

# 2019 Jobs Report

# Where the Action Is



Career opportunities abound. But the red-hot sectors and most desirable skills that set candidates apart vary by region.

BY ASHLEY BISHEL

ILLUSTRATION BY ADRIÁ FRUITÓS



**P**roject management is needed the world over. Yet for project professionals looking to get ahead in their careers, that demand is anything but uniform. While one country's leadership leans hard into diversifying its economy, another's urges business leaders to embrace digitalization or risk falling behind. Some CEOs are losing sleep over a dearth of local cybersecurity skills. Others are doubling down on retention efforts to shift a high-churn culture toward one of stability.

Looking to make a move or land a project management promotion in 2019? How easy that is might depend as much on location as résumé or CV. Here's a look at eight countries with a clear need for project talent.



**I**n the two years since the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union, Brexit has been a hot topic of both conversation and confusion around the world. In August, Britain's chancellor blamed the cloud of uncertainty for depressing economic growth and business investments.

"However, in many areas it's business as usual," says John Thorpe, managing director, Arras People, London, England. In fact, 88 percent of U.K. CEOs anticipate growth, according to PwC, and roughly twice as many are optimistic about the future as were a year prior. And, in a 2018 Arras People report, meeting increased business demand was the top reason talent recruiters were seeking to fill open project management positions. Meanwhile, the U.K. unem-



In London alone, construction is booming, with more than

**500** tall-building projects in the pipeline and 13 proposed skyscraper projects to be complete by 2026.

## and Carry On

Construction projects in London, England

### AT A GLANCE

**2019 GDP growth forecast:** 1.5%

**Median project professional salary:** US\$81,227

**Sectors to watch:** IT, construction, transportation

ployment rate is hovering at a historic low of 4 percent, according to the Office for National Statistics.

That's great news for project talent—especially those with specialized skills and experience, says Mr. Thorpe, as many U.K. companies are struggling to match openings to qualified professionals. The construction field, for instance, is gaining momentum despite the uncertainty of Brexit. The country's construction output is estimated to rise 2 percent through 2022, according to the *Global Construction Outlook to 2022* report. That compares with Western Europe's overall output of just 1.1 percent from 2013 to 2017.

In London alone, construction is booming, with more than 500 tall-building projects in the pipeline

and 13 proposed skyscraper projects to be complete by 2026. Sixty percent of U.K. land surveyors say a lack of skilled workers limits their project activity—especially professional skills. And a spate of large infrastructure projects, including transportation megaprojects Crossrail and HS2 and the nuclear power station Hinkley Point, have grabbed international headlines.

Meanwhile, in the IT sector, talent demand is as strong as ever. A July report by PwC pointed to artificial intelligence, robotics, drones and driverless vehicles as sending tremors through the country's labor market—displacing many manual jobs while creating career opportunities elsewhere, such as project management.

MEXICO

# Demonstrating Value

**M**exico's leaders have big ambitions when it comes to infrastructure. In July, President-elect Andrés Manuel López Obrador announced the prioritization of seven critical infrastructure projects—including an international airport, paving 300 rural roads, modernizing the railway and building nationwide access to the internet. The total portfolio price tag: US\$26.5 billion.

The new government also plans to launch a three-year, US\$8 billion project to build the country's largest oil refinery—capable of producing 400,000 barrels of gasoline daily. And, as the only Latin American member of the International Energy Agency, Mexico often is seen as the most promising nation for natural gas investment in the region. And earlier this decade, Mexico received nearly US\$4 billion in portfolio investments to build and maintain natural gas pipelines and other gas infrastructure. Yet infrastructure is still lacking, and many existing refineries produced at around 40 percent capacity last year because of safety and

operational issues.

For project professionals, an energetic new government and healthy economy can translate into new career opportunities. But, “depending on the sector, the roles of project manager and program manager are still evolving,” says María José Romo Cotera, senior project manager, Aki Technologies, Mexico City, Mexico. Not all organizations understand the value proper project management practices can bring.

