# Business leaders say AI is the climate challenge solution, not the problem

- Ninety-six percent of executives believe clean energy can meet AI demands, though 13 percent declare clean energy non-negotiable, even if it delays projects.
- Eighty-seven percent say AI is central to achieving net-zero goals, yet only 30 percent prioritize improving AI's own energy efficiency in the near term.
- Among data centers, AI-related energy use will jump from 8 percent today to 36 percent within three years.

**AI's dual promise: Enabling positive climate outcomes and powering the energy transition**

As delegates gather for day one of COP30 in Brazil, KPMG International has published the findings of a major survey that reveals overwhelming support from business leaders for AI as a tool to accelerate, rather than hinder, climate progress.

More than 1,200 senior executives from major companies spanning a variety of industries across 20 countries were surveyed for KPMG's report, ***AI's dual promise: Enabling positive climate outcomes and powering the energy transition*****.** The research was conducted to better understand how AI is currently being used to drive sustainability and where business leaders believe action is needed to accelerate and unlock its full potential.

While AI was debated on the sidelines of COP29, this year, it's set to be among the most discussed themes as the world's decision makers attempt to balance the potential impact of energy consumption with the technology's potential to transform clean energy.

Forecasts vary significantly, but some campaigners have called for a moratorium on new AI data center builds, warning they could significantly increase global emissions by 2030, slowing or even reversing current progress on climate change. The challenge for political and business leaders is understanding AI's increasing need for energy resources while balancing this with the huge potential the technology has to rapidly speed up progress on clean energy and decarbonization.

KPMG's survey provides some of the clearest evidence yet that senior executives now understand and are embracing AI as a potential force for good. Nintey-seven percent of respondents said they believe AI is a net positive for accelerating progress towards net zero goals. Meanwhile, 96 percent believe clean energy can meet AI's future demands and 87 percent of those questioned said AI is central to them achieving their net zero goals.

**The execution gap: why energy's progress is uneven**

Despite strong confidence in AI's potential, KPMG's findings highlight that progress remains uneven due to barriers in infrastructure, policy, and financing. One-third of executives (33 percent) identify grid limitations as a major risk, with permitting and construction delays threatening to meet only half of new AI-driven energy demand by 2030. Policy is also lagging behind innovation: 75 percent of leaders say policymakers are too slow to embrace AI's climate benefits, creating uncertainty and delaying investment. Financing is another challenge, with 37 percent of energy producers and 33 percent of energy consumers citing high costs and lack of funding as the main obstacles to expanding clean energy.
While 96 percent of executives believe renewables can meet future AI demand, only 13 percent are willing to make clean power use non-negotiable if it slows deployment or raises costs. As a result, data center expansion is likely to continue globally even without guaranteed access to clean power. Companies that overcome these hurdles by 2027 will secure a lasting competitive advantage.

**Turning AI ambition into climate action**

KPMG's survey reveals a clear commitment to both AI and the climate challenge from energy business leaders. With COP30 now underway in Belem, much of the conversations will focus on 2030 and the rapidly approaching deadline for net zero goals. The summit is a pivotal moment for embracing and exploiting AI to help meet the challenge.

**Tola Adeyemi, Senior Partner, KPMG West Africa, said**
"Technology has consistently created more jobs than it has replaced. Two decades ago, roles like data specialists didn't exist, today, they're indispensable for business growth. The same evolution is happening with AI. While it will automate routine tasks, the human qualities of empathy, judgment, and creativity remain irreplaceable."

"At KPMG, we're not only investing in AI but also prioritizing the upskilling of our people to build a workforce empowered by artificial intelligence. Beyond hard infrastructure, we are focused on developing soft infrastructure, training talent and shifting mindsets, to ensure innovation is both responsible and inclusive."

**Mike Hayes, Global Head of Renewable Energy, KPMG International and Partner, Climate Change and Decarbonization Leader, KPMG Ireland, said:**

"The research is clear. AI isn't just supporting the energy transition, it's accelerating it. The survey shows that most executives now view AI as essential for achieving net zero. There is real momentum and optimism here on the ground in Belem, with business and political leaders at COP30 ready to move from ambition to action. While AI's energy use is unquestionably a major challenge for the world, the potentially transformative power of AI for climate action is profound. If we align policy, innovation, and investment with the pace of AI's growth, this technology can become our strongest ally in building a cleaner, smarter energy future for all. The challenge isn't to slow AI down, but to steer it wisely."

**Anish De, Global Head of Energy, Natural Resources and Chemicals at KPMG International, said:**

"AI's energy demand is undeniable, and it's reshaping how we think about power systems and infrastructure. Balancing this demand with sustainability is a real challenge, but business leaders see opportunity as well: most believe renewable energy can meet AI's growing needs, accelerating the shift to

cleaner, smarter grids and enabling sustainability at scale. The key question is whether our energy infrastructure can evolve fast enough to keep pace with AI's expansion."

**Anna Scally, Head of Technology, Media, and Telecommunications, KPMG EMA; Partner, KPMG Ireland said:**

"Technology is at the heart of the climate conversation, and AI has emerged as one of the most transformative forces we've seen. With just five years until many organizations aim to hit net-zero targets, business leaders are clear: AI isn't a barrier — it's a catalyst. But let's be clear, yes, AI's energy demands are significant, and that's a real challenge, but leaders are betting on AI to drive climate progress by improving forecasting and powering smarter infrastructure planning."

**About the AI dual promise**

The AI's dual promise: Enabling positive climate outcomes and powering the energy transition, was conducted with 1,202 executive respondents between August – September 2025, to provide insight into how AI is driving sustainability and offering new challenges and opportunities.

Most respondents oversee companies with annual revenues over US$1B. The survey included executives among both energy producers (power generation, utility companies, renewable energy, infrastructure developers) and energy consumers (hyperscalers, data center developers and operators, technology companies). The respondents spanned 20 key markets including Australia, Brazil, Canada, China Mainland, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, UK, and USA.

**ENDS.**