DLT in the real world 2026.

Where, how and why DLT is transforming the capital markets this year

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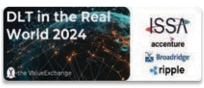
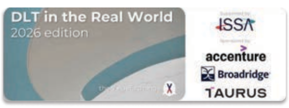
Contents.

Executive summary
seven years in the making.

"It's all finally happening"

After seven years of tracking, the 2026 DLT in the Real World survey describes an industry that has moved through multiple phases of exploration and experimentation, to finally enter a critical year of deployment.

DLT in the Real World: The journey.

		Industry participants live with DLT today	Average importance of DLT to the industry	Key asset classes in use	Digital asset volumes (Firms with over USD50m in monthly settled volumes)	Average number of participants per initiative
	2020	4%	6	Crypto currencies FX	N/A	N/A
	2021	8%	6.5	Bonds	N/A	N/A
	2022	32%	6.7	Crypto currencies Bonds	N/A	3.9
	2023	39%	6.6	Bonds Private markets	N/A	2.1
	2024	37%	7.2	Bonds Funds	14%	4.2
	2025	36%	6.6	Bonds Stablecoins	15%	4.4
	**2026**	**32%**	**7.8**	**Money market funds Stablecoins**	**33%**	**6.4**

DLT has never been more strategically important. DLT budgets are growing at three times the pace of the broader industry. 12% are trading over USD 1 billion per month in digital assets. Firms are executing repos Saturday mornings. 77% of live DLT users see significant improvements versus traditional platforms. This year's survey provides an industry dashboard that is packed with evidence of progress, of heightened practical focus and of performance.

Underneath the global DLT headlines is a host of specific narratives – each evolving at different speeds, in different regions.

Tokenised collateral

is now firmly en route to be the #1 use case for DLT in 2027, with 27% of firms looking to tokenisation to unlock billions of dollars in trapped assets

Tokenised money market funds

are now the #1 digital asset class, backed by fund managers and banks as a transformational means of both widening distribution and super-charging collateral margining

Digital money

is taking hold as over 70% of firms expect to use stablecoins and tokenised deposits in 2027 – not to mention a digital Euro.

What makes 2026 unique however are the landmark developments that will transform the industry landscape this year. By 2027, trillions of dollars of tokenised securities will be available from the world's largest securities depository – and one of the world's key currencies will be available to wholesale banks for on-chain transactions. In an industry that has so far struggled to scale its digital asset infrastructures, these developments are likely to be a watershed moment for the evolution of DLT globally and for the realisation of the benefits that DLT can deliver.

ISSA introduction.

On behalf of the International Securities Services Association (ISSA), we are pleased to introduce our seventh annual benchmark study, produced in partnership with The ValueExchange and with the support of our partners Accenture, Broadridge, and Taurus.

ISSA's mission is to shape the future of the global securities services industry by connecting market leaders, fostering collaboration across the value chain, and driving progressive change that reduces risk, increases operational efficiency, and creates standardised practices. This longitudinal research sits at the very heart of that mission. By providing transparent, data-driven intelligence on the institutional adoption of Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT), we aim to help our members move beyond industry hype, identify key operational bottlenecks, and make informed strategic decisions.

Grounding ISSA's agenda in real-world data.

The insights from this report directly inform the agenda of ISSA's **Digital Assets Working Group** and its dedicated subgroups:

Guiding industry priorities

The findings from our 510 survey participants highlight where institutional focus is converging – most notably around **tokenised collateral** and **tokenised money market funds (TMMFs)** as prime drivers for 24/7 liquidity and instant settlement finality. These empirical trends allow ISSA to align its working group initiatives directly with the market's most pressing requirements.

Addressing operational friction

While 77% of live DLT users report significant workflow improvements, our research shows that 80% of institutions still face challenges managing key digital asset risks, particularly around technology resilience and asset protection. Our workstreams are actively developing practical frameworks, legal considerations, and implementation guidelines to help members overcome these exact hurdles.

Facilitating interoperability & standards

As wholesale digital money initiatives – ranging from regulated stablecoins and tokenised deposits to central bank digital currencies – continue to proliferate, ISSA plays a vital role in encouraging standardised payment mechanics and cross-border alignment.

A pivotal moment for market infrastructure.

Seven years of tracking DLT development demonstrate that the industry has transitioned from isolated experimentation into a decisive phase of live execution. Strategic importance scores have reached an all-time high of 7.8 out of 10, and digital asset budgets are expanding at three times the rate of broader securities operations spend.

Crucially, 2026 marks a watershed moment as major Financial Market Infrastructures (FMIs) and central banks introduce DLT-ready environments. When foundational market pillars provide tokenised assets and digital money backed by clear legal frameworks and standardised rulebooks, they establish the trust and scale necessary for the entire securities value chain to participate safely.

Collaborative leadership for the future.

Solving systemic barriers – such as counterparty adoption, market liquidity, and multi-jurisdictional complexity – requires collective action. No single institution can transform market infrastructure alone. Through our working group publications, symposiums, and collaborative studies like *DLT in the Real World*, ISSA remains committed to providing the thought leadership and practical tools required to build a safe, efficient, and interconnected digital ecosystem.

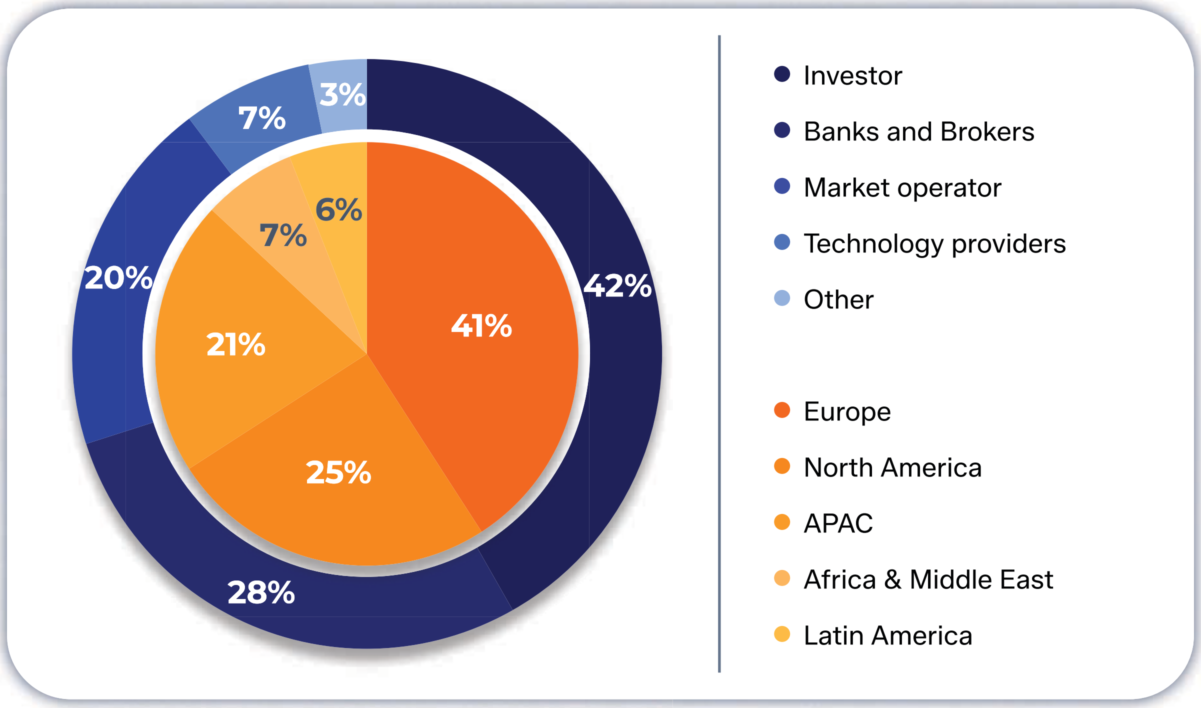
We extend our sincere thanks to all the global institutions that contributed to this year’s survey, as well as our project partners for their ongoing dedication to advancing market knowledge. We encourage you to use these findings to benchmark your organisation's journey and engage with ISSA as we collectively shape the future of securities services.

About this report.

This report is based on the 'DLT in the Real World 2026' key findings, the seventh annual survey conducted by The ValueExchange and ISSA, drawing on responses from 510 institutional capital markets firms in Q2 2026.

The survey was conducted with the kind support of our partners Accenture, Broadridge and Taurus.

Who participated?

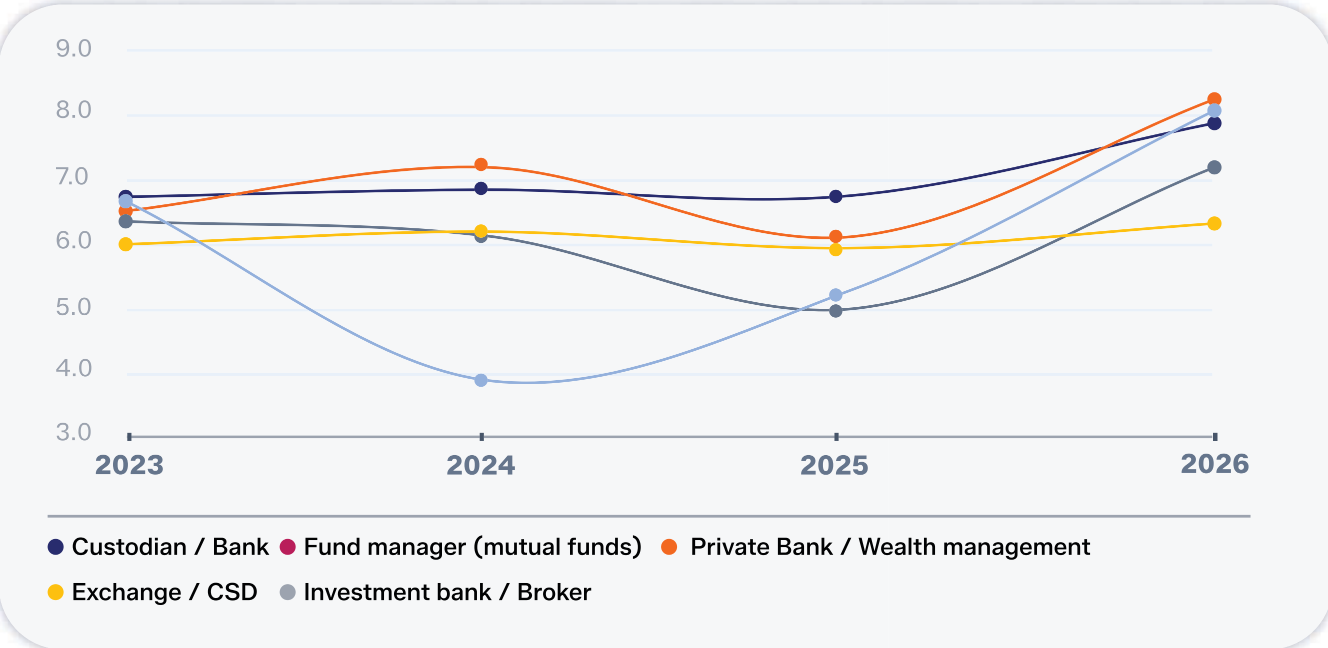


This report incorporates findings from the following VX companion research publications:

