Key takeaways...

❑ Understand what project governance is and why it matters

❑ Discover how AI is transforming project governance

❑ Recognise the skills needed for AI-enabled governance

❑ Appreciate how governance roles are evolving

❑ Consider the impacts on the workforce

❑ Examine the balance between human and ai decision-making

❑ Leave with clear next steps to deepen your governance expertise

What is project governance?

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OUTCOME

What is project governance?

Project governance is defined as the process of DECISION-MAKING on projects and the framework(s), models, structures, processes and practices that are established to enable this.

Why is project governance important?

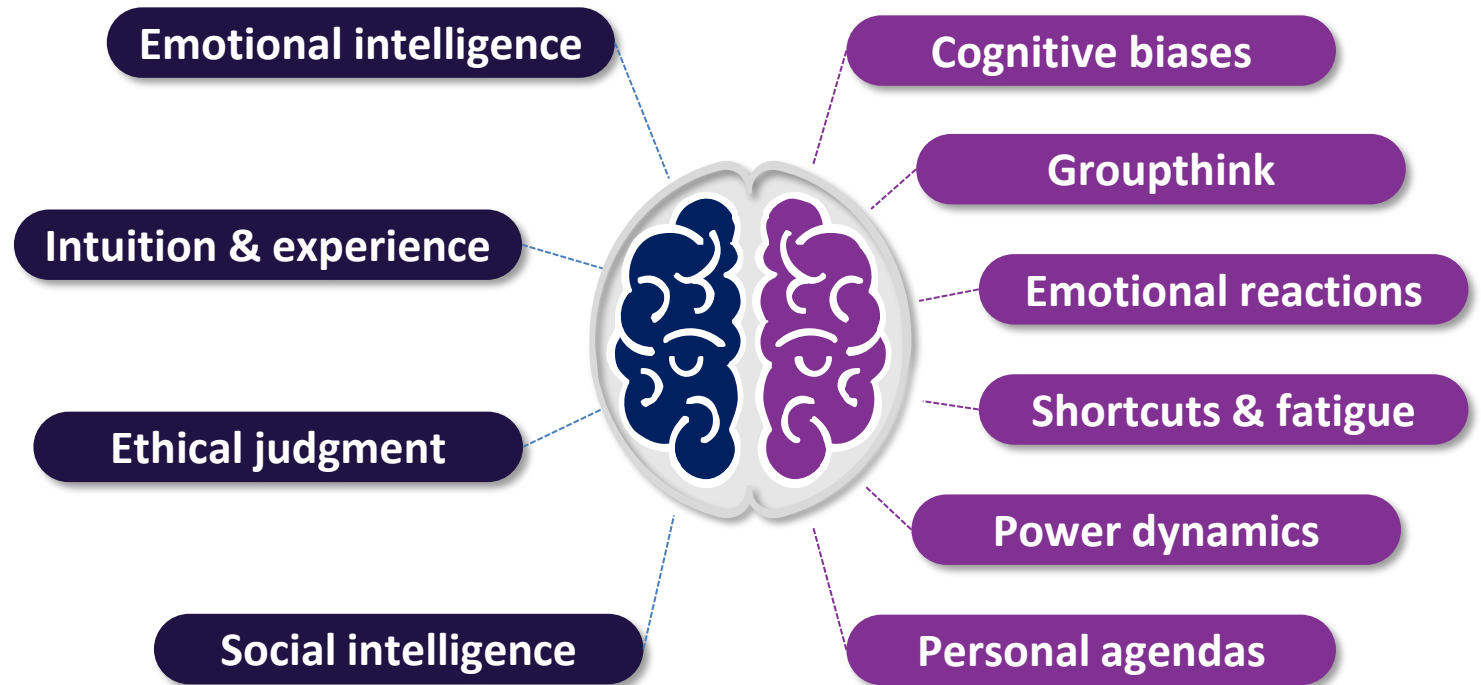**Project governance is a commonly cited cause of project failure!**

Effective decision-making on projects

Effective and efficient decision-making is critical to project success, ensuring that the **right (optimal) decisions** are made:

- ❑ By the **right people.**
- ❑ Within the **right structures.**
- ❑ At the **right time.**
- ❑ Aligned to the **right accountabilities and delegated authorities.**
- ❑ Using the **right decision processes and pathways**.
- ❑ Focusing on the **right matters.**
- ❑ Based upon the **right insights and information.**

❑ **Human behaviour is a critical factor in decision-making.**

❑ **Both positive and negative behavioural aspects need consideration when looking at AI to support decision-making on projects:**

