

ASSET SERVICING TIMES

Leading the Way in Global Asset Servicing News and Commentary

ISSUE 387 01 April 2026

CAPITAL FLOWS

How geopolitical risk is shaping private markets



KDPW | TR

Switch to KDPW TR+

trplus.kdpw.pl

Find out how we can support you
in fulfilling your reporting obligations
and how to get started with us.



Investment stewardship. Efficiency and engagement.

Independent insights, automation, and investor communications to help meet regulatory requirements with confidence.

See how our solutions can help move your business forward.

 Proxy Voting, reporting, and disclosure

 SEC N-PX compliance for 13F filers and mutual funds

 Global Class Actions filing

 Investment operations platform

 Omnichannel communications



To scan, simply open the camera app on your mobile device and point the camera at the QR code.



EU, UK, and Switzerland launch joint T+1 testing plan

The UK Accelerated Settlement Taskforce (AST), the EU T+1 Industry Committee (IC), and the Swiss Securities Post Trade Council T+1 Task Force (swissSPTC), have published a unified Testing and Readiness Plan to guide the European financial industry through its transition to T+1 settlement, targeted for 11 October 2027.

According to the firms, the plan is the first of its kind to span the EU, UK, and Swiss financial markets simultaneously.

The plan provides a practical framework for all market participants and financial market infrastructures (FMIs) to test their readiness for the move to T+1 settlement and to de-risk the transition before it goes live.

The publication follows the establishment of a joint Testing and Readiness Workstream by the AST and EU T+1 IC in December 2025.

Andrew Douglas, chair of the UK T+1 Accelerated Settlement Taskforce states: "As requested by industry participants, we have collaborated with the EU on the launch and implementation of this testing framework. It will help firms to design and

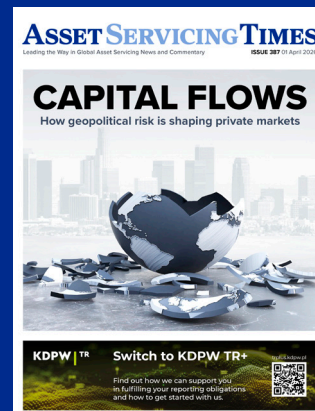
execute their own test plan for individual solution components as well as full end-to-end testing.

"It also clearly shows that testing of the individual components can start now, allowing plenty of time to guarantee a smooth transition to T+1 by October 2027."

Given the deep interconnection between EU, UK, and Swiss markets, and the significant cross-border participation across all three, the three taskforces determined that a single, aligned programme would deliver substantially greater benefit than separate national plans.

The plan is underpinned by three factors: that automation is a key success factor; participant readiness depends on the readiness of the entire settlement chain; and providers should begin testing now.

Giovanni Sabatini, chair of the EU T+1 Industry Committee, says: "Moving to T+1 is not merely a technical upgrade — it is a pillar of the Savings and Investment Union and a unique opportunity to remove friction from European capital markets."



Karl Loomes

Group editor

karlloomes@blackknightmedia.com

Carmella Haswell

Deputy editor

carmellahaswell@securitiesfinancetimes.com

Zarah Choudhary

Reporter

zarahchoudhary@assetsservicingtimes.com

Tahlia Kraefft

Reporter

tahliakraefft@assetsservicingtimes.com

James Hickman

Lead designer

jameshickman@blackknightmedia.com

David Hancock

Associate publisher

davidhancock@assetsservicingtimes.com

Nicole Taylor

Associate publisher

nicoletaylor@blackknightmedia.com

Justin Lawson

Publisher

justinlawson@blackknightmedia.com

Published by Black Knight Media Ltd
copyright © 2025 All rights reserved

Contents

4

06

News Focus

Citco relocates
Luxembourg office

08

News Focus

BNP Paribas launches
NeoLink 26

10

News Focus

Omnes collaborates with
Apex Group

12

News Focus

US financial regulator clarifies
crypto regulation

12

News Focus

Suntera Global acquires
Marick Capital

14



Private Capital

Geopolitical risk has evolved into a
fundamental factor shaping private markets

22



Blockchain

Ziv Keinan discusses the evolving institutional
adoption of tokenised real-world assets

28



ISO Standards

Can messaging alone resolve the complexity of
corporate actions processing?

34



Emerging Talent

Brooke Conroy discusses her journey into
asset servicing

T-SCAPE
www.t-scape.com

Committed to improving corporate action
processing through

iActs™

WTAX

Your Global Withholding Tax Partner

Recovery | Support | Reporting

IMPROVED RETURNS, LESS PAPERWORK

Don't forfeit your dividend
and interest income to foreign
withholding taxes.

WTax helps institutional investors maximise tax recovery yields and minimise administration. With our fully outsourced solution, you can:



Enhance your investment returns by up to **52 basis points per year.**



Receive cash 2-3 years sooner through expedited claim processing.



Eliminate **94% of your tax recovery administration** and focus on your core business activities.



Only pay for successful reclaims – **no reclaim, no fee.**

Speak to a withholding tax expert today to find out how much you could recover.

wtax.co | info@wtax.co

Citco relocates Luxembourg office

Citco, an asset servicer to the alternative investment industry, has announced the relocation of its Luxembourg office, reinforcing its presence in an alternative asset hub.

The firm says the relocation from its Carré Bonn premises reflects continued investment in operational excellence and supports its sustained regional growth, particularly across private markets mandates.

Citco has operated in Luxembourg for more than 30 years and continues to see increasing demand from alternative asset managers seeking scalable, cross-border servicing solutions.

The new premises will operate as a fully integrated asset-servicing hub, delivering middle and back office support across a broad range of asset classes and fund structures, including private markets, real assets, and hedge funds.

Eef Verachert, managing director, Citco Fund Services (Luxembourg), says: “As the region continues to strengthen its position as a global hub for private markets and cross-border fund structures, this move reinforces our long-term commitment to Luxembourg and to the clients we serve here.

Jay Peller, chief operating officer, Citco, remarks: “We are seeing sustained global demand for private markets infrastructure and Luxembourg remains a critical jurisdiction in that growth story.

“Our Luxembourg operations have thrived on a proven model of automation, scalability and agility to deliver superior service to our clients and this relocation strengthens our ability to support alternative asset managers worldwide with Citco’s comprehensive range of services, world-class technology and access to our global office network.”



State Street to support ETF

State Street has been appointed as service provider for Dimensional Fund Advisors’ newly approved ETF share class structure.

The financial services firm will provide consistent, scalable support for Dimensional’s US launch — offering end-to-end service support, including custody, fund accounting, ETF basket creation, create/redeem order management, ETF settlement, transfer agency, and reporting.

Dimensional Fund Advisors says it is the first-of-its-kind in the US under the Securities and Exchange Commission’s (SEC’s) final exemptive relief, allowing it to introduce ETF share classes within its actively-managed mutual fund lineup.

BKM
CREATIVE

Professional designers,
industry specialists

Get in touch with the team to
find out how we can help you!

justinlawson@blackknightmedialtd.com



Taskize modernises the financial sector's complex communications ecosystem

80% Same-day resolution for ops queries raised on Taskize

97% Client satisfaction scores when using Taskize vs. 57% for email

600 Firms using the Taskize platform around the world

10 ROI-enhancing fintech partner integrations and connectors

Taskize's award-winning SaaS collaboration platform – with its unique combination of secure collaboration, workflow automation and intelligent routing – allows firms to increase operational capacity, reduce regulatory risk and improve client satisfaction.



www.taskize.com

BNP Paribas launches NeoLink 26

BNP Paribas' Securities Services business has launched NeoLink 26, the latest upgrade of its all-in-one client platform with an extended suite of applications and features. According to the firm, NeoLink 26 brings together a set of enhancements made to the portal, reinforcing its transversal features as well as the range of business services it covers.

As part of the update, the portal extends its capabilities to cover a number of activities, including its schedule manager, a triparty collateral management solution that enables clients to enhance collateral optimisation. It also provides a new agency lending application, allowing clients to review, analyse and monitor their agency lending programmes.

This includes customisable reporting features for users to generate, schedule, and share reports, as well as providing further integration of automated FX application, enabling

users to monitor, and manage FX cash flows for custody and third party accounts.

By embedding Proximity's proxy voting solution into NeoLink, clients are offered access to information throughout the general meeting lifecycle. Beyond this new coverage, other enhancements to existing applications within NeoLink 26 include: the upgrade of the Cash & Payment application, providing a unified journey where clients can undertake various tasks, programme triggered actions, and benefit from tailored utilities from a central control tower for better liquidity oversight.

Additional upgrades include: a revamp of the My Reporting web app, which enables users to securely view, customise, and schedule all their reports in one place, and an enhancement of the FundWeb app, which allows clients to access and monitor their credit facilities from any computer or mobile.



Euroclear and Ares expand private market access

Euroclear FundsPlace, an end-to-end fund distribution solution, has collaborated with Ares, a global alternative investment manager, to broaden access to private market strategies, streamline the investment journey, and lower the barriers that have made these products difficult to access. The partnership aims to help connect institutional-grade investment opportunities with the evolving needs of private wealth investors.

Ares says it has expanded its wealth distribution capabilities over the years, working closely with banks, platforms, and advisory networks to deliver scalable access to alternative investment opportunities.

