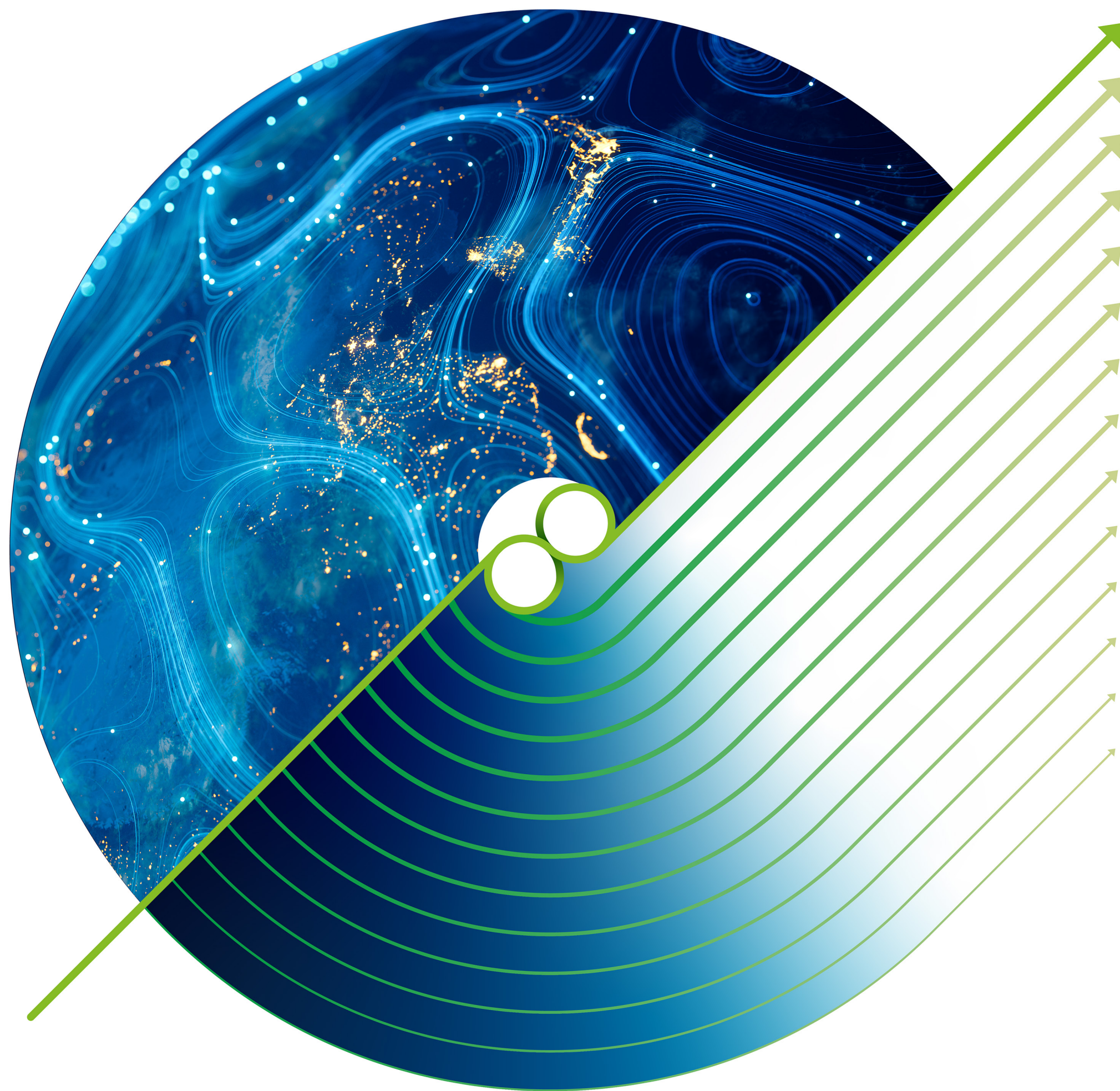


Bridging the Certainty Gap

Deloitte APEC
CEO Survey 2025

Australia and
New Zealand report



Deloitte.
Together makes progress



Executive summary

Bridging the certainty gap

APEC CEO survey highlights

The shift is real

Geopolitics, inflation and cyber threats are the top disruption risks facing leaders in the next year.

60% of companies have live AI implementations in two or more business functions.

Transformation is no longer finite, it's a continuum. CEOs need to be real-time strategists leading continual reinvention.

Expansive resilience

More than half of CEOs are maintaining investment levels.

More than half of leaders are expanding and diversifying supply chains.

The top investment priority for operational resilience now and in the next three years is AI and automation.

Resilience isn't about bracing for impact – it's about advancing with intent. For CEOs, expansive resilience is a platform for growth.

Appetite for bold moves

In three years, the number one growth driver shifts from technology application today to new products and innovation.

Companies planning growth through M&A will almost double to 59% in the next three years.

In three years, 37% expect the majority of their sales from the APEC region—up from 19% today.

In an environment with no low-risk options, standing still can be the riskiest option of all.

Bridging the certainty gap

Seven in ten CEOs are optimistic for their own company's prospects.

Yet fewer—45% of leaders—are optimistic for the global economy.

What may distinguish leaders is not just agility but character – the future belongs to visionary realists who can turn disruption into opportunity.



Australia and New Zealand Executive summary

Almost three-quarters of ANZ leaders are confident in their company's prospects, but only a third in the global economic outlook.

A chasm exists between ANZ corporate leaders' perceptions of local and global prospects. Nearly three-quarters are confident in their own companies' performance, yet under a third are optimistic about the global economy, and fewer than half about the APEC region's economy. This certainty gap underscores a need for strategies that balance home-market stability with exposure to global tensions. To counter these, ANZ leaders are supporting multilateral agreements and de-escalation tactics.

The application of technology will be ANZ's top growth driver over the next year, overtaken by innovation and new products within three years. Integration within APEC is expected to increase, with ANZ foreign investments favouring the US, China and Singapore. ANZ customer expectations, meanwhile, are shifting from price and value toward digital experiences, faster delivery, and sustainability.

Capital conditions will improve modestly but remain below APEC averages. M&A will also grow more slowly than other APEC economies, with preferred financing shifting from retained earnings to greater use of private equity, public markets, and strategic alliances.

Most CEOs plan supply chain changes within the next year, with automation, or digitisation and cybersecurity key investment priorities. AI deployment moves from marketing and IT into product development and strategy, increasing its impact in core business processes. While sustainability's overall importance to ANZ leaders lags most APEC regions, 57% of leaders expect to increase investment in the coming year.



