PRESS RELEASE

Coface APAC Payment Survey 2026: Nearly three-quarters of Japanese firms experienced payment delays from customers

Japan, July 30, 2026 – Coface's APAC Payment Survey 2026 reveals that 73% of Japanese firms report being affected by payment delays from customers in the last 12 months[1]. Payment discipline appears to be deteriorating in the country, with more firms seeing worsening payment delays, both in terms of severity and frequency, than improvements.

As part of an annual study to understand the payment behaviours and risks among businesses, Coface surveyed 2,800 finance professionals across multiple sectors and 10 Asia-Pacific (APAC) markets, including 252 respondents in Japan.

Key findings from Japan:

- **73%** of firms in Japan report being **affected by payment delays** in the past 12 months.
- Compared with 12 months ago, **28%** of firms report both **an increase in severity and frequency of payment delays**, compared with 12% who report a decrease in severity and 14% who saw a decrease in frequency.
- **50%** experienced **at least one customer default** in the past 12 months, higher than the APAC average of 45%.
- **35% expect payment conditions to deteriorate** over the next 12 months.
- **58%** of respondents still **rely on informal or limited data-driven approaches to assess payment risk**, compared with 36% across APAC.

"*Japan's payment risk profile is distinct from the wider APAC region. Fewer companies report late payments, but they are still common. And when delays occur, they are more likely to translate into defaults. This suggests that the challenge for Japanese firms is not only the frequency of payment delays, but how fast and well they detect and respond to emerging risks*," says **Junyu Tan, Regional Economist for North Asia at Coface.**

Lower incidence of late payments, but risks remain significant

At first glance, Japan appears to face less frequent payment delays than the rest of APAC. Around 73% of firms in Japan experienced late payments over the past 12 months, compared with 91% across APAC. Japanese companies are also less pessimistic about the outlook, with 35% expecting payment conditions to deteriorate over the next 12 months, compared with 48% across the region.

[1] In the 12 months preceding the survey, which was conducted between March and April 2026.

However, this relative resilience masks a more serious underlying risk. Half (50%) of Japanese respondents experienced at least one customer default in the past 12 months, higher than the APAC average of 45%. Among those that experienced defaults, 62% say defaults affected up to 5% of receivables, compared with 54% across APAC.

Businesses in Japan remain cautious amid deteriorating payment discipline

With late payments becoming more frequent and severe for Japanese firms over the past year, they remain relatively cautious in credit sales and tend to offer shorter payment terms than firms in the rest of the region. In Japan, the average payment terms are 62.7 days, compared with the APAC average of 70.2 days.

Late payment experience, payment terms, and outlook vary by sector. The paper and energy sectors offer the longest payment terms but face the longest delays on average, suggesting slower buyer settlement experienced within these industries. Looking ahead, chemical firms are the most negative on payment trends, followed by construction and energy firms, which may reflect the continued cost and supply chain pressures expected by these sectors against the current geopolitical landscape.

Relationship-led decision-making may delay risk recognition

Customer relationships remain central to commercial decision-making in Asia, including in Japan. Long-standing relationships can influence how companies respond to late payments, with some firms granting greater flexibility to established customers. More than half (54%) of firms in Japan say long-standing relationships influence their tolerance of late payments, while 66% say relationship considerations can sometimes outweigh financial warning signs.

Given that customers' financial health and creditworthiness are considered the top factor contributing to payment delays in Japan by 21% of respondents (followed by sector-specific factors and macroeconomic conditions), decision makers may wish to relook at the way they evaluate and address late payment behaviour.

Asuka Kiya, Country Manager and CEO of Coface Japan, said: "*Strong customer relationships are a valuable part of Japan's business culture, but they should not delay objective risk assessment. Repeated payment delays are often early warning signals. Companies that combine relationship knowledge with timely financial analysis will be better placed to protect cash flow and avoid losses.*"

Financial information and analytics remain underused

While firms in Japan do make use of data and analytics to assess customer payment risk, the survey points to room for improvement. Financial information influences customer payment risk assessment to at least a moderate extent among 65% of Japanese firms, below the APAC average of 78%.

Japanese respondents cite incomplete disclosure (53%), limited SME reporting quality (48%) and lack of transparency (47%) as the top limitations of financial information available to them. As a result, 58% of Japanese respondents still rely on informal or limited data-driven approaches, compared with 36% across APAC.

Asuka Kiya added: "*Even though late payment incidence is comparatively lower in the country, the risk of defaults remains high as businesses face continued cost and credit pressures. For suppliers, the priority now is to strengthen the link between warning indicators, escalation processes and credit decisions to support early intervention and long-term business resilience*."

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ABOUT COFACE APAC PAYMENT SURVEY 2026

The 16th annual Coface APAC Payment Survey, conducted in March and April 2026, gathered insights from 2,800 finance professionals across multiple sectors and 10 APAC markets, including 252 respondents in Japan. The survey examines evolving payment behaviours, liquidity pressures, customer defaults, and early warning indicators, while evaluating the governance, analytics, escalation frameworks, and customer engagement practices that strengthen organisational resilience to payment risk.

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