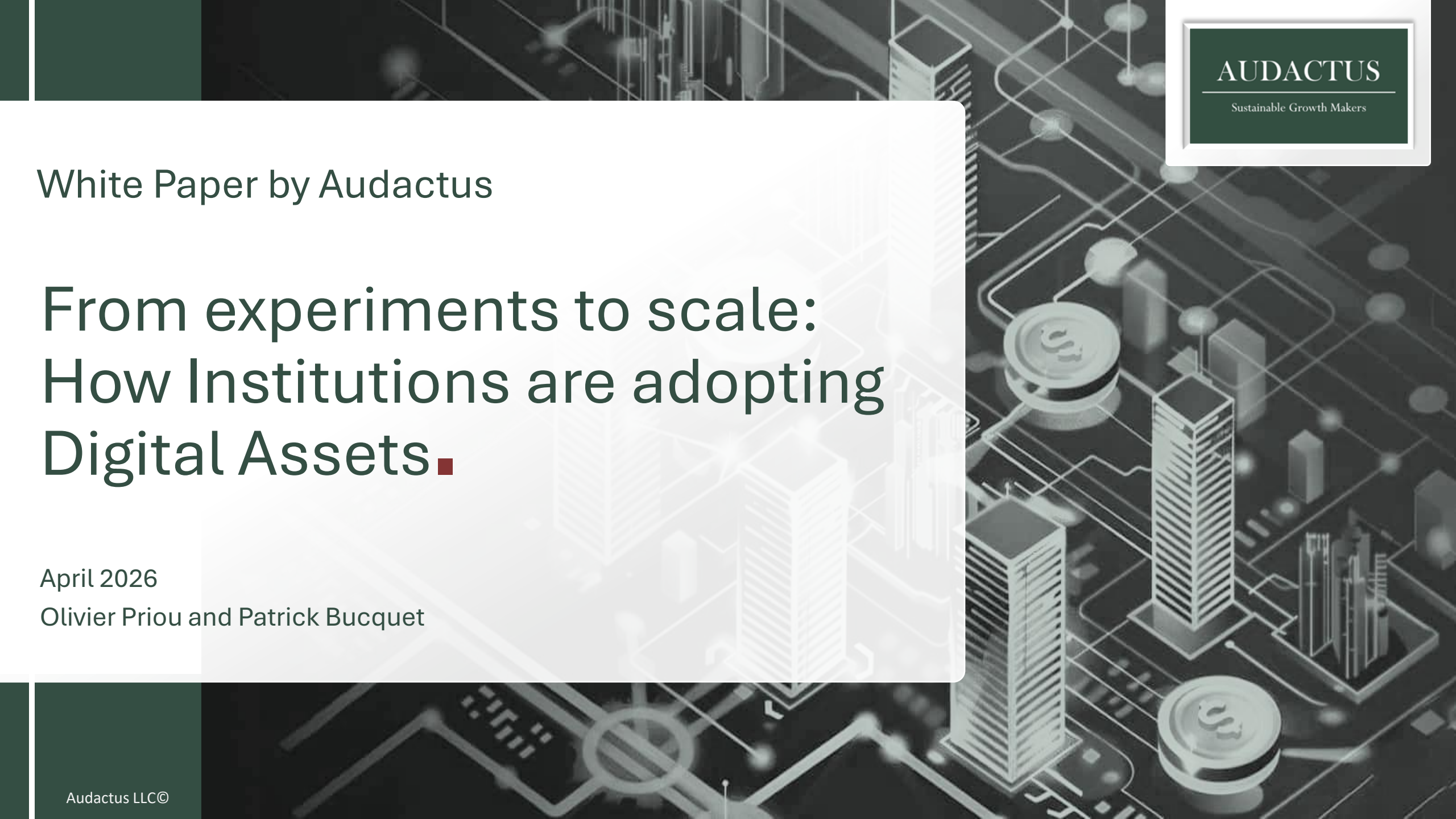

AUDACTUS

Sustainable Growth Makers

White Paper by Audactus

From experiments to scale: How Institutions are adopting Digital Assets.

April 2026

Olivier Priou and Patrick Bucquet

Credits and Resources for this white paper

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30+ interviews with Crypto and Fintech stakeholders *(extract)*

CIRCLE
Keyrock
SolideFinance
Ondo
WINTERMUTE
Borderless.xyz
SECURITIZE
SCORECHAIN
ELWOOD
Fireblocks
ELLIPTIC
TAURUS
NOTA BENE
CoinDesk
Dfns
copper.co

15+ interviews with TradFIs digital assets stakeholders *(extract)*

euroclear
Deutsche Bank
INTESA SANPAOLO
kinexys by J.P.Morgan
DZ BANK
TRUE GLOBAL VENTURES
BNP PARIBAS
caceis INVESTOR SERVICES
KBC
SOCIETE GENERALE
DTCC
BBVA

Professional Events 2026

CoinDesk consensus 2026
Digital Asset Summit 2026 new york
DIGITAL ASSETS PARIS
PARIS BLOCKCHAIN WEEK

Podcast by Audactus

Tokenized Assets and Digital Currencies, briding Financial Institution and on-chain ecosystem

Continuous market watching

AI-powered thematic update screening

Audactus has conducted a comprehensive and didactic study of the market, ecosystem, dynamics, and use cases

Definitions and key concepts

- Digital assets, stablecoins, tokenized deposits, and tokenized securities
- Public vs. permissioned blockchains and core on-chain primitives
- Key differences between crypto-native and institutional use cases

Market trends & TradFI SWOT

- Structural drivers shaping adoption (regulation, technology, cost)
- Opportunities and challenges for banks and financial institutions
- Strategic positioning in a rapidly evolving ecosystem

Ecosystem Tokenization, Blockchain, and Digital Assets

- Fintechs, incumbents, and infrastructure providers across the value chain
- Roles covering issuance, custody, trading, compliance, and payments
- Emerging convergence between digital-native players and traditional institutions

Selection of use cases

- Payments, settlement, and transaction banking on-chain
- Digitally native players leading FinTech digital transformation
- Real-world institutional case studies and deployments

Market Landscape and Outlook

- Market sizing and growth projections across asset classes
- Stablecoin adoption trends and on-chain payment volumes
- Institutional participation and investor appetite indicators

CEO Playbook

- Key milestones and must-haves of a strategic on-chain journey
- Audactus accelerators and in-depth use cases playbook

The Audactus team can help you explore the study's findings with a level of granularity tailored to your familiarity with the topic. For organizations looking to define a strategic roadmap and assess relevant use cases, we can work alongside your stakeholders to deploy a pragmatic, actionable playbook.

Executive Summary

“DIGITAL ASSETS HAVE REACHED AN INSTITUTIONAL INFLECTION POINT, MOVING FROM EXPERIMENTATION TO EXECUTION.”

Digital assets and tokenization are not new topics. **For more than a decade, financial institutions and fintech players have explored putting assets and cash on-chain, with early initiatives spanning payments, securities, and real-world assets.** However, the benefits were difficult to realize at scale. **Fragmented technology stacks, unclear regulatory frameworks, and a lack of institutional-grade infrastructure limited adoption to pilots and crypto-native use cases**, preventing these initiatives from materially impacting core financial activities or operating models. There has been general traction for cryptocurrencies in the last decade, with **over $2.5 trillion in cryptocurrency market cap today**, making experts in the fintech field excited to translate that growth to other forms of digital assets and tokenization.

Today, financial markets are reaching a clear inflection point driven by the convergence of several structural factors. **Regulation is maturing in major jurisdictions**, providing clearer guardrails for institutional participation. **Technology has evolved toward integrated**, **“one-stop-shop” platforms** that address custody, compliance, settlement, and interoperability. At the same time, **stablecoins—initially born in the crypto ecosystem—have emerged as a critical building block by bringing a reliable cash leg on-chain**, enabling end-to-end digital transaction flows. This shift is reinforced by the convergence of actors: **fintech players are moving toward institutional-grade solutions**, while **incumbents** such as banks, asset managers, and market infrastructures (e.g. JPM, Blackrock, or SG-Forge**) are actively deploying on-chain initiatives**, signaling a shift from experimentation to execution.

As a result, we believe that digital assets are positioned for sustained expansion over the coming years. Growth is supported by **the increasing range of asset classes being tokenized**, the **rise of use cases beyond payments**—such as transaction banking, settlement, and collateral mobility—**and broadening participation from financial institutions**, with **over 70% of investors interested in gaining exposure to tokenized assets**. While adoption levels remain modest relative to traditional markets, projections and early volumes point to a scalable, multi-asset trajectory rather than isolated use cases. With recent exponential growth in stablecoin usage and digital asset tokenization, there is **a general consensus that the stablecoin market cap will exceed $1 trillion by 2030 and that Digital Asset class AUM could reach at least $5-7 trillion at the beginning of the next decade.**

For clients, this moment presents a strategic choice: remain on the sidelines or begin exploring on-chain capabilities in a controlled, incremental manner. **Early engagement offers a learning-curve advantage, positions institutions to respond to evolving client demand, and supports differentiation through innovative services**—without disrupting existing business models. Operational efficiencies, improved liquidity management, and reduced intermediation further reinforce the case to explore now rather than react later. **Incumbents are well-positioned with their financial and customer expertise to move activities on-chain, and digitally native players are present across the ecosystem to fill any gaps in capabilities.** Through a purposeful and phased transition on-chain, both traditional and newer financial players can see financial and non-financial benefits across their ecosystems.

Digital assets and tokenization offers a quicker and more efficient way to move assets and process transactions across players in today's globalized market

What is a Digital Asset?

A digital asset is any item of value that is created, stored, and transferred electronically. It exists in digital form and is recorded on a digital system, most commonly a blockchain.

Digital assets typically have these characteristics:

1. **Digitally native or represented** ▶ The asset itself or its rights exist electronically
2. **Programmable** ▶ Rules, ownership logic, and transfer conditions can be automated
3. **Verifiable and securable** ▶ Ownership and history are cryptographically secured
4. **Transferable** ▶ Peer-to-peer DeFI (DEX) or through intermediaries (CEX)
5. **Fractionable** ▶ Ownership can be divided for more liquidity and accessibility

Multiple typologies of Digital Assets

	Types	Definition	Examples
Digital Currencies	Stablecoin	Blockchain token pegged to fiat value	
Digital Currencies	CBDC	Digital fiat issued by central bank (Central Bank Digital Currencies)	
Digital Currencies	Tokenized Deposit	Bank deposits represented as blockchain tokens	
	Tokenized RWA(1)	Physical or financial assets tokenized on blockchain (e.g. MMF, Bonds, Public and Private Equity, Private Debt, Commo, Real Estate)	FRANKLIN TEMPLETON INVESTMENTS; BUIDL; TOKENIZED U.S. TREASURIES
	Crypto-currencies	Decentralized digital currencies secured by cryptography and operating on blockchain networks.	
	NFTs	Unique, non-fungible digital tokens on a blockchain representing ownership of a specific asset (digital or physical)	BLUR; OpenSea

Scope of the Study

Digitally native assets reduce friction across issuance, ownership, and transfer, enabling faster settlement and greater liquidity in global markets. By representing money, securities, and real-world assets digitally, tokenization enables faster, more automated, and more interoperable transaction flows.
This study will focus specifically on Digital Currencies and Tokenized RWAs.