1. DLT and digital assets in 2026
the industry dashboard

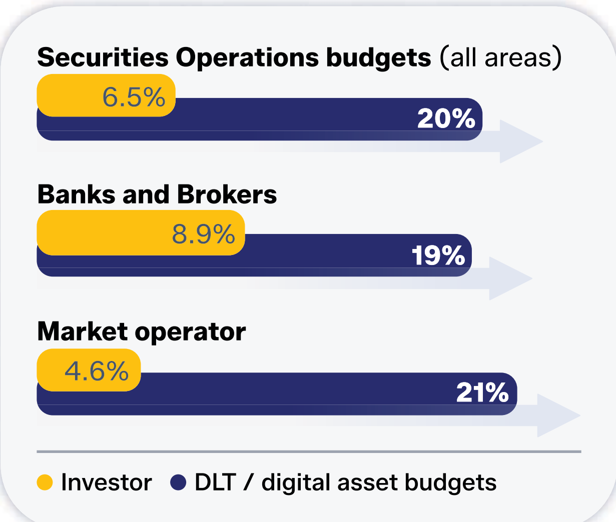
01 DLT and digital assets have never been more important

Strategic importance of DLT and digital assets (out of 10)



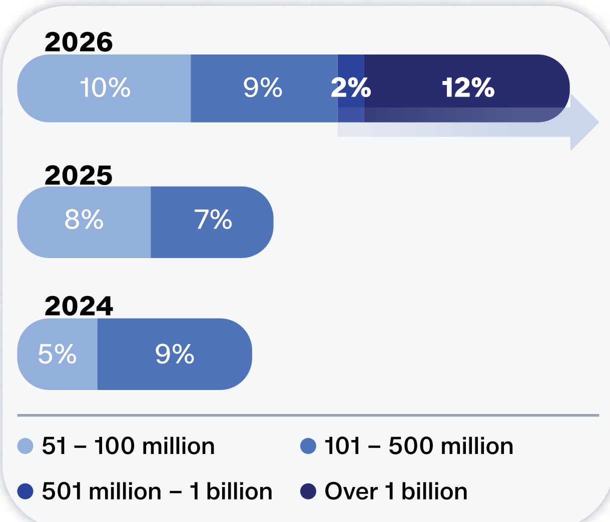
02 Digital asset budgets are growing by 20% year on year

% growth in overall Securities Operations spend vs DLT / digital asset budget growth (2025/2026)



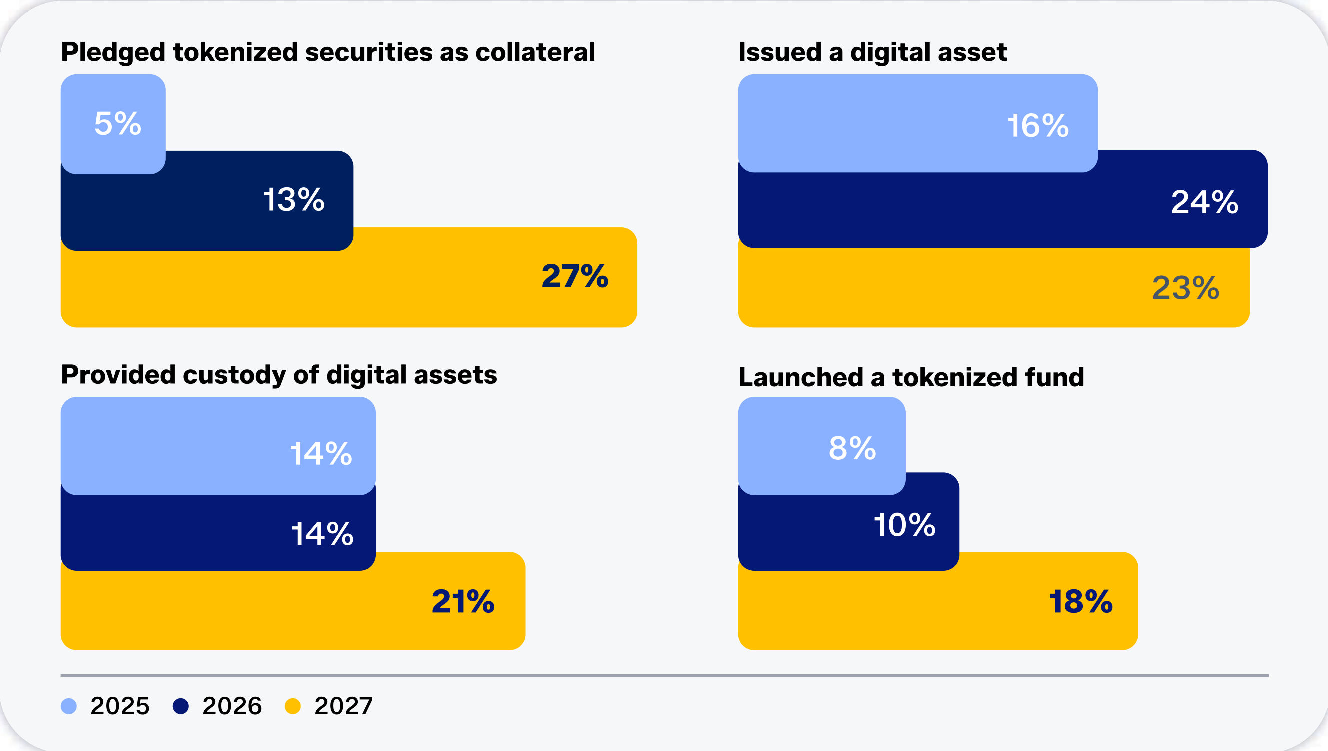
03 12% of firms expect to settle over USD 1bn per month in digital assets this year

Monthly turnover expectations for DLT and digital assets (% of respondents by tier of value settled per month, in USD)



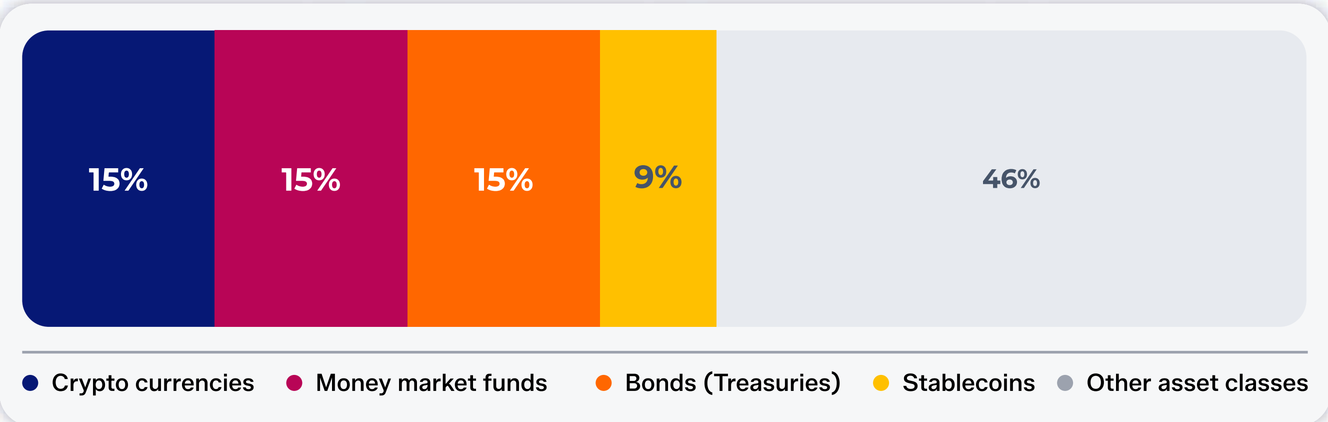
04 27% of firms are tokenising collateral in 2027

% of respondents who have taken each action in the last 12 months, and who expect to in the next 12 months



05 Four asset classes make up 50% of digital asset settlement volumes

Average breakdown of expected monthly turnover by asset class



DLT and digital assets have never been more important.

For the first time in the seven-year history of this survey, every segment of the industry has simultaneously rated the strategic importance of DLT and digital assets as being above 7 out of 10.

Doubtless spurred by landmark developments in the US, in particular, exchanges and Central Securities Depositories (CSDs) lead at 8.3. Fund managers, who were among the least engaged participants two years ago, have risen to 8.1, following the rapid expansion of tokenised money market funds (TMMF) as a new product distribution opportunity. Every global region has seen a similar trajectory: the increase is broad-based, not concentrated in any single geography.

Spending: the US leads, but the gap is no longer widening.

The average US firm is spending USD 6.3 million on DLT and digital assets in 2026, a 17% increase on 2025. The figures across other regions are lower in absolute terms but are growing at comparable or faster rates: European firms at USD 2.65 million (up 22%), Asia-Pacific at USD 1.89 million (up 21%), Latin America at USD 0.45 million (up 19%).

The US still out-spends European peers by approximately three times in absolute terms, a gap that reflects differences in regulatory environment, market structure, and the strategic direction of the largest global institutions.

> "29% of firms in North America are spending over USD 10 million on DLT projects. In Europe, 55% are spending less than 500k. The two speeds of development are just really striking."

The important shift in 2026, however, is that the gap is no longer widening in growth terms. After slow budget growth in Europe and Asia in 2025, both regions are now accelerating at rates comparable to North America. The initial commitment of the US is being followed, with a lag, by the rest of the world.

DLT budgets are growing at more than three times the pace of securities operations spend.

The most telling indicator of the industry's conviction is not the absolute level of DLT spend but its growth rate relative to the rest of the business. DLT and digital asset budgets are growing at more than three times the rate of broader securities operations budgets across every segment.

46% of market operators, 40% of investors, and 35% of banks and brokers are seeing DLT budget increases of over 25% year on year. These are not marginal adjustments: they represent a deliberate reallocation of capital towards digital asset capabilities. The technology budget has become a strategic line.

> "The average firm is spending USD 700k more this year than last just to get live. There is a substantial uptick in terms of budgets and spend."

Turnover is materialising – but mostly in the US.

One of the persistent criticisms of institutional DLT has been that issuance activity has not translated into meaningful secondary-market turnover: assets are issued and then effectively immobilised, creating a cost for the holder that eliminates the target benefits of digitalisation. The 2026 data offer the first clear evidence that this is beginning to change – at least on one side of the Atlantic.

Across Europe and Asia-Pacific, the focus on digital asset issuance continues with expected issuance volumes exceeding turnover by a factor of four. Billions of dollars are expected to be issued in digital assets there, with less than USD 500 million in total turnover expected each month.

> "We have seen over USD 30 billion of digital asset issuance in the institutional space thus far, half of which does not move. So, we have got at least USD 15 billion of assets sitting in digital wallets that are not being mobilised from a funding perspective. These assets are a drain on the balance sheet at the moment."

In the US, the story is markedly different. 12% of firms now expect to settle over USD 1 billion in digital asset volumes each month in 2027 and a further 9% expect volumes of USD 101 million to USD 500 million. This represents a meaningful shift from the near-zero volumes that characterised the early years of DLT development. The firms at the top of this distribution are not experimenting; they are building infrastructure for scale.

DLT is becoming truly multilateral.

The average number of participating organisations in a DLT or digital asset initiative has risen from 5.7 in 2025 to 6.4 in 2026. 27% of initiatives now involve more than seven participants, making these projects truly multilateral.

This is structurally important. A bilateral pilot between two institutions does not create liquidity. A network of seven or more, including at minimum a handful of banks, a market infrastructure, and a digital cash provider, creates the conditions in which tokenised assets can actually move between counterparties. The growth of multilateral initiatives is a leading indicator of the liquidity improvement that the market has been waiting for.

Four asset classes will account for over 50% of expected turnover in 2027.

When respondents break down their expected monthly transaction volumes by asset class, four categories account for more than half the total: cryptocurrency assets, money market funds (MMFs), government and sovereign bonds and stablecoins. Industry attention is focusing and aligning on a core set of increasingly well-defined opportunities.

The common thread across all four is revenue generation. New product revenues account for 78% of the objective for cryptocurrency activity, 55% for MMFs, 33% for stablecoins and 32% for bonds. Why run digital asset projects today? Because it's a revenue generator.

