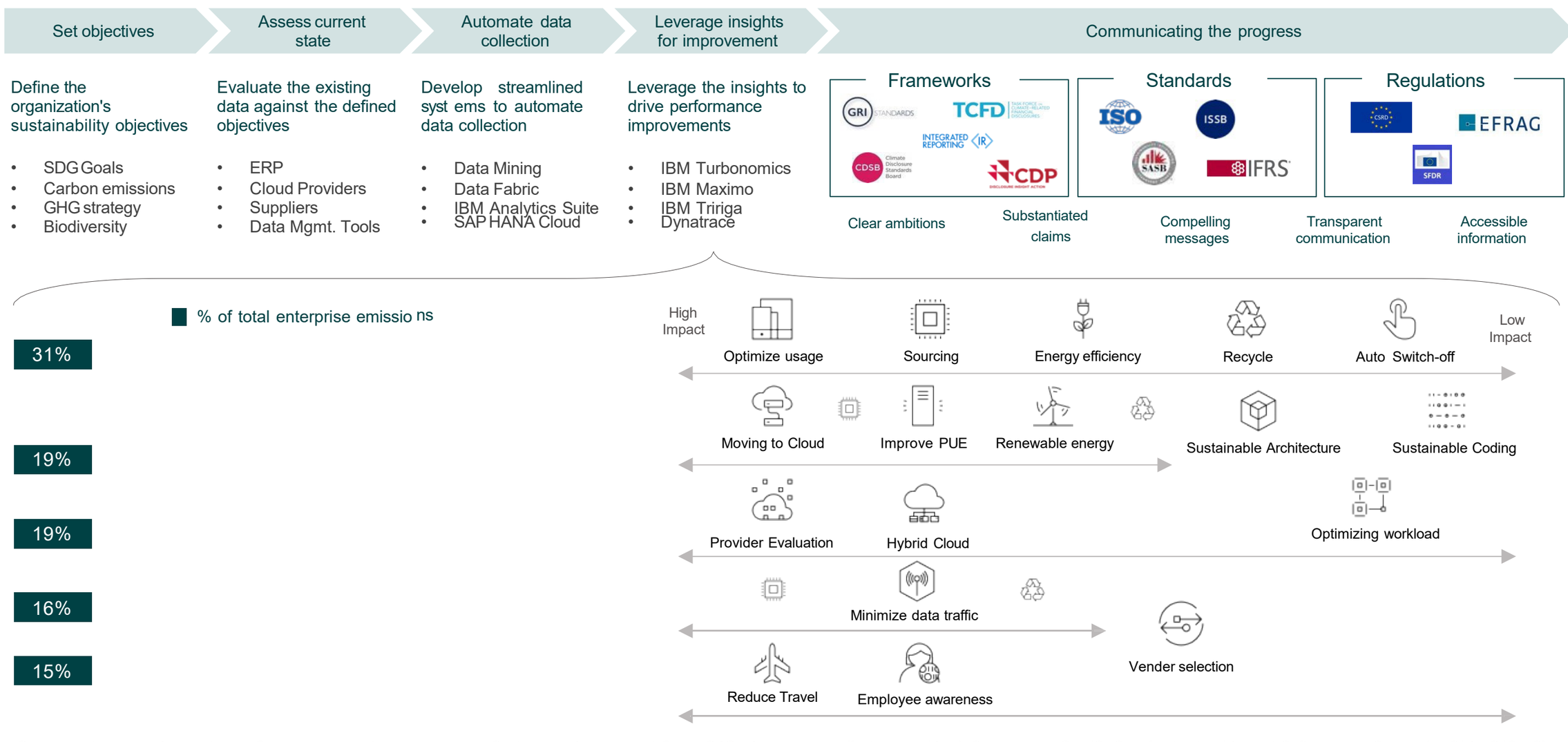
HSLU Hochschule Luzern

Technik & Architektur

Master Thesis in Business Engineering

Green IT in the Swiss insurance industry

How can Swiss insurers adapt to Green IT, and what is their current state of adoption?



Sources: Interviews, IBM, McKinsey, Capgemini, Accenture

Abbrev.: Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE), Green House Gas (GHG), Infrastructure/Product/Software as a Service (IaaS/PaaS/SaaS)

Problem definition

As concerns about climate change and environmental sustainability continue to grow, many organizations are seeking ways to reduce their carbon footprint and become more environmentally responsible. This has led to the concept of Green IT, which refers to the study and practice of environmentally preferable computing, designing, manufacturing, operating, and disposing of IT related products.

This research focuses thereby on the Swiss insurance industry and aims to answer following research question: How can Swiss insurer adapt to Green IT, and what is the current state of adoption?

Method

Through desk research, the fundamental concepts and terms of sustainability and Green IT were examined. Qualitative interviews with employees from various Swiss insurance companies were then conducted to assess the current state of adoption and identify existing pain points. The results were summarized in a Customer Profile and SWOT analysis, revealing that Swiss insurers are still in the early stages of adopting Green IT, with efforts being implemented sporadically. The research indicates that inadequate data and an unclear return on investment for such initiatives are the primary pain points hindering the adoption of Green IT.

Results

The second part of the study focuses on exploring various levers and actions within IT, utilizing both primary and secondary resources. An unexpected finding reveals that end-user devices such as laptops, tablets, smartphones, and printers generate more carbon emissions than data centers.

Through validation via a survey, it was determined that actions related to end-user device policy change and cloud migration have the most significant impact in terms of carbon emissions savings. Additionally, the research proposes a comprehensive process for organizations to obtain their sustainability data and offers insights on creating thoughtful communication strategies to prevent Green Washing.

The thesis concludes, that to effectively address the sustainability challenges, Swiss insurers should adopt a holistic approach that goes beyond surface-level solutions. Further research is necessary to get a more detailed view into the defined actions to ensure their effectiveness.

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