“This profession is still relatively unknown at many companies in Mexico,” says René Nuño Cabrera, PMP, project management office (PMO) manager, Pounce, Mexico City, Mexico. And when hiring managers and recruiters look to fill new project roles, they often don't understand the importance of real-world experience and project management certification. Project professionals who find themselves on the other side of those interviews would be wise to proactively highlight those differentiators, he says.

Comfort with job-hopping also can increase career opportunities. “Project talent is often hired on a per-project basis either as a freelancer or contractor,” says Gustavo Pastrana, PMP, head of PMO, professional services, Diebold Nixdorf, Mexico City, Mexico. As organizational project management continues to mature, he expects that will change. But for now, “many organizations aren't investing in sustaining the knowledge they gain from project talent.”

For those project professionals looking to find solid leads and gain a foothold in Mexico's market, networking is vital, says Mr. Cabrera.

“In practice, most job opportunities are not published in Mexico. You'll find them through referrals and headhunters,” he says.

AT A GLANCE

**2019 GDP growth forecast:**  
2.5%

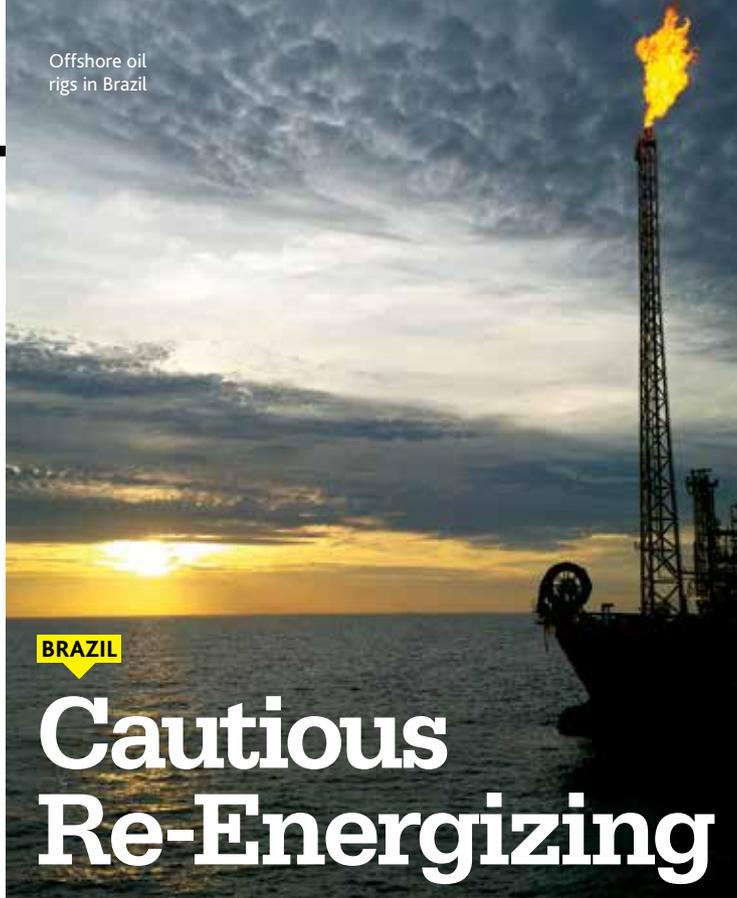
**Median project professional salary:**  
US\$34,904

**Sectors to watch:**  
Energy, telecom, transportation, IT



Mexico is expanding its rail system with a new line between Toluca and Mexico City.

Offshore oil rigs in Brazil



**BRAZIL**

# Cautious Re-Energizing

PHOTO BY RANIMIRO LOTUFO NETO / ALAMY STOCK

**B**razil officially emerged from its worst recession in history in early 2017, but the world's eighth-largest economy is still sluggish: Growth forecasts have been pessimistic, and unemployment hovers around 13 percent. In ManpowerGroup's *Global Employment Outlook* survey, Brazil and Panama reported the least optimistic employment forecasts in Latin America.

However, employers' modest hiring intentions are still the strongest they've been in three years, ManpowerGroup reports. And there are a few bright spots for growth—and job opportunities for qualified project professionals.