Emotional intelligence

Intuition & experience

Ethical judgment

Social intelligence

Cognitive biases

Groupthink

Emotional reactions

Shortcuts & fatigue

Power dynamics

Personal agendas

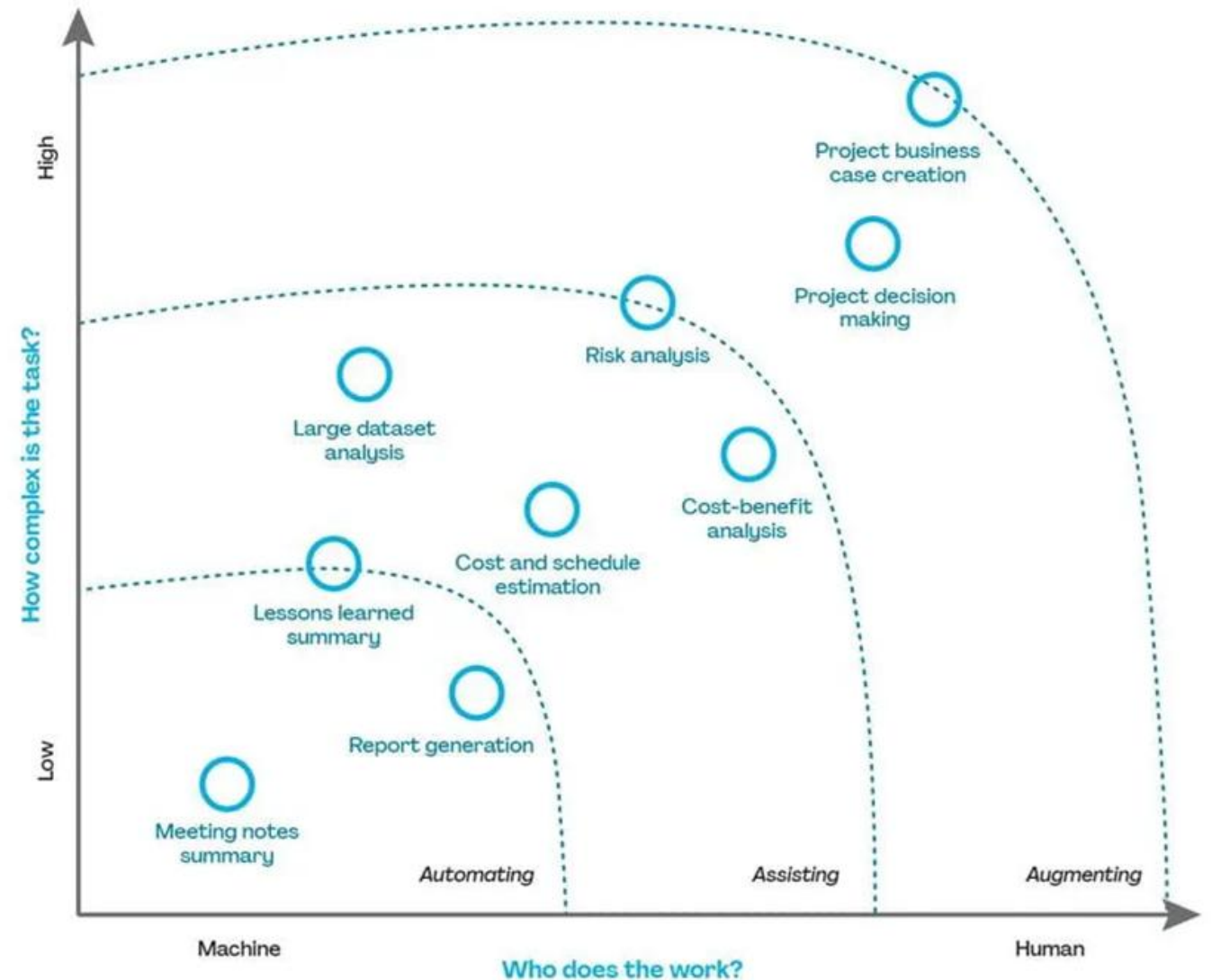# AI in project governance

AI technologies are reshaping PM

AI technologies are reshaping PM by enhancing efficiency, accuracy, and strategic contribution:

❑ Automating routine tasks

❑ Predictive analytics
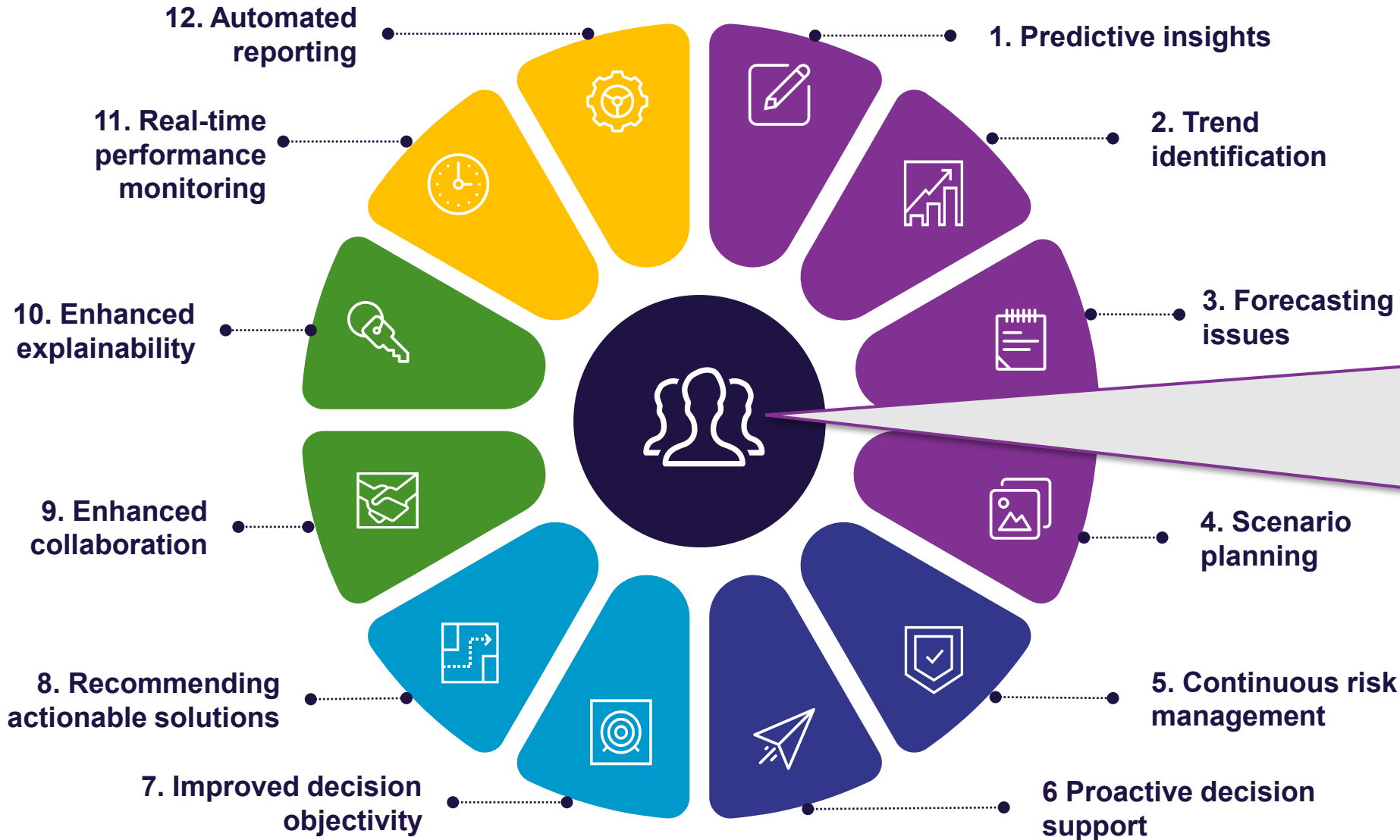
❑ Risk management

