standard chartered

Future of Trade: Resilience

Contents

Sunflowers – a symbol of resilience and positivity – are known for their ability to grow and thrive even in the most challenging conditions. For leaders shaping the future of global trade, sunflowers are a reminder of the potential and growth opportunities that can emerge from disruption and times of change.

Foreword

Though complex, the future of trade is compelling

This year's Future of Trade report arrives at a pivotal moment. World trade, alongside supply chain resilience, is facing an uncertain future and, due to its significant importance, is provoking intense scrutiny.

Global supply chains have faced considerable disruption over the past year, primarily due to tariffs. However, while they may have been dominating headlines, tariffs are not the only factor that is top of mind for corporates.

Our latest research, collected from July to early August 2025, is based on a survey of 1,200 corporate leaders from 17 markets across four sectors. It shows emerging technologies and global economic growth patterns are equally critical: 53 per cent of corporates rank these three factors as the top strategic drivers of global trade over the next three to five years.

This also points to the complexity facing corporates: it is not just the magnitude of the challenges that they need to handle simultaneously, but the fact that the same trends that threaten to disrupt operations can also be compelling opportunities.

Instead of taking a passive or defensive stance to build resilience, surveyed corporates are adopting a multi-pronged strategy to drive efficiency and capture new opportunities. Around 57 per cent of them intend to adjust their treasury management strategy, increase digitalisation efforts, and realign their supply chains geographically, forging more trade corridors.

Where then, are the new hotspots to reposition global supply chains for growth? Asia will continue to be the hub for sourcing, manufacturing, and exporting, with the Middle East rising in prominence – a clear indication that South-South trade will continue to be a significant driver of global trade growth.

India is the top destination among corporates surveyed, with more than 40 per cent planning to increase trade and manufacturing activities with one of the fastest-growing large economies and the world's most populous market.

Intra-regional trade is set to rise as well, with Malaysia and Indonesia next in line, potentially strengthening ASEAN's regional integration. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is another economy attracting attention, with corporates in nearby markets intending to expand trade and manufacturing activities with, and in, the UAE.

Yet one thing is also clear: both the US and Mainland China will remain key players in the global supply chain. Isolation, particularly for large economies, seems unlikely in the medium term.

Corporates are increasingly turning to technology to capture market opportunities, such as adopting digital supply chain finance platforms. Nearly 40 per cent of surveyed corporates have implemented these platforms, and an additional 55 per cent expect to do so within the next two years.

As emerging technologies such as AI and blockchain evolve, they have the potential to profoundly impact all sectors and accelerate growth within the digital economy, offering significant opportunities for corporate adaptation and further growth.

This is where Standard Chartered, with our on-the-ground presence in 54 markets and decades of local market expertise, comes in. We assist with digitalisation efforts and facilitate flows across trade corridors offering trade finance, advisory and risk management.

We hope this research helps other businesses identify opportunities for future growth.

Sunil Kaushal
Co-Head, Corporate & Investment Banking and
CEO, ASEAN and South Asia

Executive summary

Global trade is possibly going through its most turbulent decade, with supply chain shocks, geopolitical shifts, and rapid digitalisation redefining how companies operate.

As the world faces these disruptions, Standard Chartered aims to understand corporate sentiments and strategies for navigating the changes in the next three to five years.

Our research reveals a complex, yet compelling future for trade. Now is the time to adopt a proactive stance to help power resilience.

Executive summary

Our survey of 1,200 corporate leaders from 17 markets[1] across four industries – consumer and retail; energy; power and diversified industries; and technology, media and telecommunications – conducted from July to early August 2025 explores how leading organisations are powering supply chain resilience.

Not only tariffs

While tariffs remain a top concern for corporate leaders, the emergence of new technologies and global economic growth are also highlighted as equally important drivers of cross-border activity that keep respondents awake at night.

These three areas of concern underline the complexity facing corporates, that there is no dominant factor that will drive the future of trade. But challenges could also bring opportunities – to boost efficiency through digitalisation and capture opportunities, for example in sourcing and manufacturing in emerging markets.

Trade tariffs	53%
Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence	53%
Global economic growth	53%

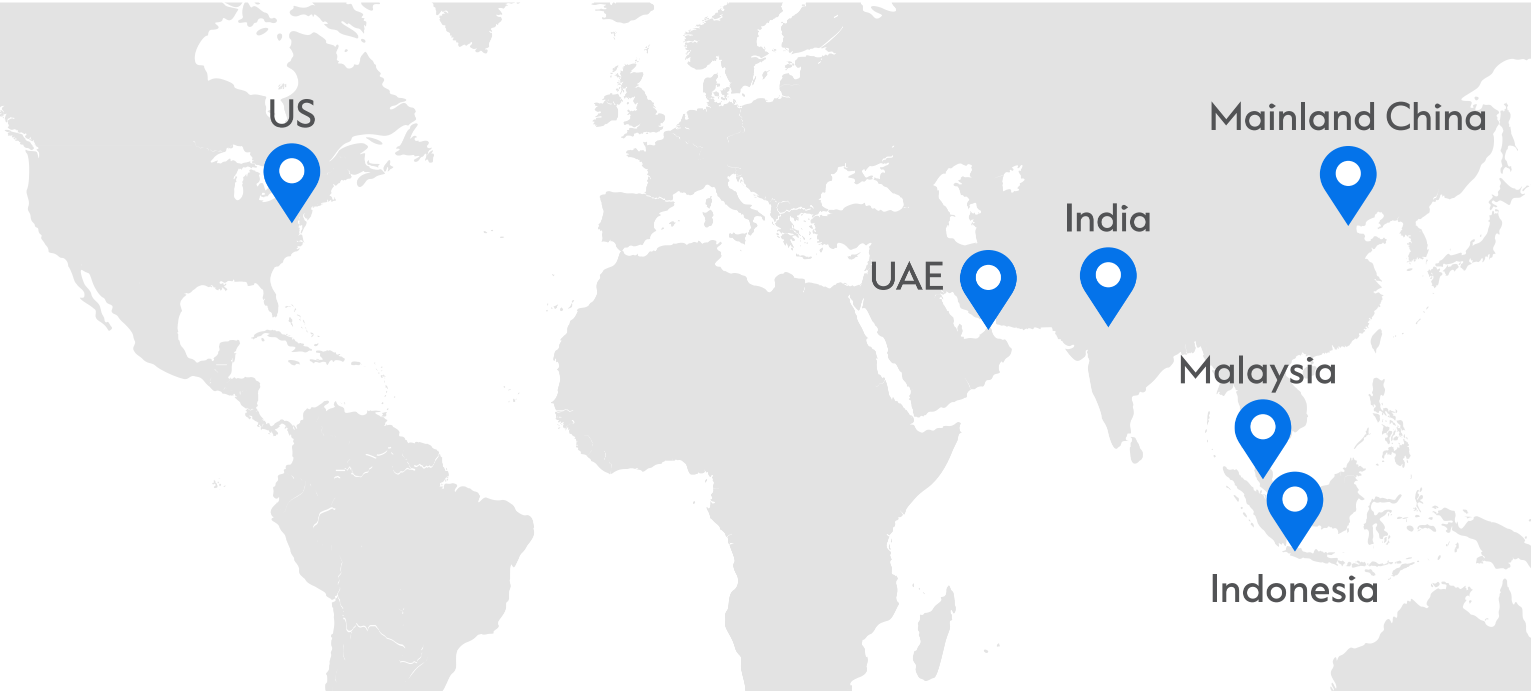
A multi-pronged strategy to help power resilience

To be resilient, corporates intend to adopt a proactive stance, responding in several ways. And though not new, the top three strategies identified – adjusting treasury management strategies, increasing digitalisation efforts and realigning supply chains – reflect the multi-faceted environment. The market and sector findings in this report locate opportunities, and inform considerations and priorities.

Adjust treasury management strategies	57%
Increase digitalisation efforts	57%
Realign supply chains geographically	56%

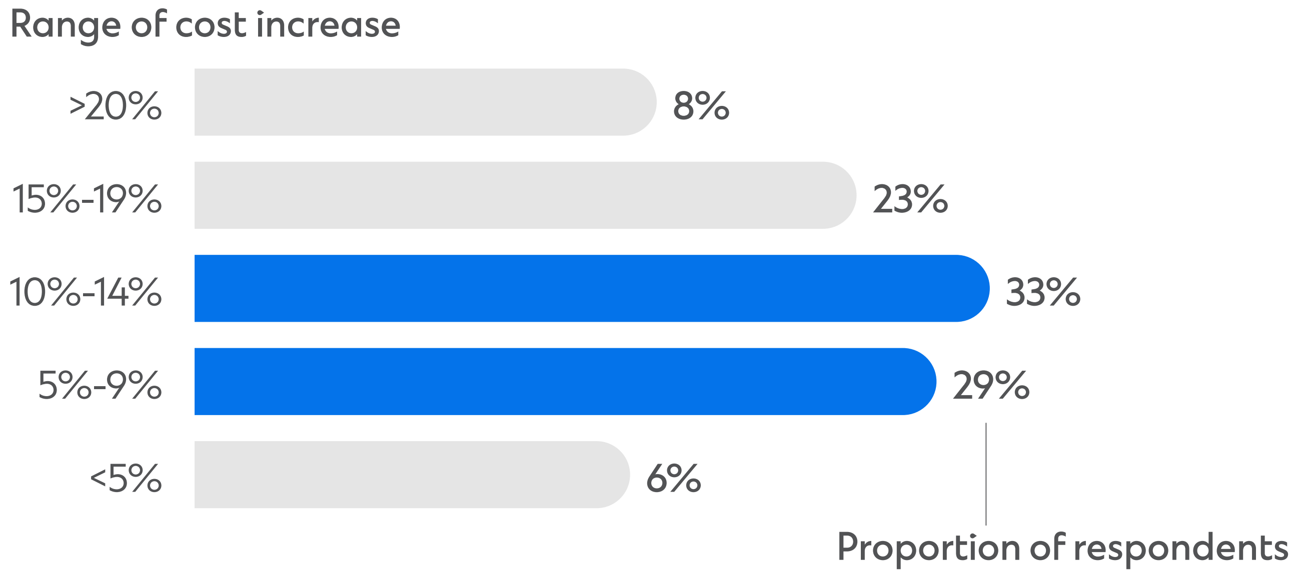
Six stand-out markets

Six markets stand out as locations for sourcing, manufacturing and exporting in the medium term. Corporates are looking at India, Malaysia, Indonesia and the UAE. They also remain committed to the US and Mainland China – key nodes in the global supply chain.



