

# FORESEE

## CFOs in Hong Kong navigate the storm of economic uncertainty

In a world where economic instability and geopolitical turbulence dominate, CFOs in Hong Kong find themselves in a critical role, steering their enterprises through unpredictable waters. The pressure on these finance leaders has never been greater as they are tasked with anticipating key developments and positioning their organisations to respond with agility and precision, all while managing a growing slate of responsibilities.

Leading CFOs are taking proactive measures to strengthen their finance departments. For example, by focusing on technology enablement, including implementation of AI-driven processes, and continuing to enhance their financial planning and analysis capabilities, these leaders are equipping their organisations to tackle challenges head-on. They are embracing new methodologies, sensitivity analyses and scenario planning to maintain a clear view of the shifting economic landscape.

The insights from Protiviti's latest [Global Finance Trends Survey](#) highlight a growing demand for CFOs to deliver foresight into emerging opportunities and risks. The survey reveals that CFOs are increasingly called upon to provide clear visibility into internal and external factors, cutting through noise and misinformation to guide strategic decision-making.

As economic uncertainty hangs over virtually every enterprise, the role of the CFO becomes central in orchestrating strategic responses and ensuring resilience and profitability. With their insights, CFOs in Hong Kong are not just responding to the present challenges but are also shaping the future trajectory of their organisations.

Amid today's volatility, finance leaders are urged to consider these research findings to recalibrate their priorities, deploy smarter tools and drive innovation across their enterprises. Why? Because as the demands on CFOs grow, so does their influence in steering their organisations toward a stable and prosperous future.

## Key findings

### **Tariffs are affecting organisations ... but finance leaders are confident in their ability to navigate the challenges.**

A majority of CFOs and finance leaders in Hong Kong indicate that new and changing tariffs are having at least a moderate impact on profitability as well as financial forecasting and reporting capabilities. Yet most (82%) report they are confident in their organisation's ability to navigate current economic challenges and uncertainties. These findings speak to the improved FP&A and strategic planning capabilities CFOs and finance teams have developed over the past several years to foresee emerging developments and respond with precision and agility.

### **Strategic planning is the top priority.**

Amid ongoing economic uncertainty, multiple and diverse impacts from tariffs, and the rapid emergence of AI and other new technologies, strategic planning represents the top priority for CFOs and finance leaders in Hong Kong.

### **AI use in finance has risen dramatically.**

A majority of finance organisations in Hong Kong (64%) are currently employing AI, including generative and agentic AI. Finance areas in which AI is being used most frequently include financial forecasting, process automation and expense management.

### **Technology enablement is paying dividends.**

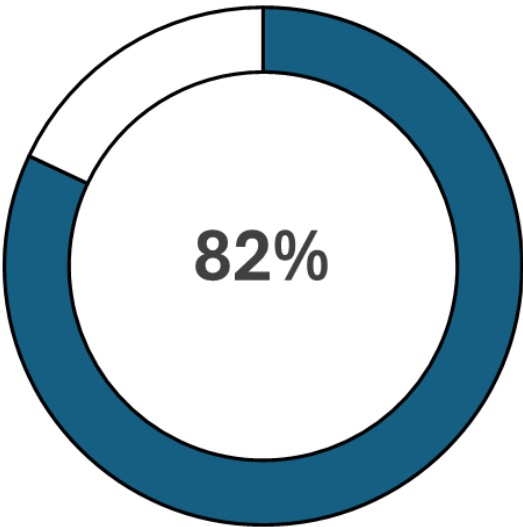
ERP enablement and technology modernisation, utilisation of cloud-based systems, and advanced analytics are among the top technology areas delivering valuable cost and efficiency benefits for Hong Kong-based finance teams.

### **FP&A capabilities continue to deliver increasing value.**

CFOs and finance teams are delivering greater value to the enterprise through their continued focus on improving FP&A capabilities to develop impactful strategic, financial and analytical insights to drive critical business decisions. In Hong Kong, many finance teams are achieving meaningful and measurable progress in their organisation's cost optimisation efforts through technology rationalisation (70%), the utilisation of cloud-based systems (50%) and headcount reductions (42%).

# Highlights from our research<sup>1</sup>

82% are very or somewhat confident in their organisation’s ability to navigate current challenges and uncertainties in the economy.



