

GenAI for Sustainability Practitioners Series Prospectus

Introduction

The *GenAI for Sustainability Practitioners Series* is designed for busy professionals working in sustainability. Over several months, 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 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 approximately one session per month (subject to group preference). Between sessions, you'll experiment with freely available tools and share reflections from optional practice exercises.

Who This Course 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.

Series Format

- **Duration:** 8 months TBC, Sequence+Cadence TBC via November 20 launch calls
 - **Sessions:** 1 live class per month (**60-90 minutes**)
 - **Practice:** ~1 hour of optional, applied work between sessions
 - **Peer Sharing:** Each session begins with a review of practice exercises and peer insights
 - **Delivery:** Interactive workshops, breakout exercises, and guided practice
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Session Overview & Roadmap (draft)

Month	Session Focus	What You'll Learn
November 2025 (Free)	Foundations & Safe Use	Discover what generative AI can (and can't) do for sustainability work. Practice your first prompts, start building your prompt library, and learn to protect sensitive client information. Walk away ready to experiment confidently.
December 2025	Prompt Engineering & Research	Practice the art of asking AI the right questions. Expand your prompt library and build efficient research workflows. Create your own knowledge management system that keeps critical information at your fingertips.
January 2026	Ethics & Responsible Use	Navigate the ethical complexities of AI use in sustainability. Understand environmental costs, communicate transparently with clients, and ensure your AI adoption aligns with your values. Establish principles you'll apply throughout the series.
February 2026	Summarisation & Writing	Transform dense reports into crisp summaries. Draft compelling proposals and polish your writing for tone, clarity, and impact. Produce client-ready documents more efficiently.
March 2026	Visual & Multimedia Content	Design professional graphics and produce presentation materials without hiring specialists. Elevate your reports and proposals with visuals that communicate complex ideas clearly.
April 2026	Business Development & 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.
May 2026	Data Analysis & Storytelling	Clean messy datasets, build scenario models, and transform numbers into compelling narratives. Create visualizations and dashboards that help clients see patterns, understand implications, and take action.
June 2026	Integration & 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 these tools into your ongoing practice.

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
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Teaching Approach

The series emphasises practice over theory. Each session combines demonstration, guided exploration, and reflective discussion. You'll test different tools, compare their performance, and develop confidence in integrating AI responsibly into sustainability practice.

This is a learning journey for both facilitator and participants. While the new series will offer structured guidance and real-world applications, it's being designed as a space to experiment and learn together, recognising that the field of generative AI is evolving too quickly for anyone to have all the answers.

Sessions for this initial run will be planned for a cohort of 10-12 learners and will accommodate a range of experience levels, from those experimenting with generative AI for the first time to practitioners already exploring basic automation or research workflows.

Participation Options & 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 8 core sessions – £400 (saves £80)
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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 **hands-on experience** with select generative AI 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.

Document Synthesis

- **NotebookLM (Free)** – structured document analysis and summarisation using uploaded materials or web sources.

Visual Content

- **Canva AI (Freemium)** – designing infographics, reports, and social content with AI-assisted layout and writing tools.
- **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

Throughout the series, you'll learn to evaluate when paid subscriptions, private deployments, 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

The Series will be run on Zoom Pro so will make use of Zoom Pro AI as needed. We'll discuss also 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.

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
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How to Participate

- The sequence and cadence will be established through the November launch sessions, and announced in December.
 - 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 8 months
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About the Instructor



Gary Sharkey 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 realized there might be broader interest. And if even friends are curious, there's probably a real need.

Gary is a dual US/UK citizen with over 25 years of international consulting experience, helping clients in more than 40 countries tackle sustainability, innovation, and technology challenges. He's been applying AI tools for over a decade, long before ChatGPT made headlines, using them for work like reviewing corporate sustainability disclosure and evaluating sustainable innovation efforts. At PwC, he founded the global Sustainability Academy, which trained nearly 200,000 staff in 2024, and led the firm's effort to build a generative AI-enabled sustainability knowledge platform for professional upskilling worldwide.

In 2025, Gary left PwC to focus on other passions, including his community interest company [Sharkey and Friends](#), which he uses as a vehicle for sharing health and wellness coaching for body, mind, planet, and spirit, especially with London's nonprofits and small businesses. Teaching is where Gary gives back, and this series reflects that commitment: helping practitioners navigate new tools while staying grounded in the values that drew them to sustainability work in the first place.