"With 44 new offshore production systems coming online in the next 10 years, Brazil is on target to be one of the key contributors to the growth of world oil production by 2030," says Daniel Godoy, PMP, Brazilian country manager,

Jacobs Engineering Group, São Paulo, Brazil. Thanks in part to recent government regulatory changes, oil and gas has the potential to attract US\$490 billion in project investments over the next decade, he says, and robust project talent will be needed to drive those initiatives.

Opportunities are brewing for renewable energy, too. Early last year, Brazil initiated the process of joining the International Renewable Energy Agency, the intergovernmental organization that supports countries transitioning to a sustainable energy future. The country's abundance of

natural resources makes it a prime spot for renewable energy projects.

Financial services and IT also are busy sectors for growth, according to a 2018 McKinsey report, and would be smart targets for project talent looking to make a career move. And sanitation infrastructure—particularly water treatment and sewage collection—continues to be on the country's to-do list.

"Despite the government's ambition to provide universal sanitation by 2015, only 83.3 percent of the population has access to treated water, with sewage collection being even lower," says Mr. Godoy. With little movement from the government, the private sector might steer future initiatives—after first filling its project ranks.

## AT A GLANCE

**2019 GDP growth forecast:** 2.4%

**Median project professional salary:** US\$45,114

**Sectors to watch:** Energy, IT, telecom, infrastructure

## How can project professionals get ahead in their careers in 2019?



"Always be ready for an opportunity. The war for project management talent is going to pick up, so make sure your résumé or CV is

in great shape and that mentally you're prepared to grasp a new opportunity with both hands."

—John Thorpe, managing director, Arras People, London, England



"Strengthen your agile delivery capabilities. In 2019, we'll see the majority of major enterprise companies

aggressively focus on reinventing their customer journeys through innovative solutions. Project managers, therefore, must augment their delivery capabilities to be able to drive quick and predictable value from projects in this changing business context."

—Alarka Purkayastha, PMP, digital transformation leader, Accenture, Bengaluru, India



"Improve your communication skills—this year, next year and every year after that. There's always room for improvement,

and without it the project fails and the team falls apart."

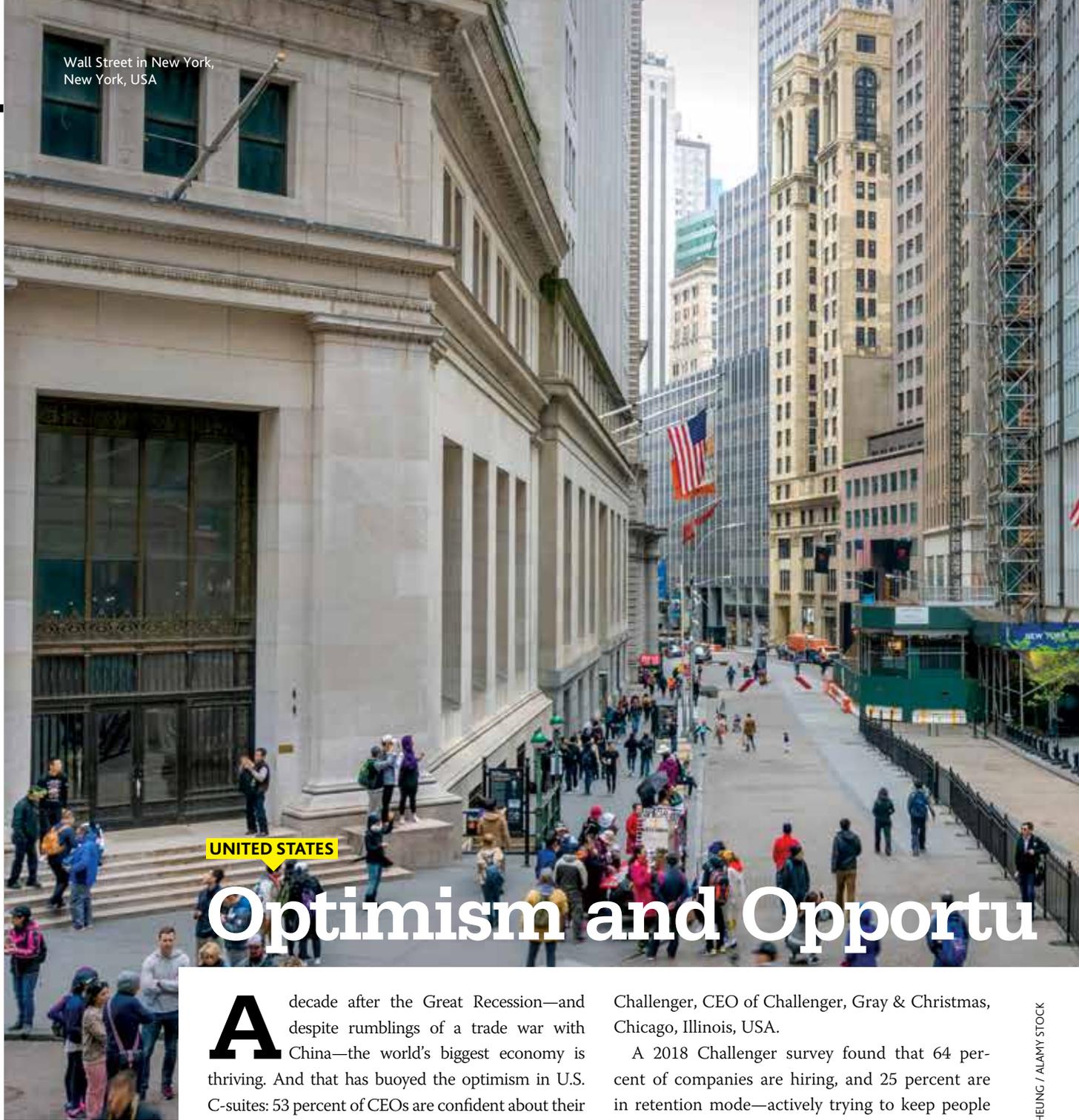
—J. Eric Maier, PMP, former project director, Intech Process Automation, Lagos, Nigeria



