

# Outsourced Custom Software Development Market Report

May 2023



Equiteq

Growing equity, realizing value

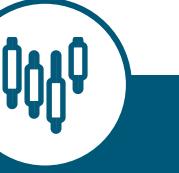
```
at mirror object to mirror
mirror_mod.mirror_object
operation == "MIRROR_X":
    mirror_mod.use_x = True
    mirror_mod.use_y = False
    mirror_mod.use_z = False
operation == "MIRROR_Y":
    mirror_mod.use_x = False
    mirror_mod.use_y = True
    mirror_mod.use_z = False
operation == "MIRROR_Z":
    mirror_mod.use_x = False
    mirror_mod.use_y = False
    mirror_mod.use_z = True
```

```
selection at the end - add
    _ob.select= 1
    mirror_ob.select=1
    bpy.context.scene.objects.active = 
    ("Selected" + str(modifier))
    mirror_ob.select = 0
    bpy.context.selected_objects = 
    data.objects[one.name].select
```

```
print("please select exact
- OPERATOR CLASSES -
```

```
types.Operator):
    X mirror
    object.mirror_mirror_x
    mirror X"
```

# Highlights from the Custom Software Development market

 Unique market dynamics...	 ... and a diverse ecosystem of CSD assets...	 ... have attracted specific buyers to the space...	 ... driving strong volumes of M&A...	 ... at evolving valuation levels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The global CSD market is forecast to grow at an 8.5% CAGR to \$120bn in 2026</li><li>The global software developer talent pool cannot keep up with the demand, creating acute talent shortages</li><li>Macroeconomic and geopolitical disruption has added a further bottleneck to the supply of talent</li><li>These dynamics are creating the ideal circumstances for the proliferation of low-code solutions that democratize CSD throughout organizations, posing a risk to traditional CSD firms</li><li>CSD firms are increasingly acquiring higher value-add IT services to address these demands</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Equiteq identified c. 24,000 CSD firms across the globe, with notable hubs being North America (c. 28%), APAC (c. 28) and Central &amp; Eastern Europe (c. 15%)</li><li>The landscape is highly fragmented, with c. 55% of identified CSD firms operating with under 50 employees</li><li>CSD firms operate a mixture of on-, off-, and nearshore delivery models – with diversified delivery increasingly popular amongst firms</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Strategic buyers and PE investors have been equally active, with PE investors driving the majority of transactions in 2022 through both direct investments and bolt-ons</li><li>Buyers are primarily based in North America and Western Europe</li><li>Nearshore CSD, Diversified Regional IT and Diversified Global IT firms have been the most active strategic acquirer category, accounting for c. 18%, c. 16% and c. 13% respectively</li><li>Bolt-ons for PE-backed CSD platforms have been prioritised for (i) niche capabilities, (ii) onshore scale and (iii) geographical expansion</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Deal volume saw a c. 23% CAGR between 2019 and 2022</li><li>2022 saw 129 deals, a slight decrease from 143 deals in 2021 driven by softening M&amp;A demand from strategic buyers and fewer PE platform investments</li><li>Equiteq identified 39 PE add-ons in 2022, up from 36 in 2021, indicating that market consolidation continued despite worsening market conditions</li><li>North America and Western Europe saw the highest levels deal volume, with CEE in third despite the Ukraine War creating investor hesitance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Since 2019, public valuations have been on a tumultuous path with COVID-19, interest rate hikes, the Ukraine War, and prolonged inflation causing valuations to converge in the 12-15x NTM EBITDA range</li><li>This is markedly down from the highs of 2021 which saw assets trading as high as 30x NTM EBITDA on a median basis</li><li>Recent turmoil has caused investors to turn towards EBITDA-based valuations as profitability is preferred over growth</li><li>Private markets have remained resilient, with the median valuation at the c. 15x LTM EBITDA level</li></ul>

# Executive Summary

**Equiteq**



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## Market overview and valuation trends

- CSD market sizing, industry trends, and market drivers
- Macro valuation commentary and trading comparable analysis

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## Global landscape overview

- Distribution of CSD service providers across the globe
- Key player landscape

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## M&A activity – 2019 to present

- Deal volume by transaction type and region
- Analysis of CSD acquirers' strategic rationales

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## Regional CSD M&A overview of nearshore hubs

- Analysis of M&A amongst CSD firms in CEE, LatAm, and MEA
- Deals by country, buyer region, and transaction type

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## Regional CSD M&A overview of offshore hubs

- Analysis of M&A amongst CSD firms in APAC
- Deals by country, buyer region, and transaction type

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## Select PE-backed platforms: M&A since inception

- Distribution of select PE-backed platforms in the CSD space
- Investment cycle, transaction rationale, and investor analysis

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## About Equiteq

- Introduction to Equiteq and select completed transactions
- Equiteq's expert CSD M&A team

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**2 Global landscape overview**

**3 M&A activity – 2019 to present**

**4 Regional CSD M&A overview of nearshore hubs**

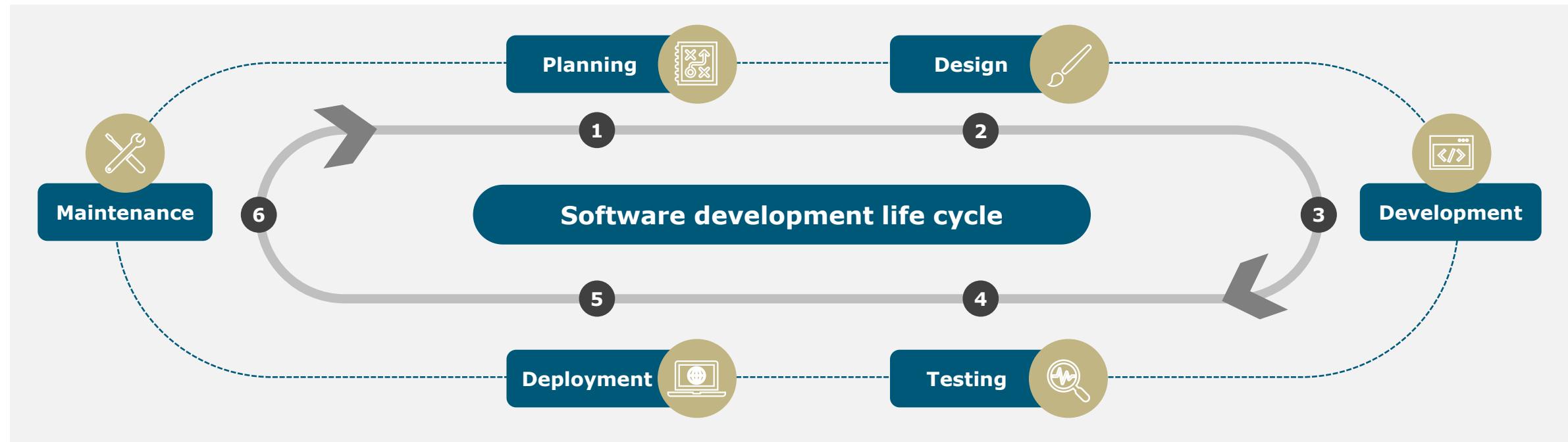
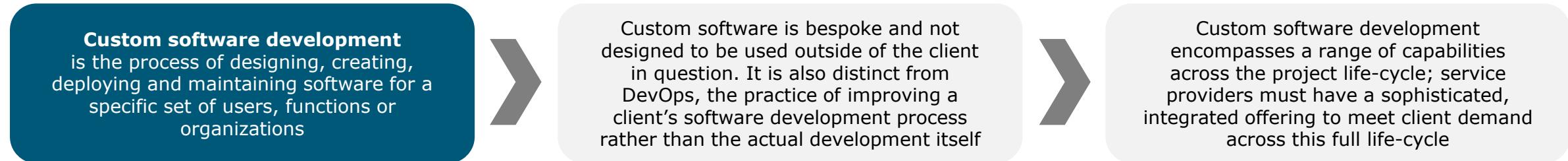
**5 Regional CSD M&A overview of offshore hubs**