## Top 5 finance priorities

### Hong Kong

2025 rank	Area	Avg score
1	Strategic planning	7.9
2	Security and privacy of data	7.6
3	Enhanced data analytics	7.3
4	Routine reporting and closing activities	7.3
5	Financial planning and profitability analysis and reporting	7.3

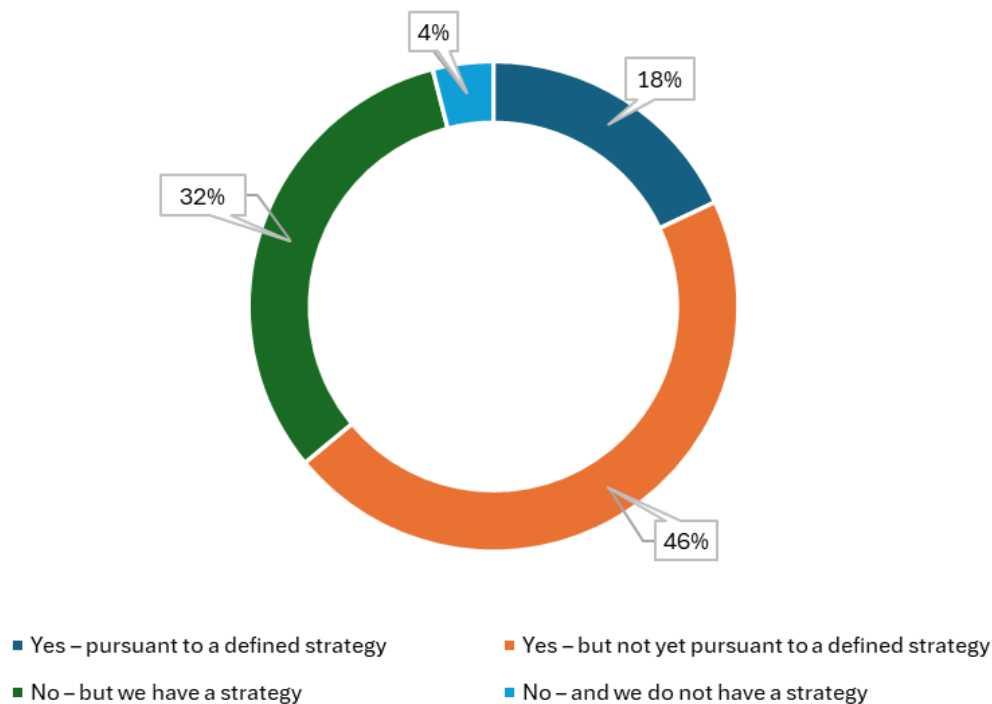
### Global

2025 rank	Area	Avg score
1	Security and privacy of data	7.2
2	Strategic planning	7.1
3	Financial planning and profitability analysis and reporting	7.1
4	Process improvement	7.0
5	Leadership (within your organisation)	6.8

