Platned

The age of innovation in construction and engineering

Top AI and ERP trends shaping 2026

Why innovation now

Industry pressure is intensifying

Construction and engineering organisations are operating in an environment of sustained disruption. Volatile markets, regulatory pressure, supply chain instability, workforce shortages and rising project complexity are no longer temporary challenges.

What has accelerated most rapidly is the shift from experimental AI to industrial, mission-critical use. AI is now influencing how organisations plan, control and deliver projects at scale.

At Platned, we help organisations apply AI and ERP capabilities in a practical, controlled way, using IFS Cloud™ as the digital foundation.

Accelerating growth demands smarter systems

Global enterprise investment in AI exceeded **$300 billion in 2025** and is forecast to more than double by 2028.

At the same time, construction and engineering growth is accelerating due to:

- Large-scale infrastructure programmes.
- Housing demand.
- Renewable energy investment.
- Data-driven industries such as utilities and data centres.

Organisations delaying AI adoption beyond 2026 risk losing competitive ground, not because AI is a trend, but because it is already delivering measurable improvements in control, predictability and profitability.

Where AI is delivering value today

AI is most effective when applied to long-standing operational challenges:

- Limited project control and predictability.
- Fragmented enterprise-wide visibility.
- Slow access to trusted, real-time data.
- Workforce and skills shortages.
- Sustainability and compliance pressures.

Platned focuses on embedding AI within core ERP processes rather than layering disconnected tools on top.

The five predictions shaping 2026

Prediction 1: Industrial AI becomes standard

91% of organisations will invest in a combination of industrial AI, automation and robotics

Industrial AI differs from consumer AI. It is designed for accuracy, resilience and mission-critical environments where decisions directly affect safety, margins and asset performance.

Key use cases include:

- Project financial forecasting.
- Cost and schedule anomaly detection.
- Predictive risk identification.
- Resource and asset optimisation.

Prediction 2: digital workers reshape the workforce

71% of organisations expect to transform their workforce using agentic AI or digital workers.

Digital workers act as virtual colleagues, not simple automation. Deployed correctly, they improve efficiency by **at least 30%** while freeing teams to focus on higher-value work.

Prediction 3: Data foundations become a priority

60% of IT leaders will prioritise data consolidation and analysis to make AI viable

Trusted AI depends on trusted data. CIOs are focusing on:

- Standardised project and asset data.
- Strong governance and quality controls.
- Integrated ERP, BIM, finance and supply chain data.
- A single source of truth across the organisation.

Prediction 4: diversification accelerates

65% of CEOs will prioritise business diversification as a growth strategy

This includes:

- Expanding into services and asset operations.
- Modular, prefab and offsite construction.
- New geographies and project types.

Diversification succeeds only when supported by a platform that maintains common processes, visibility and control.

Prediction 5: sustainability becomes operational

75% of firms will commit to decarbonisation targets to meet net-zero demands

The construction sector generates **around one-third of global waste**, approximately **2 billion tonnes annually**

Sustainability is shifting from aspiration to execution, driven by:

- Investor ESG expectations.
- Regulations such as LEED, BREEAM and CSRD.
- Demand for traceable, auditable environmental data.

How Platned supports this journey

As an IFS partner, Platned helps construction and engineering organisations embed industrial AI into IFS Cloud™ in a controlled, value-driven way, ensuring innovation improves outcomes without increasing risk.