2025

AI x CSO Network Survey

Briefing Report and Key Insights

Advancing Sustainability for the Future

CSO Network

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Executive summary

Artificial intelligence has a direct role in transforming global sustainability ambitions. This transition is taking place at a pace that could never be matched by previous technological shifts. For the MENA region, which is considered as one of the fastest-growing centers for digital transformation and environmental investment, the stakes are higher than ever. This survey, which has been conducted with CSOs and leaders that are aligned with sustainability goals across the region, serves as the first assessment of the adoption of AI across different sectors and practitioner levels with the purpose of advancing ESG goals.

The findings of this report reveal important results: AI is considered a high-value tool that can help in the improvement of environmental performance and serve as a driver of operational efficiency. However, the MENA region still has many structural barriers to deal with, related to governance, data maturity, strategic prioritization, and empowerment of CSO functions.

The insights that this survey offers are of great value; they highlight the main hidden challenges within organizational structures that can hamper the adoption of AI tools, and they reveal the various strategies that companies can adopt to unlock sustainability value by investing in AI advancement.

Evidence from global sources has reinforced the importance of this moment. The World Economic Forum (2024), OECD (2023), and McKinsey (2023) have all demonstrated that sustainability solutions enabled by AI can lead to a reduction in carbon emissions by around 10% globally. Furthermore, they can improve resource efficiency by 20 to 30% and reshape supply-chain transparency in a way that was previously considered completely impossible (McKinsey, 2023; WEF, 2024).

Therefore, this survey allows the region's companies to capture that value. It generates 21 actionable insights, identifies the most mature and high-impact use cases, and offers needed recommendations to transform AI from an experiment to a coherent engine of sustainability that can be adopted at an enterprise level.

Why this survey matters

The MENA ESG suffers from an important knowledge gap holding it back. Therefore, this survey aims to fill it by offering valuable analysis about the value of AI sustainability derived from data from the MENA region, as opposed to previous studies that have mainly focused on Western and East Asian contexts. In fact, these studies cannot capture the MENA region's particular governance models, industrial profiles, regulatory structures, or environmental emergencies.

The present survey matters because MENA economies are facing tremendous pressures related to climate. In fact, the UN (2023) stated that the UN region warms twice as fast as other places on the planet. It also suffers from water scarcity, energy transition pressure, and rapid urbanization. All these problems are creating sustainability challenges unique to the area. Additionally, regional CEOs are heavily investing in AI. For example, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar are considered the top spenders per capita on AI infrastructure (PwC, 2024). Furthermore, ESG regulations are becoming stricter. Many like the SCRD-aligned disclosures, the ISO 42001 for AI management systems, and the national net-zero mandates have been pressuring companies to take a step towards modernizing their data and advancing their reporting systems. Lastly, the private sector is currently at a crossroads. Companies must now decide whether they are willing to move from vision to actual results. AI is the main driver for this transition if it is used correctly.

The present survey, therefore, can give CEOs, CSOs, and boards clarity based on real data and evidence on where the region stands currently, and what needs to be done to match implementation strategies to expectations.

Methodology

The survey was developed with the purpose of assessing AI adoption, ESG integration, organizational governance, and impact measurement in MENA-based companies.

To target the right participants for this study, a purposive, cross-sector sampling strategy was used. Sustainability leaders, executives, and AI-related practitioners were targeted and asked to answer a structured online questionnaire which included quantitative multiple-choice and ranking questions, Likert-scale assessments of AI value, adoption maturity, and impact, and lastly, self-reported AI practices, governance models, and workforce approaches.

To analyze the data, descriptive statistics, cross tabulations, and thematic synthesis were all applied. Furthermore, all findings were put into context by using global benchmarks from WEF, OECD, McKinsey, PwC, Accenture, and academic literature tackling the topic of AI governance and sustainable transformation.

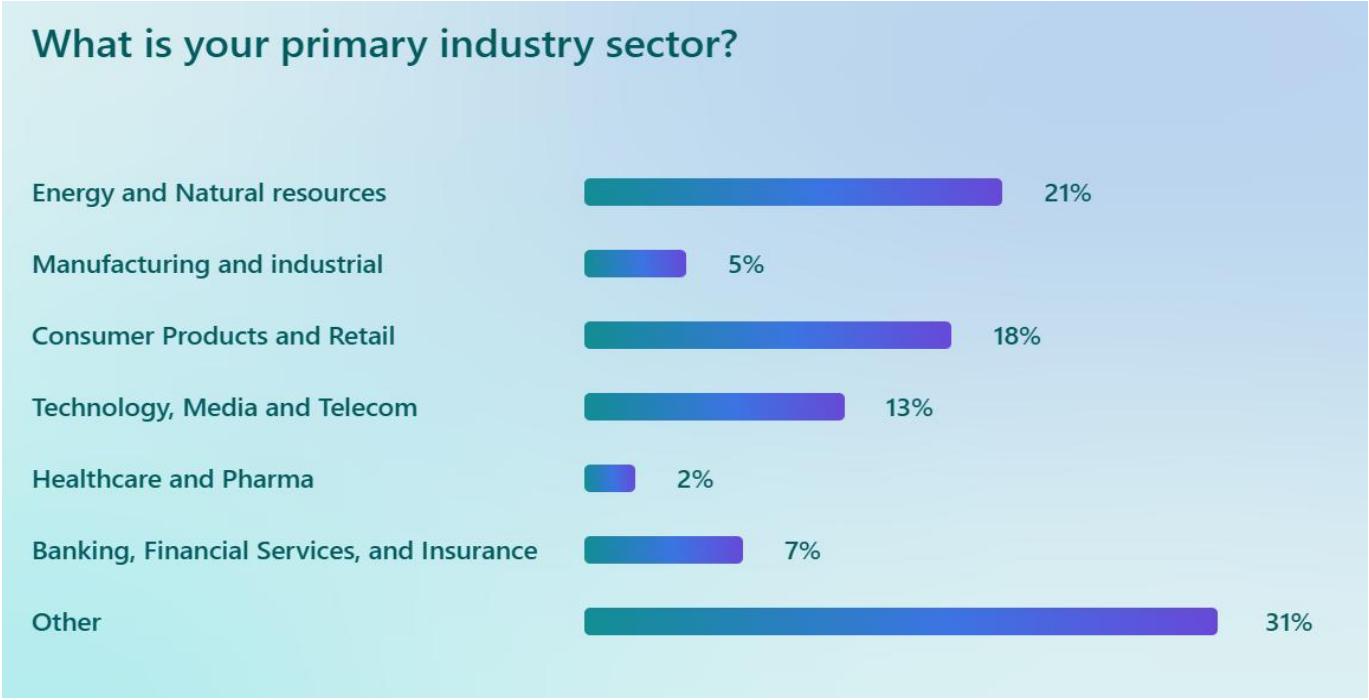
Because this survey is conducted at the practitioner level, the results are considered to reflect organizational perceptions and not audited operational metrics. However, the insights are still considered crucial, because these perceptions are what essentially shape strategy, investment decisions, and organizational readiness.

Key Insights from the AI x Sustainability Survey

This section provides key insights generated from the survey, created to shape a regional dialogue on how AI can become a powerful enabler of sustainability impact across the MENA region. It shows how companies in the MENA region are handling the intersection of AI with sustainability, highlighting key strengths and weaknesses.

1. Sustainability Leadership: Blended Industries

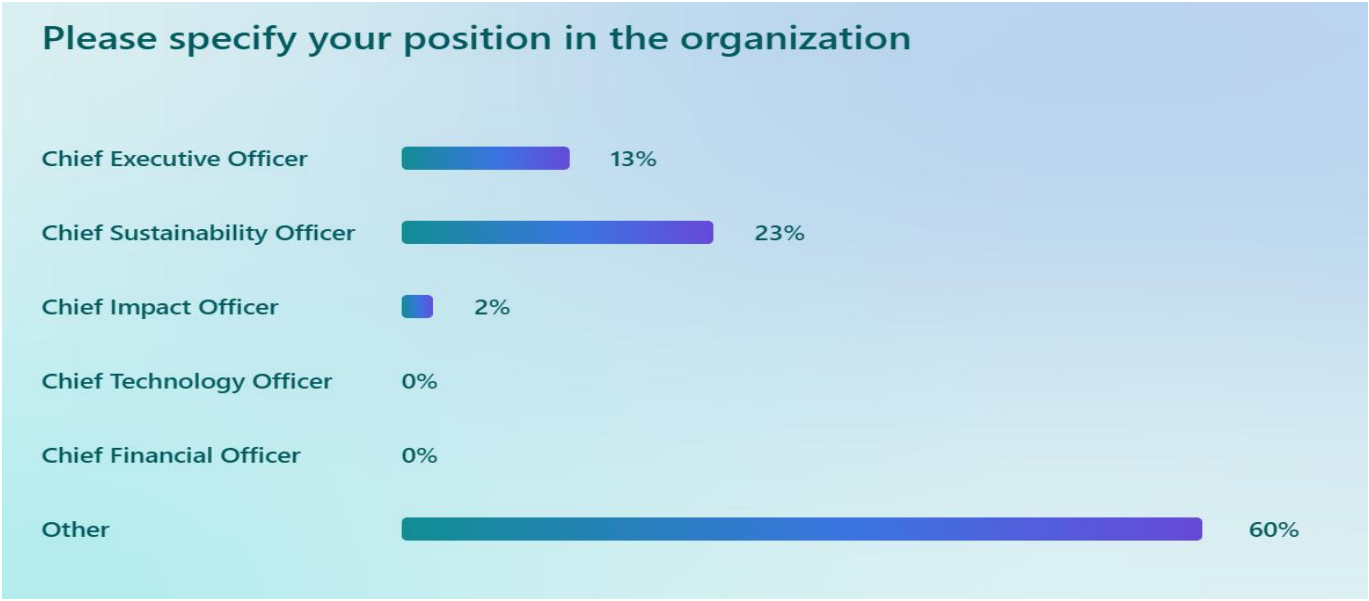
To begin with, the first question aimed at identifying the primary industry sector of the respondents. The answers were highly diverse, with "Other" leading at 29% of responses. Among specific sectors, Energy and Natural Resources is the most represented at 21.6% followed by Consumer Products and Retail at 18.9%. These top three categories account for over 70% of the responses, indicating a strong interest from the energy and consumer-facing sectors.



