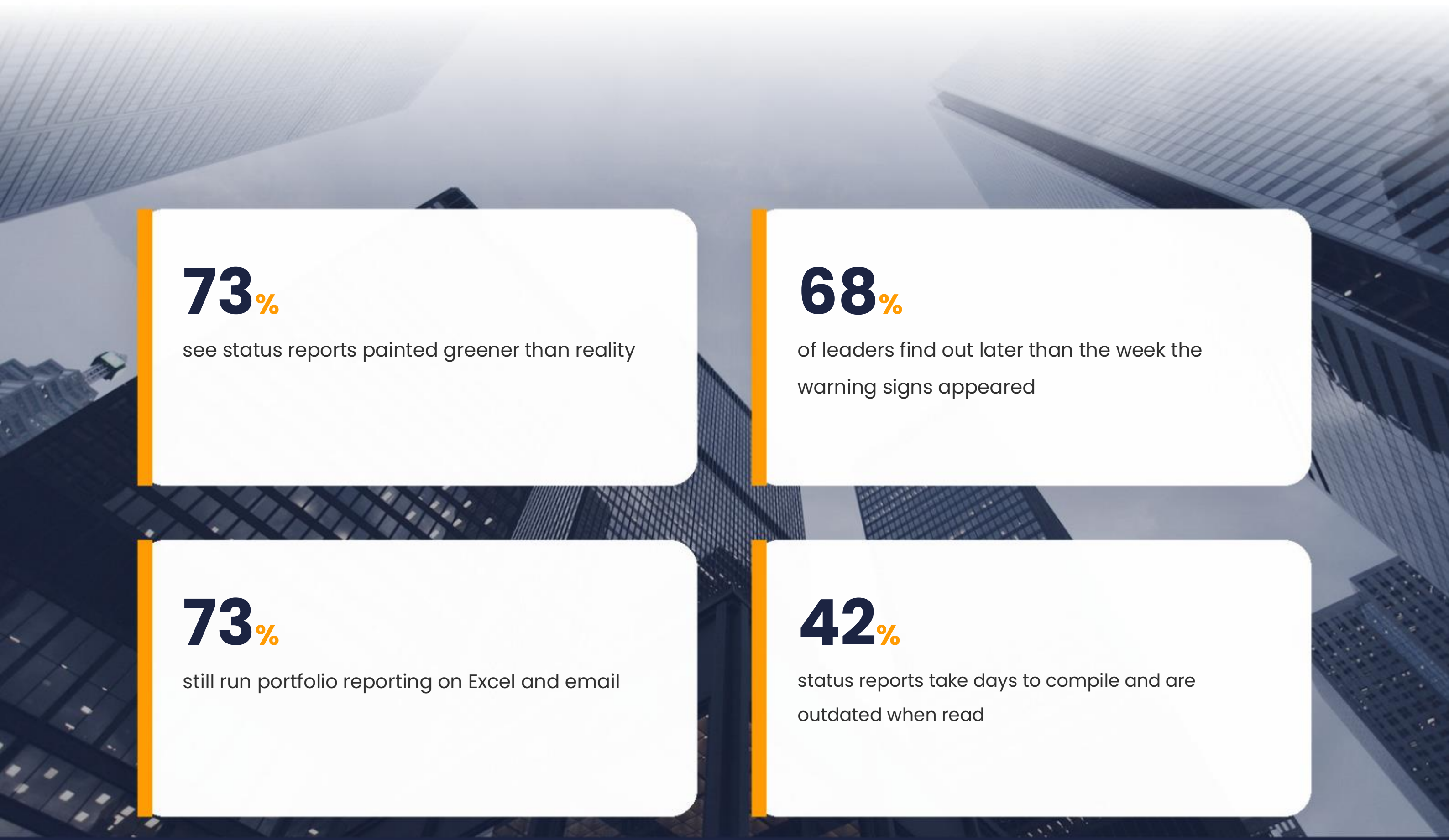
LUNAV

PROJECT GOVERNANCE SURVEY 2026

THE GOVERNANCE GAP 2026

How 26 organisations actually govern their project portfolios: what they can see, what they can prove, and what it costs them.



73%
see status reports painted greener than reality

68%
of leaders find out later than the week the warning signs appeared

73%
still run portfolio reporting on Excel and email

42%
status reports take days to compile and are outdated when read

WHY WE ASKED

Because most organisations cannot answer one very simple question: is this project actually green?

Every organisation that runs projects at scale has the same quiet problem. The data needed to steer a portfolio exists; it just lives in a dozen places, in a dozen formats, and it is assembled by hand, by expensive people, shortly before the meeting in which it will be discussed. By the time a status reaches a steering committee it has been summarised, softened and overtaken by events.

This survey measures the gap between what organisations govern on paper and what they can actually see, prove and act on: how much time it consumes, how often the picture is wrong, how late the truth arrives, and what they would change first.

