

Use of AI by banks

Report based on the itopia survey 2025

Zurich, May 28, 2025

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Key findings from the focus survey

1 Currently low penetration of AI technologies, still limited AI budgets

The majority of the 35 banks surveyed currently only use AI for selected applications. Many institutions are currently evaluating use cases and a decision on implementation is often pending.

Budgets for the implementation of AI solutions are increasing. The cost/benefit ratio for the employment of AI is estimated to be good over the next 18-24 months, despite numerous risks.

2 Increased efficiency as the most common benefit, focus on individual use

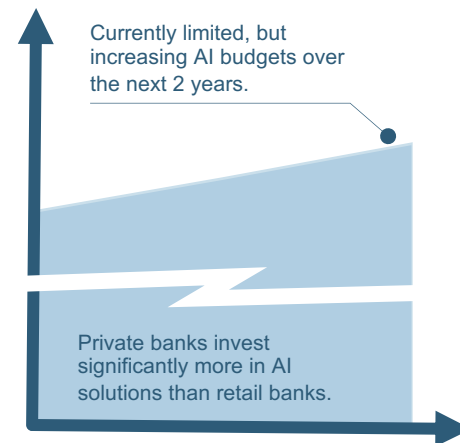
Increased efficiency is often seen as the main benefit, particularly in the areas Workplace and Operations. As a result, these areas are also the most frequently supported by AI today. There is no area in which AI is not applied.

The participating banks see risks in particular in the misuse of data and poor data quality, in compliance with laws and regulations and in the lack of explainability.

3 Realisation of AI solutions often cloud-based and with external support

When choosing the platform for development and data storage, the banks rely heavily on cloud-based services and on support from external providers for implementation.

LLMs and RAG are by far the most frequently used technologies, agent-based AI ("agentic AI") does not yet play a role.



Participants and dimensions of data collection

Participants:

A total of **35 banks (CH and LI, 23 retail banks and 12 private banks)** took part in the itopia survey on this year's focus topic **"Use of AI by banks"**. The survey was conducted from March to April 2025.

In addition to the banks surveyed by itopia on a recurring basis, the picture was rounded off with responses from other banks.

Dimensions and data basis:

Key figures were collected on three dimensions:

1. **General situation, strategies and budgets in 35 banks**
2. **Priorities & activities in 8 areas**
3. **Situation with the implementation of 117 use cases**

The answers to the focus topic questionnaire were supplemented with data from the current and previous itopia surveys on IT costs.

1 General & Strategy

- Level of adoption
- Strategic implementation & governance
- Costs/benefits & risks
- Education
- Budgets & resources

2 Areas

- Priorities
- Activities
- Expected benefit

3 Use cases

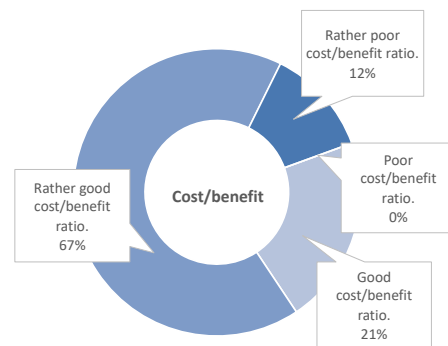
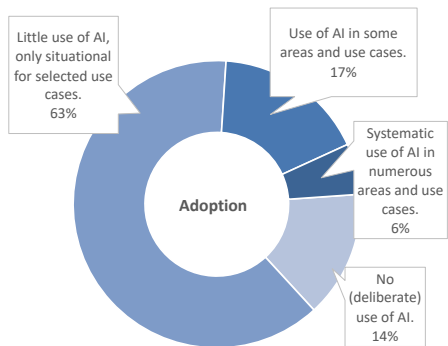
- Current situation
- Sourcing strategy
- AI technologies & platforms
- Break-even
- Benefits and challenges



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1 Currently only little use of AI, despite high benefit expectations - hardly any dedicated AI strategies