56% of FMIs expect to tokenise securities in 2027.

As interest has grown in the use of digital assets in the institutional capital markets, the lack of tokenised securities that can be transferred, settled and held by regulated firms has become an increasing blocking point. With only sporadic digital issuance by CSDs to date, tokenisation efforts have been limited to immobilisation platforms within a closed circle of member firms.

Put another way, tokenisation has gone nowhere so far because the 'big names' haven't been involved.

2026 looks set to be the year when that changes definitively. With the world's largest CSD (DTCC) and the world's largest central bank (the European Central Bank) both due to launch DLT-ready solutions in Q4 2026 for securities and cash respectively, the world will finish 2026 with over USD 1 trillion of securities and one of the largest currencies readily available in digital form.

With almost two-thirds of exchanges, clearing houses and securities depositories expecting to follow suit this year, the supply of regulated securities in tokenised form looks set to transform.

> "When an FMI tokenises an asset, it does so with legal certainty, a single industry rule book, and access to the entire ecosystem it already serves. That combination is not available to any single bank or broker acting alone. If an FMI does it, this is all seamless and it is just a tech upgrade."

Who is DLT for? Multiple digital narratives.

One of the most instructive findings in the 2026 survey is the extent to which the primary intended beneficiary of DLT activity differs by region.

60% of North American efforts on DLT are intended to benefit institutional investors and banks first and foremost, meaning that collateral mobility and fund structures are priority use cases. In Europe, major issuers such as governments and supranational bodies have had much more attention. In Latin America, Africa and Asia-Pacific, over 50% of initiatives are focused on retail investors, meaning that cryptocurrencies and stablecoins are prevalent in board room discussions.

> "There is no single DLT narrative around the world, ultimately because each region is targeting a completely different end-client. A solution designed for the North American institutional market is not relevant to a retail-focused bank in Africa and so the dynamics of adoption are entirely different."

2. Where is the action today?

2.1

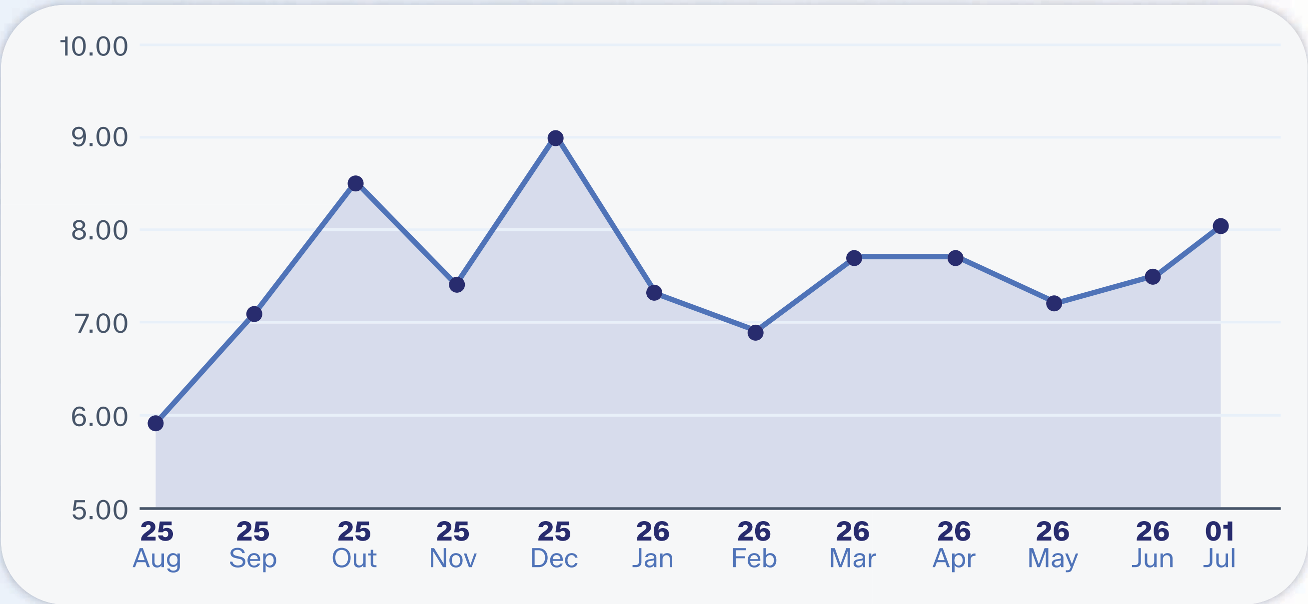
Collateral tokenisation

the billion-dollar question in 2027.

Since 2022, platforms such as Broadridge's DLR (as well as JPMorgan Kinexys and HQLAx most notably) have been leveraging tokenisation to transform the securities finance and collateral space, to the point where USD 357 billion in daily repo turnover is being transacted using tokenised securities today.

Of all the actions tracked in our 2026 survey, the pledging of tokenised securities as collateral is set to become the single largest institutional DLT activity next year, according to 27% of respondents. Building on the practical experience that these platforms have provided, collateral tokenisation has overtaken digital asset issuance (24%), custody provision (23%), and fund launches (21%) as the primary focus of the next twelve months. Collateral is where distributed ledger technology meets a genuine, large-scale, daily operational need.

Broadridge's DLR monthly transaction volumes (in USD trillion)



Why is tokenised collateral so important?

"Today, firms are deliberately slowing down liquidity to manage their risk. Management of client collateral is deliberately slow in order to ensure that it is very clear where everything is in a default scenario."

Head of derivatives clearing, leading investment bank

69%	**of firms struggle today with settlement matching and delivery issues on their collateral,** owing largely to the manual processes that support these movements. Over two-thirds of the industry is unable to say for sure that their collateral will arrive at its intended destination.
65	In a cross-border context, **this translates into high degrees of risk in moving collateral across an entire network that averages 65 collateral locations** for each firm. Settlement risk is not a bilateral issue; it is a fundamental weakness that undermines an entire network of multi-national movements every day.
25%	In practice, this settlement risk translates into a series of corrective behaviours that, together, l**eave up to 25% of the world's collateral immobile and un-remunerated**. In the face of cross-border banking cut-offs and settlement risk, firms are pre-funding 18% of their collateral obligations today, leaving billions of dollars in collateral idle overnight, simply to ensure that the margin is in place ahead of a morning deadline. In addition, cross-border payment and securities delivery risks mean that firms are over-provisioning by an additional 7%, leaving an excess of collateral in their accounts as cover.
USD 1.2bn	In a market where up to USD 25 trillion in cross-border collateral is outstanding at any one time, the combined behaviours of "better early than late" and "better too much than too little" are causing more than USD 6 trillion to be left unused and uncompensated each night, **at a cost of USD 1.2 billion in lost interest earnings, every night.** And what about the weekends? Around the world, firms today are having to project more than two days of margin obligations (or three days in the case of a public holiday) on a Friday evening, before payment and securities cut-offs make transfers impossible on a Saturday or Sunday. **This established practice of "guesstimation" is a source of frustration** for many, tying up valuable amounts of capital and with no opportunity for more sophisticated management.
13%	Tokenisation is expected to deliver a **13.4% improvement in the volume of failed collateral movements across the industry** – removing substantial risk and triggering a domino-effect that delivers benefits in buffering volumes, in Risk Weighted Asset (RWA) provisions and in collateral utilisation.
USD 346m	For a tier 1 firm, this level of efficiency can help them to realise **USD 346 million in additional interest earnings each year** – through greater mobilisation of their existing inventory across the entire working week.

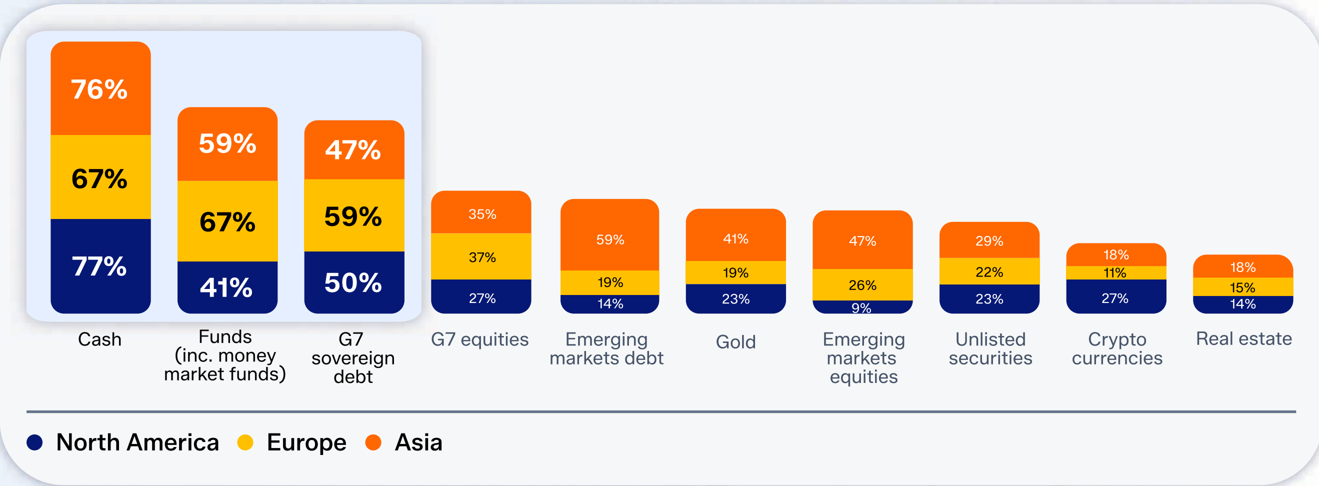
Total economic benefits of tokenised collateral, by tier of collateral pledged daily (in USD)

	Tier 1 (100bn and above)	Tier 2 (20bn - 99bn)	Tier 3 (Below 20bn)
Total value of collateral that is excess or not remunerated today (USD Average)	36.8bn	11.5bn	2.3bn
Average expected increase in mobilisation of overnight / non-remunerated collateral (through tokenisation)	2.0bn	1.3bn	100m
Average expected reduction in excess collateral (through tokenisation)	2.8bn	0.3bn	100m
Total expected increase in mobilised overnight collateral due to tokenisation	4.8bn	1.6bn	200m
Total increase in interest earnings when tokenisation of collateral (per annum)	346m	190m	7.7m

What collateral to tokenise?

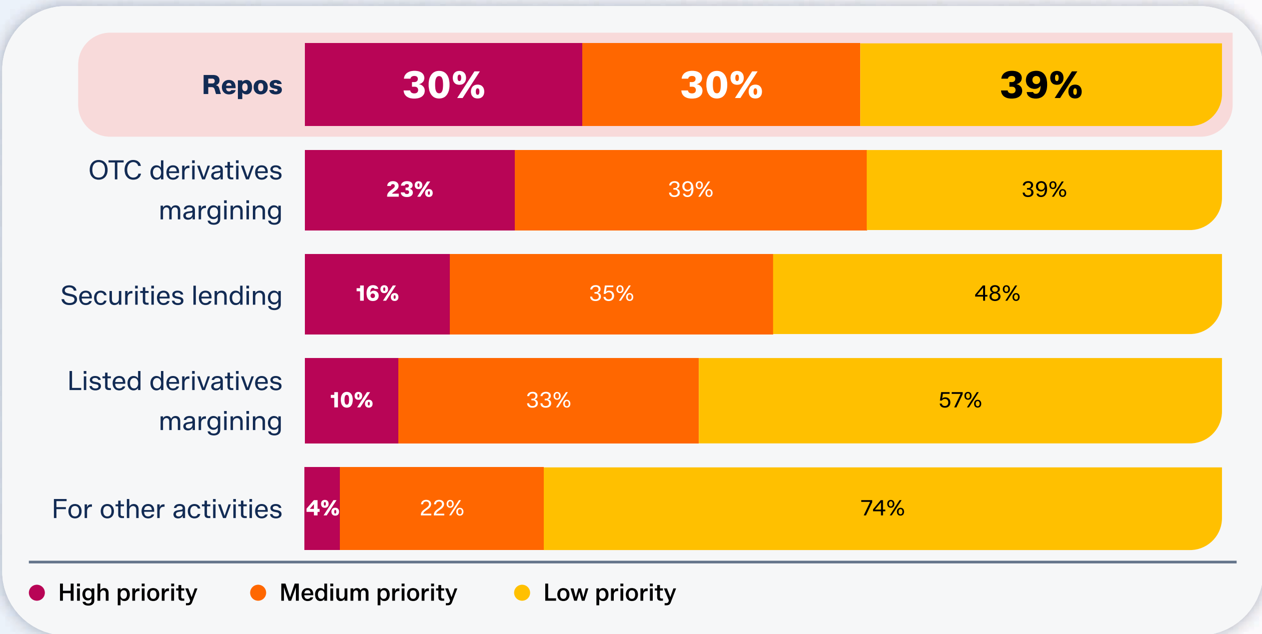
Over 50% of firms across the regulated capital markets are focused on tokenising cash, bonds and money market funds.

