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SBF Enterprise Financing Survey 2026 Findings

Compared with Q42025, enterprise financing needs have remained broadly stable, with fewer businesses face acute credit stress. But SMEs remain disproportionately vulnerable, with many still facing cash flow pressures and weaker access to financing support. At the same time, businesses that are seeking financing are increasingly doing so to fund growth, including overseas expansion, hiring and innovation.

The findings also point to gaps in financial literacy and in business' ability to navigate the financing ecosystem, particularly among SMEs and firms under credit stress. This underscores demand for a centralized advisory function, with strongest interest in services such as financing diagnostic and financial projections review. The survey further suggests a tiered support model; self-service tools such as templates and checklists for the broader business population, complemented by one-to-one advisory support and direct access to financiers for firms under greater stress.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

1. Credit conditions are improving but vulnerabilities persist

4 in 10 firms (39%) are facing a credit crunch, down from 47% in Q4 2025. Of the 18% of firms that faced moderate to severe credit crunch, 36% reported having insufficient operating cash for next 3 to 6 months. SMEs remained most exposed, with 19% reporting moderate-to-severe credit crunch versus 13% of large companies, suggesting a persistent size-based vulnerability gap.

2. Firms are taking a defensive approach in freeing up liquidity

The dominant strategies to address liquidity and working capital needs are minimising non-essential outflows (48%) and boosting collection capabilities (33%) - both inward-looking, cost-containment measures. Large companies lean more heavily into collections (47% vs. 30% for SMEs), likely reflecting greater accounts-receivable complexity and bargaining leverage.

3. Firms seeking financing are using it for growth and expansion

21% sought financing in the last 12 months (down from 27% in Q4 2025), but those who did are asking for more: 38% sought more than S\$5 million, up from 26%. The reasons for seeking financing have tilted towards growth: overseas expansion (38% vs. 19%), workforce hiring (29% vs. 22%), new products/services (25% vs. 20%), and research & development (R&D) (16% vs. 10%) - all up significantly from the prior period. This suggests a bifurcation: while fewer businesses are seeking capital overall, those that do have shifted from survival financing to strategic investment.

4. Financial literacy gaps undermine decision-making

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58% of businesses self-assess their financial literacy as moderate or below - a significant barrier to sound financing decisions. The gap is starkest among credit-crunched businesses: only 21% rate their literacy as high, compared to 50% of those not facing a credit crunch. The weakest areas are fundraising strategy & capital structure (32%), business planning (26%), valuation (26%), and tax planning (23%) - all critical competencies for accessing growth capital.

5. Financing support ecosystem is perceived as adequate but not strong

71% rate the current financing support ecosystem as moderate; only 18% rate it as strong. Businesses under credit stress are notably more critical: 21% rate the ecosystem as weak versus 11% among non-stressed firms. While majority did not experience a situation where they didn't know where to turn for financing help, more SMEs (14%) reported being lost, compared to large companies (4%).

6. Strong demand for hands-on, structured support

The most-requested support forms are templates & checklists (37%), subsidised professional support (37%), training courses (36%), and one-to-one advisory (32%). Credit-crunched businesses show sharply higher demand for clinics with financiers (31% vs. 13%) and one-to-one advisory (42% vs. 28%) - indicating that businesses under pressure need more personalised, direct engagement rather than self-service tools.

7. Significant interest in a dedicated financing advisory centre

1 in 2 businesses would use a dedicated financing advisory centre and a capital provider introduction service. There is greater demand from SMEs (52% for a dedicated financing advisory centre and 51% for a capital provider introduction service) than large companies (31% and 33%, respectively). The most valued services are diagnosing financing needs (35%) and reviewing financials & projections (35%). Banks (62%) and government agencies (52%) are the preferred capital providers, though credit-crunched businesses also show more interest in venture capital/private equity (25% vs. 13% for businesses not facing credit crunch).

Annex A: [SBF Enterprise Financing Survey 2026 Report](#)

Annex B: [SBF Enterprise Financing Survey 2026 Infographic](#)