EMIR – MiFIR – SFTR – FinfraG – MAS – US Dodd Frank – REMIT



Compliance is a beast
We help you tame it.



deltaconX
unifying regulatory compliance



office@deltaconx.com | www.deltaconx.com

kavalentevs@stock.adobe.com

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY ENHANCING INVESTMENT RETURNS

Did you know \$16 billion of tax goes unclaimed every year?

Get in touch to find out how our
AI-enabled next generation tax
recovery solutions could improve
your investment returns.



taxtec.com
info@taxtec.com
+44 (0) 203 968 7661





Omnes collaborates with Apex Group

Omnes has formed a strategic partnership with Apex Group, a global financial services provider, to tokenise its Omnes Mining Note (OMN).

OMN is an institutional-grade structured note backed by Bitcoin hashrate, to be issued and managed on the Base Chain, the Ethereum L2 incubating at Coinbase, using Apex Digital 3.0 for tokenisation, administration, and transfer agency services as a fully integrated end-to-end solution.

OMN provides non-US investors with direct economic exposure to new Bitcoin production measured in hashrate, the computational power used to validate transactions and produce Bitcoins, without the operational complexities of managing mining infrastructure, hardware, energy, or regulatory hurdles.

Issued as a secured debt note in Luxembourg, the tokenised OMN combines traditional financial structuring with blockchain enabled features, including onchain transferability among whitelisted investors.

Emmanuel Montero, CEO of Omnes, says: “Bitcoin mining is the only mechanism that creates new Bitcoin through protocol issuance. This is economically distinct from yield strategies that rely on redistributing existing Bitcoin.

“Through the Omnes Mining Note, we transform this operationally intensive production process into a structured financial instrument backed by industrial scale mining infrastructure.”

Peter Hughes, founder and CEO of Apex Group, comments: “Qualified investors can transfer OMN onchain and, over time, potentially use it as a form of collateral in permissioned lending without selling the asset. This enhances liquidity while giving Omnes a more scalable and globally distributable structure.”

Jesse Pollak, head of Base, adds: “Bringing a regulated debt product backed by mining onto Base is a huge win. It proves that onchain finance isn’t just for crypto-native assets — it’s for real-world industrial infrastructure too.”



Yealand appointed to support Whitman

Yealand Fund Services has been appointed by Whitman Asset Management to provide Authorised Corporate Director (ACD) services, supporting the ongoing development and governance of Whitman’s fund range.

The partnership will see Yealand act as ACD across Whitman’s UK-domiciled funds, delivering independent oversight, regulatory expertise and robust governance frameworks.

The appointment reflects Whitman’s continued growth ambitions and focus on maintaining high standards of investor protection, operational resilience, and regulatory compliance.

Yealand will work closely with Whitman’s team to ensure efficient fund operations, while supporting the launch and ongoing management of strategies aligned to investor demand.

Rob Leedham, CEO of Yealand says: “We are delighted to be working with the Whitman team and support their continual high-quality fund delivery.”

A CANADIAN LEADER IN ASSET SERVICING SURPASSES \$3 TRILLION IN AUA

Our commitment to excellence in asset servicing has propelled us to an incredible milestone: **\$3 trillion in assets under administration**. This achievement reflects the trust our clients place in us and highlights our efforts to foster stability and success in the Canadian financial sector.

Clients seeking to participate in Canada's dynamic markets continue to rely on CIBC Mellon for innovative solutions, product and digital enablement, and our employees' expertise in navigating the complexities of the Canadian market.

Together with the global strength of BNY and the local insights of CIBC, we're delivering meaningful progress and supporting our clients' evolving needs.

Learn more, contact:
Richard Anton
Chief Client Officer
+1 416 643 5240
www.cibcmellon.com



Subscribe to CIBC Mellon
Industry Perspectives
podcast on any major
podcast platform or
listen here.



US financial regulator clarifies crypto regulation

The US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has issued an interpretation outlining which types of cryptocurrencies are classified as securities and how a non-security digital asset could fall under specific criteria to become an investment contract. Under the SEC’s interpretation — which the US Commodity Future Trading Commission (CFTC) has joined — crypto tokens are grouped into five categories including digital commodities, digital tools, stablecoins, and digital securities.

The SEC has specified that the federal securities legislation only pertains to digital securities. The regulator dictates that securities laws could apply to a ‘non-security’ crypto asset if an issuer provides it by encouraging investment in a common enterprise from which a buyer could expect to gain proceeds.

The guidance also confirms protocol mining or staking,

and the wrapping non-security crypto assets do not constitute offers or sales of securities. The Commission says it marks a key step in providing improved clarity concerning its treatment of crypto assets, and improves Congressional efforts to organise a sweeping market structure framework into statute.

Paul S. Atkins, SEC Chairman, comments: “After more than a decade of uncertainty, this interpretation will provide market participants with a clear understanding of how the Commission treats crypto assets under federal securities laws. This is what regulatory agencies are supposed to do: draw clear lines in clear terms.

“It also acknowledges what the former administration refused to recognise — that most crypto assets are not themselves securities. And it reflects the reality that investment contracts can come to an end.”

Suntera Global acquires Marick Capital

Suntera Global, a Jersey-headquartered, independent provider of fund, corporate and private wealth services, has acquired UK-based depository services business Marick Capital.

The acquisition supports Suntera’s expansion into private markets and alternative funds, positioning the global service provider to serve a broader range of alternative investment fund structures and manager needs.

The purchase builds on the acquisition of London-based fund administration and corporate service provider Khepri in July 2025, which will shortly be integrated under the Suntera brand.

Marick Capital — the wholly owned subsidiary of Marick Real Estate — serves a range of UK real estate and venture capital clients, and provides a robust regulatory platform for Suntera to expand its UK-regulated service offering.

As well as providing an immediate footprint for Suntera in the UK real estate space, the acquisition further enhances the firm’s venture capital capability. ■

REGULATORY REPORTING

SECURITIES FINANCE

C-ONE

DLT/ BLOCKCHAIN

CONNECTIVITY

COMYNO

C-ONE | One-Stop- Shop for Securities Finance

WWW.COMYNO.COM



Building ~~ANTICIPATING~~ TOMORROW'S DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

BNP Paribas' Securities Services business unlocks your digital strategy.

Thanks to our continuous investment in technology and people, Securities Services is not just your provider; we're your partner for tomorrow. From data management to AI and digital assets, paving the way to a digital ecosystem, **we stay at the forefront of market innovations.**

Euromoney Awards for Excellence 2024: **World's Best Bank for Securities Services**

FOR THOSE WHO **MOVE** THE WORLD



DISCOVER
OUR SOLUTIONS



BNP PARIBAS

The bank
for a changing
world

BNP Paribas is authorised and regulated by the European Central Bank (ECB) and the Autorité de Contrôle Prudentiel et de Résolution (ACPR). BNP Paribas is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) and is subject to regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and limited regulation by the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA).

Geopolitical fragmentation is redirecting private capital flows

Tahlia Kraefft explores how geopolitical risk has evolved from a background consideration to a fundamental factor shaping private market capital allocation and investment strategy





The new geopolitical investment landscape

The globalisation of capital is in the midst of a profound transition, from a deeply integrated, neoliberal model of the past 30 years, to a fragmented, multipolar structure, characterised by geopolitical manoeuvring and regionalisation. This shift, coined geoeconomic fragmentation, is rearranging global trade and capital flows to align with geopolitical alliances, rather than purely economic, cost-motivated lines. As private capital allocation experiences this shift, political alignment, security, and resilience are having a greater role in directing private capital, often over solely returns and diversification strategies.

Additionally, investment geography is being reshaped by escalating geopolitical tensions, industrial policy, sanctions regime, and supply-chain realignment. Private markets — including private equity, infrastructure, and private credit — are especially vulnerable to geopolitical fragmentation due to the interchange of long run, illiquid investments with heightened, non-linear risks. Asset services are being forced to adjust to a more complex, multi-jurisdictional landscape against the backdrop of these changes.

From globalisation to strategic capital allocation

Global capital allocation is facing a structural change from efficiency driven to security-driven investments, to a large extent pushed by strategic competition between great powers, notably the US and China.

Key geopolitical factors driving the change from globalised capital allocation to increasingly strategic, and politically considered investment choices include: increased supply-chain reconfiguration, energy transition demands, escalating sanctions, contributing to a greater fragmented global financial system.

Geopolitical risk is not yet having a material effect on the complete amount of private investment being guided towards certain economies and sectors, but instead is impacting the way in which that investment is channeled, according to Dr Panagiotis Koutroumpis, assistant professor in finance, at the University of Reading. He says in reaction to growing political risks, investors are more often diversifying their global supply chains, while concentrating on more stable markets, avoiding politically exposed sectors, and funnelling more resources into sectors that are aligned with economic security and the transformational growth agenda.

Strategic competition between major powers

The US and EU are employing aggressive industrial policies such as the CHIPS Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, to boost domestic tech and green energy abilities, and intended to decrease reliance on China. On the other hand, China is valuing technological self-reliance, securitising data, and technology technology, which has motivated Chinese tech capital to find new markets.

Koutroumpis remarks: “The US CHIPS and Science Act, and the EU’s drive for greater strategic autonomy have for example driven large investment of both public and private capital into global semiconductor manufacturing base, as well as into advanced technology research and development, and into clean energy infrastructure.”

