

Leading the Pathway to Net Zero

Research summary



Why net zero matters

For today's leaders, sustainability is more than a responsibility to transition to the net zero economy, it's a strategic necessity that shapes long-term success for organisations.



74%

of managers state their organisation places at least a moderate priority on net zero and sustainability.



82%

of managers believe that all managers will be required to have an understanding of net zero and sustainability within five years.



80%

of managers agree that they would benefit from having training on net zero and sustainability.

The 'say-do' gap

Despite this growing awareness, a significant gap exists between ambition and delivery. Many managers lack the confidence and skills to turn a net zero plan into reality.



1 in 3

lack confidence that their organisation is ready for net zero.



57%

of managers in organisations with a net zero plan lack clarity on what is expected of them in their role.



51%

of managers in organisations with a net zero plan said they have not received enough employer support to integrate sustainability into their role.

The rise in green management jobs

Employers seek managers equipped with the skills to strategically implement the net zero transition.

19% rise

in the total number of green jobs, from 2015 to 2024.

69% increase

in the total number of management jobs specifically incorporating green skills between 2015 and 2024.

37% increase

in the need for management skills in green jobs between 2015 and 2024.

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Managers and leaders will need to demonstrate how sustainability drives innovation, resilience, brand trust and access to future markets.

Andrew McKenzie

Sustainability Business Guide,
The Growth Hub

Key recommendations

- ✓ **Employers need to invest** in supporting and training their managers in core aspects of sustainability management.
- ✓ **Government needs to go further and lead from the front**, adapting procurement processes to require businesses bidding for work to demonstrate that credible net zero strategies are in place.
- ✓ **SMEs should be given targeted support** to build sustainability leadership capacity, including funded access to accredited training and tailored guidance.
- ✓ **Regional skills strategies need to prioritise funding** and investment to upskill managers and leaders at every level.
- ✓ **Organisations need to measure progress** towards net zero targets and ensure it is captured in both departmental and individual key performance indicators (KPIs).
- ✓ **Organisations should use recognised frameworks and standards** to accurately map their routes to net zero and ensure consistency.



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to read the
full report.

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Leaders are uniquely positioned to articulate why sustainability matters to the organisation, what it looks like in practice and how it aligns with overall business goals. This vision must be clear, compelling and integrated[...] to prevent fragmented, unfocused efforts that lack direction.

Norhaniza A., Research and Postgraduate Studies at Sunway Business School,
Sunway University, Malaysia, June 2025

Managers want to lead, but lack the tools. Here's how CMI can help:

- ➔ **Sustainability Leadership Qualifications:** CMI accredited qualifications for real-world application of best-practice standards and impact measurement.
- ➔ **Chartered Manager (CMgr) status:** A professional benchmark that validates a leader's skills and gives them the confidence to implement large-scale transformation.

Equip your business
with managers who
can turn sustainability
ambition into action.

**Get in touch to find
out more.**

*Leading the Pathway to Net Zero:
Transforming Management and Leadership for a Sustainable Future, 2025

For more information please go to managers.org.uk
and join the conversation **#BetterManagers** **#CMISustainability**