



Why IPO markets are gaining momentum now

EY Q2 2026 Global IPO Trends

July 2026

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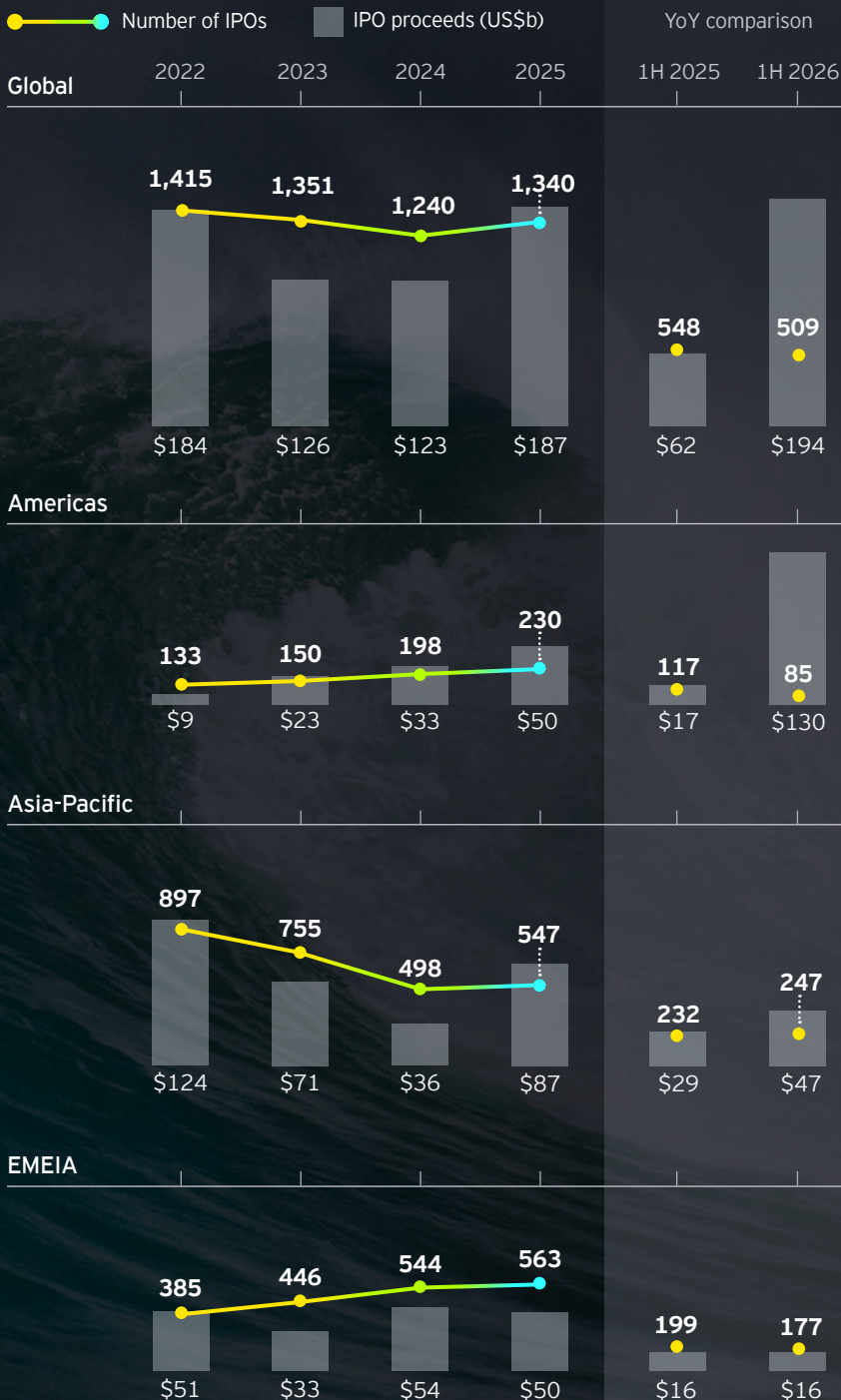


EY

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IPO snapshot

Initial public offering (IPO) snapshot



Sources: Dealogic; EY analysis. IPO proceeds are rounded to the nearest US\$1b. Includes approximately US\$86b in proceeds from one IPO priced in June 2026.

In brief:

- IPO markets are gaining momentum, with strong 1H activity setting the stage for what could be a historic 2H 2026.
- Markets are strong, but execution windows may be episodic and could be shaped by mega-IPOs and geopolitics.
- Companies pursuing public listings are using more flexible approaches – IPOs, direct listings and SPACs – to capitalize on improving market conditions.

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What makes this recovery different from the false starts of recent years is its breadth.

Karim Anani
EY Global IPO Leader

A background image of a blue ocean with white-capped waves, used as a header and footer for the document.

Global IPO markets are progressing on different trajectories. Prepared companies that maintain timing flexibility are positioned to win.

IPO markets have spent the past several years caught between tides, with activity levels trailing historical averages. A new cycle is emerging in global IPO markets, driven by broadening sector momentum and the increasing influence of AI and related infrastructure themes. After years of subdued IPO issuance, investor appetite for IPOs has returned and companies are eager to catch the wave. In the US, where several trillion-dollar candidates could tap the public markets by year-end, overall IPO market sentiment is running particularly high.

In today's market, the ability to execute a successful IPO varies by geography and sector. The recent conflict in the Middle East demonstrated just how quickly the conditions underlying an open market window can shift. In general, successful IPO candidates are flexible and disciplined enough to wait when markets are tight and nimble enough to pursue accommodating conditions.

"What makes this recovery different from the false starts of recent years is its breadth," says Karim Anani, EY Global IPO Leader. "IPO issuance is up materially year over year despite persisting global headwinds. Stronger earnings, broader sector participation and a deep pipeline are lending this reopening a firmer foundation."