The cost of resilience

Almost all corporates are concerned about rising costs resulting from realigning supply chains, geopolitical uncertainty and changes to tariffs. 62 per cent of corporates expect cost increases by 5 per cent to 14 per cent in the next three to five years.



SCF platforms for resilience and inclusivity

The vast majority of corporates report they either already use a supply chain finance (SCF) platform or plan to adopt one within two years, reflecting recognition of the efficiencies created by such tools. Giving corporates the ability to finance suppliers further down a supply chain could create a more inclusive trade ecosystem – addressing the longstanding trillion dollar trade finance gap.

Improved cashflow optimisation, working capital support, and/or faster payment to counterparties	57%
Improved integration across supply chain funding tools	52%
Diversification through adding supply chain partners	48%

1 The surveyed markets are Egypt, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mainland China, Malaysia, Nigeria, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States and Vietnam.

Key drivers of global trade: not only tariffs

To focus on tariffs is to miss the bigger picture of what will truly drive global trade.

Tariffs are, as expected, top of mind for corporates, but they are not the only factor that respondents said will impact global trade over the next three to five years.

Emerging technologies such as AI and global economic growth are deemed equally as important, very closely followed by geopolitics, and climate change and sustainability issues.

Key drivers of global trade: not only tariffs

Trade tariffs

53%[2]

Rapid changes to the global tariff regime – with tariffs implemented on many markets over the past few months – are a key concern for corporates, given their impact on costs and supply chain disruption.

Just over half (53 per cent) of corporates rank tariffs in the top three issues expected to shape globe trade in the medium term – with 20 per cent ranking tariffs as their primary concern. However, this concern has eased (from 27 per cent) when compared to the results of a pulse survey we conducted in April.[3]

Smaller and more trade-dependent markets are understandably more concerned about tariffs, with almost two thirds of respondents in Malaysia and Vietnam (62 per cent and 60 per cent, respectively) listing tariffs among their top three concerns – a reasonable reaction considering the US is the third-largest and biggest market, respectively, for exports from these two countries.

Emerging technologies

53%

The rise of AI, alongside the growing momentum around digital assets, featured significantly among respondents, with 53 per cent seeing emerging technologies as important as trade tariffs in helping to drive the future of trade.

Respondents in Nigeria, in particular, are highly focused on emerging tech, with 74 per cent citing it among their top three issues. Respondents in the UAE and Saudi Arabia also rank this highly, with over 60 per cent adding this to their top three drivers.

Nigeria, designated Africa's Digital Trade Champion by the African Union, is investing in emerging technologies such as AI and blockchain, while the UAE and Saudi Arabia have government-led efforts to enhance the countries' advanced manufacturing prowess in areas like robotics and AI. This could help to diversify their economies, remove trade barriers and unlock new opportunities for exports.

Global economic growth

53%

Despite warnings of a slowdown in global growth over the coming years due to tariffs, inflation and geopolitical tensions, Asian markets – which contribute over 60 per cent of global growth – are expected to remain resilient.

In India and Mainland China, 60 per cent and 59 per cent of corporates respectively cite global economic growth among the top three factors defining the future of trade – higher than the survey average of 53 per cent.

With China being the world's second-largest economy and India one of the fastest-growing large economies, coupled with their large populations and rising middle class, these two markets will evidently continue to play a significant role as the world's growth engines. Recent discussions between the two markets have further potential to boost South-South trade and contribute to global output.

Geopolitical dynamics

50%

Climate change and sustainability related issues

50%

Inflation, consumer confidence/spending

42%

2 The percentage on the right shows the proportion who listed this factor among their top-three choices.

3 In April 2025, Standard Chartered conducted a pulse survey with 370 respondents across the 17 markets and four sectors to find out their views on the same question.

A multi-pronged strategy to help power resilience

At times such as these, the expression "change is the only constant" takes on a new significance.

In the face of change, corporates intend to adopt a proactive stance towards resilience.

Addressing what is within their control, they expect to take multiple actions simultaneously in the medium term.

Three strategies stand out in our survey: adjusting treasury management strategies, increasing digitalisation efforts, and realigning supply chains geographically.

A multi-pronged strategy to power resilience

Adjust treasury management strategies — 57%[4]

With increased volatility in the movement of currency pairs this year, and more complex trade routes placing pressure on inventory and cashflow management, the strategic role of corporate treasury in mitigating these challenges has come to the forefront.

When it comes to investing in resilience, adjusting treasury management strategies is a leading choice among many respondents, with a notable preference in Africa and the Middle East (AME), namely Egypt, Kenya, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, with more than 60 per cent listing this as a priority.

Egypt continues to be impacted by macro challenges, such as a dual exchange rate for the Egyptian pound, as well as regional instability. Kenya as an imports-dependent economy has similarly been affected by currency fluctuations over the years, while companies in the Middle East are likely focused on optimising cash flows as liquidity remains pressurised amid a significant rise in short-term debt levels and interest expenses.

Increase digitalisation efforts — 57%

Corporate leaders are examining how to boost the digitalisation of their operations to overcome trade challenges, remain resilient and capture opportunities, through adopting technologies like cloud computing, AI and digital assets. Estimates from the World Economic Forum suggest that 70 per cent of new value created over the decade will come from digitally-enabled platform business models.

In ASEAN, corporate leaders see high potential for increased digitalisation, with 78 per cent of our survey respondents in Malaysia choosing it among their top three strategies for resilience, as did close to 70 per cent of respondents from Thailand and Vietnam. This focus may reflect the dominance of e-commerce across the youthful, tech-savvy population in the ASEAN region whose digital economy is expected to reach as much as USD1 trillion by 2030.

Realign supply chains geographically — 56%

While the top three strategies are closely ranked, geographic realignment of supply chains is most frequently ranked as the first choice for corporates, with 23 per cent of corporate leaders selecting it as their top strategy, significantly higher than the other choices. This is even more evident in ASEAN, where 33 per cent of respondents prioritise it.

Corporates cite minimising the potential impact of geopolitical conflict and capturing opportunities in growth markets as key reasons for supply chain realignment.

Pass on costs to downstream suppliers/consumers — 48%

Rightsizing workforce, including retrenchments — 46%

Take a wait-and-see approach — 36%

4 The percentage on the right shows the proportion who listed this factor among their top-three choices.

> In the current macroeconomic and geopolitical environment, corporates are rightly not searching for a quick fix but are instead adopting a more holistic strategy. This mirrors the themes we have heard consistently in client conversations over the past year.
>
> Companies continue to diversify supply chains while also reassessing treasury management strategies to strengthen financial resilience and deploy technology that streamlines operations.
>
> At Standard Chartered, we embrace emerging use cases of real-time treasury, artificial intelligence, and digital trade and supply chain solutions to support our clients' evolving needs. Together with fintech and technology partners, we aim to empower companies to become more resilient, agile, and ready to capture opportunities in new markets.

Michael Spiegel
Global Head
Transaction Banking

Six stand-out markets

Supply chain realignment is corporates' first-choice strategy to support resilience and business growth in response to the current macroeconomic and geopolitical environment.

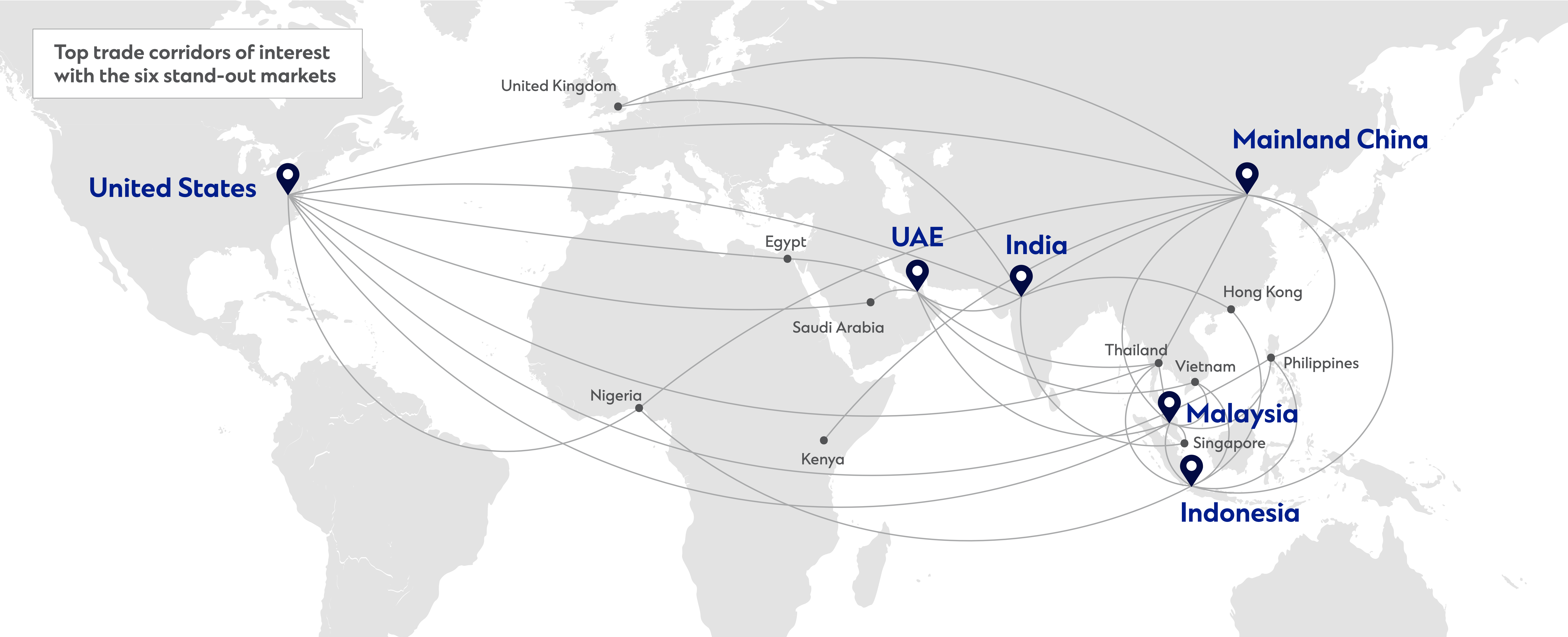
Six markets stand out from our survey as locations of interest for sourcing, manufacturing and exporting: India, Malaysia, Mainland China, Indonesia, the UAE and the US. Markets in Asia will continue to drive trade growth in the next three to five years, with the Middle East rising in prominence and the US remaining a heavyweight.