“Meanwhile, private market investors are adjusting their regional allocations to better manage geopolitical risks. In practice, this translates into a higher exposure to North America and a selection of European markets, as some regions present higher sanctions risk, political risk or regulatory risk, and therefore may not be as favorable for long term investments.”

Koutroumpis explains the rising US-China trade tensions along with the Russia-Ukraine War conflict in the Middle East is causing the world economy to become more fragmented, which is negatively impacting the level of private capital flows.

An International Monetary Fund 2023 highlighted a trend from diversified and global approach to private investment to a more regionalised and sector-specific one, Koutroumpis notes.

Increased supply-chain realignment

As companies shift manufacturing and logistics systems to geopolitically linked markets, it produces additional investment opportunities in emerging industrial centres.

Koutroumpis says the trend of ‘friend-snoring’, where foreign direct investment flows are being re-routed to more convergent or geopolitically aligned economies, highlights the greater influence of geopolitical risk on where private capital is deployed globally.

The impact of geopolitical risks on the decisions of investors is becoming more important, including for asset allocation he argues. Across the sector, stability in politics, in legislation, or economic alignment with major economic blocs are becoming

more integral components to investing, Koutroumpis explains. He says this sector-wide trend described reflects this broader systemic shift, with the tensions already being felt in trade and investment flows.

Global direct investment in geopolitically affiliated countries has risen by approximately 20 per cent compared to 2019, a 2023 International Monetary Fund (IMF) report found.

Koutroumpis highlights this indicates capital is being used for political not purely economic reasons within affiliated countries. He says geopolitical alignment and supply chain resilience are progressively moulding investment choices, but information indicates they are changing rather than replacing traditional diversification strategies. Institutional investors now list geopolitics as their most consequential risk.

A 2024 Boston Consulting Group survey showed 51 per cent of investors ranked geopolitical risk in their top three concerns, a 15 per cent increase from their previous survey. A PGIM Global Risk report on 400 institutional investors found 56 per cent label geopolitical risk as the primary threat to portfolio performance.

This shift is influencing how portfolios are geographically structured, Koutroumpis remarks.

The rise in friend-snoring and bloc-based capital allocation is reflected in the IMF’s 2023 figure which shows global foreign direct investment between geopolitical countries has risen by 20 per cent since 2019.

Corresponding trends are apparent in supply chains, Koutroumpis says, as firms prioritise resilience and redundancy over cost efficiency. Companies and investors are opting for diversified and regionally resilient production networks as a result of supply chain disruptions spanning for a month or longer happening every three point seven years on average, McKinsey 2020 research shows.

The growing influence of geopolitical tensions on trade, supply-chain structure, and cross-border investment patterns, driving capital to cluster within political or economic alliances is evident.

Diversification continues to be core to portfolio construction, Koutroumpis explains: “Rather than abandoning global diversification, investors appear to be reframing it around geopolitical blocs, resilient supply chains and strategic sectors. In practice, institutional portfolios are evolving toward a hybrid approach: maintaining global diversification while tilting

allocations toward politically aligned jurisdictions and assets that hedge geopolitical volatility. The result is not the end of diversification, but the emergence of “geopolitically aware diversification”.

Koutroumpis says investors must be aware of the macroeconomic consequences of trade and supply chain disruption resulting from geopolitical tensions.

Deepening geoeconomic fragmentation is as one the four core risks to the world economy the IMF identified in its annual risk report. Deeper fragmentation has the potential to cut world GDP by as much as seven per cent as a consequence of lower trade, more duplication of global supply chains, and lower capital mobility.

Energy security and resource geopolitics

The Iran conflict, combined with the long-running Russia-Ukraine war has markedly heightened geopolitical risks, leading investors to increase risk premiums, prioritise geographic diversification, and decrease exposure to risky regions.

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz – where 20 per cent of global oil and LNG shipments flow through – from the escalation of the Iran-Israel US conflict, has significantly disrupted energy security.

Energy and commodity markets' role in creating a channel through which geopolitical events affect the economy is increasingly apparent, Koutroumpis explains. He says the acceleration of hostilities between Russia and Ukraine has contributed to sharp rises in oil, gas and food prices – the main driver of high inflation rates in 2022–23.

“With inflation remaining elevated, and with monetary authorities looking to keep it contained by raising interest rates, investors are reassessing their investment options. High cost of capital, a more risk averse market, and a greater recognition of the role of investment risk, are leading to a greater inclination towards less volatile and more inflation linked assets and investments.”

The influence of global macroeconomic volatility, politics, and concerns about the security of supply chains on private capital flows is growing, Koutroumpis explains.

“The private investment sector is not turning its back on globalisation but is increasingly spreading its investments

more selectively and choosing to invest in stable countries, in strategic sectors and in assets which will be least affected by political and geopolitical risks. In addition to a sectoral overview and strategic framework, energy security and transition technologies are expected to be a significant area for the involvement of private capital.

After Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine, investment in renewable energy, LNG, and energy storage rose strongly. Energy transition investment attained its highest record of US\$1.77 trillion in 2023, a 17 percent increase from 2022, according to a Bloomberg NEF 2024 report.

More often governments are employing industry policy such as the US Inflation Reduction Act and the European Green Industrial Plan to encourage private investment in core sectors of the energy transition, Koutroumpis notes.

Lorne Switzer, professor of finance at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada says geopolitical risk is to a large extent influencing where private capital is deployed globally. He says private capital funds are typically constrained for moving assets around quickly. If a portfolio adjustment is necessary, due to a fundamental surprise in the market, the funds cannot change positions instantaneously, or even over a weekly or month interval. These funds are typically quite illiquid, with strong lock-ins.

“Unless you’re willing to take a big hit, and you have a cash reserve that can allow you to absorb the loss, you might just have to ride out the storm. If you had a well devised long term strategy, patience in the face of volatility can be rewarded

He says typically, in this environment we would see investors exit from emerging markets as opposed to developed markets as opposed to developed markets. Emerging markets would also take a longer time to recover.

“So infrastructure developments in places like Vietnam or India, will be hard hit in the short run given the current energy crisis. However, markets are resilient, and large projects that are affected (e.g the high speed rail line in Vietnam, and expressways, power transmission grids, and ports in India (such as the Sagarmala project).

“If we look at the current quotes on the oil futures markets, the prices are up quite a bit right now relative to the start of the Iran conflict. For the nearby delivery contract the price is about US\$90

“It may take a few months but by the end of the year, oil prices should be down to the US\$72–\$78 range”

Lorne Switzer, Concordia University

from between US\$67–71 dollars per barrel before the war. But if you are looking a few months down the road, the curve has a downward slope, prices go down markedly for later deliveries.

“In other words, the market is saying that oil blockade going on in Straits of Hormuz will end. It may take a few months but by the end of the year, oil prices should be down to the US\$72–78 range, which is livable. Some short term inflationary spike can be expected of course, but this will not persist, as alternative delivery mechanisms come online. Any short-term recessionary hit will likely be felt by small caps first, and large-caps may be spared.

“Geopolitical risk is not confined to the current War in the Middle East. The geopolitical risk of the ongoing tariff war still looms. While the US Supreme Court ruled that the sweeping tariffs imposed by the US are not legal, the current US administration is still looking at alternatives. On the other hand, the retaliatory tariffs of the US trading partners are not helpful. Attempts to devise other trading arrangements that are meant to bypass the US so far, for example substituting US markets for Chinese markets, do not make much economic or political sense for that matter.”

War and military conflicts

Conflicts such as the Russia-Ukraine war and the ongoing Iran war, are disturbing energy markets, trade routes, and regional stability, causing investors to reevaluate political risk.

The Russia-Ukraine war, and escalating tensions involving Iran are redirecting private capital markets by growing geopolitical risk premia, reshaping investment flows, and increasing capital allocation toward strategic sectors and political aligned jurisdiction, Koutroumpis states.

He says the uncertainty in the market created by a country being at war often leads investors to be risk averse, with investors seeking more secure places to move their money following large geopolitical shocks.

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, a large amount of money was taken out of US primary market funds, approximately US\$22 billion and relocated into government-backed funds that were seen as safer.

Koutroumpis explains this trend was also apparent during tension in the Middle East when investors shifted to putting more money into conventional safe-haven assets such as gold, government bonds, and the US dollar.

Global conflicts are leading to geopolitical alignment in capital allocations, where investors favour countries that are more aligned with their interests and seen as more stable.

The imposition of sanctions, freezing of assets, enforced regulatory restrictions following Russia's invasion of Ukraine increased the difficulty of Western investors accessing Russian markets and assets.

Geopolitical alignment is becoming increasingly important, as investors become selective about where they invest, significantly influencing the geography of private capital investment.

War is accelerating investment in resilient sectors that are also key for security, according to Koutroumpis. He says when Russia's energy exports to Europe were overturned, it resulted in a large rise in investments in liquefied natural gas, renewable energy, and alternative means of getting energy.

Geopolitical tensions have caused money to flow into sectors including defence technology, cybersecurity, critical minerals, and infrastructure for supply chains, governments prioritise economic security. He says this further supports the process of capital being invested along geopolitical lines.

Conflicts are contributing to longer-term fragmentation of global capital markets, Koutroumpis notes. Private capital markets are more shaped by geopolitical considerations than previous decades, he adds.

Private equity and infrastructure investment decisions are increasingly incorporating political risk, sanctions exposure, and supply chain vulnerabilities into their investment decisions.