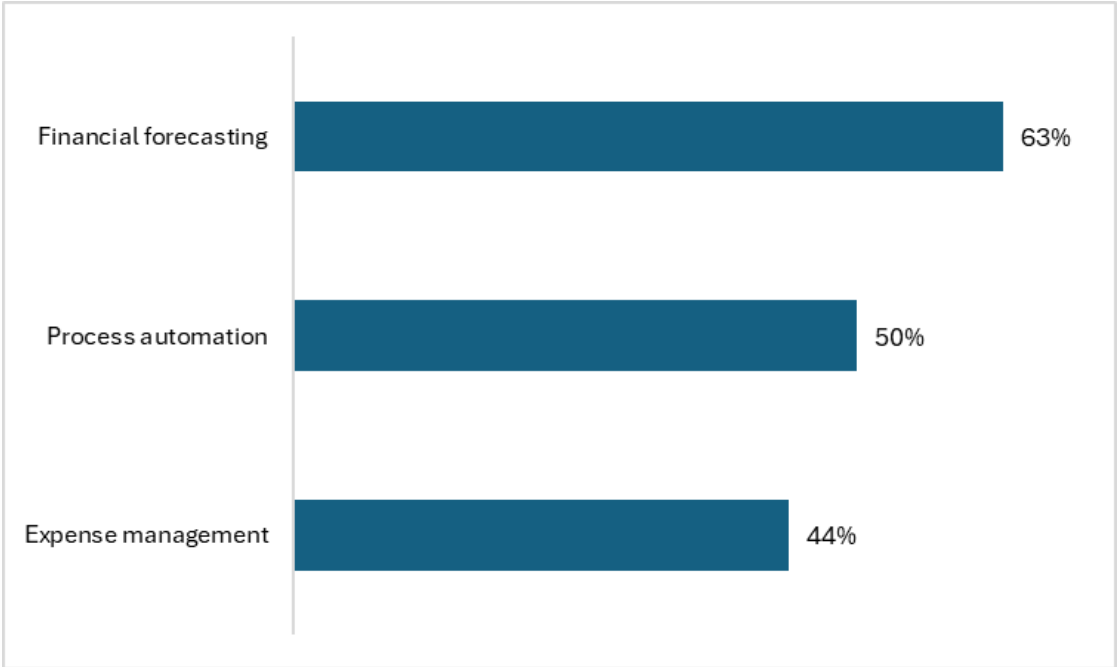
Based on this question: *Please rate the following areas based on a 10-point scale, where “1” reflects the lowest priority and “10” reflects the highest priority for the finance function to improve its knowledge and capabilities over the next 12 months.*

<sup>1</sup> Based on responses from 50 CFOs and finance leaders in Hong Kong-based organisations.

**64% of finance organisations in Hong Kong are currently employing AI, including generative AI and/or agentic AI.**



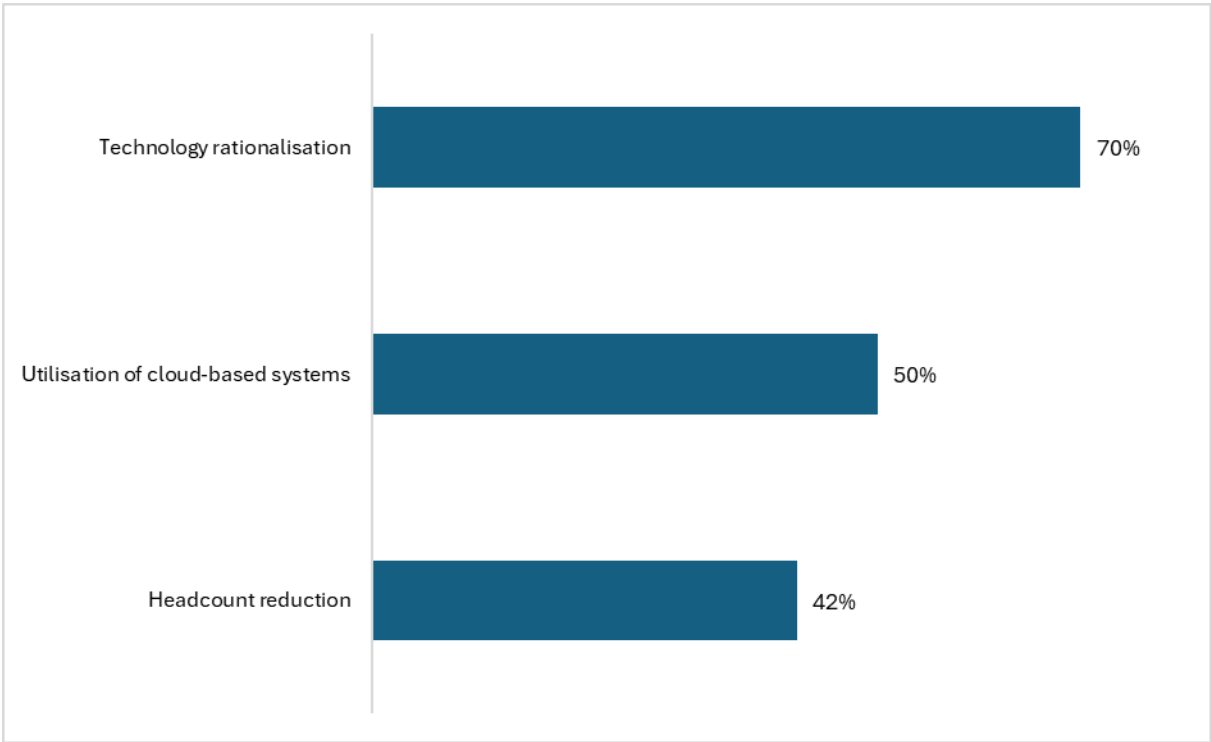
**Top areas in which the finance organisation is currently employing AI (including generative AI and/or agentic AI)**



