EUROPEAN BUSINESS EQUIPMENT OUTLOOK 2026

OWNERSHIP, USAGE AND THE LIFECYCLE SHIFT

BNP PARIBAS
LEASING SOLUTIONS

Equipment finance for a changing world

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Across industries, the way businesses approach equipment investment is changing.

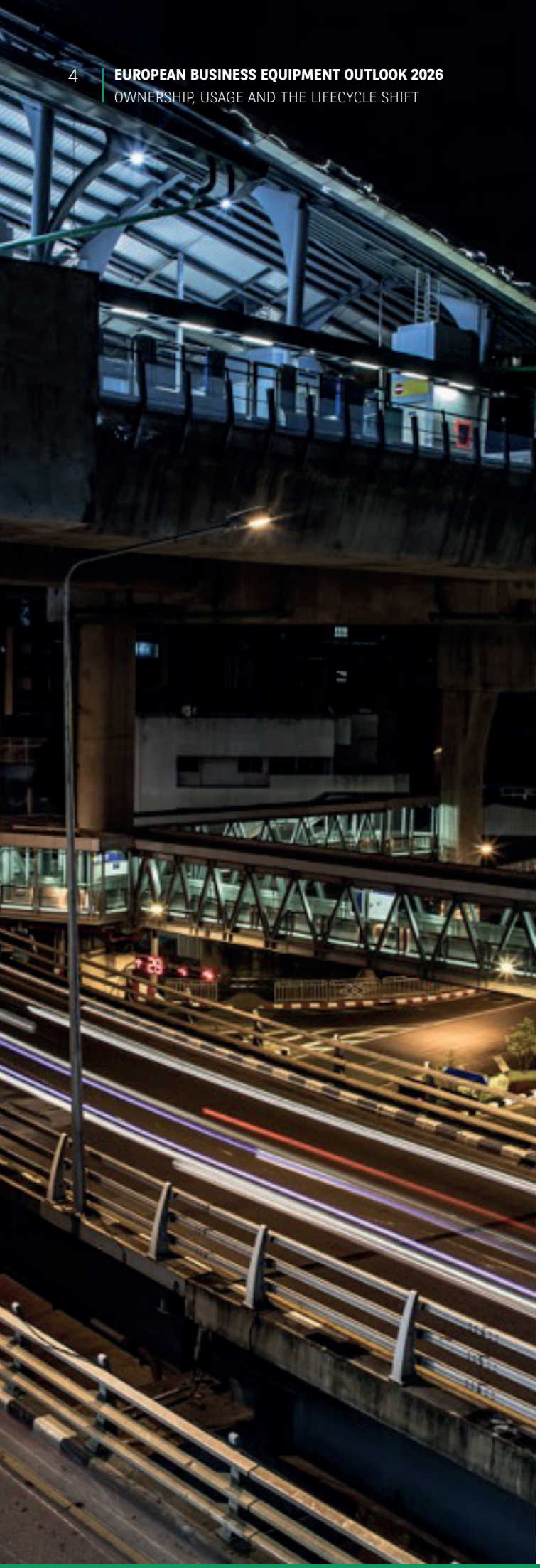
This change is driven by several forces at once: faster technology cycles, economic uncertainty, and increasing pressure to use capital more efficiently while maintaining performance. Together, these factors are challenging how organisations think about investment and asset management.

What we see today is not a clear shift from ownership to usage. On one side, ownership remains deeply rooted in how many companies operate and compete. It provides control, stability, and, in some cases, a sense of security.

On the other side, this same model can limit flexibility. It can lock in capital, increase exposure to obsolescence, and make it harder to adapt in a fast-changing environment.

Many organisations are now navigating this tension. They are balancing the need to keep control with the need to stay agile. This report was developed to better understand how this is happening in practice.

These topics are often discussed but mostly based on intuition. By gathering the views of more than 1,000 senior decision-makers across Europe, this study provides a clearer picture of how companies are making these decisions today - and how their approach is evolving.



One important point is that this change is not the same everywhere.

It differs by sector, by business model, and by level of exposure to technology and regulation. In some industries, ownership remains essential. In others, more flexible approaches are developing faster. In many cases, both models exist side by side.

This is not a simple transition from one model to another. It is a gradual shift, with different speeds and different paths.

This report does not promote a specific approach. It does not suggest that one model is better than another. Its purpose is to help understand what is changing - and to provide a reference point to observe how these changes develop over time.

I hope it offers a useful perspective for those thinking about how to adapt their equipment strategy in a more complex and uncertain environment.

Neil Pein
CEO, BNP Paribas Leasing Solutions

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report examines how organisations across Europe are reassessing their equipment strategies in response to changing economic, technological, and regulatory conditions. It explores how business leaders approach equipment decisions in practice – including how they balance ownership, financing, and access in response to increasing uncertainty, capital constraints, and lifecycle expectations.

The objective of this study is not to provide a technical classification of financing products. Instead, it focuses on how these models are interpreted and applied in real-world decision-making, where distinctions between ownership, leasing, and usage are not always clearly defined.

Definition note

In this report, "usage" – also referred to as "access-based models" – describes approaches to equipment where organisations prioritise use, flexibility, or outcomes over ownership. This may include operating leases, rental, and other structures where asset return or lifecycle flexibility is embedded.

Leasing is referenced as a broader financing mechanism, which may support both ownership-based strategies (for example, financial leasing) and access-based approaches (for example, operating leasing). As such, not all leasing structures imply a "usage" model in the strict sense.

Methodology

The research for this report was conducted by Censuswide in December 2025 among more than 1,000 C-suite and senior decision-makers across eleven European markets: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK.

Respondents included Chief Executive Officers, Chief Financial Officers, Chief Information Officers, Chief Sustainability Officers, Vice Presidents of Finance, Financial Directors, and other senior finance professionals. Participants were drawn from a range of equipment-intensive sectors, including agriculture, construction, transport and logistics, technology, healthcare, and clean or renewable energy.

The study explored how organisations approach equipment investment decisions, including how capital expenditure is financed, how ownership is perceived in relation to competitiveness, and how lifecycle considerations influence procurement strategies. It also examined attitudes towards leasing, rental, and other access-based approaches, as well as the barriers affecting their adoption.

The survey questions were designed to capture how business leaders interpret and use these models in practice. As such, distinctions between financial leasing and operating leasing were not always explicitly separated, reflecting how these concepts are often understood and applied in real-world decision-making.

FIVE STRUCTURAL SHIFTS RESHAPING EQUIPMENT STRATEGY

The findings of this study point to five interrelated developments influencing how European organisations approach equipment decisions. Together, they suggest a gradual but meaningful reassessment of the balance between ownership and access.

01 Equipment is becoming outdated faster

95% **say equipment becomes obsolete faster than it did five years ago.**

43% **report equipment becomes obsolete before generating a full return on investment at least occasionally.**

Accelerating innovation cycles are compressing planning horizons across sectors. When assets risk becoming outdated before expected return is realised, long-term capital commitments carry greater uncertainty. With 64% reporting that uncertainty about future technologies is delaying CAPEX planning, many organisations appear to be reassessing how equipment investment decisions align with the pace of technological change.

02 Capital tied up in assets can limit growth

35% **say capital committed to owned equipment has constrained growth frequently or very frequently.**

52% **say this happens occasionally — meaning only 13% say capital lock-up has never constrained their growth.**

These findings suggest that capital constraint is not an isolated challenge. With 87% of leaders reporting that capital lock-up has constrained their growth, the issue is widespread across equipment-intensive organisations. For most, the relevant question is not whether owned assets create capital pressure, but how frequently and to what degree. As economic conditions remain uncertain, the duration and concentration of capital commitments are becoming more visible considerations in broader investment strategy.

03 Managing equipment over its full life is becoming more complex

87% **find managing the end-of-life of owned equipment challenging to some degree.**

68% **say the ease of managing refurbishment, reuse, recycling, and disposal influences procurement decisions.**

Lifecycle accountability is moving upstream into purchasing decisions. Yet widespread operational difficulty indicates a gap between rising expectations and practical readiness. As lifecycle scrutiny increases, equipment strategy is becoming as much about coordination and governance as acquisition.