Geopolitical conflicts are rearranging investment geography, sector priorities, and risk management frameworks, inserting geopolitical risk more firmly into private market strategies, rather than reducing private capital activity.

Switzer argues that markets are typically resilient to conflicts such as the ongoing Iran war due to there being a price to political risk. He says: “To a certain extent, it should be expected to continue. As you can see, the fault risk rises and the private capital component of the debt market is often in areas where you can get a higher return to reflect the risk, but when you have higher risk, you say the returns are going to be adversely affected.”

Escalating sanctions and financial fragmentation

Extended sanctions regimes initiated by institutions such as the European Union and the United States Department of the Treasury are confining cross-border capital flows and driving funds to overhaul investment structures. Sanctions and regulatory divergence are influencing private fund managers’ approaches to structuring cross-border investments, due to the jurisdictional planning, and compliance arrangements they introduce, according to Koutroumpis.

He says they do not decrease global investment activity outright but compliance has become a material consideration when investing in private markets. Sanction compliance can require funds to undertake due diligence on limited partners, vendors, and investee companies to guarantee they are not published on sanctions lists from the US Office of Foreign Assets Control, the EU, or the United Kingdom.

Sanctions have majorly increased in scope since 2022 according to the US Department of the Treasury, in reaction to sanctions placed on Russia along with other factors.

The way fund managers structure vehicles and transactions is also being impacted by regulatory divergence, along with how they select target countries.

Diverse foreign investment screening regimes such as the US’s Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) and the EU’s Foreign Direct Investment Screening Regulation may create sector-specific barriers for cross-border investments. In this geopolitical context, quality fund domiciles are highly valued for private fund investments and especially for global private funds such as alternative funds and other types of private funds.

“The private investment sector is not turning its back on globalisation but is increasingly spreading its investments more selectively”

Dr Panagiotis Koutroumpis, University of Reading

Global private funds seek investment opportunities globally and look to raise capital from a large number of foreign institutional investors, Koutroumpis explains. Luxembourg and Ireland are examples of well-established fund domiciles.

Rather than blocking cross-border capital flows, sanctions and fragmentation in regulation are instead reshaping their form. Fund managers are responding by strengthening compliance capabilities, considering alternative fund structures, and selecting jurisdictions with regulatory stability and aligned with key financial markets.

Switzer explains: “Sanction regimes, regulatory divergence, are affecting the way private funds structured cross border investments. Now the environment is changing again. It’s all driven by volatility.

“To ease the impact of the energy crisis, the US has decided to lift sanctions on Russian oil, and perhaps even on Iranian oil. This will certainly help most of the economies of Europe. France is less affected, given its reliance on nuclear power. Will this make investments in Russian infrastructure more interesting? Now, I surmise from a European perspective, there may be an aversion to doing these sorts of investments, especially given the ongoing Ukraine war.

“The recent decision by the US Federal Reserve Board and other US regulators to ease capital requirements for banks offers more interesting opportunities for regulatory arbitrage. Now US banks will be in a position to help the economy grow, allowing borrowers to take on more risky projects. There must be a sense of optimism for American policy makers.

“During the Financial Crisis of 2008, capital requirements were raised, in order to reduce risk. The arbitrage will kick-in if non-US banks stand on the sideline, as they have so far in their reluctance to join the fray to free up the waterways of the Persian Gulf to world commerce.”

Operational implications for asset servicers

The fragmentation of private capital flows is steering custodian and fund administrators’ role from one of passive oversight to more active, technology-guided data management.

In an environment marked by slower capital deployment, and localising capital, the intricacy of cross-border operations, and reporting for alternatives such as private equity, private credit, and infrastructure increases.

Koutroumpis argues the political environment has expanded the workload for asset servicers and financial infrastructure providers, due to factors such as the significant increase of sanctions regimes, and the world becoming more fragmented.

Poor data quality is a core barrier for banks in providing clients with a more comprehensive view of operational risk, an International Energy Agency (IEA) Critical Mineral Market report found.

Koutroumpis draws on findings from the Global Sanction Index by Castellum.AI explaining:

“The sanctions explosion, combined with regulatory requirements and an increase in transaction volumes — such as more than 16,000 sanctions imposed on Russian individuals, entities and vessels by more than 30 countries following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, making Russia the most sanctioned country in the world — are just a few of the challenges that asset servicers are facing in relation to their custody, settlement and payments activities.

“Asset servicers will need to be able to undertake real-time screening, including beneficial ownership checks, and transaction monitoring in order to comply with the regulatory requirements.”

Additionally the fragmentation of the world is another core aspect increasing the burden on asset services according to Koutroumpis: “The various measures taken to restrict cross-border capital movements, ban certain investments and set up regional economic unions are leading to more diverse and complex

market infrastructure that has to be dealt with by asset servicing companies on a global scale.

“Extreme forms of geoeconomic fragmentation may cause losses in global output of up to seven per cent, the IMF 2023 report found, which provides an idea of the potential scale of the financial and trading system fragmentation.

“In this context, the asset servicer’s network of custodial relationships must be highly adaptable and its business processes localisation-sensitive.”

Furthermore, clients are requiring more information on possible geopolitical risks and their exposures, Koutroumpis says.

“There is a rise in focus on ESG risks in general and now also on more detailed information related to geopolitical risks in the investments, counterparties or sectors they are exposed to, for example information about restrictions in sanctioned countries or sensitive political sectors.”

A PGIM Global Risk Report, found 56 per cent of institutional investors anticipate geopolitical risk to be the largest threat to their future portfolio performance.

As a consequence, it is imperative to have good data analytics and risk monitoring, Koutroumpis states.

“Recent geopolitical events have finally brought home the importance of operational resilience and contingency planning to governments around the world.

“Asset servicers should be particularly alert to potential risks including the forced closure of markets, disruption to settlements and asset freezes.

“As global tensions and major events increase, geopolitical risk is no longer a risk that investors face, but also an operational and infrastructure risk to the asset servicing industry.

Rather than a temporary disruption, geopolitics is a core structural force redirecting global capital markets. Private capital is anticipated to carry on growing but within the constraints of a more complicated geopolitical environment.

In an era where capital progressively flows along geopolitical lines, asset servicers will serve a greater role assisting firms navigate an increasingly fragmented financial world. ■

Get your money back in *half the time* and at a *fraction of the cost.*

We're trusted by many of the world's largest and most respected financial institutions.
Contact us to see why.

60%

Increase in dividend
yield for first time
claimants

40+

Jurisdictions from
which we have
recovered WHT

\$5tn +

Collective AUM of
clients serviced

0

If we can't recover,
you pay nothing



A photograph of Ziv Keinan, a man with glasses and a beard, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and yellow tie. He is standing at a podium with a microphone, looking slightly to the right. The background is a blurred green wall.

The tokenisation marathon

Ziv Keinan, founder of STG Security Token Community and head of markets and partnerships at XDC Network, speaks with Asset Servicing Times about the evolving institutional adoption of tokenised real-world assets and the role of stablecoins in financial infrastructure

The conversation around tokenised real-world assets (RWAs) has evolved rapidly in recent years.

Once largely confined to proofs of concept and experimental pilots, the tokenisation of financial assets is now beginning to appear in live issuance and institutional initiatives across multiple markets.

For Ziv Keinan, founder of the STG Security Token Community and head of markets and partnerships at XDC Network, says this shift reflects the early stages of genuine industry adoption rather than continued experimentation.

“I don’t think we are starting from a place where there is no adoption,” Keinan explains. “Until now we had barriers that were mostly regulatory. The US, for example, was not really keen about digital assets. They maintained the dominance of the dollar through USDC and digital dollars, but they were hesitant about opening the door for institutions to participate.”

He argues that a change in regulatory tone is beginning to alter that dynamic. According to Keinan, the current US administration has signalled a willingness to stabilise the digital asset environment and encourage institutional participation.

“The administration has effectively said that this technology is the future of finance and that they want institutions to be active in this space,” he notes. “They want small investors — the ‘mom and pop’ investors — to invest through institutions like BlackRock rather than through platforms such as FTX.”

As a result, Keinan believes the industry is now entering a gradual adoption phase. “Within financial services these things take time. But many of the largest barriers that existed previously have already been addressed, and we are starting to see real signs of adoption.”

Institutional momentum and competitive pressure

Through the STG community, Keinan works with exchanges, asset managers, banks, and technology providers that are actively exploring tokenisation. Founded in 2018, the network brings together approximately 250 senior executives across the digital securities ecosystem.

“STG is essentially a community of C-level executives who are building solutions, issuing digital assets or exploring how

to operate in this space,” he explains. “Because there is a lot of marketing in this industry, it can sometimes be difficult to understand what is actually happening and what is just narrative.”

The community therefore acts as a forum for private discussions between participants before those ideas are eventually brought to public events. Within those discussions,

Keinan says institutional commitment is becoming increasingly visible — and increasingly competitive.

“We believe there is real commitment,” he says.

“But we are still at the beginning of the process. What happens in finance is that once one major institution launches something successfully, everyone else starts thinking they need to be there as well.”

He points to examples such as asset managers launching blockchain-based funds.

“If one asset manager issues an asset on blockchain, then others immediately start asking whether they should do the same. J.P. Morgan has launched a money market fund on Base. Citi is developing its own initiatives. NatWest is developing. Lloyds is developing. Everyone is moving.”

He adds that the same competitive dynamic is visible in the development of stablecoins.