**6 Select PE-backed platforms: M&A since inception**

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# Defining custom software development (CSD)



# Despite macro headwinds and the rise of competing technologies, the global CSD market is forecast to expand at 8.5% CAGR to 2026

## Companies are increasingly requiring bespoke solutions as off-the-shelf products do not satisfy their specific, complex needs

- Global IT spend is forecast to reach \$6.2tn by 2026
- Software will be the fastest-growing subsegment at a 11.9% CAGR, with spend on infrastructure software required for bespoke solutions leading at a 12.8% CAGR



## The regional dislocation of IT spend & talent supply, combined with cost arbitrage opportunities, is drawing buyers to near & offshore



- R&D spend largely stems from developed nations while near & offshore markets offer deep talent pools at a significant cost discount
- This dislocation is attracting buyers to the regions

## The global software talent market is rapidly tightening, driving price inflation and impacting business leaders' priorities



- Global software spend is forecast to grow at a CAGR of 11.6%<sup>(1)</sup> vs only 4.2% for software talent to 2026, propelling talent sourcing to the top of CIOs' priorities
- Companies are rethinking their IT & talent strategies, and actioning price increase

## The proliferation of low code / no code platforms creates a tangible alternative to selecting bespoke solution providers



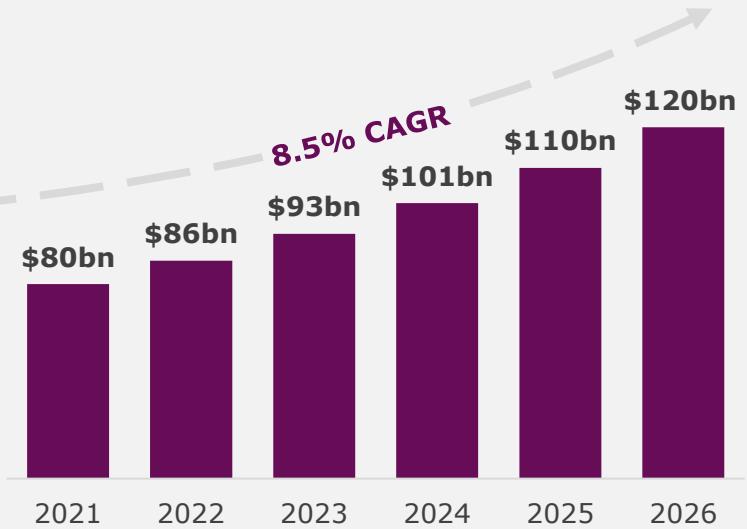
- The tightening labor market, combined with the adoption of emerging technologies and ways of work, have created fertile ground for low code / no code platforms
- At a forecast spend of ~\$60bn by 2026, this technology creates a tangible alternative to custom solution

## The macroenvironment is driving the demand for higher-value strategic services, which established developers are pursuing



- Remote working, rising nationalism, changing socio-political landscapes, increasing complexity of businesses and evolution of delivery models is turning business leaders' attention to seeking higher value strategic services

## Global Custom Software Development market



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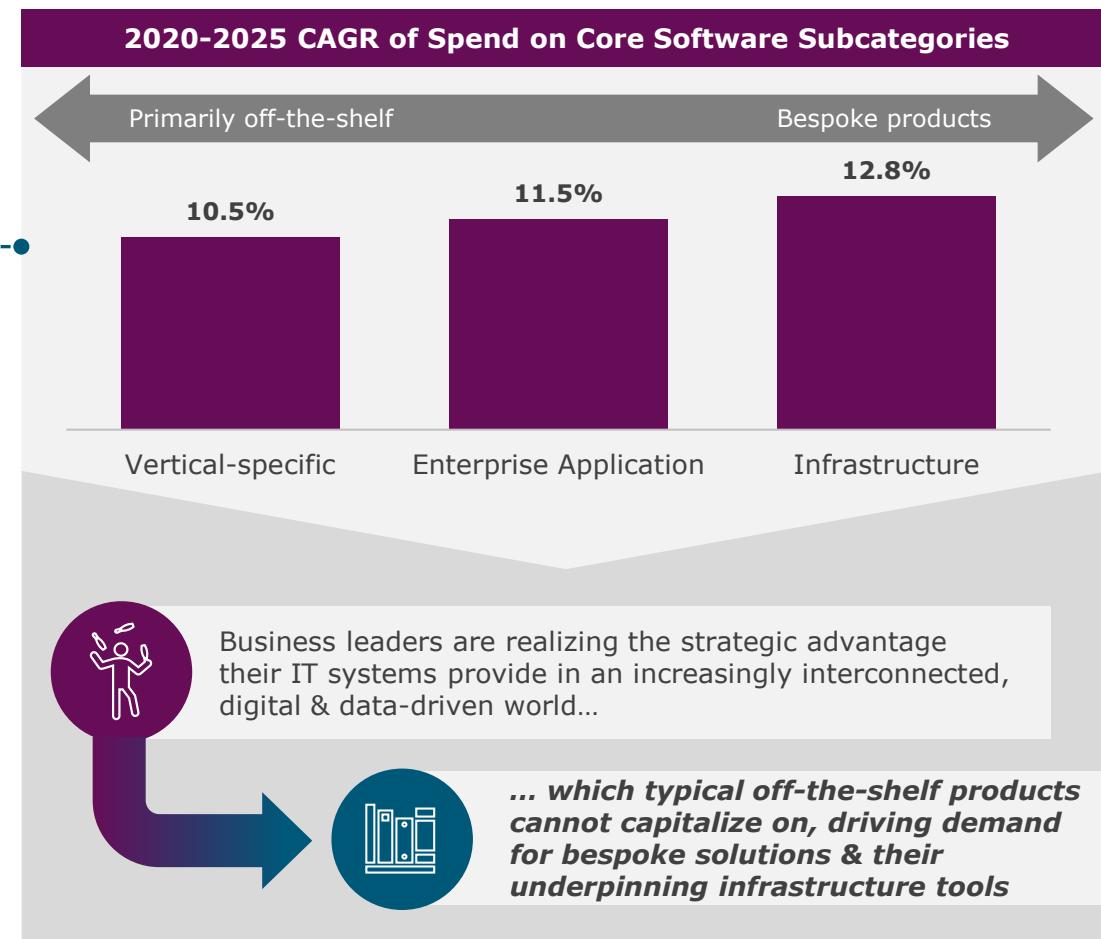
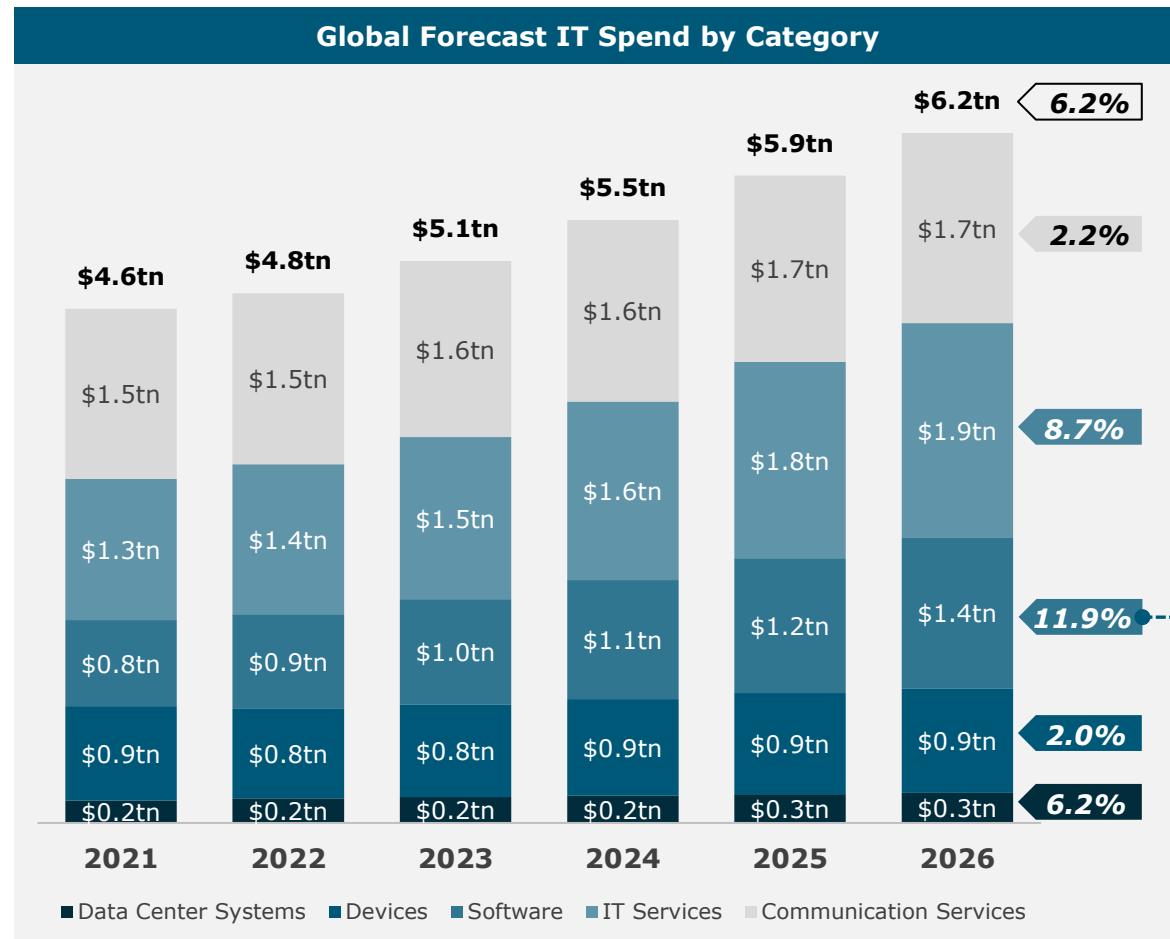
*“CIOs are using more IT services to assist in the lack of skilled IT staff. Tasks that require lower skill sets tend to be outsourced to managed service firms to alleviate staff time, while critical strategy work, which requires high-end skills unobtainable by many enterprises, will increasingly be fulfilled by external consultants.”*