Note: (1) RWA stands for Real World Assets

At its core, **DeFi is simply a digital re-architecture** of traditional finance built on DLT, smart contracts and wallets

Key tech concepts inherent to the architecture

Initially essentially dedicated to crypto-currencies, DeFI is an alternative infrastructure for traditional finance while requiring an appropriation of tech concepts as the foundation of automation, speed and security.

Concept	Role	Examples	TradFi Analogy
DeFi Protocols (DEX)	Automated financial workflow for trading, lending, and liquidity provision, executed directly on-chain	UNISWAP, AAVE, MAPLE, Morpho	OTC desk, Broker Dealers, Market exchanges
Smart Contracts	Execute rules automatically based on embedded pre-defined parameters	Digital Asset, Ondo, TRM, TAURUS, Chainalysis Tokenization assets / Risk / Monitoring	Legal contracts, operations, governance, and compliance
Digital Wallets	Hold, manage, and transfer digital assets, enabling interaction with on-chain apps, private keys management, and transaction signing (proof of ownership)	anchorage digital, Fireblocks, Ledger Institutional grade – Custodial wallet	Custody accounts, brokerage accounts, and payment wallets
Tokens	Embark information related to the asset such as the rights, value, and claims	Stable coin, Native token, BlackRock *BUILD* Tokenized Money, J.P.Morgan *JPM Coin* Tokenized Deposit	RWA, securities, deposits, and cash
Centralized Exchange (CEX)	Custodial trading venues providing liquidity, price discovery, and fiat on/off ramps, with integrated compliance controls.	coinbase, COINHOUSE, kraken, Robinhood, BINANCE	Market infrastructure, Banks, Custodians, Assets Managers
Blockchain or DLT (Distributed Ledger Technology)	Register any transaction (primary / secondary) at multiple ledgers across the chain	SOLANA, Stellar (Public); ONYX by J.P.Morgan (Private); Canton (Permissioned)	Settlement rails, clearing house, OTC, and data warehouses

Private, public or permissioned DLT?

The Chain is originally public (data distributed to every participants)

Given the concerns regarding the **privacy of transaction**, private blockchains have raised over the last years, followed by **permissioned blockchains**(1) gathering best of both worlds solving Financial Institution's privacy concerns

Zero-Knowledge Proofs (ZKPs)

ZKPs are cryptographic techniques that allow one party to **prove the validity of a transaction or statement without revealing the underlying data**.

Note: (1) Tailored to the needs of confidentiality (encryption, zero-knowledge proofs, etc), compliance (KYC, AML/CFT, KYT, etc), limited access (whitelisting)
Note: (2) In financial blockchains, ZKPs enable public or permissioned networks to validate transfers, balances, and compliance rules while preserving confidentiality of counterparties, transaction amounts, and positions.

The advantages of on-chain infrastructure **meaningfully improve institutional operations** while simultaneously **expanding client utility and access**

24/7	Instantaneous settlement and DvP (Delivery vs. Payment)	Multi-party transaction recording (DLT)	Streamlined value chain	Programmability of the execution	Fractional ownership
↓ Situation today off-chain ↓					
Limited market hours, partial after-hours support, manual intervention outside core windows	T+1 / T+2 settlement, counterparty exposure, high intraday liquidity buffers	Manual processing, fragmented systems, reconciliation across parties	Siloed ledgers, delayed reporting, limited real-time visibility	Multiple intermediaries, duplicative processes, high processing and custody fees	High minimum investment sizes, complex ownership structures, limited access to alternatives
↓ Positive effects of moving on-chain ↓					
Continuous 24/7 access, reduced idle capital, global participation across time zones	Atomic DvP settlement, reduced settlement risk, faster capital recycling	Smart-contract automation, fewer settlement errors, simplified asset servicing, lower operations cost	Shared transaction records, real-time visibility, improved auditability and reporting	Streamlined workflows, fewer intermediaries, reduced processing and liquidity costs	Native fractional ownership, lower minimums, broader participation, improved capital efficiency

On-chain infrastructure provides cross-stakeholder upside, from faster settlement to lower costs and broader investment accessibility; most on-chain benefits accrue to both institutions and clients, with significant gains in speed, transparency, automation, and liquidity.

Stablecoins have evolved from crypto-native tools to institutional rails, unlocking cash for regulated use cases and allowing **full on-chain transaction**

Why stablecoin?

Initial goal for stablecoins

- **Provide on-chain liquidity and dollar access which** enable trading, settlement, and cash-like functionality on crypto platforms in regions where access to the traditional banking system limited.
- **Offer cash-equivalent yield exposure** from short-term U.S. Treasury returns captured at the issuer level(1)

As stablecoin usage has evolved beyond crypto space

- **Enterprise payment and settlement rails** supporting real-time B2B, treasury, and cross-border payments
- **Bridge between TradFi and digital markets** acting as a regulated, chain-native representation of fiat money usable across CEX platforms, DEX, and tokenized asset ecosystems

Examples of stablecoins today	Digitally Native Player	FI Player
Regulated	Circle (USDC/EURC) PayPal (PYUSD) Heuro (HEURO) - *New*	SG Forge (EURCV / USDCV)
Partially regulated & unregulated	Tether (USDT) Sky (USDS) MakerDAO (DAI)	N/A

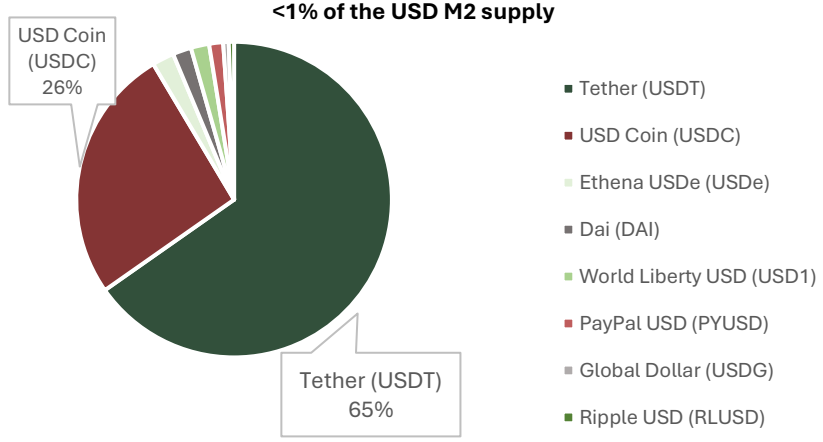
Recent stablecoin evolvements

- **Payment Stablecoin:** regulated by Genius Act in the US as U.S. federal framework (USDC / PYUSD)
- **CBDC:** A Central-bank money in token form like wCBDC of ECB (Project Pontes / Appia) or wCBDC of SNB (Project Helvetia / SDX)
- **Tokenized Deposit:** A bank deposit represented on-chain like JPM Coin

Top 8 Stablecoins by Market Cap

Total Market Cap (EOY 2025): ~$300B

<1% of the USD M2 supply



Source: defillama.com, coinmarketcap.com, Audactus analysis

Open topics

Lack of regulation on the pegged asset due to unclear guardrails (run risk) and not "singleness" of money

Issue for sovereignty of other money across the world due to dollar dominance concern and risk of FX/controls leakage

Deposit disintermediation (the #1 "bank killer" fear) due to deposits drift from banks

Stablecoins increasingly function as the institutional cash leg, enabling automated payments, collateral mobility, and cross-border settlement on-chain.

Note: (1) yield typically retained by the issuer due to regulatory requirements (e.g. Genius Act)

Digital assets are giving rise to **articulated ecosystem** where TradFi and native digital players collaborate through orchestrated, automated, and interoperable workflows

Functions of Digital Asset players in ecosystem

Issuer:
- Mints, distributes, and manages digital assets (e.g. tokenized bonds, stablecoins, funds, cash deposits)
- Embeds **transfer rules, ownership restrictions, and payout logic** in smart contracts
- Handles **redemption and burning** of tokens to retire assets or return value to investors

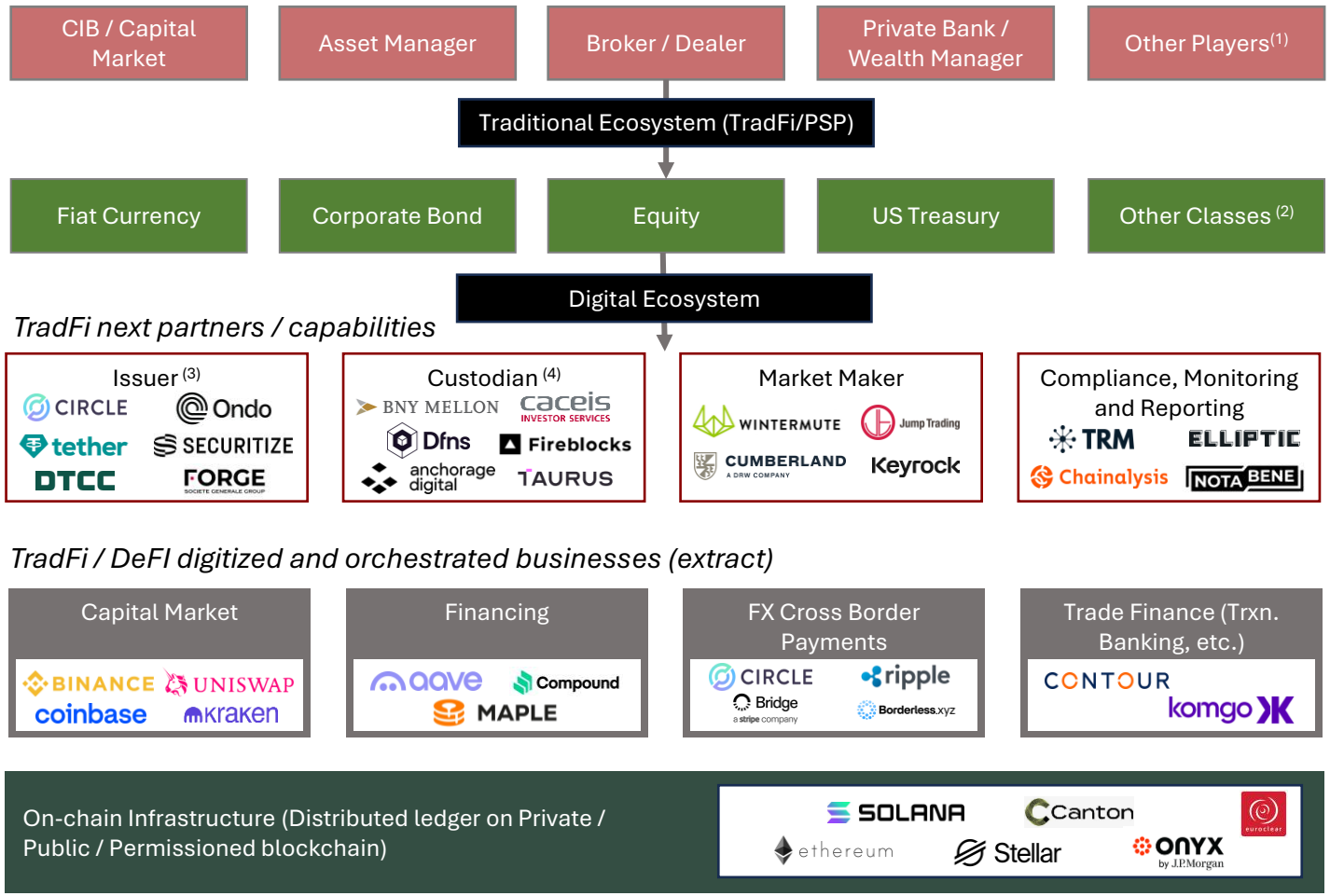
Custodian:
- Safekeeps digital assets and **private keys** for institutions
- Manages secure transfer and movement of assets across networks

