perceived.

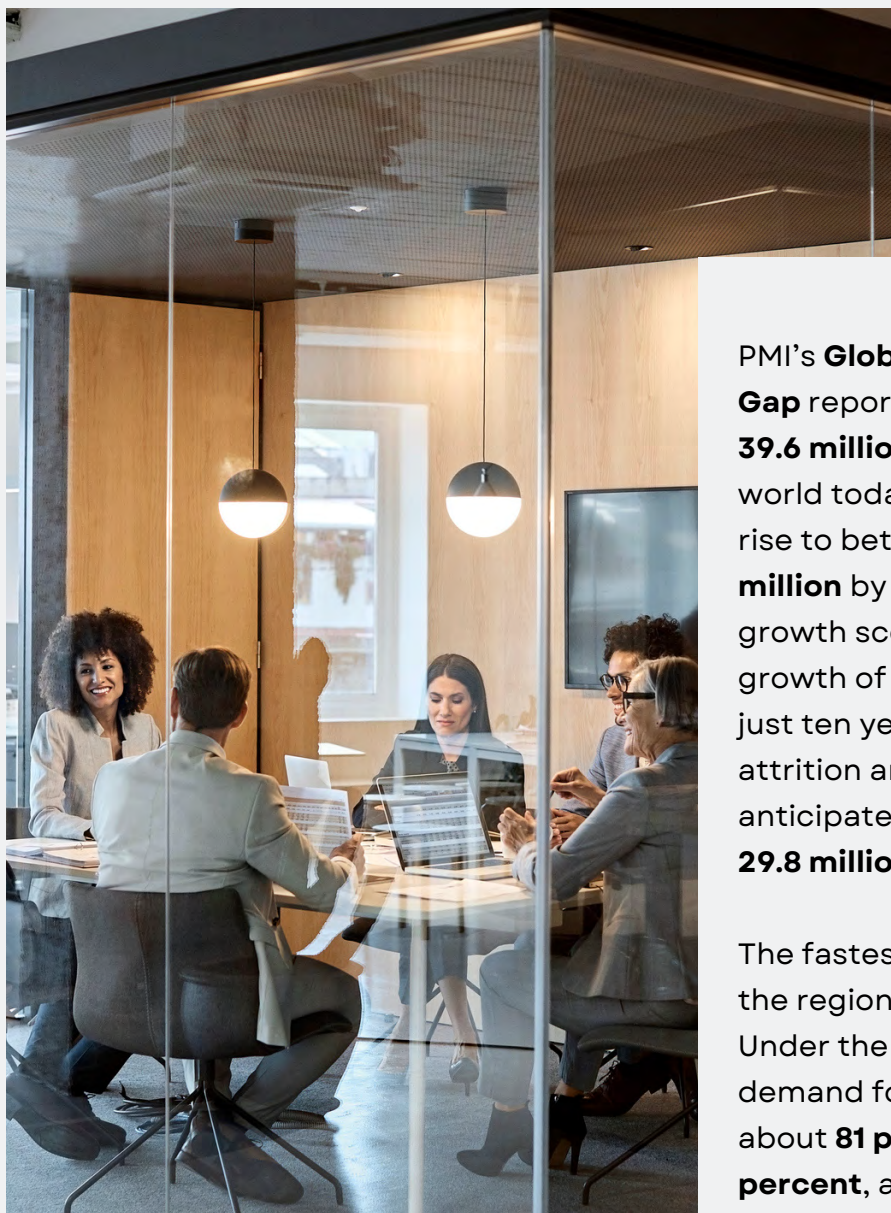


In the study, projects that did well on both execution and outcomes scored highest on the Net Project Success Score. Critically, when PMI modelled which performance themes were most predictive of that success, **sustainability and social impact came out on top**, ahead of level of quality, meeting defined requirements, customer satisfaction, and safety.

Sustainability, in other words, is not a nice extra. It has become one of the strongest drivers of whether stakeholders believe a project was worth doing.

For executives responsible for transition portfolios, this changes the question. It is no longer "how do we fit sustainability into project dashboards?" It is "how do we design our project capability so that sustainability is part of how our teams think, plan, decide, and report from the outset?"