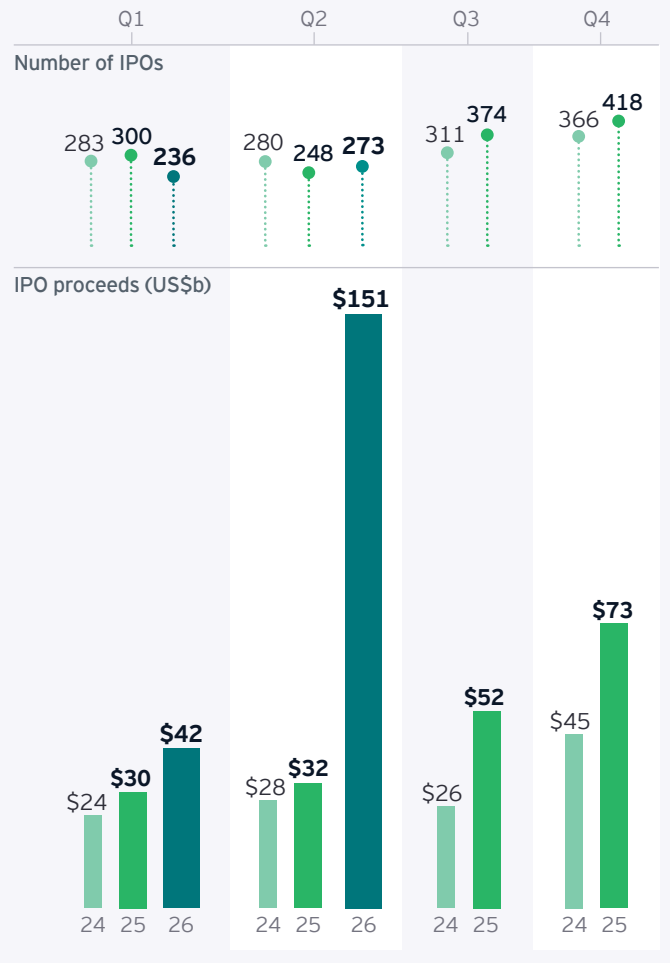
Meanwhile, AI-related demand is a major driver of both stronger corporate earnings and larger IPO pipelines, even as activity is broadening across other sectors and regions. Momentum is accelerating in semiconductors, power and data center infrastructure, robotics and other advanced manufacturing segments. In general, investors are favoring companies with a demonstrable AI value creation narrative and questioning those with unsubstantiated AI positioning. Venture capital (VC) and private equity (PE) sponsors are also a driving force behind the momentum. With IPO aftermarket performance improving, VC and PE firms are increasingly inclined to treat the IPO as a viable exit route. Several high-profile sponsor-backed IPOs have priced well and performed well in the aftermarket over recent quarters, supporting more rapid monetization paths for sponsors. Against this backdrop and in light of the extended hold periods in sponsor portfolios, sponsor-backed IPOs could also help fuel a broader reacceleration in IPO issuance over the next year or two.

However, these themes are playing out differently across regions. While equity markets have broadly remained resilient, successful IPO execution still hinges on timing, volatility and investor risk appetite in particular regions. In the Americas, IPO candidates are carefully monitoring how several anticipated mega-IPOs approach the market. EMEIA and parts of Asia-Pacific are more sensitive to geopolitical developments and energy price volatility, particularly in the most directly affected areas. MENA offers the starkest illustration, recording year-over-year declines of nearly 80% in the number of IPOs and over 90% in IPO proceeds amid the conflict in the Middle East, even as the aerospace and defense sector remains active. Across much of Asia-Pacific, AI infrastructure, semiconductors, robotics and advanced manufacturing have been particularly active. In short, there is not a single global IPO sentiment – only regional ones, and each with its own dynamics.