”

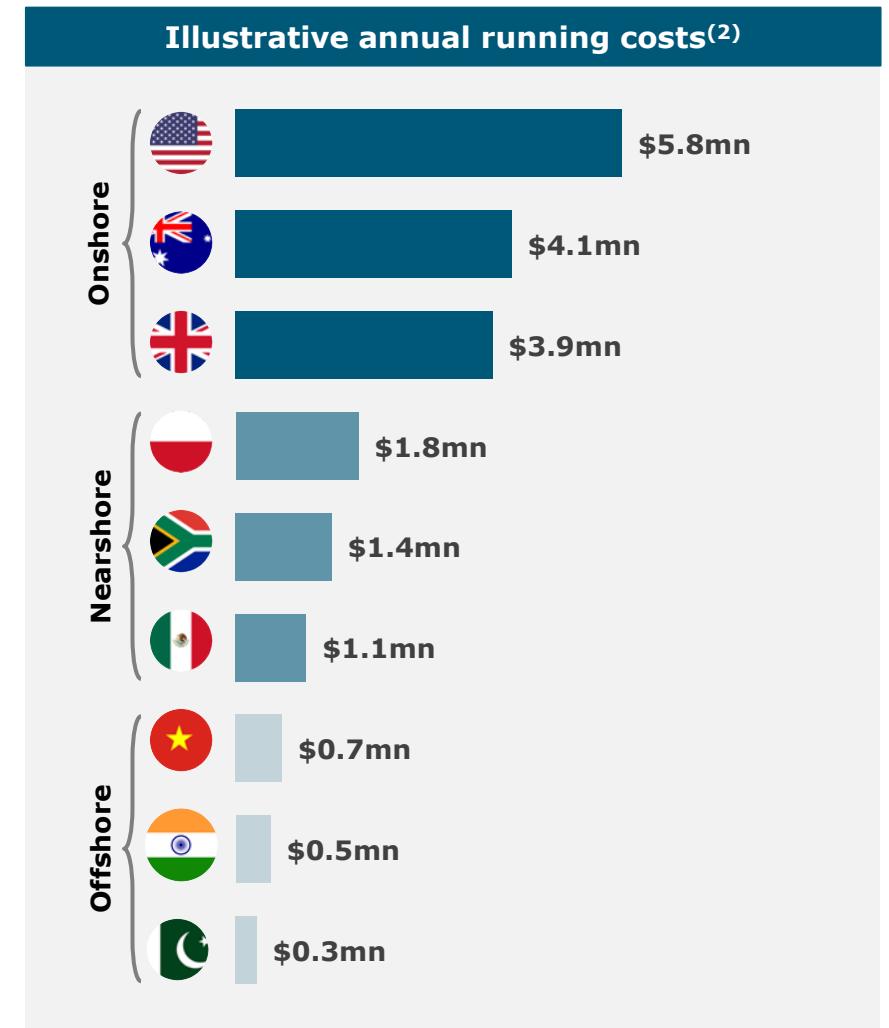
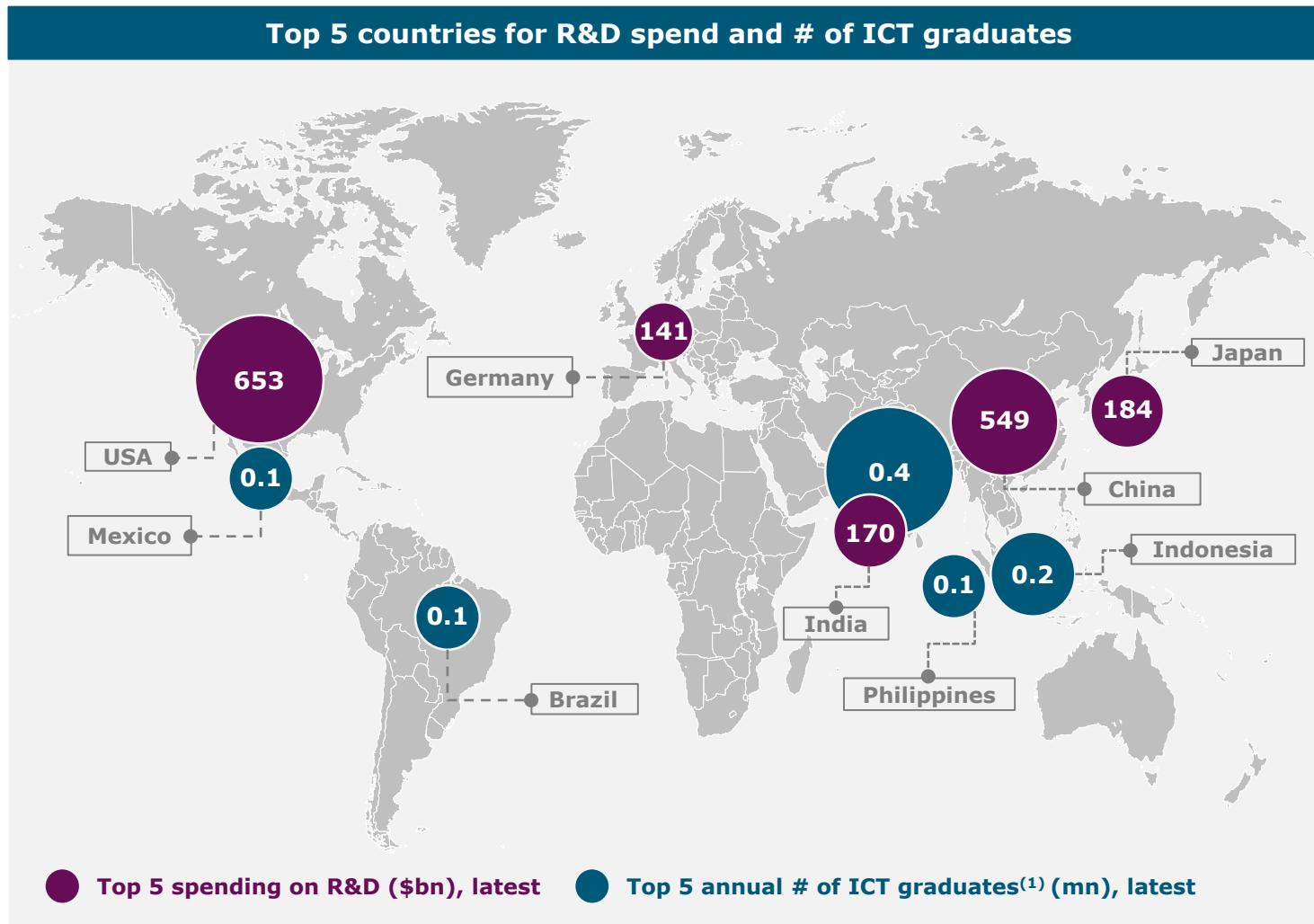
**– John-David Lovelock, Research VP at Gartner**