The Talent and Skills Gap: A Structural Risk

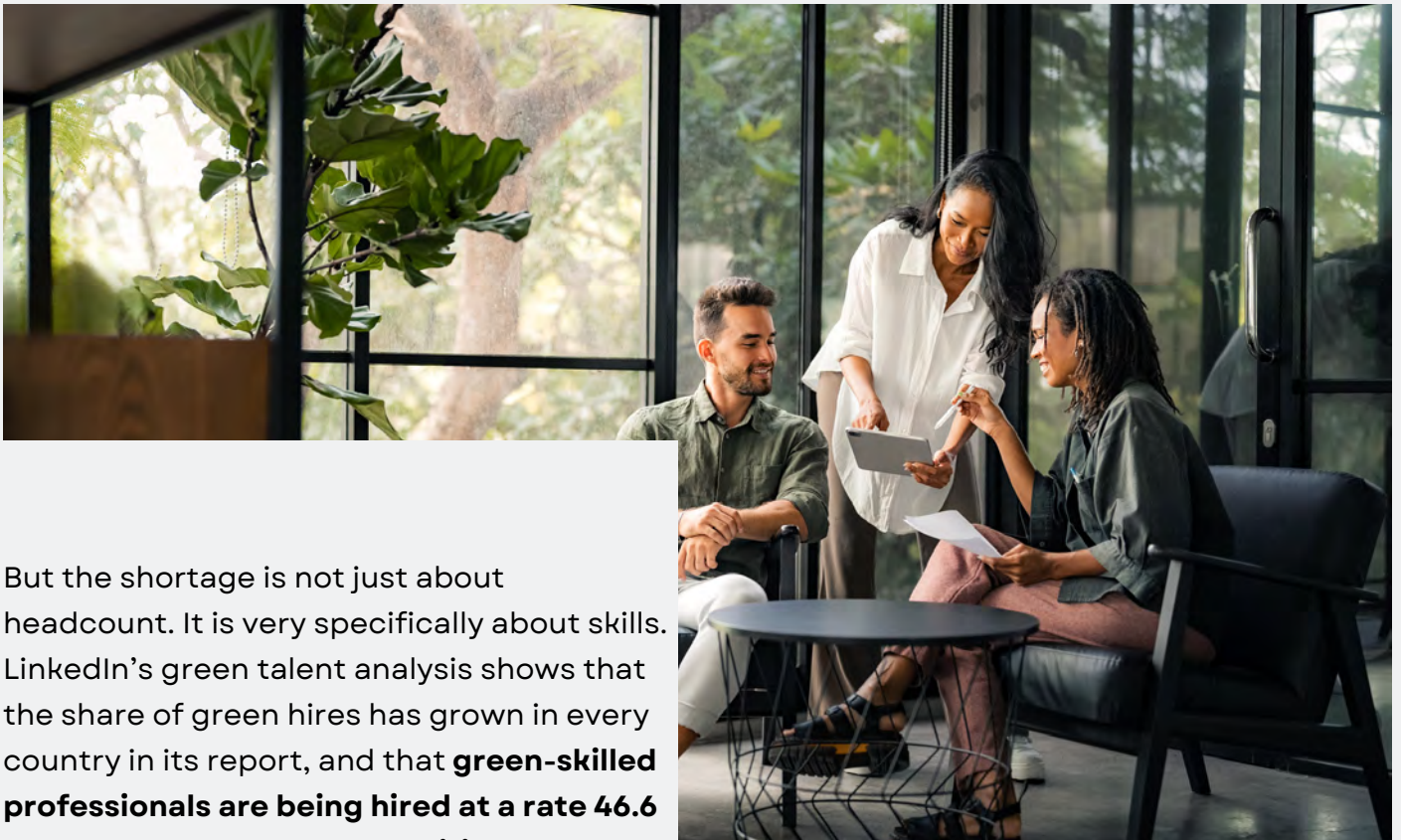


If sustainability is now a defining feature of project value, the obvious question is whether the workforce is ready. The data says it is not.

PMI's **Global Project Management Talent Gap** report estimates that there are about **39.6 million** project professionals in the world today and that this figure will need to rise to between **58.5 million and 65.4 million** by 2035, depending on economic growth scenarios. That implies demand growth of between **48 and 64 percent** in just ten years. Even after factoring in attrition and retirement, PMI still anticipates a potential shortfall of up to **29.8 million** project professionals by 2035.

The fastest growth is expected in precisely the regions most central to the transition. Under the low-growth scenario, China's demand for project professionals rises by about **81 percent**, South Asia's by around **68 percent**, and Sub-Saharan Africa's by **56 percent**; under higher-growth assumptions, these numbers climb into triple digits for some markets.

These are not marginal labour markets. They are where power grids are being expanded, transport systems are being built, and climate-sensitive infrastructure is being financed.



But the shortage is not just about headcount. It is very specifically about skills. LinkedIn's green talent analysis shows that the share of green hires has grown in every country in its report, and that **green-skilled professionals are being hired at a rate 46.6 percent above the general hiring rate**. Yet the underlying supply of green skills is rising at only about **4 percent**, while demand is climbing at roughly **8 percent**.