Implications for ANZ CEOs

ANZ leaders are resilient yet cautious, and increasingly looking for bold moves.

ANZ's archetypical leader is resilient yet cautious: grounded in pragmatism and accomplished in navigating uncertainty. They draw confidence and stability from home markets while respecting the fragility of global conditions. Adaptable and resourceful, they can balance operational discipline with measured ambition, ensuring growth without overreach.

With lower levels of optimism than their North Asian, Southeast Asian and Latin American peers, ANZ leaders should avoid being overly defensive. Selective bold moves—particularly in innovation and partnerships—can help them keep pace with faster-moving markets. With strong competition expected from China, Singapore, and the US, ANZ leaders should sharpen the innovation agenda, play to their sector strengths and look for opportunities to double down in niches where they have competitive advantage.

ANZ's CEOs are more cautious on capital availability and M&A appetite than APEC colleagues. Leaders could consider partnerships and joint ventures for growth. Opportunities can be taken to embed sustainability in business strategy where feasible—e.g. in export markets and financing, where compliance is increasingly tied to access and competitiveness. CEOs can also benefit from engaging with policy forums and trade bodies, helping anticipate regulatory shifts and shape frameworks to reduce friction in APEC trade and investment.

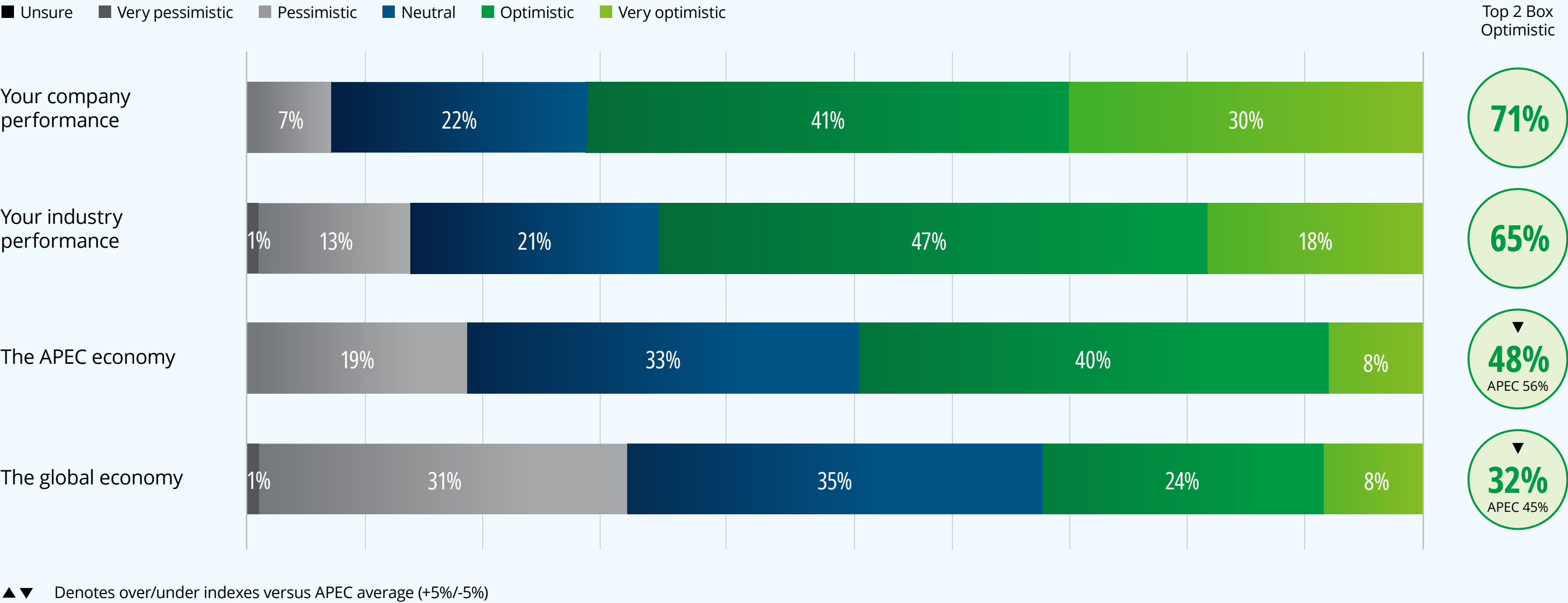


Key findings

Almost three quarters of ANZ corporate leaders are optimistic about their own company versus only three in 10 for the global economy.

Leaders in ANZ are most optimistic about their company performance followed by their industry (71%, 65%). While these results are in line with APEC peers, they have the least optimistic outlook for the APEC region (48%) and global economy (32%).

Figure 1: What is your personal outlook toward the following areas over the next 12 months?



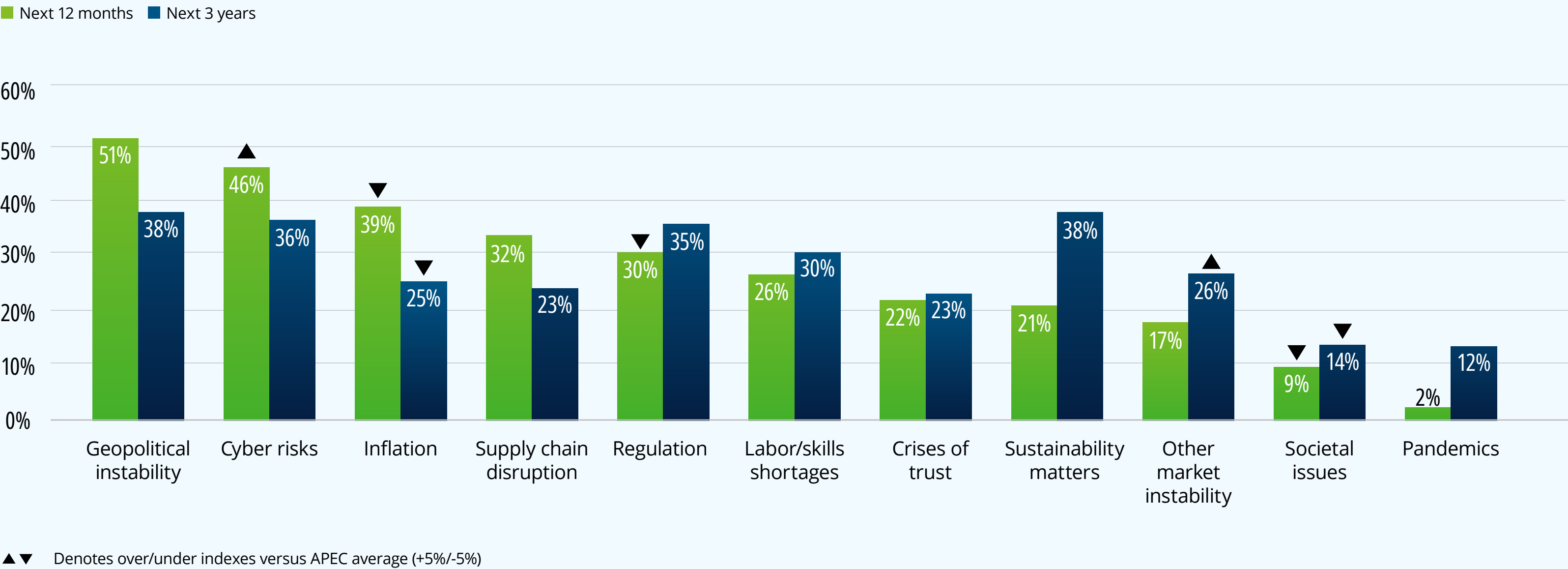
Q_Outlook: Which of the following options best describes your personal outlook toward each of the following areas over the next 12 months? Select one response per row. (n=175). Responses below 4% not shown



