XPS Group



Beyond crypto: the expanding institutional digital asset market

Digital assets survey 2026

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The market at a turning point

The digital asset market is entering a new phase of development. While institutional adoption remains at a relatively early stage, asset managers are expanding their product ranges, building specialist expertise and investing in digital infrastructure, laying the foundations for future growth.

In August 2026, we invited contacts across more than 400 asset managers to provide information on their digital asset exposure, product offerings and outlook. Our first of its kind survey provides a definitive picture of institutional investment in digital assets and how it may develop, reflecting responses of 27 managers with £31tn combined assets under management.

Why this matters

If current plans are realised:

- 26 new digital asset products will launch over the next 12 months
- Product availability will increase by 84%
- Firms will continue expanding specialist digital asset teams
- Tokenisation may become a significant part of future investment infrastructure

Our survey suggests the industry is preparing for a world where digital assets become increasingly integrated into mainstream investment markets.

Key findings at a glance

31 products available today

26 planned launches

£104bn digital asset AUM

13 Managers offering digital assets

10 firms plan to increase specialist resource

Over half believe regulation is progressing too slowly

Digital assets are evolving from a cryptocurrency story into an infrastructure story. Asset managers are positioning for that shift today.



Savvas Ioannides
Senior Investment Associate

Defining the digital landscape

Digital assets are moving beyond cryptocurrency, with asset managers increasingly exploring tokenised funds, blockchain infrastructure and digital forms of traditional investments. We surveyed the market to understand how this is translating into products, assets and specialist capabilities, and where managers expect future growth and innovation.

In our Sceptic's Guide to Digital Assets series, we explored the fundamentals of digital assets and their potential implications for institutional investors. We defined digital assets as a term that covers four broad categories:



Cryptocurrencies - digital currencies such as Bitcoin and Ether.



Stablecoins - digital tokens designed to maintain a stable value, typically by reference to a fiat currency.



Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) - digital versions of sovereign currencies issued by central banks.



Tokenised assets - digital representations of ownership interests in traditional assets, such as equities, bonds and private market investments.

For the purposes of this survey, we define digital asset products as investment products that provide exposure to one or more of the categories above. This includes both traditional investment vehicles (such as pooled funds and ETFs) and products that invest directly in blockchain-based assets or tokenised markets.

This survey is intended to provide an overview of market activity and asset manager positioning and should not be interpreted as an endorsement of any particular digital asset investment approach.

While we see potential in areas such as tokenisation and the wider development of digital financial infrastructure, XPS does not currently view cryptocurrencies as suitable strategic investments for most institutional investors.