2. Growing Roles

The next question aimed at contextualizing the specific role of respondents within their organization. The overwhelming majority of respondents selected "Other" for their position, making up 59.5% of the total, suggesting a large number of participants hold non-C-suite or specialized roles. Among the C-level executives, the Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO) is by far the most represented role at 24.3%. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) accounts for 13.5%. Notably, the Chief Technology Officer and Chief Financial Officer roles had no representation (0%).

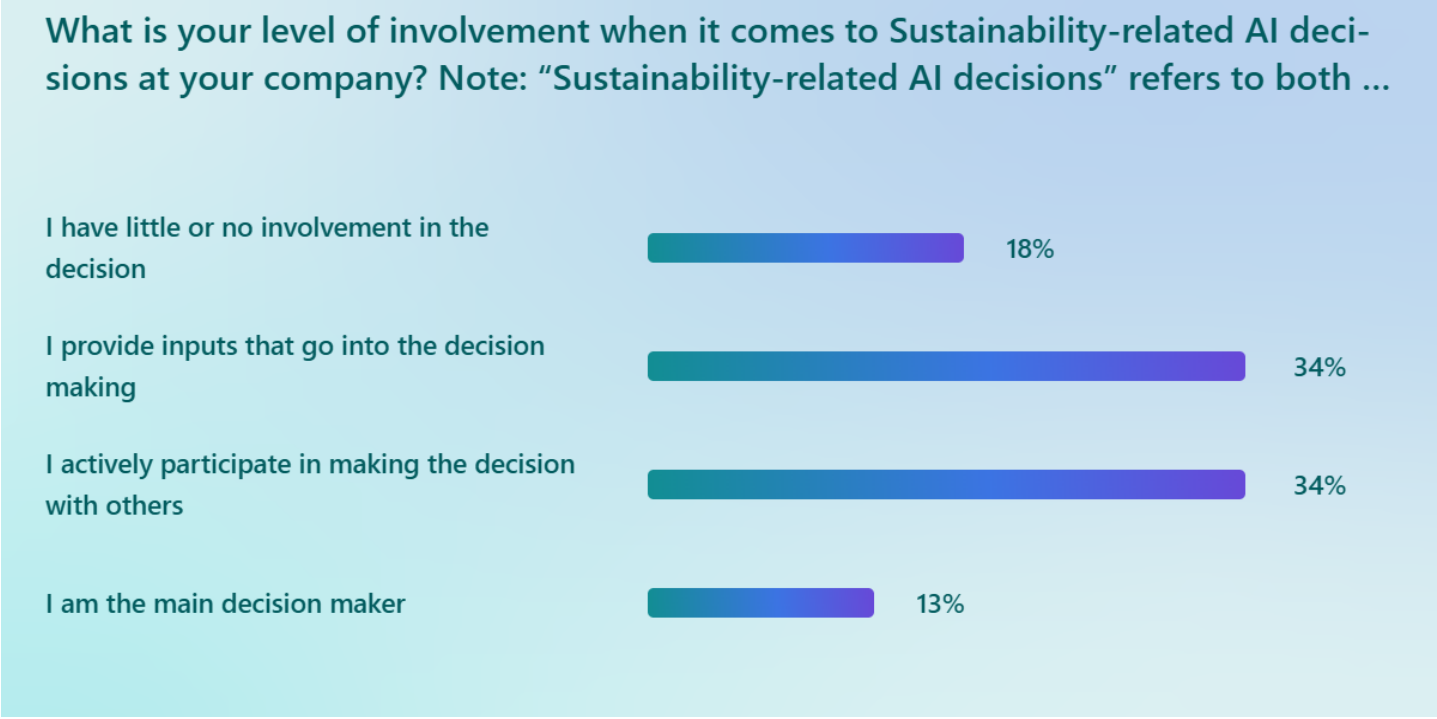
3. Importance of Sustainability in Corporate Strategy



After generating the general demographics characteristics of the sample, the next question aimed at understanding the extent to which sustainability is an essential factor in the respondents' respective overall corporate strategy. The results showed that sustainability is a major component of the corporate strategy for the vast majority of responding organizations. "Very significant role" is the dominant answer, representing 68% of the total. This highlights that for over two-thirds of the organizations surveyed, sustainability is deeply integrated into their overall strategic planning. "Moderate role" is the second-largest category, chosen by 24%. Combined with the "Very significant role" responses, this means that sustainability plays at least a moderate role for 92% of the organizations. "Minor role" was indicated by the remaining 8% of the total.
Crucially, 0% of respondents stated that sustainability plays "No role at all" or that they were "Not aware of" its role, suggesting a universal recognition and inclusion of sustainability considerations among the organizations surveyed.

4. Involvement in Sustainability-Related AI Decisions

Q4 of the survey addressed participants' level of involvement when it comes to sustainability-related AI decisions withing their company. The results were also promising, with the largest group, totaling 70% of respondents, being actively engaged either by providing inputs (35%) or actively participating in the decision-making process (35%). Another key result related to leadership, with 11% of the respondents identifying themselves as the main decision makers. Lastly, only 19% of respondents reported having little or no involvement in these decisions. This suggests that the vast majority of the survey participants are strategically connected to the intersection of AI and sustainability within their organizations.

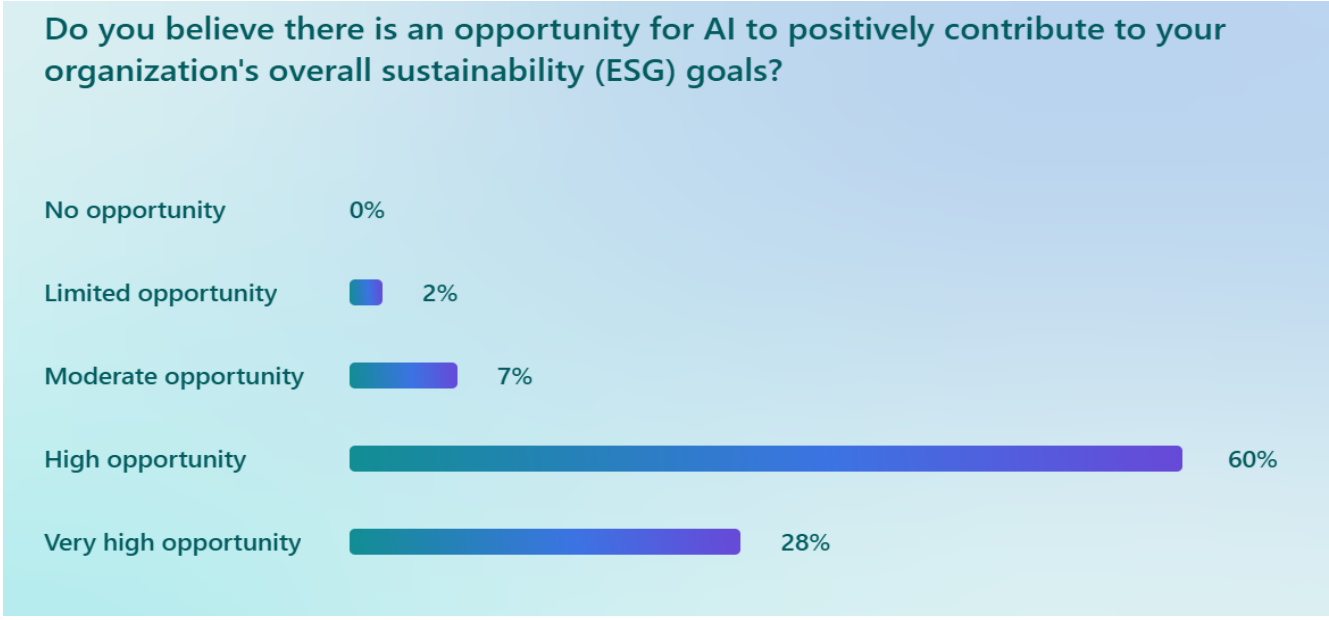


5. Stage of AI Adoption Within Organizations

Participants were then asked to describe which statement describes best the participants' respective companies' AI adoption. The results showed that the largest group, 35% of respondents, reports that their companies are actively Scaling their AI pilots, expanding them across different sites or units. An additional 24% are currently Piloting isolated initiatives, meaning that 59% of the companies are in the active implementation (Piloting or Scaling) phase. Furthermore, 19% of organizations are still in the Exploring stage, evaluating ideas without live pilots yet. Next, a significant 16% report having Mature AI adoption with multiple use cases already at scale. Lastly, only 5% of companies reported having "No activity" or planned AI projects, suggesting that AI adoption is a widespread focus across the organizations surveyed. Another positive finding is that no respondents were unsure or didn't know their companies' stance on AI adoption, showing high level of awareness and involvement.