“Stablecoins represent a form of money market fund and they offer significant financial opportunities,” he says.

“Now that they are becoming regulated in the US, we are seeing asset managers becoming fully committed to issuing them.”

Recent announcements, he notes, illustrate the pace of this shift.

“We have seen institutions like Fidelity exploring issuance, and banks such as BNY are also following with their own digital asset initiatives. So this is not only commitment anymore — it is competition.”

Enterprise blockchain infrastructure

Keinan also highlights the growing role of enterprise blockchain infrastructure in enabling tokenisation initiatives.

XDC Network, where he leads markets and partnerships, has positioned itself as a blockchain platform focused on trade finance and RWA tokenisation.

“The way blockchain works is that you have a block of data that contains the history of all previous blocks,” he explains.

“As long as the chain continues to operate, it becomes more secure and more mature over time.” This longevity, he argues, gives early networks a structural advantage. “That is why Ethereum and XDC have advantages today. They have been operating for a long time and the infrastructure has matured.”

The network also differentiates itself through its enterprise focus.

“XDC has always focused on real-world applications,” he says.

“You did not have NFTs trading on XDC or speculative activity of that type. The network was originally developed for trade finance use cases such as shipping, bills of lading, and bills of exchange.”

This practical orientation, he adds, has kept the platform somewhat under the radar compared with more speculative crypto ecosystems.

“But it means that the network was always designed for real-world asset applications.”

Stablecoins as financial plumbing

One of the most significant developments in the tokenisation ecosystem is the emergence of stablecoins as a potential settlement layer.

For Keinan, this transition is already underway. “Stablecoins are already being used for cross-border transactions,” he says. “Large companies are using them to balance treasury positions between subsidiaries in different jurisdictions.”

In a multinational organisation with operations in locations such as Singapore, Hong Kong, the US, and London, stablecoins can allow funds to move between entities at significantly lower cost than traditional banking channels.

But Keinan also sees an unexpected driver accelerating adoption: AI.

“When AI agents start interacting with the economy, they need a payment mechanism,” he explains. “An AI agent cannot go to a bank and open an account. But it can own a digital wallet and pay with stablecoins.”

As a result, he believes AI-driven automation will increase the demand for blockchain-based payment systems.

“We think AI will accelerate the use of stablecoins even further.”

Implications for custody and market infrastructure

The convergence of tokenised assets and stablecoin settlement could also reshape traditional financial market infrastructure.

While Keinan does not necessarily predict the disappearance of central securities depositories (CSDs), he does expect their role to evolve.

“A smart contract can perform many of the functions that are currently handled by third parties such as custodians,” he says. “So what we will likely see is an evolution of the model.”

Some infrastructure providers are already exploring these possibilities.

“Euroclear, for example, is looking at how blockchain could integrate with existing systems,” Keinan notes. “We may see convergence between traditional infrastructure and blockchain-based solutions.”

Privacy, cybersecurity, and operational risk

Despite the growing institutional interest, concerns around privacy and cybersecurity remain central to adoption.

Distributed ledgers are inherently transparent systems, which raises questions about how regulated financial institutions can protect sensitive trading data.

According to Keinan, however, cryptographic technologies are rapidly addressing these concerns.

“There are already technologies that provide very high levels of privacy while still allowing institutions to benefit from decentralised blockchains such as Ethereum or XDC,” he says.



GLOBETAX

Turning Tax Complexity into *Opportunity*

As the **world's largest** independent withholding tax specialist, we leverage our technology, expertise, and global relationships to **return billions of investor entitlements** to the marketplace each year.

GLOBETAX



Manages documentation
and submits claims



Determines
tax entitlements



Meets filing deadlines
in every jurisdiction

Clients Enjoy



Lower
compliance risks



Reduced
operational burden



High-touch
client service

“Once stablecoins are widely used onchain and investors are holding them, they will want yield-bearing products to invest in”

Developments in cryptography and privacy solutions, he argues, are enabling hybrid models where transparency and confidentiality can coexist. Cybersecurity remains a separate challenge.

“In blockchain systems, all the code is visible to everyone,” he explains. “That means if someone — or even an automated agent — identifies a vulnerability in the code, they could potentially exploit it very quickly.”

This environment requires continuous monitoring rather than traditional static security reviews.

“Runtime cybersecurity is essential,” he says. “It needs to operate like a firewall that protects systems constantly. Blockchain is a highly adversarial environment and people need to be careful when moving value onchain.”

Regulation and legal frameworks

Keinan’s perspective on digital securities is also shaped by his legal background. While existing securities laws can accommodate tokenisation in principle, he argues they are not always structured to capture the full benefits of blockchain-based issuance. “You can tokenise assets under the current legal framework,” he explains. “But you cannot extract the full value of the technology under those frameworks.” He points to the early era of initial coin offerings (ICOs) as an example of how blockchain enabled global fundraising and near-instant settlement.

“Investors from Singapore, India, or London could buy tokens instantly and settlement happened immediately,” he says. However, the absence of regulatory alignment across jurisdictions created compliance challenges.

“If a token represents a security, it must comply with the securities laws of every jurisdiction where investors are located,” he explains. “Each country has its own securities laws, which makes global fundraising extremely complicated.”

As a result, Keinan believes further regulatory harmonisation will be required to unlock the full potential of tokenised markets.

“The essence of a security is the same whether it is recorded on an Excel spreadsheet or on a blockchain,” he says.

“But if you want to fully use the advantages of blockchain — such as instant settlement — then additional legislation and coordination between jurisdictions will be necessary.”

The road to onchain finance

Looking ahead, Keinan expects tokenised assets to move beyond niche markets and become embedded within mainstream financial infrastructure.

“The pace of development is exponential,” he says. “Even compared with last year, the progress has exceeded expectations.”

By the end of 2026, he anticipates a much wider range of financial products being issued on blockchain networks.

“We will see more products coming onchain, and we will also see traditional exchanges such as Nasdaq, the New York Stock Exchange, and the London Stock Exchange launching blockchain-based products.”

Ultimately, Keinan expects a convergence between traditional financial infrastructure and blockchain-based systems.

“Once stablecoins are widely used onchain and investors are holding them, they will want yield-bearing products to invest in,” he says. “That means more financial products will be issued directly on blockchain networks.”

At that point, he argues, the efficiency gains will make a return to traditional systems unlikely.

“It is similar to mobile payments,” he concludes. “Once you start paying everywhere with your phone and see how efficient it is, you do not go back. The same dynamic will apply to blockchain in financial markets.” ■

FUNDGUARD

The System of Record for Investment Accounting

Cloud-native and AI-enabled, unifying all books of record across public and private asset classes, jurisdictions and investment products in real time.

Excellence Engineered.



FUNDGUARD.COM

Corporate actions data challenge

As the industry migrates from ISO 15022 to ISO 20022, questions remain over whether structured messaging alone can resolve the operational complexity of corporate actions processing. Zarah Choudhary examines where standards are helping — and where market practice still stands in the way





The legacy challenge

Corporate actions processing has long been one of the most complex areas of post-trade operations.

Events such as dividends, mergers, rights issues, and tender offers must move through a chain of intermediaries that can include issuers, agents, central securities depositories, custodians, and asset managers.

With more than 60 different types of corporate actions events — many involving elections, multiple deadlines and market-specific conventions — the operational burden has historically been significant.

For much of the past two decades, the industry has relied on ISO 15022 messaging standards — including MT564 notifications, MT565 instructions and MT566 confirmations — to transmit corporate actions information across this network.

The standard helped drive early automation and straight-through processing (STP) across the securities services ecosystem. However, the format was developed at a time when the volume, speed, and complexity of corporate actions processing were very different from today.

Neil Vernon, chief product officer at Gresham, says the limitations of ISO 15022 were rooted in its underlying structure.

“The key limitation of ISO 15022 was that it didn’t provide a fully structured data model for corporate actions. Much of the critical event information was conveyed through optional qualifiers or semi-structured narrative fields rather than discrete data elements.

“That created operational complexity because firms had to translate and normalise incoming messages before they could be processed consistently across systems. Different institutions could extract slightly different interpretations of the same event depending on how their systems mapped those fields.

“As a result, corporate actions workflows became heavily reliant on vendor enrichment and internal data transformation to produce a consistent operational view of an event.”

Dimitri Sakkis, global head of operations for custody and cash clearing at CACEIS, similarly notes that ISO 15022’s flexibility could become a source of operational complexity as corporate actions grew more sophisticated.

“ISO 20022 is a major improvement because it introduces a far richer and more structured data model”

Neil Vernon, Gresham

“ISO 15022 introduced structured messaging at a given point in time, but its effectiveness was constrained by the presence of open fields and certain structured data that was not fully standardised. However, as corporate actions grew more complex, the same data field could be presented in multiple ways, limiting the standard’s consistency and usability.

“This led to increased manual intervention, higher operational risk, and reduced STP rates. The rigid structure of MT messages also made changes difficult to implement, limiting adaptability in a fast-changing environment, and complicating the management of complex corporate actions.”

Alan Lawman, product manager for TCS BaNCS corporate actions at Tata Consultancy Services, adds that the structure of the messages also created practical constraints for processing.

“The ISO 15022 messages, while useful in driving stronger conformity by industry participants, suffered from too much flexibility in how text within the messages could be presented, while also having limitations on characters within these messages — which in turn led to use of pagination when additional data and details were needed.

