



Ireland Chapter of  
**Project**  
Management  
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# Artificial Intelligence (AI):

## Four Key Factors Driving Change in Ireland in 2024

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# Welcome & Introduction

The world is changing fast, and the Project Management profession is at the forefront of making this change happen. Over recent years, the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated technology-related business change across Ireland. From remote working to collaborative digital engagement the world has become a much smaller and more connected place.

The next few years will see even more significant change in the workplace as investment in Artificial Intelligence (AI) accelerates, new opportunities emerge, and ways of working change. The initial euphoria on Generative AI is now making way for the reality of what this really means in the workplace and beyond. In the recent 2024 Ireland Chapter of PMI survey, 74% of respondents stated that AI is driving innovation in Project Management.

This report focusses primarily on maximising business value from AI projects whilst also considering what this means for the Project Management profession and how it plays its part. The profession across Ireland has a critical role to play in strategising and delivering AI-related change. The role of the Project Manager will fundamentally change as traditional knowledge-based skillsets will increasingly become the domain of AI. For example, AI automates the processing of complex project data and uncovers important patterns that improve project success rates. Many of these knowledge-based activities will be automated and the focus will shift to Power Skills. PMI's *Pulse of the Profession® 2023* identified four critical Power Skills that are essential to help organisations transform and deliver sustainable results: strategic thinking, problem-solving, collaborative leadership, and communication. The most successful Project Management professionals will adapt to this changing world and quickly embrace the new focus.

In 2023, an AI Executive Panel was brought together by the Ireland Chapter to consider the opportunities and the implications of rapidly increasing investment in AI across Ireland. This report reflects the thoughts, views, and opinions of the group. I would like to thank everybody who contributed to the report and to Auxilion for their support.

The Ireland Chapter of PMI remains committed to supporting the profession to maximise business value from AI projects. I look forward to your thoughts and views.

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# Setting the Context

This report sets out to support and challenge the Project Management profession across Ireland to critically understand the impact of AI on organisational change agendas. It presents four factors each shaping the delivery of AI projects in Ireland in 2024 and beyond.

They are:

- 1. Organisations in Ireland are primarily investing in AI projects to prove the use case in advance of large-scale investment**
- 2. Most organisations in Ireland are focussed on a course of evolutionary change while also recognising that revolutionary AI may be imposed by the market/sector**
- 3. Data policy and regulation is critical to Ireland's future success in an AI world**
- 4. The people change element of AI projects will require considerable focus and flexibility as roles change and professions adapt.**

The next few years will see significant change in the workplace as investment in AI accelerates, professions are disrupted, and new opportunities emerge. The Project Management profession across Ireland has a critical role to play in steering and delivering this rapid acceleration in AI-led change.

The role of the Project Manager will fundamentally change as traditional knowledge-based skillsets will increasingly become the domain of AI. In the 2024 Ireland Chapter of PMI survey, 69% agree that AI will have a transformative effect on the Project Management industry, with practices changing forever. Power Skills will become the important differentiator in the success of the Project Management profession with leadership,

communication, and empathy being the primary skillsets. The most successful Project Management professionals will quickly adapt to this changing world and embrace Power Skills as their primary skillset.

Investment in AI will bring about significant change within organisations over the coming years, recognising the people impact through automation, disruption, and new ways of working. There are contextual factors that organisations in Ireland will need to take account of, including the complexity of the industrial relations landscape and a host of other factors. Most importantly, the success of AI projects is dependent on the effectiveness of the people change and this will be the differentiator that will set successful organisations apart.

The Project Management profession is both responding and reacting to the opportunities presented by AI.

In the recent 2024 Ireland Chapter of PMI survey, 78% of respondents cited 'automation of tasks' as a key benefit of using AI in Project Management. Unsurprisingly, there are adoption challenges for organisations across Ireland to consider. Interestingly, 65% of respondents in the recent Ireland Chapter of PMI Survey cite lack of a clear organisational strategy as a top challenge to AI adoption in Project Management.