04 Usage adoption is embedded – but not yet scaled

45% **finance at least a quarter of their equipment through usage-based models.**

53% **expect usage levels to stay the same or increase over the next five years.**

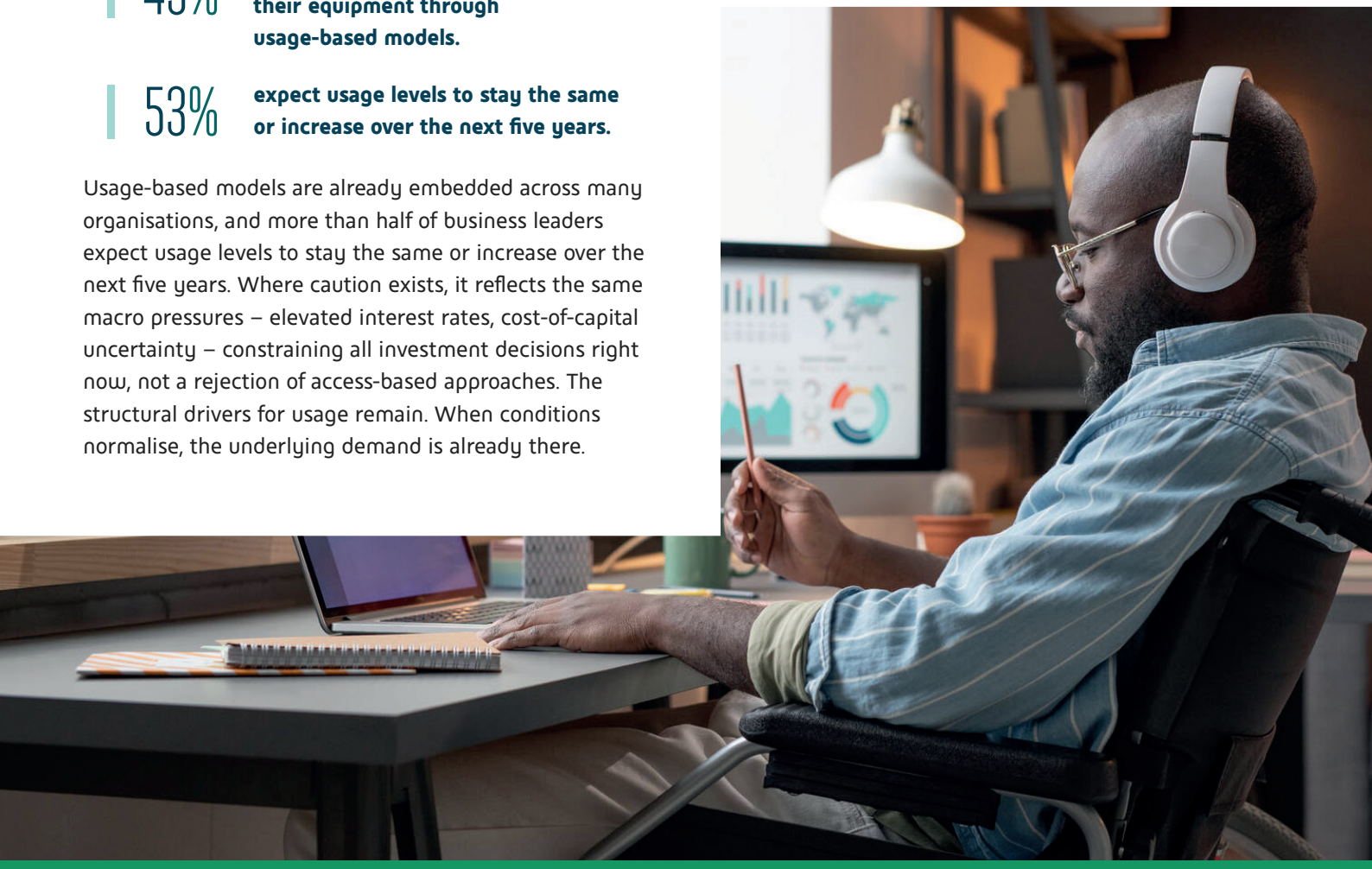
Usage-based models are already embedded across many organisations, and more than half of business leaders expect usage levels to stay the same or increase over the next five years. Where caution exists, it reflects the same macro pressures – elevated interest rates, cost-of-capital uncertainty – constraining all investment decisions right now, not a rejection of access-based approaches. The structural drivers for usage remain. When conditions normalise, the underlying demand is already there.

05 Businesses are rethinking the balance

50% **agree that traditional CAPEX models expose their organisation to unnecessary financial risk.**

58% **believe their business would perform better with greater access to equipment through leasing or usage-based models.**

Half of respondents associate traditional CAPEX approaches with unnecessary financial exposure, while a majority see potential performance benefits in greater access to equipment. At the same time, continued recognition of ownership's importance suggests the shift is not absolute. The data points to a reassessment of balance rather than a wholesale transition away from ownership.



ACROSS EUROPE, 43% OF BUSINESS LEADERS SAY THAT EQUIPMENT BECOMES OBSOLETE BEFORE GENERATING ROI

CHAPTER 01

OWNERSHIP UNDER PRESSURE

Obsolescence, capital lock-up and the CAPEX dilemma

For decades, ownership has been the dominant model for financing business equipment, promising control, predictability, and long-term value creation. But for today's business leaders, that model is under pressure. Technology cycles are shortening, equipment lifespans are compressing, and capital is being committed into assets that are ageing faster than the business case that justified it.

As uncertainty rises, the result is a growing tension in CAPEX decision-making: invest and risk obsolescence, or delay and risk falling behind?

This chapter explores how widespread that tension has become, explaining the twin pressures of accelerating obsolescence and capital lock-up. The findings in this chapter quantify the scale of that challenge and explain why many businesses are beginning to question whether traditional ownership models still serve their strategic needs.

Obsolescence before ROI is a growing risk in capital investment

Obsolescence – where equipment becomes outdated before delivering its expected return – has always existed as a theoretical risk in CAPEX. It is particularly a risk when markets shift unexpectedly or when technologies fail to mature as planned. However, today, the data suggests that something more structural is happening: obsolescence before ROI is moving from being the exception to the expected.

Across Europe, 43% of business leaders say that equipment becomes obsolete before generating ROI at least occasionally. While only a small minority experience this very frequently (3%), the broader pattern is significant. Twenty-eight per cent report that between 10% and 30% of their assets become obsolete before ROI on an occasional basis, while a further 12% say this happens frequently, affecting up to half of their assets.

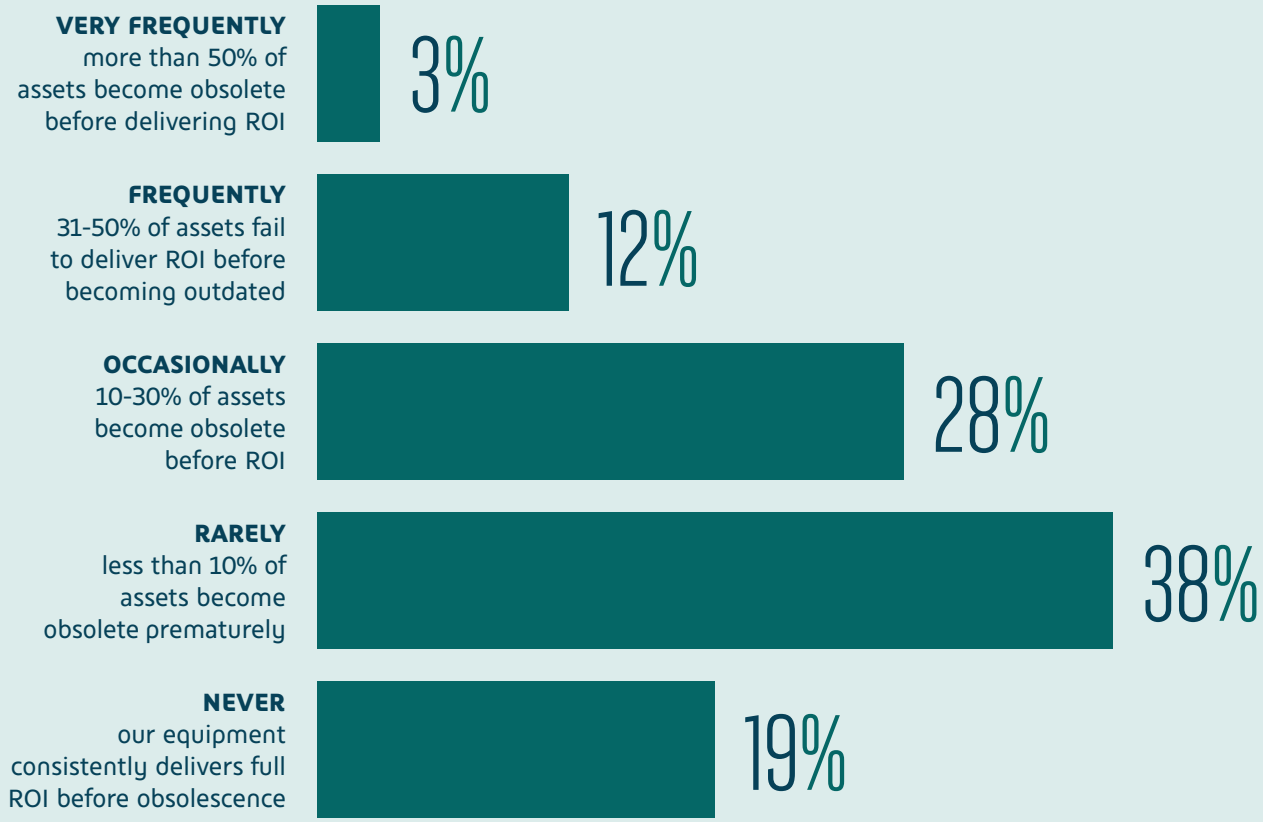
Only 19% of respondents say that equipment becoming outdated before ROI never happens in their business, while 38% say it happens rarely. For the majority, obsolescence is now a known risk rather than an unexpected outcome. It is a recurring risk that must be built into investment decisions.

Country-level variation reinforces that this is a structural issue, rather than a localised one. Belgium records the highest proportion of organisations experiencing frequent or very frequent obsolescence at 23%; the Netherlands and Italy experience similarly high levels, at 19% and 18% respectively.

Across industries, healthcare is the most exposed, with 21% experiencing frequent or very frequent obsolescence, compared with only 11% in construction.

FIGURE 1

AVERAGE FREQUENCY OF EQUIPMENT BECOMING OUTDATED OR OBSOLETE BEFORE DELIVERING ROI IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS.