These markets offer unique advantages, from scale and cost efficiencies to innovation hubs and access to high-growth consumer bases.

Growing Asia. Rising Middle East.

Trade corridors in these six markets are set to see robust activity in the next three to five years, with many corporates strengthening their sourcing from and exporting to nearby markets, pointing to further regionalisation in ASEAN and the Middle East.

The following analysis looks at each market, examining corporate interest, trade corridors with high-growth potential, and the policy and initiatives that will catalyse trade and economic growth.



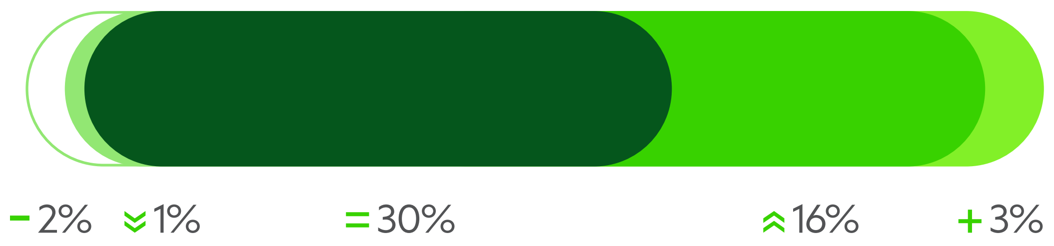
> Despite the disruption in the global trade order, we're largely seeing a status quo in supply chain networks with increasing focus on Asia and the Middle East.
>
> Companies might be looking beyond Mainland China but their focus is still mostly on Asia, presenting new opportunities not just for India but increasingly for emerging markets in ASEAN – which is continuing its economic integration, making it particularly attractive. We've also seen the emergence of the UAE, which aligns with our conversations with clients and through SWIFT reports.
>
> With half of corporates indicating in our survey that they hope for banks to be present in key markets to support supply chain changes, Standard Chartered can play that crucial role through our presence in 54 dynamic markets to power the real economy.

Sofia Hammoucha
Global Head Trade & Working Capital

India

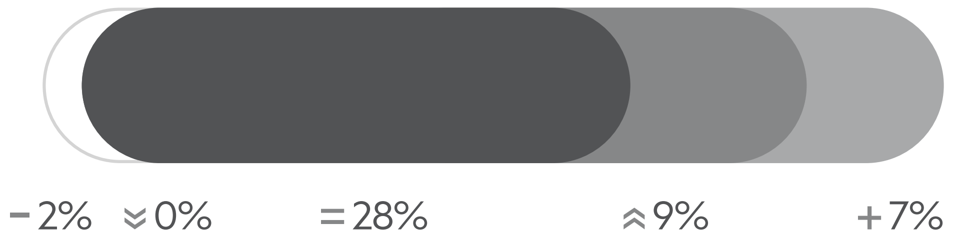
Sourcing

Net intention[5] 47%



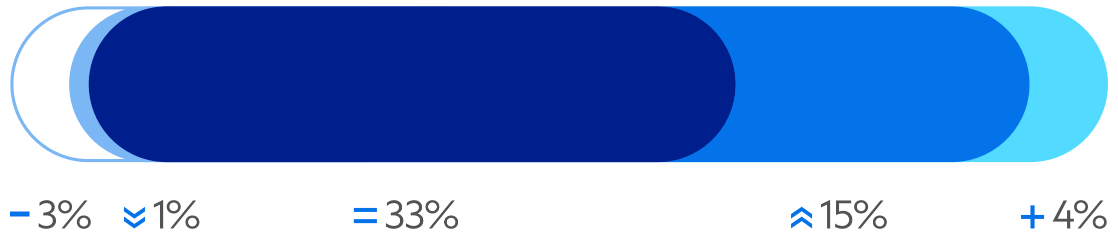
Manufacturing

Net intention 41%



Exporting

Net intention 48%



India is the leading market of interest from our survey, where almost half of respondents are looking to ramp up or maintain trade activities with the world's fastest-growing major economy. In particular, more than 60 per cent of corporates from the US, the UK, Mainland China, Hong Kong and Singapore are looking to trade with India.

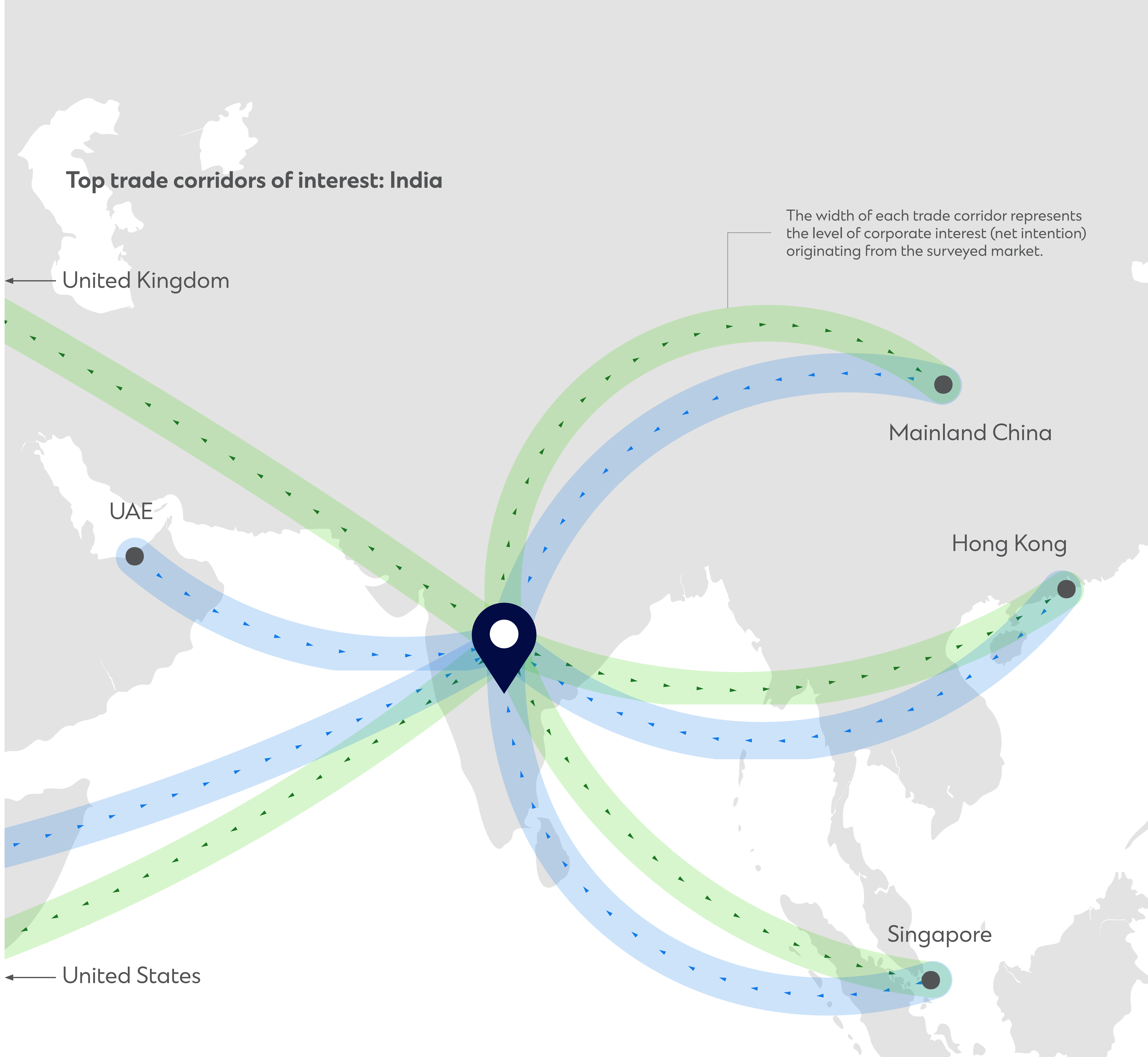
India has recently signed a free trade agreement with the UK and is looking to deepen bilateral trade and access to markets with Singapore, while trade discussions with China are ongoing. Hong Kong is both India's ninth largest trading partner and an entrepot for Mainland China.

The US is India's largest trading partner, though exports to the world's largest economy could be impacted given the escalation in tariffs in August 2025, which took place after our survey was completed.