Workers can see the gap. Roughly **43 percent** say they would ideally like a job that contributes to the energy transition or climate solutions, a figure that climbs to **52 percent** among Millennials and **58 percent** among Gen Z. At the same time, **30 percent** say they do not currently have the skills needed to access those roles, and **44 percent** say they are not being given green training at work.

For executives, this combination of numbers should ring alarm bells. There is a clear appetite among workers to move into transition-aligned roles. There is clear demand from employers for people who can bring sustainability competence into project work. And yet the systems that should be connecting the two—education, professional development, and internal learning—are not scaling fast enough.

The result is a structural risk. Organizations move ahead with transition commitments and capital plans, but when the projects start, they discover that their teams do not have enough people who understand sustainability in a way that is operational: people who can interpret regulation, incorporate socio-economic impacts into design decisions, manage new forms of risk, and produce evidence that stands up to scrutiny. That gap does not show up in a press release, but it shows up very quickly in project overruns, stalled programs, and strained relationships with regulators and communities.

The **GPM-b™ certification** sits directly in that gap. It is purpose-built to develop professionals who can bridge traditional project skills with sustainability-integrated practice—those who can design and lead projects that address the reality executives are now facing, rather than the world their organizations were built for.

03

Strategic Alignment with Contemporary Business Purpose

Sustainability scored 257 on PMI's predictive index of performance themes, compared with an average of 100 across all themes.

Across industries, the definition of corporate purpose is drifting away from narrow notions of shareholder value and towards a broader understanding of long-term, multi-stakeholder value. This is not a soft, rhetorical shift. It is being driven by tangible forces: climate-linked disruptions, regulatory changes, rising inequality, and social pressure around transparency and fairness.

The empirical evidence lines up with this. As noted earlier, PMI's Maximizing Project Success study shows that sustainability and social impact have become the most powerful predictors of whether a project is viewed as successful, outstripping classic execution metrics. Sustainability scored **257** on PMI's predictive index of performance themes, compared with an average of 100 across all themes, and with lower scores for factors such as on time, on budget, and within scope.

The WEF's work adds the macro context. Its analysis highlights that the transition must “work for people and the economy” if it is to be politically and socially sustainable. That means mitigating cost of living impacts, ensuring access to new technologies and finance, and managing job transitions with adequate social protections. Executives surveyed express acute concerns about increased costs of living, unequal access to capital and technology, and worker displacement in key sectors like energy, infrastructure, and industry.



Meanwhile, LinkedIn's data shows that green competence is already a differentiator in the labour market. Green-skilled professionals are hired faster, at higher rates, and into an expanding range of roles far beyond traditional "sustainability jobs." Over half of green hires are now going into roles that historically did not require green skills, which indicates that sustainability awareness and capability are being treated as general business skills rather than niche specialisms.

In this environment, "purpose" is not something that can be waved at from the C-suite. It has to be **operationalized**, and projects are where that happens. When project delivery integrates sustainability into planning, governance, resourcing, and reporting, it aligns organizational purpose with the daily decisions that shape outcomes. Projects stop being neutral technical exercises and become the primary vehicle through which an organization demonstrates what it believes and where it is going.

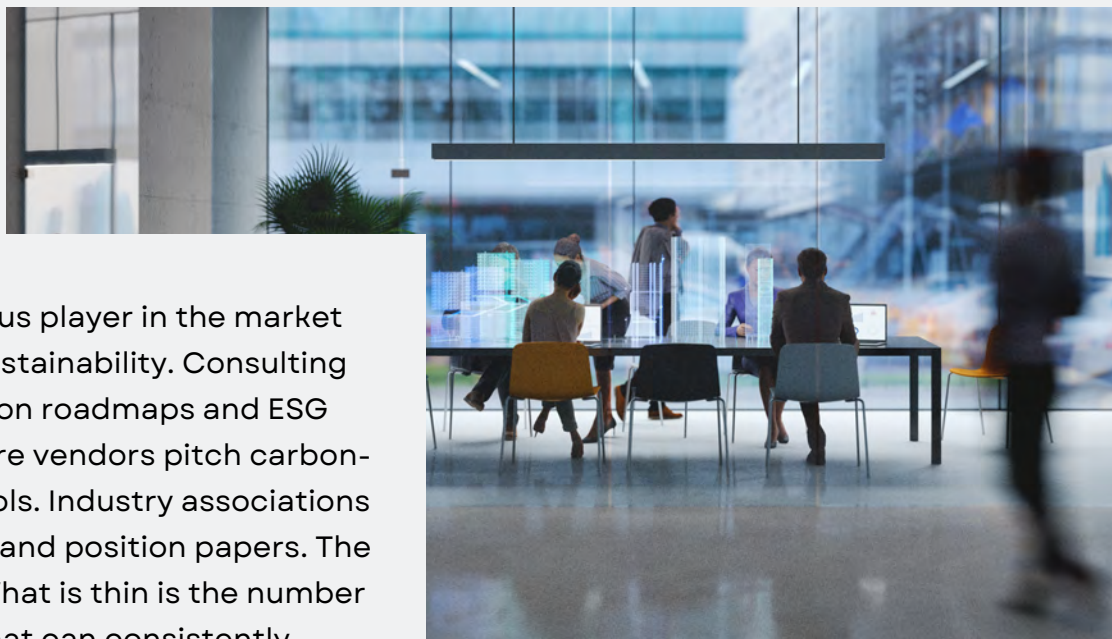
When project delivery integrates sustainability into planning, governance, resourcing, and reporting, it aligns organizational purpose with the daily decisions that shape outcomes.