# The global IT spend is forecast to reach \$6.2tn by 2026, with budgets being increasingly allocated to software required for bespoke solutions

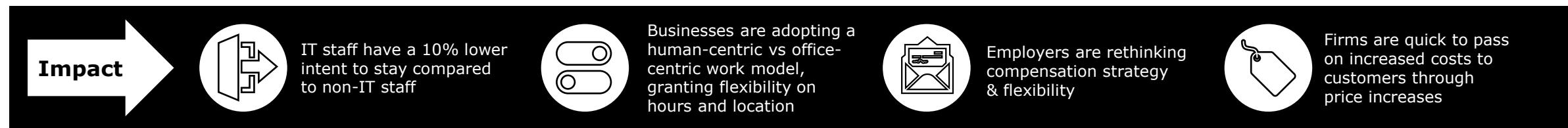
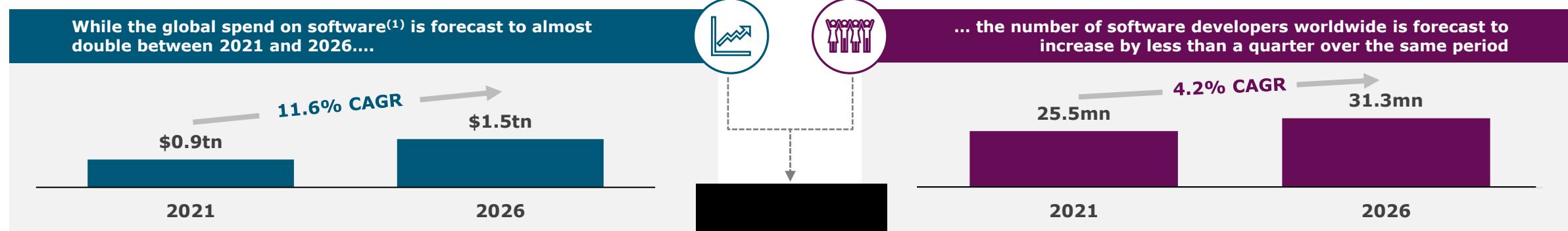
Software will be the fastest growing IT subsegment over the coming years



# While demand is primarily coming from developed nations, cost arbitrage & deep talent pools draw buyers to near & offshore markets



# Software demand is quickly outstripping the supply of talent, driving inflation and impacting business leaders' strategic priorities...

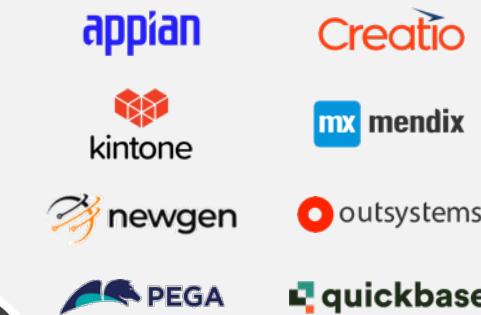


# ... creating, among other enablers, the ideal environment for low code / no code platforms, posing a threat to bespoke development providers

## Dependence on IT specialists for the maintenance of high-code programs is becoming increasingly challenging...

-  A very hot labor market for IT specialists is making it hard to attract and retain top talent
-  Increasing costs of maintaining high-code programs
-  High-code programs quickly become outdated, posing a significant disadvantage to businesses lacking the resources to continuously update their systems

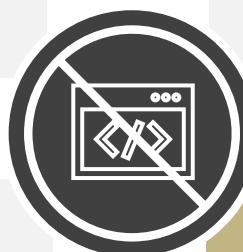
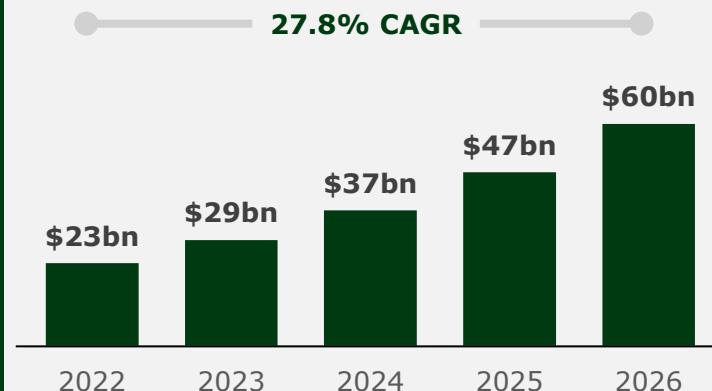
## ... driving the proliferation of low-code / no-code vendors...



## ... and buy-in from established vendors in adjacent fields.

(May-20)		
(Jul-19)		
(Oct-17)		

Global spend is forecast to reach ~\$60bn by 2026 after growing at a CAGR of 27.8%, making it one of the fastest growing subsegments of enterprise software



## Companies and business leaders are reaping the benefits of enabling citizen developers through low code / no code



Reduced IT backlog & strain on IT teams



Cost savings through lower maintenance costs and reduced need for in-house IT



Reduced development time enabling faster response to market conditions



Bottlenecks & miscommunication are avoided by business users handling their own criteria

# The numerous macroeconomic developments of recent years have increased the demand for higher value-add strategic services...

