

GenAI for Sustainability Practitioners

Series Prospectus

Introduction

The GenAI for Sustainability Practitioners series is designed for busy professionals working in sustainability. This programme is delivered both as a public cohort for individual practitioners and as a tailored programme for teams and organisations. Over the term of the series, participants will gain practical, hands-on experience using AI to support research, communication, strategy development, data handling, and ethical client engagement.

Unlike fixed curricula, this series adapts to your actual needs. The programme begins with a diagnostic session (recording) to assess participants' interests and priorities. From there, the facilitator shapes the pace and focus of subsequent sessions. This flexible approach ensures the course evolves to match what you need, whether that's deeper technical exploration, applied project work, or ethical practice.

The programme balances skill-building with real-world application, offering a manageable pace of one session per month. Between sessions, you'll experiment with freely available tools and share reflections from optional practice exercises.

Who This Is For

This series is designed for sustainability practitioners who want to integrate AI tools into their work more confidently and effectively.

This course is for you if:

- You work in sustainability (consulting, corporate, nonprofit, or policy)
- You're curious about AI but unsure how to apply it to your specific work
- You've experimented with ChatGPT or similar tools but want more structured guidance
- You want to work more efficiently without compromising quality or ethics

This course may be too basic if:

- You're already using GenAI in many of your workflows
- You regularly build your own agents, automations, or code solutions
- You're looking for advanced prompt engineering or model fine-tuning

Prerequisites: None. Just bring curiosity and a willingness to experiment. Basic comfort with technology (email, web browsers, documents) is assumed.

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Nov 2025 - July 2026 Open Cohort Session Overview and Roadmap

November 2025 - Foundations and safe use - Discover what GenAI can (and can't) do for sustainability work. Practice first prompts, start building a prompt library, and learn to protect sensitive information. Walk away ready to experiment confidently.

December 2025 - Managing your data self - Better understand what data you are sharing across the internet and how to manage this effectively for privacy and safe AI use.

January 2026 - Tooling for deep research and insight - Practice the art of asking AI the right questions. Expand your prompt library and build efficient research workflows. Create a knowledge management system that keeps critical information at your fingertips.

February 2026 - Mindful habits for ethical AI use - Navigate ethical complexities of AI use. Understand environmental costs, disclose use transparently, and ensure adoption aligns with your values. Establish principles you'll apply throughout the series.

March 2026 - Signal over noise: AI for writing and summaries - Transform dense reports into crisp summaries. Draft compelling proposals and polish your writing for tone, clarity, and impact. Produce client-ready documents more efficiently.

April 2026 - Visuals to communicate with impact - Design professional graphics and produce presentation materials without hiring specialists. Elevate your reports and proposals with visuals that communicate complex ideas clearly.

May 2026 - Business development and strategy - Put AI to work on your business challenges: brainstorm service offerings, identify high-value clients, research competitors, and refine your positioning. Turn ideas into actionable strategy.

June 2026 - Data analysis and storytelling - Clean messy datasets, build scenario models, and transform numbers into compelling narratives. Create visualisations and dashboards that help clients see patterns, understand implications, and take action.

July 2026 - Integration and reflection - Review your AI toolkit and refine repeatable processes that combine research, writing, visuals, and data. Reflect on what works, what doesn't, and how to maintain quality and consistency as you integrate AI tools into your practice.

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Learning Objectives

By the end of the series, you'll be able to:

- Understand core principles, capabilities, and limitations of GenAI in sustainability contexts
- Apply AI tools to accelerate research, synthesis, and communication tasks
- Use AI safely and responsibly, recognising ethical, regulatory, and organisational implications
- Build and maintain a personal prompt library for common sustainability tasks
- Evaluate and document AI-assisted methodologies to ensure transparency and auditability
- Integrate AI into repeatable workflows for professional practice
- Communicate AI use transparently to clients and stakeholders
- Recognise when AI is inappropriate or counterproductive for specific tasks

Teaching Approach

The series prioritises applied practice over theory. Each session combines demonstration, guided exercises, and structured reflection, with a focus on real sustainability workflows. Participants test and compare tools, assess limitations, and build confidence using AI responsibly in professional contexts.