Technology uncertainty is delaying CAPEX decisions

Europe's technology sector has undergone a period of intense transformation, with AI touching almost every industry, from healthcare to logistics and financial services. At the end of 2025, two major European AI startups, Paris-based Mistral AI and London-based Nscale, secured almost €2.6 billion in late-stage funding rounds, with the latter marking the largest Series B in European history.

But this scale and pace of technological innovation is a double-edged sword, as, while opportunity is abundant, uncertainty is rising. Almost two-thirds (64%) of leaders surveyed say uncertainty about future technology is delaying their CAPEX decisions, including one-in-five (21%) who report significant or severe delays to their planning. Only 5% of business leaders say that rapid advances in technologies have not delayed their investment decisions at all.

FIGURE 2

HOW OFTEN RESPONDENTS DELAY THEIR INVESTMENT DECISIONS DUE TO RAPID ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY.

5% **NOT AT ALL**

30% **SLIGHTLY**
occasional hesitation for major CAPEX

44% **MODERATELY**
tech uncertainty often factors into our investment decisions

17% **SIGNIFICANTLY**
we frequently delay investment decisions due to tech disruption risk

4% **SEVERELY**
tech uncertainty regularly stops new investments

Healthcare is again the most affected sector, with 31% reporting that technology uncertainty is significantly or severely delaying CAPEX decisions. Meanwhile, country-level differences show a similar pattern, with the top three regions affected being the Netherlands (28%), Belgium (28%), and Italy (26%).

Underlying this hesitation is a near-universal belief that equipment becomes obsolete faster than it used to. Ninety-five per cent of respondents agree, with most placing the acceleration of decline between 25% and 50% faster than it used to be.

Capital lock-up: ownership as a constraint on growth

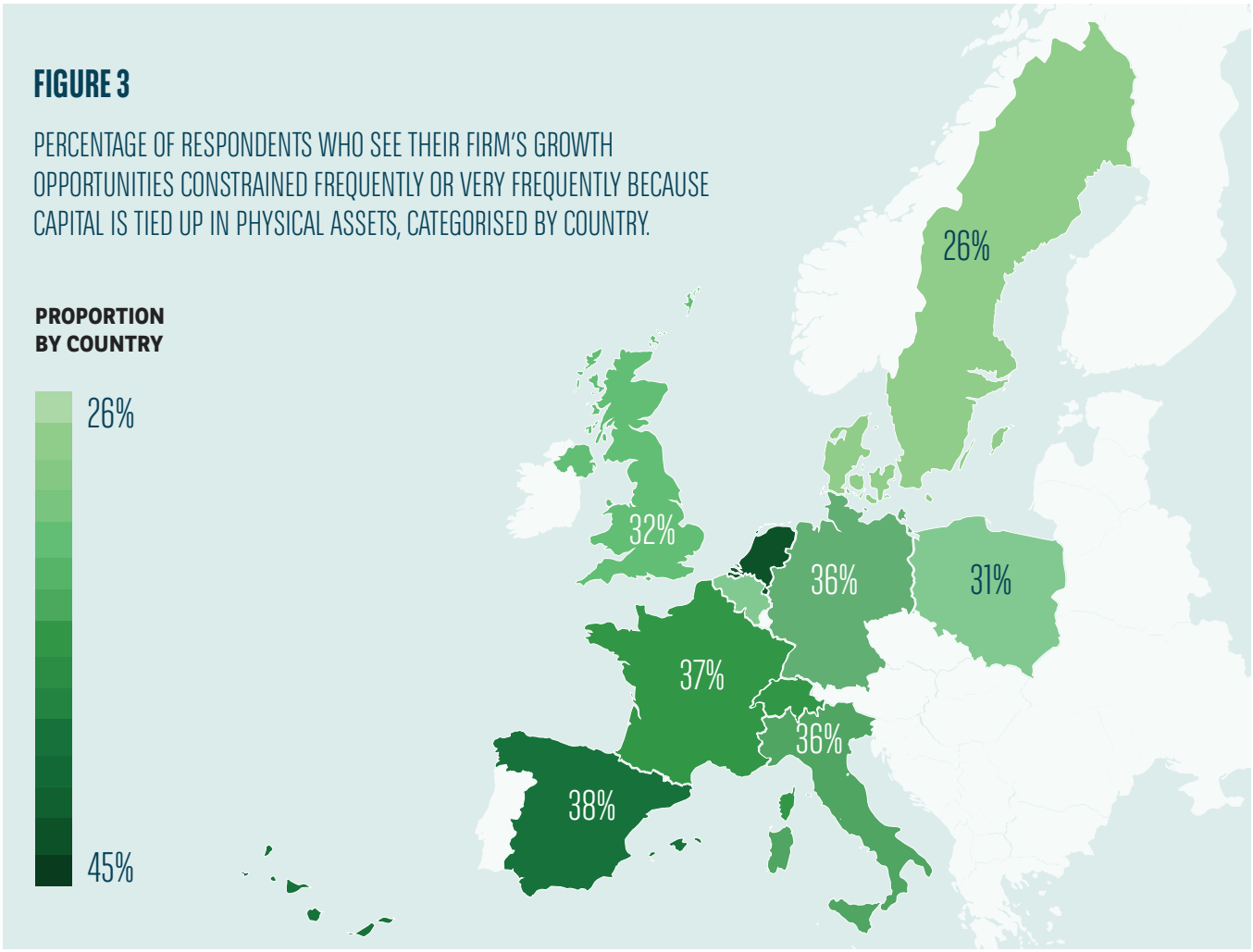
While obsolescence can undermine returns, capital lock-up constrains what organisations can do next. This constraint is not theoretical. Leaders describe real trade-offs when capital is committed over long periods.

More than a third (35%) of senior leaders say that they have seen their firm's growth opportunities constrained frequently or very frequently because capital is tied up in physical assets. A further 52% says this happens occasionally, while only 13% say capital lock-up has never constrained growth.

Again, variation by geography and industry supports the wider pattern; the Netherlands (45%) reports the highest proportion of frequent or very frequent constraints, followed by Spain (38%). The industries most affected by capital lock-up are healthcare (38%), transport and logistics (38%), and agriculture (36%).

FIGURE 3

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO SEE THEIR FIRM'S GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES CONSTRAINED FREQUENTLY OR VERY FREQUENTLY BECAUSE CAPITAL IS TIED UP IN PHYSICAL ASSETS, CATEGORISED BY COUNTRY.



The opportunity cost of ownership

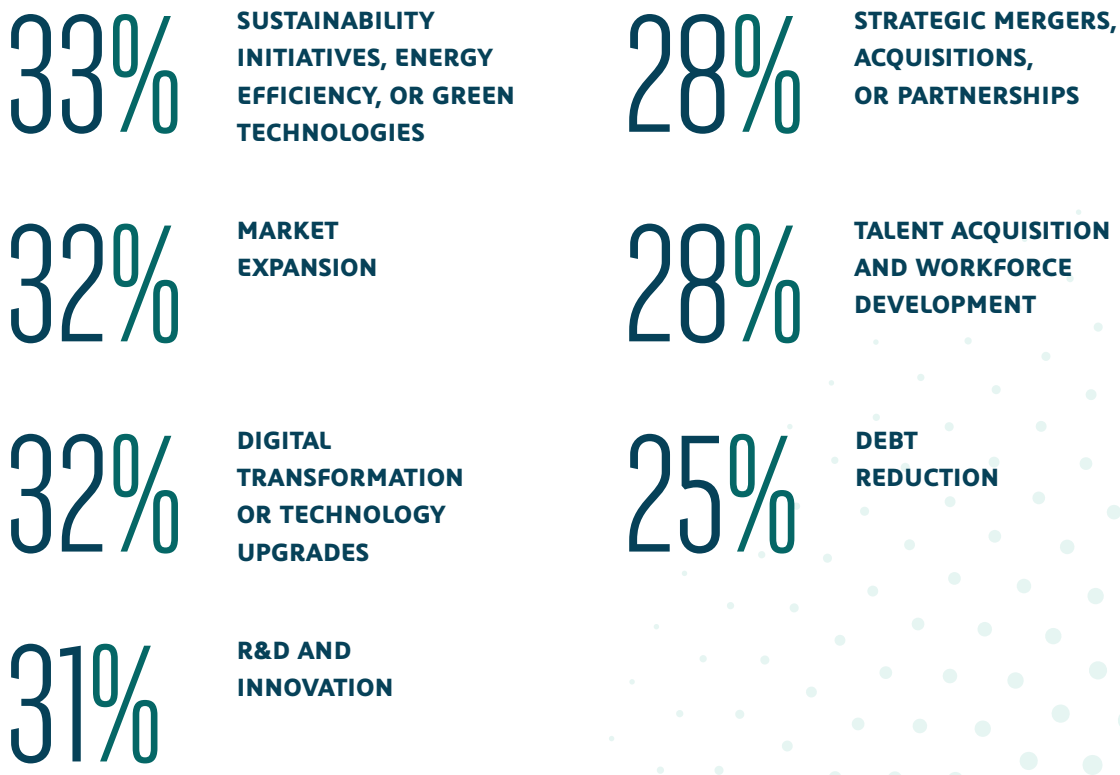
Long-term investment decisions are becoming increasingly complex for senior leaders. When asked about how they would redeploy capital if it were freed from physical assets, the opportunity cost of ownership becomes evident.

