Broad and healthy economic growth continues in the Asia Pacific region, and business optimism is buoyant. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a particularly bright spot, with record levels of optimism at net 64%. What are the trends and opportunities driving this dynamic business landscape in 2018?

The future of Asia Pacific: identifying growth in disruption

Greatest challenges and opportunities for APAC

Net business optimism* strong across APAC in Q2 2018

APAC optimism score

Global optimism score: 54%

Net business optimism* strong across APAC in Q2 2018

55%

Key

Above the global net optimism score

Below the global net optimism score

* Net optimism is calculated as optimistic business leaders minus pessimistic respondents.

ASEAN: a bright spot in the APAC economy

The outlook for the region is sustained, healthy growth of more than 5% per year between now and 2022.

Greatest challenges and opportunities for APAC

Top challenges across APAC 2018

1. Ageing populations 18%
2. Rebalancing of China’s economy 30%
3. Regional conflict 29%
4. Federal reserve interest rate policy 25%
5. Climate change 22%
6. Automation of simple businesses processes leading to significant job losses 20%
7. Restructuring of manufacturing jobs by Western businesses 18%
8. Decreased demand for natural resources 14%

Record optimism in ASEAN

64%

Globalisation of supply chains 27%

Upgrading local infrastructure 21%

Increasing ASEAN economic cooperation 29%

The Trans-Pacific Partnership 28%

Stabilisation of the middle classes 25%

Automation of simple businesses processes, freeing up workers 34%

High growth in the middle classes 23%

Increased ASEAN economic cooperation

Source: Grant Thornton IBR Q2 2018.

2 Highest level of business optimism ever recorded by the International Business Report (IBR) in ASEAN.

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