❑ Resource optimisation.

The diagram opposite illustrates AI utility in project management:

❑ A spectrum

❑ 3 horizons

*Source: **PMI - Shaping the Future of Project Management With AI***

Transformative role of AI in project governance

12. Automated reporting

11. Real-time performance monitoring

10. Enhanced explainability

9. Enhanced collaboration

8. Recommending actionable solutions

7. Improved decision objectivity

6 Proactive decision support

5. Continuous risk management

4. Scenario planning

3. Forecasting issues

2. Trend identification

1. Predictive insights

AI can mitigate some negative human behaviours:

1. Reducing cognitive biases
2. Enhancing diversity of thought
3. Reducing cognitive load and decision fatigue
4. Facilitating transparency
5. Promoting inclusivity

Typical decision-making vs. AI-enabled decision-making

Typical Decision-Making Practices	Aspect	AI-Enabled Decision-Making
Manual data collection and processing.	Speed of Decisions	Automated analysis and real-time insights.
Limited to historical, fragmented datasets.	Data Dependency	Real-time and historical integrated datasets.
Heavily reliant on human judgement	Insights	Objective algorithms uncover insights.
Time-intensive with limited alternatives.	Scenario Analysis	Rapid simulation of multiple scenarios.
Reactive and dependent on static tools.	Risk Management	Proactive risk identification and forecasting.
Labor-intensive processes prone to error.	Routine Tasks	Automation and productivity gains.
Vulnerable to inconsistencies and biases.	Consistency & Accuracy	Scalable with centralised data integration.
Rationale often undocumented or unclear.	Explainability	Decision rationale is explainable and traceable.
Relies on manual sharing of reports and siloed communication.	Collaboration	Centralised dashboards foster stakeholder communication.
Cognitive biases and subjective interpretations dominate.	Bias & Subjectivity	Reduces bias in data processing; requires safeguards for algorithmic bias.

AI also presents some risks and challenges...

Technical & Design-Related Risks

- Lack of explainability (Black Box risk)
- Transparency issues
- Bias in AI systems and algorithms