Market Maker:
- Provides continuous liquidity through two-sided pricing and supports intraday liquidity and tighter spreads across tokenized assets

Analysis, Monitoring, and Reporting:
- Deals with AML, KYC, KYB, KYT, Monitoring, and Reporting requirements

Orchestrated and digitized businesses:
- Coordinates **business workflows** between issuers, custodians, exchanges, and market participants
- Manages **permissions, identity, compliance logic**, and lifecycle automation (i.e. cross-border payments, bond lifecycle management)
- Ensures **interoperability** between blockchains and traditional systems

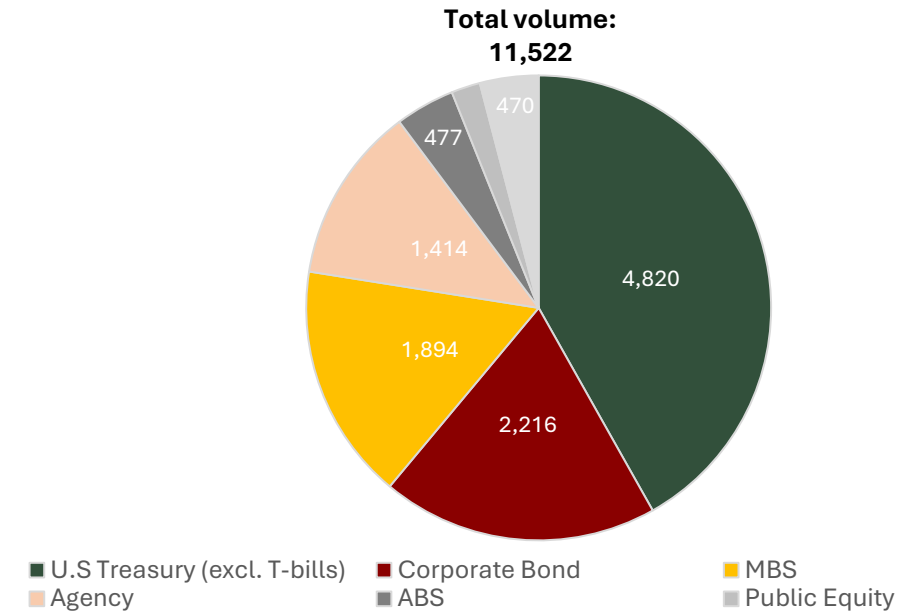
Illustration



Note: (1) 'Other Players' could include PSP, Retail Banking, and Merchants
Note: (2) 'Other Classes' could include commodities, MBS, ABS, Agency Bonds, and Municipal Bonds
Note: (3) 'Issuer' servicing typically includes any on-ramp / off-ramp support
Note: (4) 'Custodian' servicing typically includes the creation and management of the digital wallet

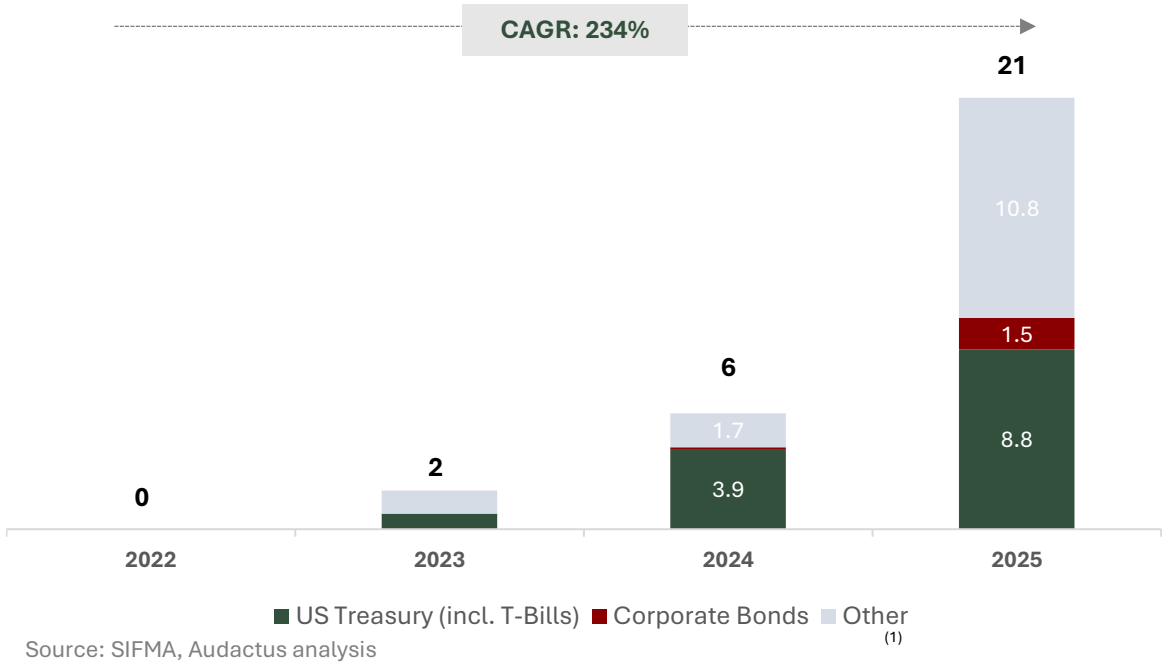
Tokenized securities have been here for some time but now entering an acceleration phase driven by enhanced access to **liquidity, technology maturity and stablecoin**

Breakdown of traditional asset gross issuance (EOY 2025 volume;$B)



Source: RWA.xyz, Audactus analysis

Evolution of tokenized RWA gross issuance (annual volume;$B)



Source: SIFMA, Audactus analysis

Gross issuance is broad-based but dominated by government (excluding T-bill) and corporate debt. Tokenized RWA gross issuance reaches out 0.18% of traditional gross issuance by end of December 2025.

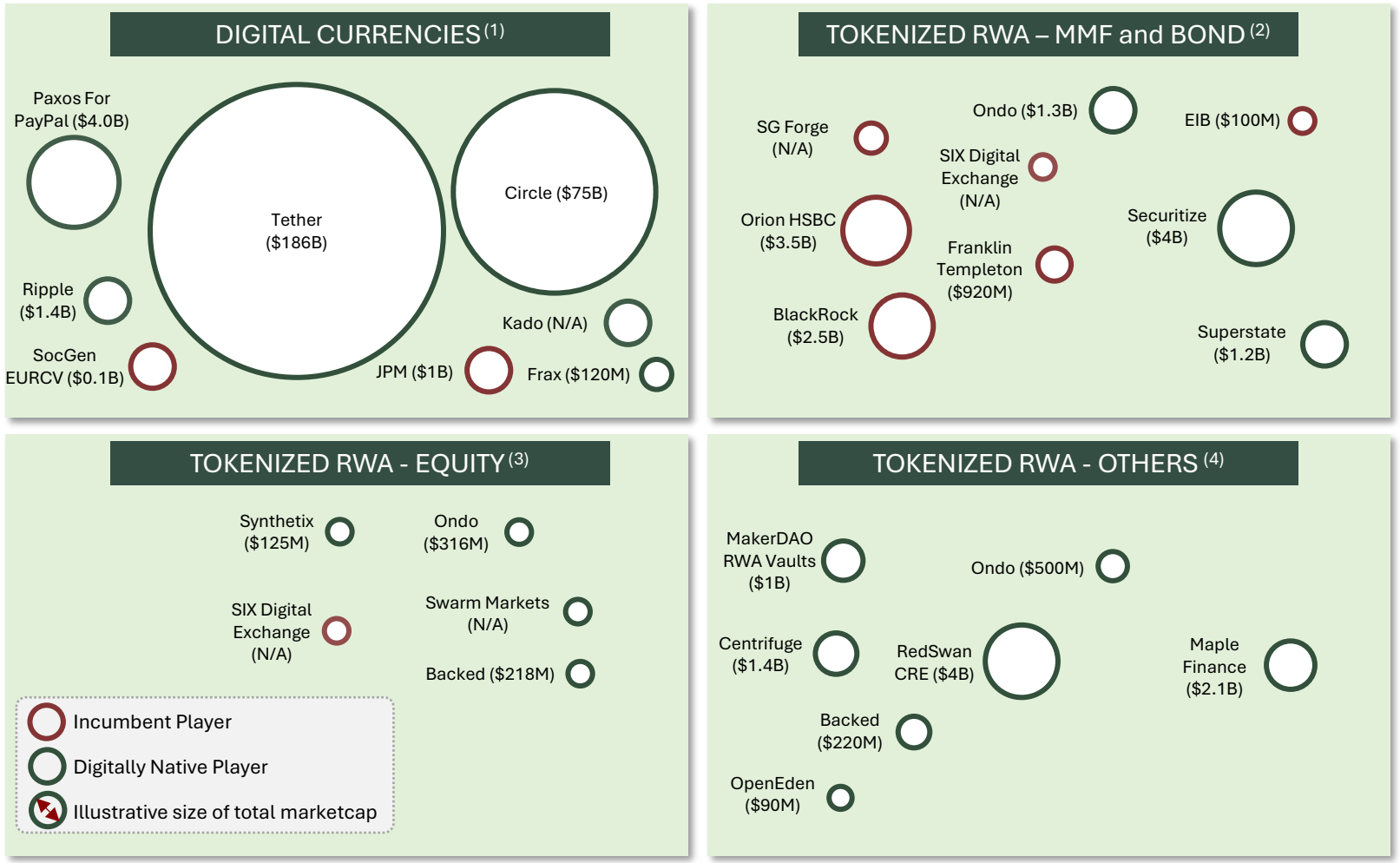
Digital issuance is scaling rapidly from a small base, while MMFs drives most of the expansion. Diversification within digital markets is accelerating supported by few leading FIs (e.g. JPM, Blackrock) and Fintechs (e.g. Ondo, Securitize) raising engagement.

Digital issuance is scaling rapidly and broadening beyond Treasuries into a multi-asset landscape; the tokenized market is transitioning from early pilots to real scaling, with Treasuries leading adoption and additional asset classes beginning to follow. The growth thus far has been driven by this new digital initiative, better market liquidity maturing technology, and progressive stablecoin adoption for settlement.