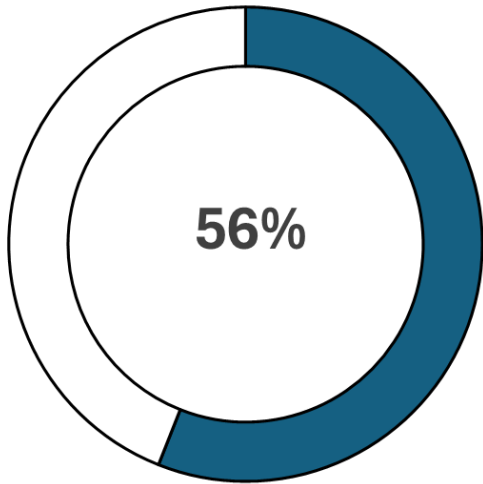
**Technologies that are viewed as most valuable in achieving cost and efficiency benefits and improving finance projects**

1	ERP enablement/technology modernisation/reconciliation tools
2	Utilisation of cloud-based financial systems
3	Advanced analytics

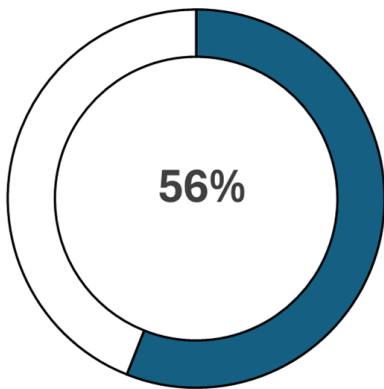
**Areas in which there has been the most meaningful and measurable progress over the past year in terms of cost optimisation efforts:**



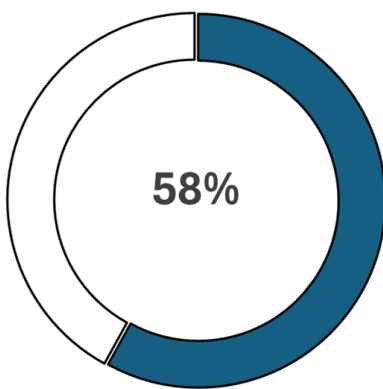
***A majority of finance functions in Hong Kong-based organisations (56%) indicate lower levels of preparedness for ESG reporting.***



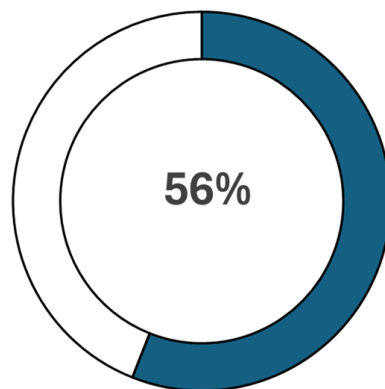
***Impact of new and changing tariffs***



A majority of finance organisations report there has been at least a moderate impact on their ability to prepare reliable and timely financial forecasts.



58% indicated that their ability to continue preparing reliable financial reporting and forecasting under required timelines has been at least moderately impacted.



A majority of organisations report that there has been at least a moderate impact on their profitability.

## How Protiviti can help

Protiviti supports clients in improving finance functions through practical advisory and hands-on implementation services. As an example in adopting AI for Finance, we begin with design thinking workshops to identify valuable use cases, enabling adoption by tailored training programs, proof-of-concept development, and end-to-end AI deployment. We help organisations streamline processes, adopt new technologies by working closely with our clients at every stage.

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To learn more, read our research report, *FORESEE: Assessing CFO and finance leader perspectives and priorities for the coming year*, available at [www.protiviti.com/hk-en/survey/global-finance-trends-survey](http://www.protiviti.com/hk-en/survey/global-finance-trends-survey).

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