26

project leaders responded, across 13 industries and 5 regions

20

answered online; a further 6 sat down with us for an interview

22

questions on reporting, evidence, tooling and trust

What is in this report

Who answered · The reporting tax

Who is in the sample, and what manual status collection costs in senior hours every week.

The trust gap · Where it hurts most

Optimistic reporting, unverified supplier claims, late escalation, and the problems that cost the most.

What would help · What this means

The capabilities and integrations respondents ranked highest, and four conclusions the data supports.

A NOTE ON SAMPLE SIZE

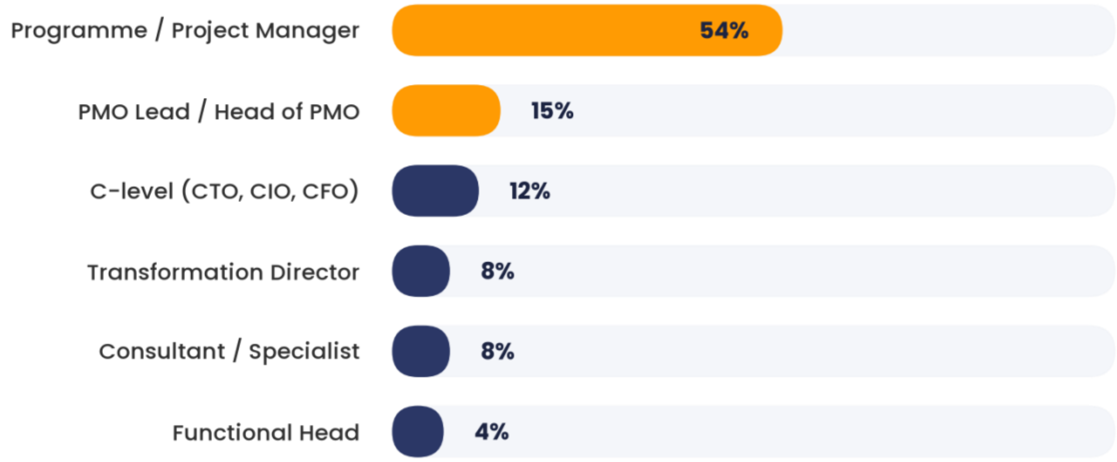
26 responses is a focused sample, not a census. Read every percentage as a directional signal from senior practitioners, not a representative market measurement. Where fewer than 26 answered, the base is stated under the chart.

WHO ANSWERED

Senior delivery people, running real portfolios, in industries where projects are the business.

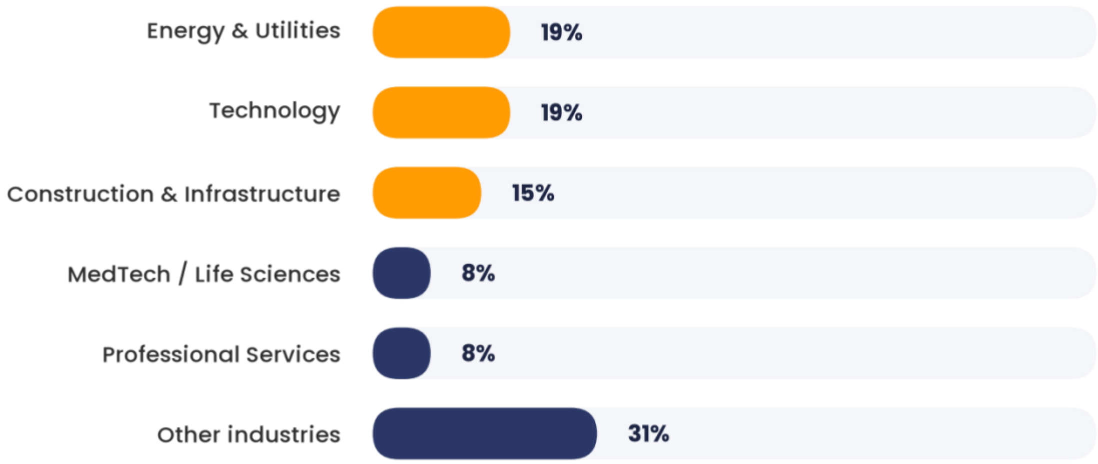
This was a deliberately senior sample. Nine in ten respondents sit in a role that owns delivery outcomes: programme and project managers, PMO leads, transformation directors and C-level sponsors. They sign off status, defend it upwards, and carry the consequences when it turns out to have been optimistic.

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT ROLE IN YOUR ORGANISATION?