One-third (33%) of respondents would invest in sustainability initiatives, energy efficiency, and green technologies. Market expansion (32%), digital transformation or technology upgrades (32%), and innovation and R&D (31%) follow closely behind.

This even spread of responses highlights that leaders are not looking for one single alternative investment, but instead seeking freedom to rebalance as priorities evolve. Many are focusing on areas that will define future competitiveness, such as growth, innovation, and sustainability.

FIGURE 4

THE AREAS IN WHICH RESPONDENTS WOULD REINVEST IF CAPITAL EXPENDITURE TIED UP IN OWNED ASSETS WERE RELEASED.



Despite pressures, ownership still dominates

Despite these risks, ownership remains the dominant financing model. More than two-in-five respondents (41%) say their organisation primarily finances CAPEX through outright ownership, followed by bank loans (31%).

Access-based models, including leasing, are cited as the preferred financing model for 28% of respondents. But at the same time, alternative models are gaining momentum. Data from **Leaseurope** finds that total leasing volumes in Europe in the first half of 2025 amounted to nearly €203 billion, up by 2.2% year-on-year.

Our research shows that leasing is already well-established in sectors such as renewable energy technology, where almost one-in-three business leaders (32%) use it as their dominant financing model. It is also a popular model in the construction industry, where 31% say they typically finance CAPEX through leasing.

THE KEY TAKEAWAY

The data points to a clear shift in mindset among business leaders. Today, they are increasingly focused on managing exposure to obsolescence, rather than simply minimising upfront cost or securing ownership.

Preserving flexibility and keeping capital available for growth is rising up the C-suite agenda. As technology cycles accelerate and uncertainty becomes a permanent feature of the operating environment, the limitations of traditional ownership models are being exposed. This is driving a gradual shift in perspective – from owning assets and absorbing their associated risks, to exploring models that prioritise access, performance, and outcomes, while redistributing risk across the asset lifecycle.

The next chapters explore what that shift looks like in practice, and how senior business leaders are responding.

CHAPTER 02

EQUIPMENT LIFECYCLE ACCOUNTABILITY

Compliance, reporting and end-of-life complexity

The findings in Chapter 1 point towards a gradual change in priorities for C-suite leaders. Many are moving away from the 'default' focus on ownership, and instead looking towards models that preserve flexibility, manage the risk of obsolescence, and keep capital available for growth and transformation.

But alongside these financial pressures, a distinct set of external forces is bearing down on equipment strategy. Regulatory requirements – including the EU Circular Economy Act, the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), and the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR) – are raising expectations around transparency and lifecycle accountability. Organisations are increasingly expected not only to invest in the right equipment, but to demonstrate how that equipment is managed across its full lifecycle.

This is where many traditional ownership models begin to show their limits. Designed primarily around acquisition and depreciation, they do not always provide the visibility, tracking, or compliance documentation that these rising expectations now demand. As a result, even organisations with clear strategic intent can find that their current asset strategies make lifecycle accountability difficult to deliver in practice.

This chapter explores how these external pressures are influencing equipment procurement strategies. It explores why end-of-life management is now a widespread operational pain point, and why leaders are increasingly seeking equipment strategies that improve lifecycle readiness.

Leaders face a myriad of external pressures on equipment strategies

Business leaders are navigating a complex and interconnected set of external forces, many of which exert direct influence on procurement strategy.

When asked about which factors have a strong influence on their equipment investment decisions, respondents point to a broad mix of economic, regulatory, and sustainability-related pressures. Central bank interest rate policy across the EU and UK ranks highest, cited by 42% of leaders surveyed as an influential factor on procurement decisions.

Currency and commodity volatility (39%) and global tariffs and cross-border trade barriers (37%) follow closely, reflecting continued uncertainty in global supply chains and input costs.

Regulation also features prominently, with 38% citing the EU Circular Economy Act (CEA) as a strong influence on equipment strategy. The CEA aims to double the current circularity rate by 2030, by transforming the 'take-make-dispose' model. It will increase the use of secondary materials and, in turn, reduce the demand for primary raw materials. However, official bodies like the European Environment Agency warn that progress in circularity has so far been slow, and the EU is currently off-track to double the circular material use rate by its target date.

Similarly, another 38% of respondents cite pressure from ESG ratings and investor expectations, while others see the SFDR (37%) and CSRD (37%) as particularly influential on purchasing decisions.

This complexity is reflected in how leaders assess risk. Almost four-in-ten respondents (39%) say that regulatory compliance presents the single greatest source of uncertainty for their CAPEX plans. This is well ahead of macroeconomic policy and geopolitical risks, which are cited by 24% and 21% of respondents, respectively.

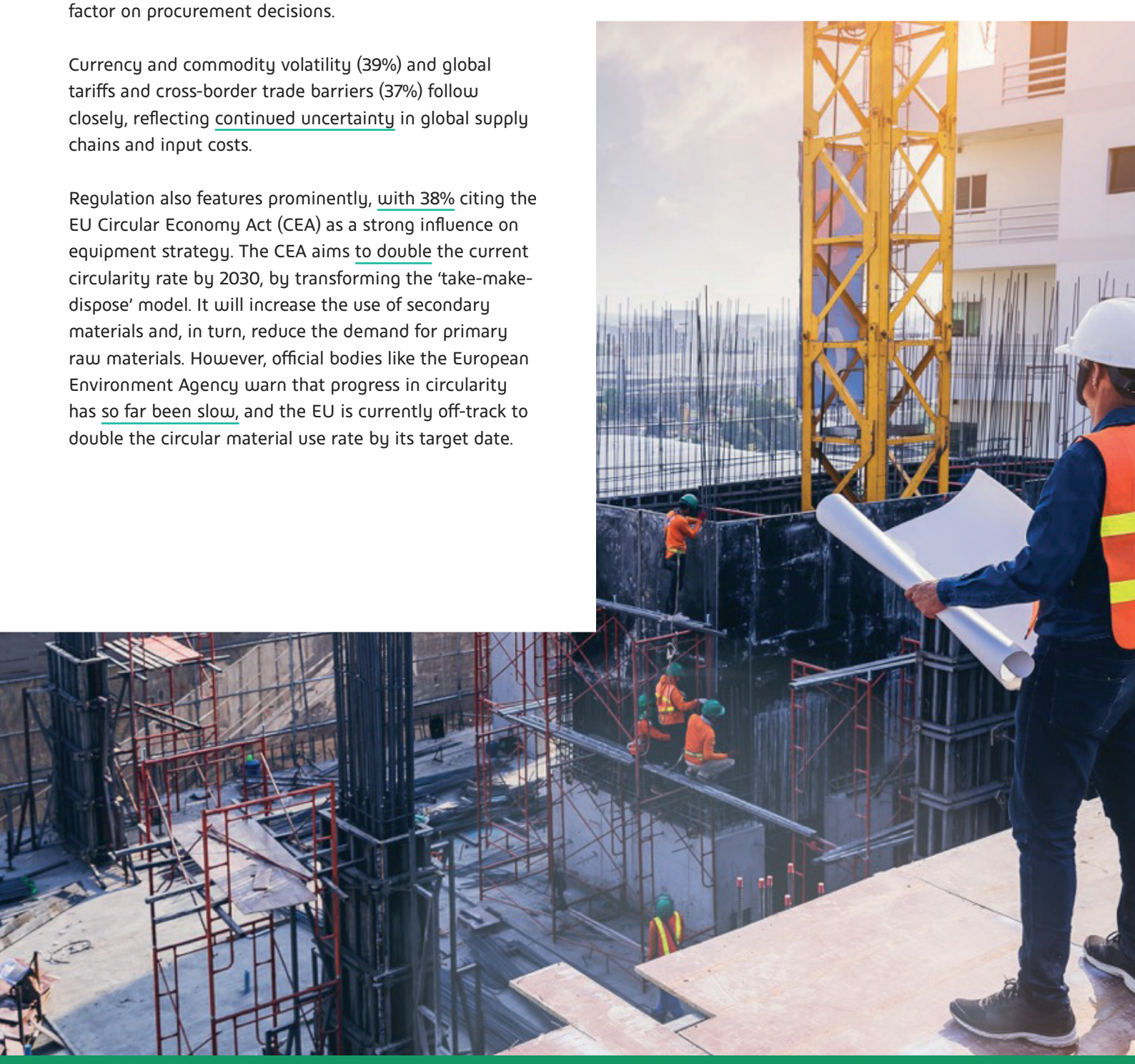


FIGURE 5

THE FACTORS STRONGLY INFLUENCING RESPONDENT'S CONFIDENCE IN COMMITTING TO LONG-TERM CAPEX INVESTMENTS.

42% CENTRAL BANK INTEREST RATE POLICY (EU & UK)

39% CURRENCY AND COMMODITY VOLATILITY

38% EU CIRCULAR ECONOMY ACT

38% PRESSURE FROM ESG RATINGS AND INVESTOR EXPECTATIONS

37% SUSTAINABLE FINANCE DISCLOSURE REGULATION (SFDR)

37% CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING DIRECTIVE (CSRD)

37% GLOBAL TARIFFS AND CROSS-BORDER TRADE BARRIERS

Taken together, the data suggests that equipment strategy is being shaped by a dense web of external factors. Compliance, trade risk, and sustainability pressures now directly affect CAPEX decisions, adding complexity for senior leaders.