Note: (1) 'Other' category includes Non-US Government Debt, Public and Private Equity, Real Estate, Money Market, Structured Credit, Commodities, Private Credit, and Institutional Alternative Funds

While the stablecoin market is dominated by digital native players, there are a few forward-thinking TradFi players leading the exploration of digital asset space

Heat map of the major initiatives across US and EU landscape



Macro statistics of US and EU landscape

342+ Stablecoin Issued
(198 USD & 20 EUR)

63+ Tokenized Fund Issued
(22 Incumbents & 41 Digital Natives)

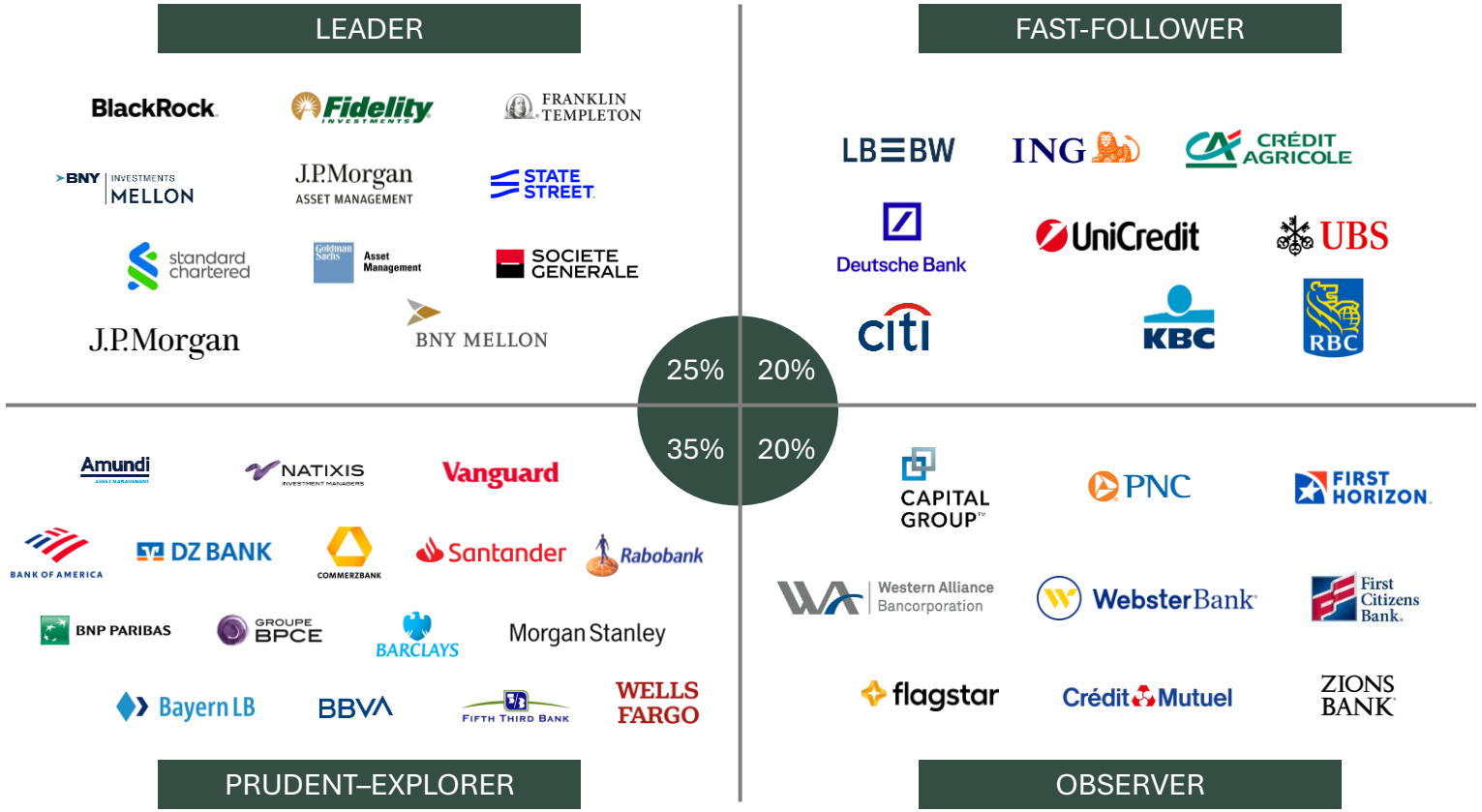
2343+ Tokenized Stocks Issued
(30+ Unique Tokenized Stock Issuers)

12+ Tokenized Real Estate Issued
(All Digital Native)

Note: (1) The 'Digital Currency' section includes stablecoins, tokenized deposits and CBDCs.
Note: (2) The Tokenized RWA - Bonds section in the heat map includes MMFs and volumes are on-chain AUM/TVL
Note: (3) The Tokenized RWA - Equity section in the heat map include commodities and index / volumes are cumulative issuance
Note: (4) The Tokenized RWA - Others section in the heat map include tokenized real estate, and fine art, and volumes are on-chain AUM/TVL
Source: Audactus analysis, deFiLama (As of March 3, 2026)

The digital asset landscape shows increasing institutional engagement, though maturity levels vary significantly by size and strategy.

Mapping of banks and asset managers' strategic positioning in Digital Assets



Source: Corporate Websites, Annual Investor Report, Strategic Plan, LinkedIn, Interviews, Audactus Insights

Methodology behind competitive landscape

Sample

46 large and mid-sized FIs across Northern America and Europe (12 Asset Managers, 34 Banks) were assessed based on their overall maturity in digital assets.

Assessment Criteria

- Capabilities: Presence of a dedicated digital assets leadership and/or specialized teams or business units
- Maturity: Level of advancement from experimentation (PoCs, pilots) to production (live use cases, tokenized assets, stablecoin initiatives)
- Ambition: Degree to which digital assets initiatives are embedded in the institution's strategy

Classification Logic

- Observer: Limited or no visible activity on digital assets
- Prudent Explorer: Early-stage initiatives with exploratory use cases
- Fast Follower: Structured capabilities with active experimentation and selective deployment
- Leader: Advanced capabilities with multiple production use cases and strong strategic commitment

Digital asset adoption is primarily driven by scale, with larger institutions advancing from exploration to concrete use cases with expressed ambitions.
U.S. banks are progressing more rapidly than European peers, while mid-sized players remain in exploratory phases.
Up to 80% of the sample has allocated resources to Tokenized Assets and Digital Currencies reflecting an increasingly interest for the market and technology.

A growing number of real use cases demonstrate that financial institutions are actively adopting tokenized assets and on-chain workflows

Extract of meaningful use cases across the asset classes and traditional finance stakeholders (*incl. banks, market infra, asset managers and others*)

Société Générale (SG-FORGE) EUR / USD Coinvertible (EURCV / USDCV)
Regulated bank-issued stablecoin for institutional settlement, liquidity management, and on-chain financial markets

JPM Coin and JPMD
JPM Coin is a USD-denominated deposit token issued by JPMorgan Chase that represents bank deposits on a public blockchain

PayPal PYUSD
PayPal-issued USD stablecoin integrated into its retail and merchant ecosystem

BlackRock's Tokenized Treasury Money Fund
A tokenized USD institutional money market fund investing in short-term US Treasuries, where fund shares are issued and transferred on blockchain

Franklin Templeton OnChain U.S. Government Money Fund (FOBXX)
A U.S. registered money market fund investing in Treasuries, with fund shares recorded and transferable on public blockchain infrastructure

DTCC – ComposerX
Building a platform allowing the tokenization of RWA, entire asset lifecycle management, and sourcing of data and analytics

Euroclear and Banque de France – Pythagore
Experiment aimed at testing the use of central bank digital currency (CBDC) to settle tokenized securities transactions in a secure and automated way on blockchain

Partnership with Securitize released in 2026
Nasdaq is developing a dual-issuance model where the same security exists both in traditional form and as a token, enabling a gradual transition toward on-chain markets.

J.P. Morgan Intraday Repo on Blockchain
J.P. Morgan executed the world's first blockchain-based intraday repo transaction, settling the collateral leg and cash leg (via JPM Coin) in hours instead of days and enabling clients to unlock intraday liquidity

Societe Generale–Forge U.S. Tokenized Bond Issuance (Canton Network)
Societe Generale-Forge issued its first U.S. digital bond as a security token on the Canton Network using Broadridge's tokenization system, purchased by DRW

SIX Digital Exchange (SDX) — Wholesale CBDC Settlement
SDX became the first regulated exchange to settle tokenized securities using a production wholesale CBDC (wCBDC) issued by the Swiss National Bank as part of Project Helvetia

Swift + SG-Forge Hybrid Tokenized Bond Settlement
Swift and SG-Forge completed a hybrid settlement pilot, settling tokenized bonds using both fiat cash and MiCA-compliant stablecoin (EURCV) while orchestrating transfers through SWIFT's ISO 20022 messaging layer

BNY + Goldman Sachs tokenized MMF
Collaboration to enable tokenized money market funds and digital collateral mobility using distributed ledger infrastructure

HSBC Orion – Digital Gilt Pilot
HSBC's Orion platform was selected by HM Treasury to issue the UK's first digitally native government bond, with blockchain acting as the sole legal record of ownership

Redswan Tokenized commercial real estate investment
RedSwan CRE is a platform that uses blockchain technology to fractionalize and tokenize commercial real estate (CRE)

Citi + SDX Tokenized Private Market Shares
Citi/SDX are launching an institutional solution to tokenize and settle private-market equity through SDX's regulated digital CSD, expanding liquidity access for private companies

HSBC Tokenized Gold
HSBC launched a tokenized gold instrument representing fractional ownership of physical gold held in HSBC vaults, available for retail (HK) and institutional (UK) investors

Distributed Ledger Repo Solutions
Developing blockchain-based solution, Distributed Ledger Repo (DLR), to streamline post-trade processes and enable more efficient, near real-time settlement of repo transactions.

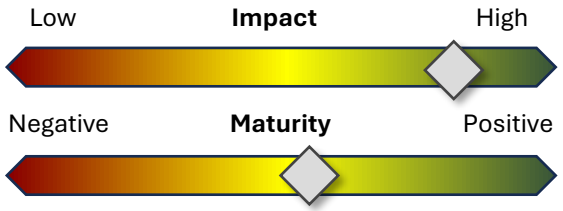
Banks | Market infra | Asset Managers | Others (PSP, RE..)