"Focus on the industry you're most interested in, then create a plan to acquire the specialized skills and

knowledge needed for that field. Project managers who can speak a common language with stakeholders in a particular field are definitely the most effective—and the most sought after."

—Val Kaplan, PMP, marketing and technical director, CIMS Ltd., Suzhou, China



UNITED STATES

# Optimism and Opportu

## AT A GLANCE

**2019 GDP growth forecast:** 2.5%

**Median project professional salary:** US\$112,000

**Sectors to watch:** IT, construction, healthcare

**A** decade after the Great Recession—and despite rumblings of a trade war with China—the world’s biggest economy is thriving. And that has buoyed the optimism in U.S. C-suites: 53 percent of CEOs are confident about their organization’s revenue growth by 2021, compared to 45 percent globally, according to PwC’s *Global CEO Survey*. Although business growth doesn’t keep them up at night, finding the right talent does, with 32 percent of CEOs expressing extreme concerns about the availability of key skills, up from just 11 percent in 2013. In fact, U.S. business leaders ranked talent woes as more worrisome than consumers’ changing behaviors, access to affordable capital, new market entrants—and even uncertain economic growth.

That makes this a project professional’s market, with companies of all sizes and in all sectors competing fiercely to attract top project talent, says John

Challenger, CEO of Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Chicago, Illinois, USA.

A 2018 Challenger survey found that 64 percent of companies are hiring, and 25 percent are in retention mode—actively trying to keep people committed and engaged in their current positions. “In this environment, employers are finding even competitive salaries and benefits aren’t always enough to stand out,” he says.

In such a tight talent market, project professionals might find job opportunities in surprising places. “Industries like oil and gas have a reputation of hiring engineers or technical experts exclusively to take on project leadership roles, but they’re starting to open up their ranks to generalists or non-technical project managers,” says Sara Gallagher, PMP, vice president of delivery, The Persimmon Group, Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA.



nity

To stand out in a job search, she recommends professionals highlight their track record for achieving project results as well as any related experience they have with agile approaches, organizational change management and business analysis.