Lifecycle considerations are already shaping procurement behaviour

Understanding lifecycle impacts is already influencing how equipment decisions are made. End-of-life management refers to the processes and controls used to manage equipment when it is no longer needed. It captures how equipment is tracked, redeployed, refurbished, reused, recycled, or disposed of, including the documentation required for compliance and reporting.

More than two-thirds (68%) of respondents say the ease of end-of-life management is either influential or very influential in procurement decisions. For respondents working in the technology industry, this figure rises to 73%, reflecting rapid innovation cycles and heightened scrutiny around electronic waste. Similar influence is seen in the agricultural sector, where 70% of respondents say their purchasing decisions are influenced by the ease of lifecycle management.

Across all industries surveyed, just 10% say end-of-life considerations are slightly influential or not influential at all, highlighting how sustainability considerations are increasingly integrated into procurement decision-making.

FIGURE 6

HOW THE EASE OF END-OF-LIFE EQUIPMENT MANAGEMENT INFLUENCES ACQUISITION DECISIONS AMONG RESPONDENTS ACROSS EUROPE.

25% **VERY INFLUENTIAL**
it's a key factor in our equipment investment decisions

43% **INFLUENTIAL**
it's a regular consideration when evaluating new equipment

22% **MODERATELY INFLUENTIAL**
it sometimes factors into decisions, depending on the equipment type

9% **SLIGHTLY INFLUENTIAL**
it's considered occasionally but not a major driver

1% **NOT INFLUENTIAL**
it has little to no influence on our purchasing decisions

In this context, financing structures can influence how responsibilities and incentives are organised across the asset lifecycle. Solutions that incorporate structured return mechanisms may facilitate asset redeployment, refurbishment, or reuse – particularly where supported by appropriate operational capabilities and viable secondary markets.

However, financing structures alone do not determine lifecycle or circular outcomes. These depend on a broader set of factors, including product design, maintenance practices, supply chain coordination, and the ability to track and manage assets effectively over time.

This reflects a wider shift in how organisations approach equipment strategy. Lifecycle considerations are becoming more visible in decision-making, as regulatory requirements and sustainability expectations increase. In response, organisations are placing greater emphasis on how assets are managed beyond acquisition, including how they are maintained, redeployed, or retired.

While access-based approaches – including operating leases, rental, and other usage models – can support these objectives in certain contexts, their effectiveness depends on the maturity of the surrounding ecosystem and the availability of supporting capabilities. As such, lifecycle outcomes are shaped as much by execution and coordination as by financing structure.

These dynamics are not uniform across markets. Geographic differences highlight how lifecycle considerations are being prioritised at different stages of maturity.

For example, Denmark reports the highest proportion of leaders finding end-of-life management very or extremely challenging, at 70%, despite also being the country where lifecycle considerations are among the most influential in procurement decisions. This suggests that increased awareness and regulatory pressure are not always matched by operational readiness.

By contrast, the Netherlands reports a lower level of influence of lifecycle considerations on procurement decisions, at 60%, indicating a different stage of adoption or prioritisation.

Taken together, these variations reinforce a key theme of the report: while lifecycle accountability is becoming more central to equipment strategy across Europe, the pace of adoption and level of execution maturity vary significantly by market.

87% SAY MANAGING THE END-OF-LIFE OF OWNED EQUIPMENT IS CHALLENGING TO SOME DEGREE

End-of-life management exposes a lifecycle visibility gap

Despite end-of-life management playing an increasingly pivotal role in purchasing decisions, managing the refurbishment, recycling, and responsible disposal of owned equipment is found to be increasingly challenging.

Almost nine-in-ten respondents (87%) say that managing the end-of-life of owned equipment is challenging to some degree. Of these, 13% describe it as extremely challenging, 44% as very challenging, and 30% as moderately challenging – suggesting that difficulty is the norm, rather than the exception.

Country-level differences highlight how widespread the issue is. Denmark reports the highest proportion of leaders finding end-of-life management very or extremely challenging (70%), despite it being the country where these considerations most strongly influence procurement decisions.

This highlights a gap between intent and operational readiness.

Rising expectations around asset traceability, refurbishment and end-of-life coordination are reshaping procurement criteria across sectors. However, the prevalence of operational difficulty indicates that many organisations are still building the internal processes and external partnerships required to manage assets effectively beyond acquisition. This gap between expectation and execution reflects the growing complexity of lifecycle accountability rather than a lack of intent.

Ownership remains important, but flexibility is increasingly decisive

Despite the growing pressures reshaping equipment strategies, ownership continues to play an important role for many organisations. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of respondents say ownership is important to competitiveness, with 17% describing it as 'core' to it.

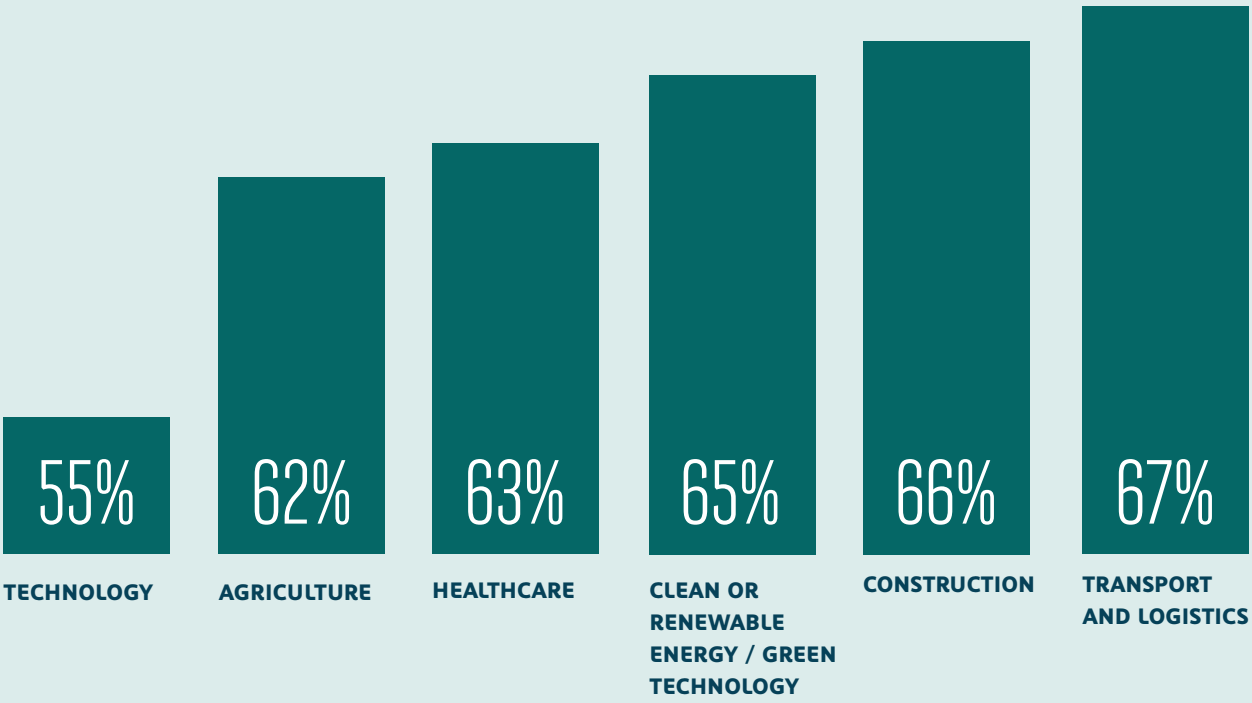
In practice, some financing structures – including certain forms of leasing – may be perceived as "ownership-like" where they provide long-term control and availability. This helps explain why ownership remains important even as access-based models develop.

The importance of ownership is particularly pronounced in asset-intensive sectors. In the transport and logistics sector, for instance, 67% of respondents say ownership is important to maintain competitiveness, with 22% saying it is vital. The construction and clean energy industries place similar importance on ownership, with 66% and 65% respectively listing it as important.

However, 26% of respondents across all sectors say the importance of ownership depends on the business area or asset type. This suggests that flexibility and context are becoming more important alongside control, as organisations assess when ownership is required and when alternative approaches may be more appropriate.

FIGURE 7

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO SAY OWNERSHIP IS IMPORTANT TO COMPETITIVENESS, BROKEN DOWN BY INDUSTRY.