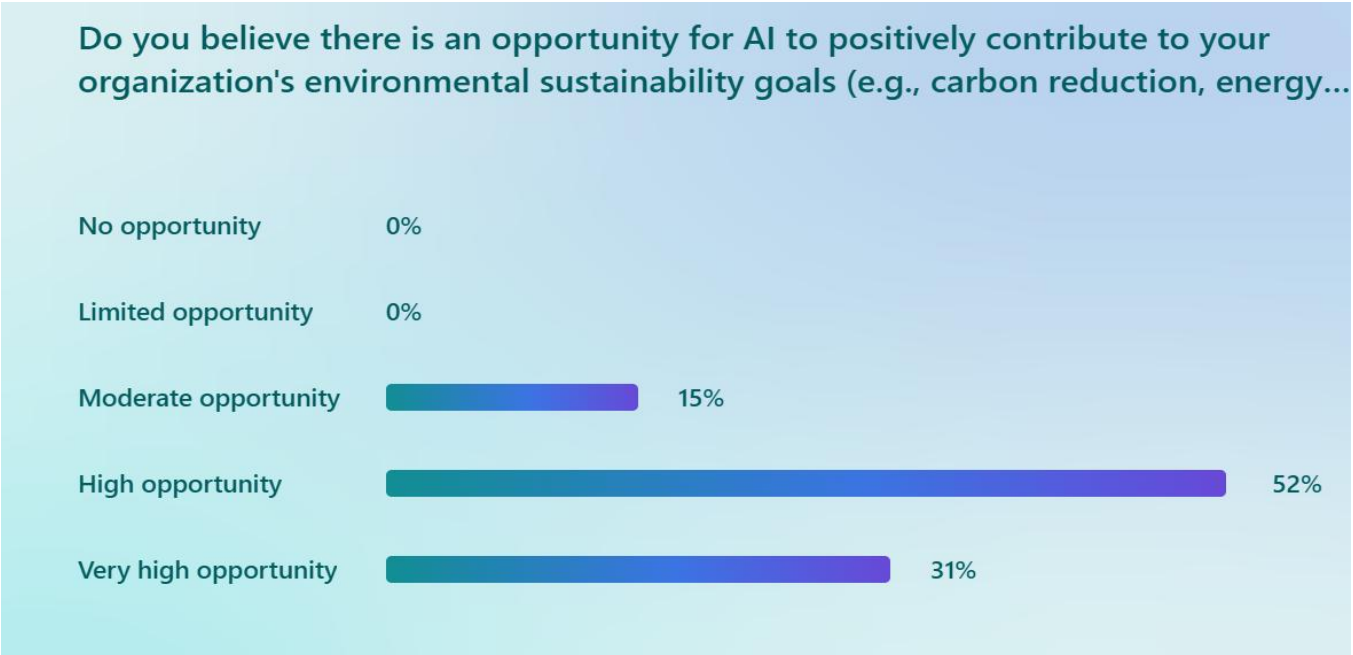
6. Perceived Opportunity of AI for Overall ESG Goals

Q6 focused if participants believed that there is a strong opportunity for AI to help in contributing their organizations' goals. The results showed that there is a major agreement that AI does present a significant opportunity to help companies achieve their sustainability goals. More specifically, a massive 89% of respondents believe the opportunity for AI in ESG is either High (59%) or Very high (30%). This suggests widespread optimism and conviction regarding AI's ability to drive sustainability efforts. Also, a small portion, 8%, viewed the potential as a Moderate opportunity. Moreover, only a marginal 3% believe the opportunity is Limited, and 0% of respondents reported No opportunity at all. This highlights a near-universal recognition among the surveyed group that AI is a critical tool for achieving sustainability goals.



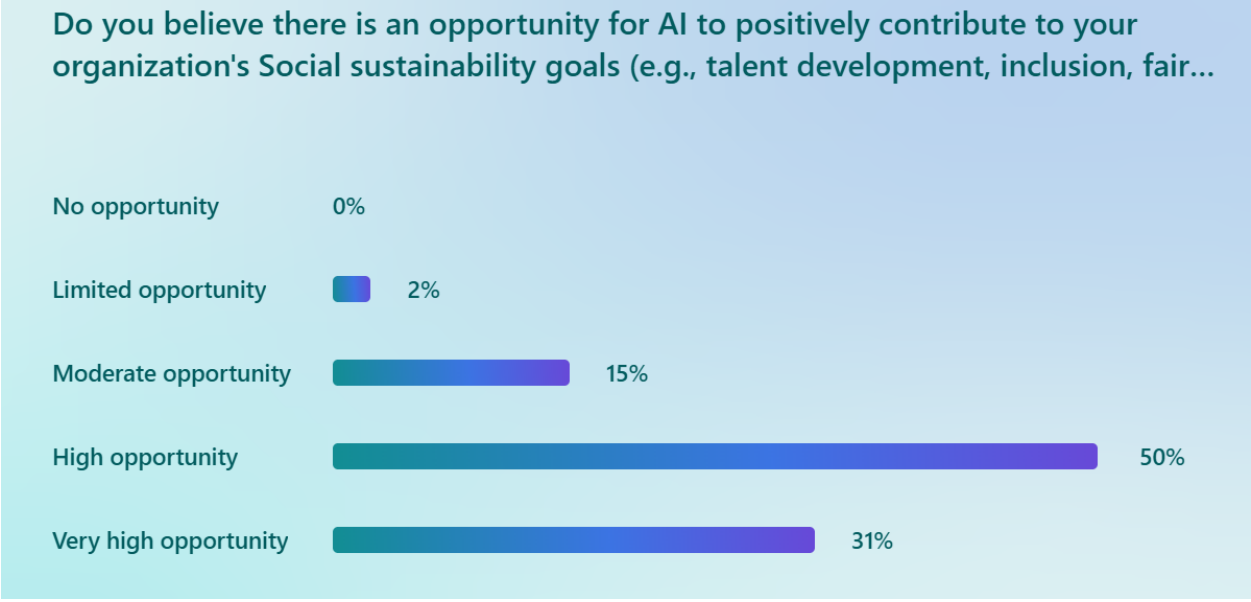
7. AI's Opportunity to Advance Environmental Goals

Next, participants were asked if they believe that there is an opportunity for AI to positively contribute to their companies' environmental sustainability goals like carbon reduction, energy efficiency and waste management. In general, the results show a unanimous and strong belief among respondents that Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers significant opportunities to advance environmental sustainability goals. More specifically, a combined 83% of respondents believe the opportunity for AI to contribute is either High (51%) or Very high (32%). This mirrors the strong sentiment observed in the previous question regarding overall ESG goals. Strikingly, no respondents indicated "No opportunity" or "Limited opportunity." Every single respondent believes that AI has at least a Moderate opportunity (16%) to positively impact goals like carbon reduction, energy efficiency, and waste management.



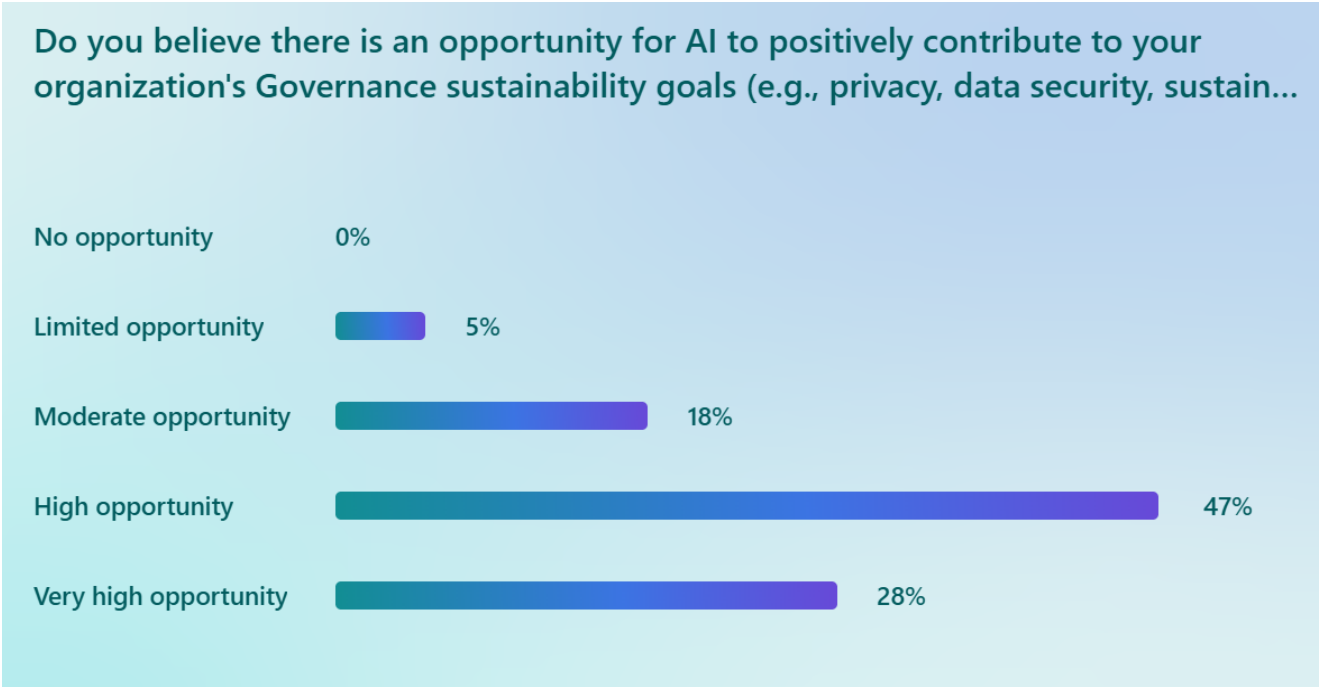
8. AI's Opportunity to Advance Social Sustainability