% of respondents in each region expecting to tokenise each asset class for use as collateral



(Bilateral) repos are the core starting point for tokenisation for 30% of firms.

% of respondents citing each collateral activity by level of priority for tokenisation



Where is collateral being tokenised?

In addition to the repo trading volumes above, a growing number of firms have been executing live repo trades using tokenised US treasuries and (real) cash on weekends throughout 2025 and 2026. Most notably, a group of 20 firms have conducted several waves of repo trades on the Canton network, highlighting the increasing viability of DLT in the collateral space.

2025

UST repo trades vs stablecoins
July 26th - Oct 18th

- Near-instant, atomic settlement
- Live cash and securities
- Regulated institutions
- On a weekend
- Re-hypothecation
- Public blockchain

Bank of America, Brale, Circle, Cumberland, Citadel Securities, Digital Asset, DTCC, HiddenRoad, M1X, Societe Generale, Tradeweb, Virtu Financial

2025

European government bonds vs UST repos
December 7th

- Cross-border repos (US to Europe)
- ICSD and two European CSDs
- Identical RWA treatment for digital cash legs (versus traditional cash)

DTCC, euroclear, EURONEXT, LSEG, Tradeweb, Societe Generale

2026

UK Gilts vs UST repos
January 31st

- Cross-border repos (US to UK)
- ICSD and two European CSDs
- Expanded customer reach into corporates

Archax, Citadel Securities, DRW, euroclear, Societe Generale, treasury spring, Tradeweb, Lloyds

What else needs to happen to drive great adoption?

Whilst these trades have highlighted the opportunity for tokenisation to deliver massive efficiencies to financial resource managers, they have also underlined the volume of work that remains ahead in order to trigger large-scale adoption. Some of these issues include:

Systems

Ensuring that all custody and position-keeping systems are running at the same times as the collateral movements – so that inventory can be managed in real time.

Due diligence

Moving transactions on-chain means moving settlement finality on-chain too. Firms need to understand and get comfortable with the measures that ensure this.

Networks

Firms need to make blockchain network risk a core competence in order to ensure resilient and cost-effective client outcomes.

People

Defining an operating model that minimises duplicative workflows (and systems) across traditional assets and digital assets

Processes

Defining an operating model that minimises duplicative workflows (and systems) across traditional assets and digital assets

Liquidity

Ensuring that today's benefits of netted exposures are maintained across all forms of traditional and digital assets (and cash).

If you would like to understand more about the case for tokenised collateral, download our report here.

2.2 Money market funds
the #1 asset class.

35% of respondents plan to use tokenised money market funds as part of their daily operations either in 2026 or 2027, making TMMFs the most-cited asset class in the 2026 survey. Stablecoins are next at 32%, bonds at 31%, and tokenised deposits at 27%.

Today, only 35% of firms view traditional money market funds as efficient, and 29% of the highest-volume users find them very inefficient. Investor onboarding, order routing and reconciliations are all heavily manual and heavily dependent on transfer agents. This limits the value of money market funds to high-friction, overnight funding vehicles, with zero secondary market liquidity.

The opportunity for tokenisation to transform this asset class has gained significant attention in 2026, spurred by a first wave of TMMFs (including Blackrock's BUIDL and Franklin Templeton's BENJI) that have gathered over USD 9 billion in AUM to date. Through tokenisation, asset managers are looking to do two things:

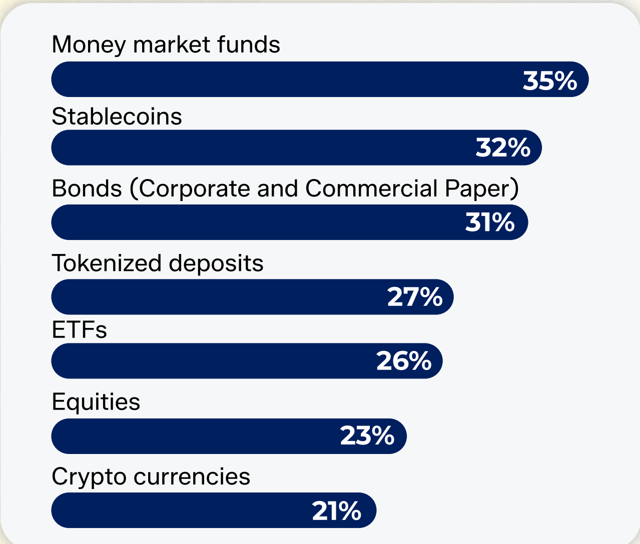
01 To make their funds available to the growing volume of digital wallet holders across the world.

02 To then super-charge the cumbersome MMFs structure into a highly-liquid product that can be fractionalised, pledged and settled in real time – thereby eliminating the need for costly, daily redemptions.

To do this, 74% of firms see transfer agents as a critical enabler of change, given their central role in managing both subscriptions and the underlying shareholder registry. Given this central pressure point, recent digital asset announcements by the world's leading fund distribution providers (including BNY, Clearstream, Euroclear and Calastone) is evidence that fund tokenisation is moving in the right direction.

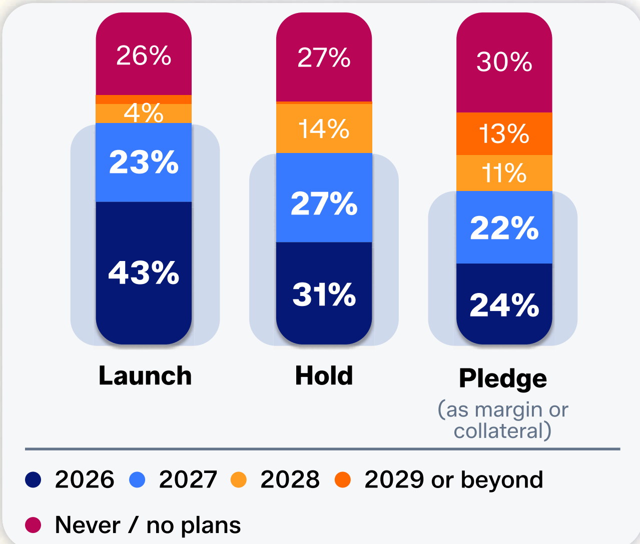
01 TMMFs are the leading digital asset class today

% of respondents planning to use each asset class as part of live, daily operations in 2026/2027



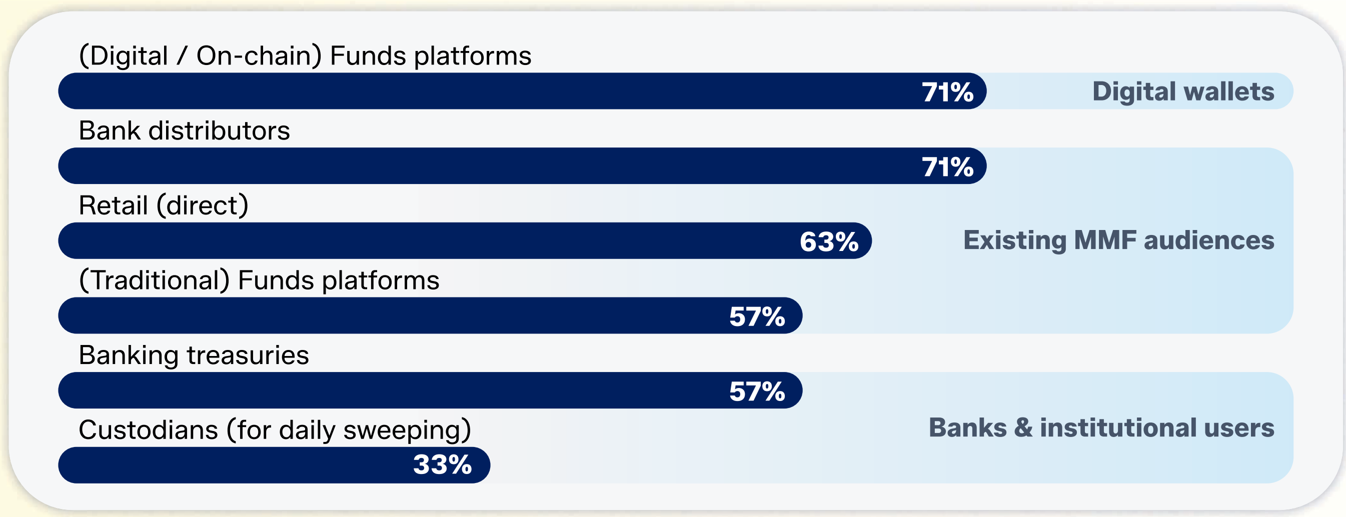
02 66% of firms plan to launch TMMFs before the end of 2027

Plans for tokenised money market funds (% of respondents by activity, by year)



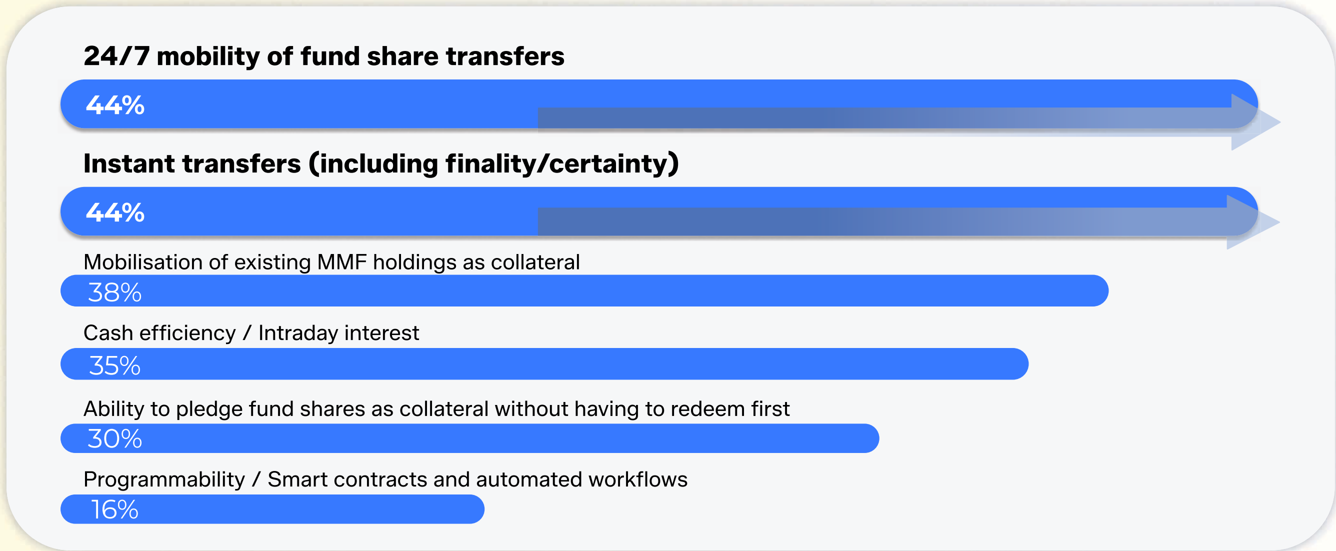
03 Who are firms launching TMMFs for today? Over 70% of TMMFs are destined for the DeFI space