Executives who grasp this do not talk about sustainability and purpose as separate strands. They use their transition portfolios to show employees, investors, communities, and regulators that the organization takes its commitments seriously—and they use sustainable project capability as the mechanism to do it.



04

Differentiation in a Crowded, Converging Market



Almost every serious player in the market now talks about sustainability. Consulting firms offer transition roadmaps and ESG strategies. Software vendors pitch carbon-aware planning tools. Industry associations publish guidelines and position papers. The rhetoric is thick. What is thin is the number of organizations that can consistently deliver transition-aligned projects under real-world constraints.

This is where differentiation is starting to emerge. The organizations that stand out are not the ones with the most polished sustainability reports, but the ones that can show, over and over again, that their projects do three things well:

They deliver value that stakeholders recognize as worth the effort and expense. They handle sustainability-linked risks—regulatory, social, environmental—without blowing up cost and schedule. And they generate reliable data that feeds into enterprise-level reporting frameworks, whether those are based on GRI, ISSB, TCFD, or jurisdiction-specific regulations.

PMI's research provides some clues on how this differentiation is built. Projects with well-established measurement systems that define success criteria up front, track performance, and monitor risk achieve Net Project Success Scores nearly twice as high as those without. When organizations also monitor risk within those systems, NPSS rises further. Yet only about a third of projects in PMI's study do all of these things.

Similar scarcity applies to sustainability: only 22 percent of projects in the dataset align with social benefit, even though those that do dramatically outperform those that do not on measures of value and satisfaction.

This rarity is an opportunity. Executives who invest in sustainability-integrated project capability are not simply catching up with expectations; they are stepping into a relatively uncrowded space where tangible competence is in short supply. As governments tie climate policy to industrial strategy and public procurement, as lenders harden climate-related risk assessments, and as communities sharpen their scrutiny, organizations that can demonstrate credible, disciplined execution in this space will have leverage that goes beyond individual contracts.



For organizations, a critical mass of GPM-b™-certified professionals becomes a visible marker of readiness in markets where readiness is increasingly a prerequisite for opportunity

The **GPM-b™ certification** can be read as one expression of that differentiation. It signals that a project professional understands not only standard delivery practices but also how to integrate sustainability into them and how to generate evidence that external stakeholders trust. For organizations, a critical mass of GPM-b™-certified professionals becomes a visible marker of readiness in markets where readiness is increasingly a prerequisite for opportunity.

05

Relevance in the Transition Economy

The sectors undergoing the fastest transformation in the world today are all project-heavy, capital-intensive, and sustainability-sensitive: energy, infrastructure, manufacturing, transport, digital and data systems, healthcare, and public services. They are also where regulation is moving fastest and where stakeholder expectations are most intense.

The WEF's equitable transition work breaks countries into archetypes—green developers, growth economies, fossil fuel exporters, inclusive green adopters, emerging green adopters, and frontier economies—and shows that each archetype faces different transition risks and opportunities. But across all of them, a common feature appears: climate action triggers labour market disruptions, affordability concerns, and competitiveness questions that must be managed intelligently if the transition is to retain public and political support.

In growth economies such as India, Indonesia, Brazil, Mexico, and South Africa, executives are simultaneously grappling with the need to expand industrial output, integrate into global value chains, decarbonize production, and avoid social backlash from rising costs or job losses. In green developers like the United States, Germany, Japan, and South Korea, companies are wrestling with higher energy costs, access to critical raw materials, and the challenge of ensuring that small and mid-sized firms are not left behind in the technology race.





The GPM-b™ certification aligns with this reality because it is not framed around abstract ESG knowledge. It is framed around practice.