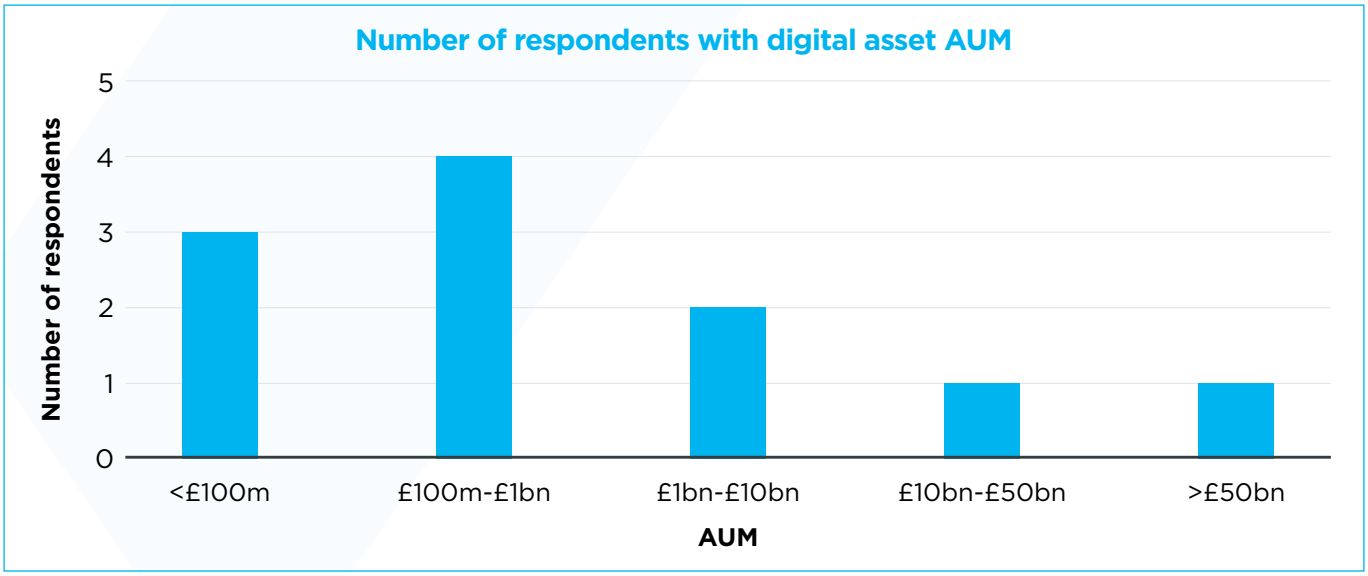
About the survey

The survey was distributed to contacts across around 400 asset managers, with 27 providing a response. Collectively, respondents represented approximately £31 trillion in firm-wide assets under management and approximately £104bn of digital asset AUM.

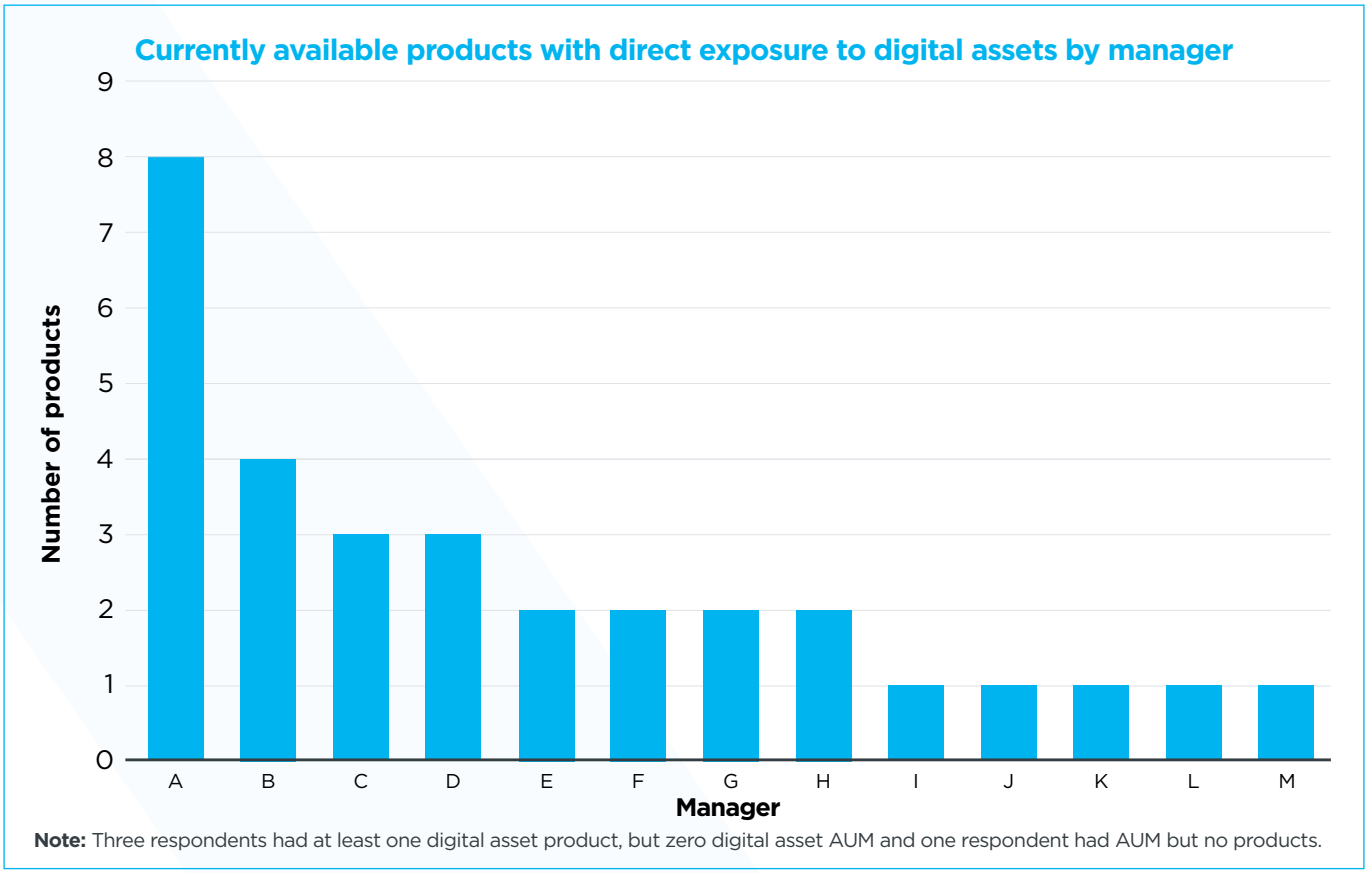
Responses have been anonymised, with manager labelling applied consistently across the charts. For example, 'Manager A' refers to the same manager throughout. Where relevant, responses have been supplemented by publicly available product information.