Q8 revolved around understanding whether participants believed that there is an opportunity for AI to positively contribute to their organization's Social Sustainability Goals like talent development, inclusion, and fair labor practices. The survey indicates a very strong belief that AI can positively contribute to an organization's social sustainability goals. More specifically, a combined 83% of respondents rated the opportunity as High (51%) or Very high (32%). This shows significant conviction that AI has a crucial role to play in the "S" pillar of ESG, including areas like ensuring fair labor practices and fostering inclusion. Conversely, only 3% of respondents viewed the opportunity as Limited, and 0% reported No opportunity. Nevertheless, this result, where 97% see at least a moderate or higher opportunity, demonstrates that the potential of AI is recognized not just for environmental efforts, but also for complex social issues within organizations.



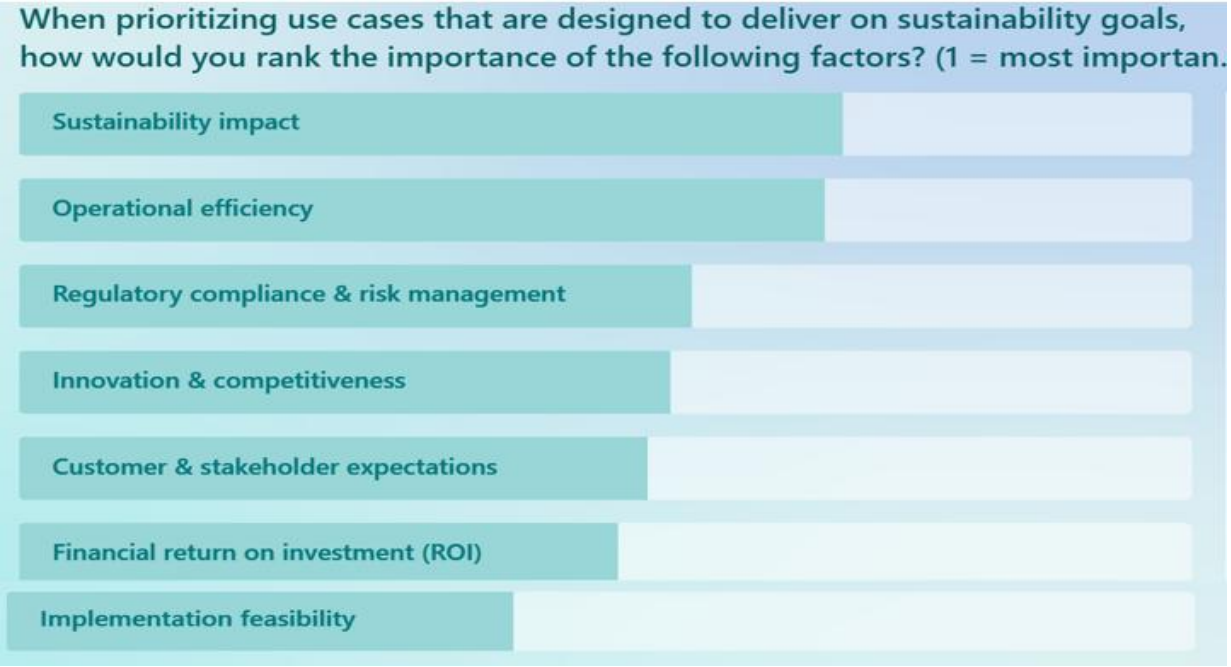
9. AI's Opportunity to Strengthen Governance Goals

For Q9, participants were asked whether they believe that there is an opportunity for AI to positively contribute to their organization's Governance Sustainability Goals like privacy measures, data security, sustainability reporting or risk management. The overall impression suggests that there is a very strong belief that AI offers significant opportunities to improve organizational Governance, particularly in areas like data security and risk management. More specifically, a combined 79% of respondents rated the opportunity as either High (49%) or Very high (30%). This confirms that the potential of AI is recognized across all three ESG pillars (Environmental, Social, and Governance). Nevertheless, Only 5% of respondents reported a Limited opportunity, and 0% saw No opportunity at all. Overall, 95% of the surveyed group believe AI offers at least a moderate or higher opportunity to contribute to governance goals, showing strong faith in its utility for compliance, reporting, and security.



10. Factors Used to Prioritize Sustainability AI Use Cases

Q10 consisted of asking respondents to rank in order of importance of several factors like sustainable impact and operational efficiency when prioritizing use cases that are designed to deliver on sustainability goals. The findings indicate that when prioritizing sustainability use cases, the most direct and operational benefits are considered the most important factors. The findings show a clear priority on mission and utility. For example, “Sustainability impact” is the most critical factor (mean=2.32), confirming that the core environmental/social mission drives prioritization. “Operational efficiency” is ranked a close second (mean=2.68), highlighting the demand for practical, resource-optimizing projects. Financial ROI (mean =4.22) and Implementation feasibility (mean=4.27) are considered the least important factors, suggesting organizations are willing to pursue high-impact projects even if they are more difficult to implement or do not guarantee an immediate financial return.



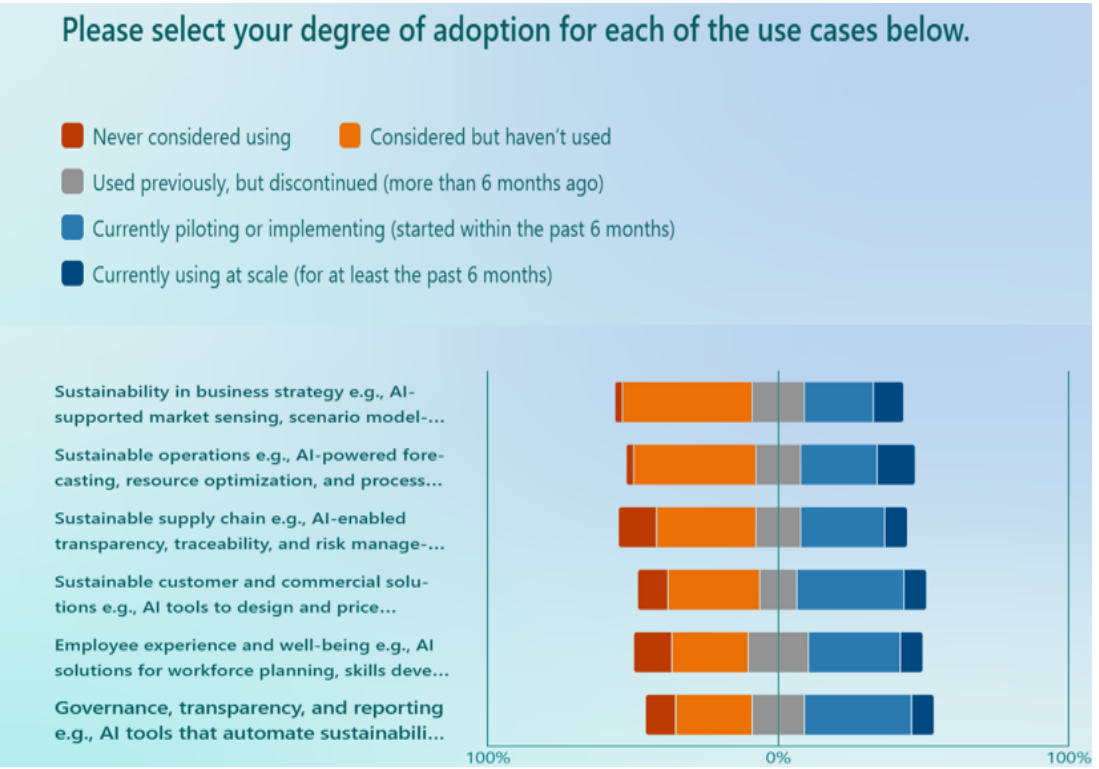
11. Areas Where AI Has Shown the Greatest Sustainability Impact

Next, participants had to choose which area of the choices below have shown the greatest positive impact of AI on the organizations' sustainability agenda. Generally, the data clearly indicates that the most significant impact of AI on organizations' sustainability agendas is in areas related to operational efficiency and environmental benefits. More specifically, the answers showed that the leading area of impact, selected by over half of the respondents (51.4%), is "Lower carbon emissions from optimized operations". This shows AI's current primary success in driving tangible environmental and efficiency gains. Following optimization, two other environmental and supply chain-focused areas are tied: "Cleaner, more responsible supply chain" and "Reduced resource use and waste" (both at 32.4%).