In all of these contexts, projects are how the transition economy is being built. New power plants and grid extensions, electrified transport corridors, retrofits of factories and buildings, digital infrastructure that supports grid flexibility and resilience, and climate-resilient water and food systems all come into being through portfolios of projects. Organizations that can deliver those portfolios in ways that respect local socio-economic realities, manage complex stakeholder environments, and stand up to scrutiny are not merely participants in the transition economy; they are its architects.

The GPM-b™ certification aligns with this reality because it is not framed around abstract ESG knowledge. It is framed around **practice**. It prepares professionals to work with the Sustainability Management Plan, the P5 Standard, and dual materiality in a way that can be applied to a power grid expansion project in South Africa, a low-carbon industrial cluster in Germany, or a coastal adaptation program in Indonesia. It equips them to see the transition not as a policy slogan but as a set of constraints, dependencies, and opportunities that must be navigated through concrete design and execution decisions.

For executives, the question becomes straightforward. If the future growth of your organization is going to be pulled towards transition-intensive sectors and activities, you will need a project workforce that can operate there with confidence. GPM-b™ is one of the few signals in the market that someone has been trained to do exactly that.

06

Strengthening Relationships With Governments and Major Enterprises



The WEF's survey of executives shows why. In many countries, particularly in lower- and middle-income economies, more than **40 percent** of business leaders see limited investment capacity and access to finance as a key constraint on their ability to compete in the green transition, and around **80 percent** fear that unequal access to green finance will create inequities between companies within the same market. Concerns about unequal access to technology and know-how are similarly widespread.

As governments move from setting targets to implementing transition programs, their relationships with corporate partners are changing. They are no longer only looking for suppliers or contractors; they are looking for organizations that can share delivery risk, help stabilize socio-economic impacts, and bring credible project governance to the table.

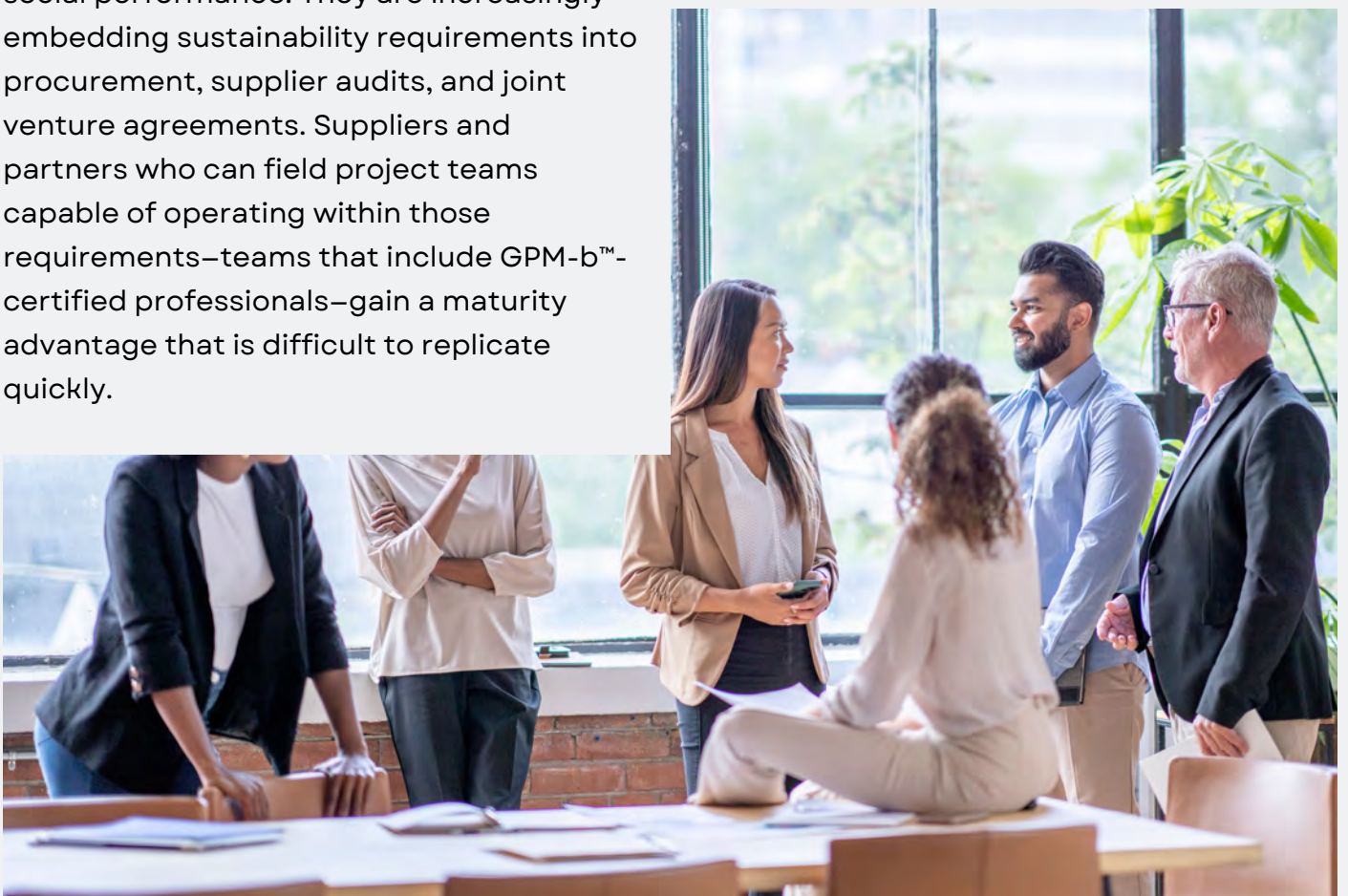
Governments cannot solve these problems alone. They need private-sector partners who can bring not just capital and technology, but also coherent ways of planning, delivering, and reporting complex programs.