The evolution of digital assets depends on progress across technology, regulation, and policy, areas that offer strong upside but remain unevenly developed globally

Technology

Accelerators:
- Maturing blockchain infrastructure, paired with improved quantum computing efforts, enable higher throughput and lower latency (L1/L2)
- Interoperability advances (cross-chain messaging, standardized APIs)
- Growth of tokenization platforms supporting multiple asset classes (smart contracts)
- Increasing integration of digital assets into existing core banking and treasury systems

Roadblocks:
- Fragmented technology standards across chains and issuers
- Legacy system constraints limiting true real-time processing (TradFi integration)
- Cybersecurity, operational risks, and lack of resilience are slowing institutional adoption
- Inconsistent enterprise-grade scalability in certain blockchain networks

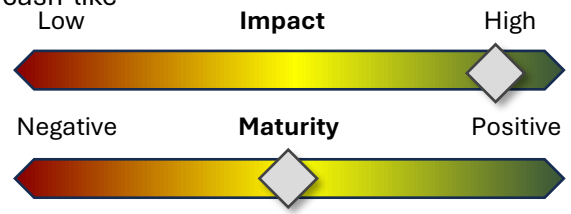


Interoperable, scalable blockchain rails are becoming viable for high-value settlement but remain uneven across networks and legacy integrations

Regulatory

Accelerators:
- Clarity around stablecoin and tokenization frameworks in major jurisdictions
- Expanding regulatory sandboxes enabling controlled experimentation
- Recognition of digital asset custody as a regulated financial activity
- Momentum around harmonization of cross-border digital asset rules

Roadblocks:
- Jurisdictional divergence creating uncertainty for global institutions (MiCA vs GENIUS)
- Slow-moving legislative bodies delaying enabling regulations (CLARITY)
- Compliance burdens (AML/KYC, travel rule) that reduce speed-to-market
- Lack of standardized classification for digital assets across regulators
- BCBS booking rules, stablecoin not considered as cash-like

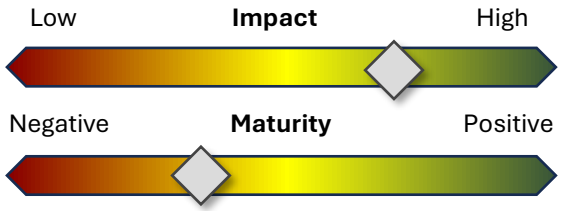


Regulatory clarity is improving but remains fragmented, creating both opportunity for regulated digital-money products and uncertainty across jurisdictions

Political

Accelerators:
- Government interest in economic competitiveness through fintech innovation
- Public sector exploration of digital identity, tokenized payments and infrastructure
- Political pressure to modernize financial rails and reduce settlement risk (Control Financial Crime)
- Strategic national focus on blockchain leadership

Roadblocks:
- Political polarization around crypto and its societal role
- Concerns about capital flow control and financial stability
- Lobbying pressure from incumbents that slows policy modernization
- Public sector risk aversion toward emerging technologies (Sovereignty at stake)



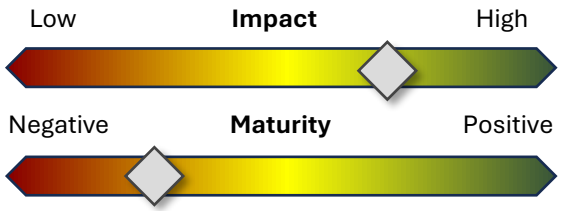
Policy momentum favors bank-led digital infrastructure, but political volatility and sovereignty concerns continue to shape adoption pace

Market momentum is now reinforced by investor appetite, cultural acceptance, and rising professional expertise, key forces driving the next phase of digital asset growth

Economic

Accelerators:
- Growing investor appetite for efficiency and yield via tokenized assets
- Increasing cost pressures on banks creating incentives for modernization
- Tokenization enabling new liquidity pools and fractional participation
- Real-time settlement reducing credit, collateral, and operational costs

Roadblocks:
- Uncertain macro environment reducing risk appetite for new products
- High upfront investment required to re-platform or integrate digital rails
- Lack of scalable business models proven across full cycles
- Liquidity fragmentation across chains and token formats

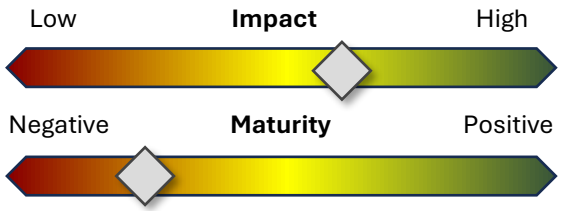


Economic signals show growing demand for efficiency and new liquidity sources, but adoption is tempered by macro uncertainty and fragmented digital-asset liquidity

Sociological

Accelerators:
- Institutional normalization of digital assets across treasury, markets, and custody
- Growing talent familiarity with blockchain and smart contracts
- Increasing public comfort with digital wallets and token-based interactions
- Wider acceptance of 24/7 digital financial services

Roadblocks:
- General mistrust of crypto due to historical volatility and money laundering
- Limited digital literacy among retail and corporate end users
- Perception gap between blockchain value and “speculative crypto” narratives
- Internal cultural resistance at incumbent firms

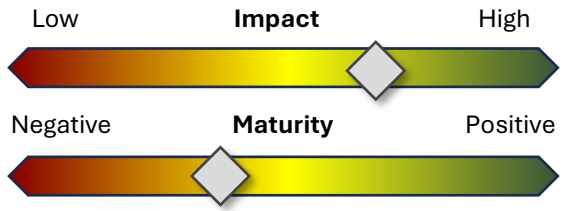


Cultural acceptance of digital assets is rising across institutions and users, though mistrust from past crypto failures and uneven literacy still shape adoption pace

Expertise

Accelerators:
- Expanding pool of blockchain engineers, product talent, and risk specialists
- Growth of digital-asset-focused consulting and integration partners
- Training programs emerging within major financial institutions
- Shared industry frameworks around smart contract security and tokenization

Roadblocks:
- Shortage of senior professionals with both blockchain and institutional finance expertise
- Limited compliance and legal talent specialized in digital asset regulation
- Steep learning curve for non-technical teams (ops, risk, finance)
- Competition for scarce technical talent raising implementation costs



Professional capability around blockchain and tokenization is expanding, but talent gaps—especially at the intersection of tech and finance—remain a constraint on scalability

As the missing cash-leg, stablecoins convert fragmented hybrid flows with multiple on-ramp and off-ramp activities into fully on-chain transactions

Takeaways from stablecoin usage as payment mechanism

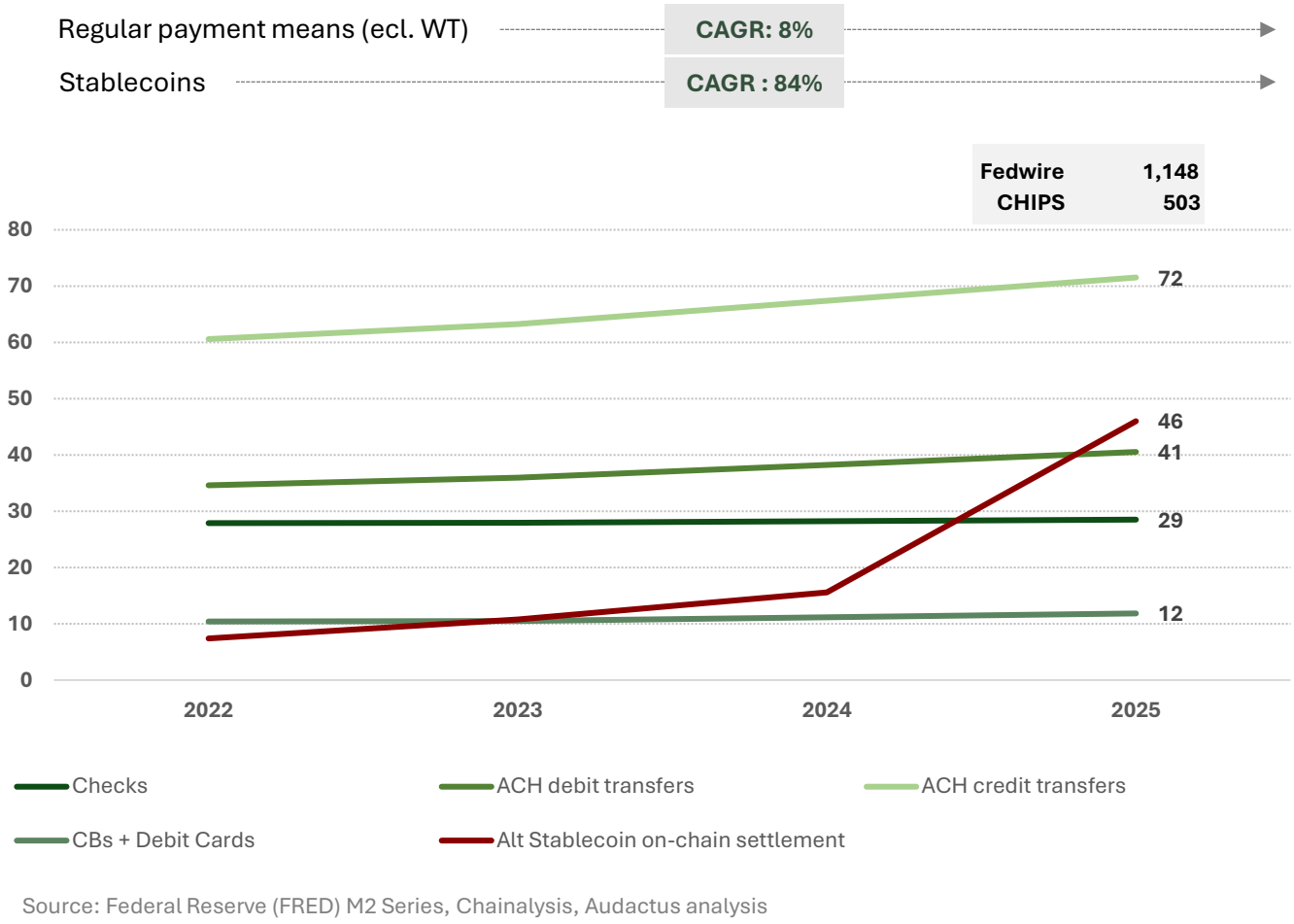
Stablecoins are trending up in its use as a means of payment:

- Stablecoin on-chain settlement is the fastest-growing line, with a CAGR of 84%, outlining an **acceleration of the adoption as a B2C and B2B payment means** (reached 9% of CHIPS volume in 2025)
- Growth in stablecoin payments is enabling more on-chain settlement, and separately we're seeing early traction in tokenized assets; together these trends increase the feasibility of end-to-end on-chain workflows, though they scale at different speeds.

Stablecoins are the cash-leg that takes flows fully on-chain:

- Stablecoins deliver immediate, programmable cash against tokenized assets and collateral, allowing atomic DvP/PvP so both sides post and settle in the same transaction without pre-funding.
- Corporates can move funds across entities and venues in minutes, improving liquidity positioning for FX, supplier payments, and intercompany sweeps while keeping rich approval and policy controls.

