Adopting AI for Trade: Business Insights to Inform Policy and Practice

Trade & Tech Insights

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1 Overview

This report presents the findings of a joint survey conducted by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) Secretariat in March 2025. The objective of the survey was to gather information on how businesses are adopting artificial intelligence (AI) to support trade-related activities. This report also builds on an ICC policy paper titled "Achieving inclusive AI".[1]

While there are other surveys that track the adoption of AI, this is the first such survey to focus on trade. The survey was developed to better understand how companies use AI for trade, the key opportunities that the technology opens for companies, and the challenges that they are facing, while examining differences in terms of firm size and income level of economies. The survey also includes novel questions designed to estimate the potential savings in trade-related costs enabled by AI.

1.1 The survey

The survey questions (listed in the Annex) were co-developed by the WTO Secretariat and ICC. ICC then asked their membership base, which represents a diverse range of companies globally and across sectors, to respond to the online survey.

Responses were received from 158 firms from diverse regions. Of the respondents, 35 per cent were based in Europe, 23 per cent in Asia, 15 per cent in the Middle East and North Africa, 11 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean, 9 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa and 6 per cent in North America.

The survey also took account of the income levels of the economies surveyed, based on the World Bank 2024-25 classifications.[2] Forty-three per cent of respondents were from high-income economies, 34 per cent were from upper middle-income economies, and 23 per cent from low/lower middle-income economies.

The distribution of respondents across sectors was varied. Twenty-five per cent of respondents were from the manufacturing sector, 25 per cent were from the finance and insurance sectors, and 49 per cent were from other services. In terms of firm size, 63 per cent of responding firms were micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) – defined as having 249 employees or fewer – while 37 per cent were large firms, i.e., with 250 employees or more.

1.2 Key findings

The survey uncovered several key findings. First, there are early signs of gaps in AI adoption between MSMEs and large firms, as well as between firms in high-income and in low/lower middle-income economies. Manufacturing firms are also lagging behind their services counterparts in adopting AI.

Second, firms that are using AI have perceived improved efficiency in trade and are expecting cost reductions, particularly related to communications functions. Firms primarily use AI to help with language processing activities, trade compliance and market intelligence in trade-related activities. More advanced or predictive use cases are less common, often due to limited tool sophistication or internal capacity. Notably, firms in lower-income economies were more optimistic that AI could help to expand their trade activities, while MSMEs were more optimistic with regard to cost savings. This suggests that, although there is an AI use gap, if AI is used, it has the potential to promote more inclusive participation in global trade. This underlines the importance of bridging the gaps in AI adoption.

Third, regulatory uncertainty and fragmentation, particularly of data policies, are key challenges for firms. Firms are subject to notable compliance costs due to having to comply with different data protection regimes.

1 International Chamber of Commerce (2025), "Achieving inclusive AI", Paris: ICC, https://iccwbo.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2025/07/2025-ICC-Achieving-inclusive-AI.pdf.
2 See https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/opendata/world-bank-country-classifications-by-income-level-for-2024-2025.

2 Current Use of AI in enterprises

2.1 Adoption of AI

Nearly half of the respondents (49 per cent, i.e., 77 firms) indicated that they currently use AI, and 79 per cent reported international trade activities. Despite the limited sample size and uneven distribution across groups, the responses nevertheless provide a snapshot of how businesses are using AI for international trade.

There are disparities in the use of AI technologies, highlighting a potential gap in AI adoption between firms of different sizes and economic contexts. Among those that are already using AI, adoption is more prevalent among large firms and firms located in high-income economies. As shown in **Figure 1**, 62 per cent of large firms reported using AI, compared to 41 per cent of MSMEs. This is consistent with similar findings in other studies suggesting a correlation between the size of the firm and the level of AI adoption.[3] In high-income economies, 66 per cent of firms reported having adopted AI, compared to 27 per cent of firms in low/lower middle-income economies.

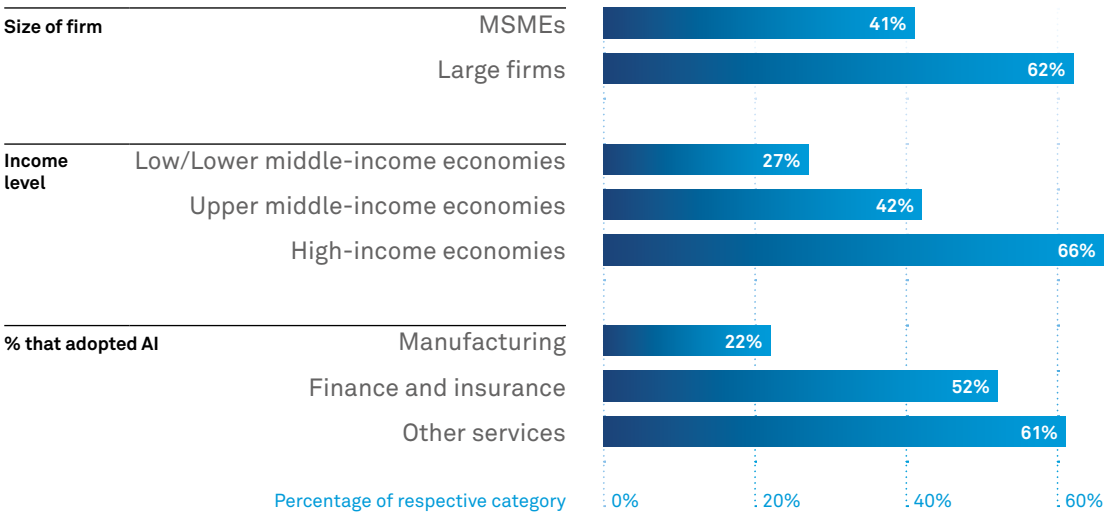
There are disparities in the use of AI technologies, highlighting a potential gap in AI adoption between firms of different sizes and economic contexts.

The level of AI adoption among manufacturing firms lags behind that of the services industry. As shown in **Figure 1**, 52 per cent of finance and insurance firms and 61 per cent of other services firms have adopted AI, compared to only 22 per cent of manufacturing firms. This corroborates other survey findings that firms in the information and communications technology, finance and insurance industries have a higher AI adoption rate.

The costs of using AI tools may hinder MSMEs and those from lower-income economies from fully benefiting from AI. There were differences in the levels of investment into AI tools in terms of firm size and national income levels, with MSMEs and firms from low/lower middle-income economies relying more on free tools. As shown in **Figure 2**, 82 per cent of large firms that have adopted AI have either invested in their own proprietary systems or are using subscription-based tools, compared to 58 per cent of MSMEs. In high-income economies, 76 per cent of firms that use AI invested in non-free tools versus 57 per cent of firms in low/lower middle-income economies. This may be because greater financial resources are necessary for subscriptions or to build proprietary AI tools, and it underscores

3 OECD/BCG/INSEAD (2025), *The Adoption of Artificial Intelligence in Firms: New Evidence for Policymaking*, Paris: OECD Publishing, https://doi.org/10.1787/f9ef33c3-en.