## IT delivery models are susceptible to changing macro environments



The acceleration of **remote working** following the C-19 pandemic has reduced expectations for in-person presence, opening the door for typically onshore, higher value-add services to be delivered from near or offshore locations

Rising **nationalism / anti-globalization** across the globe is weighing on the decision-making process of firms choosing between onshore, nearshore and offshore

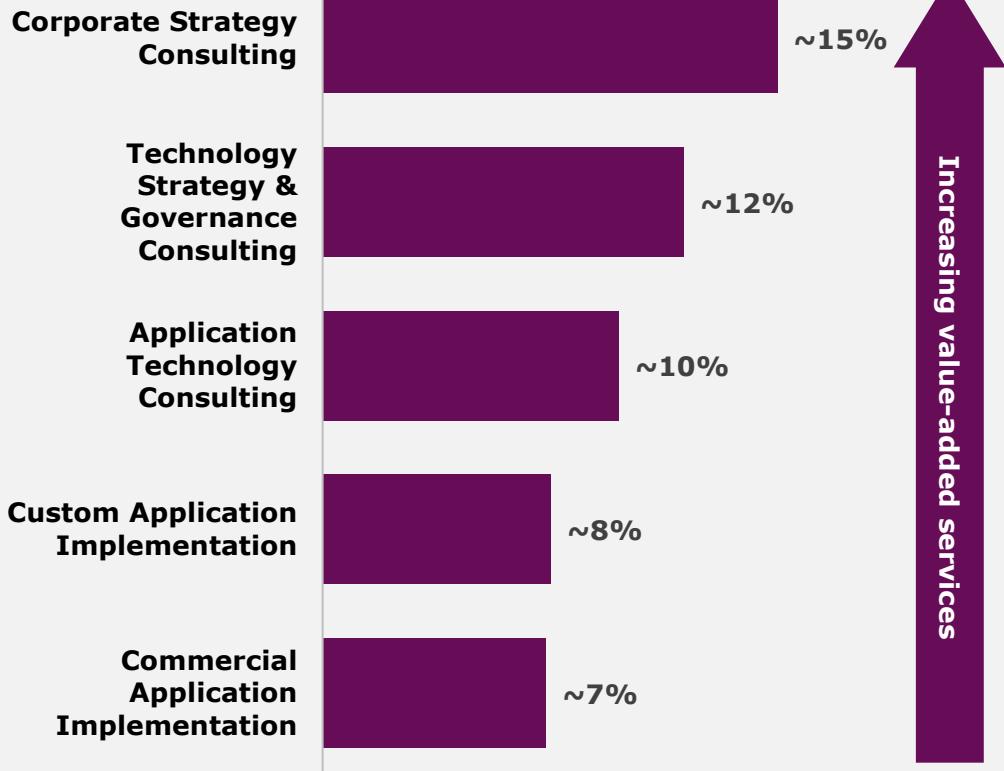
Changing **sociopolitical landscapes and international relations** (such as the invasion of Ukraine, rising China-US tensions) are adding further tangible risks to nearshore / offshore models

**Increasing complexity of businesses and the realization of IT's strategic advantage** are driving demand for higher value add consulting services, where proximity, language, and cultural affinity play significant roles in vendor selection

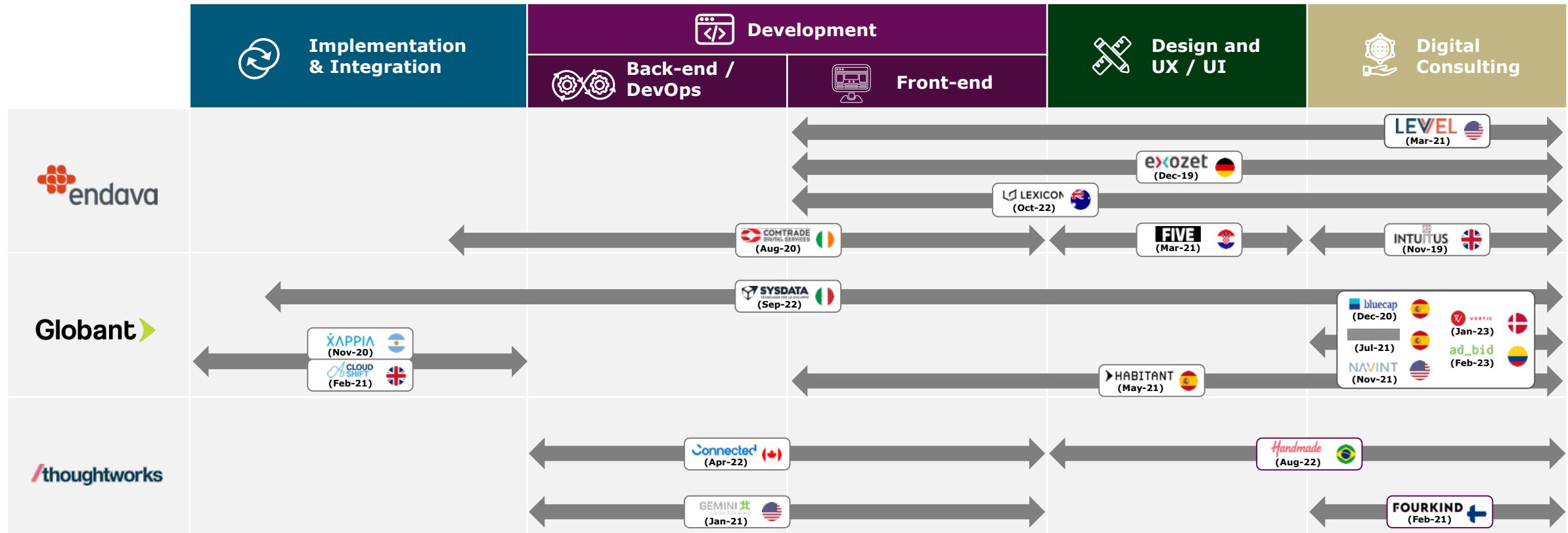
**Delivery models & processes** are becoming increasingly iterative and bespoke, benefiting vendors with closer proximity

## Business leaders are seeking strategic advice in the current market

### 2020-2025 CAGR of Consulting & Implementation Services spend



# ... which established CSD players are pursuing through targeted acquisitions



Consulting services are seen as value-additive and a cornerstone of creating an integrated digital service offering for enterprise clients...

