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Japan treasurers put AI at the top of the agenda, but execution gaps persist, HSBC research finds

All participants in Japan expect AI to be useful to treasury within the next three years, with “harnessing emerging technologies” ranked the #1 priority for the next 12 months

However, 86% say treasury isn’t keeping up with AI adoption across the wider organisation – the highest level recorded across Asia Pacific

Digital currencies remain early-stage in Japan, with only 5% likely to use them in the next two years

Treasury teams in Japan are accelerating their focus on artificial intelligence (AI) as a practical lever for productivity and process transformation, while highlighting system integration, skills and governance as key barriers to scaling adoption.

These are among the Japan findings from HSBC’s Redefining Treasury in Asia Pacific 2026: Voices of Treasury report, now in its third year. For this edition, HSBC held treasury-focused roadshows across 11 markets in Asia Pacific and spoke with 680 treasury and finance professionals, including in Japan.

Discussions with treasurers in Tokyo earlier this year revealed a constructive tension: participants are highly confident in AI’s potential, while also clear-eyed about what needs to happen to move from experimentation to embedded, day-to-day treasury outcomes.

“The conversation around AI has moved past curiosity and into capability – but the differentiator now is execution,” said **Manoj Dugar, Head of Global Payments Solutions, Asia ex Greater China at HSBC**. “Getting the fundamentals right – data, governance and controls – is what will enable AI to scale beyond pilots and deliver impact at pace.”

AI: strong confidence, with integration and capability hurdles

In Japan, every participant said AI would be extremely, very or somewhat useful to their treasury over the next three years, signalling strong confidence in AI’s potential to transform treasury processes.

At the same time, many treasurers noted a gap in adoption maturity between business-side functions and finance and treasury. 86% of respondents in Japan said treasury was not keeping up with the pace of AI adoption across their broader organisation, the highest percentage recorded across the region.

Respondents in Japan were clear on what it will take to move from pilots to scaled outcomes:

- 71% cited integration with existing systems as one of the biggest hurdles to adopting AI in treasury.
- 52% said they had insufficient skilled resources to implement their vision of real-time treasury.
- Participants also highlighted challenges such as inconsistent data formats and the persistence of manual processes, reinforcing the importance of data quality and standardisation.

Japanese treasurers also emphasised the role of governance, auditability and accountability as adoption moves into execution—particularly where AI could influence approvals, ERP postings or payment execution.

Digital currencies: interest, but adoption remains early-stage

While treasurers in Japan showed interest in the potential of digital currencies, adoption remains at an early stage.

Only 5% of participants in Japan considered themselves likely to use digital currencies in the next two years, with many still assessing whether there is a clear business need. Intra-group fund transfers were seen as the most realistic near-term use case.

More broadly, 36% said they were somewhat likely to use digital currencies in the next two years, 18% were unlikely, and 41% remained unsure.

“Treasury is an organisation’s engine room of growth, rarely seen from the deck, but without it the ship does not move,” Dugar added. “Successfully integrating transformational technologies such as AI and tokenisation is the first step toward achieving significant efficiencies – greater automation, faster execution, and smarter decision support.”

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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. [HSBC Redefining Treasury Asia Pacific 2026](#)

Notes to editors:

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