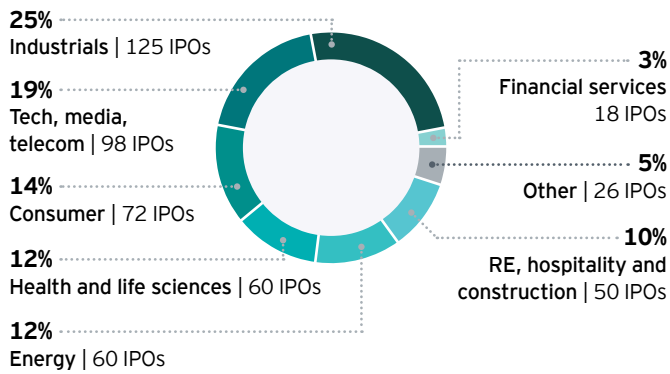


Global quarterly IPO activity

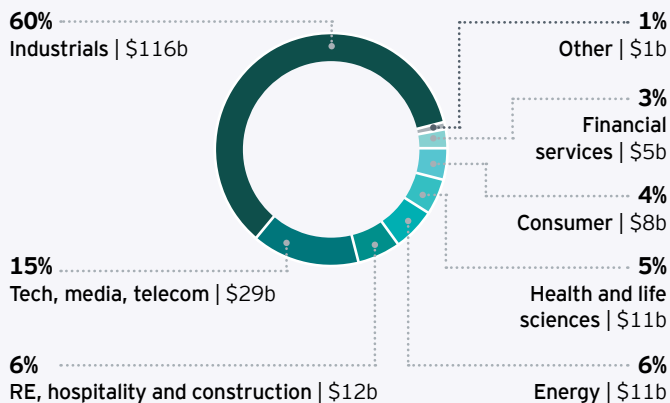
2024 2025 2026



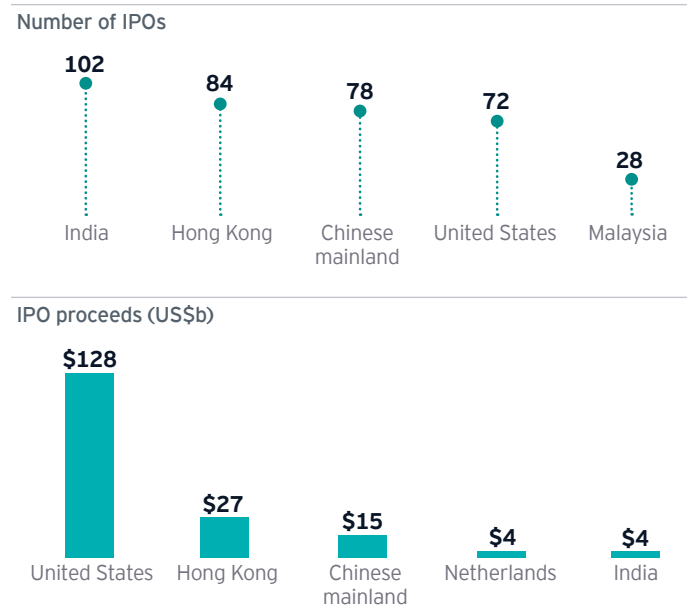
1H 2026 global sector distribution by number of IPOs



1H 2026 global sector distribution by IPO proceeds



1H 2026 top five listing destinations



Sources: Dealogic; EY analysis. IPO proceeds are rounded to the nearest US\$1b. Includes approximately US\$86b in proceeds from one IPO priced in June 2026.



IPO markets are open, but execution windows prove fleeting

Capital is available across nearly every region, but the openings are brief and uneven. Timing and readiness help determine who goes through.

In the Americas, all eyes are on a few potentially historic IPOs

The first half of 2026 would already represent the second most active full year on record for US IPOs by proceeds. The gravitational pull of a small number of mega-IPOs is shaping the IPO calendar, drawing outsized investor attention and influencing when other companies in the pipeline choose to launch. For other IPO candidates, the question is whether their planned timeline will coincide with one of these giants – and how to avoid being crowded out if it does.

“Momentum is building for US IPOs, particularly as a number of large, sponsor-backed companies prepare to come to market,” says Rachel Gerring, EY Americas IPO Leader. “Investor sentiment in the near term is likely to be shaped by the outcome of several anticipated mega-IPOs with capital and attention expected to concentrate around these transactions. In this environment, issuers should remain flexible around timing to successfully access the market.”

Beyond the marquee names, the makeup of the IPO market has continued to evolve. The most recent class of IPOs includes several larger, more mature companies that have stayed private longer, using that time to build out their presence and infrastructure. Notably, 12 deals raised more than US\$1 billion in 1H 2026 in the US, up from four in the same period last year. AI remains a dominant driver, with the strongest momentum in semiconductors, power and data center infrastructure, and companies already translating AI demand into revenue. Demand is also evident across other sectors, including aerospace and defense, and biotech.

Alongside the well-functioning IPO market, special purpose acquisition companies (SPACs) are re-emerging as a credible alternative for certain issuers, supported by a dramatic increase in SPAC formation and an improving environment for capital-raising. With the high demand for a public listing, dual-track IPO or SPAC processes have become more prevalent in the current market, and companies are increasingly preparing for both routes in parallel to preserve flexibility around timing and execution.

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Investor sentiment in the near term is likely to be shaped by the outcome of several anticipated mega-IPOs with capital and attention expected to concentrate around these transactions.

Rachel Gerring
EY Americas IPO Leader

In Greater China, deep liquidity and international capital are supporting solid IPO activity

Greater China's story is one of depth. It remains among the world's most active equity capital markets, with the A-share and Hong Kong markets playing complementary roles. The Chinese mainland draws principally on domestic investors, while Hong Kong attracts regional and international capital. This structure – deep local liquidity from Chinese mainland long-term funds such as mutual funds and insurers, and steady flows into Hong Kong – provides a buffer against the external shocks that have unsettled other regions. It also helps explain why Q2 IPO volumes have held up despite the impact of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East on the economy.

As Terence Ho, EY Greater China IPO Leader, notes, “Q2 IPOs were supported by strong participation from international investors, including sovereign wealth funds and leading asset managers, particularly from the Middle East. These investors play an active role in the local IPO market, including serving as cornerstone investors on several offerings. Their engagement reflects growing confidence in China's hardware assets, as well as a more favorable outlook on regulatory developments and a stronger long-term investment outlook.”

The pipeline is being reshaped by hard technology. AI infrastructure, semiconductors, robotics, and advanced manufacturing increasingly define what comes to market, and the listing architecture has adapted to accommodate them. The STAR Market and Hong Kong's Chapter 18C both offer routes for hard-tech companies that may not yet be profitable but can meet market capitalization thresholds. By contrast, more traditional sectors, including conventional manufacturing, real estate and traditional financials, continue to attract limited investor interest.

Two further dynamics are worth noting. Firstly, companies are increasingly using pre-IPO financings to bolster their balance sheets to bridge to a more attractive IPO window. This lets companies wait for the right timing rather than accept an unfavorable one. Secondly, regulatory reform, including the offshore filing regime, has added structural stability. This has given companies a clearer ability to choose among Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and US listing paths. For many IPO candidates, the gating factor is less about market sentiment than regulatory approval; once it's secured, companies tend to move regardless of conditions, managing valuation expectations and planning follow-on raises rather than waiting indefinitely.

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Terence Ho

EY Greater China IPO Leader



Strong pipelines are awaiting the right execution window in EMEIA

EMEIA presents strong pipelines and genuine access to capital, with several notable candidates in India that could come to market in the near term. The region's IPO market has proven resilient, but investors seem to be highly selective. Equity stories linked to hot sector trends and growth have commanded investor attention. As a result, there has been concentrated activity in a narrow band of sectors – in the defense value chain, industrials, AI-related and critical infrastructure. Investor appetite is on cash-generative resilient business models, clear growth prospects and strong management.

Sentiment across the region is shaped by a confluence of macro factors. The conflict in the Middle East and the war in Ukraine weigh on the regional growth outlook, while higher energy prices have reintroduced the prospect of renewed inflation and, in turn, higher rates. Geopolitical uncertainties influence regional sentiments in EMEIA with higher uncertainty and short spikes of volatility. Addressing this, IPO readiness is paramount to create flexibility and transaction optionality for IPO-bound companies.