Unless otherwise stated, survey responses reflect information provided as at 31 March 2026. Where the paper refers to actions or expectations occurring "within the next 12 months", it should be interpreted as referring to the 12-month period following August 2026, the month in which the survey was conducted.

The digital asset landscape today

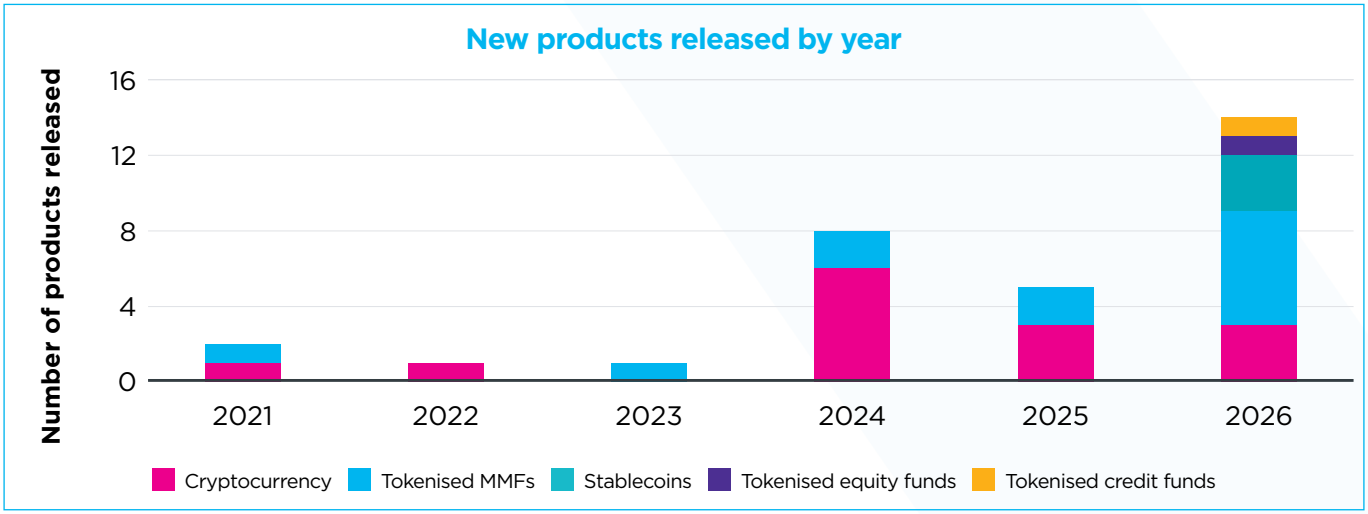


A modest sized but growing market: A total of £104bn digital asset AUM (assets under management) was reported, but assets remain highly concentrated. A single manager accounts for around 86% of the total reported AUM. Only a relatively small cohort of managers have accumulated significant assets, along with a number of managers managing smaller allocations. This highlights that, whilst product availability is increasing rapidly, adoption is uneven across providers.



Note: Three respondents had at least one digital asset product, but zero digital asset AUM and one respondent had AUM but no products.

A concentrated market: Our survey identified 13 managers that have launched at least one product featuring direct exposure to digital assets. Across these managers, a total of 31 products are currently available.



Accelerating product launches: Available products have accelerated markedly. Of the reported 31 products currently available, 27 were launched in the last 3 years of which 14 were launched this year (up to September 2026, when the data was collected).