“This limited the scalability of the messages. Faced with industry pressure for higher automation and faster processing, questions have been raised about new requirements under MiKaDiv and Faster reporting will not be met using ISO 15022.”

Despite these limitations, ISO 15022 has played a central role in driving automation across the corporate actions ecosystem. David Baxter, managing director at T-Scape, says the standard itself was not necessarily the core problem.

“ISO 15022 has been hugely successful as a catalyst for automation in corporate actions. In our experience working with market participants across the ecosystem, the real challenge has never been the standard itself but the level of adherence and consistency with which it has been applied.

“The corporate actions process has also historically been hindered by limited issuer engagement, with event information typically originating as narrative disclosures that require manual interpretation at multiple points along the chain.”

ISO 20022 and the promise of structured data

The shift towards ISO 20022 represents the industry’s attempt to modernise financial messaging infrastructure and address many of these limitations.

Unlike ISO 15022, which relies heavily on coded fields and narrative text, ISO 20022 introduces an XML-based messaging framework with richer and more granular data elements designed to improve automation and machine readability across financial markets.

The standard has already been adopted by many financial market infrastructures and is increasingly used across payments, securities settlement, and asset servicing processes as part of broader efforts to modernise market infrastructure and enable more structured financial data exchange.

Vernon says the new format provides a significant improvement over legacy messaging structures.

“ISO 20022 is a major improvement because it introduces a far richer and more structured data model. Instead of relying on loosely defined fields, event details are represented through clearly defined data elements and relationships, which makes automated interpretation much more feasible.

“That structure significantly improves the potential for straight-through processing. Systems can validate, map and process corporate actions events with far less reliance on manual interpretation.

“However, structured messaging doesn’t eliminate complexity entirely. Corporate actions still originate from issuer announcements that can vary significantly across markets. ISO 20022 improves data transport and representation, but automation still depends on consistent capture and translation of issuer information.”

Sakkis agrees that ISO 20022 delivers improvements in both data quality and message design.

“The shift from ISO 15022 to ISO 20022 delivers significant added value, both in terms of data quality and message structure. MX formats offer far greater flexibility for evolving message formats over time.

“Every data element now has a dedicated field, ensuring major improvements in data quality and enabling consistent interpretation across all institutions processing MX messages. The better quality, standardised data naturally drives higher automation and STP rates, and allows for more effective handling of increasingly complex corporate actions.

“As technological transformations like API integration and AI accelerate, high-quality, structured data is central to the evolution of corporate actions platforms. ISO 20022 provides the foundation for this shift. For custodians like CACEIS, this aligns with a broader strategy focused on operational excellence and execution speed designed to better support our clients.”

However, adoption across the industry remains uneven.

According to Tim Lind, managing director at DTCC Data Services, ISO 20022 has yet to achieve widespread uptake across global custody networks.

“ISO 20022 has been characterised as an improvement over ISO 15022 based on its underlying semantic dictionary, support for additional data requirements, and an XML structure that supports better machine readability. While ISO 20022 has been mandated as the protocol for many market infrastructures, it has witnessed minimal adoption within global custody networks and between banks and asset managers compared to ISO 15022.

“The business case for organic adoption of ISO 20022 has not been compelling without a forced migration. Coexistence and continued support for ISO 15022 further weakens the case for adoption.”

Lawman notes that the coexistence of the two standards continues to influence adoption decisions across the industry.

“TCS provides the ability for clients to use either or both ISO 15022 or 20022, mainly because the take-up is still relatively slow, though this itself is also due to the equivalence approach that has largely mirrored the data content within each standard.

“Addressing a problem in the short term is not ensuring there is focus on long term solutions.

“The industry has started to move in breaking the long-standing agreement around co-existence and equivalence with many of the new messages developed for proxy voting and shareholder identification only being provided in ISO 20022.

“The benefit of new messages is the opportunity to design the core messages and data standards around each business purpose, without having to compromise structures due to alignment with ISO 15022.”

The vendor layer and the ‘golden copy’

Even with richer messaging standards, many institutions still rely on data vendors to interpret and normalise corporate actions information.

Vernon says vendors continue to play a central role in producing consistent data across the industry.

“ISO 20022 certainly moves the industry in the right direction, but it does not eliminate the need for data interpretation and enrichment. Vendors still play a critical role in normalising this information and producing a consistent ‘golden copy’ that market participants can rely on.

“Structured messaging helps reduce some of the technical friction in transporting the data, but it does not fully address the challenge of harmonising how events are described across markets and issuers.

“In many ways, ISO 20022 raises expectations around data quality. As firms move towards greater automation, the tolerance for inconsistent or incomplete data becomes much lower. That makes validation, enrichment, and quality control services even more important within the overall data ecosystem.”

Sakkis adds that vendors remain important for consolidating information from multiple sources.

“While ISO 20022 improves the quality of data available for golden copy creation, it does not eliminate the role of data vendors. Data received from non-vendor sources is not yet fully harmonised, and vendors continue to play a key role in comparing multiple sources to produce a reliable golden copy.

“Despite giving better data quality, disparities remain. Vendors help normalise, validate and ensure consistent interpretation of events that may be announced differently by various issuers.

“Corporate actions often involve multiple updates between announcement and settlement. Vendors consolidate these updates and track corrections or additional information throughout the lifecycle.

“Finally, the vendor role is evolving: rather than interpreting unstructured data, they now focus on consolidating, validating and enriching structured data to ensure a fully reliable golden copy.”

Lawman notes that vendor dependency is also tied to uneven adoption of the new messaging standard.

“It should have but as the adoption hasn’t been great, the reliance on ISO 15022 and the validation and scrubbing against alternative sources to ensure correct interpretation still exist. Especially around the challenges in areas like where the narrative fields are still used to cover non-standard and complex areas.

“Those markets and regions that have moved onto ISO 20022 are seeing the benefits and are relying less on vendor sources and the associated normalisation and scrubbing processes.

“They are increasingly offering an ‘issuer to investor’ approach, which increases the speed of announcement and removes the need for further review and comparison.”

APIs and the shift to real-time data

Alongside messaging standards, technology developments such as APIs and real-time data feeds are beginning to reshape how corporate actions data is distributed and consumed.

Vernon says API-based distribution can improve the timeliness of event information.

“APIs and real-time data feeds are beginning to reshape how corporate actions data is distributed and consumed. API-based delivery allows institutions to receive incremental updates as soon as information changes, improving timeliness and reducing the risk of acting on outdated event details.

“This becomes increasingly important as settlement cycles shorten and operational timelines compress. However, the value of real-time delivery ultimately depends on the quality and structure of the underlying data. APIs accelerate distribution but cannot resolve interpretation challenges alone.”

Sakkis similarly points to the growing role of real-time connectivity.

“APIs and real-time data are playing an increasingly important role, enabling a shift from periodic messaging to more dynamic, interactive and automated workflows.

“Although standards like ISO 20022 improve data and message structure, APIs add a real-time layer that further enhances operational efficiency. This also delivers value to clients by enabling direct integration of data into their systems, streamlining portfolio management and risk management and eliminating intermediate processing steps.”

Lawman says APIs are becoming an important operational tool but still require standardisation to scale effectively.

“API’s and real time feeds are becoming a critical part of the processing solution, where the option to pull data on demand in real-time from operating counterparts expedites exception resolution and improves the quality of data being provided to firms making elections.

“The primary challenge that we have seen was in the absence of any standards when these were initially introduced by firms, thereby hindering the scalability of these solutions. To overcome this challenge, TCS has partnered with SWIFT to develop a range of standard ISO 20022 API standards for corporate actions around the key use cases as a means to expanding their use and take-up.”

Technology, standards, or market practice?

While technology and messaging standards continue to evolve, many industry participants argue that the biggest barrier to automation lies elsewhere.

According to Lind, messaging improvements alone cannot address deeper structural challenges in corporate actions processing.

“Legacy applications, fragmentation in communication methods through custodian channels, and the inherent complexity of translating legal entitlements consistently into a structured message remain the root cause of manual workflows as well as a massive expense related to this process.

“Message standards have improved automation in common distribution events, but ISO 20022 does not address the root cause of inefficiency.

“30 years of market practice and harmonisation discussions have not resulted in higher rates of automation for more complex events.

“The industry needs to fundamentally rethink how to connect the workflow of corporate actions beyond fragmented financial messaging.”

Vernon says the underlying challenge ultimately lies in market practice.

“The biggest challenge today is market practice. Technology and messaging standards, like ISO 20022, provide the tools to automate and structure data, but corporate actions originate from issuer announcements that are often inconsistent and follow local market conventions.

“Variability in issuer reporting still creates friction, and until market practices align globally, automation and standards alone cannot resolve corporate actions complexity.”

Sakkis echoes this view.

“The greatest challenge in corporate actions today is not solely technological — it’s structural and multi-faceted. However, if you have to put them in order, market practices are still the primary obstacle, ahead of standardisation and technology.

“Divergent market practices across jurisdictions and participants are the main source of complexity and even with common standards, local variations persist, including differing notification timelines (record date, ex-date, instruction deadlines), distinct tax regimes, local interpretations or formatting of events, and agent or market-specific operational processes.

“A public offer or optional dividend, for example, may be structured differently in European and Asian markets, with dates communicated or adjusted according to local market infrastructures.

