

The Business of Expansion

How international businesses are harnessing growth and building resilience in an uncertain world

HSBC's report **'The Business of Expansion: How international businesses are balancing resilience and ambition in an uncertain world'** shows firms are still pushing international growth despite trade, tariff and geopolitical uncertainty. Based on a survey of **2,700 financial decision-makers** across **18 markets** (Dec 2025–Jan 2026), **77%** plan to expand overseas in the next two years and **48%** say tariffs have accelerated their plans. Growth (**38%**) and supply chain resilience (**35%**) lead the drivers, while economic conditions (**35%**), regulation / trade policy (**34%**) and political factors are the biggest barriers. Read the full report to learn more.

Key findings

Expansion intent:

85% of India HQ international enterprises intend to expand overseas in the next two years

Tariffs accelerating plans:

76% of international enterprises reported accelerating overseas expansion due to tariff changes

In 2026, India-headquartered mid-market and corporate decision-makers appear strongly expansion-minded (**67% planning to expand**). The very high share accelerating plans due to tariff changes (**76%**) indicates trade policy is a major catalyst—likely pushing firms to rethink where they manufacture, source, or route supply chains to protect margins and reduce disruption.

Qualitative interview notes also point to a practical execution constraint: shortages of local technical and specialised tech talent (e.g., AI professionals, developers), which may influence where firms choose to build capability or establish delivery hubs.

Top triggers for international expansion

43%

Growth in line with overall International ambitions

41%

Sector is expected to grow

39%

Expecting overseas demand

31%

Financial support and funding

30%

Advisory / consulting support (Advisory and consulting services)

Top considerations for market selection

Economic stability

31%

Market size and growth potential

27%

Tax incentives or financial benefits

27%

Key corridors

Inbound

(International enterprises plan to expand to India)

21%

TH

19%

MY

14%

AU

14%

PH

14%

AE

Outbound

(HQ-ed India to expand into)

24%

AU

24%

EU

23%

ME

21%

JP

21%

SG

Barriers to international expansion for organisations

Economic factors

48%

Technological barriers

32%

Financial barriers

32%

Bank and banking operations

30%

Low knowledge of the local market

29%

Technological barriers (top mentions)

Lack of local technology

Absence of minimum standards

Financial barriers (top mentions)

High collateral requirements

Cost of credit

Difficult to open a business bank account locally

Lack of access to VC or Equity capital

This study, a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, was conducted over a period of 18 months across 18 markets, concluding in Q1 2026, with over 2,700 mid-market companies. This study is not a product of HSBC Global Investment Research.

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