Certain sectors seem to be red-hot for hiring: Mining, construction and manufacturing are experiencing the greatest job growth rates those sectors have seen since 1984, according to a *Washington Post* analysis. The number of IT project managers is projected to surge 12 percent by 2026. And “jobs in the health space will continue to grow at almost all levels, including project positions,” says Mr. Challenger.

PMI’s *Project Management Job Growth and Talent Gap* report backs this up, estimating a 17 percent growth in project-oriented jobs between 2017 and 2027 in the healthcare industry—the largest percentage increase in all U.S. sectors.

## How can project professionals get ahead in their careers in 2019?



“Embrace change. It’s a constant, and it can involve many variables. Don’t assume that this job search or promotion

opportunity will look like the last.”

—Edgar Bonilla, PMP, energy and hydrocarbons project adviser, LG International Corp., Bogotá, Colombia



“Look for professional opportunities in the leadership and strategic and business management sides of the PMI Talent Triangle®. Make

this the year you gain a working knowledge of business analysis or learn a little something about finance. Decide you’re going to work on your ability to facilitate a meeting or persuade an audience or navigate a difficult conflict. The more you can complement your traditional project management knowledge and experience, the easier it is to grow into a leadership role within your organization.”

—Sara Gallagher, PMP, vice president of delivery, The Persimmon Group, Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA



“Get trained in emerging technologies—like artificial intelligence or machine learning—and position yourself as a technology

project manager or program manager. You should think beyond pure-play project roles if you want to remain competitive in the industry.”

—Duraideivamani Sankararajan, PMI-ACP, PMP, program manager, IBM India, Bengaluru, India



“Stay curious. To really get ahead as a project manager, you can’t be afraid to ask questions, try new things and be disruptive.”

—Stefano Riva, PMP, program manager, global talent acquisition, people and culture, Philip Morris International, Lausanne, Switzerland

Chhatrapati Shivaji  
International Airport  
in Mumbai, India



INDIA

# Standing Out

## AT A GLANCE:

**2019 GDP growth  
forecast:** 7.4%

**Median project  
professional salary:**  
US\$25,959

**Sectors to watch:**  
IT, transportation,  
financial services

**I**n July, the International Monetary Fund cut India's growth forecast slightly for 2019, citing higher crude prices and faster than anticipated monetary tightening. Yet India remains one of the world's fastest-growing economies, and career opportunities for project talent abound. Hiring rates are expected to be brisk across all sectors, according to ManpowerGroup's *Global Employment Outlook* survey, with employment optimism 21 percent higher than the global average.

"There's widespread demand for project managers, but there is still a gap in terms of finding the right skill mix for these roles," says Alarka Purkayastha, PMP, digital transformation leader, PMI Global Executive Council member Accenture, Bengaluru,

ing project managers and program managers," says Duraideivamani Sankararajan, PMI-ACP, PMP, program manager, PMI Global Executive Council member IBM India, Bengaluru, India. More local project professionals are embracing emerging technologies, he says, in order to nab positions managing projects in digital disruption, blockchain and artificial intelligence.

And to really get ahead, project talent would be wise to take advantage of training opportunities—or, if they're not offered at work, seek them out independently, says Mr. Sankararajan. "There has been a paradigm shift in the past few years in how project managers are perceived and what skills they need to stay competitive."

India. Hiring managers often seek out applicants for roles limited to project coordination and resource management, and the lack of an internal career path contributes to a high turnover rate in the field.

Project professionals considering a career move should inquire about the company's skills and training development, as well as the role's career trajectory, he says. Indeed, it soon might be easier to find a company that's bucking the high-churn trend. Nearly half of businesses reported in 2018 that they're investing more in retention efforts—more than double the 22 percent figure from 2017, according to HireRight's *India Employment Screening Benchmark Report*.

"Many IT companies now are investing in training their employees, includ-

ISTOCKPHOTO

## NIGERIA

# Post-Oil Push

**A**frica's largest economy is steadily climbing out of its 2016 recession, but experts warn the country isn't yet in the clear. Oil remains the nation's largest export, and when global prices dropped in 2018, Nigeria's output contracted for the first time in decades.