Organizations that invest in sustainable project capability—of which GPM-b™ is a visible component—are better positioned to form those partnerships. When they can show governments that their teams are trained to identify and manage socio-economic impacts, to integrate sustainability requirements into scope and design, to maintain credible measurement systems, and to produce evidence that can be rolled up into national reporting, they make themselves useful in ways that go beyond the contract.

The same logic applies to relationships with large enterprises that sit at the center of global value chains. Many of these firms are under pressure from regulators, investors, and customers to decarbonize and improve social performance. They are increasingly embedding sustainability requirements into procurement, supplier audits, and joint venture agreements. Suppliers and partners who can field project teams capable of operating within those requirements—teams that include GPM-b™-certified professionals—gain a maturity advantage that is difficult to replicate quickly.

Organizations that invest in sustainable project capability—of which GPM-b™ is a visible component—are better positioned to form those partnerships.

In both public and private spheres, sustainable project capability becomes a language of trust. It signals that an organization is not coming to the table with only a sales pitch, but with the ability to carry its share of the transition's complexity.



Integrating Sustainability Into Modern Project Delivery



The evidence from PMI, WEF, and LinkedIn points to a single conclusion: organizations that treat sustainability as an external constraint or a reporting category are going to struggle. Those that treat it as an integrated part of project delivery have a fighting chance of turning the transition into a competitive advantage.

One way to think about this integration is through four interlocking dimensions that are increasingly showing up in high-performing project organizations: mindset, outcomes, risk, and execution.

Mindset shifts when project professionals stop viewing sustainability as “someone else’s job” and start seeing it as part of how they create value. Instead of asking only whether a project can be built, they ask whether it can be built in a way that stands up to regulatory scrutiny, aligns with community expectations, and strengthens long-term resilience.

Outcomes expand beyond output metrics. Under PMI’s redefined success lens, the question is not just whether the project met its technical requirements, but whether its benefits justified the effort and expense. Sustainability-aligned projects are more likely to deliver that perception of value, particularly when they connect clearly to social goods such as climate mitigation, community well-being, and economic inclusion.

Risk management evolves as sustainability introduces new dimensions of uncertainty. Climate policies may change; public sentiment may shift; technologies may mature faster or slower than expected; physical risks may materialize in unexpected ways. Project teams need tools to model these uncertainties and governance structures that allow them to respond without losing control of cost and schedule.

Execution mechanisms change because the tasks change. Procurement needs to be able to evaluate suppliers on carbon and social performance, design teams must be able to account for future regulations and physical climate impacts, and reporting teams need data collected throughout the project lifecycle, not reverse-engineered at the end.