Intended distribution partners for TMMFs (% of respondents citing each)



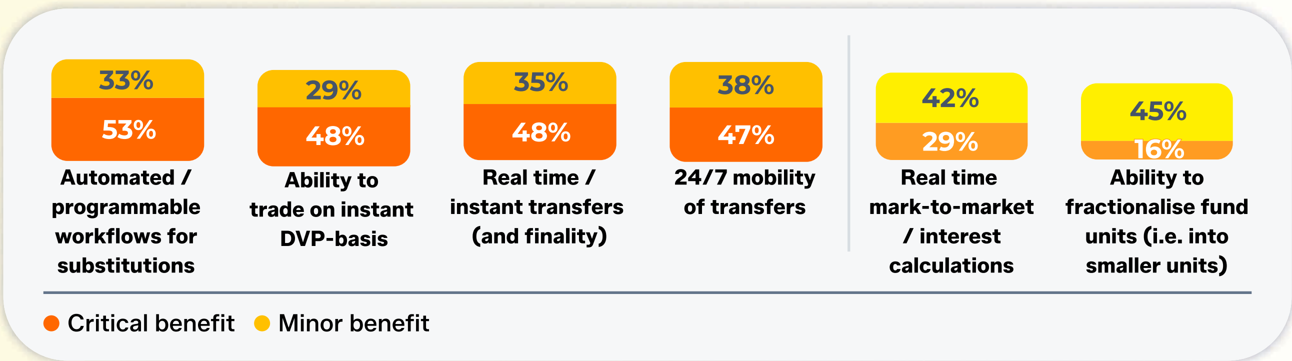
04 Why tokenise a money market fund? Instant, zero-risk movement of fund shares on a 24/7 basis

Critical benefits of TMMFs as drivers of firms' investments into development (% of respondents citing each)



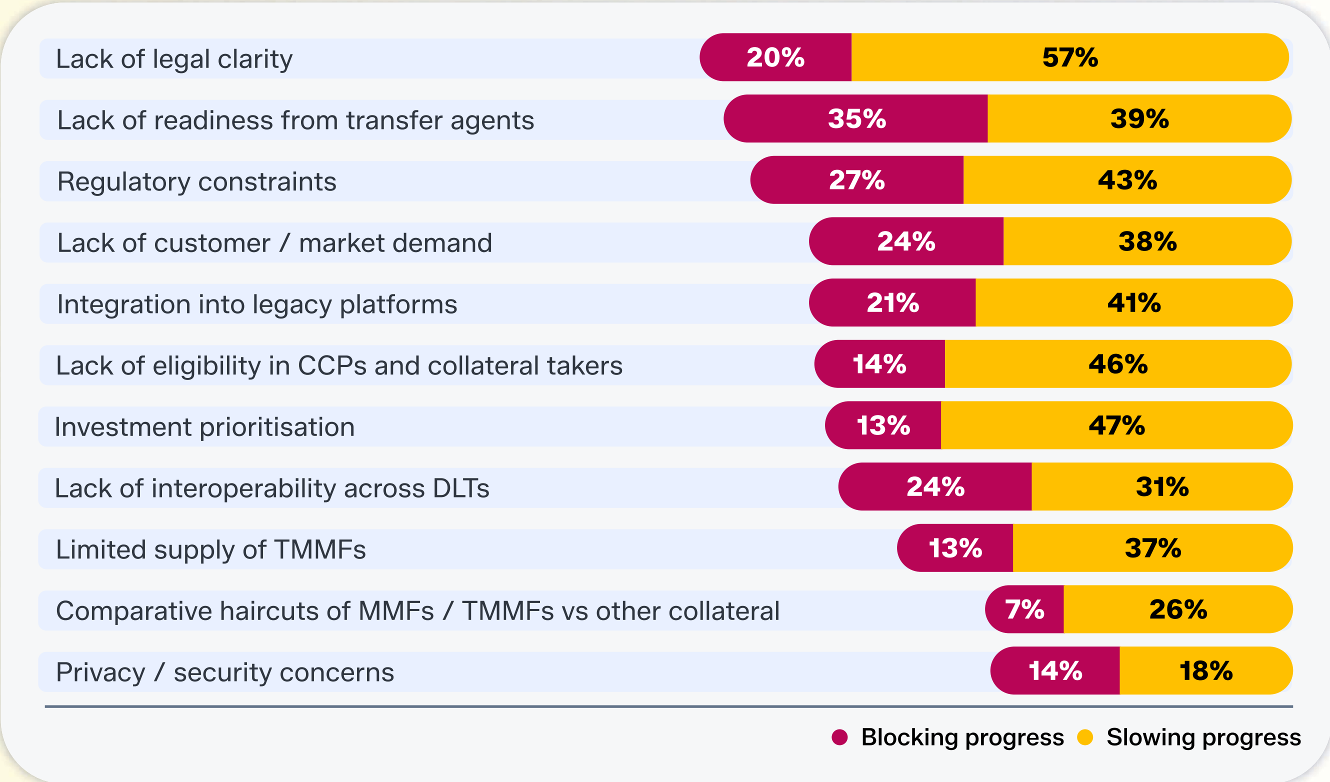
TMMFs as collateral: Over 70% of firms see 24/7, real-time delivery and programmability as the critical elements for collateral eligibility

% of respondents citing each benefit as an enabler for the use of TMMFs as collateral



05 Over 70% of firms see legal definitions and transfer agent readiness as critical obstacles to the use of TMMFs today

% of respondents citing each area as an obstacle to TMMF adoption, by scale of issue



If you would like to learn more about the opportunity for tokenised money market funds to transform the collateral industry, click here for GDF / ISDA's 2026 report.

2.3 Digital money

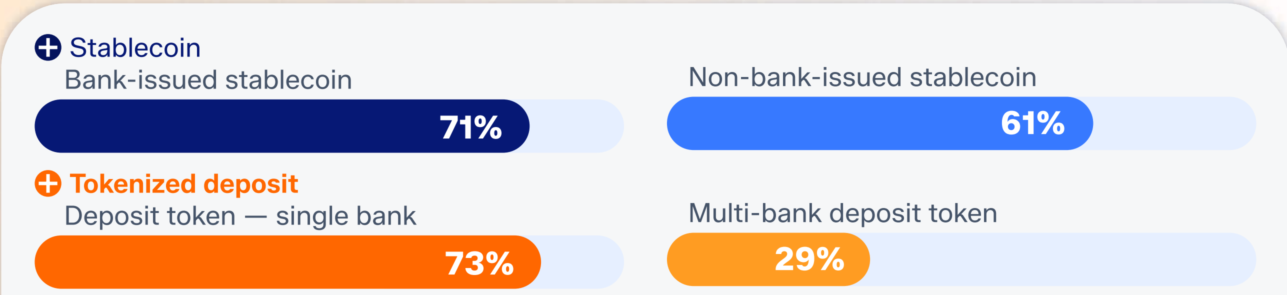
heading the banking agenda.

As the volume of digital asset activity has grown in 2026, the importance of digital money in facilitating delivery-versus-payment transactions on chain has come to the fore. For banks, digital cash in its two principal forms of stablecoins and tokenised deposits, has moved to the top of the operational agenda in 2026.

Stablecoins or tokenised deposits? Over 70% expect to use both.

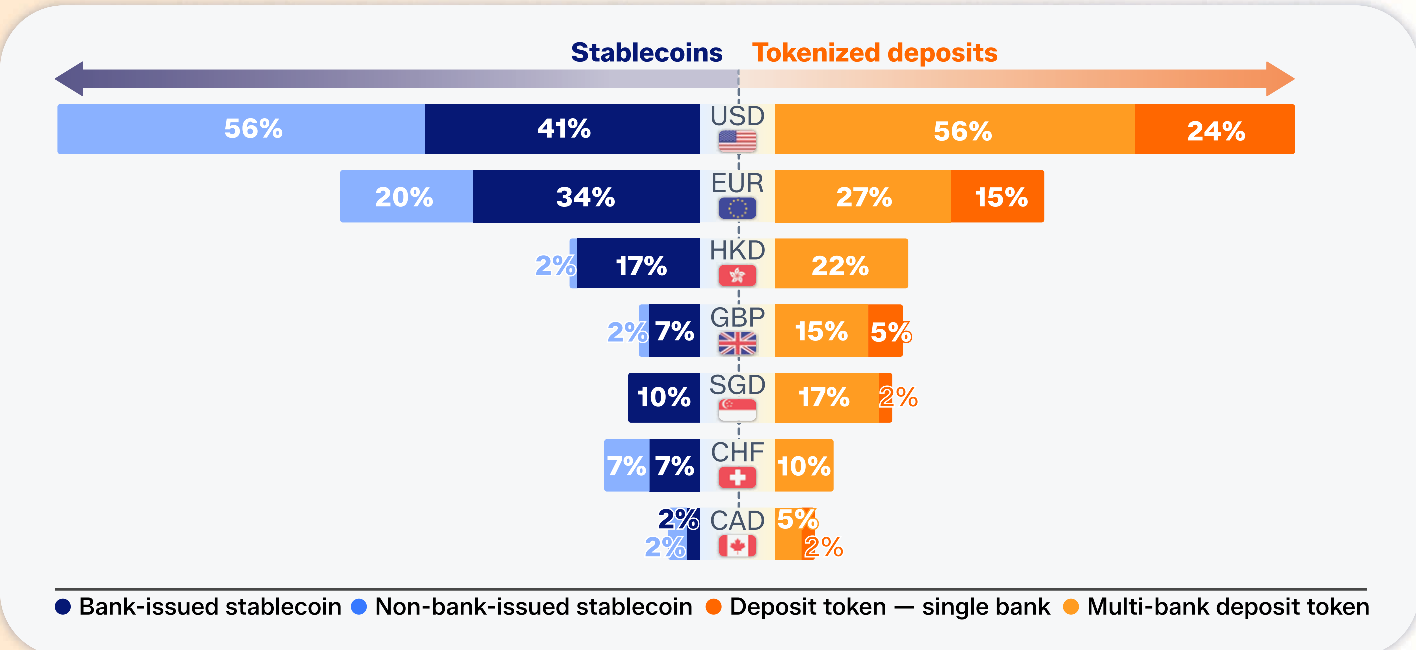
When asked "Which form of digital, commercial cash to use?", 71% of respondents confirmed that they plan to use stablecoins in 2026 or 2027. 73% plan to use tokenised deposits. However, the picture for wholesale, digital cash is more nuanced than a simple stablecoin-versus-tokenised-deposit binary, defying all efforts to simplify digital money down to a single option.

% of respondents planning to use each form of digital commercial money in live operations in 2027



Percentages represent separate respondent selections; they are not intended to add up to 100%.

By currency



Today, the choice of which form of digital money to use in any given transaction depends heavily on the currency, intended client activity and the jurisdiction. Where a stablecoin may be an ideal unit of payment for a digital exchange in USD, a bank may prefer today to use a tokenised deposit as the cash leg for an institutional repo in EUR.

As regulatory rules evolve at pace (across the US, UK, Europe, the UAE, Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore most notably), banks and investors are still working out exactly what cash unit to use in each case in 2026. The only certainty is that no single form will dominate.