Reforms designed to make India more attractive to foreign investors have helped it climb the value chain in innovative ways. Business process outsourcing has transformed into global capability centres that play a vital role in the operations of many multinational corporations.

India's creation of sector-specific Special Economic Zones has also helped it gain traction internationally. Among the most notable is GIFT City, which is designed with financial services in mind.

Top trade corridors of interest: India



Key economic indicators

GDP	FDI	Total imports	Total exports
USD3.58tn	USD28.2bn	USD674bn	USD432bn

Source: UNCTAD. Data is correct as of 2023, and import and export values are for trade in goods only.

5 Net intention is determined by subtracting the proportion of corporates who are looking to decrease or remove activities, from those who are looking to add, increase or maintain activities with the target market. Numbers may not add up due to rounding.
− Remove market Decrease activity = Maintain activity Increase activity + Add market

Malaysia

Sourcing Net intention[5] 35%

Manufacturing Net intention 31%

Exporting Net intention 37%

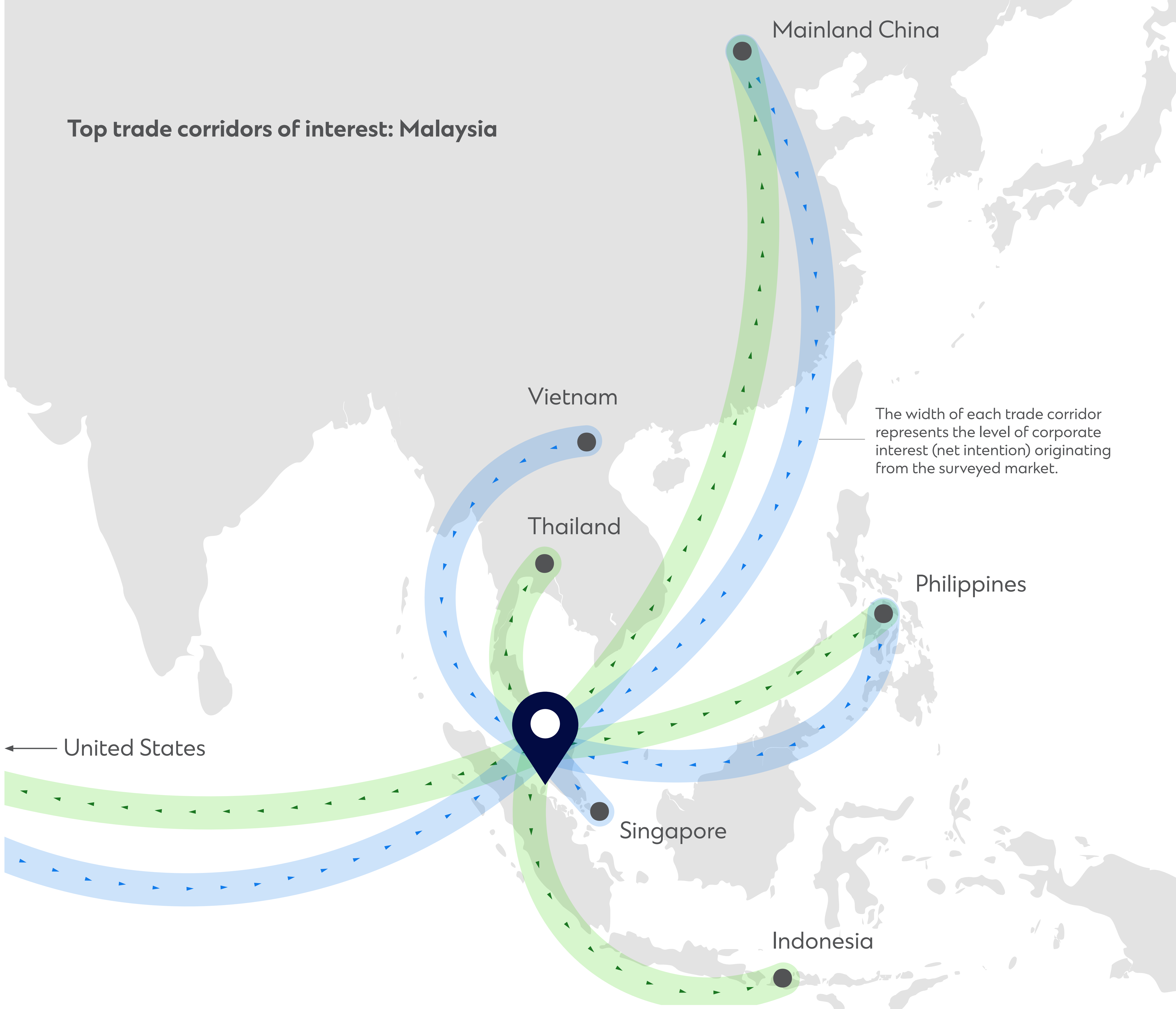
Malaysia is ASEAN's star performer with more than 35 per cent of companies surveyed looking to increase or maintain trade activities. Over half of corporates from Mainland China and the US – its first and third largest trading partners respectively – express interest to trade with and manufacture in Malaysia.

Trade corridors within ASEAN are also set to see more activity, with Thailand and Indonesia looking to source more from Malaysia while the Philippines and Vietnam intending to export more to this market.

Our survey results also show that Singapore corporates plan to set up manufacturing facilities in Malaysia to take advantage of some compelling features of the market's outlook. The recently-announced Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone, for example, aims to streamline bilateral trade and investment in sectors that include manufacturing, logistics and technology.

These zones reduce the risk of disruption from geopolitical tensions, minimise the impact of tariffs and lower costs by offering conducive labour markets and policy incentives – the three priorities our respondents look for when choosing a location.

Top trade corridors of interest: Malaysia



Key economic indicators

GDP	FDI	Total imports	Total exports
USD400bn	USD8.65bn	USD266bn	USD313bn

Source: UNCTAD. Data is correct as of 2023, and import and export values are for trade in goods only.

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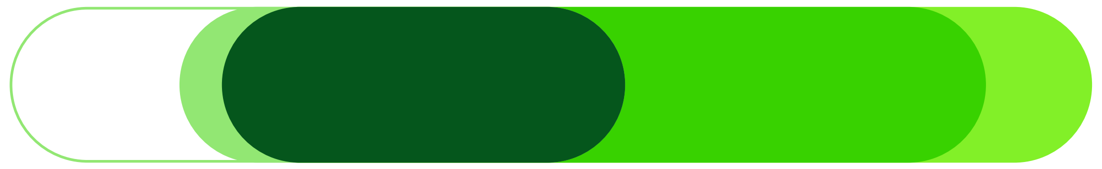
Mainland China

Sourcing

Net intention[5] 31%

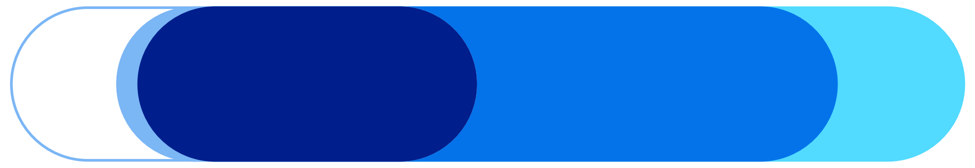


Manufacturing

Net intention 26%

Exporting

Net intention 33%



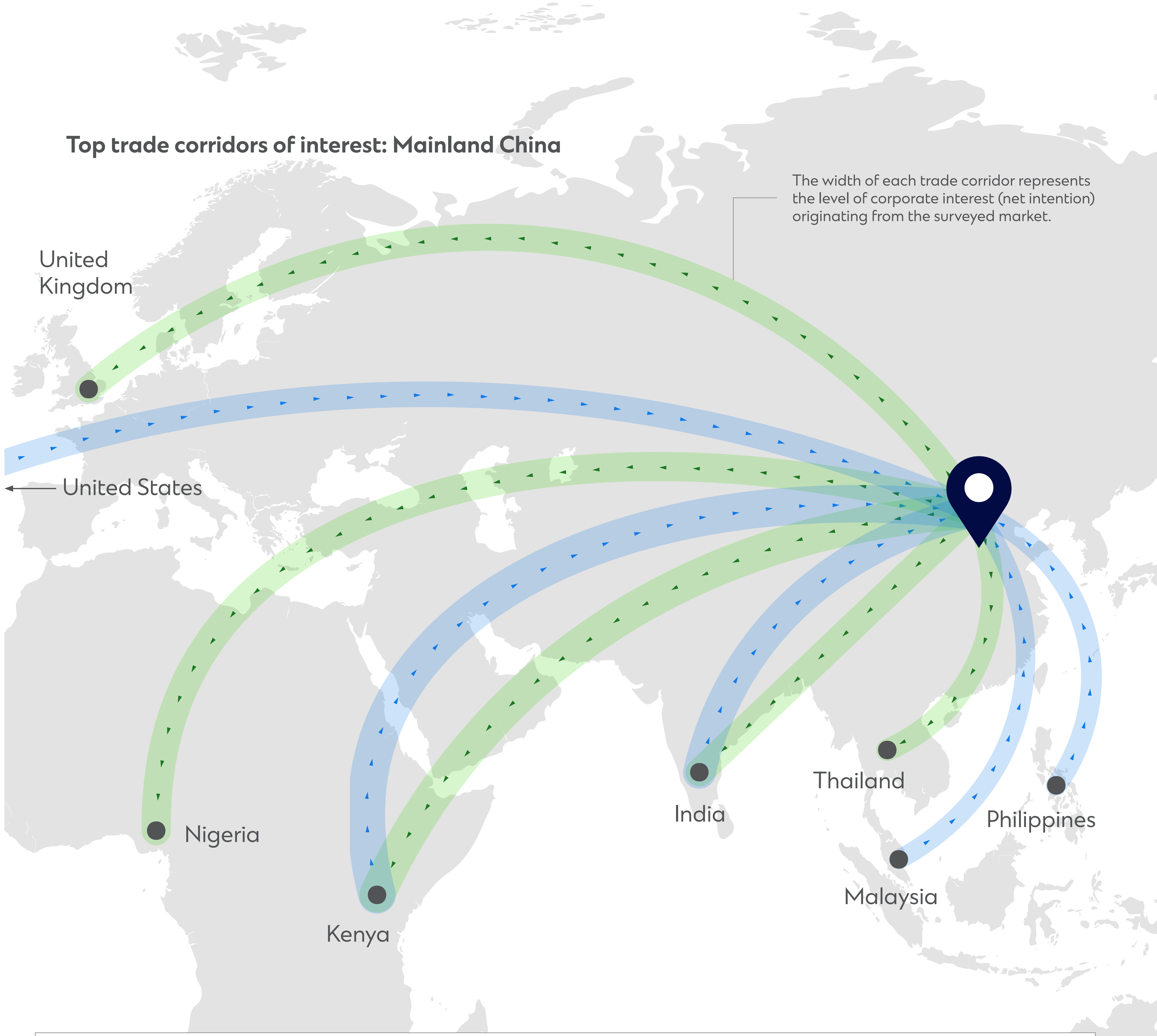
Mainland China is poised to continue playing a key role in global supply chains in the next three to five years, with a third of corporates surveyed looking to increase or maintain trade activities with the world's second-largest economy.