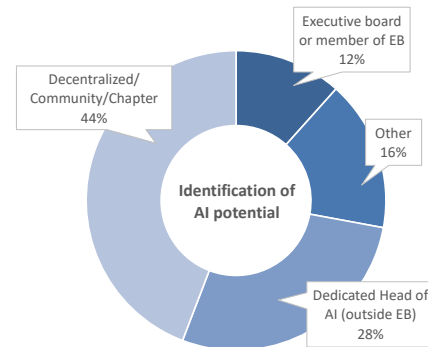
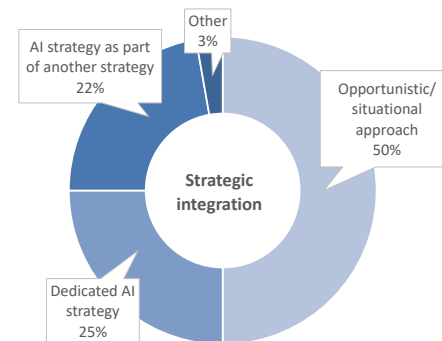
The majority of the **35 banks surveyed** currently **only use AI** for selected use cases **depending on the situation**. A small number of banks **do not use AI at all** - or are not aware of it.

In contrast, most banks consider the **cost/benefit ratio** of using AI over the next 18-24 months to be rather good.

Only just under a quarter of banks currently have a **dedicated AI strategy**. Most institutions rely on an **opportunistic or situational approach**.

Responsibility for **identifying AI potential** is **decentralised** at many banks **via AI communities or chapters**. Some banks have a **dedicated AI officer** outside of the management board. Only a few institutions have anchored **responsibility at management level**.

Many banks have one or more instruments in place to ensure compliance with **AI governance**. Committees, directives and codes of conduct/guidelines were mentioned with similar frequency.



n=35


1 Budgets for the implementation of AI use cases are increasing - realistic assessment of risks

The **expenses** for AI-related activities (material and personnel costs, internal and external) **are currently mostly low, but will often increase in the coming years**. Private banks invest significantly more in AI solutions than retail banks. Relatively **few bank employees on the business and IT side** are currently working specifically on AI topics.

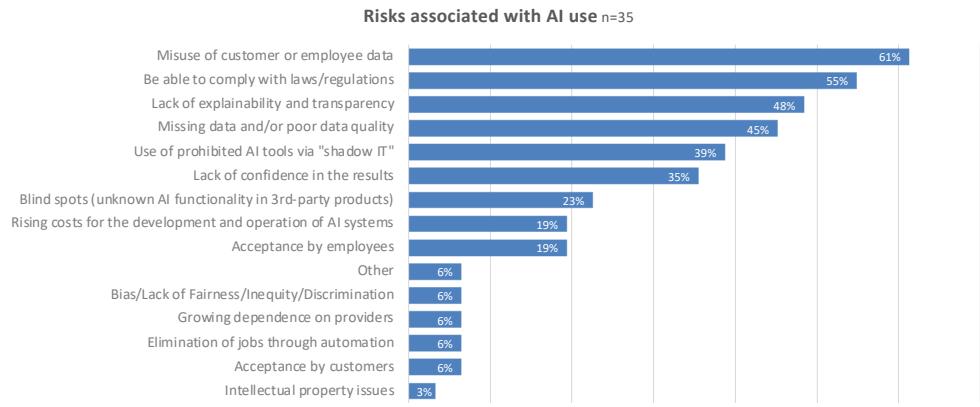
A differentiated picture emerges in the area of **training**. One third of the banks provide **no or very little training**. **Individual AI training** for specific roles is mentioned with similar frequency. Few banks **offer company-wide training**.

Numerous risks are identified through the use of AI.

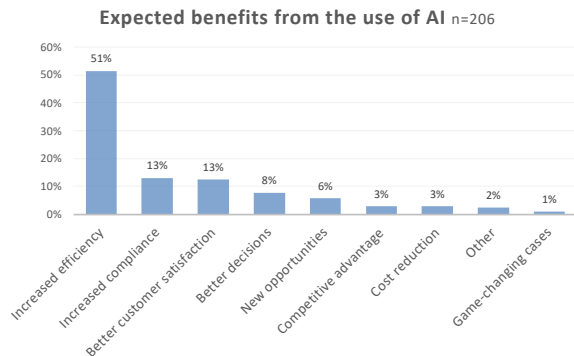
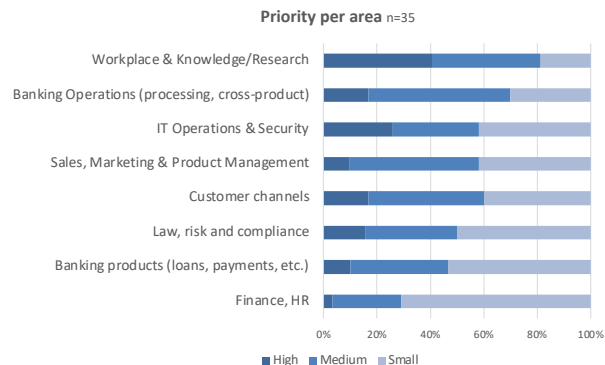
- **Frequently mentioned:** Misuse of customer or employee data, compliance with laws/regulations, lack of explainability and transparency as well as missing data or poor data quality.
- **Rarely mentioned:** Intellectual property issues, customer acceptance, growing dependence on providers, impact on jobs due to automation and bias/lack of fairness/inequity/discrimination.