“We’re about to enter this fascinating new era of AI, where it’s no longer just a novel and fascinating technology. We’re getting into the specifics of safety, actual productivity gains, product deployment, and all the issues that arise in the real world. We’ve reached a turning point.”

**Satya Nadella, CEO Microsoft, 2023**



# Organisations in Ireland are primarily investing in AI projects to prove the use case in advance of large-scale investment

Generative AI, including ChatGPT, is driving the conversation and creating hype-based interest in the market. Recent media profiling of ChatGPT and the use of Large Language Models (LLMs) has increased understanding and driven take-up, primarily by individuals using these tools to harvest information. However, the evidence suggests that most organisations across Ireland have a developing understanding of what Generative AI is and where it can provide the most value.

Major technology vendors such as Microsoft, Google, Apple, and others are accelerating their AI product set to maintain competitive advantage in the marketplace. Open AI is driving standards against their original mission that artificial general intelligence should benefit all of humanity. This race to market is increasing options for organisations to implement new AI solutions within existing technology platforms, e.g. Microsoft Co-Pilot. All of this is critical to rapid deployment and widespread adoption.

A recent [2024 report by Microsoft and Trinity College Dublin](#) highlighted that 49% of organisations in Ireland are using Generative AI in some form. The report also highlighted that 29% of organisations are using Generative AI in very limited circumstances or are using specialised tools. Unsurprisingly, only 2% have an AI-first policy in place where the organisation prioritises the technology across strategy, decision-making, and resource allocation.

Investment in AI projects across Ireland increased over 2023 with an early adopter proof of concept approach being the pathway of choice for most organisations. Primary use cases are focussed on new operating models, cost reduction, risk reduction, and revenue generation—customer service operations being the notable low-hanging fruit. Incubator or innovation lab style approaches are being used by organisations to demonstrate early-stage value. However, there remains a caution around committing to large-scale investment until individual business cases stack up and convincingly prove their investment value. The recent Microsoft and Trinity report indicates that 4 out of 5 senior managers plan to introduce Generative AI at some point, while 37% have adoption plans in place for the next 18 months.

The 2023 PwC Business Leaders GenAI Survey highlighted that 55% of respondents are not confident in their organisation's ability to assess the return on investment on current AI initiatives. The availability of robust reference data to inform the benefits case for AI remains a challenge for many organisations. There will be greater clarity in 2024 through more widespread availability of organisation-specific reference data from pilot initiatives. There will also be a greater level of reference data available through industry bodies, government organisations or specific collaborations. All of these factors will accelerate commitment to larger scale investment in AI, helping to build the confidence for organisations to invest.

To move beyond the hype, organisations need to focus on education and understanding to drive forward their AI agendas in 2024. They need to develop a strong corporate capability in understanding the use cases for AI, how to build the business case, and how to maximise the benefits. Project professionals have a critical role to play in driving forward this change agenda.

The role of Government in incentivising and accelerating investment in AI projects across Ireland in 2024 is more critical than ever. The Government's National AI Strategy, 'AI – Here for Good', launched in July 2021, has set a target of 75% of enterprises across Ireland using AI by 2030. In May 2022, Dr. Patricia Scanlon was appointed Ireland's first AI Ambassador, providing critical focus to the adoption of the technology across the country. The Enterprise Digital Advisory Forum was established in May 2022 to advise and work with Government to drive industry adoption of AI and other digital technologies. In addition, the Digital Transition Fund was introduced by Government in June 2022 to help organisations develop new digital products, processes and services, allowing them to invest in digital technology, including AI. Eighty-five million in funding is being made available over a four-year period to 2026.

All of these developments are welcome. However, more needs to be done by Government to position Ireland as a leader in AI technology, maintaining its reputation and competitiveness in this rapidly growing global market.

## Ireland Chapter of PMI Survey 2024

The highlights below present the views of 123 Project Management professionals across Ireland surveyed in March 2024.