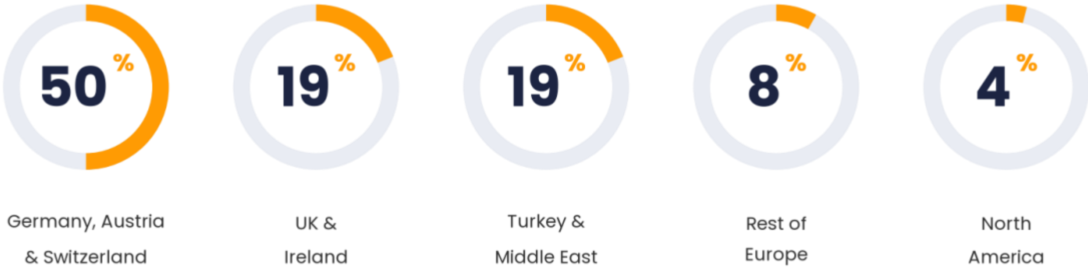
Base: all 26 respondents. Single choice.

WHICH INDUSTRY DOES YOUR ORGANISATION OPERATE IN?



Base: all 26 respondents. “Other industries” covers manufacturing, automotive, public sector, financial services, food, communications and beauty.

WHICH REGION ARE YOU PRIMARILY BASED IN?

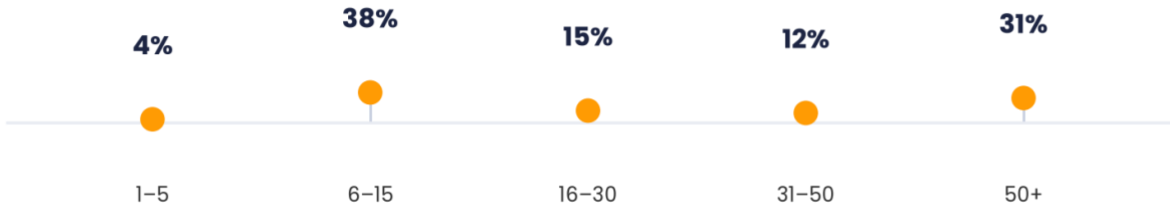


Base: all 26 respondents.

The portfolios behind the answers

Almost six in ten respondents oversee sixteen or more concurrent projects, and nearly a third sit above fifty or more. At that scale status reporting stops being an administrative chore and becomes the only instrument leadership has.

HOW MANY CONCURRENT PROJECTS DOES YOUR ORGANISATION TYPICALLY MANAGE?



Base: all 26 respondents. 58% manage 16 or more concurrent projects.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ORGANISATION'S PMO MATURITY?

Base: all 26 respondents.

THE MATURITY PARADOX

54% describe a PMO that actively governs projects or drives strategy, yet the same population reports manual data collection, optimistic status and late escalation at almost identical rates. Governance maturity, as practised today, is not protecting organisations from these problems.

CHAPTER

01

THE REPORTING TAX

Your most expensive people are the integration layer between your tools.

Before anybody can decide anything, somebody has to assemble the picture. That assembly work, chasing updates, reconciling spreadsheets, re-keying dates, is invisible in every budget and enormous in every week.

27%

spend more than 20 hours a week collecting status data

59%

lose at least five hours every week to collation

73%

still run this on Excel, SharePoint and manual process

18%

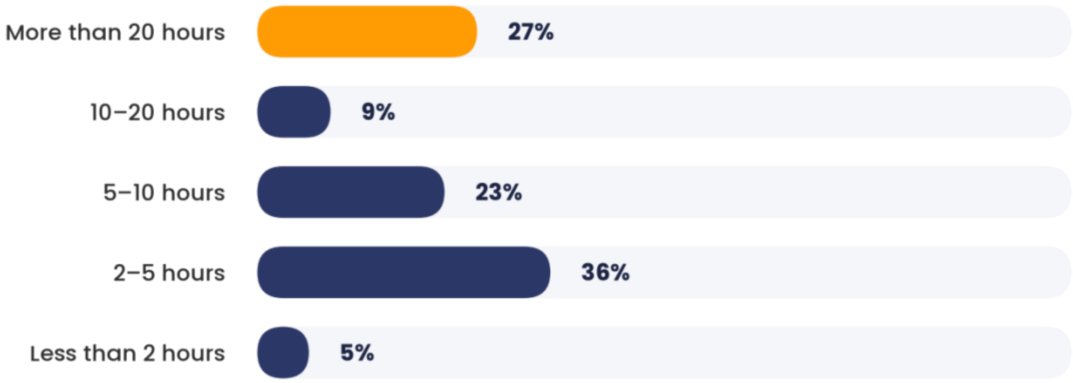
have simply accepted it as an unsolvable pain

THE REPORTING TAX

Six in ten organisations lose at least five hours a week to assembling data they already own.

We asked how many hours a week respondents or their teams spend manually collecting, chasing and compiling project status data across Excel, Jira, MS Project and email. The answers split the sample almost in half, and the heavy end is very heavy.

HOURS PER WEEK SPENT MANUALLY COLLECTING, CHASING AND COMPILING PROJECT STATUS DATA



Base: 22 respondents who answered this question.

spend more than 20 hours a week on it

spend 10 hours a week or more

spend at least 5 hours of senior time weekly

Base: 22. Cumulative reading of the same question.