Geopolitical instability is the most disruptive risk concern now and is a top concern within three years.

Sustainability matters is expected to gain traction as the top equal risk within the next three years. Cyber risks, inflation and supply chain disruption rate highly in the coming year but are expected to subside significantly. Regulation, other market instability and pandemics are expected to increase in potential disruptive impact over the next three years.

Figure 2: What external matters do you expect to disrupt your business strategy within the next 12 months and next 3 years?



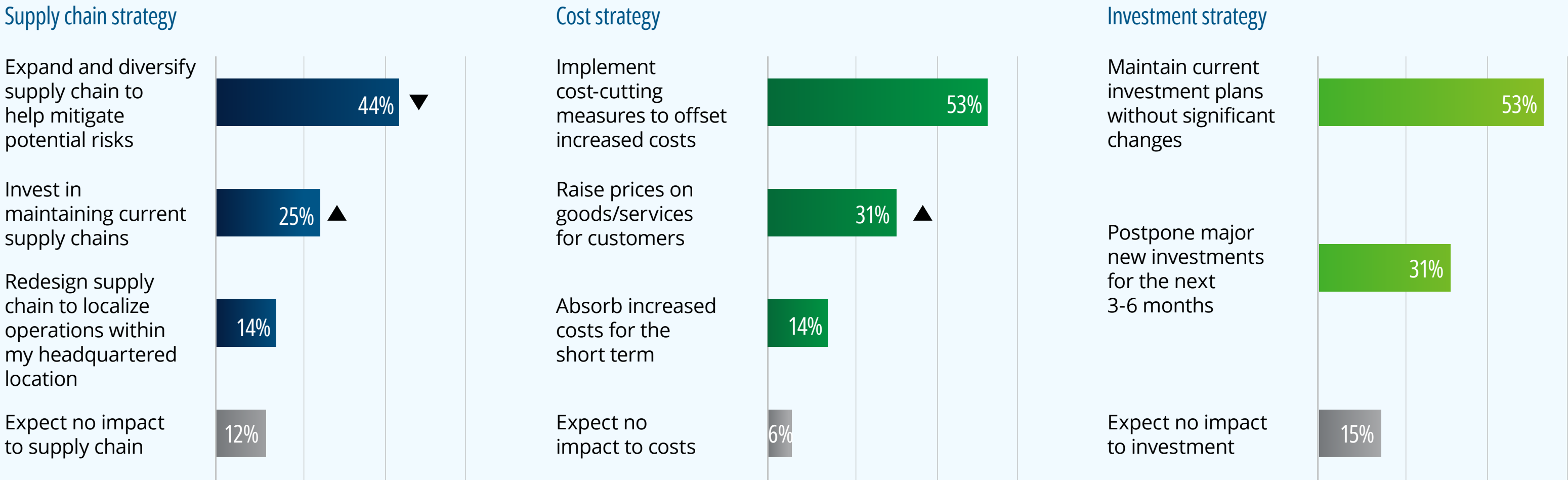
Q_Disrupt: What external matters do you expect to disrupt your business strategy within the next 12 months and next 3 years? Select your top three. (n=175)



ANZ corporate leaders are likely to expand and diversify their supply chains and implement cost-cutting measures, they are also more likely to continue with current investment plans.

However, more leaders in ANZ are likely to invest in maintaining current supply chains and more intend to raise prices in the next twelve months than in other APEC regions.

Figure 3: Given current economic and related policy uncertainties what strategies is your organization planning to implement in the next 12 months?



▲ ▼ Denotes over/under indexes versus APEC average (+5%/-5%)