Rapid growth but still limited choice: Between 2021 and 2022, launches were primarily focused on providing investors with indirect cryptocurrency exposure through collective pooled funds. From 2023 to 2025, activity shifted towards tokenised vehicles, particularly tokenised money market funds (MMFs held directly), reflecting growing interest in applying blockchain technology to traditional financial instruments.

By 2026, the product landscape has become more diversified, with managers offering a broader mix of tokenised MMFs, stablecoins, and tokenised equity and credit strategies, although choice is still very limited. The shift towards tokenised products points to growing interest in the operational, liquidity and efficiency benefits of tokenisation, rather than solely seeking cryptocurrency exposure.

Nevertheless, the market is in its infancy.

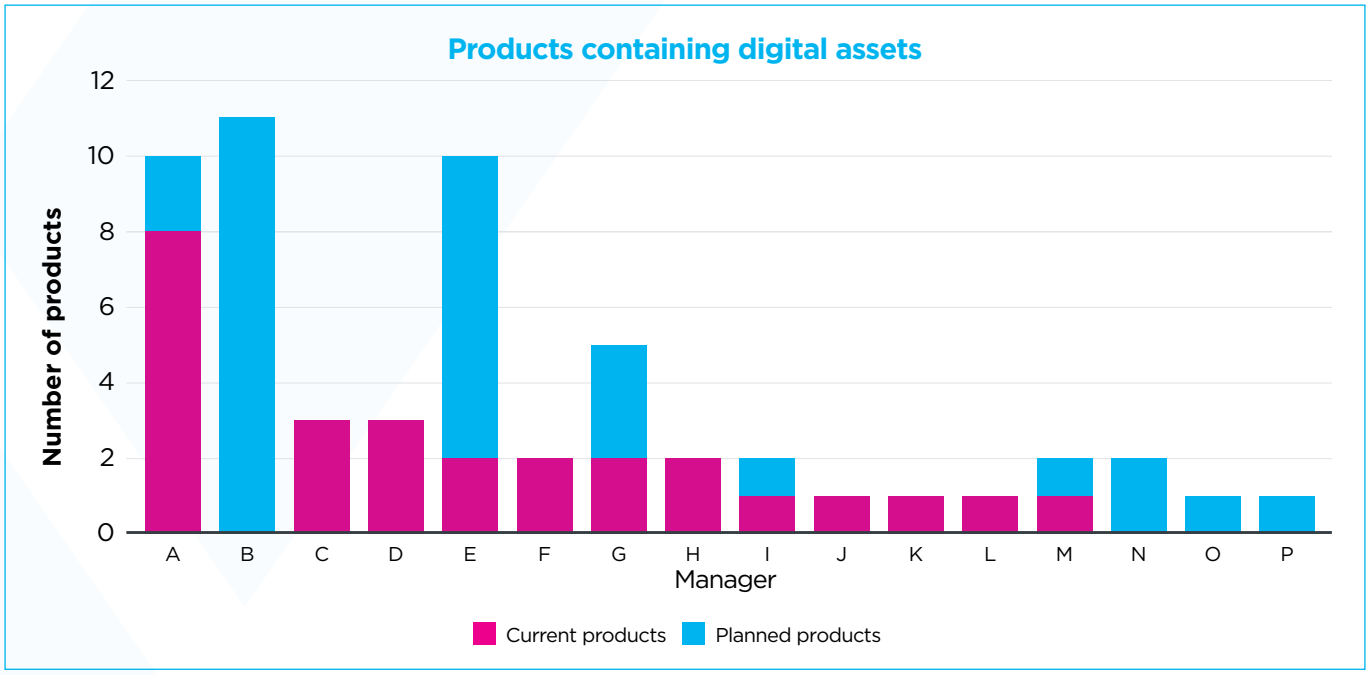
Perhaps the most striking finding is the divergence between supply and demand. Product development and organisational investment are accelerating, yet institutional adoption remains cautious, highlighting both the opportunity and the work still required to build confidence in tokenisation.