74%

stated that AI is driving innovation in Project Management



70%

stated that AI will have a transformative effect on the Project Management industry and change Project Management practices forever



Over 45%

say AI will reduce stress for project managers



Ireland Chapter of Project Management Institute.

# Most organisations in Ireland are focussed on a course of evolutionary change whilst also recognising that revolutionary AI may be imposed by the market/sector

The key consideration for any organisation in Ireland is whether to 'innovate' or 'react' in response to the opportunities presented by AI. Ambition, pace, and attitude to risk are the three factors that will drive business leaders to make this important investment decision. Organisations need to carefully consider if their competitors will gain market advantage from earlier adoption of AI technology. For those organisations who are slower to adopt, AI-related change is likely to be accelerated as a reactive strategy to maintain their competitive advantage.

For many Irish organisations, their 20th century business practices are not yet aligned to maximise value from investment in AI technology. This provides the opportunity to prime business practices to prepare them for the exponential value that AI brings. It also poses a challenge to ensure that less than optimal business practices are not simply thrown into the domain of AI without fully understanding where the value lies. The balance lies in between, ensuring that ambition, pace, risk, and value are carefully considered before committing to investment.

AI is promising to revolutionise operating models, enabling organisations to drive efficiency, create new opportunities, and prepare for growth. The three most common areas of value from AI are:

### + **Cost Reduction**

AI is starting to be used across sectors in Ireland to increase staff productivity and save money through automating processes and tasks. The technology promises to make workflows more efficient, reduce staff costs, and improve quality



outcomes. Though limiting the cost of human error, it will also reduce spend and even areas like AI-based predictive maintenance have significant potential to save money.

**+ Risk Reduction**

Machine learning can extract important insights from data about potential risks and their probability. For example, AI can identify patterns associated with malfunction to allow for an accurate assessment of equipment health in real-time and proactive maintenance to prevent breakdown. Using AI and machine learning, engineers can discover patterns associated with past problems to predict future risks and design systems and procedures to avoid them. AI in the domain of cybersecurity risk is also important. Insights from past user behaviour associated with security breaches allow organisations to implement policies and safeguards to reduce the risk and prevent them happening again in the future.

**+ Revenue Generation**

Are Irish organisations missing an opportunity to drive significant business growth from investment in AI? Machine learning can provide valuable data insights enabling new markets or customer segments to be targeted based on predicted behaviours. This opens opportunity

to drive growth, leverage new markets, and increase profitability. AI technology enables new high growth sales models through predictive analytics and faster market response times. New products and services can be accelerated to market where previously they would have required significant lead time and higher levels of investment.

There are stark differences in ways of working across the various sectors within the Irish economy which impact the pace of change. For example, public sector procurement pathways and timelines may need to be optimised to ensure that Government deploys AI technology in a way that derisks obsolescence in a fast-moving market. Finance approval timelines may also need to be optimised to ensure timely investment and deployment of AI. The risk of obsolescence increases with the pace of deployment set against ever-increasing customer expectations.

Whilst the hype of AI is starting to turn towards the question of “what does this really mean in reality,” organisations across Ireland need to be more responsive to the accelerated nature of AI change. The pace of the technology and the opportunities for significant value require a targeted response from leaders to ensure that investment is timely and wisely directed.



# Data policy and regulation is critical to Ireland's future success in an AI world

Ireland has a significant role to play in data policy and regulation, particularly due to its position as the lead supervisory authority for many technology companies with EU headquarters in the country. In 2024, the Data Protection Commission (DPC) received a budget allocation of €28 million, a significant increase compared to its 2015 allocation of less than €4 million. This emphasises the increasing importance of the role of the DPC across the Irish economy and beyond. In addition, the Government's new AI Advisory Council, which convened for the first time in January 2024, will be pivotal in ensuring Ireland's success in an AI world.

The regulatory approaches taken across the world vary with differing models being deployed in various jurisdictions. The US favours a state-led, sector-specific approach, the UK has prioritised innovation and flexibility while leveraging existing regulatory bodies, and the EU has adopted a comprehensive, risk-based framework to govern AI across all member states. In 2023, the EU adopted its position ('general approach') on the Artificial Intelligence Act. In December 2023, the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament reached a provisional agreement on the law in December 2023, after months of negotiations.