Figure 1 **AI Adoption rates by firm size, income level, sector**

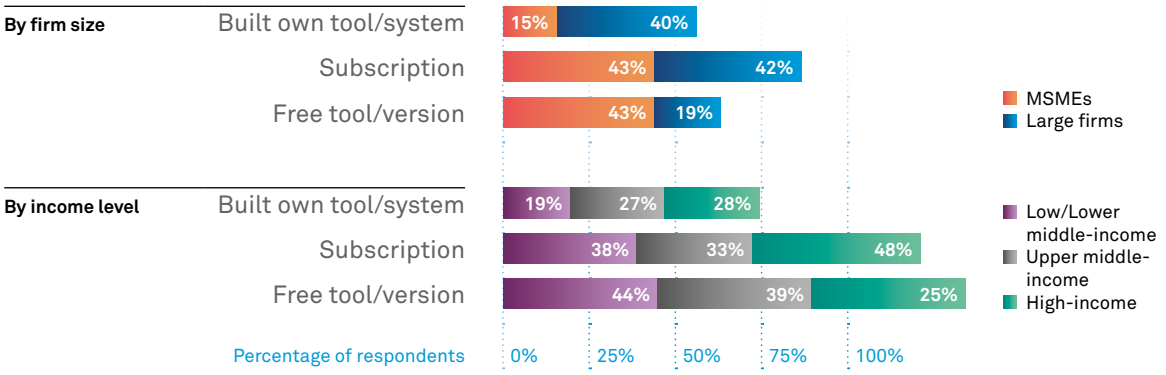


the importance of open-source and low-cost AI tools to enable MSMEs and lower-income economies to benefit from AI. It is important to acknowledge that free tools are not necessarily less sophisticated or resource-intensive. Companies that use free open-source or open-weight models[4] may still need to dedicate resources to fine-tuning them so that they can be applied successfully.

Technical capacity seems to be a more important consideration than financial returns in adopting AI. As **Figure 3** shows, firms that have not adopted AI ranked lack of in-house expertise, data privacy/security concerns and complex integration with existing trade management systems as the top reasons for not adopting AI, above the unclear return on investment. A greater share of larger firms compared to smaller firms reported concerns about data privacy/security and complex integration with existing systems. Smaller firms ranked lack of in-house expertise as the top barrier.

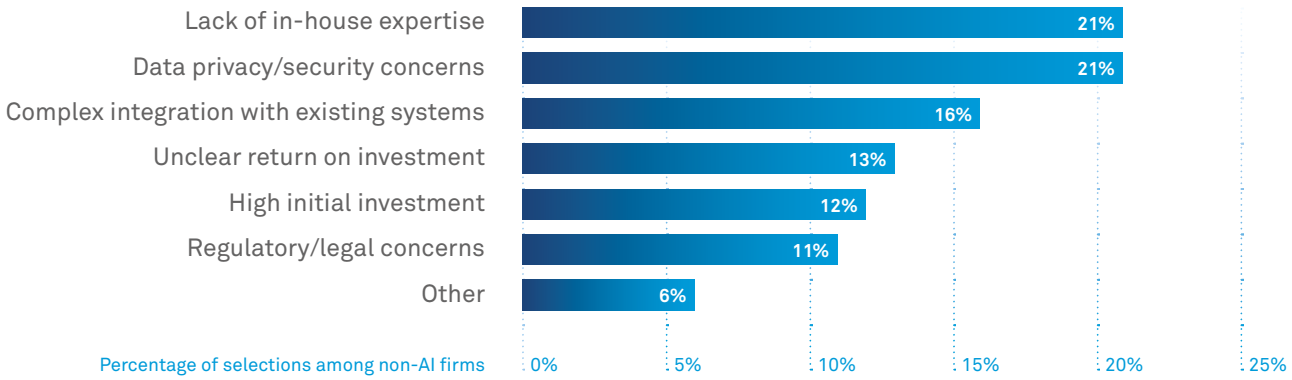
4 Open-source models often refer to AI models in which underlying source codes are freely available for use. Open-weight models release the trained parameters (i.e., the variables that determine the models' capabilities) that enable fine-tuning of the model.

Figure 2 **Types of AI systems used in MSMEs and large firms and correlated with economies' income levels**



The percentages refer to the percentages of respondents within that category.

Figure 3 **Reasons given by firms for not using AI**



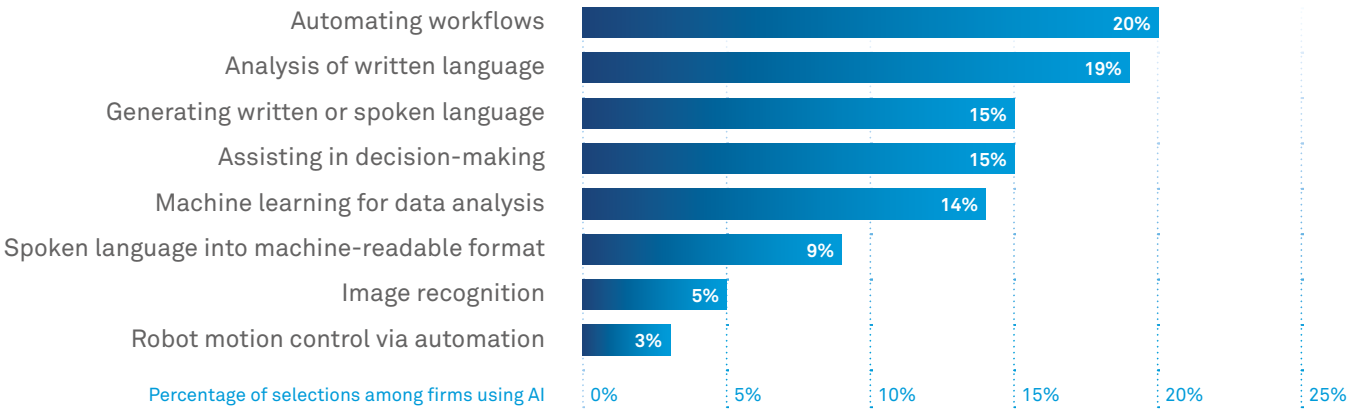
Percentages are calculated as a share of total selections of that response within that category. Respondents could select multiple responses.

2.2 General use cases of AI

Companies are using AI tools to automate workflows and analyze written language. **Figure 4** shows that the two types of technology most used by AI-adopting firms were those used to automate workflows and to perform analysis of written language (e.g., to analyze unstructured text from customer feedback in order to understand customer sentiment). In terms of what AI-adopting firms perceived as the biggest opportunities offered by AI, as **Figure 5** shows, about one-third of responses pointed to operational efficiency (e.g., automating trade processes and optimizing workflows).

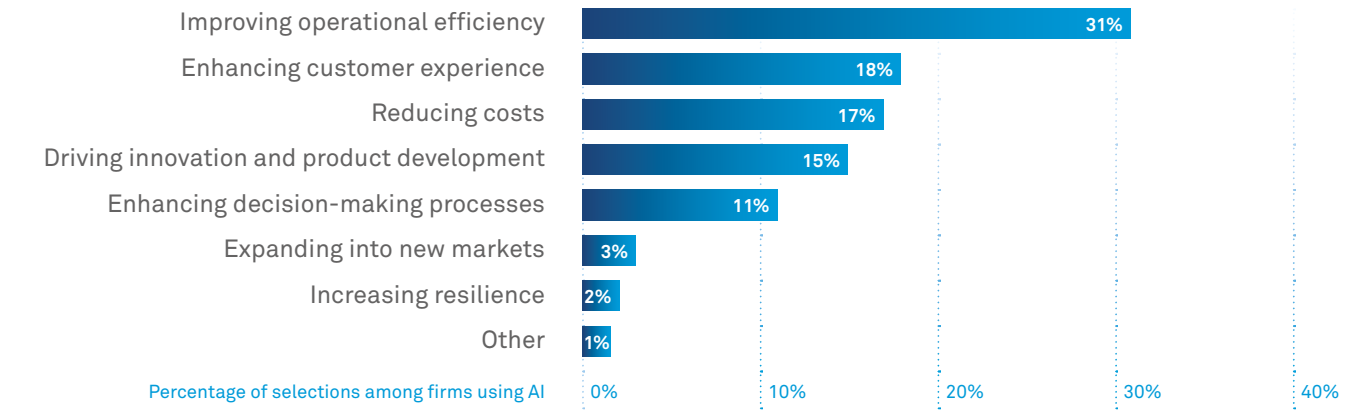
One possible reason is that it is relatively simple and accessible to implement improvements in these areas. There are a number of readily accessible or free versions of AI tools that can assist with productivity and language processing tasks. There may also be limitations in both technical capability within firms and in the AI systems they are using, as more complex tasks often require customized or subscription-based tools with additional features. However, as shown in **Figure 5**, firms recognised the potential for AI to be used in other functions as well, such as in product development (15 per cent) and to improve customer experience (18 per cent).

