



Press release

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Facing the Climate Challenge – Is the Project Profession Ready?

Association for Project Management launches *Future Trends: Tackling Climate Change* report

- Competing priorities are the biggest barrier to action on climate change for project professionals – cited by 36 per cent in the report
- More than half (55 per cent) of those working on projects say that their organisation now has a strategy for reaching net zero
- 51 per cent of those working in an organisation with a net zero strategy feel well equipped for the challenge ahead, compared to less than a quarter (23 per cent) of those working with no strategy.

Association for Project Management (APM), the chartered body for the project profession, has launched a new report *Future Trends: Tackling Climate Change*, ahead of World Environment Day (5 June), revealing the views of the project profession on climate change and its role in addressing the key challenges.

Insights highlighted in the report are drawn from APM's annual [Salary Survey and Market Trends Survey 2021*](#), in partnership with YouGov, in which 2,626 project professionals took part. The report centres around key themes including awareness and engagement with climate change, the challenges facing the projection profession, and the measures that can deliver the biggest lasting impacts.

APM commissioned the report following a poll of project professionals in 2020 (with research company Censuswide) which showed early signs that the 'new normal' of the post-pandemic world has led to project managers and their organisations placing greater focus on net zero projects.

Sue Kershaw, APM president, says: "As the only chartered body for the project profession in the world, we fully acknowledge the importance of project skills in delivering global solutions to the climate crisis. Organisations developing net zero carbon strategies must demonstrate commitment and the capability to deliver them well.

"To support this, we are doing more than ever to emphasise the importance of making sustainability and environmental focus a core part of projects and their deliverables, including our latest report on tackling climate change."

Key findings highlighted in APM's *Future Trends: Tackling Climate Change* report :

Barriers to action

The report discovers that the most significant challenge for project professionals in moving towards a decarbonisation/net zero strategy in their organisation is competing priorities, identified by 36 per cent of project professionals. The top five challenges highlighted in the report include:

- Competing priorities – 36 per cent
- Financial or investment restrictions – 33 per cent
- Lack of knowledge or awareness – 27 per cent
- Lack of demand from clients/customers/supply chain – 22 per cent
- Business strategy conflicts – 22 per cent

Climate change and competing priorities

Despite the importance of climate change and achieving net zero, competing priorities means it ranks joint-third in the list of most significant challenges facing the project profession in the next five years. The top five challenges are:

- The coronavirus pandemic – 22 per cent of respondents
- Developing the skills and talent pipeline – 15 per cent
- Climate change and net zero – 14 per cent
- Demonstrating more clearly the value of the project profession – 14 per cent
- The impact of Brexit – 13 per cent

Organisational decarbonisation strategies

More than half of respondents (55 per cent) to the survey say their organisation has a decarbonisation or net zero strategy. Only 17 per cent state that they do not, with 28 per cent saying that they don't know.

The study reveals a wide range of sectoral insights. The sectors where respondents are most likely to report having a net zero strategy were energy (76 per cent) and transport (72 per cent), closely followed by local government (71 per cent).

The sectors with the least engagement are the voluntary sector (22 per cent); life sciences (30 per); IT (34 per cent); and health (36 per cent).

Are project professionals ready for the challenge?

The report reveals that over a third (36 per cent) of project professionals say they are confident they are equipped to tackle net zero challenges in their projects, either to a large extent or to some extent. It was revealed by 18 per cent of respondents that they were not at all equipped to tackle net zero challenges.

Taking action on climate change

Several trends emerge from the report for organisations working to minimise the impact of their projects on the environment. The top five measures being taken by the profession include:

- Reducing resource waste – 76 per cent of respondents
- Adopting measures to reduce resource use – 75 per cent
- Collaboration to reduce waste during project delivery – 71 per cent
- The need to raise awareness about climate change in projects – 61 per cent
- sharing knowledge, research and experience on climate change and biodiversity loss – 57 per cent

Visit apm.org.uk/salary-survey-2021/future-trends/ to read the full ***Future Trends: Tackling Climate Change*** report

*To read APM's Salary Survey 2021 visit apm.org.uk/resources/find-a-resource/project-management-salary-and-market-trends-survey/

APM's statement on climate change is available at apm.org.uk/about-us/corporate-social-responsibility/environment/climate-change-statement/

About Association for Project Management (APM)

APM is the Association for Project Management, a professional membership organisation that sets the standards for the project profession and the only chartered organisation representing the project profession in the world. As a registered charity, APM provides education, qualifications, networking opportunities, research, resources, events and best practice guidance for the project community, helping the profession deliver better.

APM, based in Buckinghamshire, UK currently has over 30,000 members and more than 500 corporate partners based in over 128 countries across the world. Please see apm.org.uk for further details.