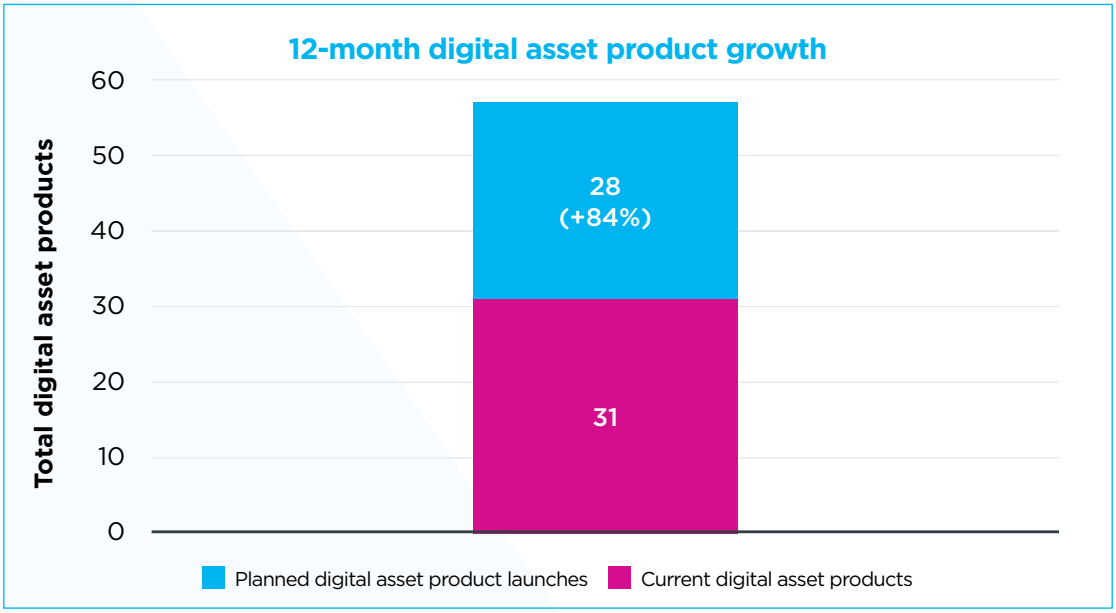
James White
Investment Associate

Rapidly expanding product universe

The digital asset product universe is expanding at pace. Respondents are planning a further 26 products for launch within the next 12 months, implying potential growth of 84%, and increasing the total product universe to 57 products across the sample.



This growth is being driven by both existing and new entrants. 9 managers confirmed plans to launch at least one additional product, including 3 managers that do not currently offer any digital asset products.

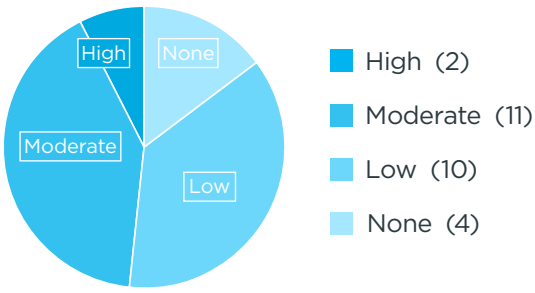


Actual growth may be higher than reported, as 7 managers indicated that they were unable to disclose details of future product plans.

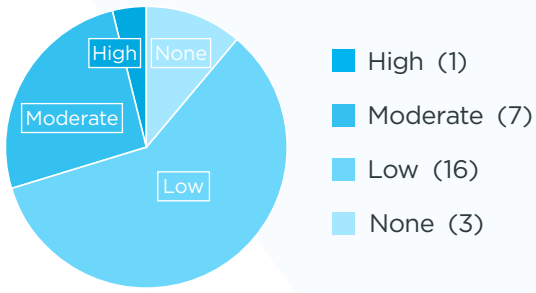
Product development is running ahead of investor demand

Despite strong product development, current levels of demand remain relatively modest. We asked all respondents, including managers with no existing digital asset exposure or products, to assess the level of demand they are seeing.