Figure 4 **Types of AI technology used by firms using AI**



Percentages are calculated as a share of total selections of that response within that category. Respondents could select multiple responses.

Figure 5 **Future opportunities for firms to use AI among firms already using AI**



Percentages are calculated as a share of total selections of that response. Respondents could select multiple responses.

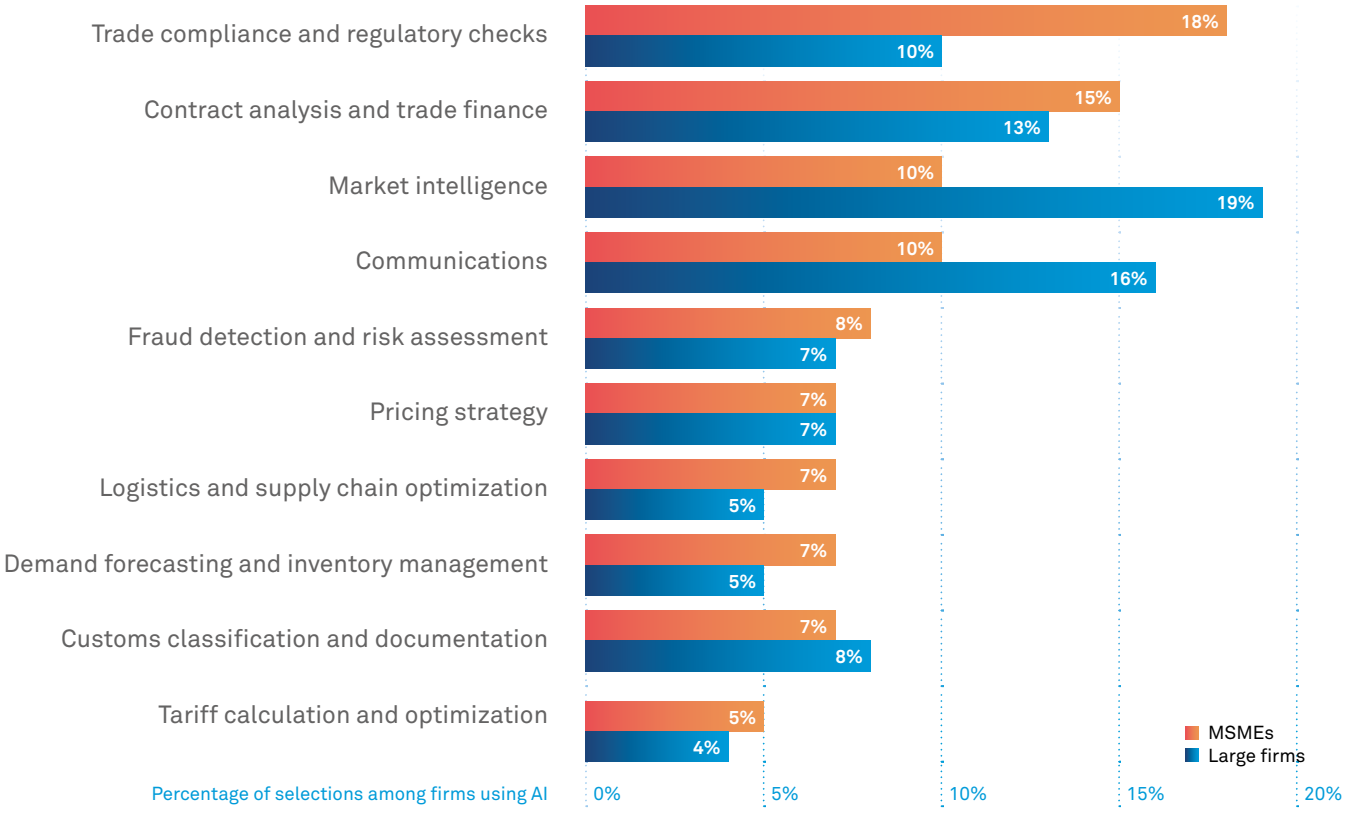
3 AI and Trade

Thus far, this report has looked generally at AI applications in the surveyed firms. This section examines the use of AI in a trade context.

Firms are primarily using AI for market intelligence, compliance, and communication for trade-related activities. Among AI-adopting firms, 15 per cent of responses point to the use of AI to perform market intelligence and 14 per cent for contract analysis and trade finance, followed by 13 per cent for communication and another 13 per cent for trade compliance and regulatory checks. This is understandable given that most of the respondents indicated that they are using AI tools that help them to automate workflows and perform language-related tasks. There were fewer responses about using AI for predictive capabilities and specialized applications such as demand forecasting, price strategy, and or tariff optimization.

Large firms use AI more for trade compliance, while MSMEs use AI more for market intelligence and communications. As shown in **Figure 6**, responses from large AI-adopting firms showed that they were using AI primarily for trade compliance and regulatory checks (18 per cent), compared to 10 per cent of MSMEs. In contrast, MSME responses identified market intelligence (19 per cent) and communications (16 per cent) as their top use cases, where examples of communications tasks in trade include translation of documents and exchanges with suppliers and clients. One possible explanation for this variance is that using AI for trade compliance may require a more complex subscription-based or bespoke AI tool, which is what most of the large firms have obtained. Another possible explanation is the difference in the maturity of international trading activities, given that large firms may be trading more than

Figure 6 **Use of AI in trade-related activities by size of firms among AI-adopting firms**



Percentages are calculated as a share of total selections of that response within that category. Respondents could select multiple responses.

the MSMEs. Large firms are also using AI to help with existing trading activities, while MSMEs are using AI to identify new opportunities. The variations across income levels are less evident compared to those observed by firm size, indicating that the availability of firm-level resources plays a more decisive role.