Next, AI's role in “Better analytical capabilities and strategic decision-making” (29.7%) and creating “New sustainability focused products and services” (24.3%) suggests its value extends beyond internal operations into corporate strategy and market offerings. Lastly, areas related to Governance (Enhanced governance/trust, Proactive compliance) and Social (Enhanced jobs/safety, Fairer/ethical decision-making) were cited less frequently (all under 14%), indicating that while AI's potential in the "S" and "G" pillars is recognized, its proven positive impact is currently strongest in the "E" pillar.

12. Adoption Levels Across Sustainability-Focused AI Use Cases

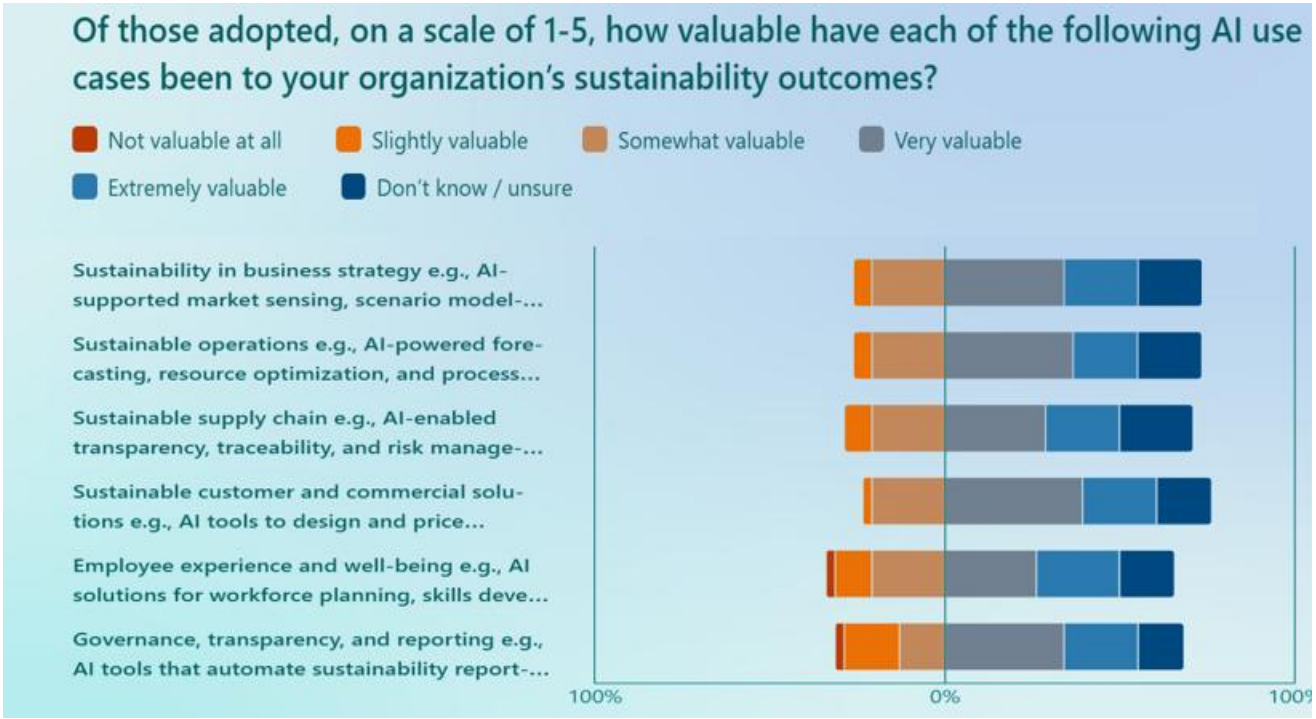
Next, for Q12, the analysis reveals that most organizations are either actively piloting/implementing or already using at scale across all listed AI sustainability use cases. Very few organizations have discontinued use, and only a moderate number have never used a given case. The findings reveal valuable insights. Specifically, for every single use case, the combined percentage of organizations "Currently piloting or implementing" and "Currently using at scale" exceeds 40%. The highest adoption is in Sustainable operations (approximately 55%) and Sustainable supply chain (approximately 46%),



reflecting the focus on environmental (E) and operational efficiency gains noted in previous questions. Also, use cases related to Operations and Governance, transparency, and reporting show the highest levels of active use or scaling, indicating these areas are the most mature applications of AI for sustainability. Lastly, for all categories, the number of organizations that "Used previously, but discontinued" is minimal (the light grey segment is the smallest across the board), suggesting high satisfaction or commitment once a pilot is launched.

13. Perceived Value of Adopted AI Sustainability Use Cases

For Q13, the graph shows the distribution of responses across the 1-5 value scale, where the blue spectrum represents "Very valuable" and "Extremely valuable" (the highest perceived value). The data overwhelmingly indicates that adopted AI use cases are perceived as highly valuable to organizations' sustainability outcomes, with the majority of responses mainly concentrated in the "Very valuable" and "Extremely valuable" categories across all areas.



For all six categories, the combined percentage of respondents rating the use case as "Very valuable" or "Extremely valuable" exceeds 60%. This

confirms that once a sustainability-focused AI use case is adopted, it is generally considered a successful tool. Sustainable customer and commercial solutions and Sustainability in business strategy are perceived as the most valuable, suggesting that AI's impact is strongest when applied to external offerings and top-level decision-making. Lastly, for every use case, the combined percentage of responses for "Not valuable at all" and "Slightly valuable" (the orange/red spectrum) is consistently low (less than 20% for most), further supporting the high perceived value of adopted AI solutions.

14. Time Required to See Results from Sustainability AI Solutions

Next, the chart for Q14 shows how quickly companies see results (either money savings or better sustainability) after using AI.

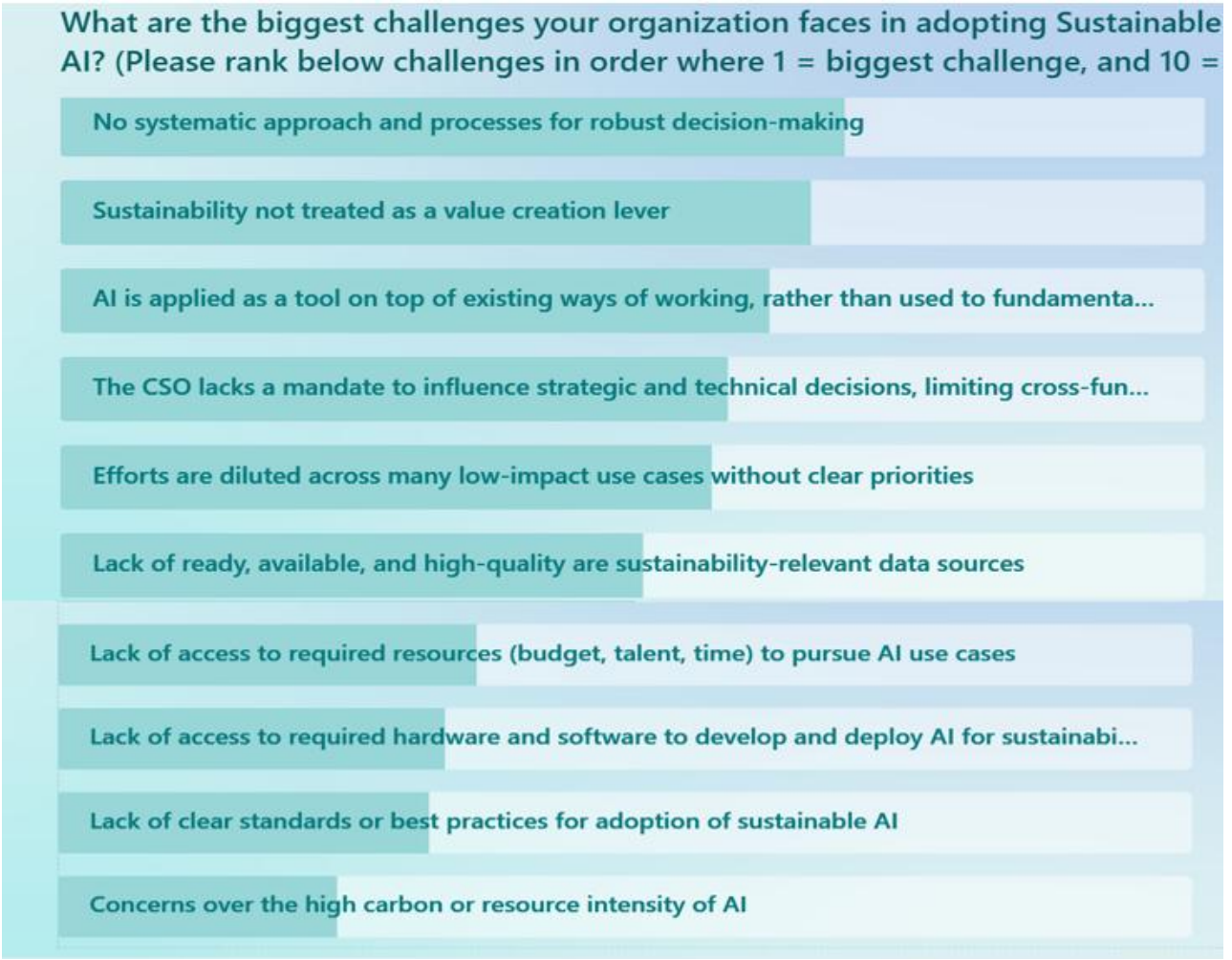
For all use cases, the majority of companies that do track results see them within the first year (the red, light orange, and medium orange sections combined). “Sustainable Operations” and “Sustainable Supply Chain” appear to show the quickest returns. The biggest challenge is estimation. The "Don't know / hard to estimate" category

(light blue) is very large for every use case, suggesting that even when AI tools are valuable, measuring the exact financial or sustainability ROI is a major difficulty. A noticeable portion of companies (dark blue) state, "We don't track financial returns for sustainability AI use cases." This is consistent across all categories, showing that for many, the main goal is the sustainability benefit, not the financial profit. Lastly, returns taking "Over a year" (grey) are most common in Sustainable Supply Chain and Governance, transparency, and reporting. This suggests these areas (which involve large-scale systems and complex compliance) require the longest time to show measurable benefits.