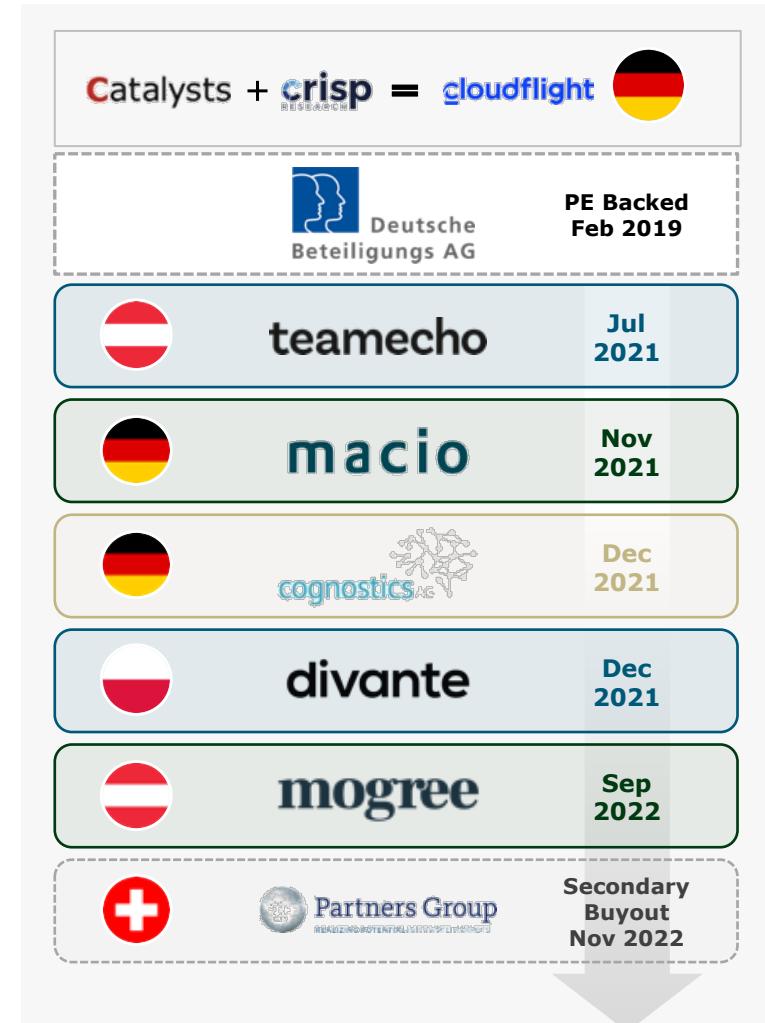
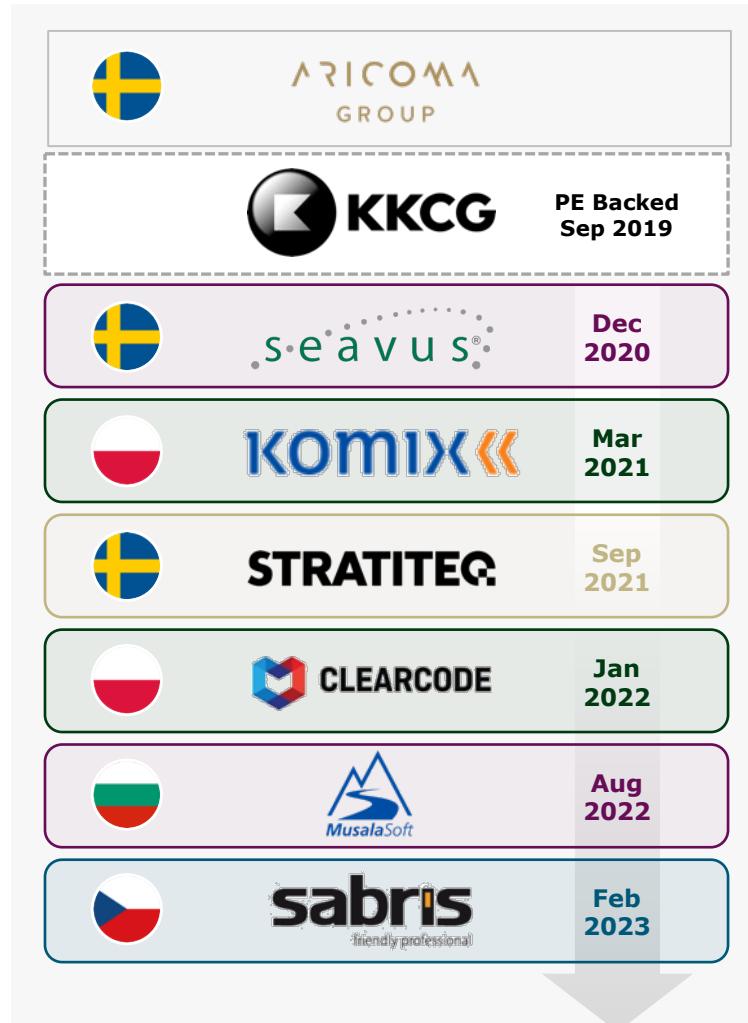
**epam**

"Our strategic acquisitions have expanded our geographic reach and service capabilities to include digital strategy, design, and consulting... [we are] moving beyond traditional services into business consulting, design, and physical product development" – **FY21 10K**

**PERFICIENT**

"In 2021, we continued to implement a strategy focused on...leveraging our existing (and pursuing new) strategic alliances by targeting leading business advisory companies" – **FY21 10K**

# These various sector dynamics and the fragmented nature of the market have attracted investors seeking platforms for consolidation



# Severe macro disruption has altered traditional valuation indicators for publicly traded CSD firms

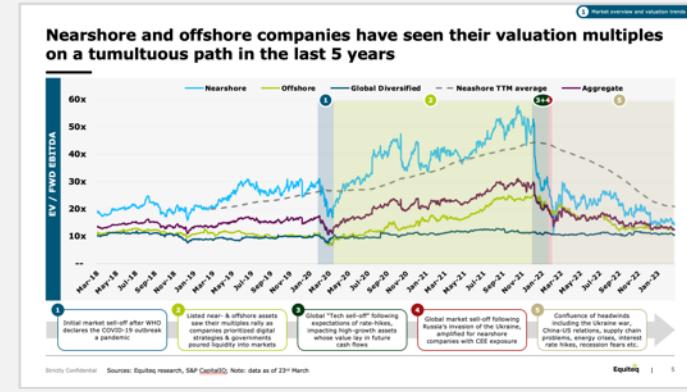
## Public comparables have seen their valuations below pre-COVID levels



In the face of historic volatility, publicly traded CSD firms now trade at levels below their pre-COVID averages



Following the initial COVID shock, CSD equities enjoyed a strong rally which was curtailed by the onset of inflationary pressure and the Ukraine War



## War in Ukraine has cut CEE nearshoring firms' growth prospects



The humanitarian crises caused by the Ukraine War have uprooted talent pools vital to the nearshore model

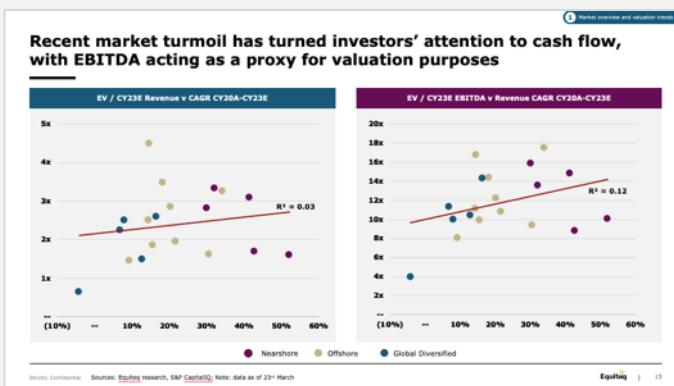


Global sanctions and the reticence of businesses to continue operations in Belarus and Russia have dramatically impacted the growth prospects of CSD firms with exposure to the CEE region

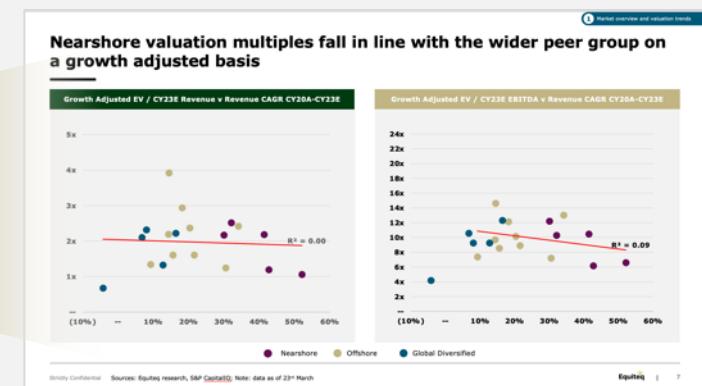


This has had a direct impact on valuation: e.g. EPAM (with ~58% of its delivery headcount in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia<sup>(1)</sup>) saw a 52% draw-down in its stock price in the week following the invasion<sup>(2)</sup>