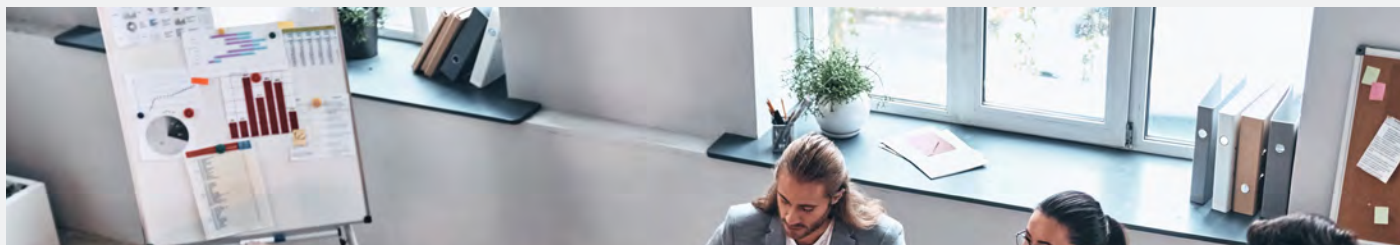


The **GPM-b™ certification** is designed around these realities. It does not replace existing project methods; it extends them. It trains professionals to work with the Sustainability Management Plan, to use P5-based impact analysis to surface relevant sustainability issues, to apply dual materiality principles, to integrate commitments into charters and work breakdown structures, and to ensure that the data needed for reporting and benefits realization is systematically captured.

For executives, the appeal is straightforward. Instead of relying on a thin layer of sustainability expertise sitting outside delivery, they can embed competence inside the teams that actually make decisions. That makes the organization less brittle, more adaptable, and more credible.

08

Measurement, Risk, and the Investment Story



One of the most striking findings from PMI's Maximizing Project Success report is how much measurement matters. Projects that defined success criteria up front, had well-established measurement systems to guide decisions, and tracked performance along the way achieved a Net Project Success Score of 49, compared with 27 for those that lacked one or more of those elements. When risk monitoring was also built into the measurement system, NPSS climbed again, with projects that practiced all four components far outperforming those that did not.

From an investment perspective, this is critical. Sponsors are often told that sustainability will pay off in the long run, but in the short term they face the reality of higher capital expenditure, uncertain revenue timing, and political and regulatory risks. That is why they so often ask, "Can't we just run the decarbonization work through our existing project processes?" The answer, based on the evidence, is no. Existing processes were not designed to handle the kinds of dependencies and thresholds that sustainability introduces.



When sustainability is integrated into measurement systems and risk frameworks, however, the investment story changes. Cost overruns and schedule slippage can be linked to specific sustainability-related drivers—permitting delays, supply-chain bottlenecks, community opposition, or design changes prompted by new regulations. Benefits can be tracked not only in financial terms but also in resilience, emissions reductions, social outcomes, and strategic positioning. Thresholds can be defined to distinguish between impacts that are interesting and those that are material enough to require board-level attention or external reporting.



The **GPM-b™ certification** prepares project professionals to work inside this enhanced measurement and risk environment. It equips them to construct sustainability-aware success criteria, to build and maintain Sustainability Management Plans that reflect both outward impacts and inward risks, and to present results in ways that speak directly to the concerns of boards, CFOs, and external stakeholders.

For executives, that means fewer surprises, more honest visibility into where sustainability is helping or hurting performance, and a stronger foundation for investment decisions in a world where the cost of getting the transition wrong is increasing.