Though oil prices are once again inching upward, the World Bank has called for leaders to focus on stronger infrastructure and streamlined regulations to drive more economic diversification and support the country's burgeoning middle class. The government seems to be listening: Recent regulatory reforms helped Nigeria climb the ranks in the 2018 *World Bank Ease of Doing Business* report. And leaders are in the midst of a three-year strategic planning initiative, known as the Economic Growth and Recovery Plan, that's expected to launch dozens of public and private projects in agriculture, transportation, manufacturing and energy.

"The electric power system needs a lot of investment to bring power plants up to capacity and

build new plants. The existing system has not kept up with the population increase," says J. Eric Maier, PMP, who worked as a project director at Intech Process Automation in Lagos, Nigeria before recently relocating to the United States. He points out that infrastructure improvements in one area will likely stimulate growth—and job opportunities—in other sectors as well. "Better power also means more manufacturing and opportunities in heavy equipment manufacturing, for instance."

A 2018 KPMG survey found that 76 percent of CEOs are confident about the country's growth prospects over the next three years. But finding the project talent will be crucial to that growth. A 2018 IMF report found that many large-scale projects in Nigeria have been weakened by a lack of effective project appraisals and evaluations. As the project management profession matures in Nigeria, Mr. Maier says, hiring managers have learned to zero in on specific skills, such as risk management and budget control, when assessing applicants.

## AT A GLANCE

**2019 GDP growth forecast:** 2.3%

**Median project professional salary:** US\$21,498

**Sectors to watch:**

Agriculture, transportation, mining, manufacturing, energy

Oil refinery, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Lagos, Nigeria





# CHINA Shifting Strides

ISTOCKPHOTO (2)

## AT A GLANCE:

**GDP growth forecast:** 6.2%

**Median project professional salary:** US\$29,040

**Sectors to watch:** IT, finance, manufacturing, transportation

Gone are the days when China relied mainly on manufacturing and exports to drive its red-hot economic growth. The country has shifted to a technology-driven economic growth model. In fact, internet-based businesses expanded at an average annual rate of 16 percent between 2007 and 2016 (nearly twice as fast as the GDP growth over the same period), according to the Institute of Population and Labor Economics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The government's latest Five-Year Plan calls for China to become an "innovation nation" by 2020 and an international leader of innovation by 2030.

And though recent news that the United States intends to impose 25 percent tariffs on US\$267 billion worth of imports has caused some economists to warn of an economic deceleration, the country's job market hasn't yet been impacted. Seventy percent of CEOs expect to expand headcount in the near future, according to PwC.

"The overall job market is stable, despite the uncertainty and friction of trade between China and the United States," says Frank Fu, PMP, founder and chairman, Shanghai Changeway Management Consulting, Shanghai, China. "And those with professional skills, such as project managers, are highly sought after in this market."

That's something Val Kaplan, PMP, has wit-

nessed firsthand, as his organization has struggled to fill openings for project professionals. "It's been increasingly hard to attract top talent," says Mr. Kaplan, marketing and technical director, CIMS Ltd., Suzhou, China.

Yet career opportunities aren't consistent across every sector. Chinese business leaders are more keen to expand headcount in finance and transportation, for instance, than mining or construction, according to a 2018 ManpowerGroup survey. And "in recent years, the manufacturing sector has seen a rapid increase in the demand for project management talent," says Mr. Fu. Likewise, project professionals with digital skills may have their pick of positions, as 88 percent of CEOs are somewhat or extremely concerned about the scarcity of those skills—nearly 20 percent higher than the global average, according to PwC.

Project professionals interested in making a career move in China's current market should highlight what sets them apart from the pack, says Mr. Kaplan. "In finance, hiring managers want to hear about your risk management skills and specialized experience, while those hiring for tech projects might want more subject matter knowledge," he says. "Project managers who make it clear they can speak a common technical language with other stakeholders will be more effective in their job search."

GERMANY

# Powering Along

**D**espite internal political turmoil, potential fallout from Brexit and the threat of a major European trade dispute with the United States, Germany's economy remains brisk and buoyant. The country's 2.1 percent projected growth is above average for the past decade and outpaces other European countries. No wonder, then, that 90 percent of Germans feel positive about the local economy, according to the European Commission's Eurobarometer. And 35 percent of German CEOs are confident their companies will expand in the next three years, according to PwC.