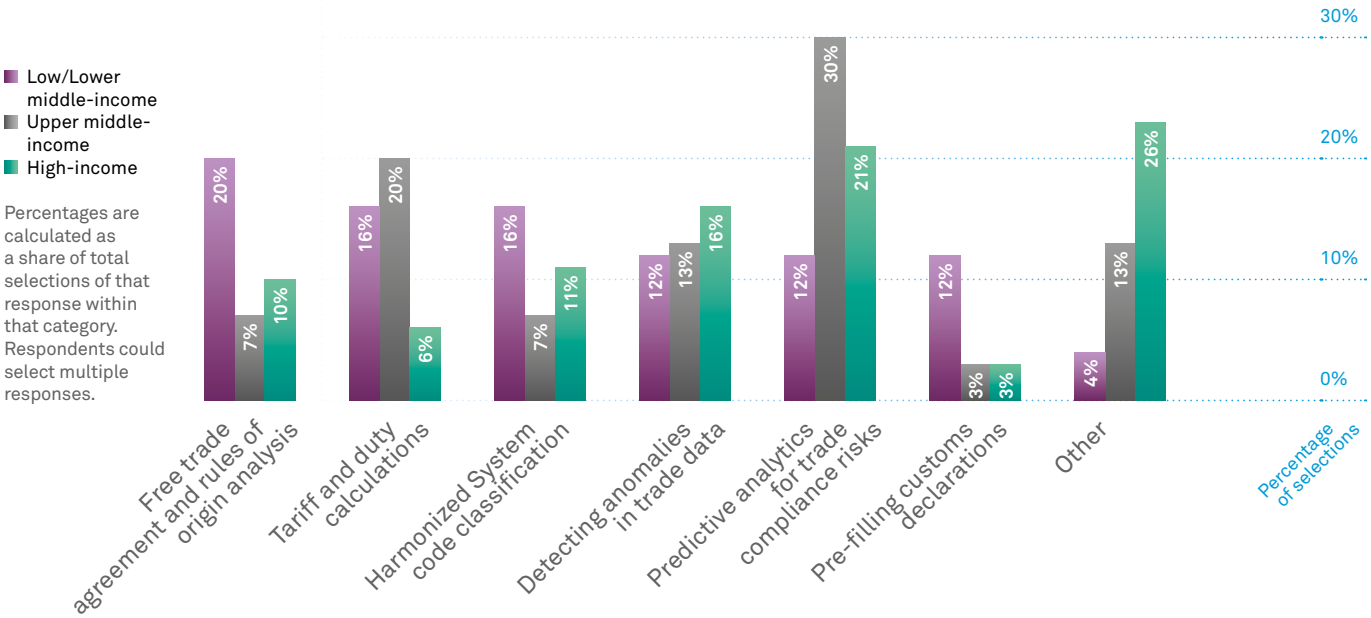
The survey shows that there is potential for AI to navigate complex trade rules and to help firms to benefit more from trade agreements. Three-quarters of responses indicated that firms were using AI for various customs-related applications, and 20 per cent of responses indicated that firms use AI to predict trade compliance risks. A greater share of MSMEs than large firms were using AI for customs-related applications. Thirty-five per cent of responses from large firms indicated that AI was not being used in customs-related applications, whereas this was the case for only 18 per cent of MSME responses. When examined by income level, as shown in **Figure 7**, responses from firms in low/lower middle-income economies show that a greater share of these firms are using AI to understand how to benefit from preferential trade agreements, how to use the right HS code classifications and how to pre-fill customs forms. The findings suggest that the use of AI could help to increase the participation of firms from low/lower middle-income economies and MSMEs in global trade, and this underscores the need to bridge the gap in AI adoption.

3.1 Trade benefits

Close to 90 per cent of firms using AI reported benefits in trade-related activities. When examined further in **Figure 8**, 22 per cent of responses highlighted that these firms had seen gains in efficiency and productivity, and 14 per cent observed optimized decision-making. Other reported benefits included an expanded export base (10 per cent) and a broader range of traded import and export products (17 per cent).

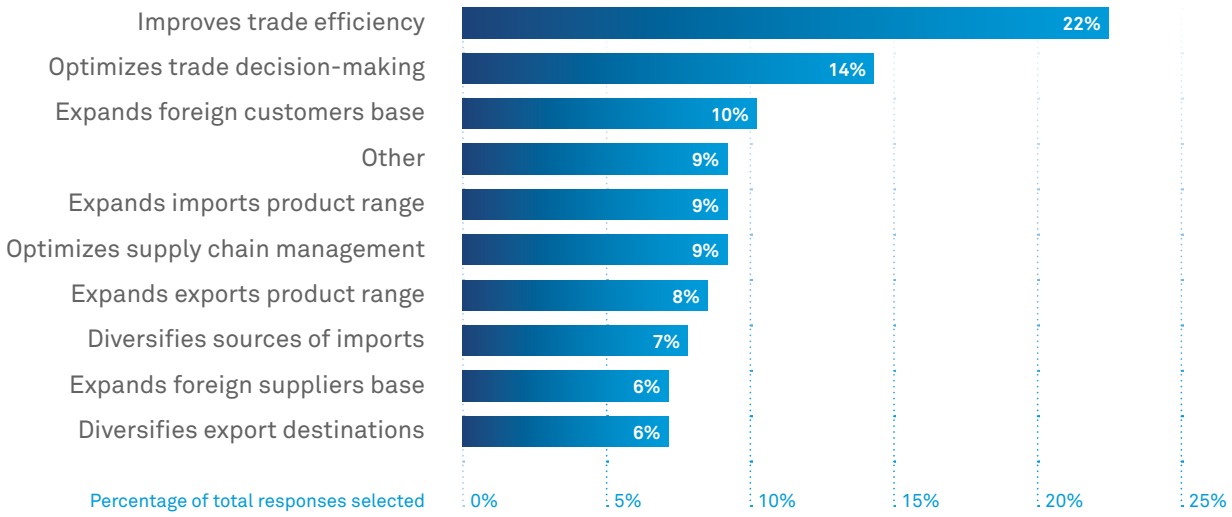
AI benefits firms in low/lower middle-income economies more in terms of growing their trading business. As shown in **Figure 9**, 16 per cent of responses from firms in low/lower middle-income economies highlighted that AI has helped them to expand their foreign customer base, and 10 per cent of the responses indicated that AI has helped these firms to diversify their export markets and expand their export product range. These results, which relate to expanding these firms' trading business, are higher than responses from other income groups, particularly

Figure 7 **Use of AI in customs-related applications by income level among AI-adopting firms**



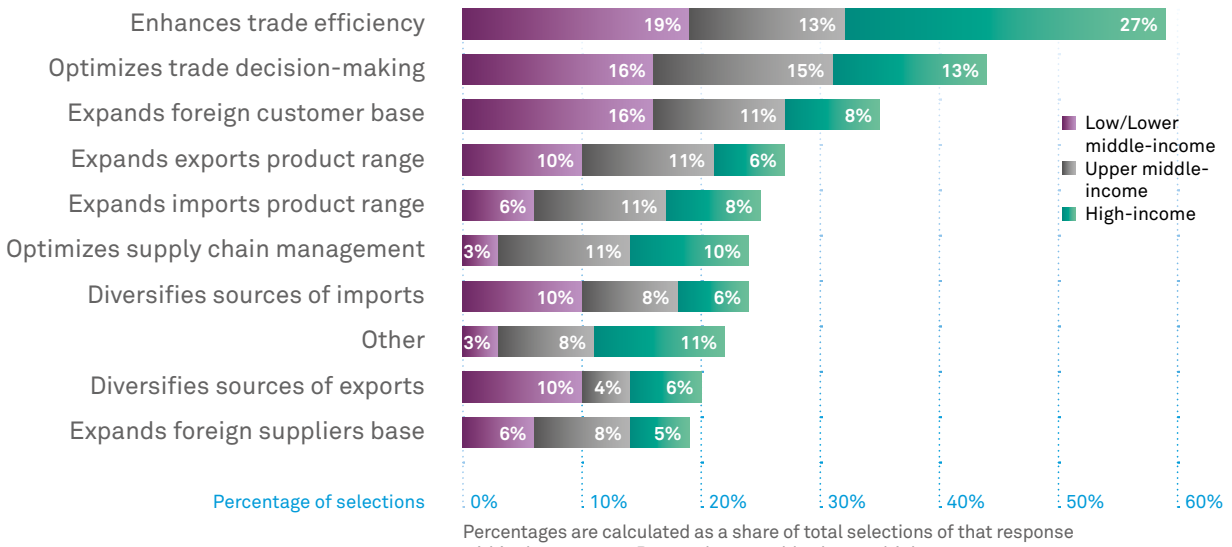
the high-income economies. A similar trend was observed when the size of firms was considered, as a greater share of MSMEs than of large firms observed benefits in these activities. In addition, as shown in **Figure 10**, firms in low/lower middle-income economies were more optimistic about AI's ability to drive innovation and product development in the future. Firms from the high-income economies were more optimistic about productivity gains due to AI, and a greater percentage of responses from firms in high-income economies reported an impact on trade efficiency (27 per cent – see **Figure 9**). Examples of trade efficiency included faster customs clearance, automated compliance and reduced paperwork.