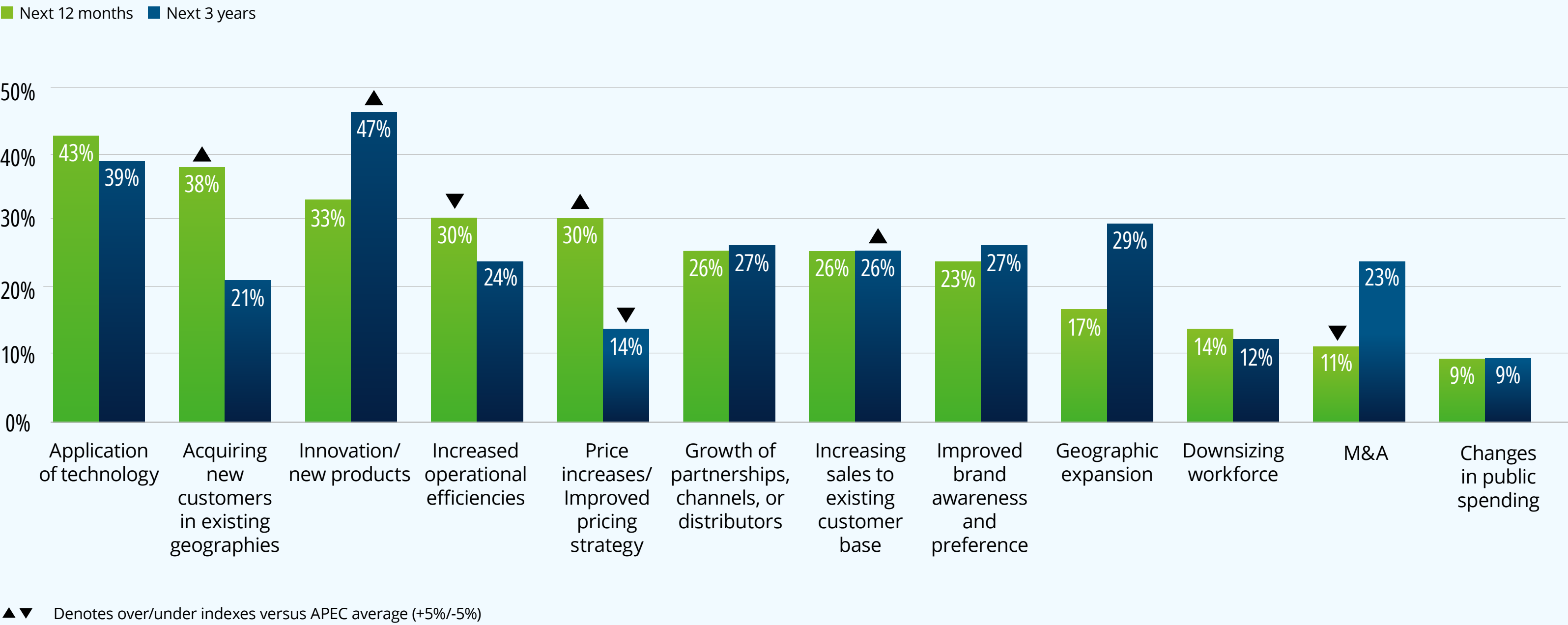
Q_Uncertainties: Given current economic and related policy uncertainties what strategies is your organization planning to implement in the next 12 months? Select the best choice in each category. (n=175)



Application of technology is seen as the top growth driver within the next twelve months.

ANZ leaders are more focused than other APEC regions on acquiring customers in existing geographies and price increases in the next twelve months, but these decrease in importance over the next three years. Innovation and new products is expected to become the leading driver of growth in the next three years. And more companies are expected to pursue geographic expansion.

Figure 4: What do you expect to be most important to your business success over the next 12 months and over the next 3 years?



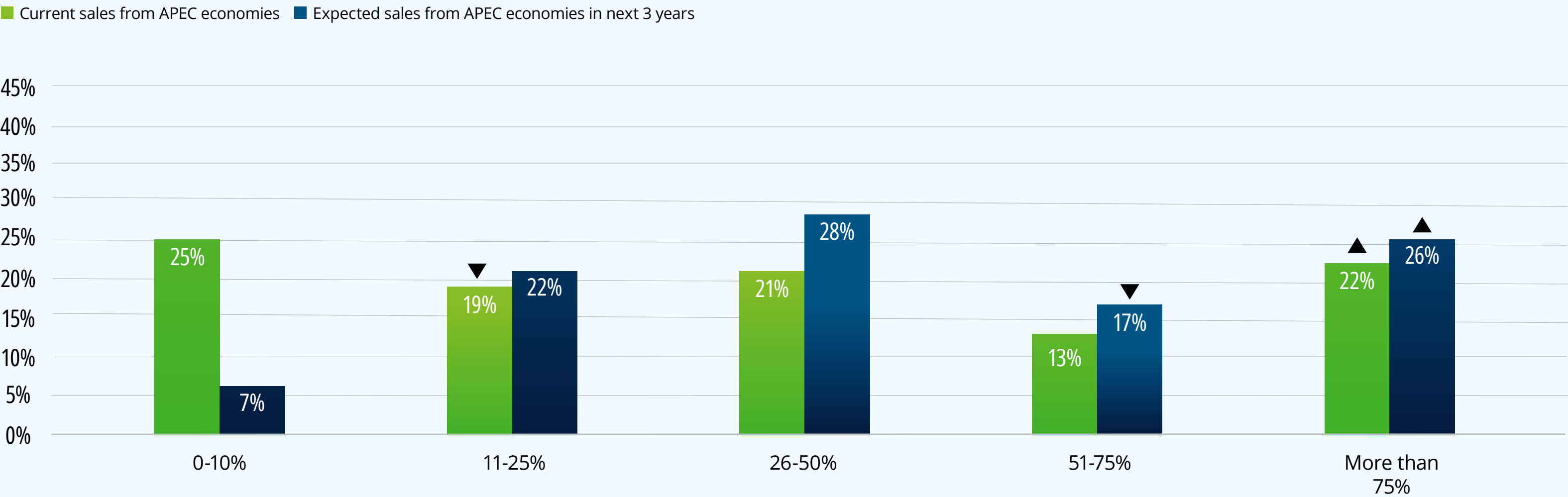
Q_Growth_driver: What do you expect to be most important to your business success over the next 12 months and over the next 3 years? Please select your top three. (n=175)



ANZ corporate leaders expect more of their sales to come from the APEC region in the next three years.

43% of leaders expect the majority of their sales from APEC markets in three years, 8% more than at present.

Figure 5: Approximately what percentage of your company's current total global sales comes from the APEC economies? What percentage do you expect in 3 years?



▲ ▼ Denotes over/under indexes versus APEC average (+5%/ -5%)