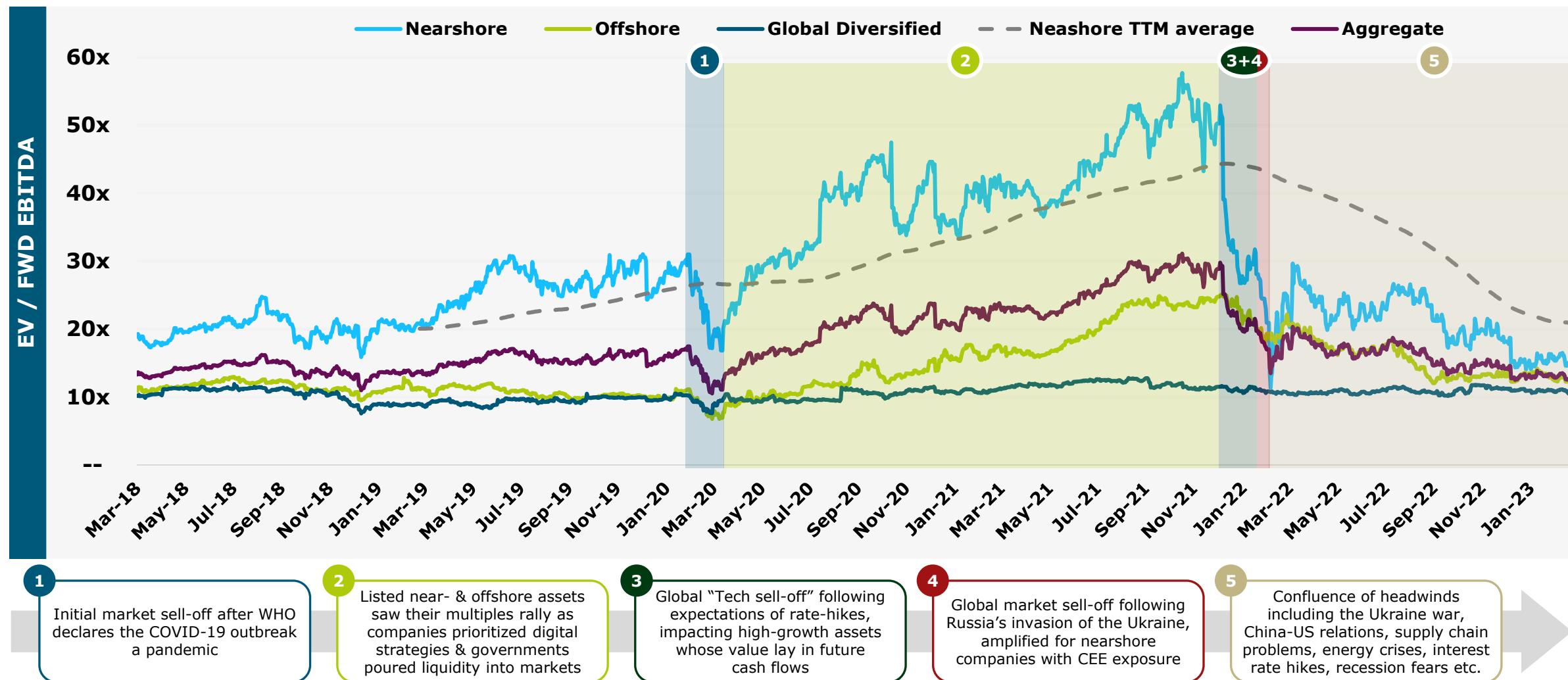
## Though growth remains highly-impactful on valuation, turmoil has driven investors to prioritise profitability



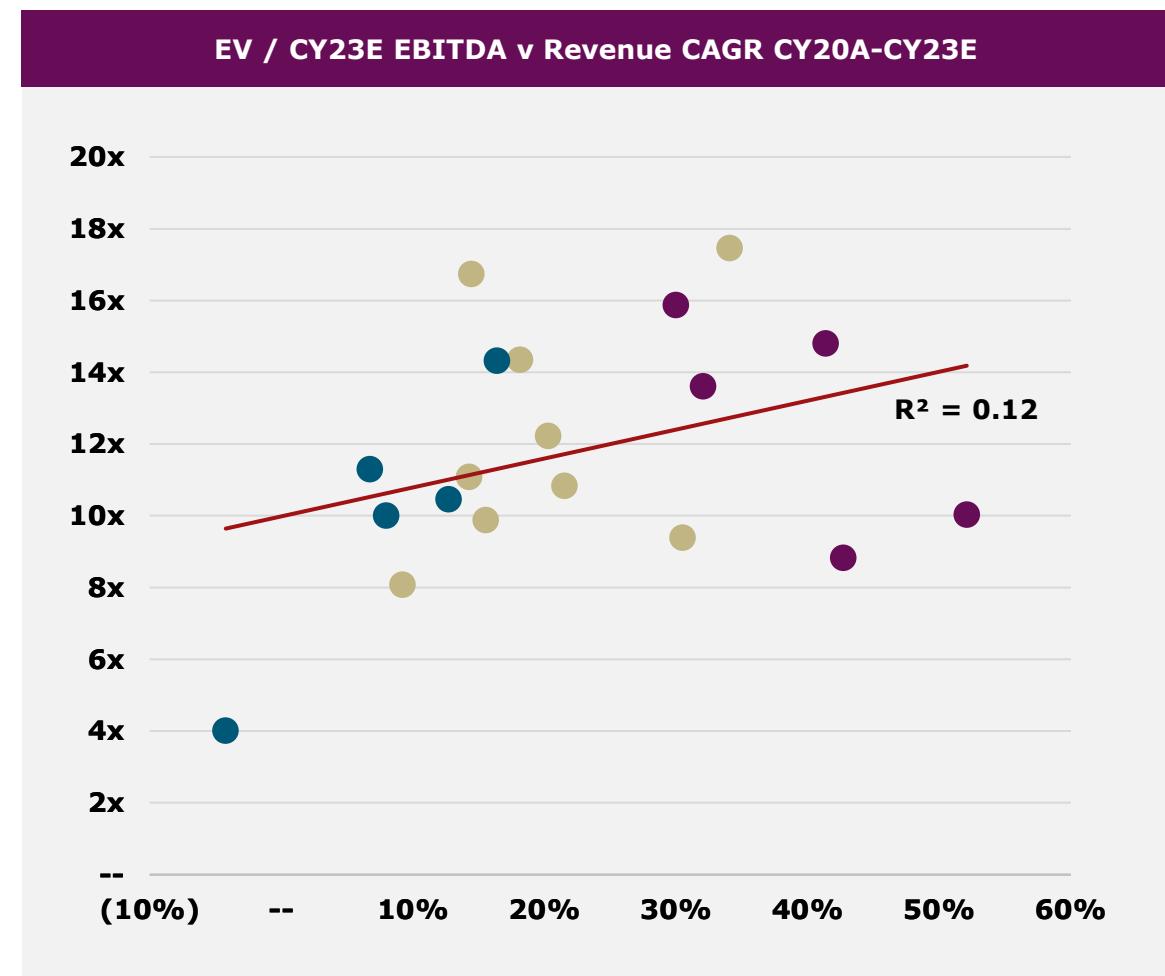
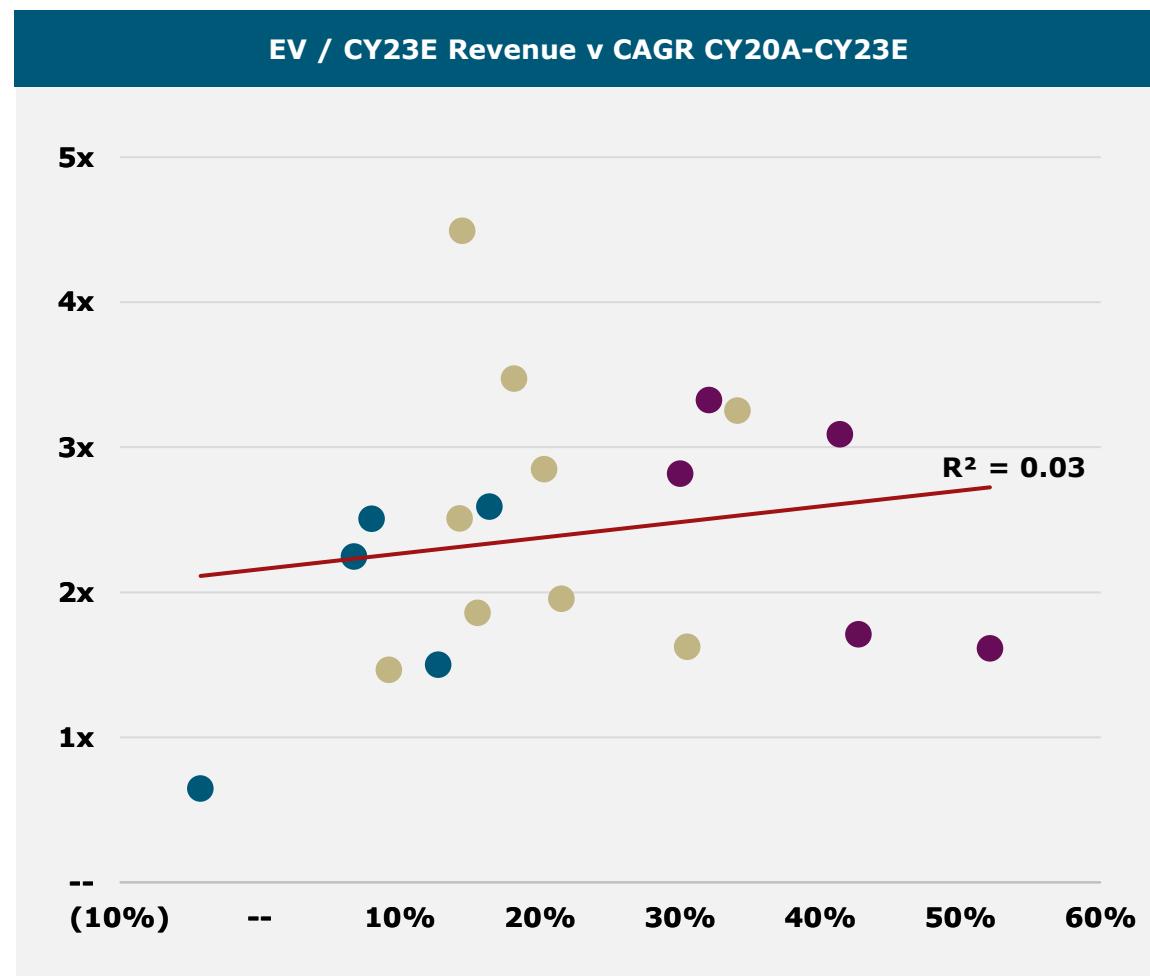
Revenue growth has historically been the valuation bellwether for IT services firms; recent growth challenges have disrupted this model, pushing investors to view profitability in the form of EBITDA as the key valuation driver