Figure 8 **Benefits of AI on trade activities**



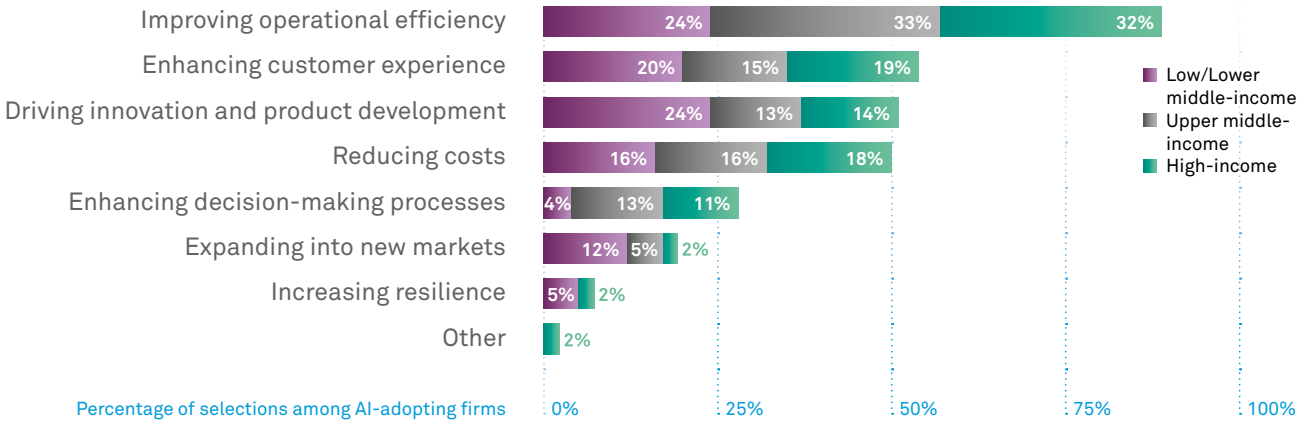
Percentages are calculated as a share of total selections of that response. Respondents could select multiple responses.

Figure 9 **Current benefits of AI on trade activities among AI-adopting firms according to income level**



Percentages are calculated as a share of total selections of that response within that category. Respondents could select multiple responses.

Figure 10 **Future opportunities for firms to use AI among AI-adopting firms according to income level**



Percentages are calculated as a share of total selections of that response within that category. Respondents could select multiple responses.

3.2 Trade cost savings

The majority of respondents expect that the use of AI when they engage in international trade will result in cost savings. As shown in **Figure 11**, for non-zero savings for trade costs (i.e., the "1-25%", "26-50%" and "Over 50%" groups), 70 per cent of AI-adopting firms expected logistics savings, while 80 per cent of respondents expected compliance savings, and 86 per cent of respondents expected savings on communications. Close to 40 per cent of respondents across all categories expect cost savings of between 1 per cent and 25 per cent, which is sizeable, especially for firms that are using free AI tools that do not require further fine-tuning. The most significant cost savings are expected in communications-related costs: a quarter of respondents expect reductions of over 50 per cent, while another 22 per cent of firms expect savings of between 26 per cent and 50 per cent. Expected cost savings in logistics were the least significant. This may be due to the higher number of services firms that participated in the survey, as they firms may have more limited supply chain functions.

The majority of respondents expect that the use of AI when they engage in international trade will result in cost savings.

MSMEs tend to be more optimistic about the cost savings that can be derived by using AI within logistics and communications. As shown in **Figure 12**, 34 per cent of MSME respondents expected cost savings of over 25 per cent in logistics, while 61 per cent expected similar communications-related cost savings. A much lower proportion – 17 per cent – of large firms anticipated cost reductions of over 25 per cent for logistics and of 31 per cent for communications related costs. A possible explanation is that MSMEs have fewer resources, and therefore any gains would be felt more significantly.

3.3 Management of trade risks

AI is helping firms to manage trade risks more effectively. More than half of the responses from AI-adopting firms (56 per cent) indicated that AI has improved their ability to manage trade risks. These firms are using AI to identify fraud and anomalies in trade transactions, reduce exposure to regulatory non-compliance, and identify and mitigate supply chain disruptions.

More MSMEs than large firms use AI to predict tariff changes and trade policy shifts. Nineteen per cent of responses from all AI-adopting firms indicated that they are using AI to anticipate and adapt to tariff or policy changes. The fact that firms are using AI for these purposes shows its potential to help firms, particularly MSMEs. Notably, 22 per cent of the responses from MSMEs indicate that they are using AI to anticipate tariff changes or policy changes, compared to 17 per cent of the responses from large firms. In addition, when asked about trade risks, a greater share of MSMEs (28 per cent) than of large firms (15 per cent) indicated that AI could help them to predict geopolitical risks.

Figure 11 **Expected trade cost reductions among AI-adopting firms**

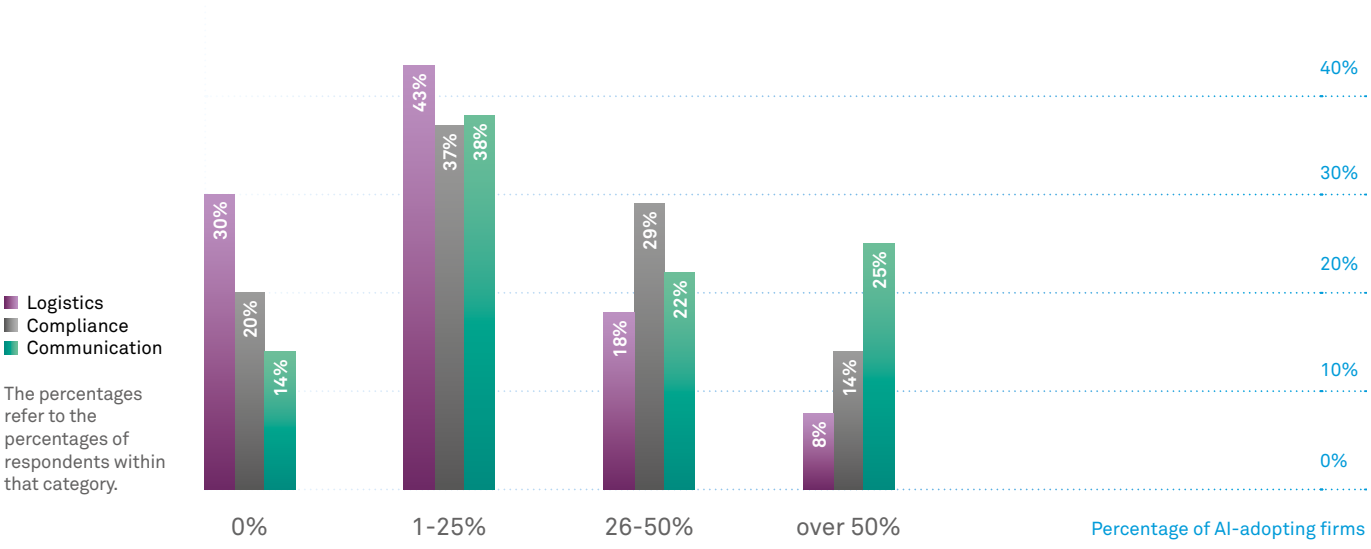
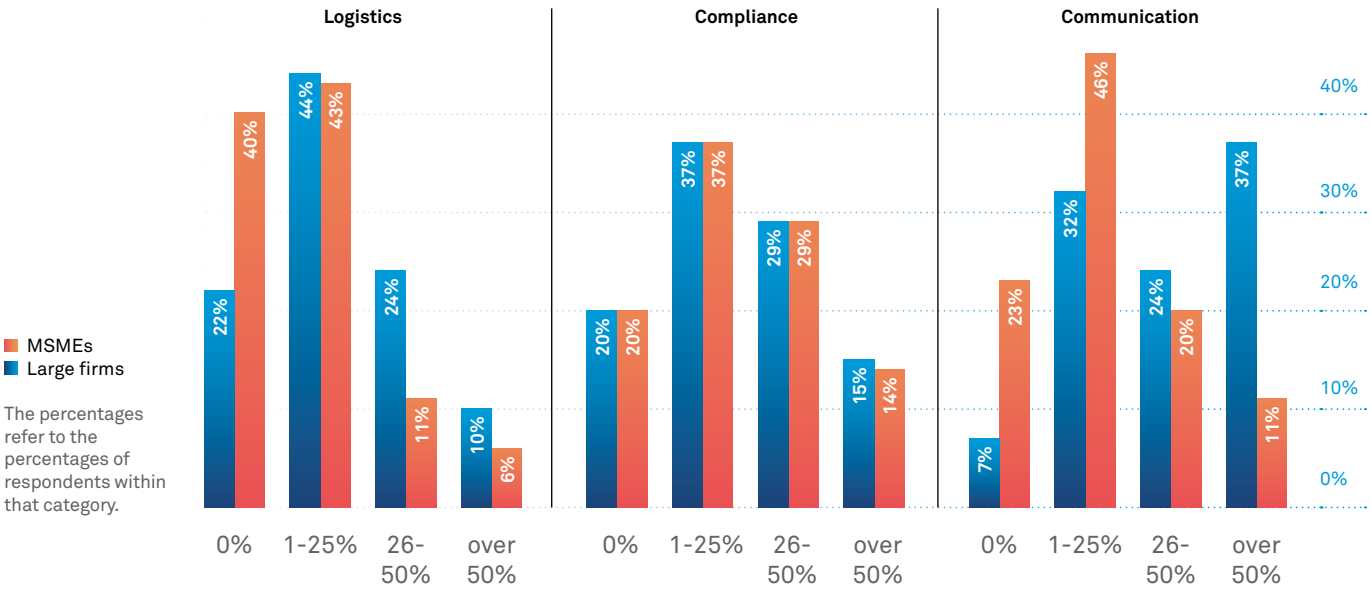