Among corporates in Africa – Kenya and Nigeria specifically – more than half are looking to increase trade with China, after the Chinese government recently announced zero-tariff access for African markets. In addition, around half of corporates from India indicate they're looking to rely more on Mainland China for trade.

Around 40 per cent of respondents from the US and the UK are looking to broadly maintain their level of trading activities with Mainland China, while 10 per cent intend to reduce it, indicating that corporates are looking to diversify their supply chains geographically.

At home, industry in Mainland China is moving up the global value chain – transitioning from labour-intensive manufacturing to higher value-added production – enabled by technologies such as AI, robotics and renewable energy, alongside efforts to boost domestic consumption.

Top trade corridors of interest: Mainland China



Key economic indicators

GDP USD17.8tn

FDI USD163bn

Total imports USD2.56tn

Total exports USD3.38tn

Source: UNCTAD. Data is correct as of 2023, and import and export values are for trade in goods only.

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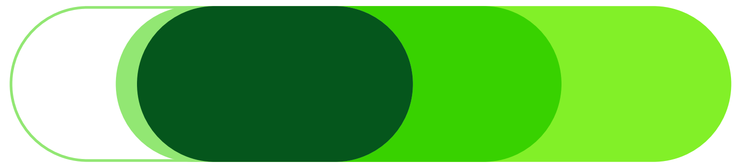
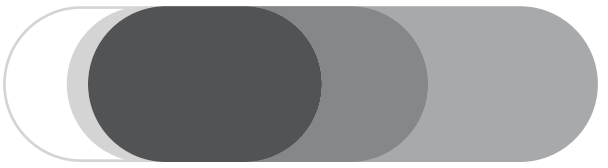
− Remove market Decrease activity = Maintain activity Increase activity + Add market

Indonesia

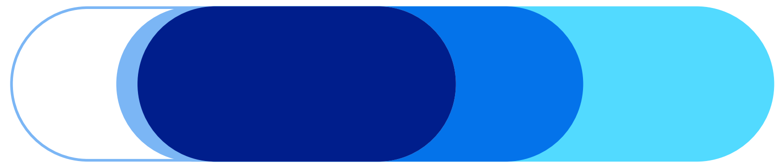
Sourcing Net intention[5] 23%



Manufacturing Net intention 20%



Exporting Net intention 23%



Respondents are optimistic about Indonesia, with more than one in five looking looking to grow or maintain a trade footprint in ASEAN's largest economy.

There is significant interest coming from its neighbour, Malaysia, as well as Mainland China, with around 40 per cent of corporates from these two markets intending to maintain or increase their trade with Indonesia. ASEAN and China have recently completed negotiations to further refine their free trade area to include more sectors, such as the digital economy.

Like other major economies in ASEAN, Indonesia's GDP per capita has flourished, increasing sevenfold since 2000. This success stems from financial reforms that strengthened the banking system after the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s and growing global demand for coal, palm oil and nickel in the decades since.

Indonesia's very large and relatively young population, its expanding middle class and immense need for infrastructure present further market opportunities for corporates for sourcing, manufacturing and exporting.

Key economic indicators

GDP USD1.37tn	**FDI** USD21.6bn	**Total imports** USD222bn	**Total exports** USD259bn

Source: UNCTAD. Data is correct as of 2023, and import and export values are for trade in goods only.

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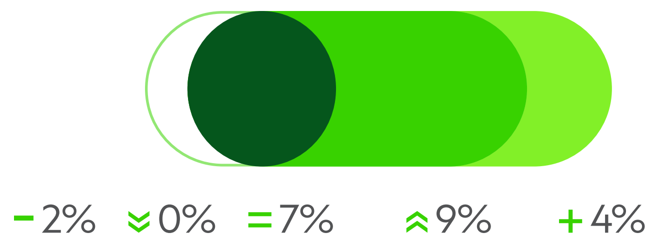
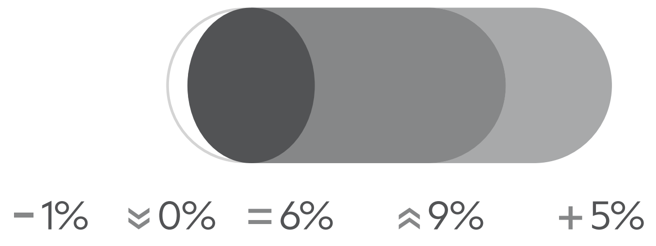
− Remove market   Decrease activity   = Maintain activity   Increase activity   + Add market

United Arab Emirates

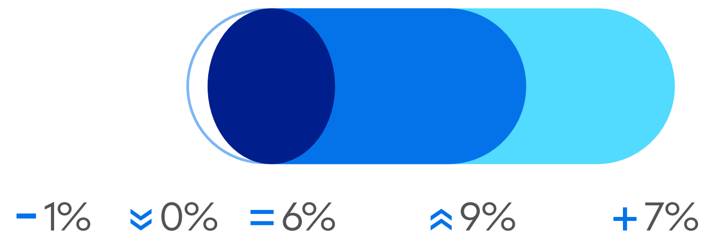
Sourcing Net intention[5] 18%



Manufacturing Net intention 18%



Exporting Net intention 21%



The UAE is a market of interest for sourcing, manufacturing, and exporting for 20 per cent of respondents looking at reviewing their supply chains, reinforcing its role as a rapidly growing commercial hub.

Around half of corporates from Saudi Arabia, Egypt and India expressed strong interest in the UAE, supporting growing intra-regional trade and investment within the Middle East and along the Middle East-India trade corridor.

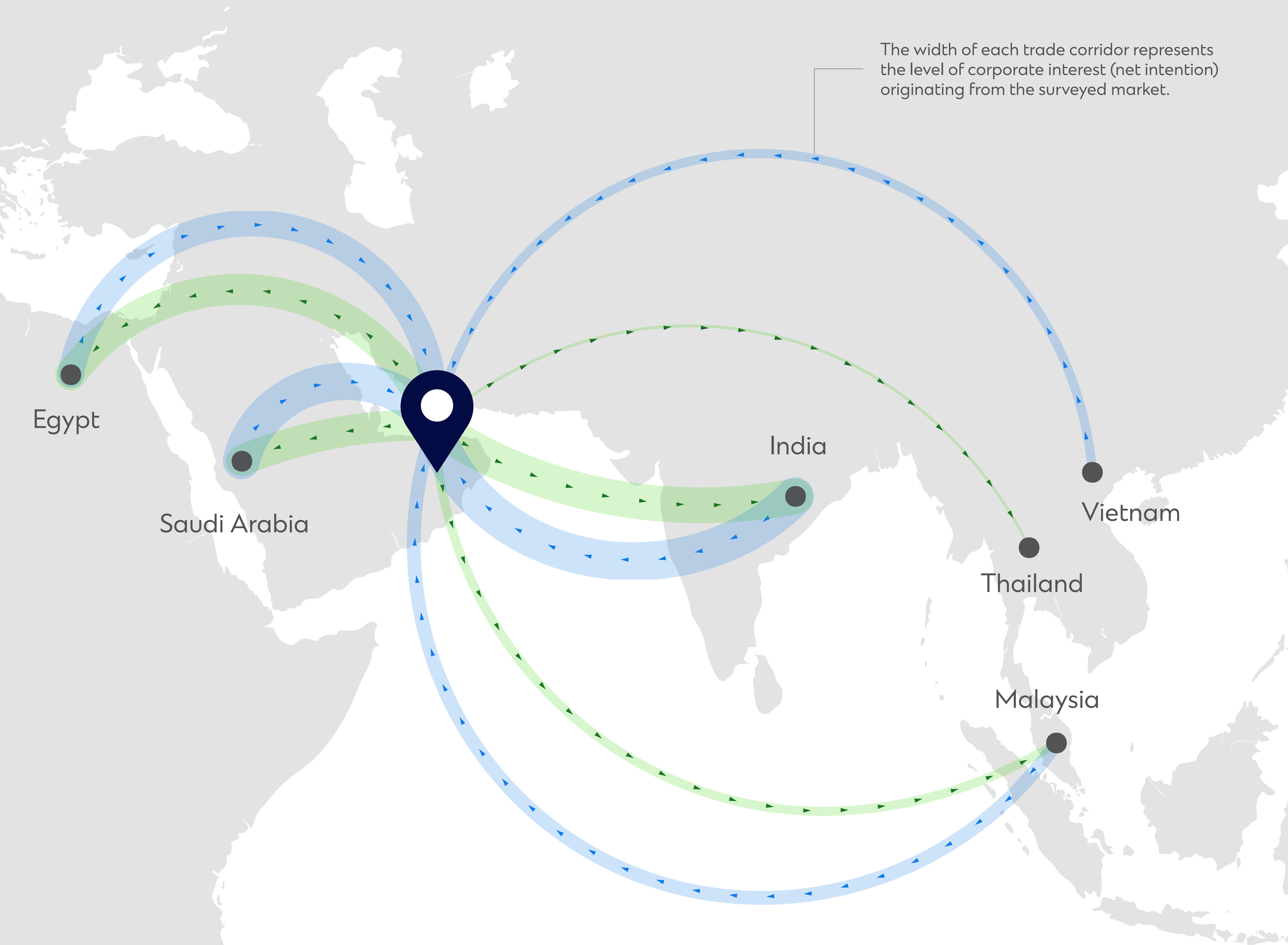
Simultaneously, the UAE's growing engagement with Mainland China, ASEAN, Africa, and the US reflects the UAE's growing role as a global connector.