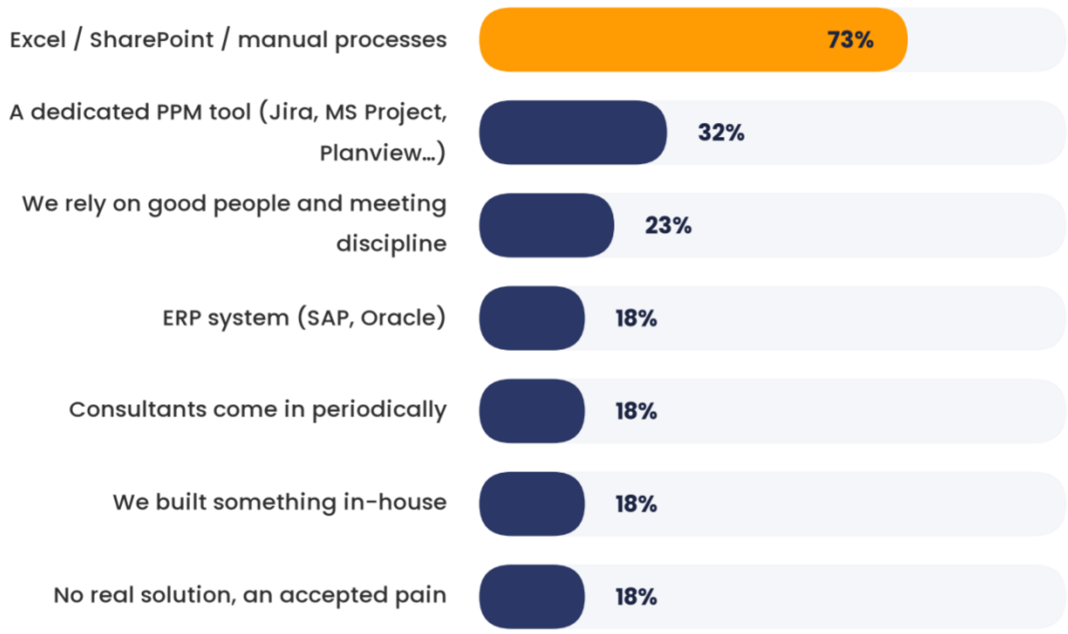
WHAT 20 HOURS A WEEK ACTUALLY COSTS

More than a quarter of respondents spend over half their working week on data collation. Applied to one project manager that is roughly half a full-time equivalent consumed by work which produces no delivery outcome, only a document.

And it is still being done by hand

The tooling answer explains the hours. Nearly three quarters of respondents still solve portfolio reporting with spreadsheets, SharePoint and manual process. Dedicated PPM tools are present in roughly a third of organisations, but as the written comments make clear, they are usually one more source to reconcile rather than a single source of truth.

HOW DO YOU CURRENTLY TRY TO SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS?



Base: 22 respondents. Multiple answers permitted, so percentages sum to more than 100.

> *"Time to gather the data and compile it into a reporting structure is our main issue. Validity and actuality of the data unclear. No automation rules."*
>
> **PROGRAMME MANAGER · MANUFACTURING**

THE PATTERN UNDERNEATH

Buying a PPM tool did not remove the manual work. The tool holds plan data, while the evidence of what actually happened stays in email, timesheets, invoices and supplier reports. Integration, not another interface, is the unmet need.

CHAPTER

02

/THE TRUST GAP

Green on the outside. The question is what is underneath.

A status report is a claim. In most organisations that claim is accepted, because checking it would cost more time than anyone has. This chapter is about what that costs when the claim turns out to be wrong.

73%

see reports painted greener than reality at least sometimes

68%

say leadership found out later than the same week

45%

say supplier claims are checked only sometimes, or not at all

9%

cannot say how early leadership found out, because they lack the data to know

73%

OF RESPONDENTS SEE STATUS REPORTS PAINTED GREENER THAN REALITY

Only two people in the entire sample said status reports never paint a rosier picture than reality.

The watermelon report is not an anecdote. It is the reported norm in a sample of senior delivery professionals who are, themselves, the people writing and defending those reports.

They do not describe it as dishonesty. They describe it as the predictable result of asking people to self-assess without evidence, under time pressure, in front of the person who funds the work.

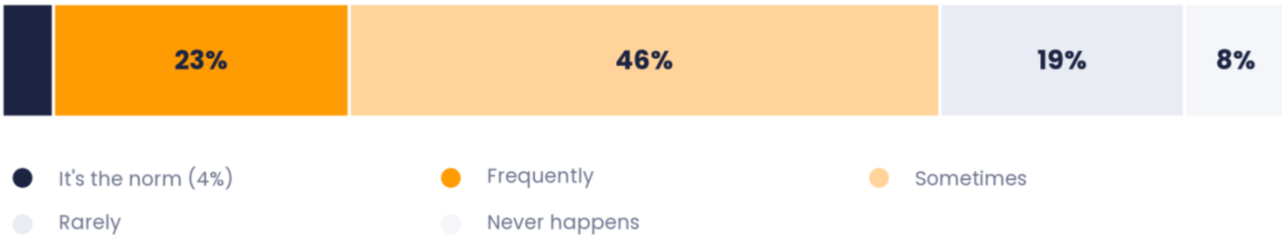
Base: all 26 respondents. Question: how often do project status reports paint a rosier picture than reality?