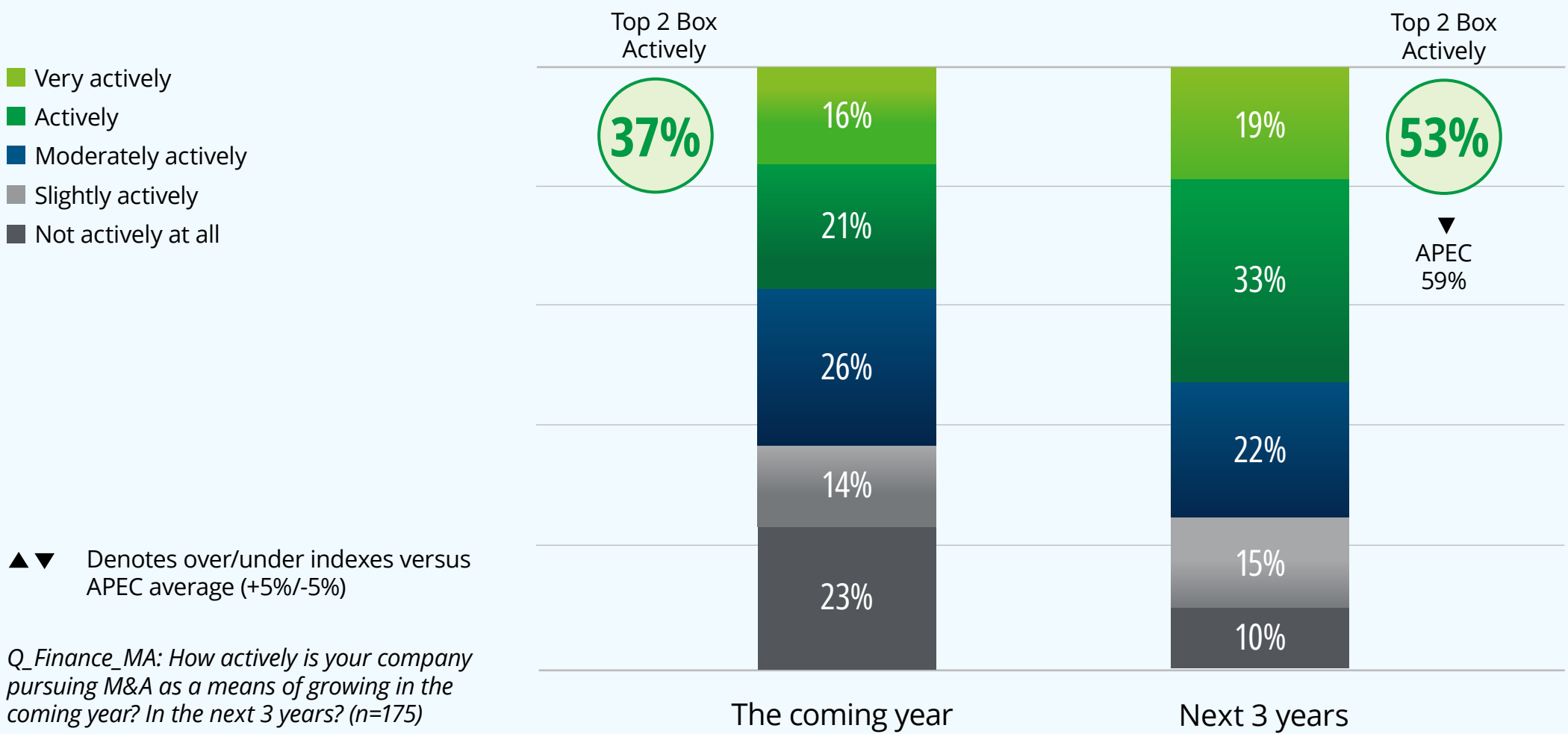
Q_APEC_integration: Approximately what percentage of your company's current total global sales comes from the APEC economies? What percentage do you expect in 3 years? (n=175)



More ANZ CEOs are expecting to actively pursue M&A in the next three years.

In the next year, 37% of leaders expect to actively or very actively pursue M&A for growth. This increases to 53% in the next three years, but deal appetite is at a lower level than in other APEC regions.

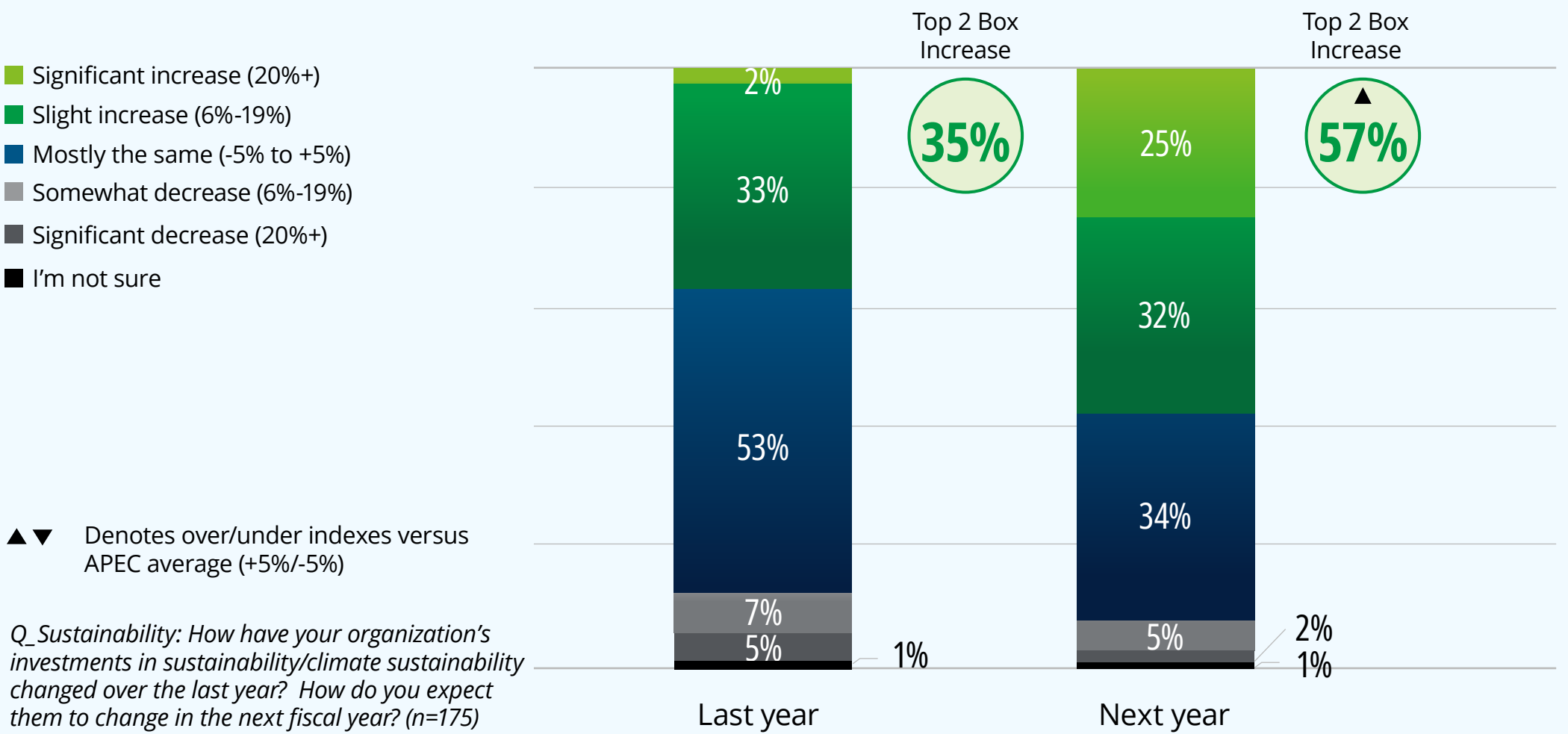
Figure 6: How actively is your company pursuing M&A as a means of growing in the coming year? In the next 3 years?