Human, Organisational and Ethical Concerns

- Fear of AI – cultural resistance
- Accountability questions
- Ethical dilemmas

Data-Related Challenges

- Data privacy risks
- Data sovereignty
- Data bias and fairness

Security Concerns

- Cyber threats

Misinformation & Disinformation

- Hallucinations
- Misinformation
- Disinformation and malicious action

Over-Reliance on AI

- "Word-of-machine" bias
- Loss of critical thinking
- Sidelining human factors

Implementation Barriers

- High perceived costs
- Lack of expertise
- Complexity of integration

Governance & Regulatory Challenges

- Evolving regulatory frameworks
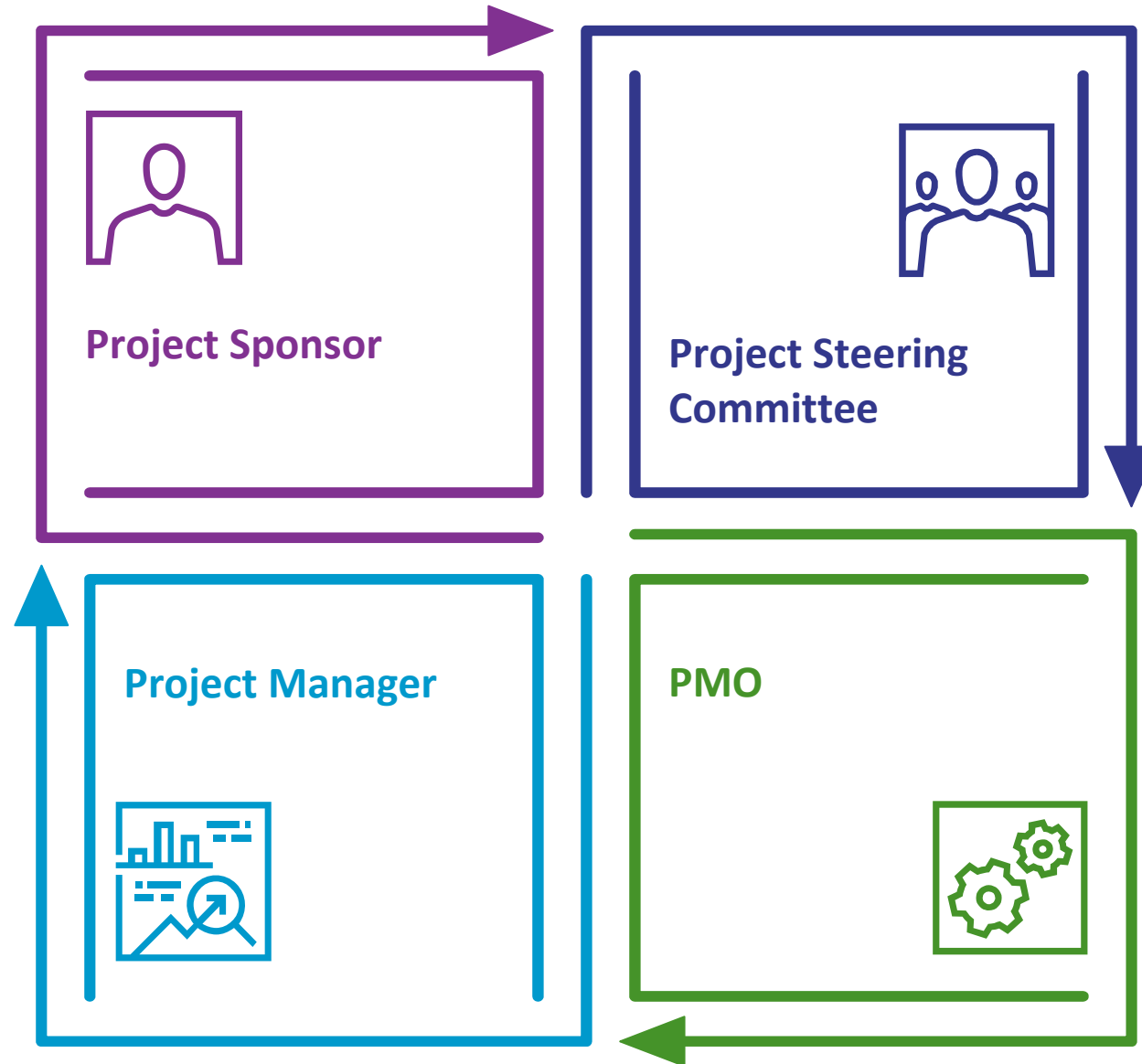- Need for new governance guidelines

AI and project governance roles

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OUTCOME

Key roles in project governance

Evolution of the Project Sponsor role

Traditional Role: Reactive Problem Solver

- ❑ Ensuring projects contribute to organisational goals.
- ❑ Addressing material matters as they arise.
- ❑ Securing resources.
- ❑ Monitoring benefit realisation.

AI-Enabled Role: Proactive Strategist

Note – comments equally apply to supporting Steering Committees

- ❑ **Anticipating risks and opportunities:**
  - Real-time predictive insights
  - proactive risk identification
  - prevention over mitigation

- ❑ **Scenario analysis and strategic planning:**
  - Simulate multiple outcomes
  - Risks, benefits and impacts
  - Evidence-base

- ❑ **Resource optimisation:**
  - Allocation and utilisation aligned to constraints

- ❑ **Real-time oversight and dynamic responsiveness:**
  - Continuous updates on project health
  - Negates reliance on periodic review cycles

- ❑ **Ethical AI governance:**
  - Sponsors and committees play a pivotal role in enforcing governance protocols for AI use.

Evolution of the PMO function

Traditional Role:
Administrative & Supportive

❑ Establishing governance frameworks and ensuring compliance.

❑ Facilitating communication between project teams, stakeholders, committee and Sponsors

❑ Monitoring and reporting.

❑ Oversigting resources.

❑ Supporting risk management and continuous improvement.

AI-Enabled Role:
Digital Governance Enabler

❑ **Decision support & advanced analytics:**
- Automated data gathering, analysis and actionable insights.
- Provide scenario analyses.
- AI-powered dashboards.

❑ **AI stewardship:**
- Protocols for ethical AI use.
- Data integrity, and address biases in AI tools.

❑ **Support risk & resource management:**
- Risk identification and prioritisation.
- Resource demand analysis and recommended allocation.