Its attractiveness as a destination for corporates has been boosted by Dubai's Jebel Ali, one of the world's busiest container ports, and Operation 300bn, which aims to raise the industrial sector's contribution to the economy to AED300 billion (USD81.7 billion) by 2031.

Beyond trade, the UAE is consolidating its position as a hub for financial services, AI, and digital infrastructure. The country is rapidly expanding investment in data centres and cloud ecosystems, supporting regional digitalisation and the expansion of global tech providers.

This diversification is reflected in increasingly important trade corridors that now extend well beyond petrochemicals, linking the Middle East globally while driving new flows in technology and e-commerce, amongst others.

Top trade corridors of interest: United Arab Emirates



Key economic indicators

GDP	FDI	Total imports	Total exports
USD514bn	USD30.7bn	USD471bn	USD570bn

Source: UNCTAD. Data is correct as of 2023, and import and export values are for trade in goods only.

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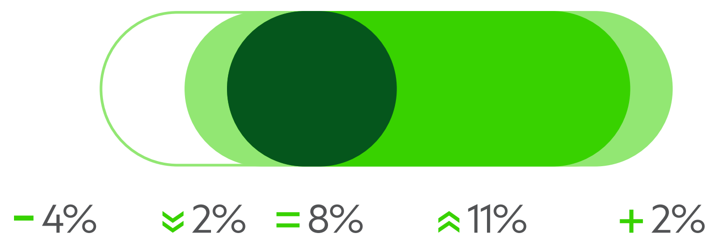
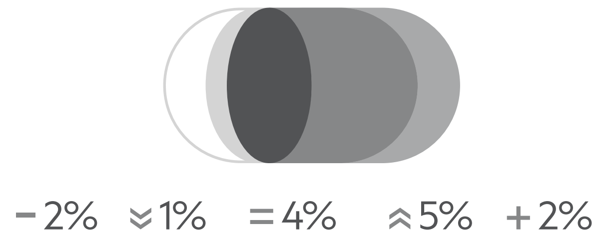
United States

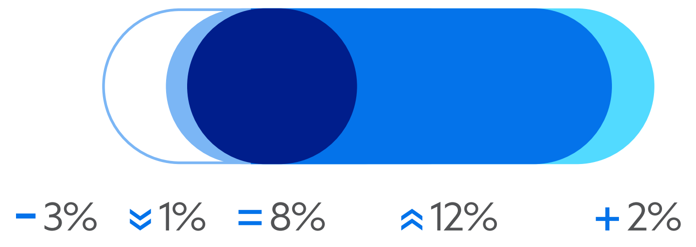
Sourcing Net intention[5] 16%



Manufacturing Net intention 9%



Exporting Net intention 19%



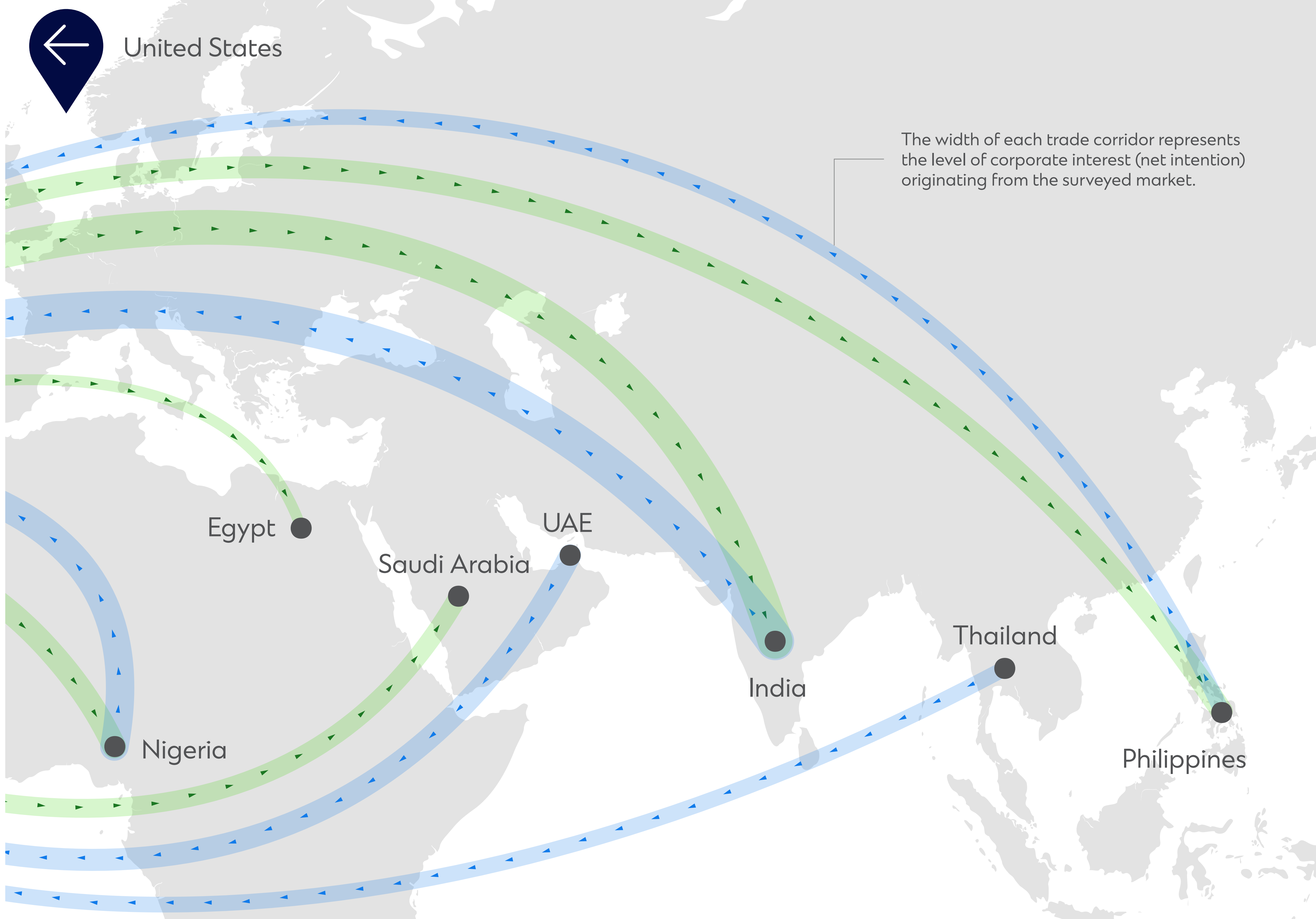
Despite changes to its tariff regimes, almost one in five corporates surveyed are looking to increase or maintain trade activities with the US. Notably, more than half of respondents from India intend to ramp up or maintain trade with the US – noting that our survey was conducted before the escalation in tariffs in August 2025.

Next in line are corporates from Nigeria and the Philippines, where around 40 per cent have shown interest in the world's largest economy. The US is the Philippines' top export market, and they have recently announced a trade deal, which may create a degree of stability in the trading relationship. For Nigeria, it is seeking a trade deal with the US – one of its top trading partners and foreign investors – for instance around critical minerals and rare earths. These are used to produce products such as mobile phones and fibre-optic cables and extend to aerospace, defence and medical applications.

Besides tariffs, the US continues to attract interest given its central role in the development of innovative technologies such as AI, and its status as the world's largest consumer market.

Furthermore, even though tariffs may impact the US economy, its near-term growth is likely to be higher than that of other developed economies, which could be a draw for corporates keen on expanding their markets and realigning their supply chains.

Top trade corridors of interest: United States



Key economic indicators

GDP	FDI	Total imports	Total exports
USD27.7tn	USD311bn	USD3.17tn	USD2.02tn

Source: UNCTAD. Data is correct as of 2023, and import and export values are for trade in goods only.

5 Net intention is determined by subtracting the proportion of corporates who are looking to decrease or remove activities, from those who are looking to add, increase or maintain activities with the target market. Numbers may not add up due to rounding.

– Remove market ≚ Decrease activity = Maintain activity ≙ Increase activity + Add market

The cost of resilience

Realigning supply chains geographically comes at a cost. More than three in five respondents estimate overall costs of goods will increase by 5 per cent to 14 per cent in the medium term. Corporates are therefore intending to adopt varying approaches to keep those costs under control.

ASEAN and African and Middle Eastern respondents are taking a more strategic approach and adjusting treasury management strategies to tackle this challenge, while corporates from Greater China and North Asia are looking at more short-term tactics, such as passing the costs downstream.