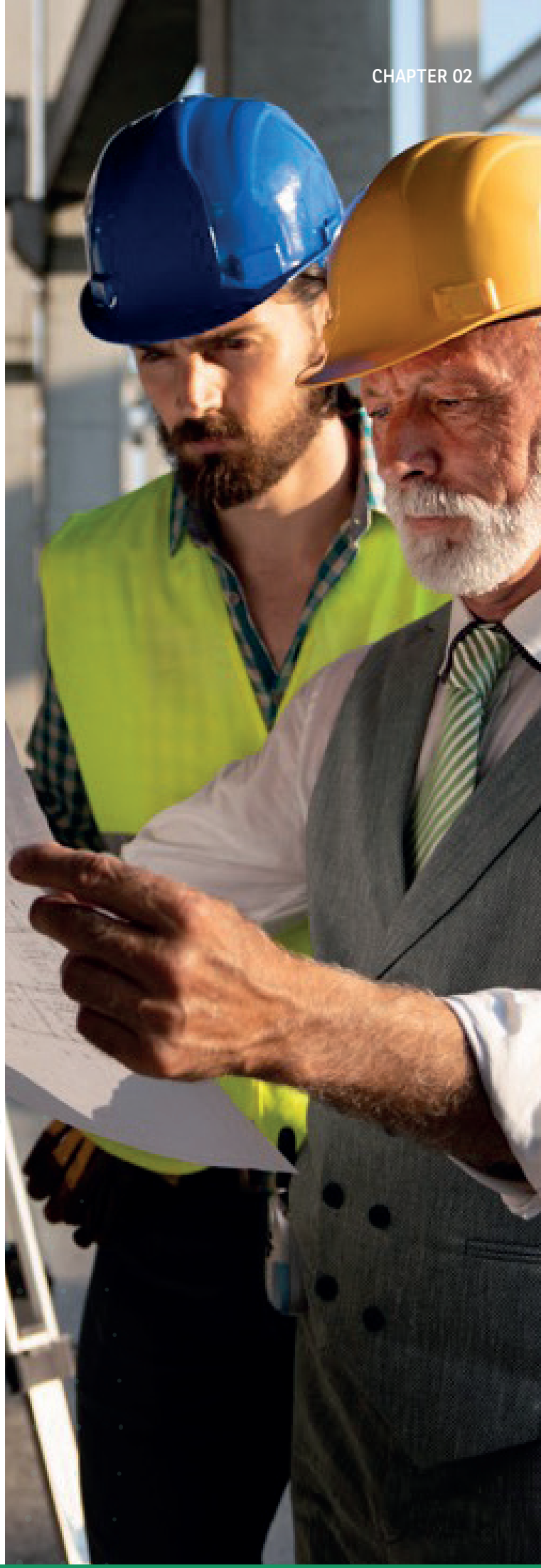


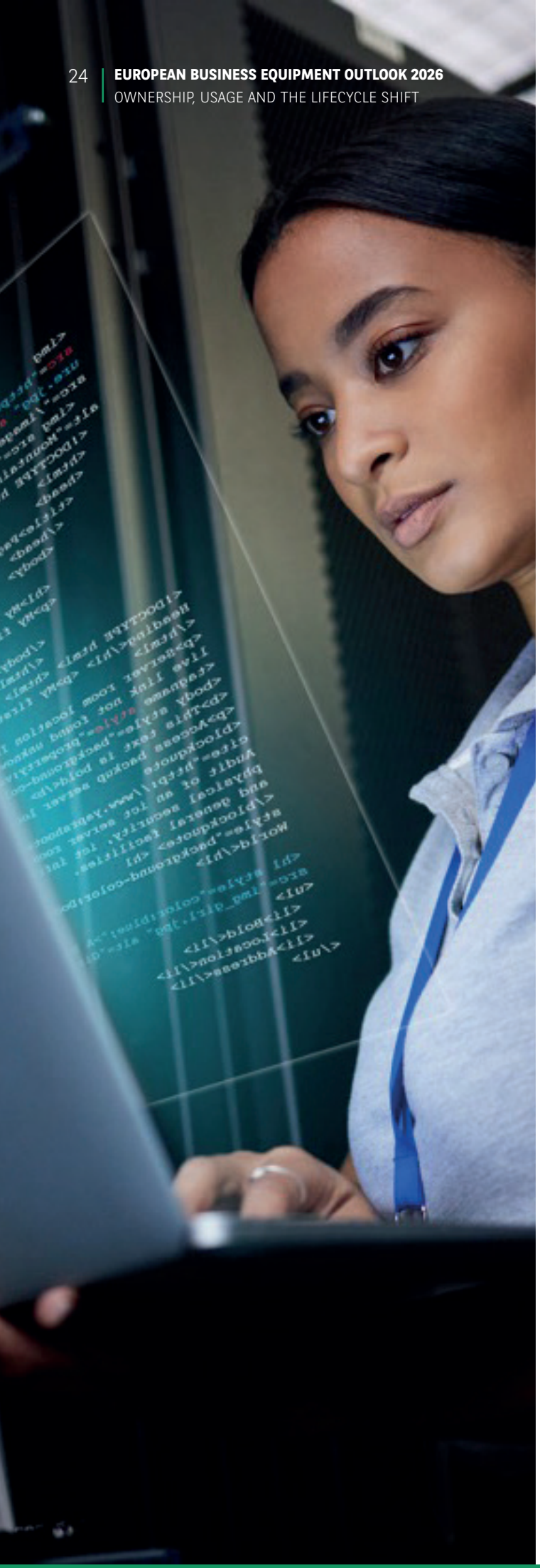
THE KEY TAKEAWAY

The findings in this chapter reflect a broadening of what equipment strategy is expected to deliver. Regulatory requirements, reporting obligations and end-of-life complexity are increasingly shaping how procurement decisions are made, moving lifecycle accountability from a secondary consideration into a more central one. Yet the data also reveals a gap between rising expectations and operational readiness. For many organisations, managing assets effectively beyond acquisition remains a genuine and widespread challenge.

This gap is in part a structural one. Ownership models designed around acquisition and depreciation do not always provide the visibility, tracking or coordination that lifecycle accountability now demands. As external pressures continue to build, organisations are increasingly seeking equipment strategies that address not only cost and control, but flexibility and end-to-end lifecycle management.

Where usage-based models are supported by the right operational capability, they may offer contractual frameworks that facilitate asset return, redeployment and improved lifecycle visibility. For organisations navigating growing sustainability and compliance expectations, the way equipment is financed is becoming an increasingly relevant part of how those responsibilities are managed in practice.





CHAPTER 03

THE USAGE LANDSCAPE

Demand, barriers and the conditions for scale

The previous chapters have explored why traditional ownership models are being tested, from accelerating obsolescence and capital lock-up to challenges with end-of-life management. Together, these forces are creating a strong theoretical case for usage-based and leasing models.

But theory alone does not drive widespread adoption. While intent is there, and usage-based models are already playing a role in how some equipment is accessed, the transition remains gradual.

This chapter examines the reality of the usage transition today: where demand already exists, why adoption is not accelerating at the pace some might expect, and what factors are preventing organisations from scaling usage-based models more widely.

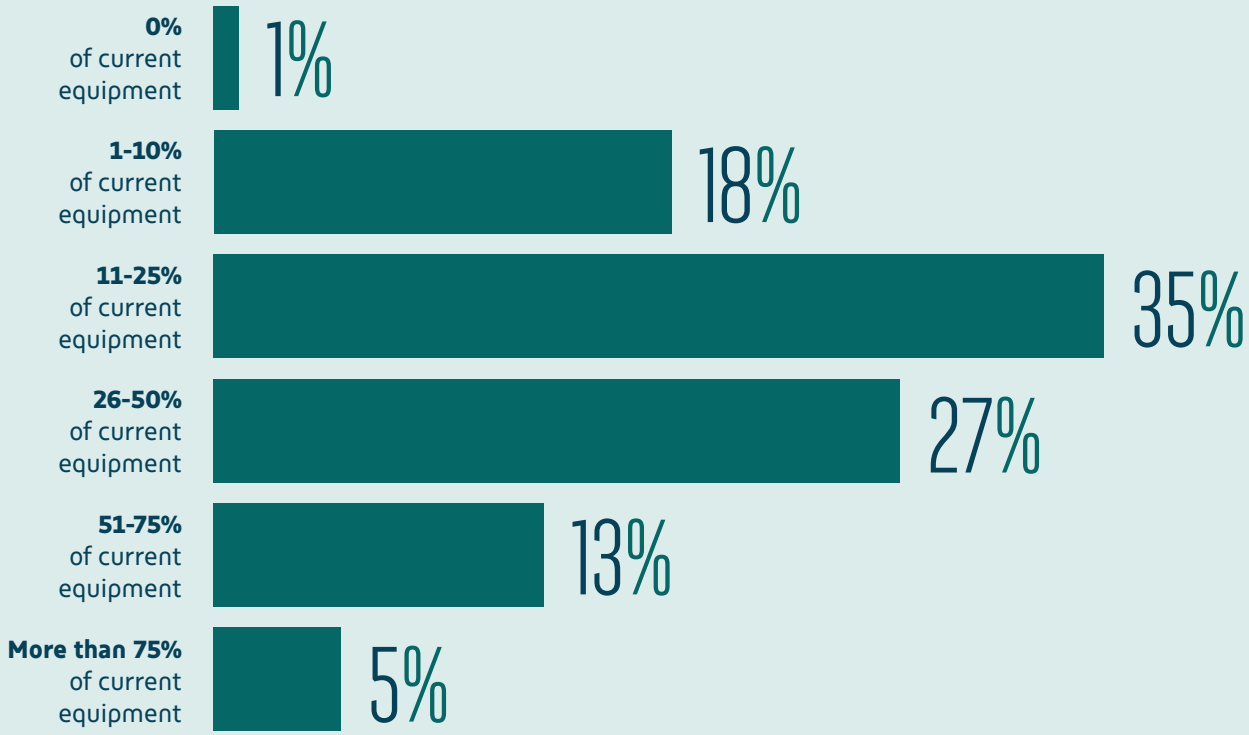
Usage-based models are already part of today's equipment landscape, but leaders are cautious about how they will evolve in the near to medium term

Usage-based and leasing models are already integrated into purchasing processes for many organisations. When asked to estimate the proportion of equipment currently accessed through leasing or usage-based models, 45% of business leaders say that at least a quarter of their equipment falls into this category. A small number rely on usage-based models very heavily, with 5% saying that more than three-quarters of their equipment is accessed this way.