Despite the macro uncertainty, there are two structural trends that are helping to bolster IPO activity and shrink the deep European IPO backlog.

First, government spending programs – such as Germany's substantial commitments to critical infrastructure and NATO's push toward a 5% of GDP defense spending target – are expected to underpin infrastructure, energy, industrial and defense-related listings.

Second, despite a longer road to exit, sponsors are increasingly weighing the IPO path for portfolio companies where an outright sale would once have been the default.

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Despite heightened geopolitical tensions and a confluence of macro headwinds, the EMEIA IPO market has been resilient, providing open access to capital.

Martin Steinbach
EY EMEIA IPO Leader

The constant, across sectors and structures, is that size and scale widen investor reach and cushion against volatility. This transaction optionality, established early, is what positions a company to act when its opportunity arrives.

“Despite heightened geopolitical tensions and a confluence of macro headwinds, the EMEIA IPO market has been resilient, providing open access to capital,” says Martin Steinbach, EY EMEIA IPO Leader. “Yet investors remain highly selective. As a result, focus has concentrated on the industrial, AI, defense and infrastructure sectors. Size, compelling equity stories related to key growth trends and maintaining transaction optionality are critical to succeed within narrow IPO windows.”



Q&A: As IPO and SPACs heat up, which path do issuers choose?

A conversation with Mark Schwartz, EY Americas IPO and SPAC Advisory Leader

With both the IPO and SPAC paths accelerating, the question facing issuers is how and when to approach the market. The EY team sat down with Mark Schwartz, EY Americas IPO and SPAC Advisory Leader, to discuss how companies and their stakeholders should think about approaching the new issue market.

What are you seeing in the market today that suggests IPO activity is accelerating?

We're seeing clear signs that the IPO market is open and accommodating and could set IPO issuance records this year. Broader markets, particularly in the US, are largely looking past the recent geopolitical tensions. Meanwhile, IPO filings and pricings have increased following a brief pause at the start of the conflict in the Middle East. Importantly, recent IPOs have generally been pricing and trading well in the aftermarket, and the pace of IPO readiness activity among EY clients has been very robust for several quarters.

How should companies determine whether a traditional IPO or a SPAC merger is the right path for them?

Regardless of whether a company chooses an IPO or merges with a SPAC, the result is a publicly traded company. However, IPO and SPAC deals differ in many significant ways, such as when deal terms come into focus, transaction timelines and potentially the depth of the resulting shareholder base. Historically, more established companies have favored IPOs, while emerging companies more often pursued SPACs, although these lines are increasingly blurred. Importantly, companies can explore both paths on the way to a listing, if that makes sense for them.

What has led to the renewed interest in SPACs?

SPACs are re-entering the conversation for certain companies as the market has been replenished with newer vehicles that have ample time to transact. In addition, some of the headwinds that weighed on the last cycle, including high redemptions and a constrained private investment in public equity (PIPE) market, are beginning to ease. We certainly haven't returned to the 2020-2021 SPAC boom, but for the right issuer, a SPAC merger can offer an attractive route to the public markets.

How will the potential of mega-IPOs impact the IPO calendar?

The wave of mega-IPOs could serve as both a catalyst and a constraint for the broader new issue market. If these transactions price and trade well, they can build investor confidence and support broader issuance, even though they will likely garner significant investor attention and absorb liquidity from the market. For companies in the IPO pipeline, readiness and flexibility will be critical – whether that means launching ahead of larger deals or waiting for the market to digest them. The better-positioned issuers will be those that are prepared to move quickly when windows are open.



Five priorities for IPO candidates in today's market

When windows open briefly and without warning, readiness is a critical component.

Five priorities stand out for companies preparing to access public markets in today's environment:

1 Do what you do best. Focus on the near-term, actionable growth drivers. Investors are prioritizing visible, credible execution. IPO candidates should anchor their equity story in clear near-term revenue and earnings drivers.

2 Take the time to get your business and financial models right. Together, they will be the foundations for success as a public company. Robust business and financial models underpin investor confidence and will need to hold up through IPO scrutiny and into life as a public company.

3 Approach funding decisions as if an IPO isn't in the cards. IPO markets can be fickle, and IPO windows can be fleeting. Capital planning should maintain flexibility and not depend on a specific IPO window, given how quickly market conditions can shift and windows can close.

4 Get to know your longer-term shareholder targets. Going public today is more about relationship building than ever. Developing an early understanding of target shareholders and beginning that engagement pre-IPO can support stronger alignment, book quality and aftermarket stability.

5 Be proactive about public company preparation. IPO readiness can open the door to a successful listing, while not being ready can have far-reaching consequences. Readiness enables execution when windows open; lack of preparation can delay or derail outcomes.

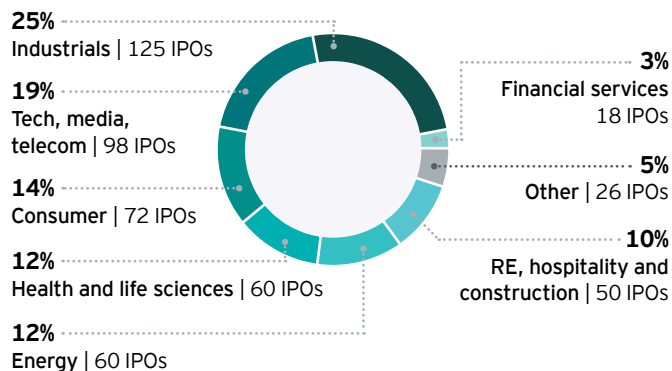
Looking ahead:

a message for IPO candidates

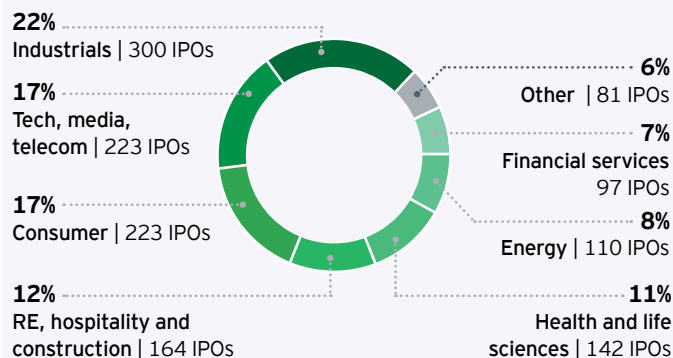
All indications point to a significant IPO market re-acceleration that could push issuance volumes to record highs. Mega-deals, geopolitics and sector-specific fundamentals will continue to shape IPO windows. Against this backdrop, bullish sentiment largely prevails today, causing many issuers to no longer consider whether to go public, but when and how. A higher tide is forming in today's IPO market – issuers should be ready and properly positioned to catch the right wave.

Appendix: IPO data

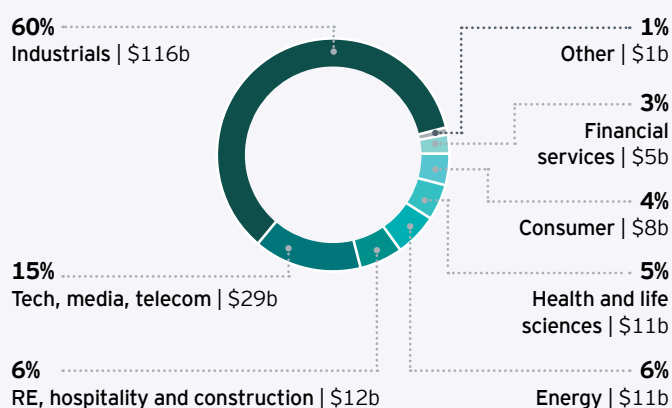
1H 2026 global sector distribution by number of IPOs



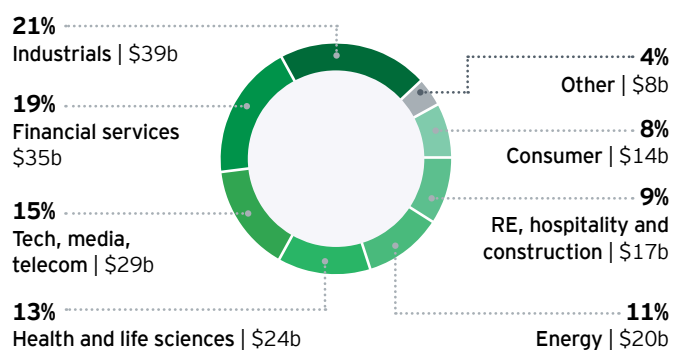
2025 global sector distribution by number of IPOs



1H 2026 global sector distribution by IPO proceeds

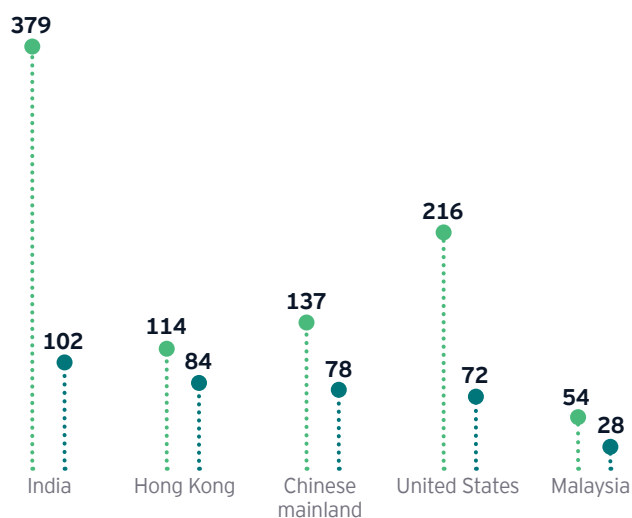


2025 global sector distribution by IPO proceeds



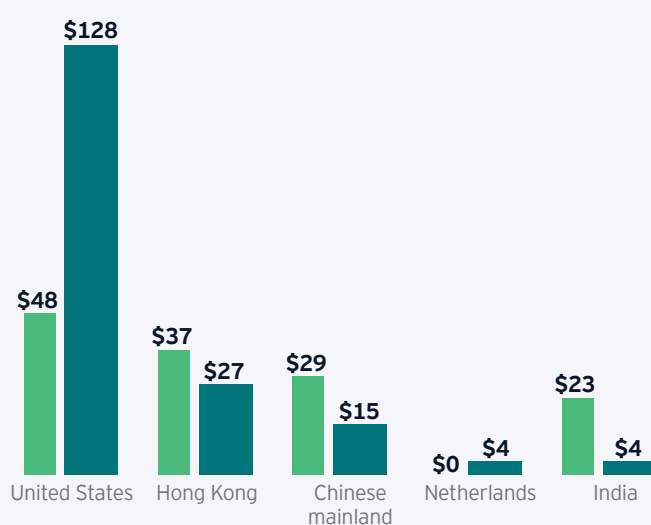
Top five IPO listing destinations by number of IPOs

■ 2025 ■ 1H 2026



Top five IPO listing destinations by proceeds (US\$b)

