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Malaysia treasurers bullish on AI and digital currencies, but say integration barriers remain

- *76% expect AI to be extremely or very useful within the next three years*
- *Integration with existing systems is the biggest barrier to AI adoption in treasury*
- *Malaysia is the region's most enthusiastic market for digital currency adoption, with 50% very likely to use them in the next two years*

Treasury teams in Malaysia are increasingly confident about the potential of both artificial intelligence and digital currencies but remain pragmatic about the operational and infrastructure barriers that stand in the way of wider adoption.

These are among the findings from HSBC's *Redefining Treasury in Asia Pacific 2026: Voices of Treasury* report, based on insights from treasury and finance professionals across 11 Asia Pacific markets, including Malaysia.

Confidence in AI is particularly strong in Malaysia. More than three quarters (76%) of respondents said AI will be either extremely useful or very useful to treasury within the next three years, ahead of the regional average of 72%. A further 21% said it would be somewhat useful.

At the same time, more than 8 in 10 (82%) said treasury is not keeping pace with AI adoption across the wider organisation. Integration with existing systems was identified as the biggest hurdle to adoption by 69% of respondents, well ahead of cost (45%) and lack of expertise (36%), pointing to the drag created by fragmented ERP and treasury technology environments.

"There is a real appetite among Malaysia's treasury community to explore what new payment instruments and AI-enabled tools can deliver. At the same time, treasurers recognise that the challenge is often less about the technology itself and more about how it is integrated into existing, fragmented legacy and ERP systems", said Anand Mukati, Head of Global Payments Solutions, HSBC Malaysia.

Digital currencies - high perceived risk, but even higher intent to adopt

Malaysia stood out as the most enthusiastic market in the region on digital currency adoption. Half of respondents (50%) said they were very likely to use digital currencies in the next two years, compared with a regional average of 19%.

This enthusiasm comes despite a relatively cautious view of risk. Some 42% of respondents in Malaysia said digital assets in treasury are high risk, broadly in line with the regional average of 44%.

That apparent tension reflects a market that sees both the opportunity and the complexity. Respondents cited greater treasury efficiency (73%) and enhanced liquidity management (50%) as the leading reasons to adopt digital currencies.

"What comes through quite clearly from the Malaysia findings is that treasurers aren't viewing risk and adoption as an either-or decision. They understand the operational and regulatory considerations around digital currencies, but they also see the potential to improve efficiency, manage liquidity, and shape new payment models. The challenge now is for market infrastructure to catch up to the demand", Mukati added.

Malaysia respondents also ranked the threat of cybercrime and fraud at 8.4 out of 10, above the regional average of 7.78, underlining the importance of resilience as treasury functions modernise.

About the Report
The Redefining Treasury in Asia Pacific 2026 report draws on qualitative and quantitative insights from 680 treasury and finance professionals who took part in HSBC events across 11 Asia Pacific markets, including Australia, Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The report examines how treasury and finance functions are being reshaped by artificial intelligence, digital assets and currencies, and the changing nature of cyber and fraud risk. [Insert report link]

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Note to editors:

About HSBC Malaysia
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