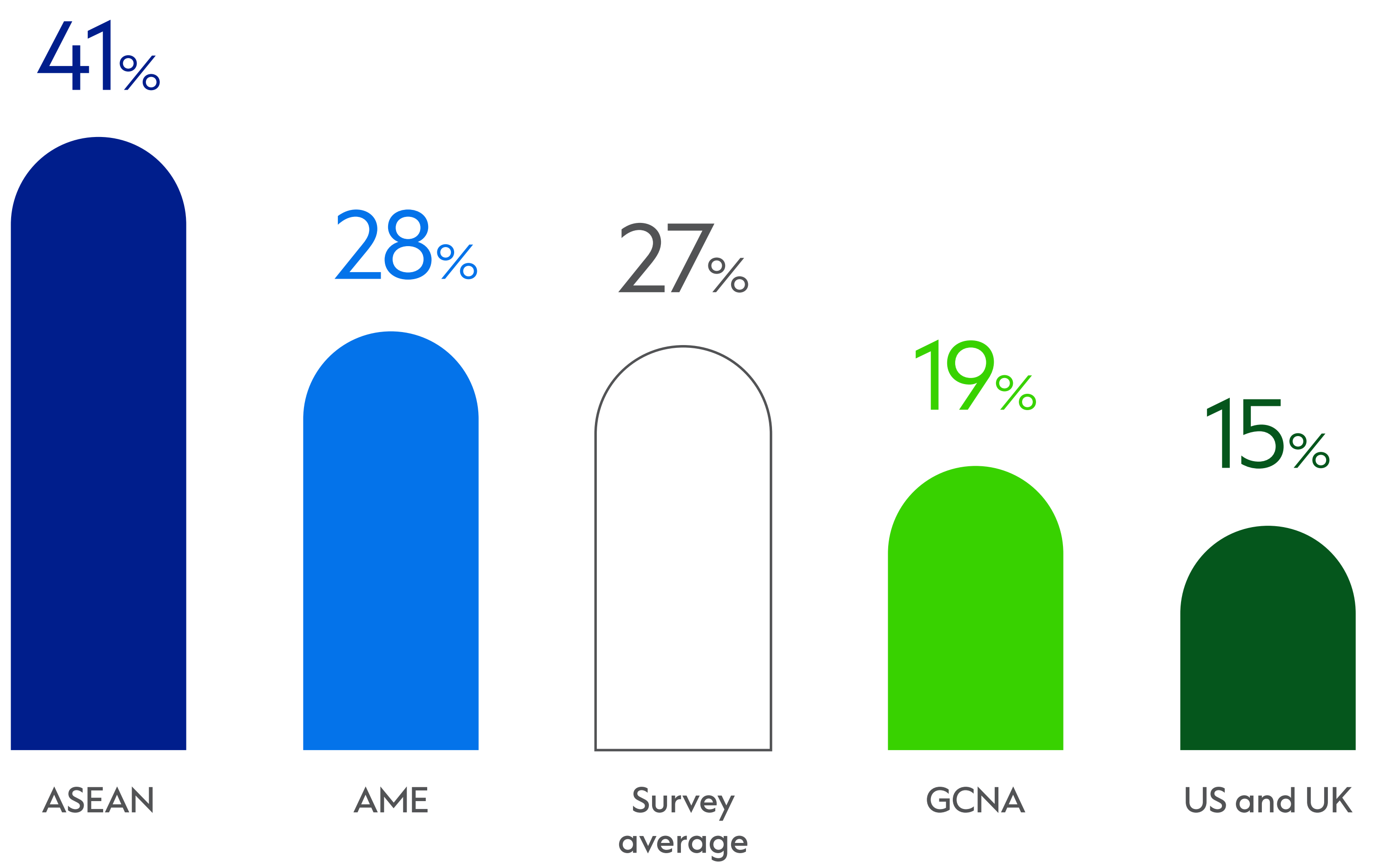
The cost of resilience

While corporates are considering realigning their supply chains to address trade tariffs and other geopolitical issues, new potential challenges are simultaneously emerging.

In addition to the growing length of supply chains and the impact on productivity, the cost of realignment is the most pressing concern for corporates. This is understandable, given that moving a business or adjusting trade routes to other markets can increase expenses related to logistics, operations and products.

Within ASEAN, corporates in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam are particularly concerned about the cost of supply chain realignment. In the UK and US, loss of revenue is seen to be of equal importance.

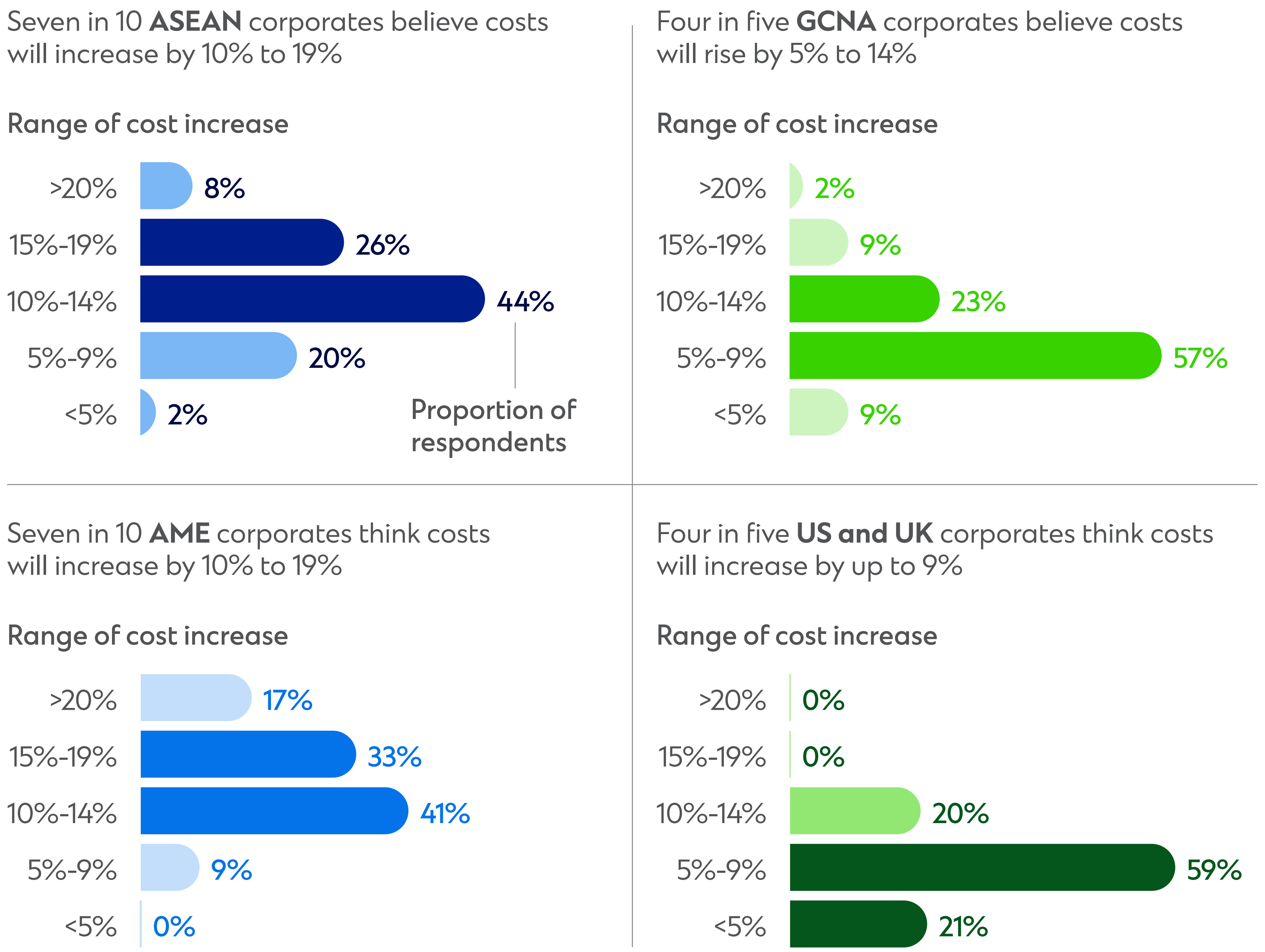
More ASEAN corporates ranked rising costs the top consequence they're facing now



Unsurprisingly, ASEAN corporates' cost concerns translate into higher inflation estimates. Meanwhile, respondents from the US, UK and Greater China and North Asia see cost increases as less of a concern.

This could be because corporates from these three markets are considering options to offset cost pressures, through efficiency, digitisation, and supplier diversification. ASEAN and African and Middle Eastern corporates are more focused on adjusting their treasury management strategies.

How much do corporates think costs will go up by in the next three to five years?



> In the current geopolitical climate, it is natural that corporates are stepping up their efforts to diversify their supply chains – the problem is that it doesn't come cheap.
>
> It's no surprise that rising costs are front of mind for many companies, with inflation and the price of goods impacting the bottom line. In the near term, corporates will have to solve this problem with more effective treasury management or by pushing the costs downstream, potentially to customers.
>
> Tackling this challenge should be done at a systemic level, with governments, financial institutions and corporates in close partnership. There is no better time than now for us to come together and create a more inclusive trade ecosystem, improve supply chain resilience, and make globalisation more equitable for businesses and markets of all sizes.

Mark Troutman
Global Head of Transaction Banking Corporate Sales

Supply chain finance platforms: aiding resilience and inclusivity

Corporates are adopting supply chain finance (SCF) platforms to boost resilience.

Our survey shows that up to 95 per cent of corporates could be using digital SCF platforms within the next two years to improve cashflow optimisation and to enable supply chain diversification.

In addition to powering business resilience, mass adoption of SCF platforms can narrow the multi-trillion-dollar trade finance gap and improve the livelihoods of smaller businesses.