Observation

Overall, **funding for the implementation of AI is low**. The **budgets** of many banks **will increase over the next two years**. The budget information provided by the banks **often does not match the banks' plans**, the size of the bank and the stated use cases being implemented. The information on the **resources** used also **often does not match the respective situation**.



Differences and similarities in prioritisation - major focus on increasing efficiency



When prioritising the use of AI along 8 areas, there are numerous differences - but also similarities.

- For many banks, the greatest priority in the implementation of AI use cases is in the **workplace and knowledge/research** areas.
- The picture is more differentiated in the area of **banking operations**. While more than half of the banks indicate this as a high or medium priority, the area is not a priority for the other banks.
- Finance and HR** get the lowest priority at many banks, similar to **banking products**.

Many banks expect the primary **benefit** to be an **increase in efficiency**. This is particularly the case in the areas of workplace and banking operations.

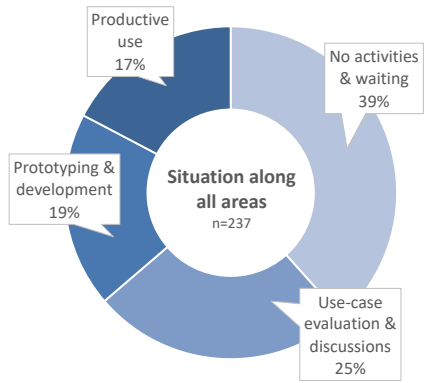
- Improved customer satisfaction** and **new opportunities** are mentioned surprisingly rarely. No **game-changing cases** are currently seen.



Observation

The banks **expect an increase in efficiency** through the use of AI, although this is **not accompanied by an expected reduction in costs**. It will therefore be interesting to see how banks use the resources freed up by efficiency gains. Regardless of this, the implementation of AI solutions will have a **negative impact on costs** for the time being.

2 Wait and see, currently only a few AI use cases in productive use

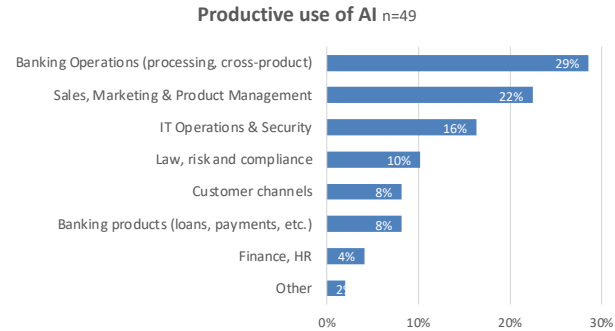


To date, relatively **few AI solutions are in productive use** at the banks surveyed.

- Many banks are **waiting and watching** or have other priorities.
- **Use cases** are currently being **evaluated** in numerous institutes and a decision on implementation is still pending.

The 49 **AI applications in productive use** are distributed differently across the various areas. There is no area in which AI is not employed. The **banks' core processes** are currently rarely supported by AI.

- The **workplace & knowledge/research** area is most frequently supported by AI today. Specifically, **internally used chatbots** such as Microsoft Copilot, OpenAI ChatGPT or Unique FinanceGPT are mentioned.
- AI is also already being used in **banking operations**.
- AI applications are currently rarely used in the areas of **finance, HR and banking products**.



Observation

The answers often coincide with the findings of the **FINMA survey on the use of AI 2025** and the **IFZ Studie Bank-IT und Sourcing 2025**.