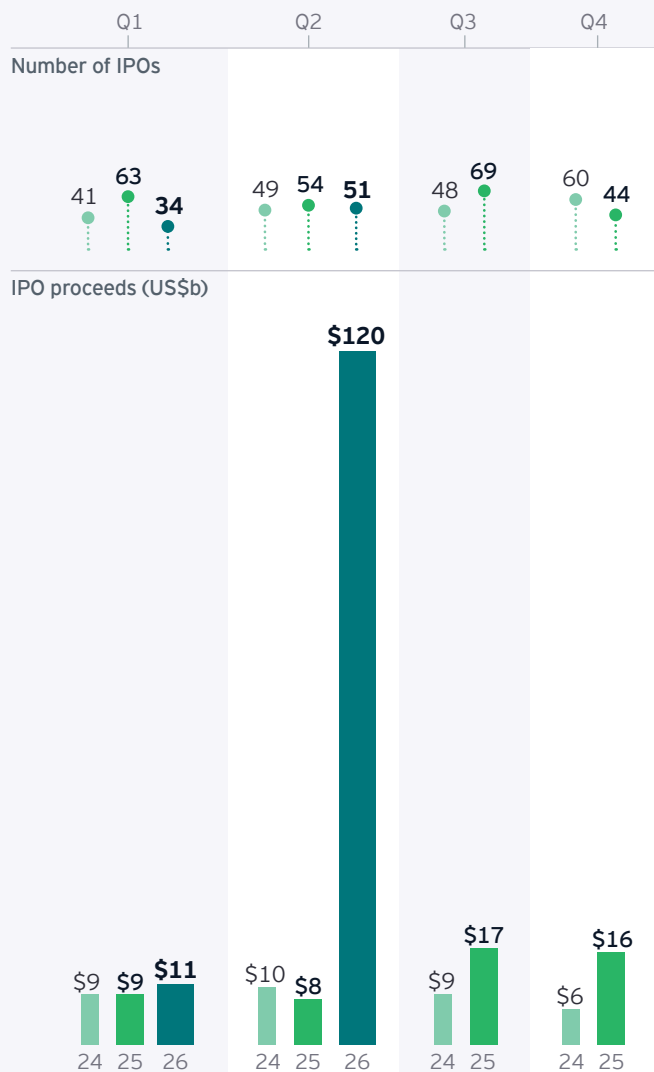
■ 2025 ■ 1H 2026



Sources: Dealogic; EY analysis. IPO proceeds are rounded to the nearest US\$1b. Includes approximately US\$86b in proceeds from one IPO priced in June 2026.

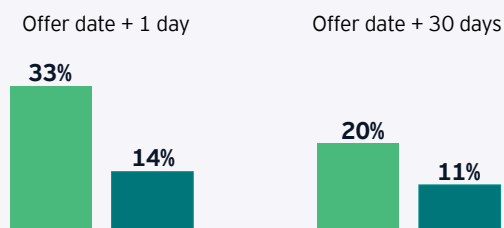
Americas quarterly IPO activity

■ 2024 ■ 2025 ■ 2026



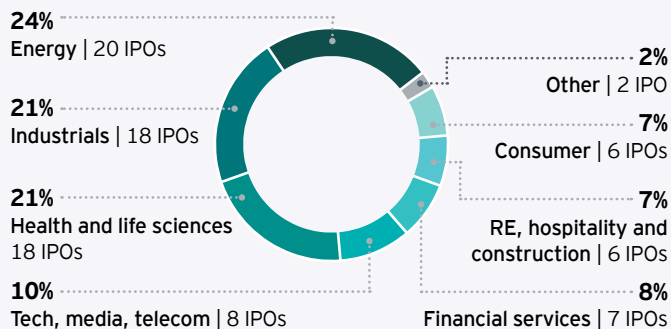
Americas IPO aftermarket performance

■ Class of 2025 ■ Class of 1H 2026

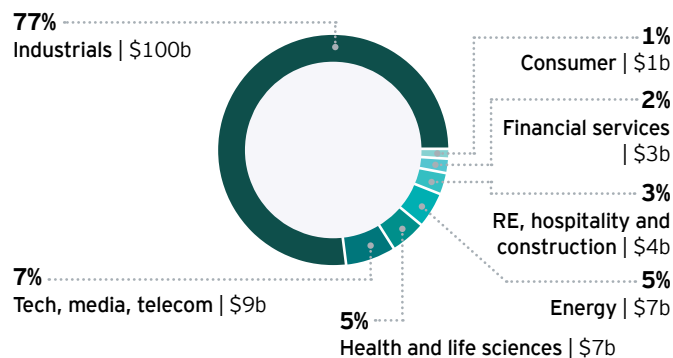


Note: IPO performance reflects average share price performance relative to the IPO offer price. Includes deals listed on Americas exchanges with proceeds of US\$30m and above.

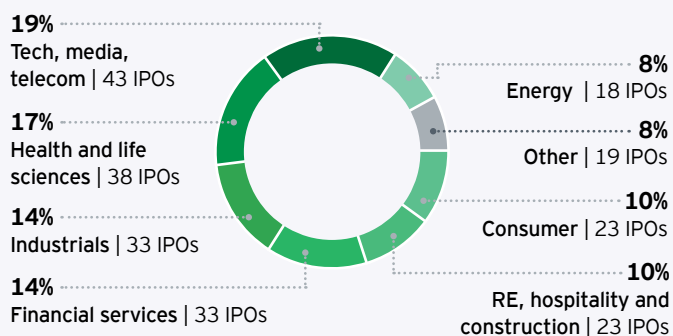
1H 2026 Americas sector distribution by number of IPOs



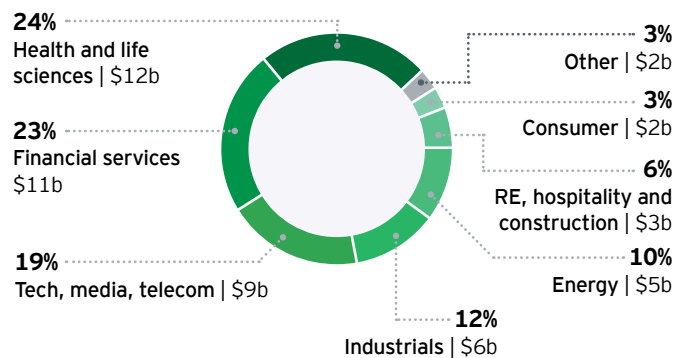
1H 2026 Americas sector distribution by IPO proceeds