“This can leave a degree of interpretation or manual oversight, depending on the market. AI may eventually play a role in resolving such issues but that is a topic for another discussion.”

Lawman also points to market practice as the critical challenge.

“To a large degree, these issues are inter-dependent. We have made great advances in technology platforms and in overlaying AI and Chatbot solutions. Leading-edge platforms like TCS BaNCS are also readily accessible.

“The standards, as per SMPG for the 20022 messages, if adhered to correctly will address the processing issues that are seen today and will encourage greater STP and reduce normalisation.

“As such the biggest challenge has to be market practice, and where markets do not follow or adopt the agreed standard.

“This adds to extra work for the user and extra risk to the processing, based on a greater need for understanding and interpretation.

“There needs to be a drive to make the market practice the market ruling, should we be looking at legislating here?”

Baxter says progress will also depend on improving engagement from issuers themselves.

“ISO 20022 introduces a richer and more structured event data model, and initiatives such as the Shareholder Rights Directive are pushing structured messaging closer to the issuer source.

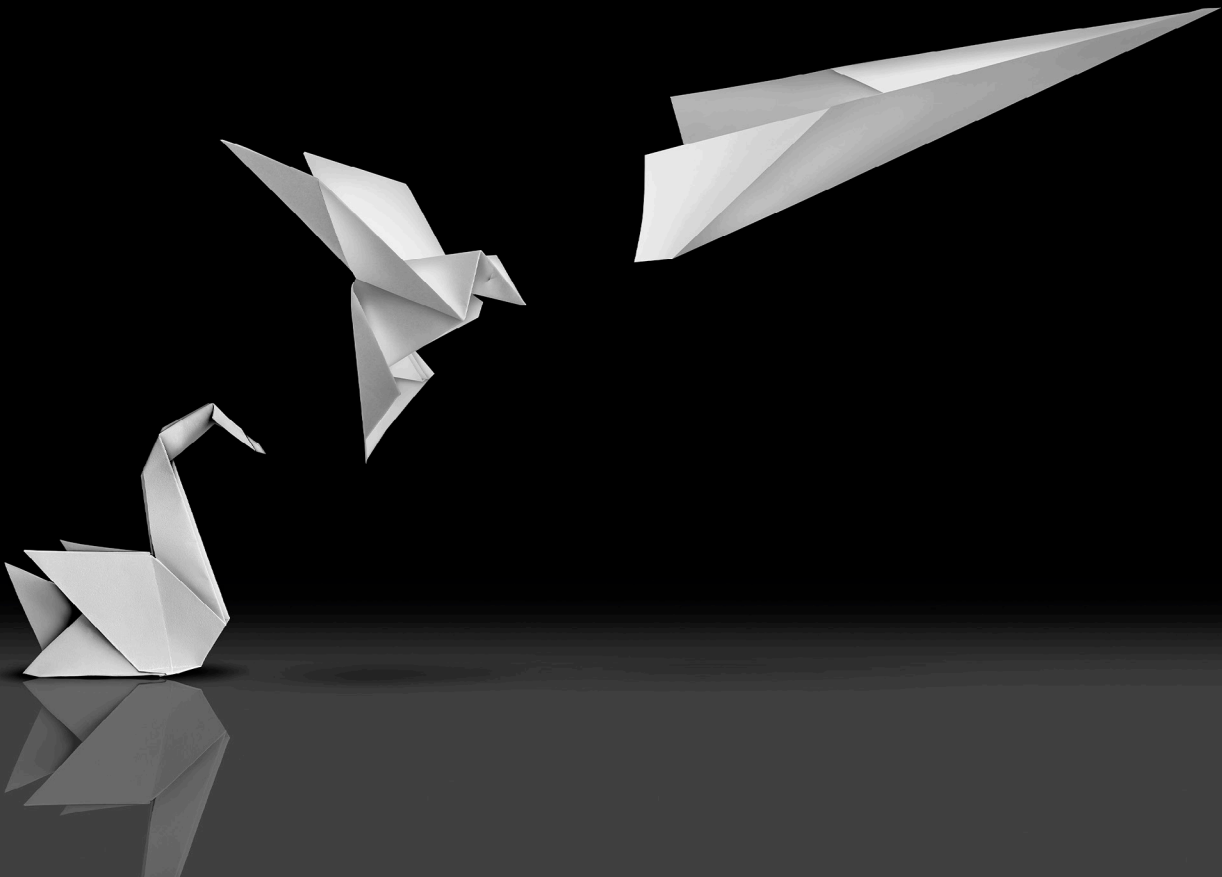
“However, the same issues of inconsistent implementation risk carrying through unless the industry addresses them.

“As such, and until issuers are fully engaged in releasing structured event data, vendors will continue to play an important role.

“Harmonisation efforts, including the European Commission’s recent SRD consultation and moves by European CSDs to retire ISO 15022, will be key to enabling API-driven architectures and more automated workflows.” ■

Constantly Evolving

Brooke Conroy, director of Account Management, Broadridge Financial Solutions, discusses her journey into asset servicing, her passion for its role at the heart of the investment process, the sector's continual change, and championing client satisfaction



Can you give us an insight into your personal journey into the asset services industry? Why did you decide this was the right career for you?

My journey into asset servicing started when I was first exposed to the operational side of financial markets and saw how much happens behind the scenes to keep everything running smoothly for clients. What really stood out to me was that asset servicing sits at the heart of the investment process — it may not always be the most visible part of the industry, but it is absolutely essential in terms of accuracy, control, and client trust.

As I gained more exposure, I realised it was the right career for me because it combines two things I really enjoy: technical problem-solving and working closely with people.

I like the fact that the role demands attention to detail and strong accountability, but also requires you to communicate clearly, build relationships, and help clients navigate complexity. That mix of technical knowledge and service mindset is what has made asset servicing such a rewarding field for me.

What aspects of your job do you enjoy most?

What I enjoy most about working in asset servicing is the opportunity to make a real difference for clients in an environment where quality, trust, and a proactive outlook matter every day. I enjoy being in a role where strong operational delivery, attention to detail, and proactive communication all come together to create a high standard of service, a positive client experience, and the opportunity to deliver continuous improvement for ourselves and our clients.

I also really value the collaborative nature of the work. Delivering the best outcomes for clients often means working closely with different teams, across functions and markets, to solve problems quickly and effectively. I find that very rewarding, particularly when it helps build confidence and long-term client relationships.

Another aspect I enjoy is the pace of change in the industry. Client expectations continue to rise, technology is evolving, and regulation keeps moving, so there is always an opportunity to improve how we work and raise service standards further. For me, the most rewarding part of the role is combining technical expertise, teamwork, and continuous improvement to provide clients with the kind of reliable, high-quality service they can genuinely rely on.

As someone fairly new to the industry, how does your experience compare with those who are more established? Are there any pros and cons?

I think there are strengths on both sides. Those who are newer to the industry often bring fresh thinking, strong digital capability, and a willingness to challenge existing ways of working, which is important in a market where client expectations and technology are evolving quickly.

More established professionals bring deep expertise, historical perspective, and the judgement that comes from navigating complexity over many years. That experience is hugely valuable, especially in an industry where clients expect confidence, consistency, and trust.

The real opportunity is to bring those strengths together. When you combine experience with fresh perspective, you create an environment that is both innovative and dependable — and that is exactly what helps deliver the high-quality service clients expect.

Have you noticed any common misconceptions about the asset servicing industry?

Yes — one common misconception is that asset servicing is simply a back-office function, when, in reality, it plays a much more strategic role in the financial system. It underpins trust, supports regulatory compliance, and has a direct impact on both client experience and market efficiency. For example, areas such as proxy voting, class actions, corporate actions, and securities lending show just how important asset servicing is in enabling effective communication, governance, participation, and adding tangible value to shareholders — and that is an area where Broadridge has built real leadership and credibility.

Another misconception is that it is a static industry, when actually it is constantly evolving. Technology, regulation, and client expectations are all changing, so asset servicing is an area where innovation, resilience, and continuous improvement are essential.

Is there anything within the industry you would like to see evolve or change?

I would like to see continued investment in automation and data transparency to reduce manual risk, improve efficiency, and allow teams to focus on higher-value, more client-focused activities.

“Be curious and proactive. Embrace feedback, volunteer for new challenges, and align yourself with strong values”

As client expectations continue to rise, seamless digital solutions and better use of data will be increasingly important in delivering the quality, transparency, and responsiveness clients expect.

Another area I would like to see evolve is representation and visibility across the industry. In particular, it would be great to see more younger women entering asset servicing and feeling encouraged to build long-term careers in the sector.

Having more diverse perspectives at every level can only strengthen the industry, support innovation, and improve how we serve clients. It is important that younger women can see clear opportunities for growth, development, and leadership.

What is the training process like for a new employee? Was it beneficial to your role and to others now in the same position?

Training at Broadridge is structured, but also highly practical. Early exposure to live processes, with support from experienced colleagues, helps new employees build both confidence and competence from the outset.

I found mentorship particularly beneficial, because it gave me an understanding not just of the ‘how’, but also the ‘why’ behind the work. I now see the value of that approach when supporting the onboarding of new team members.

Combining technical training with real-life scenarios helps people learn more effectively and understand the wider client impact of what they do.

That is a strong foundation for delivering the high standard of service Broadridge is known for and for building trusted client relationships.

Where do you see yourself professionally in ten years’ time?