THE TRUST GAP

Nearly three quarters have seen the watermelon report: green outside, red inside.

We asked how often project status reports paint a rosier picture than reality. Only two people in the entire sample said it never happens. This is not treated as misconduct by those who reported it; it is treated as a structural consequence of asking people to self-assess without evidence.

HOW OFTEN DO STATUS REPORTS PAINT A ROSIER PICTURE THAN REALITY?

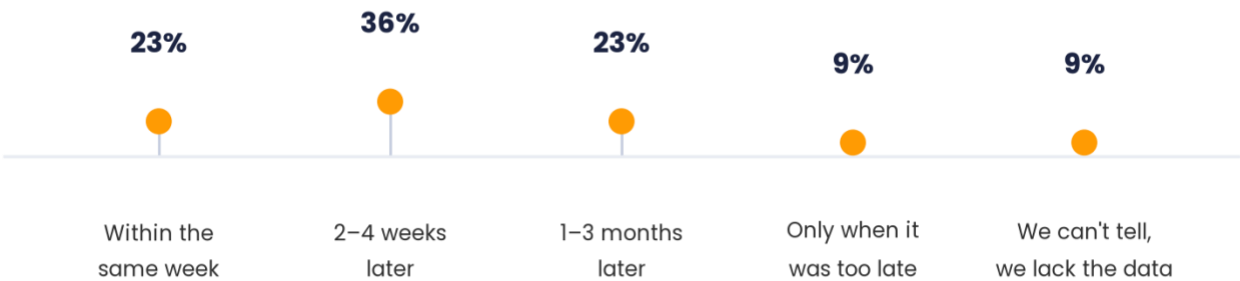


Base: all 26 respondents.

Leadership finds out late

The consequence is measurable in time. We asked respondents to think about the last project that went seriously off track, and to say how early leadership found out relative to the first visible warning signs. Only 23% said the same week. Almost seven in ten found out later than the same week, and two said they genuinely could not tell, because the data to answer the question does not exist.

HOW EARLY DID LEADERSHIP FIND OUT, RELATIVE TO THE FIRST WARNING SIGNS?

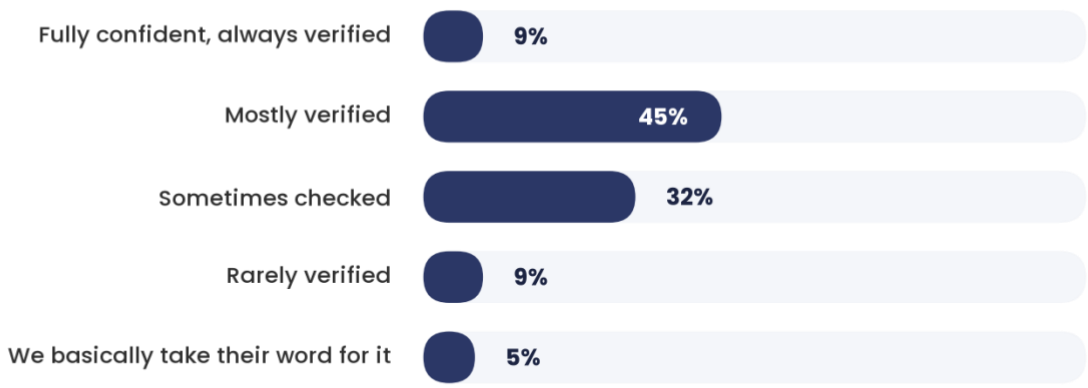


Base: 22 respondents who answered this question.

Supplier claims: verified, but not consistently

The same trust question appears at the commercial boundary, where it gets expensive fastest. We asked how confident respondents are that a supplier's "milestone complete" or "status green" has been verified against real evidence before an invoice is paid. The answer is reassuring at the top and thin underneath: 12 of the 22 respondents say claims are always or mostly verified, but only two are fully confident that verification always happens.

HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU THAT SUPPLIER MILESTONE CLAIMS ARE VERIFIED BEFORE AN INVOICE IS PAID?



Base: 22 respondents who answered this question.

9%

are fully confident that supplier claims are always verified

A further 45% say claims are mostly verified. For the remaining 45%, checking happens only sometimes, rarely, or not at all: a gap sitting directly on the payment path, and the one gap here whose financial consequence is immediate.

> *"The main issue is the portfolio projects with their numerous details, that cannot be comprehensively captured, tracked and reported in any single tool."*
>
> **PMO LEAD · CONSTRUCTION & INFRASTRUCTURE**

CHAPTER

03

WHERE IT HURTS MOST

We asked what actually costs time, money and headaches. The answers cluster.