15. Key Challenges to Scaling AI for Sustainability

For Q15, the survey shows that the biggest hurdles to using AI for sustainability are organizational and strategic, rather than just technical or resource-related. The most critical challenges revolve around leadership, strategic clarity, and fundamental business processes.

The results shown below indicate that the three most critical challenges (Ranks 1, 2, and 3) all point to the need for a fundamental change in corporate strategy and culture before AI can be truly effective in delivering sustainable outcomes. Technical challenges (like data, resources, and hardware) are ranked lower (6, 7, and 8).

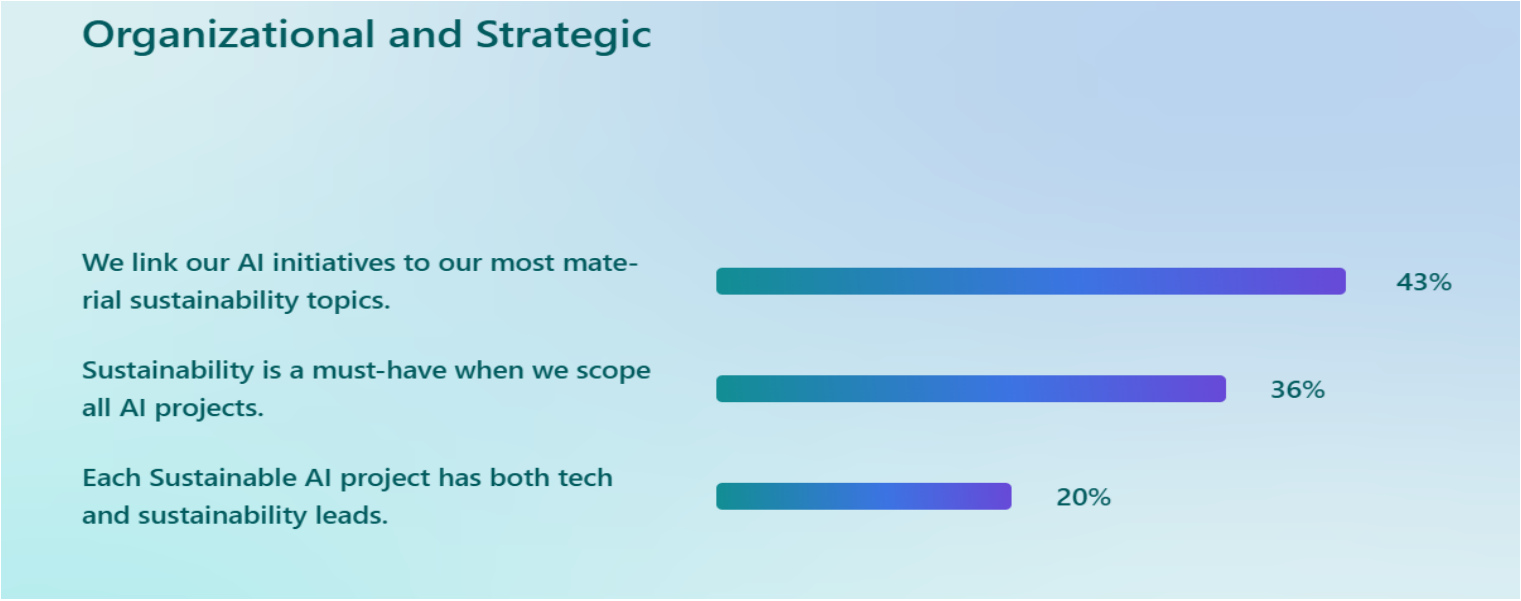


Rank	Challenge (Average Rank - Lower is Bigger Challenge)	Key Finding
1	No systematic approach and processes for robust decision-making	The biggest problem is how decisions are made and lack of a structured approach.
2	Sustainability not treated as a value creation lever	Companies don't see sustainability as a way to create business value (e.g., make money or grow), only as a cost.
3	AI is applied as a tool on top of existing ways of working, rather than used to fundamentally transform business	AI is used for small tweaks instead of changing the core business to be sustainable.
4	The CSO lacks a mandate to influence strategic and technical decisions	Sustainability leaders (CSOs) don't have enough power to make changes across all departments.
5	Efforts are diluted across many low-impact use cases without clear priorities	Companies try to do too many small things instead of focusing on a few big, impactful projects.

Rank	Challenge (Average Rank - Lower is Bigger Challenge)	Key Finding
6	Lack of ready, available, and high-quality sustainability-relevant data sources	Finding good data for sustainability projects is difficult.
7	Lack of access to required resources (budget, talent, time) to pursue AI use cases	Not enough money, skilled people, or time for AI projects.
8	Lack of access to required hardware and software to develop and deploy AI for sustainability use cases	Not enough technology/tools (hardware/software).
9	Lack of clear standards or best practices for adoption of sustainable AI	No clear rules or guides on the best way to use sustainable AI.
10	Concerns over the high carbon or resource intensity of AI	Worries that AI itself uses too much energy or resources.

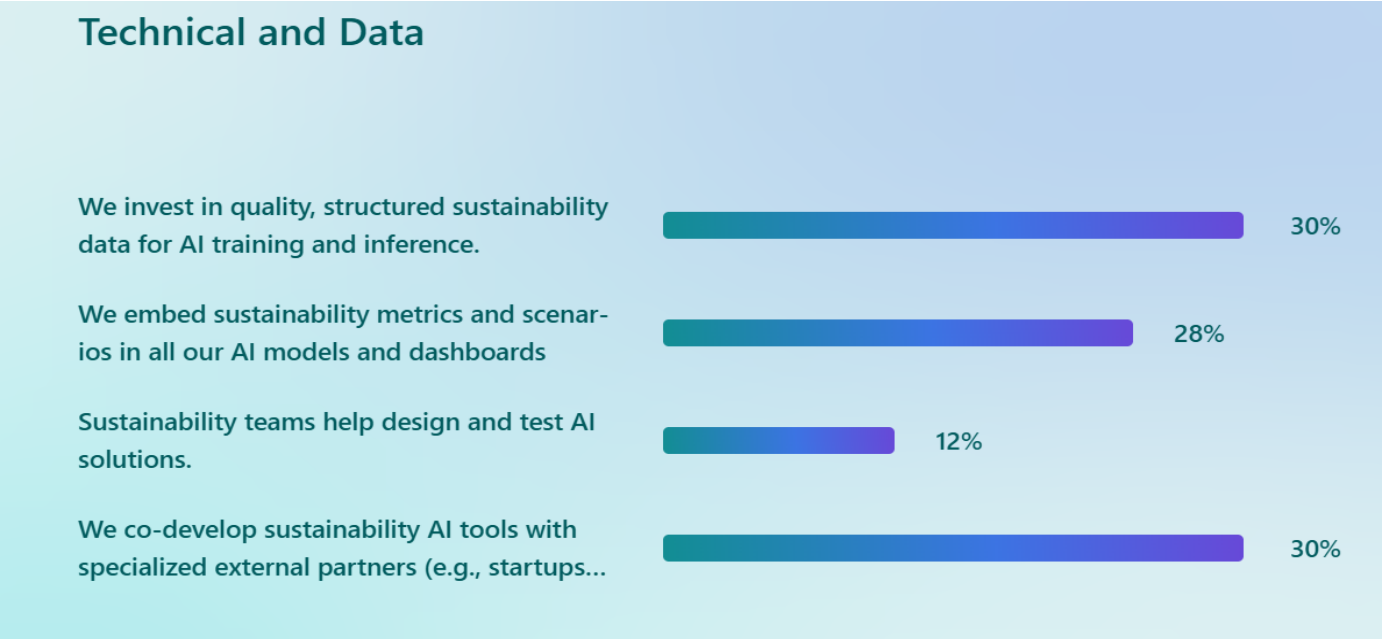
16. How Sustainability Is Integrated into AI Projects

For Q16, participants were asked to describe how they integrate sustainability in their AI projects and approach. The results showed that the majority of participants, 42%, link their AI initiatives to their most material sustainability topics. This number is closely followed by another big portion of participants (37%), who admitted to considering sustainability as a must-have when they scope all AI projects. Lastly, also considered a considerable statistic, 21% of participants admitted to considering each sustainable AI project having both tech and sustainability leads. All in all, the results confirm the interconnected dynamics between AI and sustainability across organizational projects.



