

The Global Digital Infrastructure Survey 2021

Angus Leslie Melville

19/08/2021

IJGlobal is delighted today (19 August) to be publishing the findings of the Global Digital Infrastructure Survey 2021 and associated report – sponsored by Allen & Overy and DigitalBridge, and run in partnership M&E Global.

This is the second version of this report (first published 2020) and drew in international responses from almost 200 infrastructure and energy industry professionals who are currently involved in delivering, financing/lending or advising on transactions in the digital infrastructure (DI) space.

To access the report in full, [CLICK HERE...](#)

The highlights of this international survey (by percent of respondents) are:

- 70% – 5G and advanced data centres are developing most
- 70% – cyber security is the main building block needed in DI
- 65.3% – reducing costs is the main benefit of DI
- 61.1% – resilience is the second main benefit of DI
- 66% – the energy sector will save the most costs from DI
- 63% – smart cities will also save costs
- 71.3% – key benefit of DI for the power sector is to reduce outages and improve resilience
- 79.2 – main benefit of DI for the transport sector is usage optimisation
- 64.3% – cyber breaches constitute the overall biggest risk of DI
- 62% – greatest risk to the public sector for not investing in DI
- 75.3% – governments and regulations are greatest obstacle to DI
- 56% – roads and railways are going to be most outpaced by DI
- 65.3% – lowering emissions is the greatest ESG benefit of DI

These findings identify a significant evolution from the inaugural Global Digital Infrastructure Survey (2020), showing a rapid development in the sector as the market evolves swiftly and participants become increasingly comfortable with it as an asset class.

IJGlobal anticipates this trend will continue in coming years with a corresponding uptick in market activity.

Sara Pickersgill, co-head of Allen & Overy’s global infrastructure group, says: “The pandemic has increased demand for digital infrastructure with working from home and flexible working among innumerable reasons that have helped push this sector to the forefront of the minds of infrastructure funds that had not been playing in this space before Covid-19.



“The pandemic itself has demonstrated the resilience of this infrastructure sector and thrown the spotlight, in many cases, on portfolio selection and diversification. It has highlighted something that took a lot of people by surprise – that not all infrastructure is immune to macro-economic events. To take an obvious point... airports, toll roads and mid-stream energy have all suffered as a result of the pandemic. And it is this that brings into question portfolio selection and diversification.”

Meanwhile, Dr William Cox, managing director at M&E Global and co-author of the study, said: “Despite digital infrastructure’s strong growth, 75.3% of respondents in this survey see governments and regulators as the greatest obstacles digital transformation.

“In our 2020 digital infrastructure survey, only 32.4% thought governments were the major hurdle to DI. This suggests more than scepticism about governments’ abilities to advance digital infra. It might be investor disappointment that government policies are lagging way behind technology.”

Thank you for printing this article from IJGlobal.

As the leading online publication serving the infrastructure investment market, IJGlobal is read daily by decision-makers within investment banks, international law firms, advisory firms, institutional investors and governments.

If you have been given this article by a subscriber, you can contact us through www.ijglobal.com/sign-in, or call our London office on +44 (0)20 7779 8870 to discuss our subscription options.