US B2C and B2B payments usage (annual value excl Wire Transfers, $T)

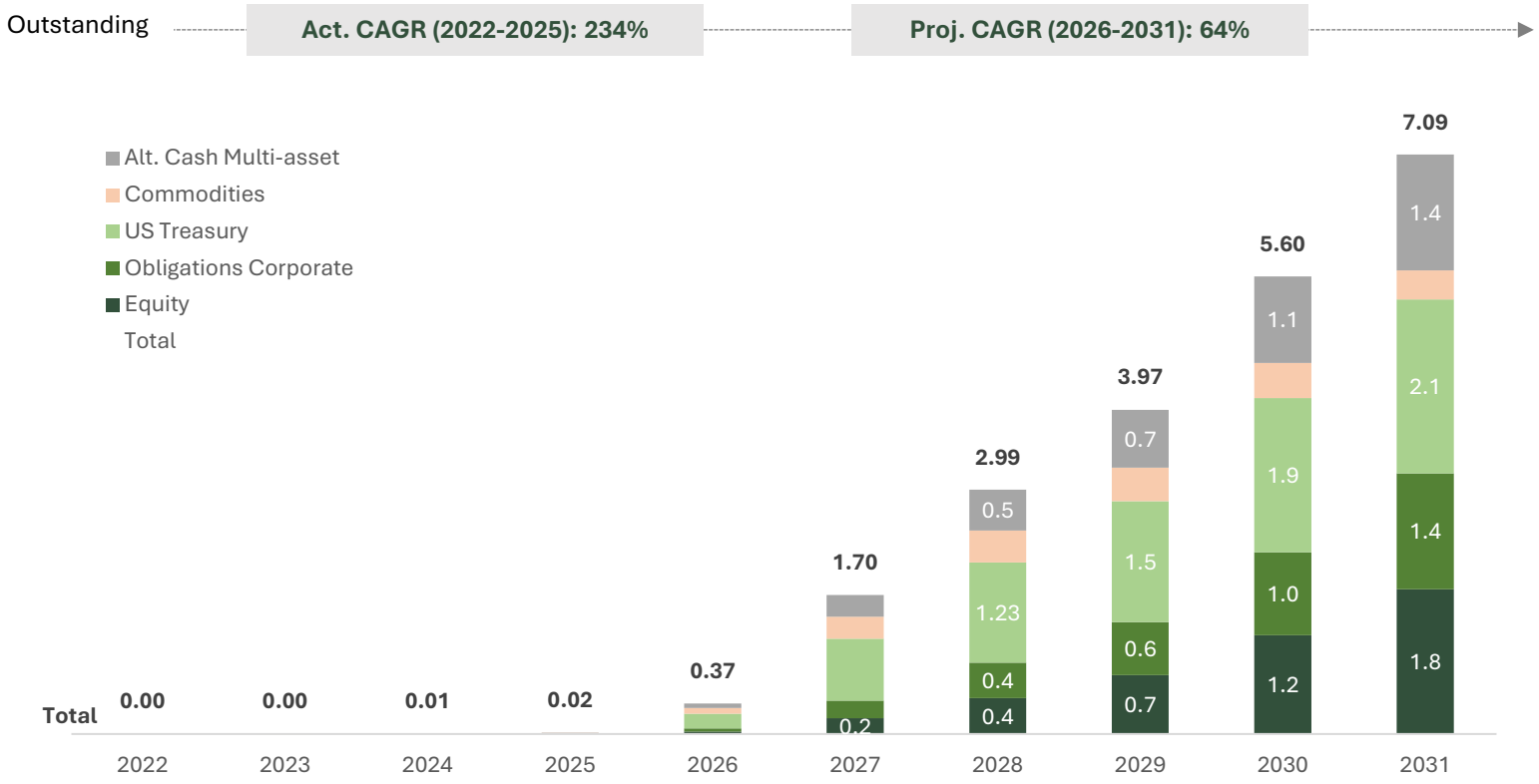


Source: Federal Reserve (FRED) M2 Series, Chainalysis, Audactus analysis

Note: (1) Volume of payment transactions includes bots, programmatic DeFi flows, and internal churn

Digital asset markets are positioned for significant expansion, transitioning from **early experiments to large-scale AUM** across diverse asset categories

Projecting Digital Asset class AUM (excl. stablecoins) (annual volume;$T)



Source: RWA.xyz, SIFMA, Audactus Analysis

Key projection assumptions

Conservative projection of AUM based on YoY growth of 7% up to 2031 according to PwC.

Asset class breakdown assumptions: progressive alignment of digital asset split on traditional asset class split, with an under representation of the equity asset class to reflect a slower start in 2025:

- All. Cash Multi-Asset = 20%
- Commodities = 5%
- US Treasury = 30%
- Obligations Corporate = 20%
- Equity = 25%

Digital issuance penetration assumptions: 2026 penetration rate assumed at 0.5% with a steady 68% CAGR increase in overall penetration rate, reaching ~5% by 2031. This is mainly driven by the top 10 incumbents(2) (up to 6% to 2031 vs. 3% rest of the market) and FinTechs(3) that are demonstrating a strong appetite to tokenization and an ability to leverage large tech capabilities.

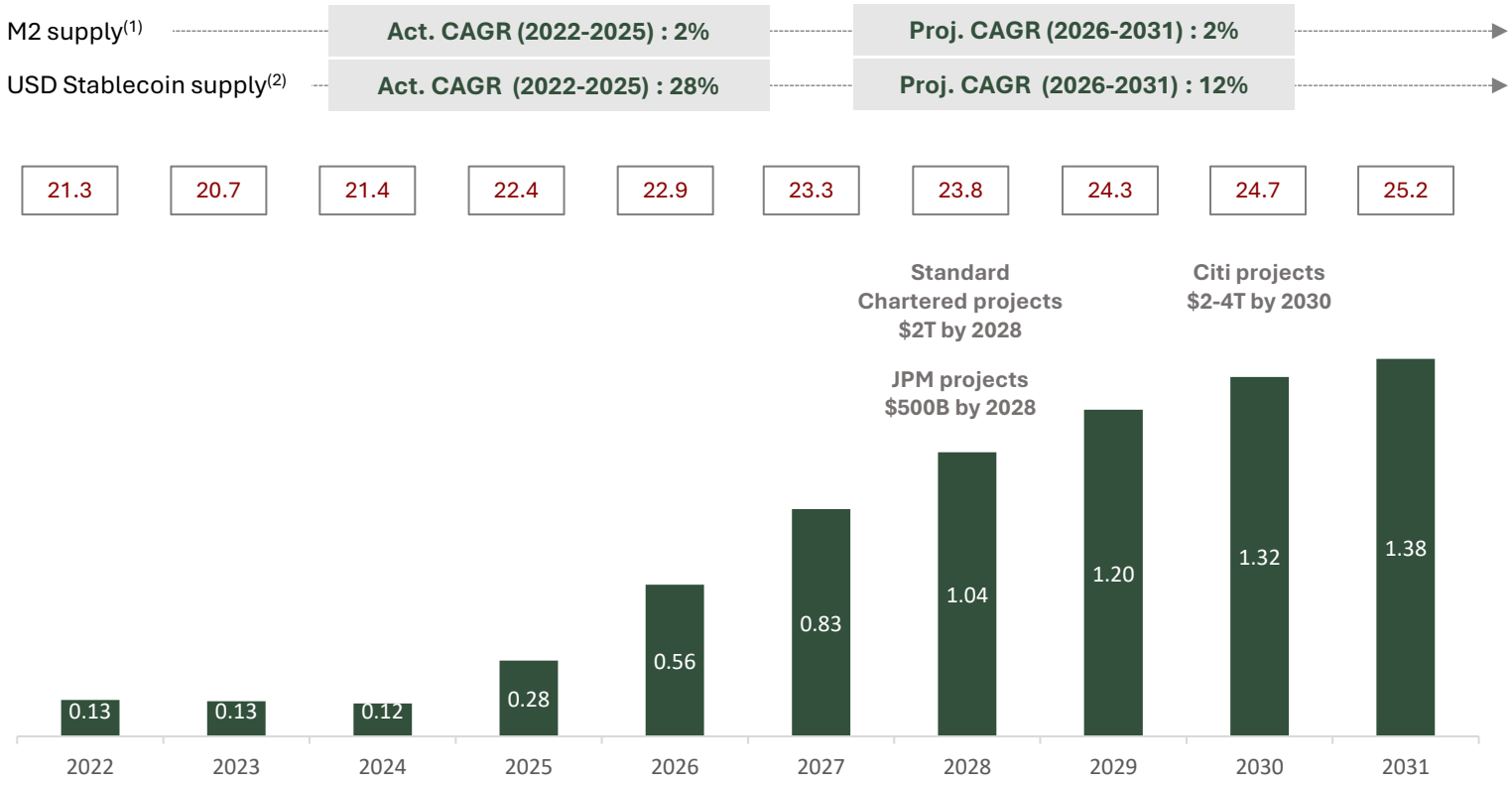
General projection assumptions: The approach taken accounts for conservative estimates by McKinsey and Citi ($3-5T by 2030) as well as aggressive estimates by BCG ($16T by 2030).

A mid-decade inflection drives issuance from almost negligible levels to over $7T annually by 2031, supported by broadening participation across asset classes. Rapid growth is accompanied by widening asset-class participation, signaling a transition from early Treasury-led pilots to multi-asset digital issuance

Note: (2) BlackRock, Vanguard Group, Fidelity Investments, State Street (SSGA), J.P. Morgan Asset Management, Goldman Sachs Asset Management, Capital Group, and BNY. Note: (3) Ondo, Securitize, Taurus

USD-backed stablecoin supply is projected to scale significantly, outpacing M2 growth as adoption deepens across payment and liquidity use cases

Projecting USD stablecoin market cap and M2 supply (value, $T)



Source: defillama.com, Audactus analysis

Key projection assumptions

USD M2 supply growth assumptions: Consistent projected growth YoY matching actual CAGR from 2022 – 2025 - YoY growth from 2025-2031 of 2%.

USD stablecoin supply growth assumptions: Accelerated growth followed by slower growth as stablecoin matures in the market. YoY growth from 2025-2026 estimated at 100% (already outpacing that growth as of March 2026) with a steady reduction in YoY growth for remainder of forecast settling at 5% growth from 2030-2031.

USD stablecoin yield assumptions: No yield is paid to holders and treat USD stablecoins purely as a cash-leg settlement asset (not an investable product). Under current frameworks, U.S. payment-stablecoin proposals (e.g. the GENIUS Act) prohibit interest to holders and require 1:1 high-quality liquid reserves with ongoing disclosures; yield on reserves, if any, remains with the issuer.

*This is a conservative base case. If regulation were to permit interest-bearing stablecoins, revise assumptions upward to reflect potential holder yield and stronger liquidity pool incentives.

Stablecoin issuance accelerates rapidly through the decade, growing far faster than M2 and reflecting strengthening demand for on-chain dollars. Projections show stablecoin supply expanding from near-zero to nearly $1.5T by 2031, even as traditional USD supply grows at a steady low rate.

Note: (1) M2 consists of currency in circulation, demand deposits, other liquid deposits, small-denomination time deposits, and retail money-market mutual funds
Note: (2) Supply including only the market cap of stablecoins pegged by fiat currency, excluding t-Bill, commodities and other high-quality collateral

The next phase of competition will be defined by institutions that integrate on-chain capabilities horizontally and vertically across the enterprise.