❑ **Continuous improvement:**
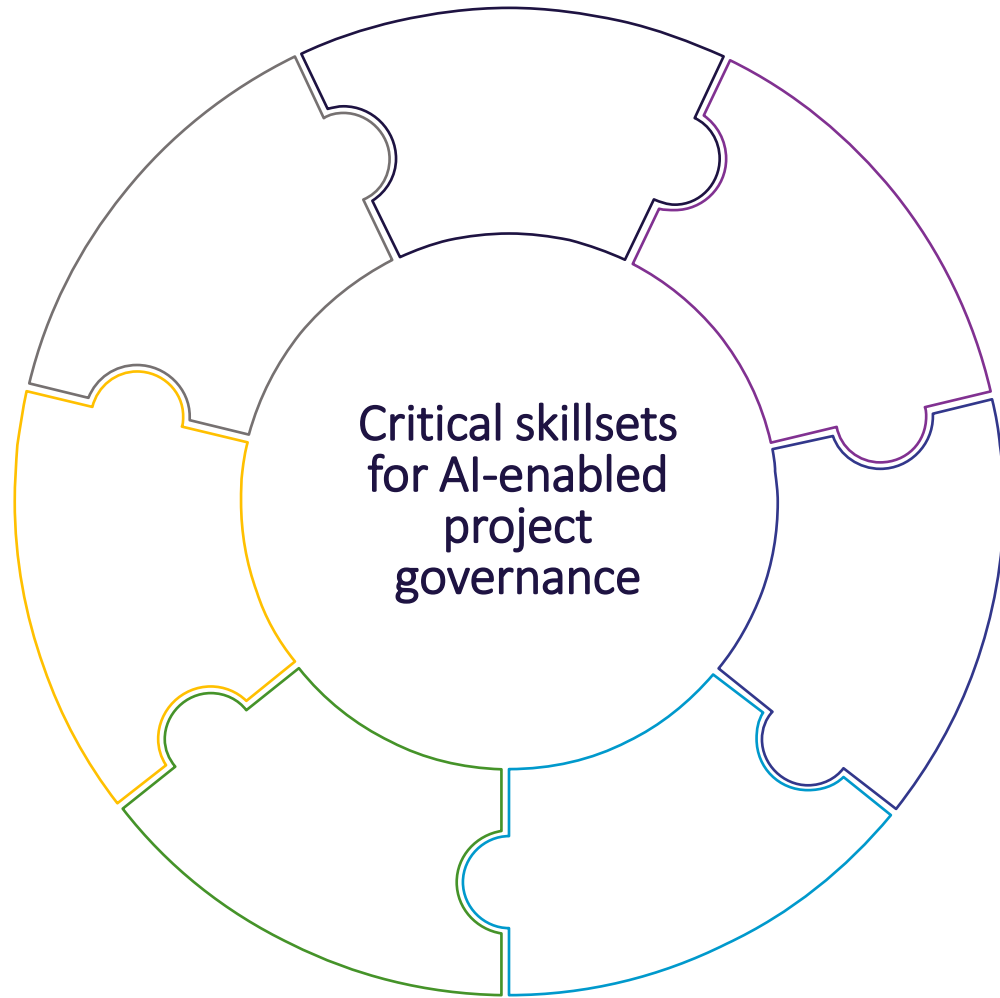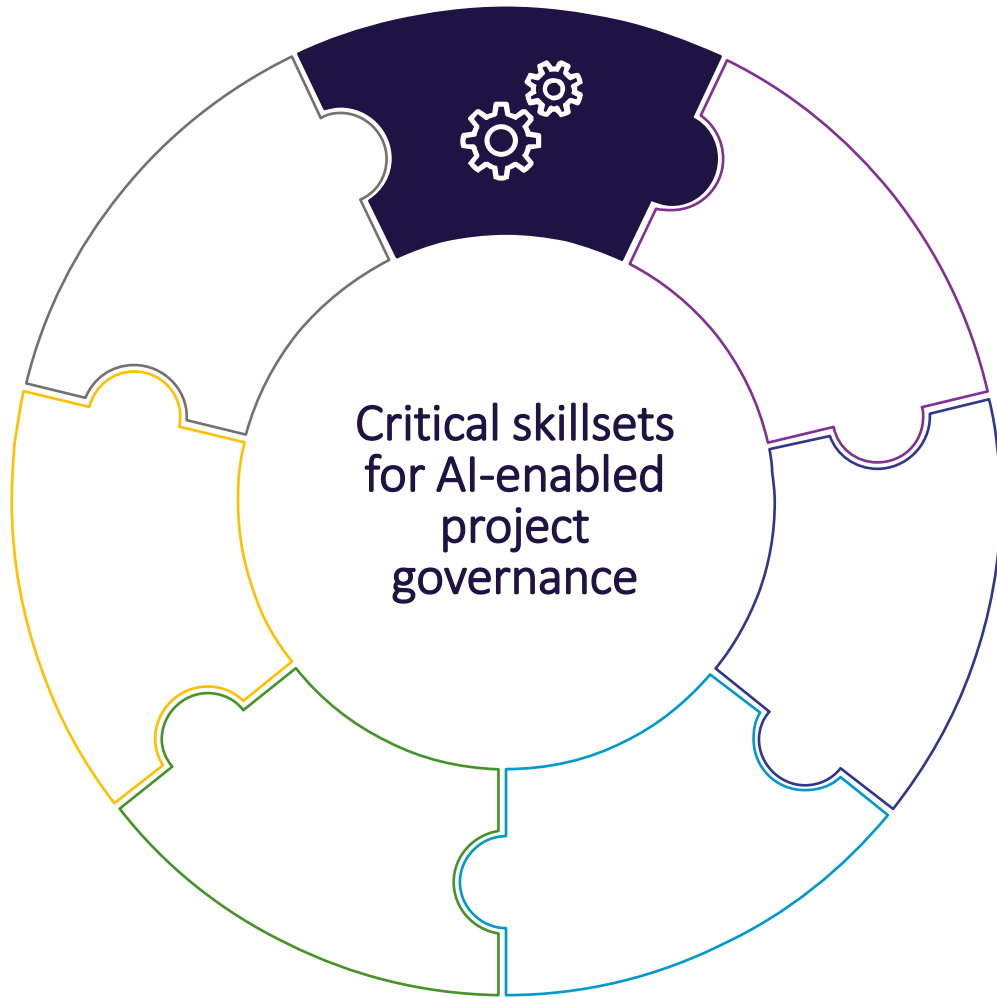- Analyse past project performance, actionable lessons for future projects.