***GPM-b™ certification
prepares project
professionals to work
inside this enhanced
measurement and risk
environment.***

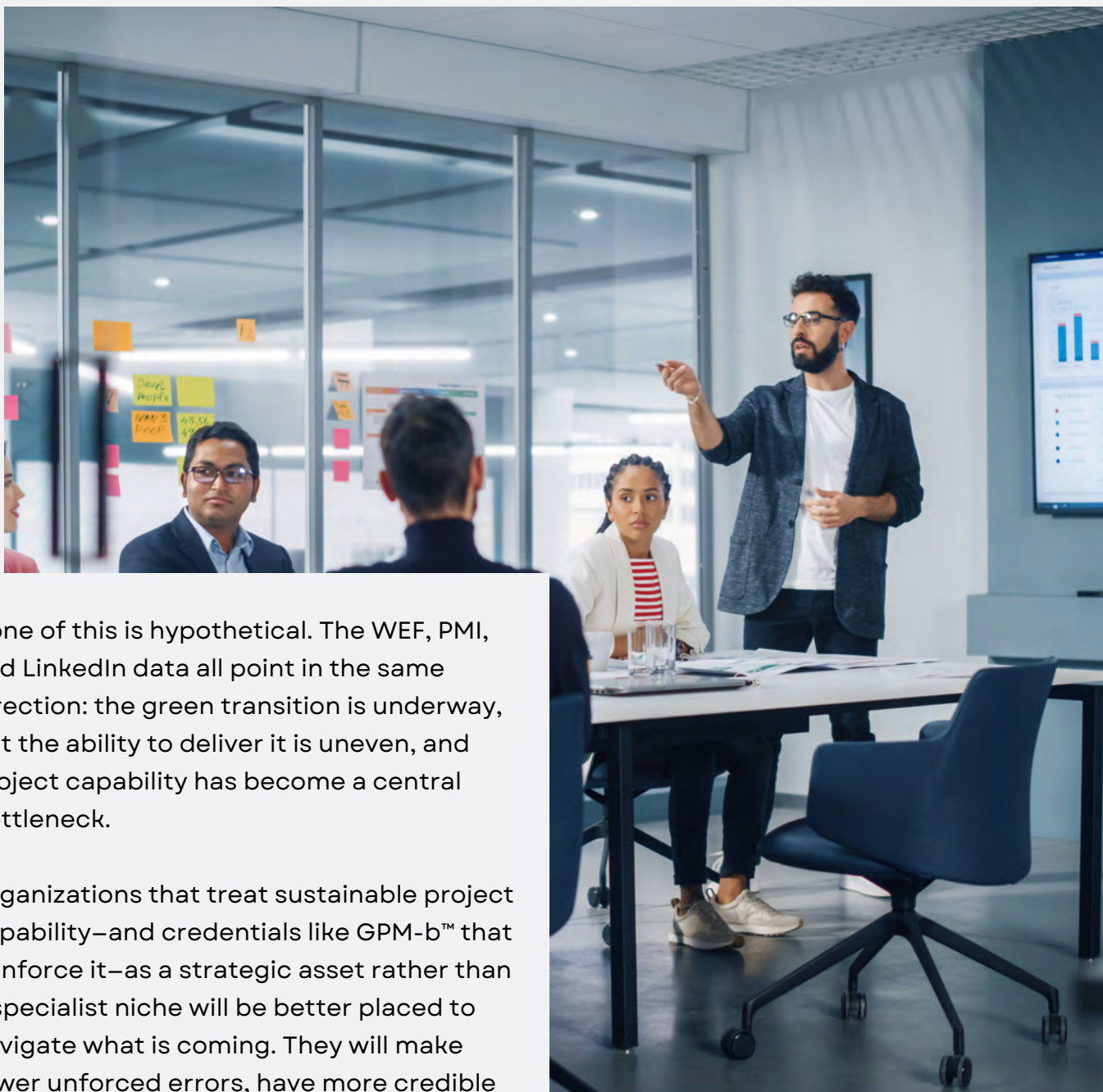
What This Means for Leaders



Boards are now routinely asking: are our transition commitments credible? Can we execute them? Are we managing the socio-economic consequences in ways that protect our license to operate? Without sustainable project capability, the honest answer is often no. Boards that understand the central role of projects in this landscape are starting to ask deeper questions—not just about targets, but about who is running the projects, how they are trained, and how outcomes are being measured.

CFOs, meanwhile, are discovering that sustainability is changing the profile of risk and return across their project portfolios. Projects with poorly understood sustainability exposures often require higher risk premia, face greater volatility in cash flows, and are more likely to suffer from stranded assets or impaired reputations. Projects led by teams that are competent in sustainability-integrated delivery, by contrast, are better able to anticipate regulatory and social shifts, to document compliance and impact, and to support more favourable financing terms.

PMOs and transformation leaders find themselves in the middle. They are the ones trying to standardize methods, integrate sustainability into templates and tools, and build the capability pipeline. For them, **certifications like GPM-b™** provide a concrete way to signal readiness and set expectations. A PMO that can say “our critical transition programs are led by professionals who have been trained and assessed against a sustainability-integrated standard” is sending a strong message to internal and external stakeholders alike.



None of this is hypothetical. The WEF, PMI, and LinkedIn data all point in the same direction: the green transition is underway, but the ability to deliver it is uneven, and project capability has become a central bottleneck.

Organizations that treat sustainable project capability—and credentials like GPM-b™ that reinforce it—as a strategic asset rather than a specialist niche will be better placed to navigate what is coming. They will make fewer unforced errors, have more credible answers when regulators and investors ask hard questions, and be more attractive to the next generation of talent that wants to work on meaningful problems with serious tools.

The transition will not be won in conference halls or earnings calls. It will be won—or lost—in projects. The GPM-b™ certification is one of the few levers organizations can pull today to ensure that they have people who can do that work well, in ways that align with the economic, social, and environmental realities of the decade ahead.

Organizations that treat sustainable project capability—and credentials like GPM-b™ that reinforce it—as a strategic asset rather than a specialist niche will be better placed to navigate what is coming.

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Analysis showing that global demand for green skills is increasing at twice the rate of supply, with green-skilled workers hired 46.6% faster than the general workforce and significant gaps in employer-provided training.

GPM / PMI-GPM (2025). *The Sustainability Reporting Guide for Projects.*

Framework detailing the Sustainability Management Plan (SMP), P5 Impact Analysis, dual materiality, thresholds, and reporting structures essential for sustainability-integrated project delivery.