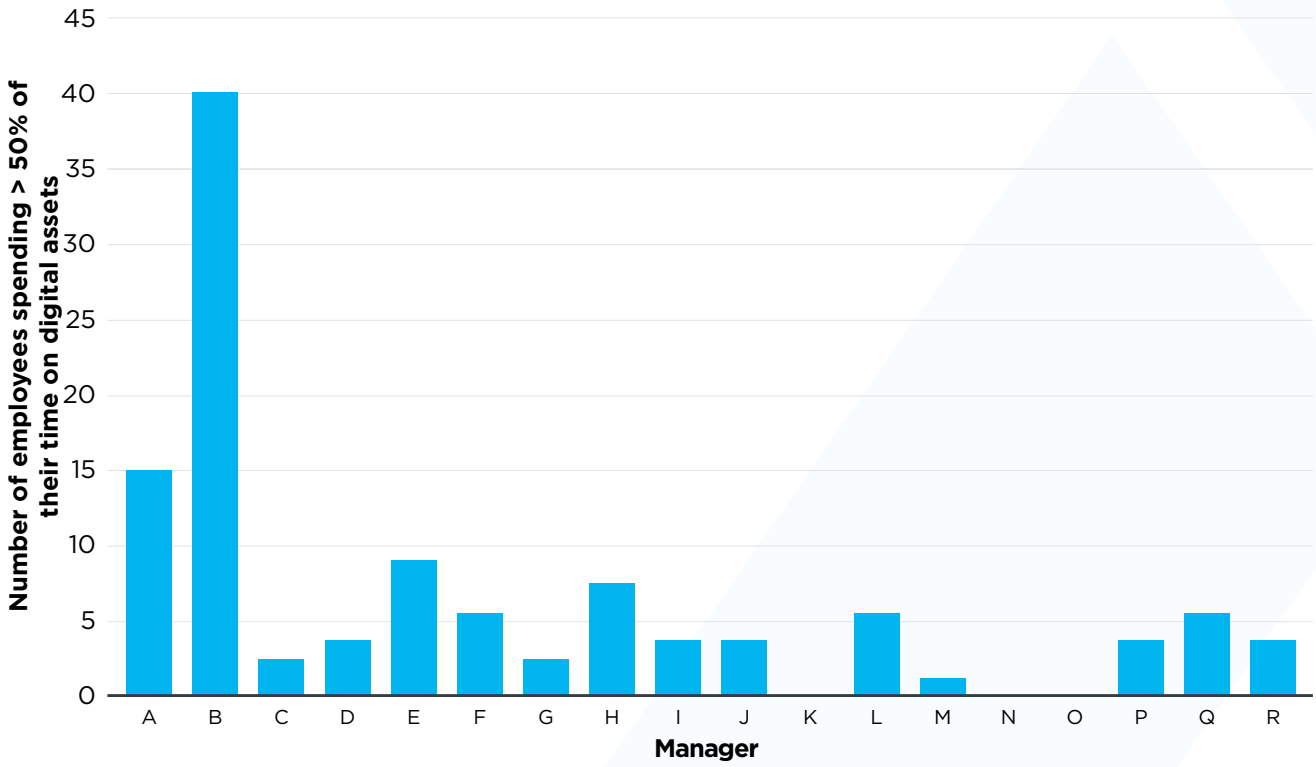
How would you characterise current investor demand for digital assets in the **retail** investment sector?



How would you characterise current investor demand for digital assets in the **institutional** investment sector?



Retail interest is greater than institutional. Out of 27 managers, 19 reported low or no institutional demand, compared with 14 reporting low or no retail demand. This suggests that whilst interest in digital assets is greater in retail markets, neither retail nor institutional markets are exhibiting high demand.

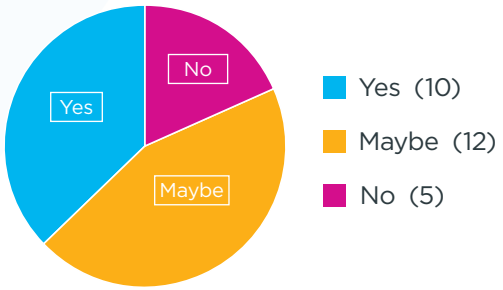


Dedicated digital asset teams: 8 managers reported teams of 5 or more specialists focused primarily on digital assets, whilst 1 manager reported a team of 40 dedicated employees spending at least 50% of their time on digital assets.

Investing ahead of product launches: Investment in specialist resource is not restricted to firms with existing products. 3 managers reported dedicated digital asset teams despite not yet having launched a product, suggesting that some firms are building capabilities ahead of anticipated market growth.

Conversely, 1 manager has already launched a digital asset product without reporting dedicated digital asset resource, highlighting that approaches to resourcing vary significantly across the market.