2025 Americas sector distribution by number of IPOs



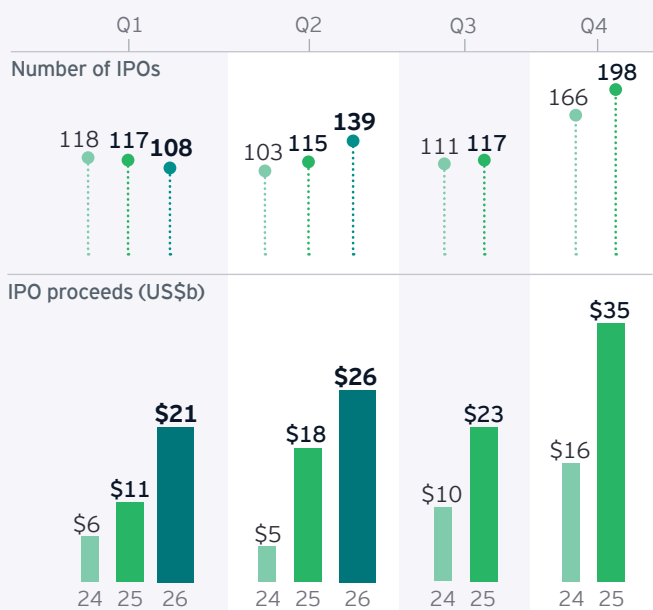
2025 Americas sector distribution by IPO proceeds



Sources: Dealogic; EY analysis. IPO proceeds are rounded to the nearest US\$1b. Includes approximately US\$86b in proceeds from one IPO priced in June 2026.

Asia-Pacific quarterly IPO activity

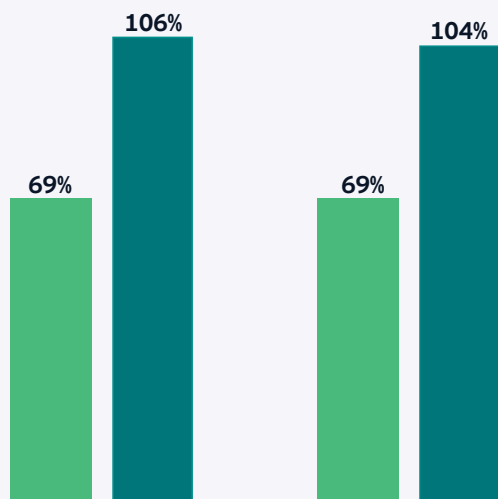
■ 2024 ■ 2025 ■ 2026



Asia-Pacific IPO aftermarket performance

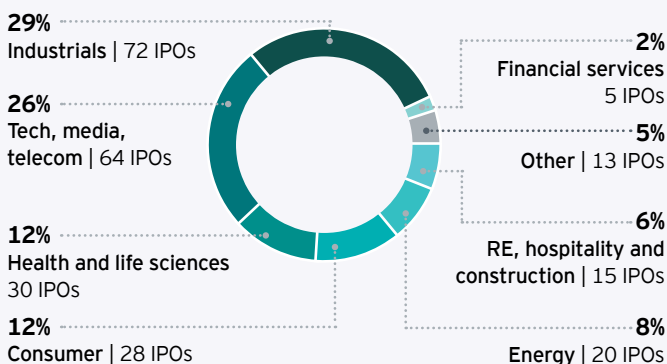
■ Class of 2025 ■ Class of 1H 2026

Offer date + 1 day Offer date + 30 days

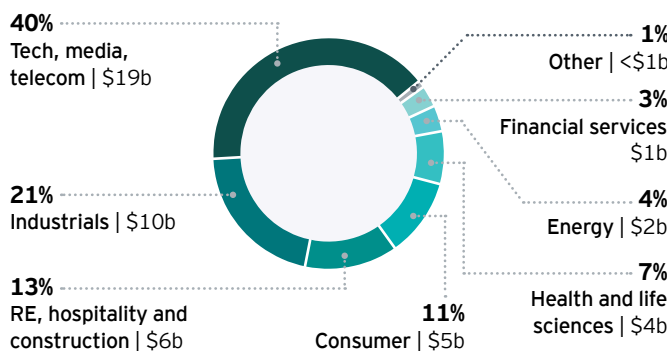


Note: IPO performance reflects average share price performance relative to the IPO offer price.

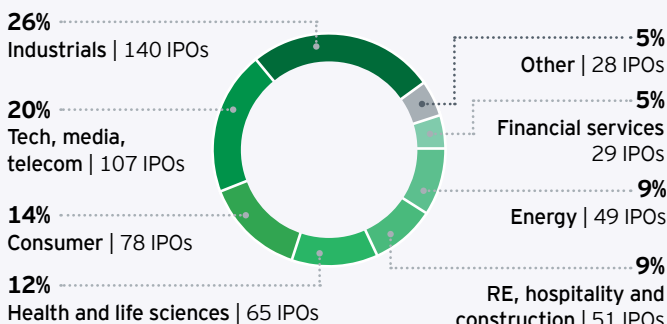
1H 2026 Asia-Pacific sector distribution by number of IPOs



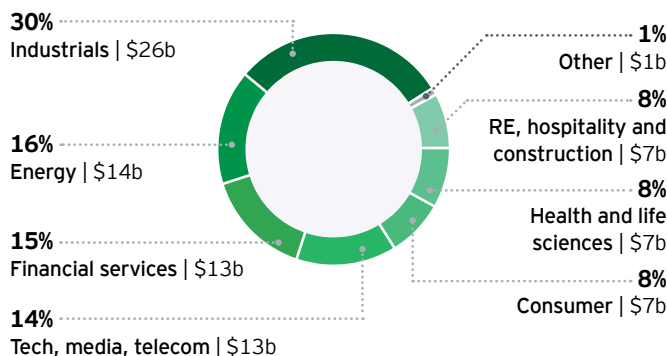
1H 2026 Asia-Pacific sector distribution by IPO proceeds