At the other end of the spectrum, only 19% of respondents say that 10% or less of their equipment is accessed through leasing or usage-based models. For business leaders working in the construction industry, this figure rises to as high as 28%.

FIGURE 8

THE PROPORTION OF EQUIPMENT CURRENTLY ACCESSED THROUGH LEASING, RENTAL, OR USAGE-BASED MODELS.



The results show that leaders are somewhat cautious about how adoption of usage-based models will evolve in the near to medium term, despite appetite.

When asked about how they expect the proportion of equipment accessed through leasing or usage-based models to change over the next five years, more than half (53%) of business leaders expect it to stay the same or increase. A further breakdown shows 38% expect it to remain broadly the same, while 14% anticipate an increase.

Nearly half (47%) expect a decrease. This caution reflects the same macro pressures constraining all investment decisions right now. Central bank interest rate policy ranks highest among the external pressures on equipment investment decisions, cited by 42% of leaders, and elevated cost-of-capital is acting as a brake on all forms of commitment, not a reassessment of the usage model itself.

The adoption barriers for leasing models

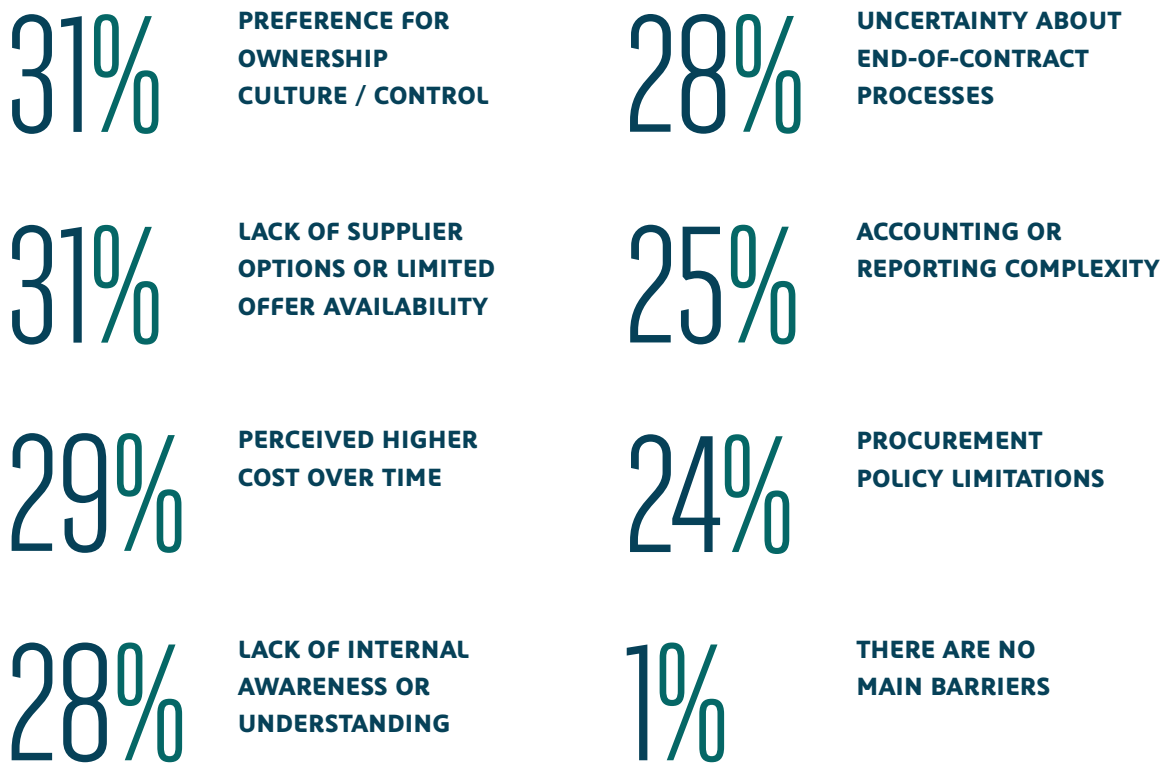
To understand this hesitation, the research explores the barriers leaders face when considering wider adoption of usage-based or leasing models. The results show that friction stems from a combination of practical constraints, rather than a single issue.

The most frequently cited barriers are cultural and structural. Nearly a third of respondents (31%) point to a preference for control, while the same proportion cite a lack of supplier options or limited availability of suitable offers. Another common barrier is the perceived higher cost over time, with 29% of business leaders citing this as an issue.

The data also uncovers the operational and organisational barriers to widespread adoption of usage-based models; 28% cite a lack of internal awareness and understanding of usage and leasing models, while the same proportion highlight uncertainty around end-of-contract processes. Only 1% of business leaders surveyed say there are no significant barriers at all.

FIGURE 9

THE MAIN BARRIERS FOR RESPONDENTS PREVENTING GREATER USE OF LEASING OR USAGE-BASED MODELS.



Sector-level differences underline the role of ecosystem maturity. For business leaders operating in the agricultural industry, 41% cite a lack of supplier options – the highest of any sector – as their main barrier to adoption. This may reflect perceived limitations in the availability of alternative or more flexible access-based solutions, rather than financing availability alone.

In renewable energy, preference for ownership and control is most pronounced (35%), while in healthcare, accounting and reporting complexity is cited most frequently (27%).

Taken together, these findings show why adoption remains uneven, creating friction that slows progress even where demand and interest exist.

50% OF RESPONDENTS SAY TRADITIONAL CAPEX MODELS EXPOSE BUSINESSES TO UNNECESSARY FINANCIAL RISK

48% SAY ACCESS TO NEWER TECHNOLOGIES THROUGH LEASING WOULD MAKE IT EASIER TO MEET ESG AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

FIGURE 10

THE PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS AGREEING TO THE STATEMENTS ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF USAGE-BASED AND LEASING MODELS.

50% TRADITIONAL CAPEX MODELS EXPOSE BUSINESSES TO UNNECESSARY FINANCIAL RISK

50% I BELIEVE THAT IN THE FUTURE OUR BUSINESS WILL BE MORE INCLINED TO LEVERAGE USAGE-BASED BUSINESS MODELS

49% FLEXIBILITY IN EQUIPMENT ACCESS WOULD HELP MY ORGANISATION BETTER RESPOND TO SUDDEN MARKET CHANGES OR DEMAND FLUCTUATIONS

48% ACCESS TO NEWER TECHNOLOGIES THROUGH LEASING MODELS WOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR MY ORGANISATION TO MEET ESG AND REGULATORY TARGETS

46% LEASING MODELS HELP REDUCE TECHNOLOGY OBSOLESCENCE

46% USAGE-BASED BUSINESS MODELS WOULD MAKE IT EASIER TO ACHIEVE OUR SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

Leaders are recognising the benefits of usage-based models

Despite these barriers to adoption, leaders broadly recognise the outcomes that usage-based and leasing models can offer.

Half (50%) of European business leaders agree that traditional CAPEX models expose businesses to unnecessary financial risk, while the same proportion believe their organisation will be more inclined to use usage-based models in the future. Around half (49%) of respondents agree that flexibility in equipment access would help them respond better to sudden market changes.

Sustainability and technology considerations are also prominent, with 48% agreeing that access to newer technologies through leasing would make it easier to meet ESG and regulatory requirements. Another 46% say usage-based models would support sustainability goals, and the same number believe leasing helps reduce technology obsolescence.

These responses suggest that leaders see usage-based approaches as tools for improving flexibility and managing exposure to technological change, rather than purely as financing alternatives. However, whether these outcomes are realised in practice depends on contract structure, asset characteristics, utilisation patterns and prevailing market conditions.