The programme is designed as a structured learning journey rather than a static curriculum. Content reflects current best practice and real-world application, while remaining responsive to a rapidly evolving technology landscape. Emphasis is placed on judgement, transparency, and professional accountability rather than tool mastery alone.

Sessions are delivered in timezone-based cohorts and are suitable for a range of experience levels, from practitioners new to generative AI to those already experimenting with research, analysis, or early automation workflows.

Open Cohort Participation Options and Pricing

- Free Intro Session: November 2025, complimentary for all participants
- Single Session: £60 per session
- Pack Option: Choose any 3 sessions – £160 (saves £20)
- Full Series Pass: All 9 core sessions – £400 (saves £80)
- Registration: Register for all sessions on the Luma calendar: <https://luma.com/genai4sus>

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Tools Overview

This series focuses on accessible, low-cost tools that sustainability practitioners can begin using right away. Participants will gain experience with GenAI applications across text, data, and visual domains.

Some Useful Tools (Free or Freemium)

Text & Research

- ChatGPT/Atlas (Free / Plus) – drafting, summarising, exploring sustainability ideas and policies.
- Claude (Free / Pro) – in-depth synthesis and reasoning, particularly for longer documents.
- Perplexity/Comet (Free / Pro) – AI-powered search and citation-aware research.
- Gemini/Copilot (Free / Paid) – Google/MSFT AI for specific research and writing within workspace.
- NotebookLM (Free) – structured analysis and summarisation using uploaded materials or sources.

Visual Content

- Canva AI (Freemium) – designing infographics, reports, and more with AI-assistance.
- Freepik (Freemium) - generating visuals and concept imagery directly from text prompts.
- Google Nanobanana (Freemium) - AI-enhanced image generation and editing

Data Analysis

- ChatGPT/Claude/Perplexity in Google Sheets (Free) – data cleaning, visuals, quick analysis.
- Copilot / ChatGPT in Excel (Paid / Paid) – natural-language data analysis + charting within Excel.
- Gemini in Google Sheets (Paid) – generating formulas, analysing data, and suggesting insights.

When to Consider Paid or Private Tools

You'll learn to evaluate when paid, private, or enterprise tools become necessary:

- Confidentiality requirements: When working with sensitive client data
- Volume and speed: When free tier limits constrain your workflow
- Customisation needs: When you need domain-specific models or custom assistants
- Compliance requirements: When client or regulatory standards demand auditable, private solutions

Open cohorts will run on Zoom Pro and will make use of Zoom AI. We'll discuss other leading paid/enterprise options (like ChatGPT Plus, Claude Pro, Microsoft Copilot, custom GPT deployments) and help you make informed decisions about when investment is justified.

What's Not Covered: Specialist sustainability platforms with built-in AI (such as carbon accounting or ESG reporting tools) could constitute a standalone course and are outside this series' scope.

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Outcomes

By the end of the series, you'll have:

- A personal toolkit of AI methods and workflows relevant to sustainability practice
- A curated prompt library tailored to your specific work
- Enhanced capability to use AI ethically and effectively in professional contexts
- Clear understanding of how to evaluate, document, and communicate AI-assisted work
- A community of peers exploring similar questions about technology, sustainability, and change

How to Participate

- The November launch sessions confirmed a monthly cadence (every 4 weeks).
- Register for individual sessions, 3-session packs, or the full series
- Receive session links, practice guidance, and a simple peer to peer sharing space
- Engage in hands-on exercises and build your AI-assisted sustainability toolkit over 9 months

About the Instructor

Gary Sharkey is a senior sustainability and technology practitioner with over 25 years of international consulting experience across more than 40 countries. He created this series for a friend who asked for help navigating AI in their sustainability work. When other friends asked if they could join too, he realised there might be broader interest. And if even friends are curious, there's probably a real need.

He previously founded and led PwC's global Sustainability Academy, training nearly 200,000 professionals worldwide, and led the firm's effort to build a generative AI-enabled sustainability knowledge platform for professional upskilling worldwide.. His work focuses on translating emerging technologies into disciplined professional practice under real commercial, ethical, and regulatory constraints.

This programme reflects that approach: practical, grounded, and accountable.