Project governance jobs of the future

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Critical skillsets for AI-enabled project governance

Critical skillsets
for AI-enabled
project
governance

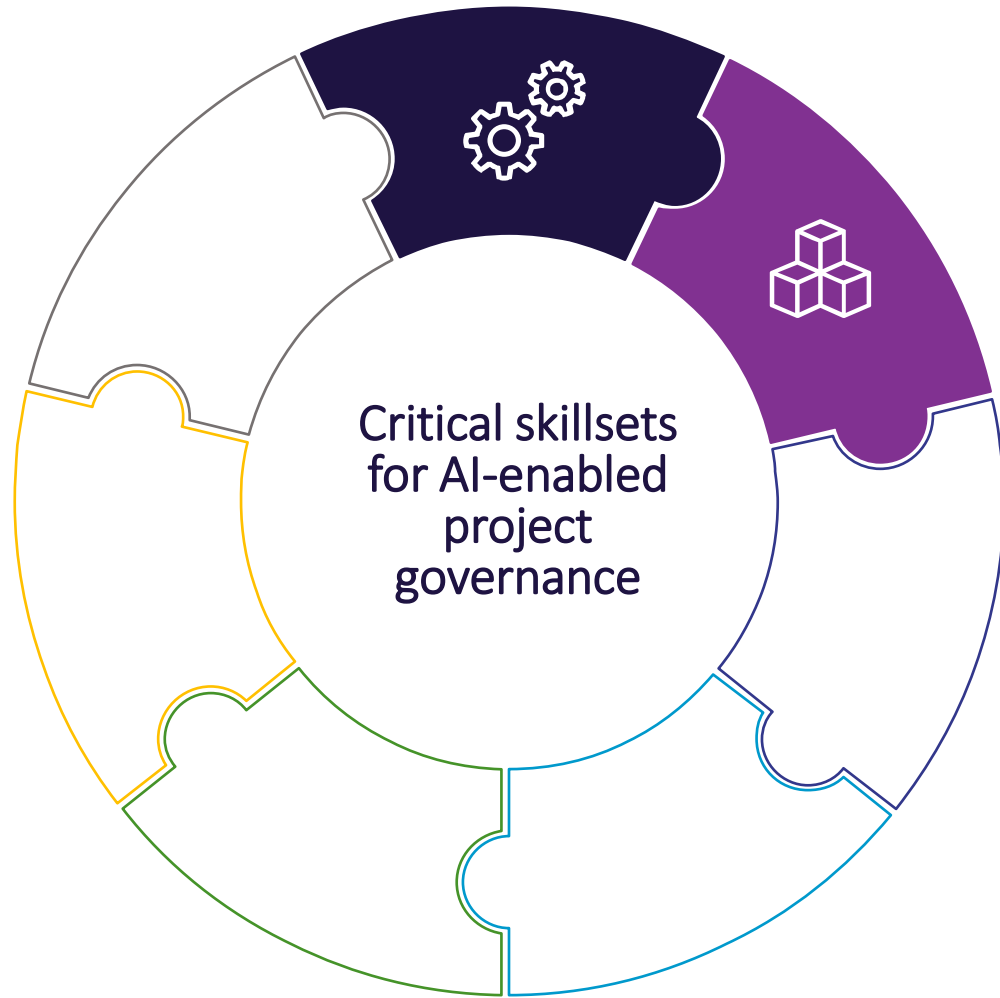# Critical skillsets for AI-enabled project governance

Critical skillsets for AI-enabled project governance

1. Data and analytics fluency

- ❑ Interpret AI-generated dashboards, insights, and predictive models.

- ❑ Validate outputs using statistical reasoning.

- ❑ Draw implications from data trends and scenario forecasts.

Critical skillsets for AI-enabled project governance

2. Proficiency in AI tools and simulation

- ❑ Configure and apply AI tools e.g. AI platforms such as predictive modelling and language analysis tools.

- ❑ Run "what-if" simulations to assess project risks and opportunities.

- ❑ Maintain automated reporting systems for relevance and accuracy.