2025 Asia-Pacific sector distribution by number of IPOs



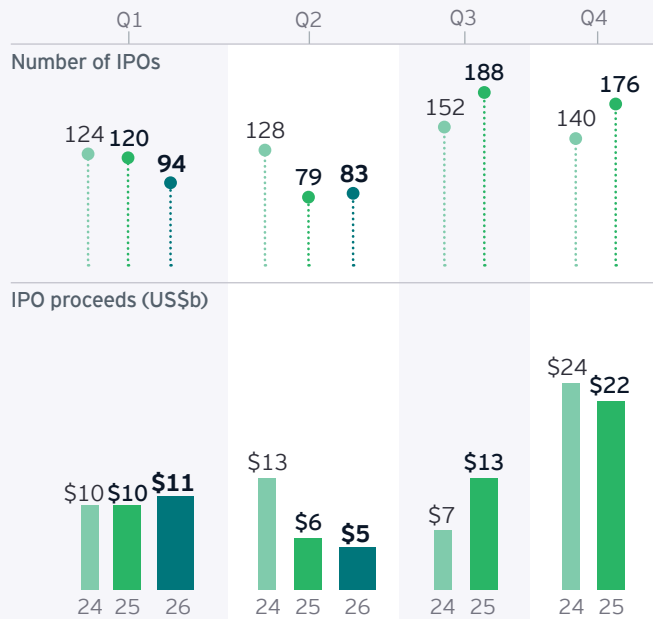
2025 Asia-Pacific sector distribution by IPO proceeds



Sources: Dealogic; EY analysis. IPO proceeds are rounded to the nearest US\$1b.

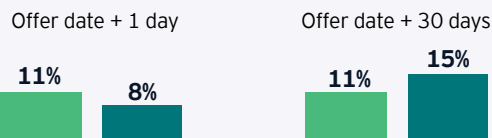
EMEIA quarterly IPO activity

■ 2024 ■ 2025 ■ 2026



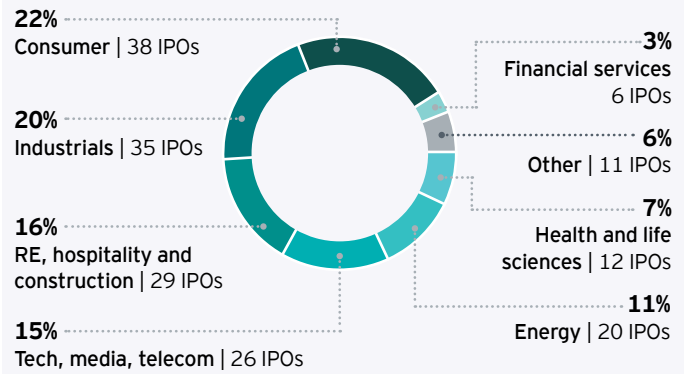
EMEIA IPO aftermarket performance

■ Class of 2025 ■ Class of 1H 2026

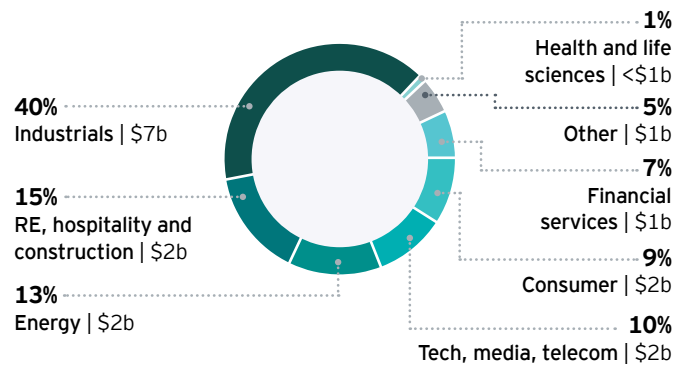


Note: IPO performance reflects average share price performance relative to the IPO offer price.

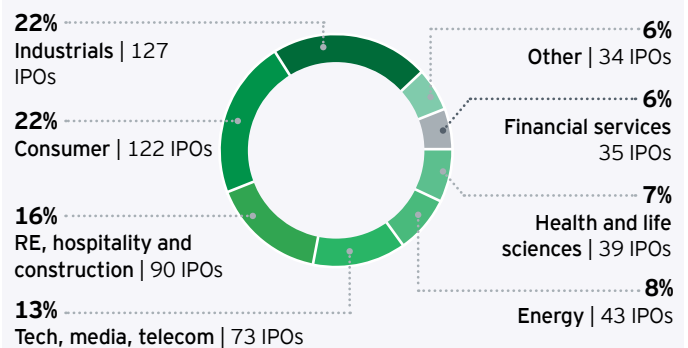
1H 2026 EMEIA sector distribution by number of IPOs



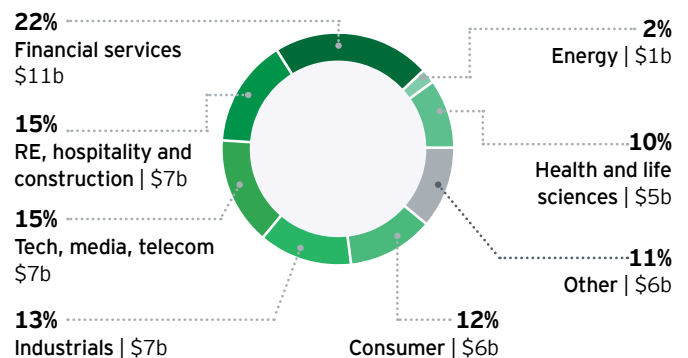
1H 2026 EMEIA sector distribution by IPO proceeds



2025 EMEIA sector distribution by number of IPOs



2025 EMEIA sector distribution by IPO proceeds



Sources: Dealogic; EY analysis. IPO proceeds are rounded to the nearest US\$1b.

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EYG no. 113684-26-GBL

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