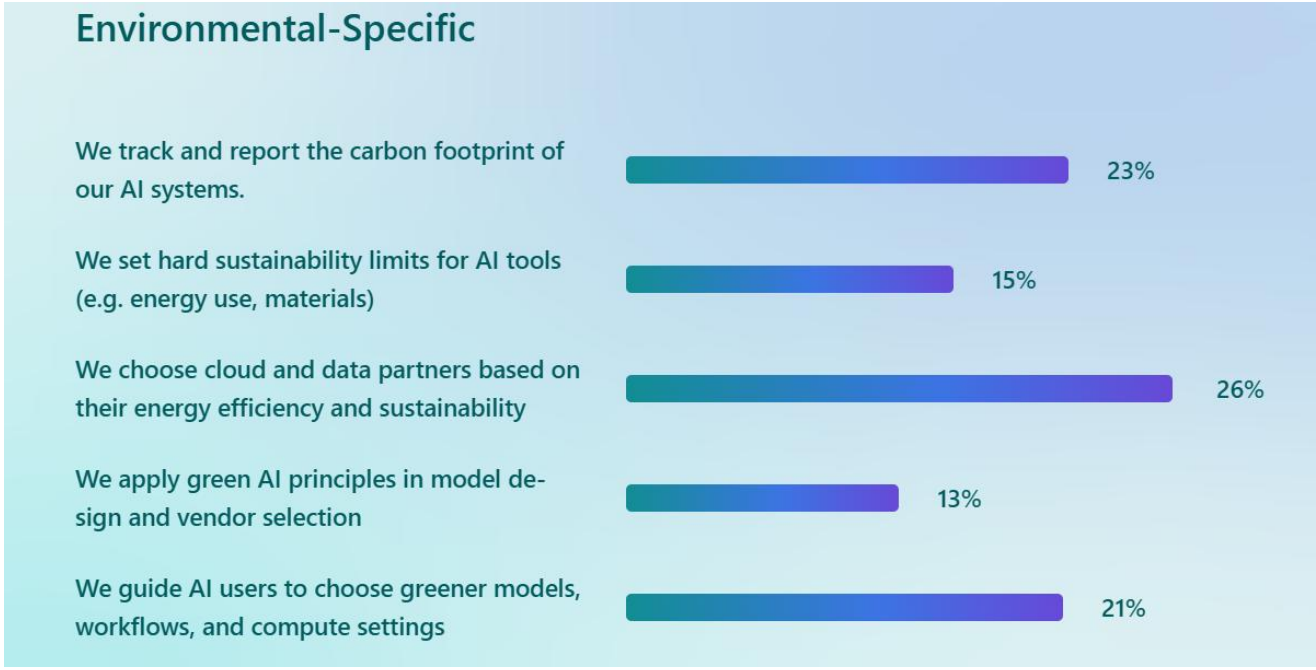
17. Data and Technical Practices for Sustainable AI

Q17 looks at the technical infrastructure and data practices used to support Sustainable AI. The leading action is investing in high-quality, structured data for AI (31%), acknowledging that good inputs are crucial for reliable AI outputs. Also, nearly the same number of companies (29% each) are focused on two different areas: embedding sustainability metrics into their models and dashboards and co-developing tools with external experts (partners/startups). Lastly, only 12% report that their sustainability teams are actively involved in the design and testing of AI solutions, suggesting that while the data and metrics are included, the sustainability experts aren't fully integrated into the development cycle.



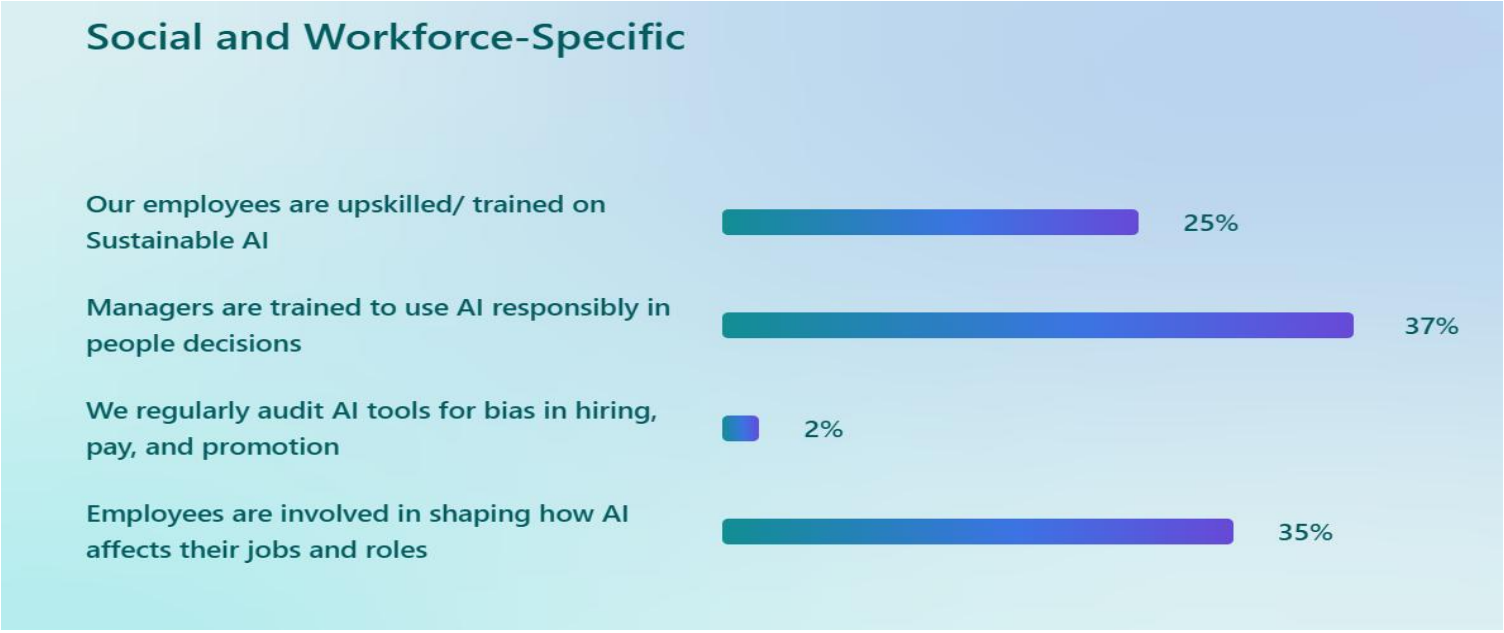
18. Managing the Environmental Impact of AI Tools

Q18 focused on environmental-specific factors, to show how companies are navigating the environmental impact of the AI tools they are leveraging in their operations. The results show that the most frequently answered practice (27%) is choosing cloud and data partners according to their sustainability and energy efficiency. This indicates that companies are also relying on their partners and suppliers to achieve a sustainable brand image by giving them part of the responsibility. Next, the results show that the second most commonly answered element (24%) is tracking and reporting the carbon footprint of AI systems, revealing a multifaceted management of supply chain management. Also, 19% of organizations try to influence user behavior by guiding users toward greener settings and models. Lastly, only 16% set hard sustainability limits on their tools, and the lowest response (14%) was for applying green AI principles in model design and vendor selection. This suggests that while companies are tracking and choosing green partners, they are less focused on imposing strict limits or deeply integrating "green" thinking into the core design of the AI models themselves.



19. Social and Workforce Practices for Sustainable AI

Next, the survey focused on social and work-specific factors. The results showed that the top answer (18%) is training managers to use AI responsibly in decisions that affect people (like hiring or reviews). Also, a significant 33% of companies involve employees in discussions about how AI will change their jobs. As for upskilling, the results were moderate with 26% are training employees on Sustainable AI generally. Lastly, a concerning finding is that only 3% report regularly auditing AI tools for bias in critical areas like hiring and pay. This suggests that while companies focus on training and involvement, the rigorous technical check for fairness is largely missing.