Respondents could select as many problems as applied. What came back was not a long tail of niche complaints but a tight cluster around one theme: the organisation cannot see itself clearly, quickly enough, in one place.

42%

status reports take days and are outdated when read

38%

risk registers filled in once and never updated

38%

no single portfolio view across the tool landscape

31%

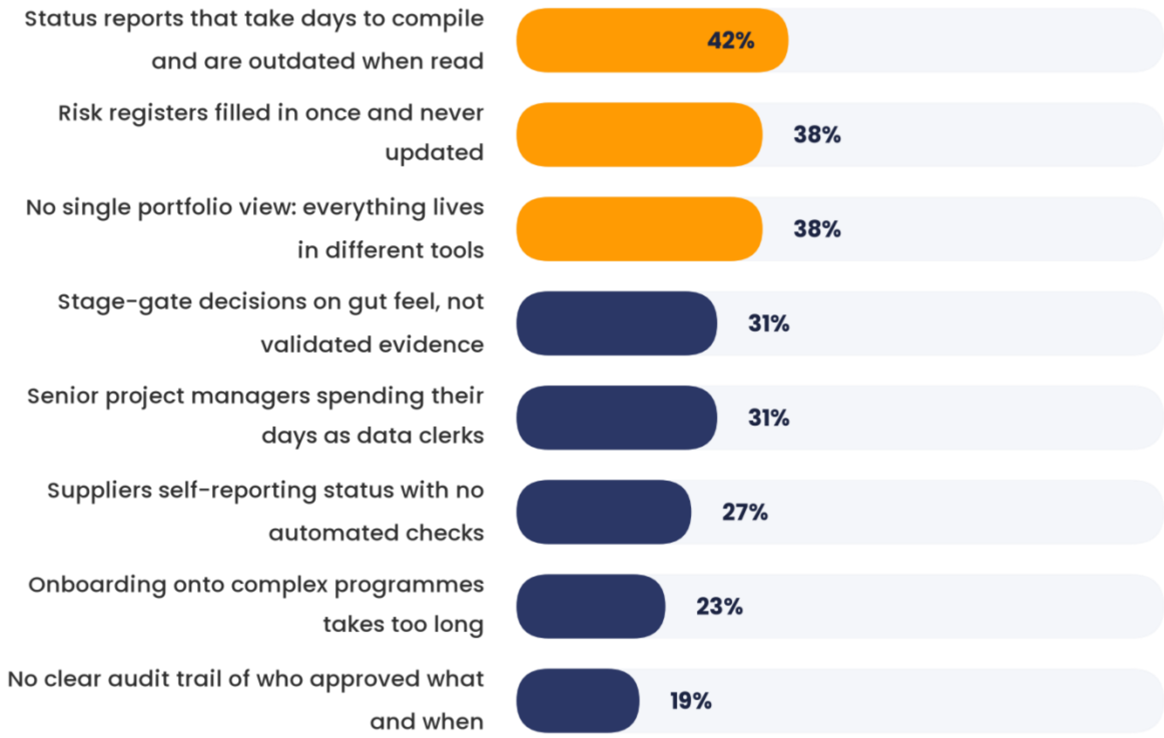
senior project managers working as data clerks

WHERE IT HURTS MOST

Eight problems were offered. The top three are the same problem wearing different clothes.

Slow reports, stale risk registers and a fragmented portfolio view are not three separate failures. They are symptoms of one condition: project truth is distributed across systems that do not talk to each other, and reassembling it is a human job.

WHICH OF THESE PROBLEMS COST YOUR ORGANISATION THE MOST TIME, MONEY OR HEADACHES?



Base: all 26 respondents. Multiple answers permitted.

READ THE BOTTOM OF THE CHART TOO

Only 19% flagged the absence of an audit trail of who approved what and when, the lowest-ranked problem here. Not because audit trails do not matter, but because their absence is only felt after something has gone wrong.

> *"Lack of centralised data. Project information is scattered across Excel and ERP; we need a single source of truth for the whole portfolio."*
>
> **PROGRAMME MANAGER · CONSTRUCTION & INFRASTRUCTURE**

CHAPTER

04

WHAT WOULD HELP

Automate the report first. Everything else has to earn its place afterwards.

We offered seven capabilities and asked which would deliver the most value. The ranking is unambiguous, and it maps directly onto the problems in the previous chapter. Respondents want the collation work to disappear before they want anything clever.