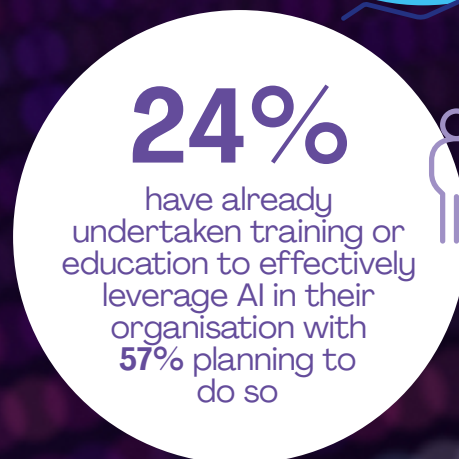
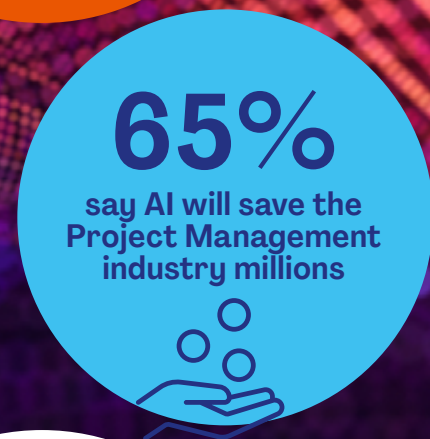
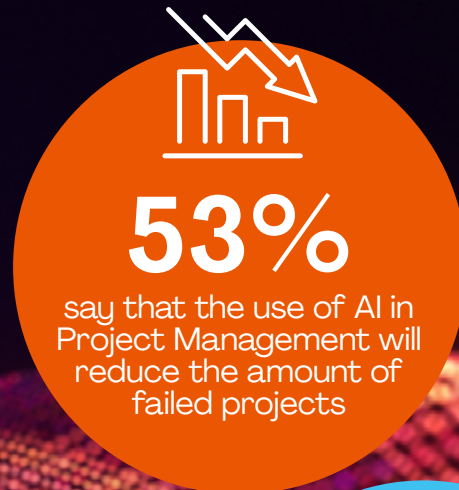
In March 2024, the EU Parliament overwhelmingly passed the EU AI Act, with 523 votes in favour, setting a precedent for stringent AI regulation globally. Expected to be officially announced by the

end of May 2024, the Act outlines a comprehensive risk-based approach to AI regulation, emphasising alignment with fundamental rights and safety standards. It introduces severe penalties for non-compliance, including fines of up to €35 million or 7% of global turnover. The Act mandates organisations to reevaluate their AI strategies and compliance frameworks, addressing their roles, the compliance burden, inventory of AI systems, governance updates, employee training, and provider obligations. With extraterritorial reach, this landmark regulation marks a significant step towards responsible AI development and usage, with most provisions taking effect 24 months post-publication and prohibitions on specific AI uses by early 2025. This move underscores Europe's leadership in establishing global standards for AI governance.

Whilst a welcome development for Ireland, there is an important difference between laws and codes for ethics. Legislation sets the minimum legal requirements for organisations to adhere to whilst ethics are more aspirational and based on voluntary compliance. The EU AI Act will require Irish organisations to adhere to legal compliance from the start. In the meantime, this will require organisations to design and implement regulatory compliance programmes to build the inventory of their AI applications, categorise the risk, and formulate their treatment strategies along with the approach to ongoing monitoring. This requirement will result in near-term demand for strong regulatory programme management skills across Ireland.