Digital money in 2026: a comparative overview

	Criteria	Regulated Stablecoins (GENIUS Act, HK, Sing, etc.)	Tokenised deposits
Operational	Operating hours	24/7 (Issuer hours)	Dependent on participant banks
	Used in existing legacy infrastructures	No (i.e. new asset)	(Yes, still considered fiat currency, e.g. USD or EUR)
Liquidity	Balance sheet treatment	Asset	Cash
	Remuneration	None	Dependent on participant banks
Counterparty risk	Issuer risk	Stablecoin issuer	Issuer bank
	Backing / guarantee?	100% asset-backed (by Cash and HQLA)	Bank-guaranteed
	Liquidity risk	“Gap risk”: How fast can holders redeem when the cash reserves are gone and only bonds remain?	Counterparty exposure to issuing bank (subject to credit limits)
	Bankruptcy cost coverage	Taken from reserves (meaning some holders don’t get their cash)	Paid by issuer (but GSIFI)
Leading initiatives		USDC, USDT Qivalis (37 banks)	Clearing House (JPM, Citi, BoA, Wells Fargo) LSEG DISH

47% of firms are ready to use digital Euros this year.

The launch of the ECB's Pontes programme on the 21st September 2026 looks set to be one of the landmark developments of the year for digital money.

In 2024, the ECB's DLT trials with wholesale Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC solutions created a unique foundation of institutional familiarity with central-bank digital money. Today, a number of central banks are running similarly broad market initiatives with the aim of stimulating similar levels of learning and familiarity (notably the Bank of England's Synchronisation lab, Singapore's Project Guardian, Hong Kong's Project Ensemble, Australia's Project Acacia and Brazil's Drex).

As this engagement enters a new phase this year with the live availability of digital, wholesale Euros. This is one more critical foundation stone created to support the world's regulated capital markets. The only question is in which form that access will take over time and in each currency. Based on our survey, 47% expect to use CBDC for their EUR in 2026/2027, whilst 38% will use a tokenised Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) connector (or trigger mechanism) and 25% each for single-currency and multi-currency regulated payment infrastructure.

As the above initiatives continue (alongside the Bank of International Settlements' Project Agora[1]), we look set to see an emergence of myriad wholesale payment mechanisms.

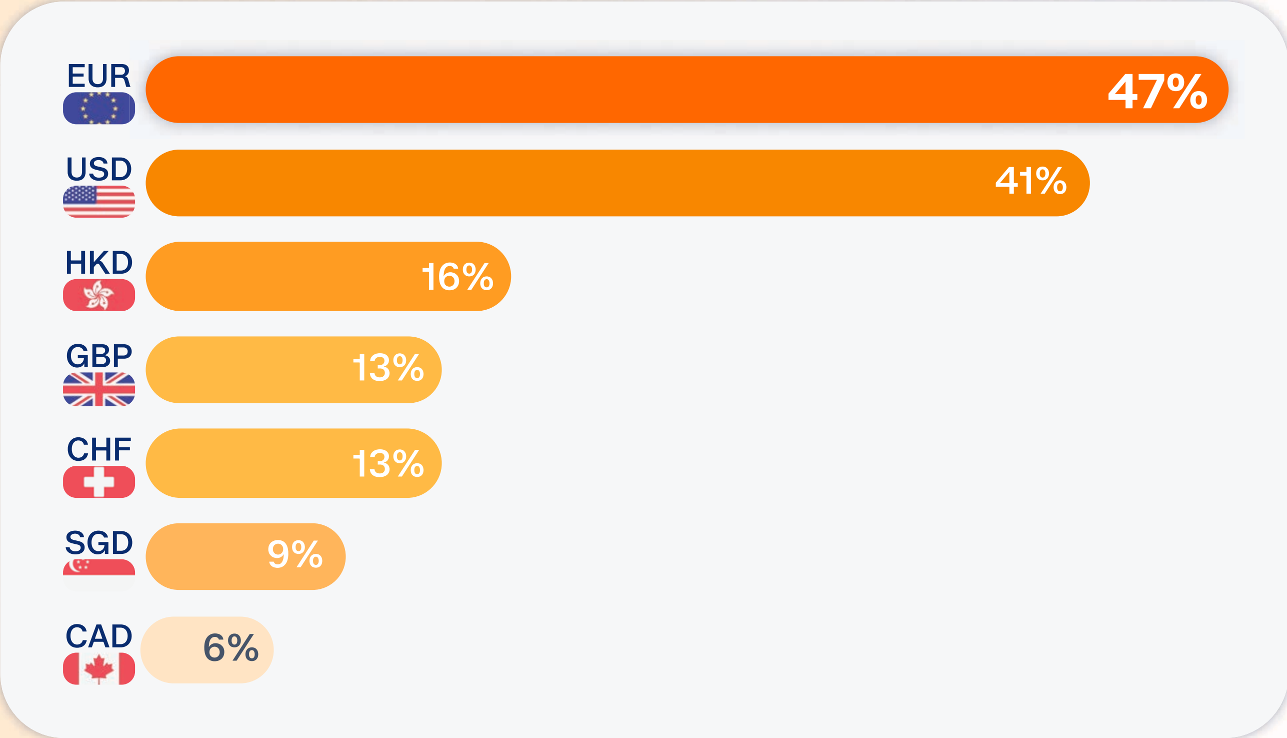
Digital money: Current state (by major currency)

	Central bank money	Regulated stablecoins	Tokenised deposits
CHF	●●●●● Project Helvetia Phase 3 live	●○○○○ Limited activity	●○○○○ Limited activity
EUR	●●●○○ ECB DLT trials; phasing into Pontes (Q3 2026)	●●●○○ MICA: 8 regulated EUR stablecoins	●●○○○ 4 banks, all single-bank deposits
GBP	●●●○○ BoE Synchronisation Facility	●●○○○ 3 regulated stablecoins	●●○○○ 2 banks, all single-bank deposits
USD	●○○○○ No CBDC; potential access via Fnality	●●●●○ GENIUS Act; 240 coins, 99% of global supply	●●●○○ 9 banks (incl. JPM), all single-bank deposits
HKD	●○○○○ Limited activity	●●○○○ HK stablecoin act; 2 licensed stablecoins	●●○○○ 2 banks, all single-bank deposits
SGD	●○○○○ Limited activity	●●○○○ 3 regulated stablecoins	●●○○○ 3 banks, all single-bank deposits
AUD	●●○○○ Project Acacia (initial wave)	●●○○○ 1 live stablecoin provider	●●○○○ 1 bank
BRL	●●●○○ Drex	●●○○○ 4 live stablecoin providers	●○○○○ Limited activity

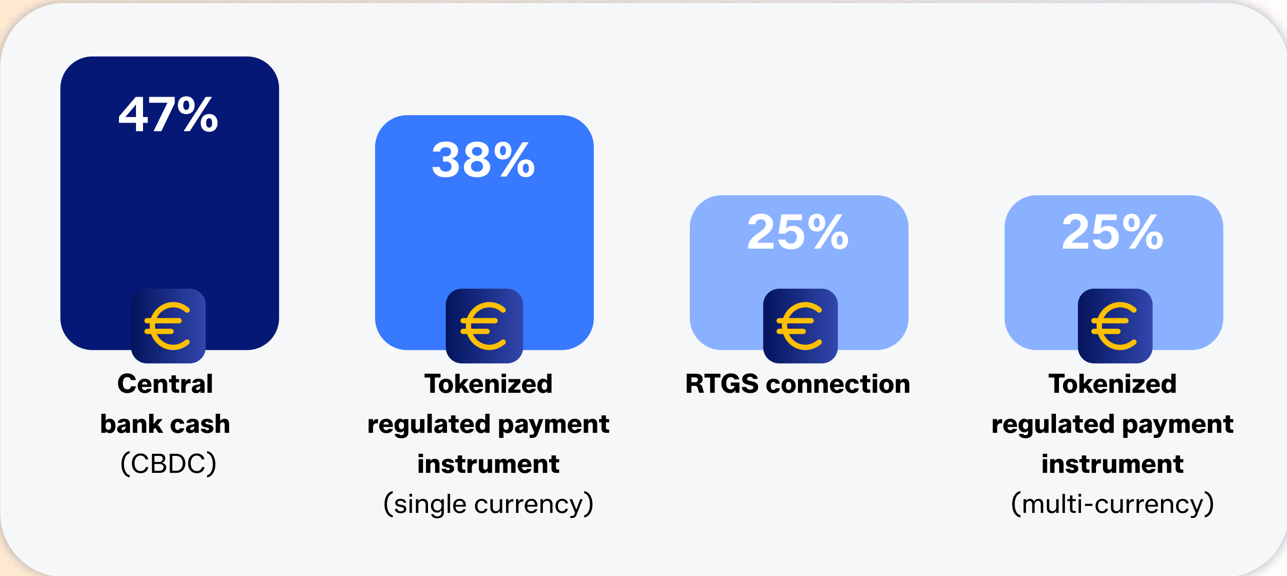
● Advanced / live ● Developing ● Limited / early

01. https://www.bis.org/about/bisih/topics/fmis/agora.htm

% of respondents expecting to use digital forms of wholesale cash in 2027



% of respondents planning to use different forms of digital wholesale EUR in 2027



3. Running DLT projects today.

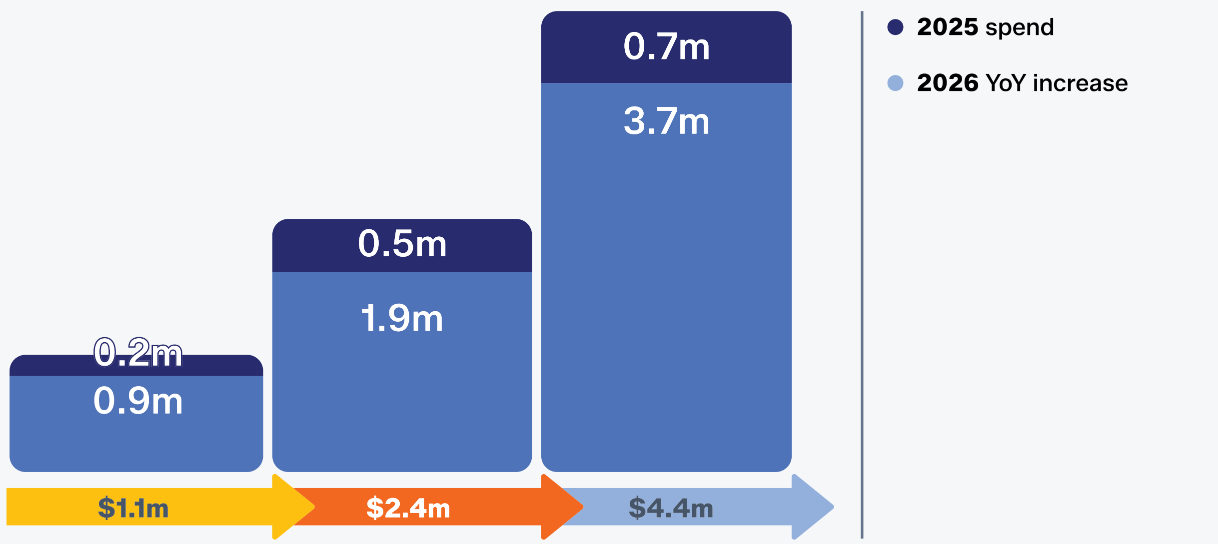
The cost of getting live: **USD 7.9 million on average.**

The cost of going live with DLT accumulates across three stages:

- The preparing and proof-of-concept (POC) phase, which now averages USD 1.1 million (up from USD 0.7 million in 2025)
- The development phase at USD 2.4 million (up from USD 1.9 million)
- The live phase at USD 4.4 million (up from USD 3.7 million)

The cumulative effort is all the more significant given that the average firm is spending approximately USD 700k more this year than last simply to advance to or maintain the live stage.