69%

want status reports generated from data already in their tools

46%

want a real-time view of how risks cascade across projects

77%

need Excel to remain part of the picture

64%

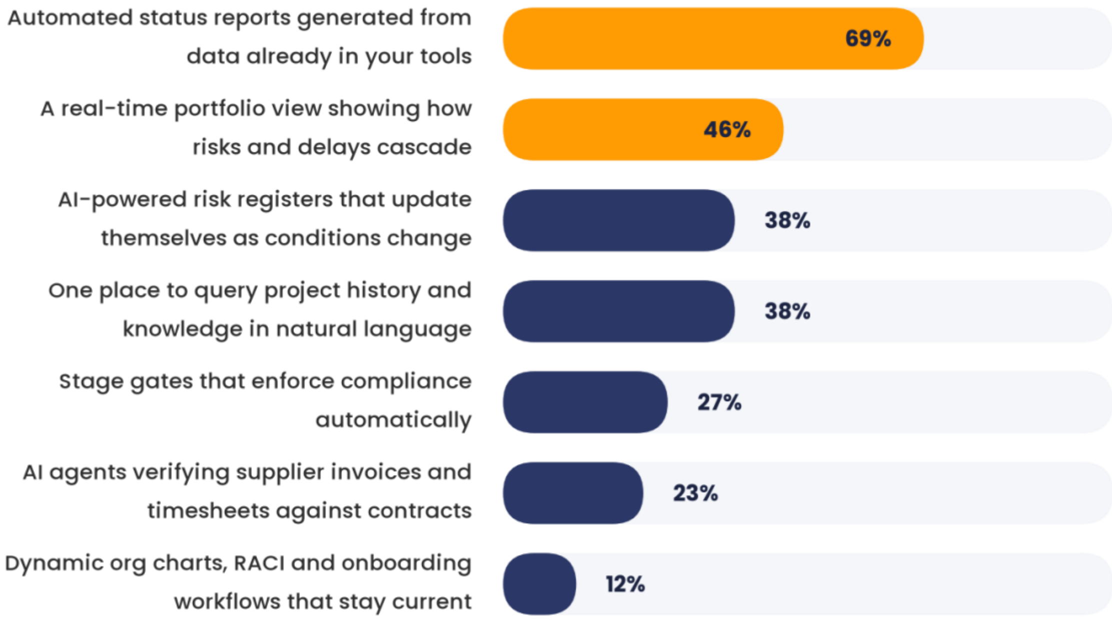
named Jira and SAP as required integrations

WHAT WOULD HELP

Seven in ten want one thing above all: the status report to write itself, from data that already exists.

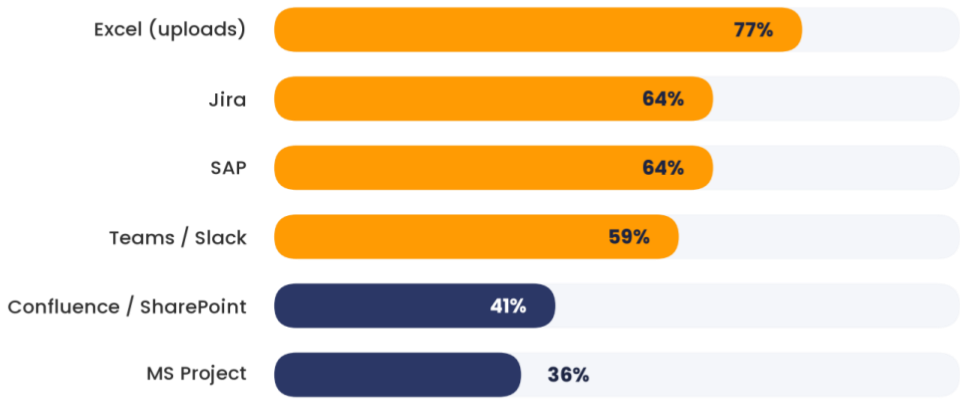
Automated status generation leads by a wide margin. Behind it sits a second tier: a real-time cascade view, self-updating risk registers, and natural-language access to project history, each named by roughly four in ten. Every one carries the same constraint: it has to work with what is already installed.

WHICH OF THESE CAPABILITIES WOULD DELIVER THE MOST VALUE TO YOU?



Base: all 26 respondents. Multiple answers permitted.

WHAT WOULD A GOVERNANCE PLATFORM NEED TO INTEGRATE WITH TO BE USEFUL IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT?



Base: 22. Multiple answers permitted. Named once each: ServiceNow, Monday, Asana, Primavera, Planta, qTest, Uffective, Weclapp.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Four conclusions the data supports, whatever you do next.

01 **Governance maturity is not the protection it is assumed to be**

More than half describe a PMO that actively governs or drives strategy, and they report manual collation, optimistic status and late escalation at the same rate as everybody else. Maturity measured by process does not translate into visibility.

02 **The binding constraint is integration, not ambition**

Excel at 77%, Jira and SAP at 64%, Teams and Slack at 59%. Organisations do not need another place to look; they need the places they already look to reconcile themselves.