Figure 12 **Expected trade cost reductions among AI-adopting firms by size of firm**



4 Concerns and challenges

4.2 Concerns

Based on the findings shown in **Figures 13 and 14**, there are similarities in the concerns firms have about AI and the barriers to its adoption. Three main themes emerge: trust and security, regulatory concerns, and technical readiness. These themes are consistent across firm size and income levels.

First, there are significant concerns about trust and security. Of the responses about using AI in trade, 25 per cent highlighted concerns related to cybersecurity issues, such as data breaches and hacks, while 19 per cent of responses were related to challenges about data privacy and security. Collectively, 37 per cent of responses related to concerns about the perceived untrustworthiness of AI (i.e., a lack of human oversight, bias and fairness issues, and limited transparency in decision-making), suggesting that many firms view AI as a "black box" and consider that AI decisions may not be fully explainable nor its output fully trustworthy.

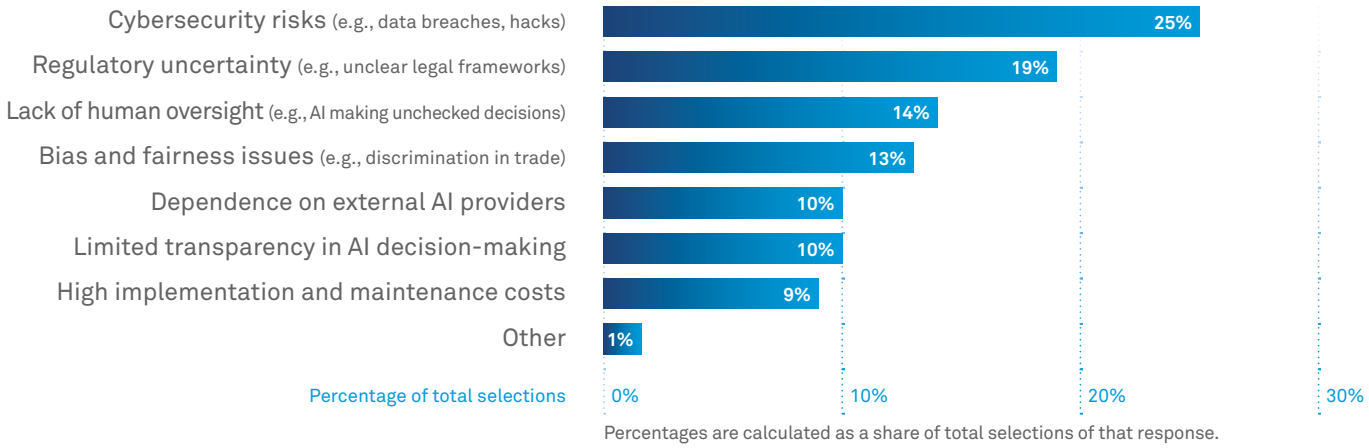
Second, on regulatory concerns, nearly one fifth of responses (19 per cent) cited regulatory uncertainty as a top concern. Meanwhile, 12 per cent highlighted regulatory or compliance challenges as a key barrier. In addition, 7 per cent cited regulatory heterogeneity as a challenge in adopting AI, which shows how regulatory fragmentation can create obstacles to the cross-border adoption of AI.

Third, technical readiness poses practical challenges. Fourteen per cent of responses reported difficulty accessing high-quality data for training AI systems, while another 14 per cent cited limited AI expertise or skills as a challenge. Integration challenges with their legacy infrastructure was another difficulty that firms encountered (12 per cent).

Encouraging the use of AI in trade is less a matter of financial considerations than of fostering regulatory clarity and alignment and trust in AI systems, as well as of supporting the technical capabilities of firms. The three main concerns and challenges outweigh financial considerations. High implementation costs ranked lower for both challenges and concerns. This is similar to the finding in Section 2.1 of this report among firms that have yet to adopt AI.

Nearly one fifth of responses (19 per cent) cited regulatory uncertainty as a top concern. Meanwhile, 12 per cent highlighted regulatory or compliance challenges as a key barrier.

Figure 13 **Concerns about AI in trade among AI-adopting firms**



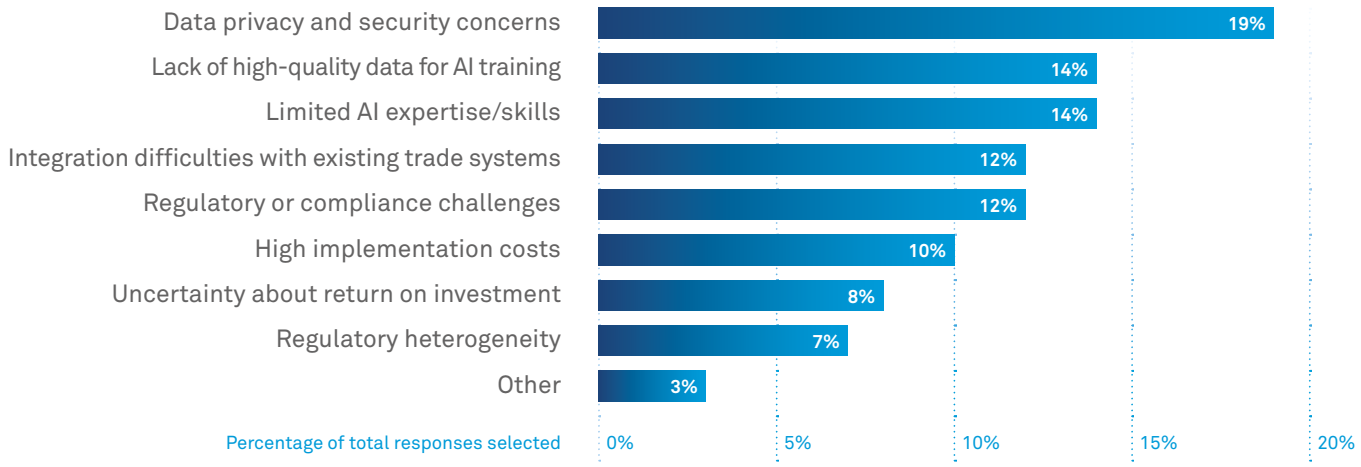
Percentages are calculated as a share of total selections of that response. Respondents could select multiple responses.