Average spend on DLT / digital asset initiatives in 2025 and 2026 (in USD)



Technology is less than half the bill.

> "Technology actually only costs half the project. The overall running and operating costs, between the control functions, people like ourselves and then operations, it is almost 50/50. And a large majority of the costs really swell during the launch period."

DLT projects are not simply a technology build. The legal, compliance and change-management costs that surround the technology investment are substantial and are often underestimated in early planning.

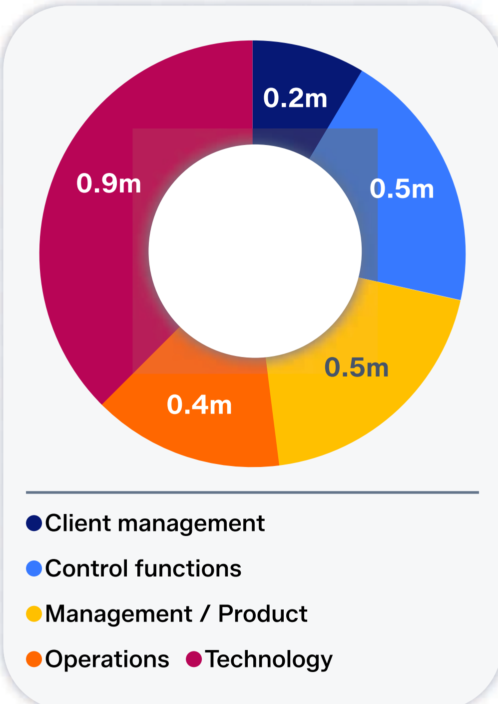
IT and vendor charges account for 38% of total project costs on average, compared with over 50% for operations, business and control functions. In absolute terms, technology spend averages USD 0.9 million per firm, while control functions add USD 0.5 million and client management USD 0.2 million.

Anecdotally, firms tend to spend 6-9 months in their risk and compliance approval stages for key projects, as teams struggle to answer critical questions around finality, asset recovery and cyber security. These factors increase project lifecycles (and costs) to well beyond initial expectations.

As a result of this effort, the distribution of costs across the project lifecycle is disproportionately resource-intensive in internal terms. The composition of costs at the POC stage is front-loaded with management and legal engagement, making the internal cost of simply exploring DLT high.

Average breakdown of DLT / digital asset project costs

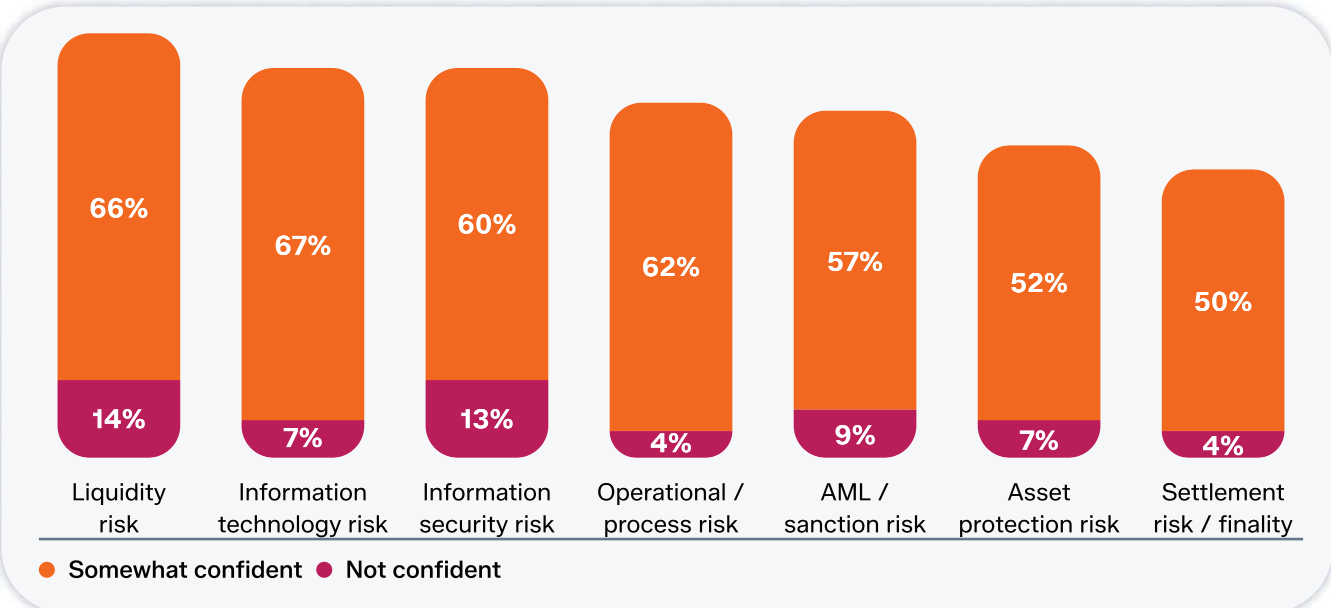
Average costs per firm (in USD)



80% are unsure of how to manage key risks.

In an era when operational resilience is paramount, the fact that 80% of firms need help managing at least some of their digital asset risks is a core indicator of broader challenge in the market's readiness to scale. The areas of lowest confidence are information technology risk (with 66% describing themselves as 'not confident' or only 'somewhat confident'), and asset protection risk (67%). Investment banks and brokers are least confident overall, with 30% reporting low confidence. With many core issues still to be resolved, the path to live deployment of DLT within a regulated environment still appears long.

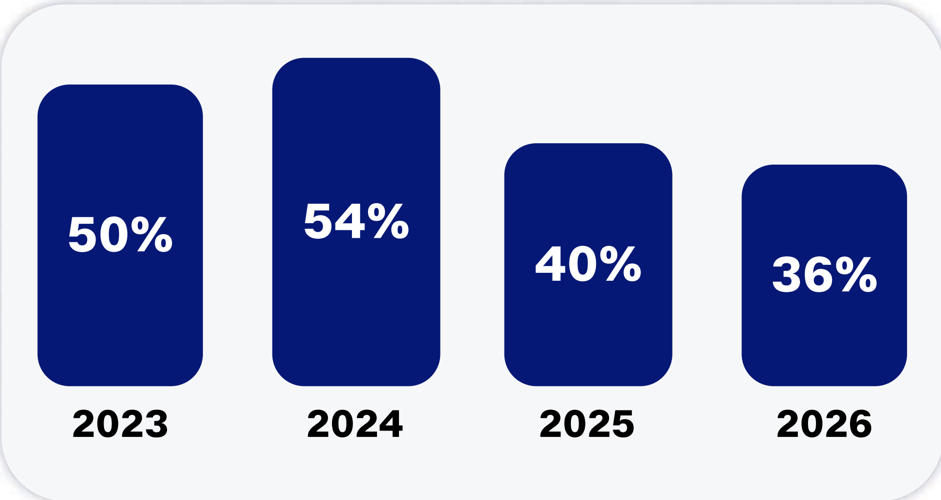
% of respondents saying that they are "somewhat" or "not confident" in managing the following digital asset risks



The shift to permissioned networks.

One of the clearest directional trends in the 2026 survey is the continuing movement of banks away from private blockchains toward public and permissioned-public infrastructure. The share of banks and brokers using private networks has fallen from 54% in 2023 to 36% today.

Average percentage of banks and brokers using private networks (per survey year)



This shift is likely driven by two factors:

- The growth of activity around asset classes that demand the broadest possible public reach (notably cryptocurrencies, stablecoins and tokenised money market funds). As ambitions and volumes grow around these asset classes, banks will be compelled to master the extensive due diligence and balance sheet considerations that are inherent in public chain use.
- The increasing profile of leading permissioned networks, notably Canton. With a growing volume of regulated market infrastructures and banks conducting live trading activity on these networks, they are a compelling proof point that the institutional risk and compliance community needed for adoption.

Building a wallet capability: a core competency?

% of respondents' citing their core digital wallet strategy

32%
Digital wallets are needed quickly, requiring a partner / outsourced solution.

30%
Digital wallets are a core competency that we cannot outsource.

22%
Requirements are changing too quickly to build an in-house capability yet.

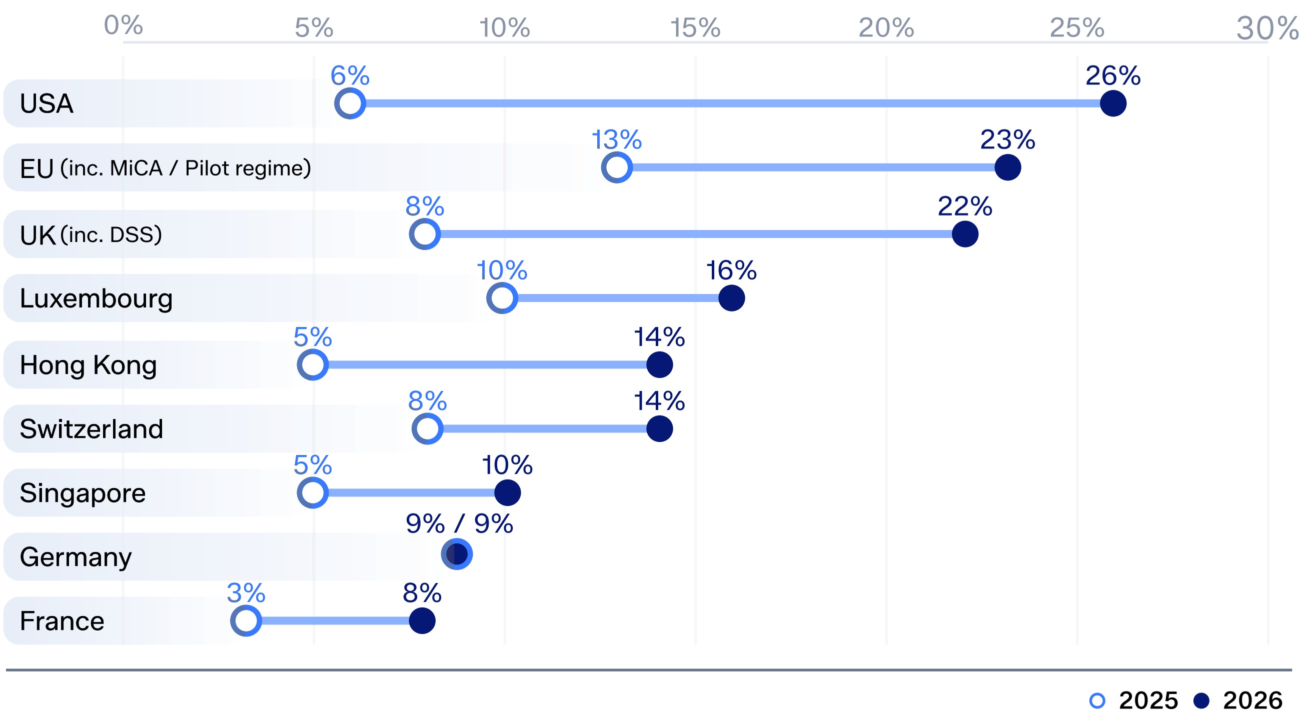
17%
Digital wallets are not a necessary capability right now.

For 32% of firms, digital wallets are a capability they need quickly. In a world where regulations, practices and market standards are evolving at rapid pace, the outsourcing or "buying" routes are widely preferable to in-house development. Only custodians see digital wallet technology as a core competency today. However, the question of who owns the wallet, and who holds the keys, has significant implications for custody, liability as well as for the competitive dynamics between traditional custodians and new digital-asset-native providers.

