



Finance Trends 2026  
Mining & Metals

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## **African CFOs at the strategic forefront**

From financial stewardship to operational and strategic leadership

Deloitte's *Finance Trends 2026* report confirms a fundamental shift in the role of finance leaders globally. Today's finance leaders are playing a leading role in shaping enterprise strategy, cost optimisation, and digital transformation—and building tech fuelled teams to power their organisations.



Compared to the recent past, today's leading chief financial officers are thinking differently, operating differently, and hiring differently. But they're contending with a complex growth environment.

To help leaders gain a better understanding of what's likely to come next and inform this inaugural *Finance Trends 2026* report, we surveyed 1,326 global finance leaders around the world and across industries. Respondents to our survey are CFOs or next-in-line to be CFOs at some of the world's largest companies (with annual revenues exceeding US\$1 billion). We also conducted one-on-one interviews with nine finance executives from global organisations to learn how these trends are playing out in their role and across the finance function.

More than 70% of mining and metals finance leaders globally report playing a leading role in enterprise strategy, significantly above the cross industry average (57%). In Africa, this expanded role is not new in principle, but it has intensified in complexity and urgency.



What has changed is the speed at which these factors interact and the degree to which financial outcomes are determined by operational decisions underground. As a result, African mining CFOs are no longer only interpreters of performance after the fact, they are increasingly required to shape decisions before value is lost.

In practice, this means finance leaders are being drawn closer to mine planning, production sequencing, capital allocation, and portfolio decisions. The CFO's ability to translate operational realities into financial consequences, and to challenge decisions with data, is becoming a defining source of competitive advantage.



## Finance led cost management that drives measurable value

Globally, more than

**60%**

of cost owners use cloud based solutions to optimise costs, with increasing use of AI to automate processes. In African mining, cost management is already a core focus, but visibility and timeliness remain challenges.

Lower labour costs and historical operating models have reduced the perceived urgency for real time cost insight. However, rising input costs, energy constraints, and margin pressure are changing attitudes of CFOs. The result is a shift from retrospective cost control to proactive cost influence, enabled by better data integration between finance, operations, and engineering.

## The journey toward agentic insights

The *Finance Trends* study shows that

**70%**

of finance leaders are already using AI, with a smaller subset seeing measurable value (30%). In African mining, AI adoption remains at an earlier stage.

While AI is gaining traction in operations, for example the use of sensors in safety to identify hazards, in finance the use is still limited in Africa. Where AI is being used in finance globally, for example in statistical forecasting and agent based workflows, it is constrained in the African context by data quality, fragmented systems, and a lack of trusted "single sources of truth".

The long term opportunity lies in agentic finance workflows, where AI agents support planning, validation, risk identification, and compliance. However, realising this vision depends on foundational investments in data governance and system standardisation.

## Developing technical and interdisciplinary skills

With AI, cloud, and data now central to finance, technical skills development is a priority for mining finance leaders globally. Respondents identified

AI and automation skills

**29%**

data analysis and technology integration

**27%**

and advanced scenario planning

**27%**

as their top skills priorities.

Regulatory and compliance knowledge

**27%**

is also a priority

In Africa, the challenge is not only skills availability, but where those skills sit in the organisation. Many mining companies already employ data scientists and technologists, but these capabilities are often isolated in IT or specialist teams, limiting their impact on finance decision making.

This shift requires CFOs to rethink organisation design and embrace deeper business partnering across functions. Over time, this model also supports more effective workforce planning - aligning future skills with production strategy, mechanisation plans, and long term asset portfolios.

## Looking ahead

As African mining companies navigate cyclical commodity markets and persistent operational uncertainty, the CFO's role is evolving from financial oversight to architect of organisational resilience.

The *Finance Trends 2026* report points to three imperatives for African mining finance leaders:

01



**Embed advanced scenario planning** as a continuous capability, not an annual exercise

02



**Invest in data foundations and standardisation** to unlock speed, trust, and insight

03



**Build interdisciplinary finance teams** that combine financial, operational, and digital expertise

Finance is no longer a back office function. In African mining, it is becoming a central driver of strategic clarity, cost discipline, and long term value creation. Those CFOs who act decisively today, while commodity cycles are favourable, will be best positioned to navigate the next downturn and redefine competitive advantage.

For more information, contact your Deloitte partner or



**Siliziwe Mafika**

Africa CFO Programme Leader  
smafika@deloitte.co.za



**Andries van den Berg**

Finance Transformation Partner  
andrvandenberg@deloitte.co.za



**Louis Kruger**

Africa Energy, Resources &  
Industrials Industry Leader  
lokruger@deloitte.co.za

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