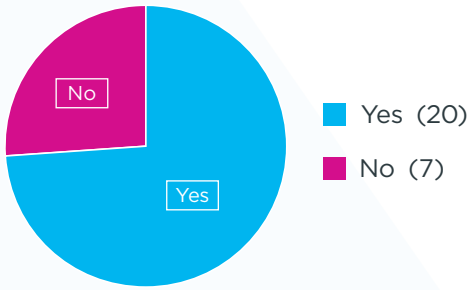
Do you plan to increase your team resource in the area of digital assets in the next 12 months?



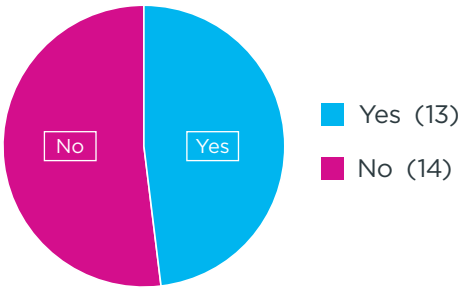
Further build-out of digital teams planned: 10 respondents plan to increase their digital asset resource over the next 12 months, while a further 12 are considering doing so. Together, this means that 22 respondents (81%), may add resource during the coming year.

Strategic and regulatory outlook

Do you consider digital assets to represent a growth opportunity to your firm?



Do you consider UK regulatory progress to be moving fast enough?



20 respondents view digital assets as a growth opportunity for their firm, and the same number have incorporated digital assets into their growth plans.

Of the 20 managers that identified digital assets as a growth opportunity, 12 included digital assets within their near-term (12-month) growth plans, while 8 referenced digital assets primarily within their longer-term (three-year) planning horizon.

This suggests that some managers see this as a longer-term commercial opportunity.

Industry undecided on pace of regulatory progress: Despite this positive strategic outlook, managers expressed concerns regarding the pace of regulation. Around half of respondents believe UK regulatory progress is not moving quickly enough. We do expect this to evolve in the next 12 months and it'll be useful to see how this develops as the market becomes more mature.

Digital assets poised for growth

The survey results suggest that the digital asset market is entering a new phase of development.

- While products offering cryptocurrency exposure remain a core part of the landscape, activity is increasingly focused on the tokenisation of traditional financial assets, particularly money market funds, with a broader range of tokenised investment solutions now emerging.
- Asset managers appear confident in the long-term commercial potential of digital assets. Product pipelines are strong, specialist teams are expanding, and many firms have incorporated digital assets into their growth strategies. However, investor adoption, particularly among institutional investors, has yet to develop at the same pace as product availability. As a result, the market currently appears to be characterised by supply running ahead of demand.
- Our survey also indicates a clear distinction between early adopters and the broader market. A relatively small cohort of managers has already developed specialist teams, established product ranges and accumulated meaningful digital asset AUM, whilst many others are at an earlier stage of development. Digital asset expertise and market participation remain concentrated amongst a limited number of providers.
- Looking ahead, the pace of regulatory development is likely to be an important determinant of how quickly the market evolves. Greater regulatory clarity may help support broader adoption and provide a framework within which institutional investors can more confidently evaluate digital asset opportunities.

We find an industry that is positioned for growth in demand starting to come through in the next 3 years, despite current adoption being relatively light.

We look forward to reviewing the market again in 12 months' time to see if the optimistic growth of products and resource in this space grows as forecast.



Faye Clark
Head of Manager Research

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all participating asset managers for taking the time to contribute to this survey. Their willingness to share data, insights and perspectives has provided a valuable snapshot of a rapidly evolving area of the investment market.

Survey respondents (A-Z)

Aberdeen Investments
Allianz Global Investors
Allspring Global Investments
Aviva Investors
Baillie Gifford
BlackRock
BNP Paribas Asset Management
Cambrian Asset Management
Columbia Threadneedle Investments
Federated Hermes
Fidelity International
Franklin Templeton
IFM Investors
Insight Investment
Invesco
J O Hambro Capital Management
Janus Henderson Investors
LGT Capital Partners
Lombard Odier Investment Managers
Marsh
Morgan Stanley Investment Management
PGIM
Schroders
SEI Investments
State Street Investment Management
Veritas Asset Management
Wellington Management

Find out more

If you would like to find out more about digital assets, please contact **Savvas Ioannides, James White, Faye Clark or Simeon WIllis.**



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