A rising tide lifts all boats, and "the project manager job market is good at the moment," says Daniel G. Glasow, PMP, transition management director, Unisys, Stralsund, Germany. In particular, IT is a hot spot of career activity, he notes, as organizations race to staff an uptick in digitization initiatives across various industries—from banking to healthcare.

That's especially noteworthy, considering that Germany has historically lagged in the digital race—with initiatives hobbled by government bureaucracy, entrenched resistance to new digital technologies and aging broadband. (A 2018 analysis by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ranked Germany 29th out of 37 industrialized economies for fast internet connections.)

But Chancellor Angela Merkel has said the country's future prosperity rests on fixing its digital deficiencies, and many organizations are now reacting by launching projects and expanding headcount. Project professionals with digital experience will be in high demand, and those with cybersecurity skills might find themselves fielding multiple offers. According to Cisco's 2018 *Cybersecurity Report*, 24 percent of German organizations cite a lack of trained personnel as a major obstacle.

AT A GLANCE:

**2019 GDP growth forecast:** 1.9%

**Median project professional salary:** US\$88,449

**Sectors to watch:** Banking, healthcare, IT, finance



Berlin, Germany

## How can project professionals get ahead in their careers in 2019?



"Earn the Project Management Professional (PMP)<sup>®</sup> certification, if you don't already have it. It can help you perform better in your role and stand out in

the application process. And if you already have your PMP<sup>®</sup>, take advantage of PMI's continuing certification requirements program."

—René Nuño Cabrera, PMP, project management office manager, Pounce, Mexico City, Mexico



"Meet with three new people each week. That could mean colleagues, project professionals in other companies or referrals from your social network. The best way to

advance your career is through growing and tapping your professional network."

—John Challenger, CEO, Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Chicago, Illinois, USA



"Take the time to understand your own capabilities and strengths. The best way to iterate in your career is to assess where you're at—whether that means

asking a mentor or objectively reviewing your experience—and only then try to map out which organizations or positions might be the best fit."

—María José Romo Cotera, senior project manager, Aki Technologies, Mexico City, Mexico



"Listen more. Communication skills can make all the difference in your career, but listening is such an undervalued part of that."

—Toshiaki Hattori, PMP, former senior engineer, Sangikyo Corp., Yokohama, Japan



"Gain experience with hybrid delivery approaches. There's no question more organizations are moving toward this and looking for project managers

who have that transition capability and adaptability."

—Venkatraman Lakshminarayanan, associate director, projects, Cognizant Digital Business, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

# Discover & Dem

## INDUSTRY ADVANTAGE

The sectors expected to generate high demand for project management talent include:



### Construction

The pace of construction output is expected to average 3.6 percent each year through 2022—hitting US\$12.7 trillion in 2022, compared with US\$10.6 trillion in 2017. In particular, project activity has picked up in Western Europe, with the region's output on track to expand 2.4 percent annually through 2022. (Between 2013 and 2017, growth was a sluggish 1.1 percent.)



### Human resources

Automation and artificial intelligence are poised to redefine how organizations operate—but only if companies have a digital-ready human resources function that's capable of managing such large-scale transformations. Sixty percent of CEOs are looking to overhaul their human resource departments to better embrace the new frontier.



### Cybersecurity

What keeps CIOs up at night? A lack of skilled talent tops the list in all industries and across all regions, according to Cisco's *2018 Annual Cybersecurity Report*. A significant number of organizations are expanding headcount for their security teams this year.



### Energy

It's sunny skies ahead for the renewable energy sector. There's a significant uptick in projects in emerging markets and a global focus on decarbonization at many enterprise organizations.



### Healthcare

An aging global population, regulatory flux, changing consumer behavior and digital disruption are continuing to drive project activity in the sector. And 83 percent of healthcare CEOs report they're somewhat or extremely concerned about the availability of key skills.



### Finance

Risk management and cost reduction remain an industry focus around the globe—yet 95 percent of finance executives see technology disruption as a major opportunity. Digital transformation managers cracked the list of the top five skills needed for the financial sector to grow.