In ten years’ time, I would like to be in a position where I am playing an even more meaningful role in shaping and enhancing the client experience, helping to ensure we remain proactive, agile, and aligned with Broadridge’s values.

I would hope to have grown into a role where I can contribute not only through strong delivery, but also by helping drive continuous improvement, supporting colleagues, and influencing positive change.

For me, long-term growth means continuing to learn, deepening my expertise, and adding measurable value to both clients and the business.

What advice would you give to young graduates entering the financial services sector?

Be curious and proactive. Embrace feedback, volunteer for new challenges, and align yourself with strong values — that is how you learn, differentiate yourself, and deliver meaningful impact. ■



Brooke Conroy
Director of Account Management
Broadridge Financial Solutions



Some things improve with age. Your core systems don't.

Technical debt compounds. Client expectations accelerate. The servicers thriving aren't adding more people to yesterday's problems, they're eliminating the structural constraints underneath.

FINBOURNE's cloud-native platform delivers what legacy systems can't: scale efficiently without proportional headcount. Handle private markets complexity without operational strain. Launch new services in weeks, not months. Deliver real-time data access and digital experiences clients expect. Reduce IT overhead while accelerating innovation.

Trusted by leading global asset servicers.

finbourne.com/asset-servicers

FINBOURNE 

Industry Appointments

Malella joins Standard Chartered

Standard Chartered has appointed Naveen Mallela as global head of Payments, effective 4 May 2026. Mallela will be based in Singapore and will report to Mahesh Kini, global head of Cash Management.

In his role, Mallela will lead the bank's integrated payments organisation, bringing together collections, clearing, and payments teams into a single organisation, reflecting the rising client demand for end-to-end solutions.

The global payments team will design and deliver solutions across the entire payments' lifecycle across traditional and emerging tokenised and onchain payment flows, says the firm.

Mallela joins the bank from JPMorgan Chase where he was the global co-head of Kinexys (formerly Onyx), the bank's permissioned blockchain business unit focusing on real-time, 24/7, cross-border payments and digital asset settlement.

With more than 25 years driving global transaction banking, and payments innovation experience, the firm says Mallela brings deep expertise in modernising payment infrastructures and scaling next-generation solutions.

Michael Spiegel, global head of Transaction banking at Standard Chartered, says: "Our Cash Management Business is entering

a defining chapter as we build a scalable, product-led franchise that enables clients to manage across both traditional and emerging digital payment ecosystems, positioning them for long-term growth in an increasingly integrated financial landscape."

Roberto Hoornweg, CEO, Corporate and Investment Banking at Standard Chartered, adds: "As client needs evolve and payments increasingly integrate traditional and onchain settlement models, Naveen's experience in leading payments innovation will be pivotal as we scale our next phase of growth by combining clearing and digital assets capabilities in a client-centric way."

Teciem selects Bouillard

Teciem, a provider of front-to-back treasury and capital markets software solutions, has appointed Didier Bouillard as chairman of its board of directors.

As an independent chair, Bouillard brings more than three decades of global governance and leadership in financial technology, with experience building, scaling, and supervising multiple private-equity-backed platforms across capital market infrastructure and enterprise software, says the firm.

Based in London, Bouillard will work closely with the Teciem board, management team, and shareholder representatives to ensure strategic clarity, strong governance, and

rigorous execution of the company's long-term growth agenda.

Bouillard's career includes senior roles at Ubitrade and SunGard, where he contributed to the development and expansion of major trading, risk, and post-trade platforms.

He later served as CEO of Ullink, leading its global growth and value creation, before becoming CEO of Calypso Technology in 2018.

In 2021, he assumed leadership of Adenza after the merger of Calypso Technology and AxiomSL.

During his tenure there he oversaw the integration of trading, treasury, risk, and regulatory compliance capabilities and guided the company through its subsequent acquisition by Nasdaq.

Gabriele Cipparrone, partner at Apax and board director of Teciem, notes: "We are delighted to welcome Didier to the role of chairman of Teciem's board. His deep sector expertise and experience governing high-performance fintech platforms will further strengthen the board as the company accelerates its next phase of growth.

"We look forward to partnering closely with Didier, Wissam and the rest of this board to support Teciem's long-term value-creation strategy."

Bouillard adds: "Teciem combines deep domain expertise, strong customer relationships, and significant growth potential. I'm thrilled to take on the role of chairman, working closely with the management team and other board members, sharing my experience in supporting disciplined execution, robust governance and sustained growth."

Around the clock, around the globe



For over 20 years, our global footprint and capabilities have continued to grow, supporting the development and success of our clients. Today, with our 24/5 Follow-The-Sun operational model and unsurpassed asset servicing expertise, CACEIS works continuously around the globe to help you excel in all situations.

That's frog power!

caceis
INVESTOR SERVICES

A company of Crédit Agricole

www.caceis.com





Broadridge Appoints Reali

Broadridge Financial Solutions has appointed Peter Reali as senior vice president and general manager of Institutional Governance, a newly created business focused on advancing proxy voting, stewardship, and governance solutions for institutional investors.

Reali brings more than 20 years of corporate governance and stewardship experience, most recently serving as a managing director on Nuveen's Responsible Investing team, where he led their Stewardship and ESG Integration efforts.

He previously held senior governance roles at Lord, Abnett & Co., T. Rowe Price, and TIAA-CREF.

Based in New York, Reali will be responsible for the overall leadership, strategic direction, and financial performance of the Institutional Governance business.

The firm says the creation of its Institutional Governance business strengthens its ability to deliver proxy infrastructure at scale and underscores its continued investment in next-generation technology platforms.

Reali will lead Broadridge's new Institutional Governance business, bringing together Proxy Edge, Custom Policy Engine, Proxy Disclosure, Pass-Through Voting, and Shares Management Solution into a cohesive, end-to-end solution suite for stewardship teams at asset managers, asset owners, and wealth managers.

Reali will report to Swatika Rajaram, president, Bank and Broker-Dealer Solutions, Broadridge, who comments: "Investors are navigating increasing complexity in stewardship around proxy voting and Peter brings deep industry expertise, operational experience, and a forward-looking vision for governance solutions."

TNS appoints Mehmet

Transaction Network Services (TNS), a provider of connectivity and infrastructure for financial markets, has appointed Levent Mehmet as managing director of Asia Pacific, for its Financial Markets business. Based in Singapore, Mehmet will lead strategy, sales, and client engagement across the region.

He brings more than 25 years of experience in financial market data and infrastructure and prior to joining TNS, he spent 17 years with ICE Data Services, where he helped drive the company's expansion across Asia Pacific, and has also held positions with SIX and Bloomberg in Europe and the Middle East.

According to the firm, Mehmet will lead TNS's teams based in Japan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, as well as supporting clients more widely across China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Commenting on his appointment, Mehmet says: "Asia is a key centre for trading innovation, and TNS is playing an increasingly important role in helping firms connect and grow in these markets."

"With new market data connectivity, a proven network infrastructure, and strong relationships across global exchanges, including additional exchange coverage added recently, we're helping clients to trade smarter and faster."

According to Mehmet, the expansion of overnight trading in the US illustrates how quickly global markets are evolving. "By continually adding these venues to our network, TNS ensures clients can capture opportunities as they emerge, whether that means trading US equities during Asian hours or broadening their market reach. My focus will be on scaling that success across the region." ■



Investor
Services

Protecting today. Pursuing tomorrow.

Since 1899, RBC Investor Services has been the engine that administers and protects the assets of millions of Canadians. We harness the power of Canada's largest bank to deliver reliable investment servicing and data to more than 1,200 Canadian asset managers and pension plans so they can focus on what matters most – helping their clients and members achieve their aspirations.

Let's talk. Visit [rbcis.com](https://www.rbcis.com)

Custody | Shareholder Services | Fund & ETF Administration | Performance
Market Services – Cash, Foreign Exchange & Securities Finance Solutions

© Copyright Royal Bank of Canada 2026. RBC Investor Services™ is a global brand name operating primarily through the following companies: Royal Bank of Canada and RBC Investor Services Trust and their branches and affiliates. In the United Kingdom (UK), RBC Investor Services operates through RBC Investor Services Trust, UK Branch, authorized and regulated by the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions of Canada. Authorized by the Prudential Regulation Authority. Subject to regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority and limited regulation by the Prudential Regulation Authority. Details about the extent of our regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority are available on request. RBC Offshore Fund Managers Limited is regulated by the Guernsey Financial Services Commission in the conduct of investment business. Registered company number 8494. This material provides information on the services and capabilities of RBC Investor Services. It does not constitute an offer, invitation or inducement with respect to any service or financial instrument. RBC Investor Services' services are only offered in the jurisdictions where they may be lawfully offered and are subject to the terms of applicable agreements. This material is for general information only and does not constitute financial, tax, legal or accounting advice, and should not be relied upon in that regard. Links to external websites are for convenience only. RBC Investor Services does not review, endorse, approve, control or accept any responsibility for the content of those sites. Linking to external websites is at your own risk. © / ™ Trademarks of Royal Bank of Canada. Used under licence.



THE DIGITAL ASSETS EDGE

Where Digital Finance Meets Traditional Markets



Digital assets are reshaping how institutions think about markets

The Digital Assets Edge provides professionals across securities finance, capital markets, asset management, and fintech with the insight they need to stay ahead of this transformation.