Enablement will determine adoption

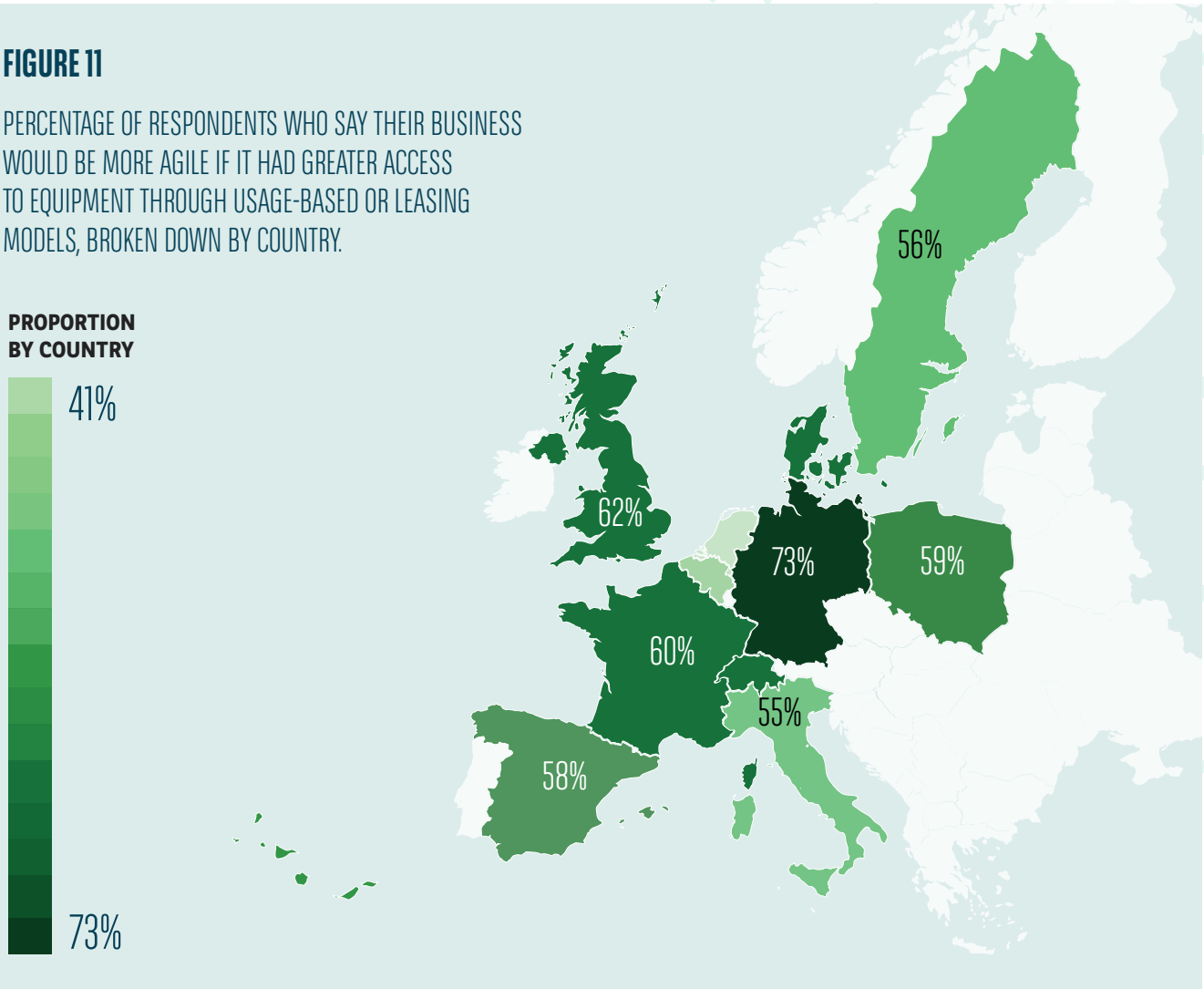
Again, leaders are receptive to the benefits of usage models. More than half (58%) of business leaders across all geographies agree that their business would be more agile if it had greater access to equipment through usage-based or leasing models. Yet interestingly, almost a third (31%) still remain neutral on this issue, despite the benefits of leasing being well known by many business leaders.

In Germany, however, almost three-quarters (73%) of business leaders believe usage-based models would make their business more agile. Compared with the European average of 58%, this suggests that the strategic case for usage is already well embedded into Europe's largest economy, and leaders have a high awareness of its benefits in this market.

The data suggests that the future growth of usage-based and leasing models will depend on reducing complexity, improving clarity around cost and contracts, and building mature ecosystems that make usage easier to access and manage.

FIGURE 11

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO SAY THEIR BUSINESS WOULD BE MORE AGILE IF IT HAD GREATER ACCESS TO EQUIPMENT THROUGH USAGE-BASED OR LEASING MODELS, BROKEN DOWN BY COUNTRY.

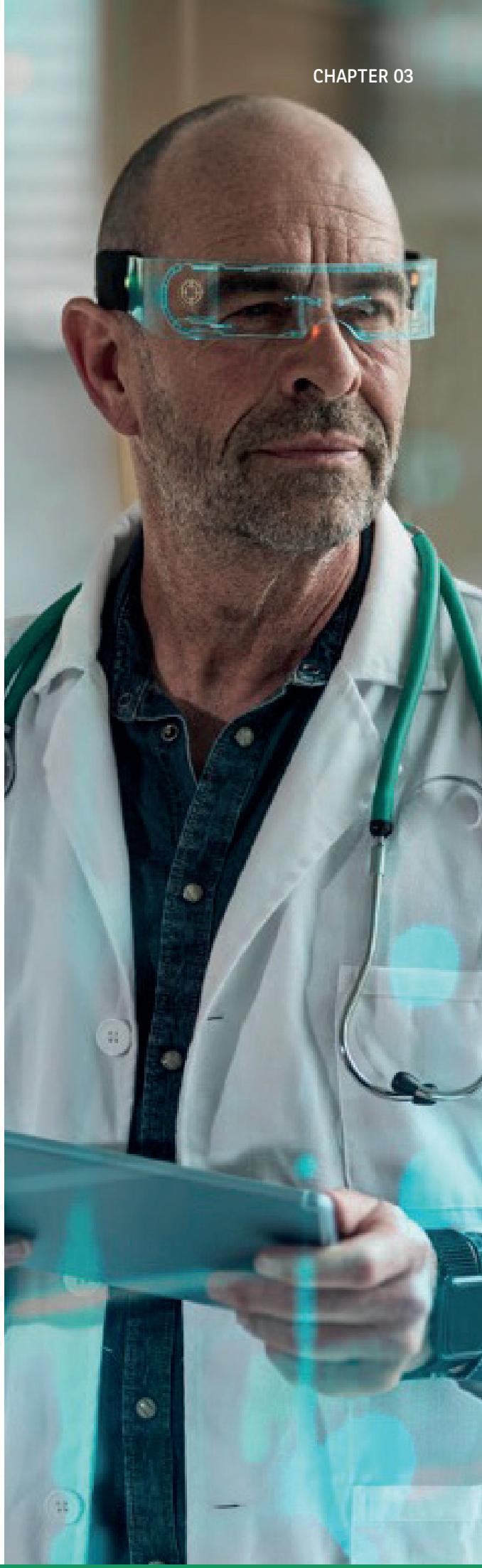


THE KEY TAKEAWAY

The findings in this chapter show that leaders recognise the potential benefits of usage-based models, including flexibility, performance and reduced exposure to obsolescence, alongside perceived sustainability benefits.

But adoption is not accelerating in a linear way. Instead, it is constrained by a set of practical, structural, and cultural barriers that make scaling usage difficult in the current environment.

This makes the transition to usage-based models less a question of appetite, and more a question of enablement. Overcoming the friction will require clearer value propositions, greater internal understanding, more mature supplier ecosystems, and financing models designed around lifecycle management rather than ownership alone.



CONCLUSION

REDESIGNING EQUIPMENT STRATEGY FOR FLEXIBILITY AND RESILIENCE

Balancing ownership and access in an era of accelerating change

The findings of this Outlook point to a structural shift in how organisations are evaluating equipment decisions. Across sectors, leaders are responding to faster technology cycles, tighter capital conditions, and rising expectations around how assets are managed across their full lifecycle. These pressures are not temporary fluctuations. They reflect a deeper recalibration of how businesses manage long-term commitments in an uncertain environment.

What is changing is not only how equipment is financed, but how it supports broader business priorities. Equipment decisions are increasingly linked to flexibility, technology renewal, regulatory requirements and the ability to adapt when conditions change.

For many years, equipment strategy was largely centred on ownership, cost efficiency and depreciation planning. Today, the conversation is widening. When assets risk becoming obsolete before full return is realised, when capital tied up in physical equipment limits the ability to invest elsewhere, and when lifecycle responsibilities extend beyond acquisition into tracking, reporting and end-of-life coordination, financing choices become part of broader business strategy.

Ownership continues to serve an important role, particularly for long-lived, stable assets where utilisation is predictable. The appropriate balance between ownership and access will vary by asset type, sector maturity, utilisation profile and strategic priorities. But the data suggests that in markets shaped by rapid innovation, economic volatility and growing accountability demands, many organisations are reassessing whether permanent capital commitment should remain the default approach. In these contexts, usage-based models are being explored not simply as alternative funding mechanisms, but as practical tools for preserving flexibility and distributing risk more effectively across the asset lifecycle.

Access-based approaches, where return conditions are defined contractually from the outset, may help organisations adapt more easily to technological change and shifting market conditions. Adoption remains uneven and influenced by sector maturity and ecosystem readiness. Yet with nearly half of respondents already financing a significant portion of equipment through access-based models, the data suggests that this evolution in equipment strategy is already taking shape across many organisations.

The debate, therefore, is not a binary choice between ownership and usage. It is about aligning equipment strategy with faster innovation cycles, constrained capital, and rising lifecycle expectations. It is about ensuring that asset decisions strengthen resilience rather than restrict it.

As organisations pursue models aligned with circular economy principles – including asset longevity, redeployment and value retention – financing structures that enable flexibility and coordinated lifecycle management may form part of the supporting framework. Circular outcomes, however, depend on product design, operational capability and collaboration across value chains as much as on financing structure itself.

In an environment where change is constant and accountability is rising, the organisations most likely to sustain long-term competitiveness will be those that treat flexibility, access and lifecycle coordination as core elements of their equipment strategy – rather than relying on ownership as the default starting point. That more than half of business leaders expect usage levels to hold or grow is consistent with this direction. Where near-term caution exists, it mirrors the same macro pressures – elevated interest rates, cost-of-capital uncertainty – slowing investment decisions of all kinds, not a weakening of the underlying case. Equipment is becoming obsolete faster, capital lock-up is constraining growth, and end-of-life complexity is rising – pressures that exist independently of interest rate cycles and will intensify as technology continues to accelerate.

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