Critical skillsets for AI-enabled project governance
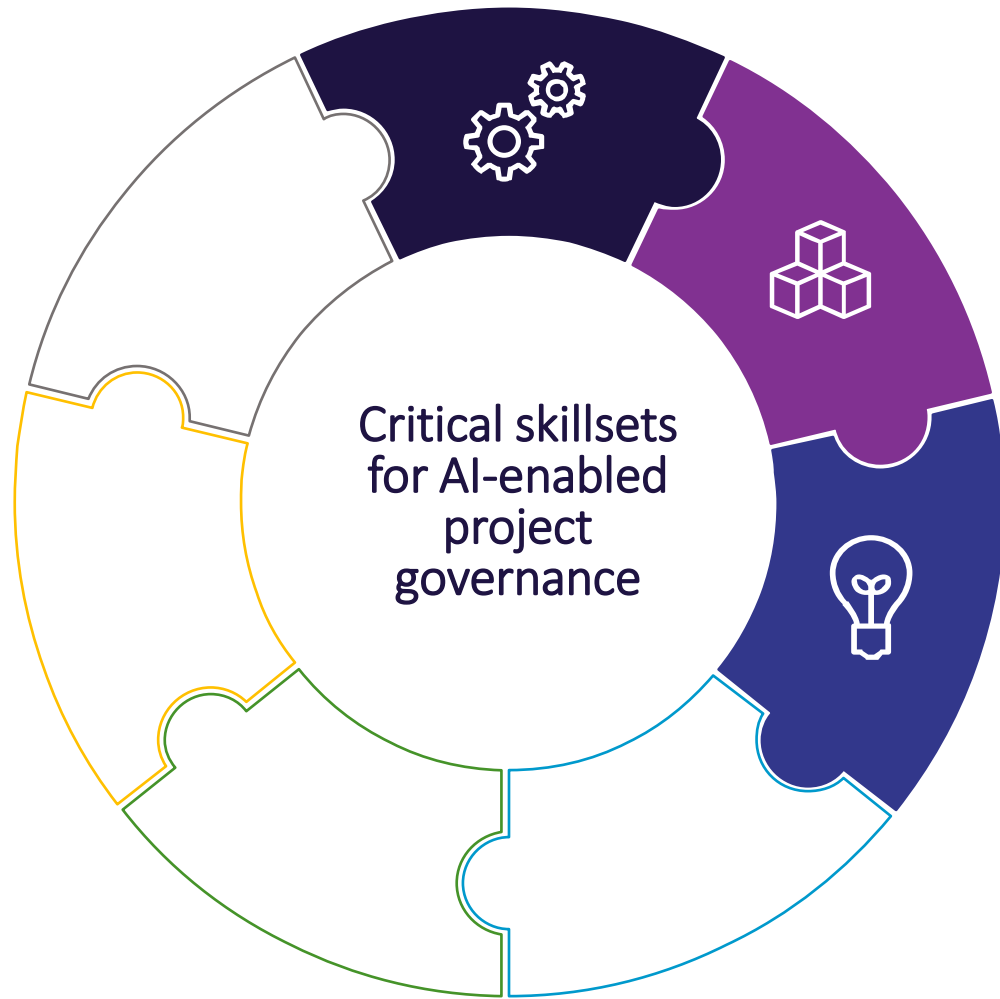
3. Ethical AI and responsible data use

- ❑ Identify and mitigate bias in AI models and outputs.

- ❑ Apply privacy, transparency, and accountability standards.

- ❑ Align with ethical and regulatory frameworks for AI governance.

Critical skillsets for AI-enabled project governance
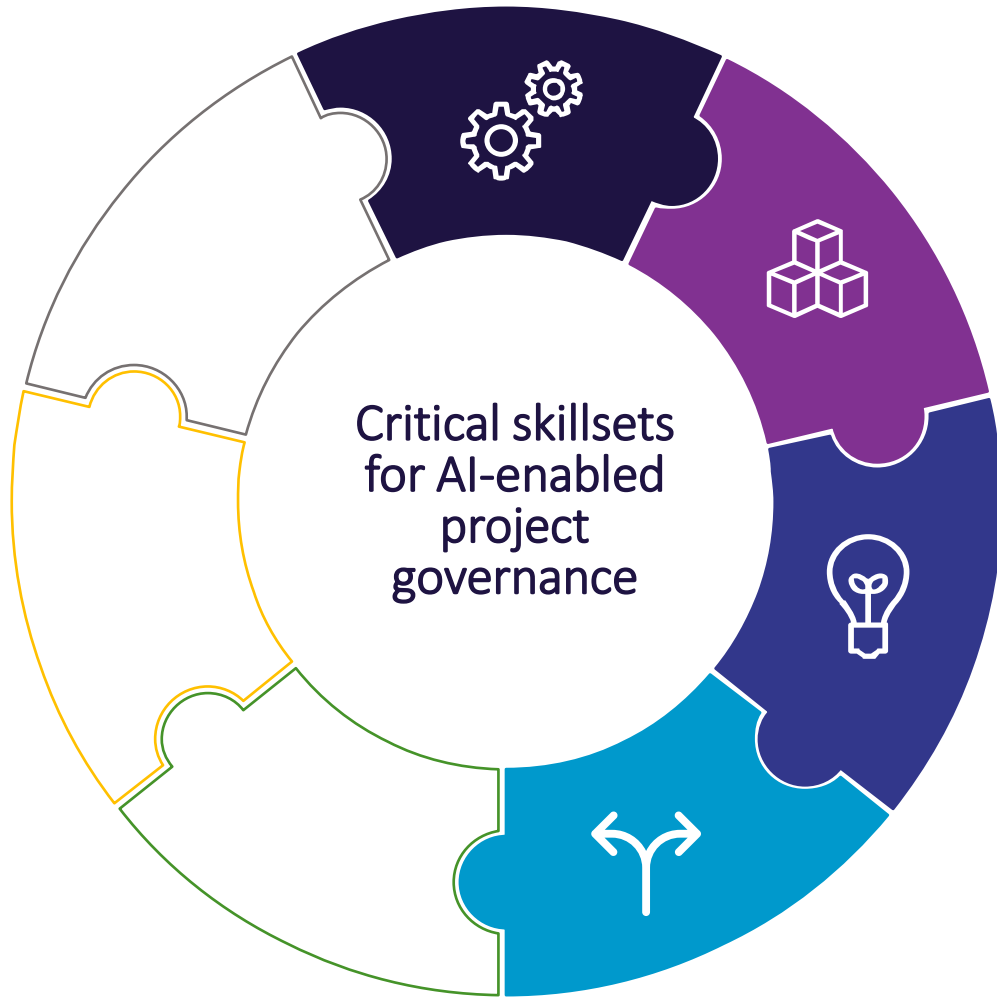
4. AI-augmented decision-making

- ❑ Integrate AI insights into governance and project decisions.

- ❑ Set clear thresholds for AI vs. human decision authority.

Critical skillsets for AI-enabled project governance

Critical skillsets for AI-enabled project governance

5. Human-AI collaboration and oversight

- ❑ Design workflows balancing automation and expert judgment.