⚠ Escalate to high-end market / proximity to final client = Progressive disintermediation

Clients	U.S Department of Treasury	Agencies / Municipal	Corporate	Financial Institutions

	Advisory	Capital Market	Financing	Transaction Banking	Crypto services
Financial and Banking Stack					
Activities	ECM, Private Debt, M&A	FX, Credit Rates, Commodities, and Equity	Project finance, Asset Finance, Securitization, Payables /Receivables, and Lending	Cash Management, Payments, Clearing Settlements, Custody, and Trade finance	Trading & brokerage services, Custody, Borrowing / Lending, or Payments
DeFI Tech Servicing Stack					
Activities	Digital issuance, on-ramp / off-ramp support	Digital wallet management	two-sided pricing and intraday liquidity	AML, KYC, KYB, KYT, Monitoring, and Reporting	Price discovery, trade execution, and market liquidity

Vertical integration through an aggregation of **financial services and asset classes** with digital tech stack capabilities

coinbase kraken BitGo SECURITIZE

1

2

DeFI Tech stack horizontal integration through orchestration: **"One stop shop tech stack"**

CIRCLE TAURUS SECURITIZE

Key drivers to promote horizontal and vertical integration include the opportunity for entities to **capture high-end market revenue within the banking space** (1), to support the needs of clients by **promoting a one-stop shop of on-chain offerings** (2), and to **partner and integrate directly with SEC-regulated technologies and FinTechs**. Ultimately, **banks that integrate financing with on-chain capabilities and technologies to capture future market share**.

As this market undergoes a structural rebalancing, three converging forces are emerging, oscillating between cooperation and direct competition

Real World Asset market and related value chain
Advisory ♦ Trading ♦ Custody ♦ Post-trade ♦ Asset Servicing ♦ Liquidity Management ♦ Payment

Three major competitive moves are shaping the market ecosystem

	1 LARGE BANK AND ASSET MANAGERS	2 MARKET INFRASTRUCTURES (e.g. LCP,CSD)	3 CRYPTO-NATIVE PLAYERS & FINTECHS
Examples	*JP Morgan (Kinexys)* *Citi Bank* *Societe Generale (SG-Forge)*	*DTCC (ComposerX) + Market Participants* *Euroclear (Pythagore) + DdF* *Clearstream (Seturion) + Market Participants*	*Anchorage* *Coinbase* *Kraken* *Gemini* *BitGo* *Securitize*
Ambition	• Lead the definition of tomorrow's market standards • Build deep blockchain technology and ecosystem expertise • Preserve and strengthen client relationships at all cost	• Mitigate disruption risk through hybrid or full infrastructure transformation while preserving market positioning • Maintain access to the liquidity pools enabled by the centralized model	• Diversify their revenue streams through adoption of traditional asset classes and strategic partnership with incumbents • Deliver a one-stop-shop experience within an institutional grade framework to steadily capture and retain client base
Core Assets	• Extensive client portfolio • Financial product expertise • Risk management framework	• Centralized accessibility to broad range of assets and liquidity pool • It 'works' with T+1	• Master the blockchain / DLT tech stack with up-to-date infrastructure • One-stop-shop tech stack

Adopting the DeFI ecosystem through strategic partnerships and collaboration prior to a consolidation cycle (Issuer ♦ Custodial Wallet ♦ Network ♦ Market making ♦ Monitoring/Reporting ♦ On/off ramp)

These market movements introduce significant uncertainty in the path to success. To navigate this complexity, banks and asset managers must be selective in identifying the use cases that matter most to their business model, while adopting a multi-option approach to preserve strategic flexibility and avoid being locked into a single path.

Financial institutions are well positioned to compete in digital assets, provided they can overcome legacy constraints and operating-model inertia

Conducting a SWOT analysis from the bank's perspective

STRENGTHS

- The long track record of digital infrastructures providing **regulatory and risk enterprise credibility** makes banks comfortable with moving on-chain.
- Current digital infrastructure systems already run **mature compliance programs that banks can leverage** for its wallets and on-chain flows.
- Banks already **understand how markets settle and fund**, which can easily translate to digital capabilities for doing settling and funding.
- Banks are already knowledgeable of each client's portfolio and cash needs, so it would be **easy to offer highly customized digital-asset services**.

WEAKNESSES

- The fragmented core systems for digital infrastructure make new **wallet, key, and smart-contract integration slower and more expensive**.
- Limited staff of **crypto-engineering talent**
- The challenges of balancing **new on-chain and traditional rails offerings**
- Standing up **cyber, security, and enterprise-grade controls for on-chain activity is costly** at the start.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Offering **new on-chain services will help banks stand out** from other competitors and would deepen client retention.
- Digital settlement can **lower processing, liquidity, and risk-management** for banks over time.
- On-chain markets and tokenized assets **open additional funding, liquidity, and collateral options** that banks could offer.
- Fintech 'one-stop' platforms can **provide banks with a faster, simpler connectivity** to blockchain infrastructure.

THREATS

- Any failure in smart contracts, keys, or vendors could lead to **major reputational and regulatory issues** for the bank.
- If clients hold value in stablecoins or fintech wallets, **bank deposits and payment flows can decline**.
- Mixed rules on CBDCs and stablecoins due to **regulatory differences across US/EU/APAC regions** can slow or derail bank digital execution.
- General reliance on outside digital infrastructures can **reduce internal bank control of the general workflow and the technical stack**.
- The business model of banks might **be pressured by margin compression** as on-chain rails commoditize traditional payments.

Banks bring trust, regulatory credibility, and distribution strength into digital assets, but must move quickly to mitigate legacy-system drag and the risk of disintermediation. On-chain services unlock new revenue pools but capturing them requires overcoming technology fragmentation and accelerating execution.

A wide spectrum of institutional, retail, and operational use cases can be improved through on-chain capabilities and programmable digital assets

Business Asset Management

- Tokenized fund share issuance
- Automated NAV & reporting workflows
- On-chain transfer agency
- Tokenized MMF distribution
- Collateral mobility for fund operations
- Tokenized alternatives access (PE/RE)

Business CIB & Capital Market

- Tokenized bond issuance & lifecycle
- Tokenized equity and structured notes
- On-chain collateral management
- DLT-enabled repo and securities lending
- Programmable corporate actions
- Atomic settlement for capital markets

Private Banking / Wealth Management

- Tokenized alternatives access (PE/VC)
- Fractional ownership of private assets
- Tokenized real estate distribution
- Digital-native portfolio products
- Automated suitability / compliance checks
- Cross-border DLT product distribution

Transaction Banking services

- Trade Finance with Tokenized Instruments (LCs, Guarantees, Invoices)
- Tokenized deposits for Corporate Treasury (managing liquidity across subsidiaries)
- Real-Time Liquidity Management (Manage interbank liquidity)
- Programmable Payments with Smart Contracts

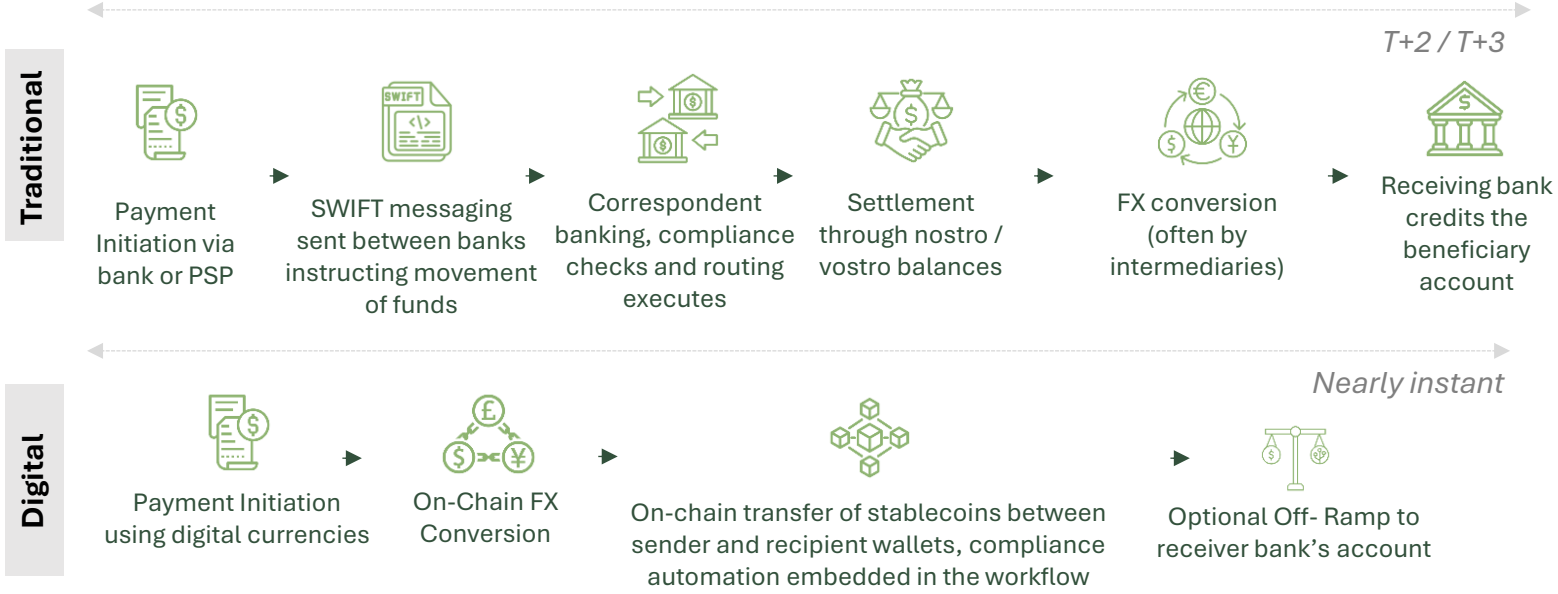
Functional / Service lines

- Supporting employee payroll
- On-chain KYC / identity
- Tokenized data entitlements
- Automated compliance workflows
- Smart-contract-based reconciliation
- Digital asset tax reporting
- Intelligent entitlements & access controls

Digital assets unlock material efficiency gains and new product capabilities across asset management, capital markets, wealth, Transaction Banking and core service lines. As banks evaluate integration paths, tokenization provides a scalable foundation for operational improvement, enhanced client experiences, and future-ready financial infrastructure

Use Case – Drill into the FX cross-border payments value chain

Illustration of traditional and digital cross-border payments rails



Institutional players:

- Originator Bank
- Correspondent Banks
- FX Providers
- Messaging Network
- Receiving Correspondent Bank
- Beneficiary Bank

On-chain native players:

- Tokenized Cash Issuer
- Digital Asset Wallet / Custodian
- Programmable FX Venue
- Settlement Network
- Beneficiary Wallet / Bank

Benefits

- Near-instant settlement vs T+2 / T+3 (up to T+4)
- Faster corridor setup (days/weeks vs months)
- Reduced dependency on intermediaries
- Improved liquidity efficiency
- End-to-end transparency & traceability
- Programmable compliance & payment logic

Economics[1]

- Global cross-border payments reached ~$179tn in 2024
- B2B generated ~$57bn of revenue in 2024, implying an average revenue yield of ~3.3 bps across the B2B cross-border pool (driven by FX spread and fees)
- The most profitable segments are the lower-value flows: only 8–10% of flow value but 30–35% of the revenue pool
- On-chain rails should compress execution revenues (intermediaries and settlement delays reduced)