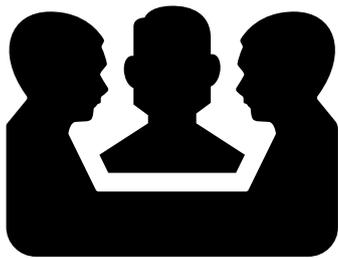
# and

The first step in getting ahead is knowing where to look. Here are the sectors, skills and spots on the globe that are most likely to provide abundant career opportunities.

## SKILLS SEARCH

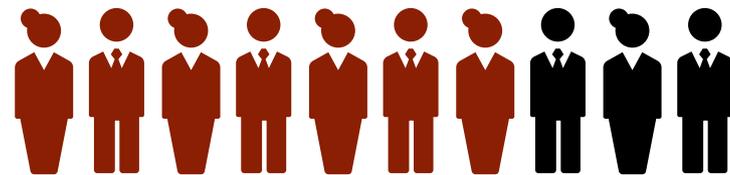
Which skills are most important for building a truly digital capability for project leaders? Respondents at innovator organizations pointed to:

- 1 Data science skills
- 2 Innovative mindset
- 3 Security and privacy knowledge
- 4 Legal and regulatory compliance knowledge
- 5 Ability to make data-driven decisions
- 6 Collaborative leadership skills



## 4 in 5

respondents report that soft skills—such as communication, leadership and negotiation—are more important today than they were five years ago.

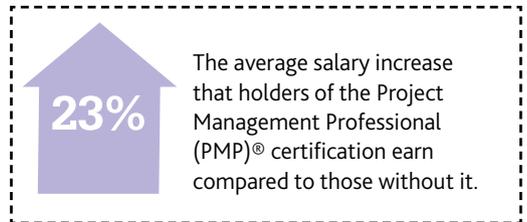


## 7 in 10

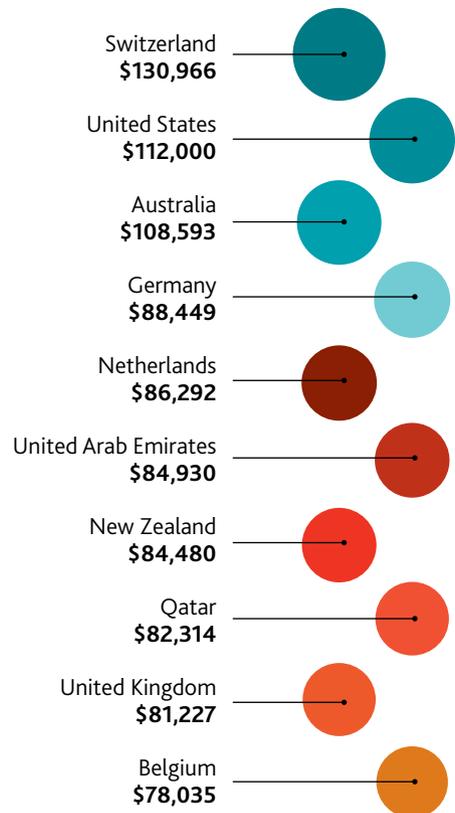
project leaders are either currently using or considering the use of lean agile practices to manage the impact of disruptive technologies.

## MONEY MATTERS

Location and certifications can have a big impact on salaries.



The countries with the highest median salaries for project management professionals. (All salaries have been converted into U.S. dollars.)



Sources: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; *Global Construction Outlook to 2022*, ReportBuyer, 2018; *Global CEO Survey*, PwC, 2018; *Annual Cybersecurity Report*, Cisco, 2018; *2018 CEO Outlook*, KPMG, 2018; *Renewable Energy Industry Outlook*, Deloitte, 2018; *The Project Manager of the Future: Developing Digital-Age Project Management Skills to Thrive in Disruptive Times*, PMI, 2018; *Earning Power: Project Management Salary Survey*, 10th edition, PMI, 2018

This material has been reproduced with the permission of the copyright owner. Unauthorized reproduction of this material is strictly prohibited. For permission to reproduce this material, please contact PMI.