In the past year, there have been several high-profile legal cases involving AI which could shape case law and set precedent, impacting the future direction of AI. In 2023, the New York Times initiated a copyright infringement lawsuit against OpenAI and Microsoft, marking a significant moment in the debate over using copyrighted content to train AI technologies. This landmark case, filed in Manhattan's Federal District Court, accuses the tech giants of unlawfully using the Times' content to develop AI models that rival the newspaper as an information source. The lawsuit seeks extensive damages and the destruction of any AI models trained with the Times' content. Despite prior discussions aimed at an amicable resolution, the lawsuit proceeds, highlighting tensions between copyright protection and AI development, with potentially wide-reaching implications for the news industry and AI innovation.

## Ireland Chapter of PMI Survey 2024 / continued



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# The people change element of AI projects will require considerable focus and flexibility as roles change and professions adapt

Investment in AI will bring about significant change within organisations across Ireland over the coming years, recognising the people impact through automation, disruption, and new ways of working. This level of disruption, while revolutionary, will vary between industry sectors and is dependent on the availability of investment, attitude to risk and pace of adoption. One thing is certain: the success of AI projects is dependent on the effectiveness of the people change and this will be the differentiator that will set successful organisations apart.

A 2023 [report from Goldman Sachs](#) claims that AI could potentially replace the equivalent of 300 million full-time jobs globally. This level of impact is certain to drive major change within Irish organisations. Any job losses would not fall equally across the economy. According to the report, 46% of tasks in administrative and 44% in legal professions could be automated, but only 6% in construction and 4% in maintenance. How this plays out across Ireland over the coming years will be telling.

Ireland has a complex industrial relations landscape, particularly in the public sector, and this will undoubtedly bring both opportunity and challenge. The journey to bring about AI-related change in the

public sector is coupled with complex negotiation and pay-related agreements along with phased acceptance of new work practices. In the near term, the recent Public Service Pay Agreement 2024-2026 brings about cooperation with change and the use of new technology to deliver services digitally. This agreement is centred on maximising the benefits of modern and emerging IT, including AI and related technologies. The test will be in how the two-year agreement sits against the pace and value of what is achieved over this period. While other sectors across Ireland may have less complex pathways to change, the challenge is to navigate the change with a people-centric approach. How do organisations respond to such significant people change?



The complexity of AI transformation will require strong change management at a level never seen before. The primary focus of executive teams will be to deliver more quickly whilst successfully navigating the people-centric aspects. The scale and pace of this change will drive organisations to shorten their implementation lifecycle and find innovative ways to accelerate the embedding of the operational change. This requires strong executive leadership and enhanced Project Management skills coupled with dynamic change management. The organisations who don't adapt quickly to this new world will lose their competitive position and be exposed to new threats from those that get there first.

New skills and career paths will emerge in AI in Ireland. In 2023, there were more than 105 courses in AI and related areas available across Ireland, which, combined with a highly skilled workforce, make Ireland well positioned to lead in development and adoption. Ireland's successful track record across financial services, pharma, technology and other sectors positions it strongly on the global stage, presenting the opportunity to become a recognised centre of excellence in AI. There are great examples of global corporate organisations establishing AI hubs in Ireland leveraging the country's track record as a leading player across Europe and the US.

The Irish Government is committed to addressing the people impact from the acceleration of AI technology across the country over the coming years. This includes re-skilling initiatives, enhancing social security measures, and encouraging industries to create new job roles that complement AI.

# How is the Project Management Profession responding?

The Project Management profession plays a pivotal role in delivering against business priorities across Ireland. There is revolutionary change ahead, not only in the content of the change being delivered but also in the very nature of the role itself, and a different mindset is now required. Is the profession across Ireland ready to respond to the scale and pace of the challenge ahead?

The Project Management profession is both responding and reacting to the opportunities presented by AI.

In the recent 2024 Ireland Chapter of PMI survey 78% of respondents cited 'automation of tasks' as a key benefit of using AI in Project Management. This underlines the productivity benefit of freeing up time to focus on higher value activity, thereby eliminating many of the more transactional aspects of the role. The focus is now shifting to Power Skills; namely coordination, empathy, critical thinking, and listening skills. These will be the measure of effectiveness for the profession in the AI-centric business environment. The [2023 PMI Global Survey on Project Management](#) results show that organisations that place a higher value on Power Skills tend to perform significantly better on multiple key drivers of success such as benefits realisation, organisational agility and Project Management maturity. Power Skills will become the important differentiator for success.