Sustainability investments have generally remained consistent over the last year.

The majority of ANZ leaders maintained investment levels in sustainability last year, while 35% increased. In the coming year this jumps to 57% of companies.

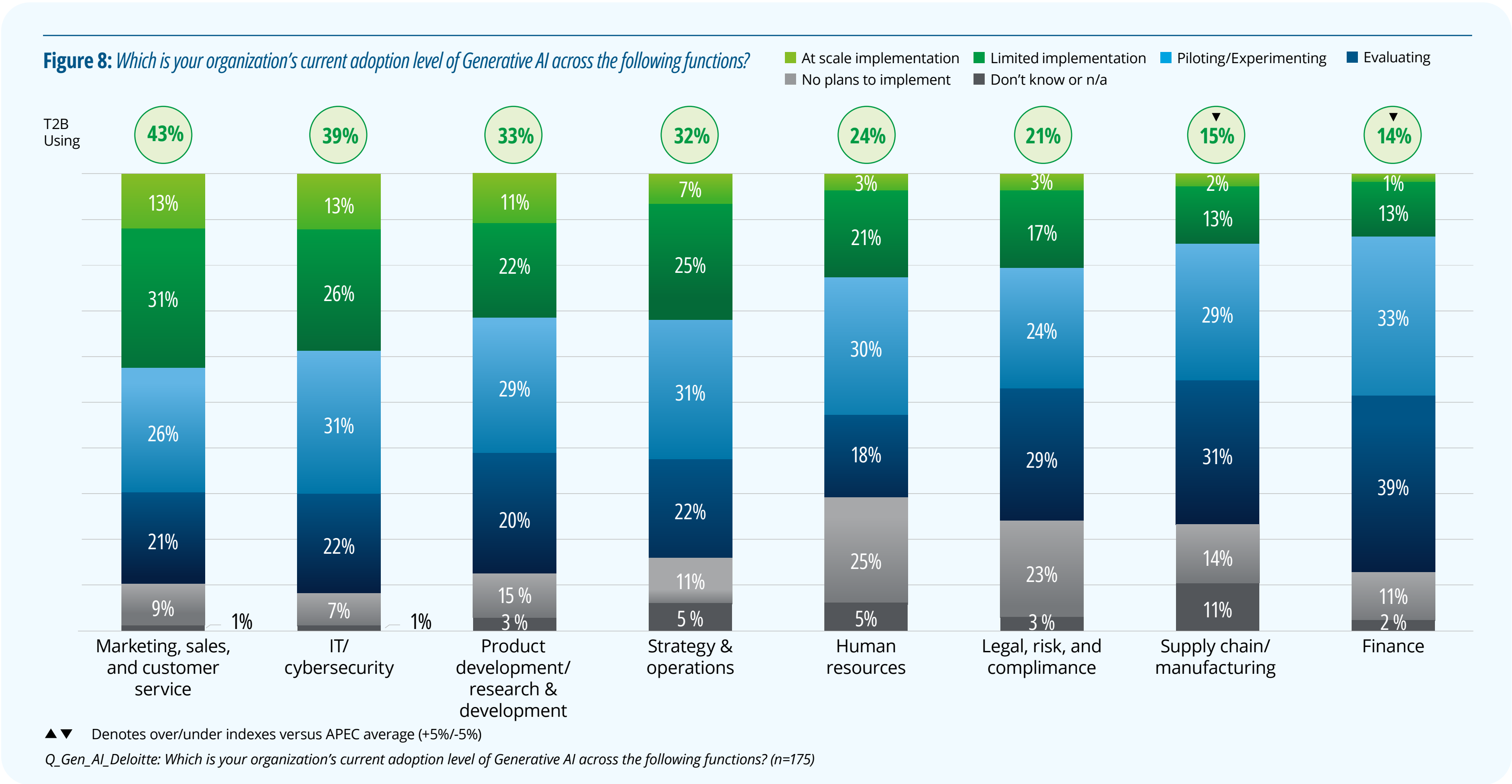
Figure 7: How have your organization's investments in sustainability/climate sustainability changed over the last year? How do you expect them to change in the next fiscal year?





Generative AI adoption is most advanced in marketing, sales, and customer service, and IT and Cybersecurity functions.

GenAI adoption in head office functions is lower, and ANZ trails the APEC region with implementation in supply chains and finance functions.





Objectives & methodology

APEC CEO Survey methodology

Context

The APEC region is one of the most dynamic in the world, and includes both advanced and emerging markets, offering diverse growth opportunities.

Business confidence, growth, and business trends often start first in large companies in APEC countries and then spread more widely throughout the world.