Potential strategic path forward

- Leverage white-labelled, one-stop-shop platforms
- Adopt a phased, hybrid approach (integrate on chain capabilities with existing systems)
- Focus on high-value use cases first (Settlement, Liquidity)
- Build internal capabilities & governance across business, IT and risk teams

Source: Mckinsey / How banks can win back lower-value cross-border payment business

CxO Playbook: Navigating Digital Assets and On-Chain Opportunities

Focus on what matters

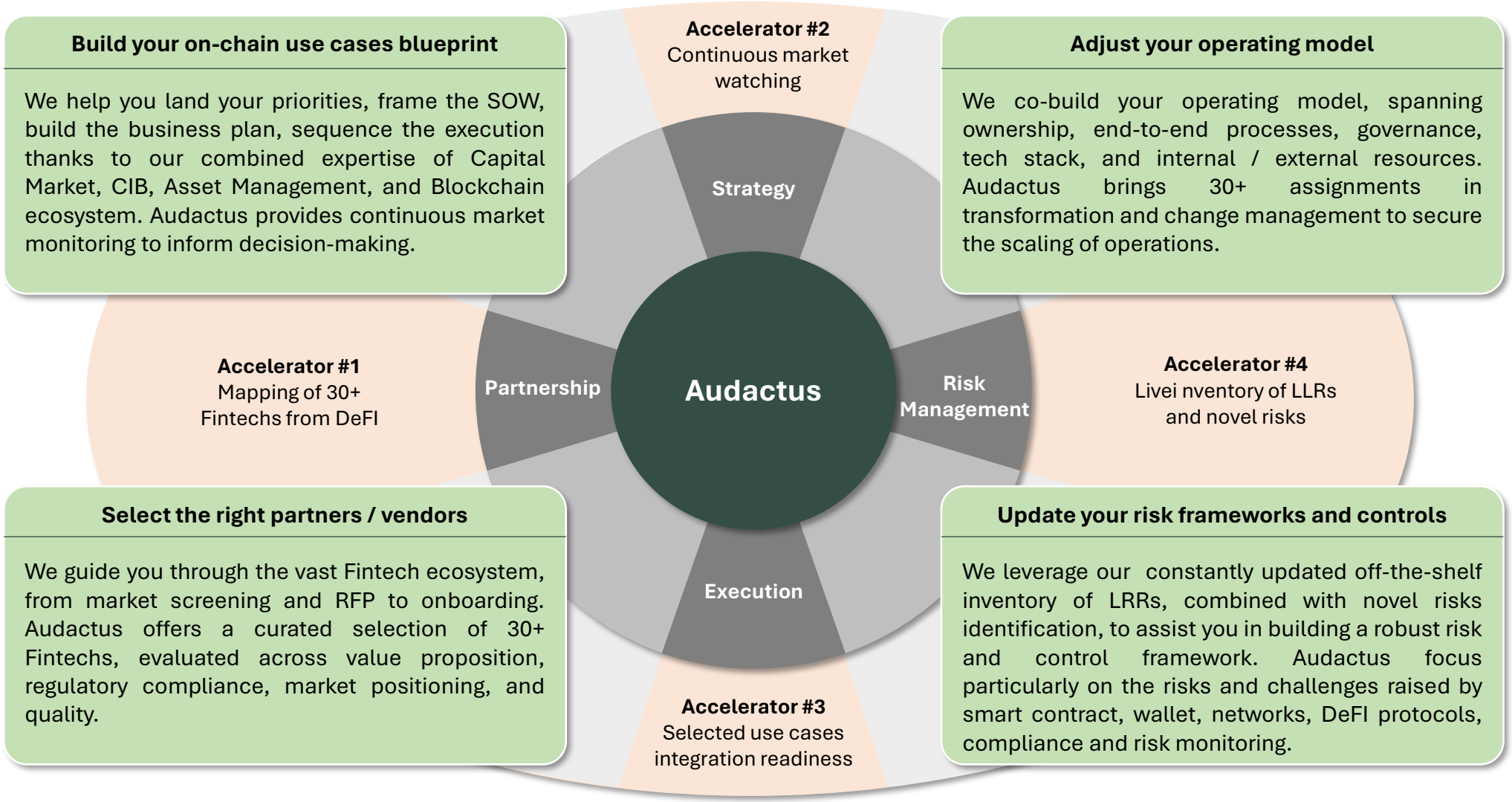
- Preserve strategic optionality, engage broadly without losing focus
- Engage with the **DeFI players** to experiment more and scale faster
- Include **novel risks in the Control Framework and Risk Management** (e.g. smart contract, AML/CFT, OFAC, cyber security)
- Maintain **continuous market intelligence**
- Secure and centralize **rare expertise** – Center of excellence
- Decide the 'make or buy'of your tech stack and capabilities

Certainty curve

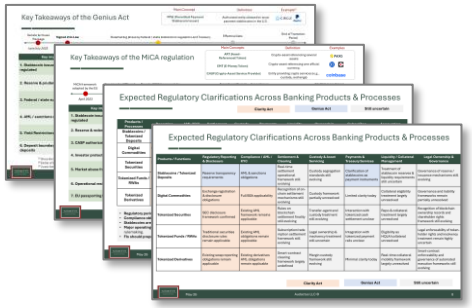
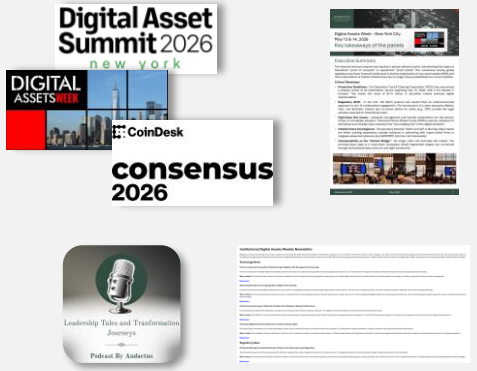
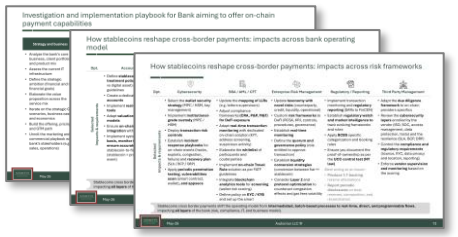
1 EXPLORE	2 ENGAGE	3 SCALE
What are the most beneficial use cases?	What are the most promising use cases?	Which use cases merit deployment on a larger scale?
Review where are the main frictions across your BL based on client's feedback, operational losses, cost-to-serve, capital requirement	Identity and define the frameworks and controls to specific risks and regulatory requirements	Build the stage 2 of the integration with internal system and risk framework integration
Explore and prioritize on-chain use cases that may bring a valuable solution	Build the operating conditions to execute the use case with internal resources and ecosystem of partners	Extend ownership and supervision to BAU within the business lines
Engage with fintechs to get a better understanding of the trends and visions and perform competition analysis	Perform a skills inventory and acquire expertise on the market	Plan a comprehensive training plan to internal staff
Define the tactical scenario to operate the first use cases (e.g. partnership, organic, acquisition)	Apply continuous assessment of the evolving market conditions as well as the internal KPIs	Take the strategic decision to internalize core technological and monitoring capabilities
Establish the key principles and limitations of your on-chain participation	**Make agile decision to maintain, abandon, or scale use cases**	Prepare extensive go to market in line with expected growing volumes
Divesture	Maintain experimentation	Expand to production

As certainty and visibility progress – internally and externally.

Audactus > How can we support your on-chain adoption?



Audactus > Our accelerators to support your on-chain transition

TradFI's questioning	**Which are the institutional-grade fintech to partner with?**	**What are the key rules and requirements to comply with?**	**How can I stay up to date amid a constant evolving market ?**	**What are the impacts on my risk and compliance framework?**
Audactus mission and value prop	In-depth knowledge of the DeFI ecosystem and Fintech's value proposition	Forward understanding the regulatory requirements across the U.S. and Europe	Contant market and innovation watching	Risk watching through in-depth monitoring
Audactus resources	30+ interviews with Fintech and crypto-native players across the value chain	Screening of requirements and impacts from Genius Act, Clarify Act, and MiCAR	AI-powered news feed screening Attendance to professional conference (e.g. DAS, DAW, Consensus)	Mapping of the novel risks (e.g. AML/CFT, cyber, fraud) and mitigation plan
Key frameworks and deliverables	Unique player positioning analysis (e.g. offering, value chain positioning, licensing, SOC 2, ISO)	Dynamic inventory of rules and policies to be applied across processes and functions	Podcast Newsletter Outlook report	Dynamic risk taxonomy, assessment, policy and controls alignment
Extracts	*ID card Fintech x20+* 	*Inventory of LRRs* 		*Framework readiness* 

Audactus > Example of use cases we can conduct with our partners

Cross border stablecoin payments

- Improve your working capital
- Secure the settlement
- Reduce the cost

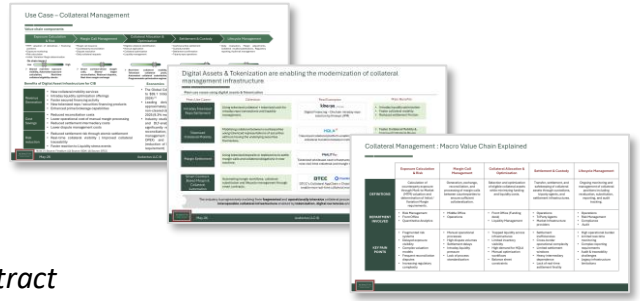
- B2B, B2C and wholesale cross border payment market outlook
- Stablecoin payment definition, key features and regulatory requirement
- Operational value chain of stablecoin ‘sandwich’
- Mapping of the ecosystem, curated selection of vendors
- Risk mapping, inventory of the regulatory and operational requirements
- End-to-end exploration and implementation roadmap

Extract

Settlement and Collateral Management Utility

- Improve your P&L with accelerated rotation
- Reduce your liquidity requirements
- Enhance the settlement execution

- Collateral management business applications landscape
- Operational value chain of tokenized collateral choreography
- Mapping of the ecosystem (market maker, transfer agent, infrastructure, market monitoring, custody)
- Risk mapping, inventory of regulatory, functional and operational requirements
- End-to-end exploration and implementation roadmap



Extract

Crypto trading platform

- Offer crypto trading, derivatives and yield products to institutional, corporate, SMB, and individuals

- Target addressable market of the crypto trading market
- Study of the crypto holders’ needs and behavior
- Benchmark of the financial services offered on crypto (e.g. spot, derivative, yield, ETF) through crypto native platform
- Incentive to unlock crypto trading capabilities for Financial Institutions
- Mapping of the ecosystem offering white label solutions complying with institutional-grade rules
- Business strategy, offering design, and go-to-market
- Tech stack requirement and third-party selection, integration with bank’s current infrastructure

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Audactus is a management consulting firm dedicated to supporting Financial Institutions in navigating complex initiatives from strategy to execution. Our expertise spans Corporate Banking, Capital Markets, Digital Assets, and Asset Management. We provide advisory capabilities across business strategy, M&A, organizational effectiveness, project portfolio management, and risk management. The Audactus team operates across the US and EU.

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