According to a 2024 PMI global report, the world-wide market for AI in Project Management is projected to grow from USD 2.5 billion in 2023 to USD 5.7 billion by 2028, at a compound annual growth rate of 17.3% during the period. In 2024, there is an

accelerating number of PM-related AI applications coming to market, such as PMI Infinity and more generic productivity applications such as Microsoft Co-Pilot. While it is still early days, the initial focus is on automation of tasks and knowledge harvesting to drive successful Project Management. The next two years will see greater sophistication in new functionality providing more targeted value for the Project Management profession.

Unsurprisingly, there are adoption challenges for organisations across Ireland to consider. Interestingly, 65% of respondents in the recent Ireland Chapter of PMI Survey cite lack of a clear organisational strategy as a top challenge to AI adoption in Project Management. In addition, 52% cite inadequate skills within their teams to implement the technology as a top challenge. This reflects the developing maturity of AI technology along with the need for targeted leadership within organisations to agree and prioritise a roadmap along with deployment timelines. It also highlights that targeted, skills-based education on AI is required to leverage value within organisations. While this reflects the maturity of the technology, one thing is for certain: the organisations that quickly adapt will gain significant competitive advantage over those who stand back and wait.

The scale of pace of business change within organisations over the coming years will result in greater convergence between Project Management and Change Management. AI will create disruption, bringing together a critical common skill set around change in a hybrid role. While both roles are traditionally demarcated within organisations, the more technical elements of both roles are being replaced by AI. There is now more commonality in the two complementary roles than ever before. Recognising that AI can develop a project schedule or that it can write content for change communications, the focus now shifts to Power Skills in the newly defined AI-centric business world.

### Further Reading

Generative AI in Ireland 2024 – Adoption Rates and Trends - a Report by Microsoft Ireland and Trinity College Dublin

<https://pulse.microsoft.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Generative-AI-in-Ireland-2024-Microsoft-and-Trinity-College-Dublin.pdf>

Goldman Sachs: The Potentially Large Effects of Artificial Intelligence on Economic Growth

<https://www.gspublishing.com/content/research/en/reports/2023/03/27/d64e052b-0f6e-45d7-967b-d7be35fabd16.html>

PMI Infinity AI (PMI Member Access Only)

<https://infinity.pmi.org/chat>

PMI Power Skills Resource Hub

<https://www.pmi.org/learning/thought-leadership/power-skills>

PMI Artificial Intelligence Hub

<https://www.pmi.org/explore/ai-in-project-management>

2023 PMI Pulse of the Profession Report (Power Skills)

[https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/learning/thought-leadership/pmi-pulse-of-the-profession-2023-report.pdf?rev=427949fcd684485a020cc72ea219f32&sc\\_lang\\_temp=en](https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/learning/thought-leadership/pmi-pulse-of-the-profession-2023-report.pdf?rev=427949fcd684485a020cc72ea219f32&sc_lang_temp=en)

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<https://www.pmi.org/-/media/pmi/documents/public/pdf/artificial-intelligence/community-led-ai-and-project-management-report.pdf?rev=bca2428c1bbf4f6792f521a95333b4df>

## The top three benefits of using AI in Project Management

**+78% say automating tasks**

**+63% say more effective use of resources**

**+41% say more accurate metrics**

**83%**

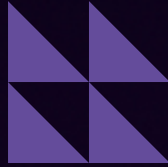
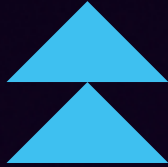
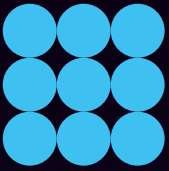
say AI lacks governance in the sector

**54%**

of respondents have not introduced any AI technology yet

**72%**

cite a lack of trust as an obstacle preventing the use of AI in Project Management workflows



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