Objectives

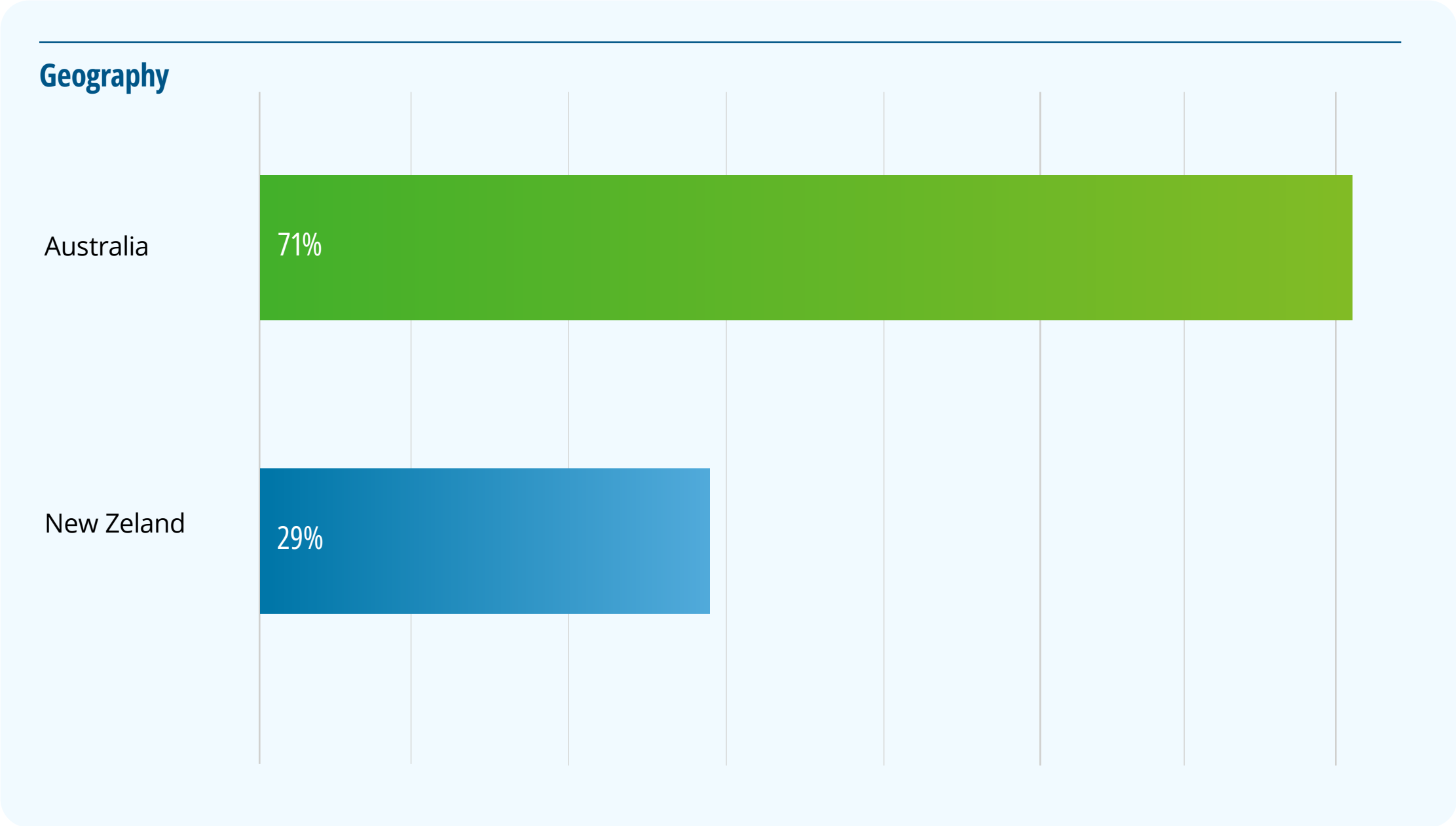
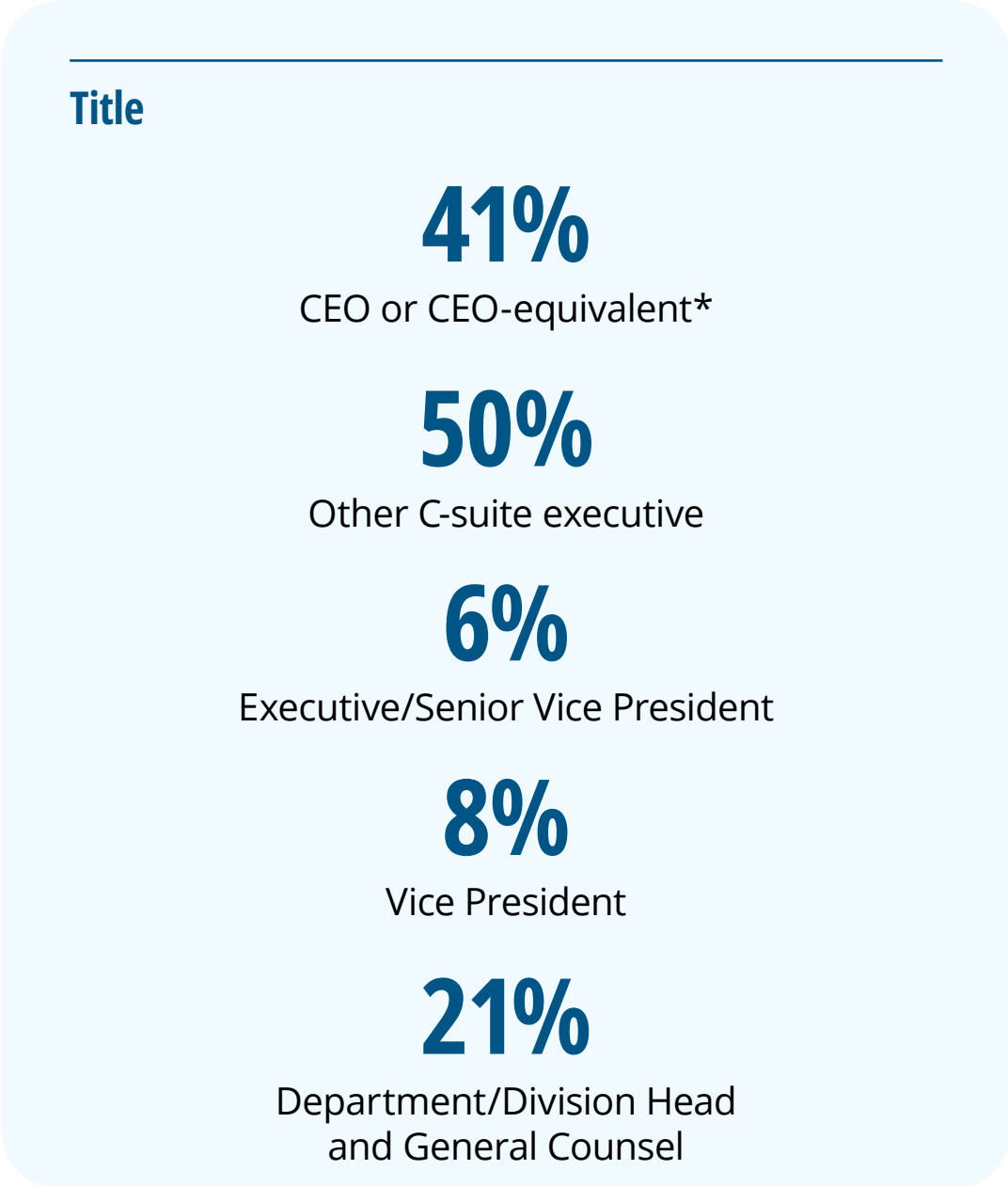
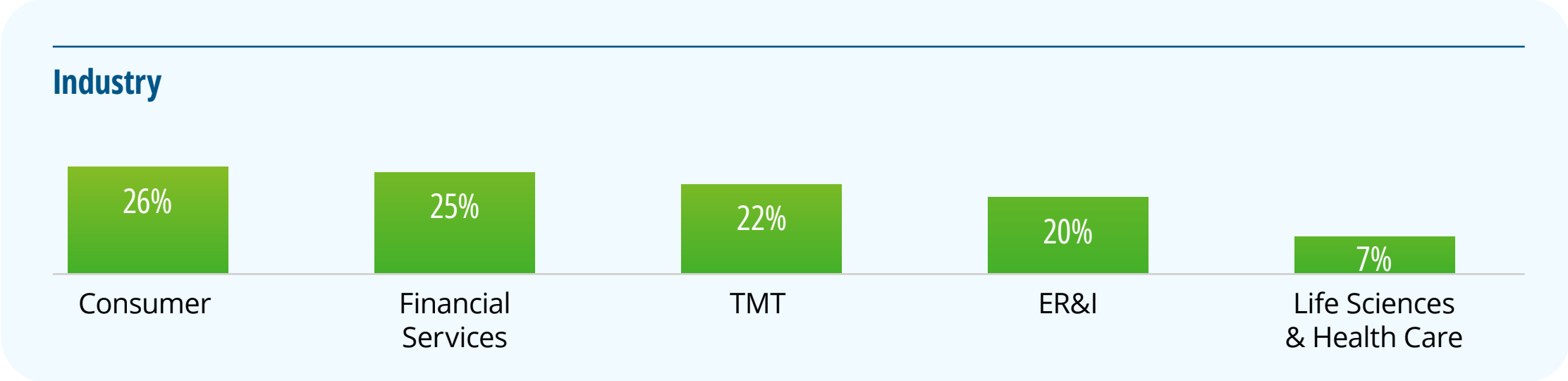
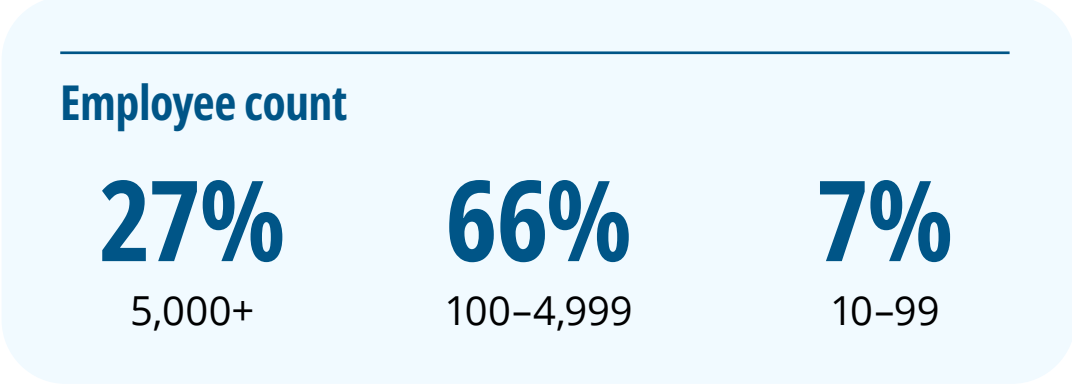
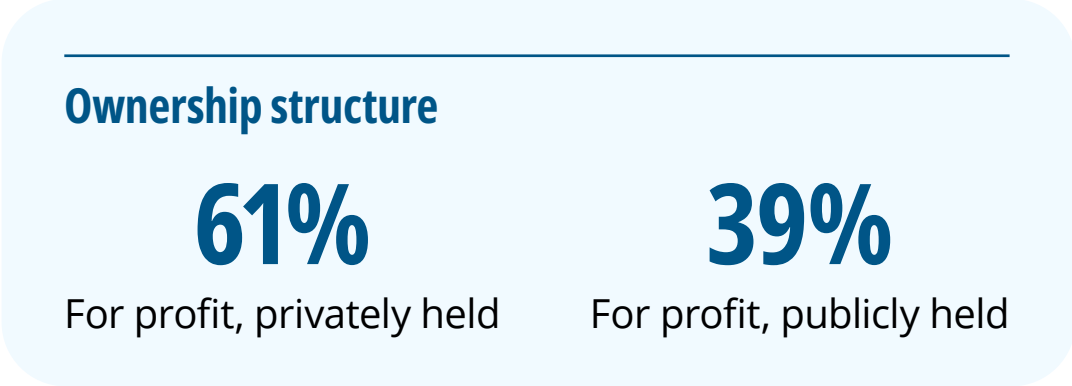
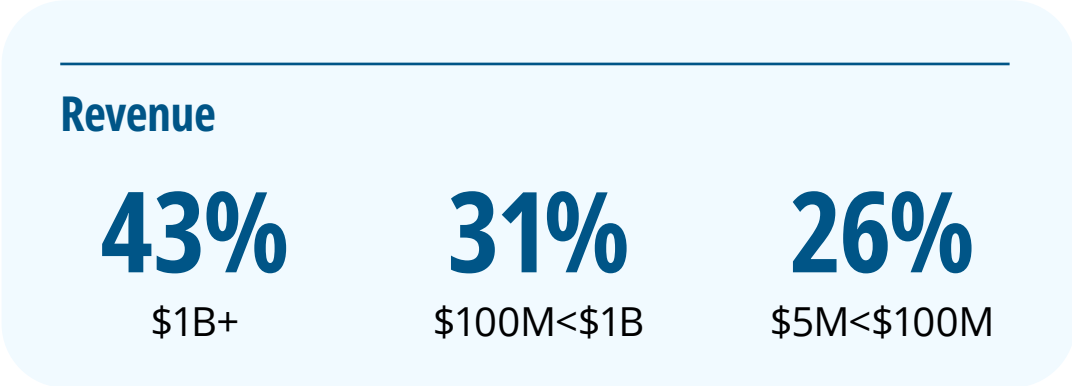
Deloitte conducted a study of corporate CEOs and senior executives of 18 APEC member economies (excluding Russia, Brunei and Papua New Guinea).

The study assesses the issues that matter to CEOs: business confidence and growth expectations, identify challenges and opportunities for regional economies, and evaluate various trends and priorities.





ANZ sample profile



*Note: CEO-equivalent in ANZ includes CEOs, Presidents, C-suites in a General Management role, and Managing Directors in Financial Services firms; sum may not equal 100% due to double counting



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