03 **Verification is thinnest where money changes hands**

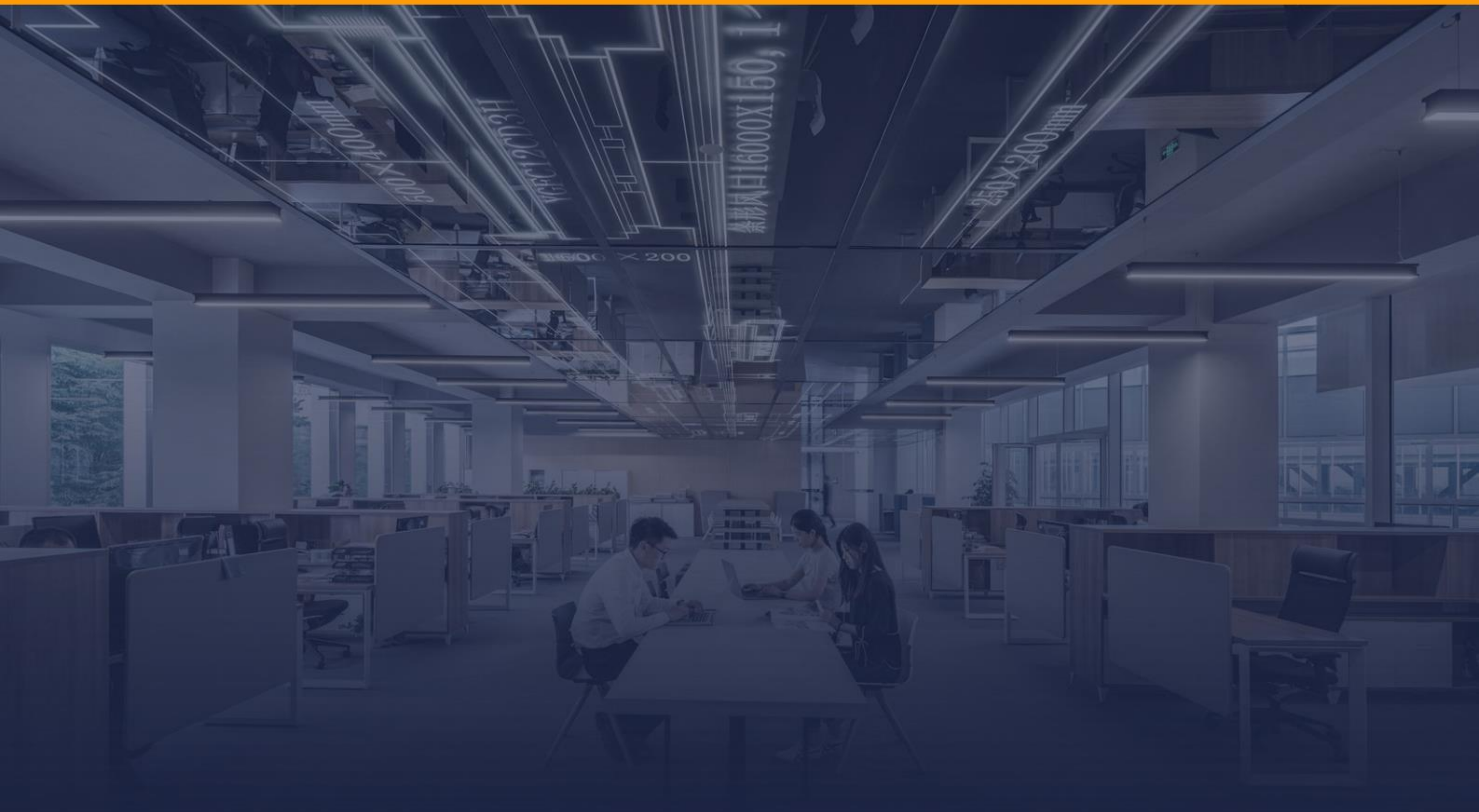
Only 9% are fully confident that a supplier's milestone claim is verified against evidence before payment. For 45%, checking is occasional, rare or absent: the control gap with the most immediate financial consequence.

04 **What they want first is the least glamorous thing**

69% named automated status generation ahead of every more sophisticated capability, including self-updating risk registers and natural-language search. The demand is not for cleverer analysis; it is for the weekly collation work to stop.

Method

Sample	26 respondents: 20 completed the online questionnaire and 6 took part in a structured interview using the same question set. Both channels are reported together.
Fieldwork	1 November 2025 to 30 April 2026.
Bases	Not every respondent answered every question. Where the base is smaller than 26 it is stated beneath the chart, and percentages are calculated on that base.
Multiple answers	Some questions allowed more than one option; those percentages sum to more than 100 and are labelled accordingly. Figures are rounded, so some charts total 99% or 101%.
Question wording	Where the original questionnaire named the sponsoring platform, chart labels have been generalised. The substance of each question is unchanged.
Confidentiality	Verbatim comments are lightly edited for readability and attributed by role and sector only. No personal data, contact details or employer names appear in this report.



THANK YOU

This report exists because 26 project leaders gave us their time and their honest answers. Every number on these pages came from you.

If you would like to discuss what the findings mean for your portfolio, we would be glad to hear from you.

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