Jurisdictional complexity is universal.

The US has consolidated its position as the leading jurisdiction for digital asset and DLT activity, with 26% of respondents running projects under US law in 2026, up from 22% in 2025. The EU (including MiCA and Pilot Regime) is second at 23% of firms. The UK (including the DSS regime) is at 16%, followed by Luxembourg (14%), Hong Kong (13%), Switzerland, Singapore, Germany and France.

% of respondents running DLT and digital asset projects in each jurisdiction



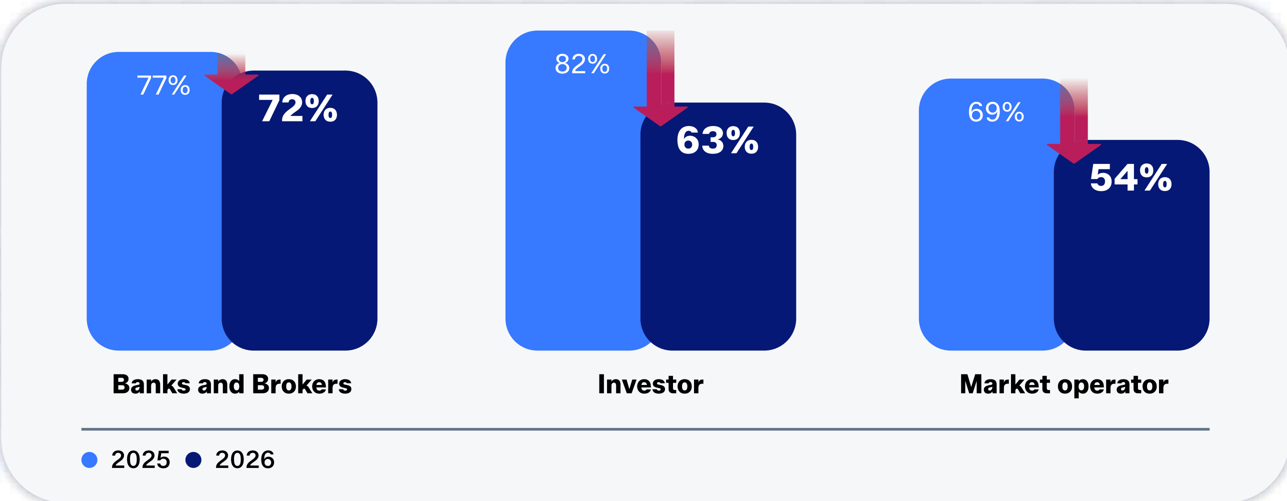
Yet no single jurisdiction captures more than 30% of any region's activity. North American firms spread their projects across the US, the EU and other markets. European firms run projects across multiple EU member states, the UK, Luxembourg, and Switzerland. Asian firms spread across Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, and Australia.

This multi-jurisdictional reality is not optional. The counterparties, assets and settlement systems that make a digital asset initiative valuable are distributed across borders and the legal framework has to match this scale. This diversity maps directly into additional deployment costs and delays and is a critical source of inertia for future adoption.

DLT outcomes: 77% of users are experiencing upside.

77% of the banks who are using DLT in 2026 say that they are seeing significant improvements in their workflows when compared with traditional flows. Across all segments, using DLT today is clearly a productive experience.

% of respondents seeing tokenization and digital cash deliver significant improvements in their workflows



Yet this percentage has declined modestly across all segments in 2026. This reflects the transition from early adoption, where the technology's novelty and the enthusiasm of committed early movers set expectations very high, to a more mature phase in which firms are grappling with the practical complexity of integrating digital assets into production systems. The technology is performing as expected. The challenge is the operational, legal and organisational changes required to make the most of it.

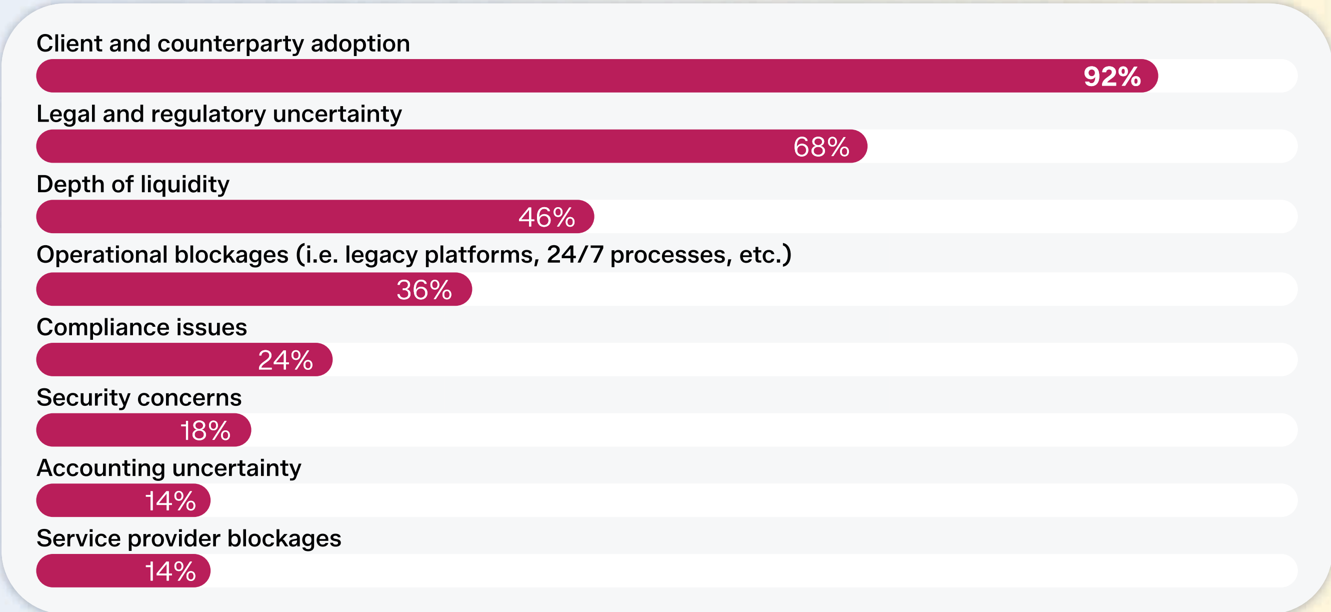
4. Looking ahead – unlocking demand and adoption

Counterparty adoption: breaking out of the “fast follower” trap.

92% of respondents identify client and counterparty adoption as the primary blocking obstacle to their DLT and digital asset development. The logic is clear. Regulated institutions are not seeing their counterparties trading digital assets yet and vendors are not hearing their clients demanding readiness. Given the substantial enterprise costs involved in taking those first steps (above), everyone is choosing to be a “fast follower”.

No other challenge comes close: legal and regulatory uncertainty, which dominated early surveys, is second at a mere 68%.

% of respondents facing blocking obstacles in the following areas



However, there is also good news embedded in the data. Technology concerns have receded sharply. The fact that security and technology availability are now lower down the blocking list is a significant statement about how far the technology has travelled. The question is no longer whether the technology works.

Looking ahead, it is very likely that the availability of large quantities of standardised, tokenised securities (and cash) from the world’s leading market infrastructures will break this current stand-off. In 2025, a bank wanting to run DLT transactions needed to find a means of tokenising cash and securities safely and within their complex regulatory frameworks. By the end of 2026, digital cash and securities will be available from regulated securities depositories and central banks.

Moving past the need for 24/7 availability.

In our 2025 and 2026 surveys, the dominant benefit that 83% of firms with live DLT activity report is the enablement of intraday liquidity management. In the face of legacy overnight cycles and batch processes, the opportunity for DLT to enable round-the-clock mobility has been a foundation layer to industry business cases in the last two years.

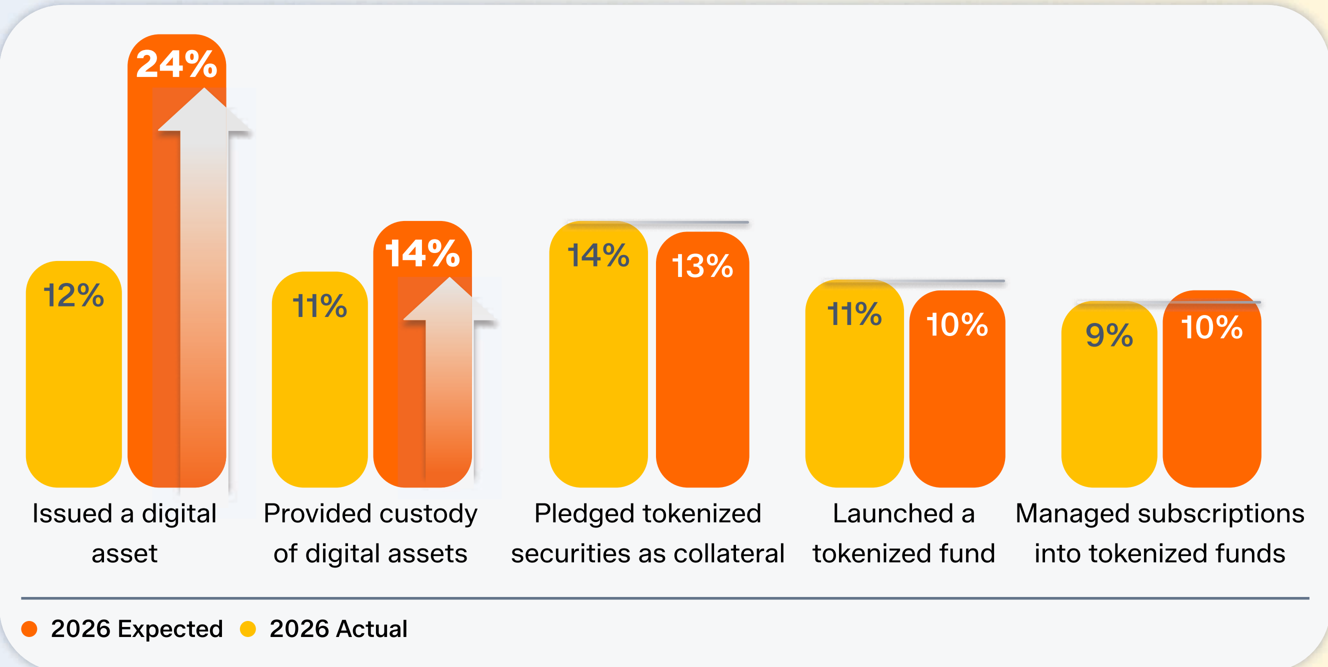
But what would the role be for DLT if those same legacy or traditional infrastructures were available on a 24x7 basis? In the next year, the US equities market will move to 23x5 trading and US Treasuries will be mobile on a 20x5 basis via BNY's traditional infrastructure. As the world's capital market infrastructure moves closer towards always-on operations, firms will no longer need to invest millions in DLT connectivity to move collateral at 3am. As that happens, the benefits of DLT will need to be refocused (around programmability and increased surety) if today's momentum is to be sustained.

The industry DLT journey is on schedule.

Our 2026 survey highlights that the industry is on course. Across the leading use cases for DLT, we are precisely where we expected to be at this stage (based on 2025 projections) – with the notable exception of digital asset issuance (where adoption is twice the expected speed).

As we move deeper into the execution phase of the industry DLT journey, progress is increasingly complex and nuanced. But with digital asset investment budgets, participation levels and trading volumes all growing by landmark percentages in 2026, it is clear that this year is different. The world will finish this year with its largest CSD supplying trillions of dollars in tokenised securities and the world's largest central bank live on-chain. Now the adoption phase can begin in earnest.

Expected levels of DLT / digital asset activity (from 2025 survey) vs actual levels of activity (in 2026 survey)



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