4.3 Regulatory challenges related to data policies

Data privacy is a major challenge. Given the importance of data for developing and training AI systems, the survey explored the impact of data policies. As **Figure 14** shows, the survey found that data privacy and security were the top challenge for firms using AI (19 per cent of responses), ranking above internal technical challenges such as the difficulty of accessing quality data and the shortage of workers with AI expertise (14 per cent each). Meanwhile, **Figure 15** shows the AI-related cross-border regulatory challenges that firms face. A third of the responses (34 per cent) cited adapting to different data privacy requirements as the most significant issue, ranking higher than concerns about ensuring model fairness i.e. lack of bias (24 per cent), the need to comply with AI-specific reporting (20 per cent) and meeting diverse transparency requirements (15 per cent). While respondents identified data protection as a key concern for AI adoption, broader data governance challenges, such as data localization requirements, which can significantly impact cross-border AI deployment, were not specifically examined in this survey and warrant further investigation.

Regulatory fragmentation due to differing data protection regimes imposes notable costs on firms. As shown in **Figure 16**, although a notable share of firms – 37 per cent – expect minimal impact on their compliance costs due to differing data protection regulations, the proportion anticipating moderate to critical effects – 64 per cent – is substantial, and for some firms, even a moderate increase in operating costs can significantly affect profitability. When examined by size of firm, a much greater share of larger firms (37 per cent) than MSMEs (19 per cent) expect significant to critical impact. This may reflect the fact that large firms are trading in more markets and are more exposed to different regulatory regimes.

Figure 14 **Challenges faced by AI-adopting firms when using AI for trade activities**



Percentages are calculated as a share of total selections of that response.
Respondents could select multiple responses.

Figure 15 **AI regulatory challenges (percentage of AI-adopting firms)**

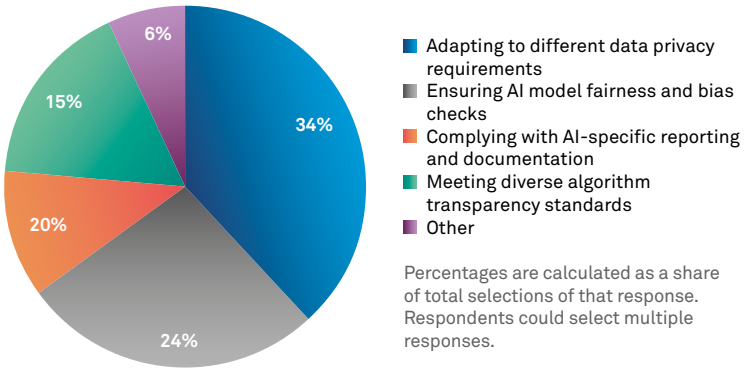
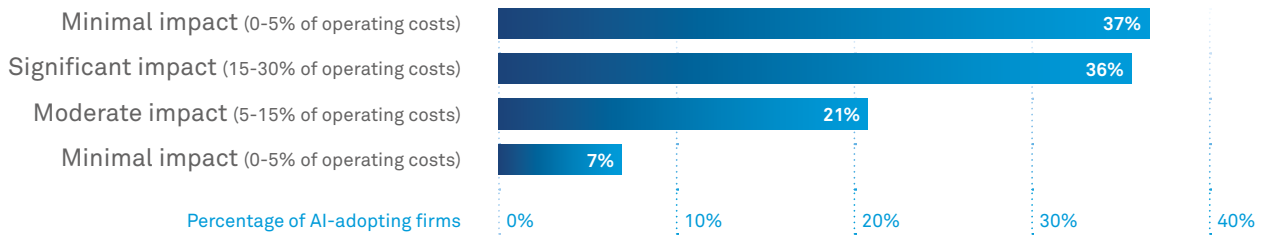


Figure 16 **Impact of compliance costs due to differing data protection regimes**



5 Conclusion

The survey shows the potential for AI to be used by firms in trade. Although there are early signs of a gap in AI adoption between MSMEs and large firms, as well as between firms in high-income and low/lower middle-income economies, the findings suggest that AI is delivering measurable benefits in terms of efficiency, cost savings and improved risk management. Notably, firms in lower-income economies and MSMEs report promising outcomes in terms of expanding trade activities, as well as cost savings, respectively. This suggests that AI may have the potential to promote more inclusive participation in international trade, as it can improve access to market intelligence concerning new opportunities, trade compliance tools and knowledge of how to benefit from preferential trade agreements, all promising reasons to bridge the gap in AI adoption.

AI may have the potential to promote more inclusive participation in international trade, as it can improve access to market intelligence concerning new opportunities

However, various challenges, particularly in relation to data privacy, need to be addressed to enable a greater adoption of AI. Regulatory fragmentation on data protection rules places a cost burden on firms, potentially limiting their ability to scale AI solutions. This may indicate the importance of international cooperation between governments to promote greater regulatory coherence and reduce compliance barriers. At the national level, governments may also consider measures to strengthen trust in AI systems and increase firms' technical readiness.

One example of how this could be done is through open-source and low-cost AI tools. The survey's findings underscore their importance, as many MSMEs and firms from lower-income economies rely on freely available AI systems and tools. The fact that these free tools are contributing to meaningful outcomes suggests that they have the potential to drive more significant improvements.

The information presented in this report serves as a starting point for policymakers and business leaders seeking to understand the implications of AI for global trade. These findings align with the concerns raised in the ICC Paper on Achieving Inclusive AI which makes several recommendations for policymakers to consider on data governance, data privacy and other policy areas. For businesses, this information may provide more awareness of the opportunities AI presents in trade-related use cases. Future research and collaborations might benefit from focusing on the gaps and opportunities highlighted in the present report.

Annex
Survey questions

1 What is the name of your company?
→ Optional

2 Email address or other contact details
→ Optional

3 Where is the headquarters of your business located?
(Provide city → Optional)
(and country → From a dropdown list)

4 Where is your office located?

5 Which industry is your company in?

- ☐ Food products
- ☐ Textiles & apparel
- ☐ Wood & paper
- ☐ Chemicals
- ☐ Pharmaceuticals
- ☐ Rubber, plastics, minerals
- ☐ Metal products
- ☐ Computer & electronics
- ☐ Electrical equipment
- ☐ Machinery & equipment
- ☐ Transport equipment
- ☐ Other manufactures
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Wholesale & retail
- ☐ Transportation & storage
- ☐ Hotels & food services
- ☐ Media
- ☐ Telecommunications
- ☐ IT services
- ☐ Finance & insurance
- ☐ Real estate
- ☐ Legal & accounting
- ☐ Scientific R&D
- ☐ Other business services
- ☐ Admin. & support services

6 How many employees work at your company?

- ☐ 0-9 employees
- ☐ 10-49 employees
- ☐ 50-249 employees
- ☐ 250-9999 employees
- ☐ 10 000+ employees

7 Is your company engaged in international trade?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

8 If yes, which regions do you trade with?
→ Dropdown or multiple choice:

Europe; Central Asia; South Asia; East Asia; Australia and Oceania; North America; Central & Latin America and Caribbean; Middle East and North Africa; Sub-Saharan Africa

9 Does your company currently use AI or systems built on AI? (YES/NO Branching)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

IF NO:

10 Why is your company not using AI?

- ☐ High initial investment
- ☐ Lack of in-house expertise
- ☐ Unclear return on investment (ROI)
- ☐ Regulatory/legal concerns
- ☐ Complex integration with existing trade management systems
- ☐ Data privacy/security concerns
- ☐ Other (please specify)

IF YES:

Questions on AI use:

11 What type of AI system are you using?
→ Several options possible

- ☐ Free version
- ☐ Subscription
- ☐ Built own tool/system

12 What type of AI technology is your company using?
→ Multiple choice

- ☐ Automating different workflows or assisting in decision making
- ☐ Performing analysis of written language (text mining)
- ☐ Machine learning (e.g. deep learning) for data analysis
- ☐ Converting spoken language into machine-readable format (speech recognition)
- ☐ Identifying objects or persons based on images (image recognition, image processing)
- ☐ Generating written or spoken language (natural language generation)
- ☐ Enabling physical movement of machines via autonomous decisions based on observation of surroundings

Trade-related AI questions:

13 In which trade-related activities does your company use AI? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Customs classification and documentation
- ☐ Tariff calculation and optimization
- ☐ Trade compliance and regulatory checks
- ☐ Fraud detection and risk assessment
- ☐ Logistics and supply chain optimization, real-time tracking
- ☐ Contract analysis and trade finance
- ☐ Market intelligence
- ☐ Demand forecasting and inventory management
- ☐ Pricing strategy (e.g., dynamic pricing, tariff impact modeling)
- ☐ Communication (overcoming language barriers)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

14 If your company uses AI for Customs-related processes, what are the main applications? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Automating HS code classification
- ☐ Pre-filing Customs declarations
- ☐ AI-assisted tariff and duty calculations
- ☐ FTA and Rules of Origin analysis
- ☐ Predictive analytics for trade compliance risks
- ☐ Detecting anomalies in trade data (e.g., misclassification, valuation discrepancies)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

15 Has AI improved your company's ability to manage trade risks? (Yes/No/Not applicable)

- ☐ If Yes, in what areas? (Select all that apply)
- ☐ Identifying and mitigating supply chain disruptions
- ☐ Predicting geopolitical risks (e.g., sanctions)
- ☐ Detecting fraud and anomalies in trade transactions
- ☐ Reducing exposure to regulatory non-compliance
- ☐ Other (please specify)

16 Does AI help your company anticipate and adapt to tariff changes or trade policy shifts? (Yes/No/Not applicable)

- ☐ If Yes, in what way? (Open-ended)

17 How does AI affect your trade activities?

→ Select all that apply**?**

- ☐ Expands the product range of our imports.
- ☐ Diversifies the geographical origin of our imports.
- ☐ Expands the number of foreign suppliers.
- ☐ Expands the product range of our exports.
- ☐ Diversifies the geographical destination of our exports.
- ☐ Expands the number of foreign customers.
- ☐ Optimizes supply chain management (e.g., trade logistics, inventory management)
- ☐ Optimizes trade decision-making (e.g., market entry, supplier selection, pricing strategies)
- ☐ Improves trade efficiency (e.g., faster processing of trade documents, automated compliance checks)
- ☐ Other (Please specify)

Specific trade costs elements:

→ Follow up question on the magnitude of trade cost reduction if respondent selected specific answers in the previous question

18 By how much can AI potentially reduce logistics costs for your business?

- ☐ 0% (no impact)
- ☐ 1-25% (limited impact)
- ☐ 26-50% (moderate impact)
- ☐ Over 50% (significant impact)

19 By how much can AI potentially reduce compliance costs of trade-related regulations and documentation requirements?

- ☐ 0% (no impact)
- ☐ 1-25% (limited impact)
- ☐ 26-50% (moderate impact)
- ☐ Over 50% (significant impact)

20 What percentage of communication related costs (e.g., translation costs) can AI help overcome?

- ☐ 0% (no impact)
- ☐ 1-25% (limited impact)
- ☐ 26-50% (moderate impact)
- ☐ Over 50% (significant impact)

21 What are the biggest challenges your company faces in using AI in relation to trade activities?

- ☐ High implementation costs
- ☐ Limited AI expertise/skills within the company
- ☐ Data privacy and security concerns
- ☐ Regulatory or compliance challenges
- ☐ Uncertainty about ROI (Return on Investment)

- ☐ Integration difficulties with existing trade systems
- ☐ Lack of high-quality data for AI training
- ☐ Regulatory heterogeneity
- ☐ Other (please specify)

22 Which aspect of AI-related regulations across countries poses the greatest challenge for your business?

- ☐ Adapting to different data privacy requirements
- ☐ Meeting diverse algorithm transparency standards
- ☐ Ensuring AI model fairness and bias checks
- ☐ Complying with AI-specific reporting and documentation
- ☐ Other (please specify)

23 How significant are the compliance costs your business incurs due to differing data protection regulations across countries?

- ☐ Minimal impact (0-5% of operating costs)
- ☐ Moderate impact (5-15% of operating costs)
- ☐ Significant impact (15-30% of operating costs)
- ☐ Critical impact (over 30% of operating costs)

24 What do you perceive as the biggest opportunities for your company in using AI?

→ Select up to three

- ☐ Improving operational efficiency (e.g., automating trade processes, optimizing workflows)
- ☐ Enhancing customer experience (e.g., AI-powered chatbots, faster response times, improved service personalization)
- ☐ Driving innovation and product development (e.g., AI-generated market insights, optimizing product offerings)
- ☐ Reducing costs (e.g., cutting labour-intensive trade processes, optimizing sourcing strategies)
- ☐ Enhancing decision-making processes (e.g., better trade intelligence, predictive analytics, risk assessment)
- ☐ Expanding into new markets (e.g., identifying new suppliers/customers, navigating regulatory barriers more effectively)
- ☐ Increasing resilience (e.g., managing trade disruptions, supply chain risk mitigation, fraud detection)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

25 What do you see as the biggest opportunity AI brings to global trade?

- ☐ Enhancing trade efficiency (e.g., faster Customs clearance, automated compliance, reduced paperwork)
- ☐ Optimizing supply chains (e.g., predictive logistics, reduced trade disruptions, better inventory planning)
- ☐ Reducing trade costs (e.g., minimizing tariffs/duties, lowering operational expenses, optimizing pricing strategies)
- ☐ Improving risk management and fraud detection (e.g., detecting illicit trade, improving due diligence, reducing compliance risks)
- ☐ Facilitating market expansion (e.g., identifying new suppliers, customers, or export destinations)
- ☐ Improving trade policy adaptation (e.g., analysing tariff impacts, predicting regulatory changes, automating FTA compliance)
- ☐ Enhancing data-driven decision-making (e.g., AI-powered trade intelligence, better demand forecasting, supplier evaluation)
- ☐ Other (Please specify)

26 What are your biggest concerns about AI in trade?

→ Select up to three

- ☐ Regulatory uncertainty (e.g., evolving AI laws, unclear global AI governance in trade)
- ☐ Bias and fairness issues (e.g., AI making discriminatory or inaccurate decisions in trade compliance, Customs processing, etc.)
- ☐ Cybersecurity risks (e.g., AI systems being hacked, sensitive trade data exposure)
- ☐ Lack of human oversight (e.g., AI replacing critical human judgment in Customs, compliance, or trade decisions)
- ☐ Dependence on external AI providers (e.g., reliance on third-party AI tools, lack of in-house expertise)
- ☐ Limited transparency in AI decision-making (e.g., difficulty understanding how AI makes trade-related recommendations or classifications)
- ☐ High implementation and maintenance costs (e.g., affordability concerns for SMEs, unclear ROI)
- ☐ Other (Please specify)

27 Would you like to share any other insights or suggestions with us? → Open ended

Source for figures 1-16: ICC and WTO

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