- ❑ Escalate outputs for human review where appropriate.

- ❑ Foster trust in AI-assisted governance processes.

Critical skillsets for AI-enabled project governance

Critical skillsets
for AI-enabled
project
governance

6. Data governance & stewardship

- ❑ Ensure data quality, completeness, and integrity.

- ❑ Enforce secure, ethical data access and management.

- ❑ Document AI decision logic to support stakeholder transparency.

Critical skillsets for AI-enabled project governance

Critical skillsets for AI-enabled project governance

7. AI change leadership

- ❑ Lead cultural adoption of AI within governance teams.

- ❑ Build digital confidence across stakeholders and sponsors.

- ❑ Support continuous learning and responsible innovation.

The evolving job landscape – Emerging roles

AI Governance Specialist

Role: Oversees the ethical and effective use of AI, ensuring compliance with data governance policies and aligning AI systems with organisational values.

Responsibilities:

❑ Establish AI usage protocols and standards.

❑ Monitor AI algorithms for biases or inconsistencies.

❑ Ensure transparency and explainability of AI-driven decisions.

Data Strategist

Role: Develops and implements strategies to manage, analyse, and apply large-scale data for governance success.

Responsibilities:

❑ Translate AI-generated insights into actionable strategies.

❑ Ensure alignment between data outputs and project objectives.

❑ Collaborate with technical teams to optimise data pipelines.

Digital Transformation Lead

Role: Champions the integration of AI and other technologies into project and portfolio governance.

Responsibilities:

❑ Identify and adopt value-adding technologies.

❑ Manage change initiatives related to digital tools.

❑ Align technological advancements with organisational goals.

The evolving job landscape – Evolving roles

Project Manager

Shift: From tactical management to strategic enabler.

Responsibilities:

❑ Interpret AI-driven insights to guide strategic decisions.

❑ Balance human judgment with AI recommendations for complex scenarios.

❑ Foster collaboration across AI-augmented project team(s).

Risk Analysts

Shift: From manual assessments to advanced risk modelling using AI.

Responsibilities:

❑ Leverage AI tools for predictive risk analysis.

❑ Prioritise mitigation strategies based on real-time data.

❑ Communicate insights to stakeholders effectively.

Governance Officers

Shift: From procedural oversight to ensuring ethical AI integration.

Responsibilities:

❑ Oversee ethical and regulatory compliance of AI tools.

❑ Facilitate strategic discussions on AI-driven governance frameworks.

❑ Support transparent reporting and stakeholder trust.

The evolving job landscape – Roles likely to decline

Routine Administrators

Reason for decline: Tasks such as manual data entry, report generation, and compliance checks are automated.

Impact:

❑ AI tools streamline administrative functions, reallocating human resources to higher-value activities.

Manual Risk Assessment Roles

Reason for decline: AI-driven risk assessment tools outperform manual methods in speed and utility.

Impact:

❑ Human intervention is now reserved for interpreting complex scenarios and ethical considerations.

Traditional Report Generators

Reason for decline: AI dashboards provide real-time data visualisation and insights, eliminating manual compilation.

Impact:

❑ Resources shift towards strategic roles that leverage AI-generated outputs.

Professor Richard Baldwin observes, *"AI won't take your job; it is somebody using AI that will take your job."* This underscores the urgency for professionals to adopt and master AI tools to remain competitive.

Humans or machines?

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OUTCOME

Will AI replace humans in decision-making on projects?

Accountability requires that decision-makers take accountability for project success.

Empowerment equips decision-makers with the authority to act on their accountability

Accountability

Empowerment

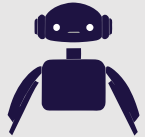Accountability is a uniquely human trait, and without it, decision-making loses its ethical foundation.

Machines cannot be held accountable for the consequences of their actions. Human oversight remains essential.

Will AI replace humans in decision-making on projects?

Let's reframe the question... *'How will AI reshape the way we make decisions?'*

AI is extraordinary at performing tasks that are data-heavy, pattern-driven, and repetitive:

- ❏ Process massive datasets
- ❏ Detect patterns and anomalies
- ❏ Auto-generate reports
- ❏ Recommend optimised options
- ❏ Run scenario simulations
- ❏ Predict risks and outcomes
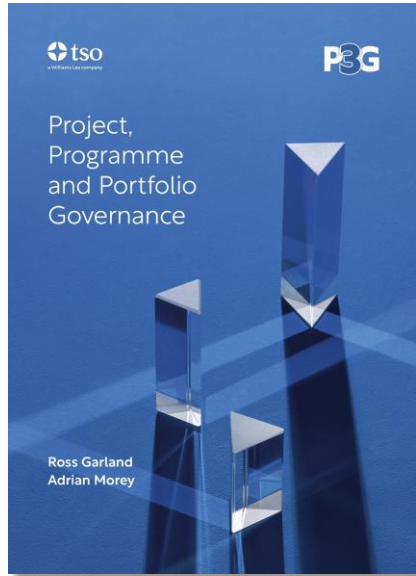- ❏ Approve lower risk change requests

The human role becomes more critical, not less — but the focus needs to shift:

- ❏ Frame the right questions
- ❏ Apply judgment
- ❏ Make trade-offs
- ❏ Align choices with strategy and ethics
- ❏ Drive accountability and leadership
- ❏ Translate insights into appropriate actions

So, it isn't a binary choice — *it's a partnership!*

Successful project leaders will be those who master the synergy between AI and human judgment.

Project, Programme and Portfolio Governance
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Thank you

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