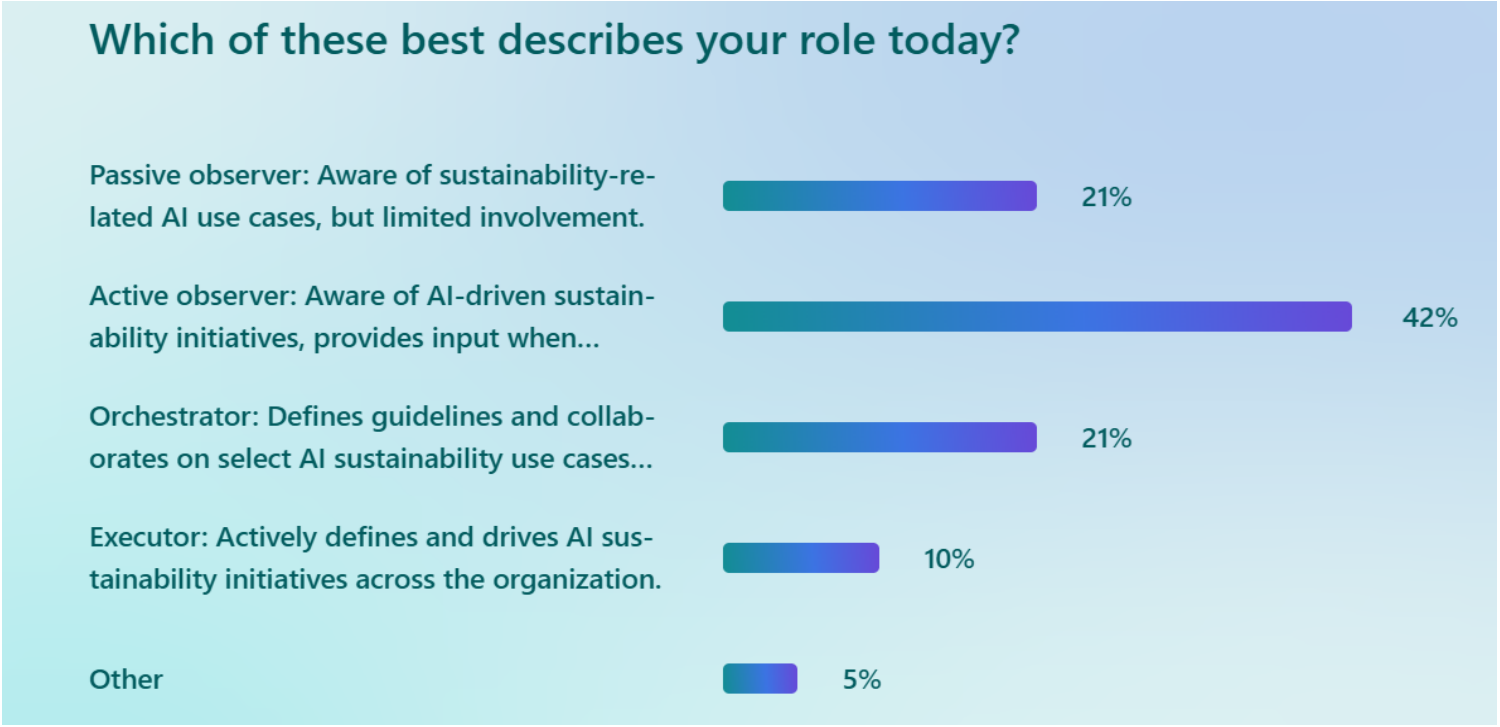


20. Privacy and Governance Practices in Sustainable AI

Privacy and government practices were assessed next in Q20. The obvious and clear priority, chosen by over half of the respondents (56%), is ensuring that users can easily understand and control their data use. This shows that the participants are involved in companies that have a strong focus on basic data transparency and privacy rights. Next, 27% of companies state that their formal AI governance and public disclosures specifically include sustainability risks and impact. Lastly, only 17% are actively involved in trying to shape broader Sustainable AI standards, policies, and regulation, suggesting most companies are followers rather than leaders in setting the regulatory framework.

21. Participants' Roles in AI-Driven Sustainability Initiatives

Participants were then asked to choose the statement that describes their current role the best. The majority of the participants (43%), reported being active observers, aware of AI-driven sustainability initiatives and ready to provide input as needed and requested. Next, respondents reported to being passive observers (aware of sustainability-related AI use cases but with a limited involvement) and orchestrators (responsible for defining and driving AI sustainability initiatives across the company) equally with 22% each. Lastly, Only 11% are the Executors who actively define and drive these initiatives, suggesting that direct ownership is concentrated among a few leaders.



22. Expected Evolution of Participants' Roles in the Next Three Years

The last question of the survey asked participants to share their thoughts on their expectations regarding the evolution of their roles over the next three years within their respective companies. More than half of the participants (51%), admitted that they believe that they will have significantly more influence and responsibility, followed by 38% who believed that they will have somewhat more influence and responsibility. This result points to strong internal confidence in the growing importance and strategic value of their roles related to sustainability and AI within their organizations over the next three years. Only 5% expect their influence to decrease, and 0% expect a significant decrease, suggesting the field is viewed as one of expansion.

Key insights

1. Sustainability is now considered a core strategic pillar, as 92% of the surveyed organizations have stated so. This is in alignment with global trends that show that 70% of the top-performing companies are known for including sustainability in corporate strategy (Deloitte, 2024).
2. AI is widely viewed as an important opportunity for ESG advancement. In fact, environmental use cases are leading the way.
3. AI adoption is moving quickly, with 59% of the surveyed organizations piloting or scaling AI. Still, its maturity remains uneven, with only 16% of these organizations having a mature adoption.
4. The most important barriers are structural and not technological. They include the lack of robust decision-making processes, fragmented governance, CFOs not having influence on the entire enterprise, and sustainability not being considered as a value-creation driver.
5. Environmental applications can create the strongest measurable impact, with 50% of organizations reporting AI-driven carbon reduction.
6. Measurement remains a weakness, with the majority of companies unable to estimate ROI for sustainability AI solutions.
7. Governance and responsible AI practices are still behind, with only 17% of participating in shaping standards. and 3% regularly auditing for bias.

Strategic analysis of the findings

Four strategic themes shape AI x Sustainability in the MENA region:

AI's clear, yet unmeasured sustainability value: Across all the cases, AI is predominantly perceived as high value. This is in alignment with the conclusion made by McKinsey (2023), which states that AI is seen as the top technology driver for achieving corporate net-zero commitments. This shows that the survey's findings reflect international evidence that AI can improve resource efficiency, supply-chain traceability, emissions modeling, and programs of circularity. However, another point must be considered: most organizations do not have the needed mechanisms or tools to measure impact, which creates a blind spot that can slow down scale and investment.

Structural constraints undermining AI's potential: The survey shows that three main challenges emerge in most cases: fragmented governance, weak integration of sustainability into value creation, and limited empowerment of the CSO role. These findings are confirmatory of the findings by Accenture (2024), which state that 63% of sustainability transformations are destined to fail not because of technical issues, but because of governance misalignment.

Data systems are the missing layer: AI is valuable, but its power is mainly derived from the data feeding it. Most respondents in the survey have stated that high-quality sustainability data is rarely available, which is a challenge that has also been highlighted by the WEF (2024). This problem is considered the "Achilles heel" of sustainable transformation. AI tools are unable to generate actionable insights without available data on carbon emission, waste, social needs, and supply chains.

Governance and ethical AI are turning into competitive differentiators: The companies adopting clear AI governance structures usually win regulatory protection and market trust. The present regional practices are still limited; however, this area might quickly undergo a transformation with the strict global disclosure requirements.

What companies should do next

The survey's findings and global best practices may be combined to gain a better understanding of what companies should prioritize. The following is a list of the most important actions:

- Build an integrated AI-ESG governance model that defines roles, responsibilities, and accountability across CSO, CTO, CFO, and operations teams.
- Develop an enterprise-wide sustainability data strategy by investing in emissions data digitalization, real-time energy monitoring, supplier traceability systems, and ESG data lakes.
- Prioritize high-impact, scalable use cases by focusing on categories with the strongest ROI and environmental benefits. These categories include carbon optimization and energy efficiency, predictive maintenance, sustainable supply chains, and circularity analytics.
- Empower the CSO function by giving CSOs mandate, budget, and cross-department authority that can lead to transformations
- Embed responsible AI frameworks by adopting standards for bias audits, carbon footprint AI models, data privacy controls, and explainability and accountability.
- Train leaders and employees on sustainable AI, as this is the most critical requirement for enterprise-wide adoption.

Future directions for the MENA region

Based on international sustainability trends, the MENA region is expected to see a rise in AI-enabled climate adaptation, AI-driven circular economy systems, ESG reporting automation and predictive analytics, green AI infrastructure, and AI-supported workforce transitions.

Countries that are willing to invest in data infrastructure, data governance, and talent (acquisition and development) will be the ones who gain the most competitive advantage.

The Road Ahead

The AI x Sustainability Survey shows that the path is both promising and demanding in the MENA region. Companies need to embrace a new operating model that considers both sustainability and technology as integrated engines of value creation.

During the next couple of years, organizations are expected to shift from individual AI pilots to AI ecosystems that include the entire enterprise, automating reporting, optimizing energy resources, and forecasting risks. The region is expected to rapidly invest in digital infrastructure, which will give it all the competitive advantage needed to become a global leader in sustainable innovation.

However, this potential can be fully reached only if companies are willing to deal with the foundational challenges that are related to governance, data maturity, skills, and strategic clarity.

Organizations that build strong ESG data architectures, integrate AI governance frameworks, and place sustainability at the center of corporate strategy will win.

As AI reshapes industries, winner companies will be those that combine digital strength with sustainability purpose. Only by doing so can they define the next era of regional leadership.

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About The Posterity Institute

The Posterity Institute (PI) is a social enterprise dedicated to advancing sustainable and inclusive development across growth markets. Serving as a catalyst for strategic collaboration and innovation, PI operates through two key platforms: the Irth Institute and the CSO Network. The Irth Institute focuses on enabling governments through research, tailored training programs, and publications. Meanwhile, the CSO Network advances sustainability by nurturing partnerships, and convening meaningful, impactful events and networking opportunities among Chief Sustainability Officers. Together, these complementary initiatives drive PI's commitment to global sustainability and systemic change.

About The CSO Network

Operating under The Posterity Institute, the Chief Sustainability Officers (CSO) Network serves as a platform for sustainability leaders to collaborate, exchange knowledge, and drive innovation. With a focus on the Middle East and Africa, the Network empowers organizations to integrate sustainability into their core strategies and achieve transformative results.