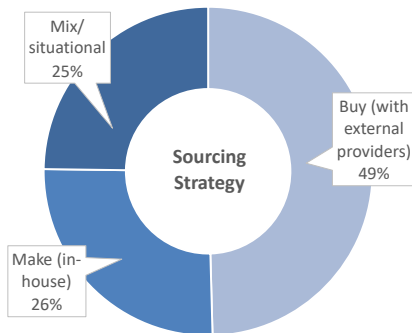


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3

Implementation mostly in the cloud with the support of external providers



Technology development platform (ML/Ops)

	On-Prem	Cloud	Mix
Retail	36%	48%	16%
Private	25%	71%	4%

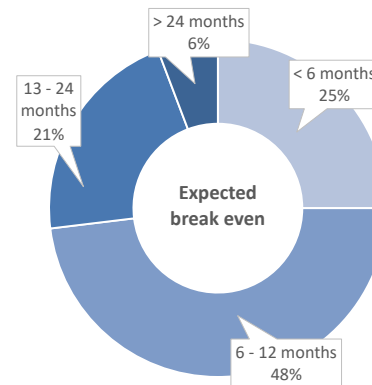
Technology data platform

	On-Prem	Cloud	Mix
Retail	39%	40%	21%
Private	33%	63%	4%

The majority of the **117 AI use cases** are implemented **with the support of external providers** and through the **use of standard software**.

When choosing a **platform for development (ML/Ops)** and **data storage** for the 117 use-cases, banks rely heavily on **cloud-based services**. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of solutions are also **implemented on-premise**.

A quarter of the banks expect to **break even (benefit = investment)** in less than 6 months, just under half of the banks between 6 to 12 months.



Observation

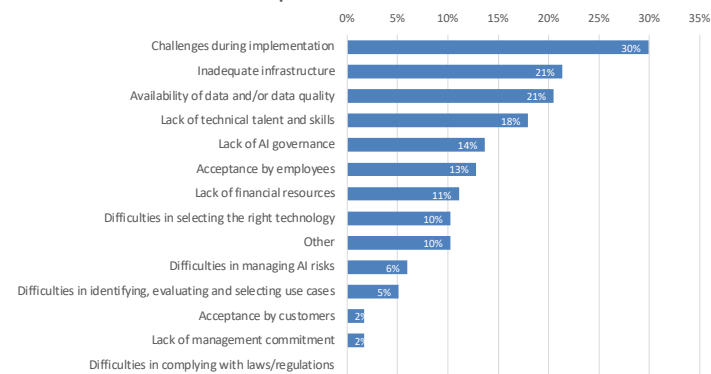
With the implementation of AI solutions in the cloud, **the dependency on BigTech providers** continues to increase. It is worth noting that data protection-sensitive private banks use cloud solutions more intensively than retail banks.

Banks choose **different sourcing options** for different applications, but typically opt for a **common platform**.

n=117

3 Numerous obstacles must be overcome before a benefit can be realised

Obstacles to the implementation of AI use cases n=117



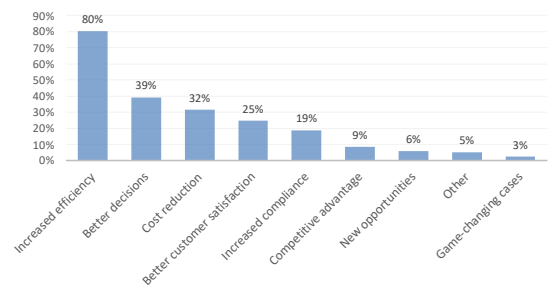
The banks are facing **numerous obstacles** in the implementation of the 117 reported AI use cases.

- Technical obstacles such as **implementation challenges**, **inadequate infrastructure** and **poor availability of data and data quality** are frequently cited.
- **Acceptance by customers** does not play a major role; in contrast, the lack of **acceptance by employees** was mentioned much more frequently.

When it comes to the **expected benefits** of implementing the 117 use cases, **increased efficiency** is the top priority.

- **Better decisions** are also mentioned relatively frequently.
- **Improved customer satisfaction** and **new opportunities**, on the other hand, are mentioned surprisingly rarely.
- No **game-changing cases** are currently seen.

Expected benefits after implementation of use cases n=117



Observation

An increase in efficiency through AI support depends heavily on the correct use by individuals. Training for the employees concerned plays a major role in this. The information on AI training does not quite fit the picture.



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