Supply chain finance platforms for resilience and inclusivity

Our survey results found that corporates are increasingly looking to tighten their grip on their treasury management as they realign their supply chains, and supply chain finance (SCF) platforms are growing in popularity.

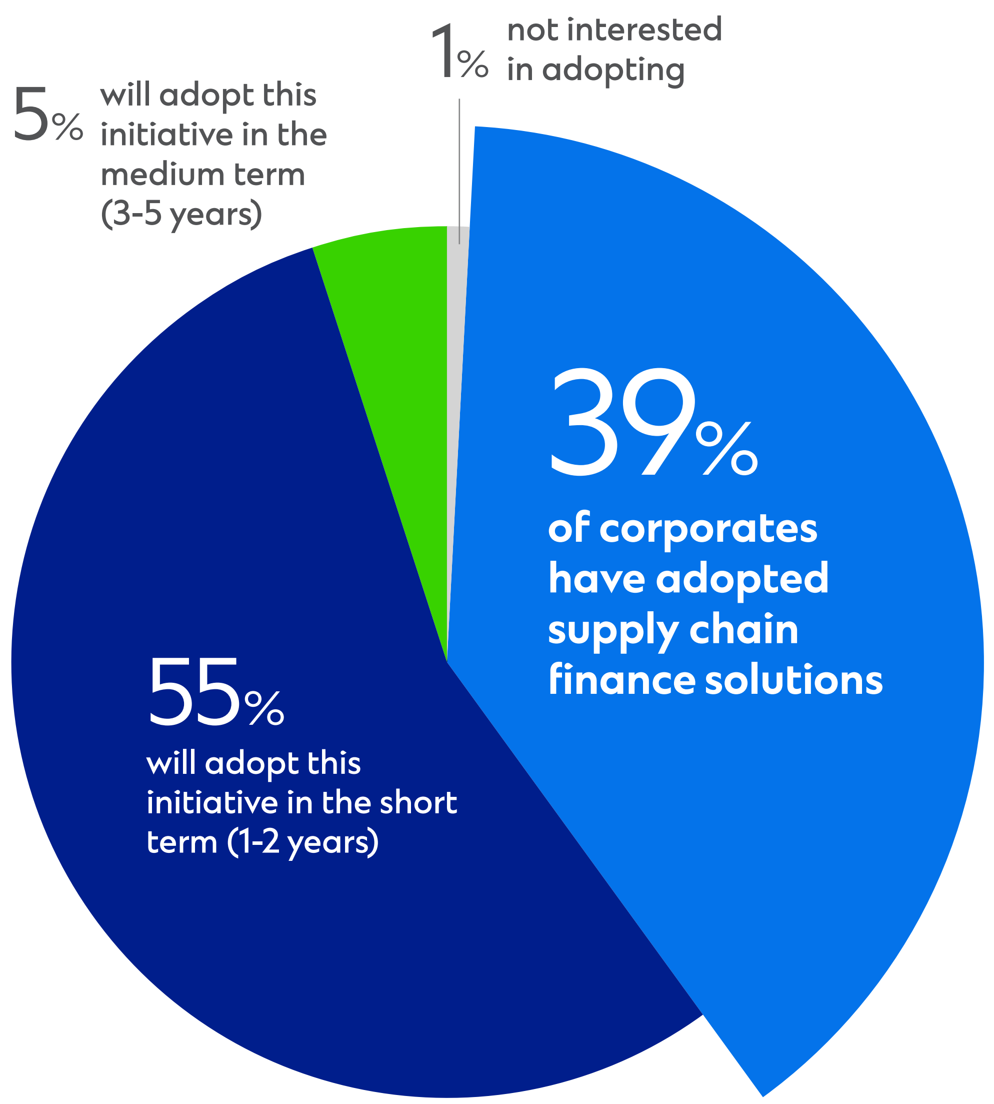
SCF platforms – which close to 40 per cent of corporates surveyed are using, with an additional 55 per cent looking to adopt in the next one to two years – can help improve the relationship between suppliers, buyers and financial institutions.

On a broader level, by enabling corporates to finance suppliers further down a supply chain, this could help smaller businesses – the backbone of the global economy – access financing solutions.

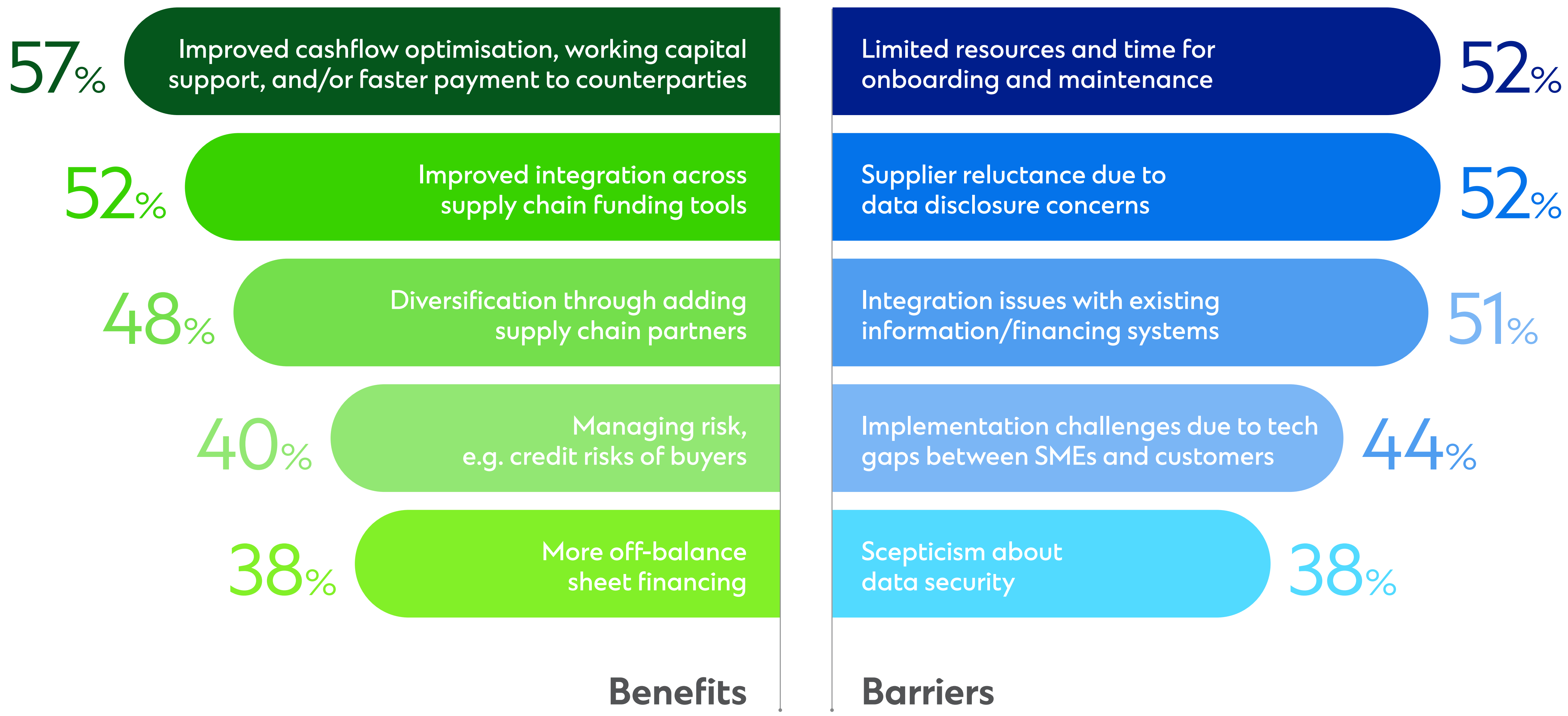
Adopting digital SCF solutions could boost trade in Asia, Africa and the Middle East by 7.5 per cent by 2030, bridging the trade finance gap and making global trade more inclusive and transparent.

Corporates are increasingly turning to SCFs to improve cashflow optimisation, working capital support, and faster payments to counterparties. Others who are yet to embrace the platforms point to easier supplier onboarding, maintenance and integration with existing systems as reasons why they might turn to SCFs in the future.

SCF platform adoption among corporates



Top benefits and barriers to SCF platform adoption



> "Supply chain finance platforms can provide a significant boost to trade in emerging markets by liberating working capital, building resilience and helping to close the multi-trillion-dollar trade finance gap faced by smaller businesses in emerging economies.
>
> More work is needed in terms of speeding up the process of onboarding, ensuring interoperability, and implementing universally aligned rules that permit the safe storage and sharing of data.
>
> Only through close public-private partnerships can digital SCF solutions be extensively adopted in markets around the globe and the technology benefits realised.

Riccardo Scapinello
Global Head
Supply Chain Finance, Trade and Working Capital

Methodology

Standard Chartered commissioned Kantar to conduct an online survey targeting C-suite executives and/or key trade finance decision makers from multinational corporations (with annual revenue of over USD250 million). A total of 1,200 respondents took part in the survey from 2 July to 5 August 2025. They were asked for their views on global trade and their strategies to build resilience in the next three to five years.

Respondents are based in 17 key markets and operate across four sectors:

Markets

- Egypt
- Hong Kong
- India
- Indonesia
- Kenya
- Mainland China
- Malaysia
- Nigeria
- Philippines
- Saudi Arabia
- Singapore
- South Korea
- Thailand
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom
- United States
- Vietnam

Sectors

- Consumer and retail
- Energy
- Power and diversified industries
- Technology, media and telecommunications

Key sources

- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- Forrester
- Government websites, policy documents, research papers and various news sources
- International Energy Agency
- International Monetary Fund
- McKinsey
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- Standard Chartered
- UNCTAD
- World Bank
- World Economic Forum
- World Shipping Council
- World Trade Organization

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