# Nearshore and offshore companies have seen their valuation multiples on a tumultuous path in the last 5 years

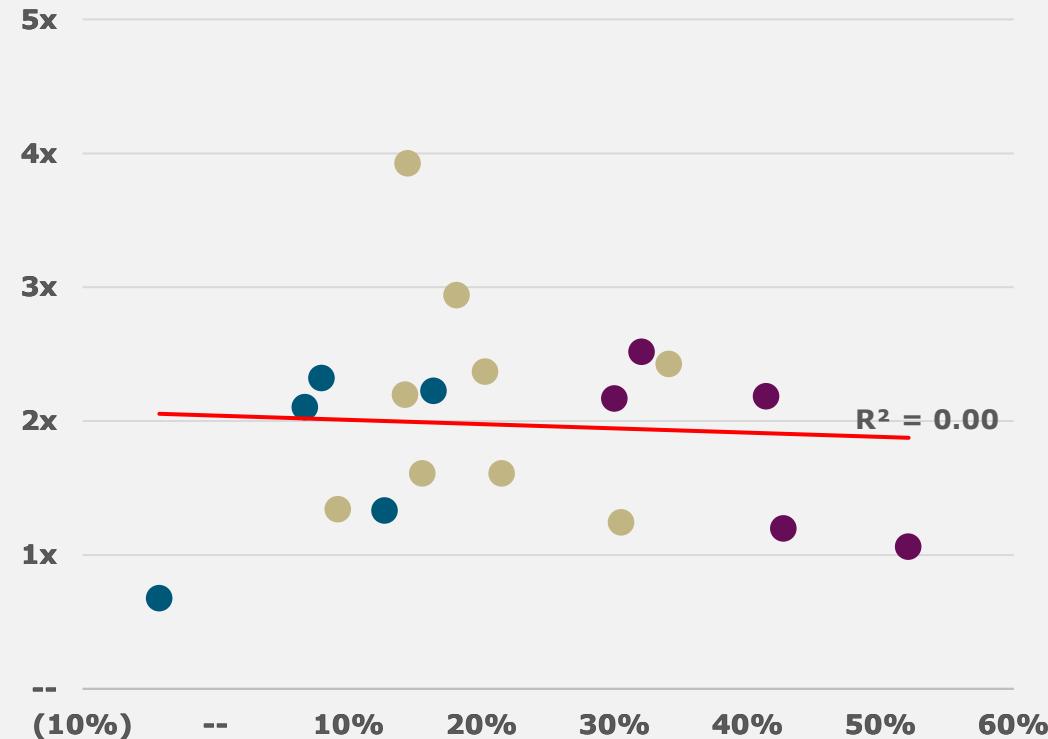


# Recent market turmoil has turned investors' attention to cash flow, with EBITDA acting as a proxy for valuation purposes

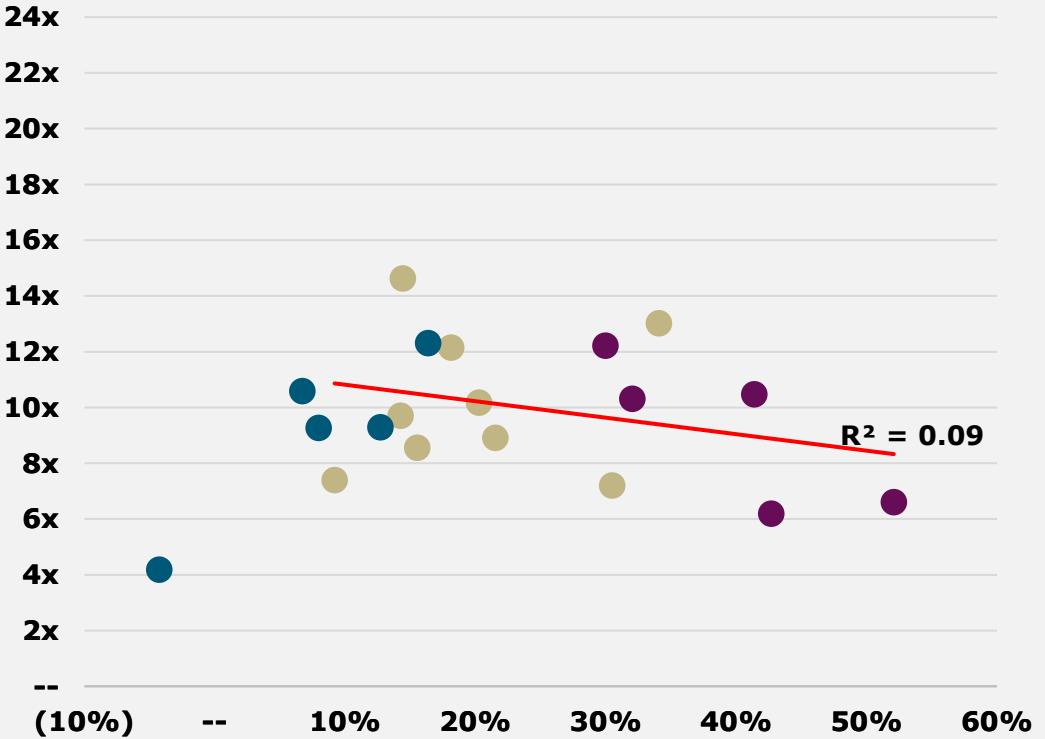


# Nearshore valuation multiples fall in line with the wider peer group on a growth adjusted basis

Growth Adjusted EV / CY23E Revenue v Revenue CAGR CY20A-CY23E



Growth Adjusted EV / CY23E EBITDA v Revenue CAGR CY20A-CY23E



● Nearshore    ● Offshore

● Global Diversified

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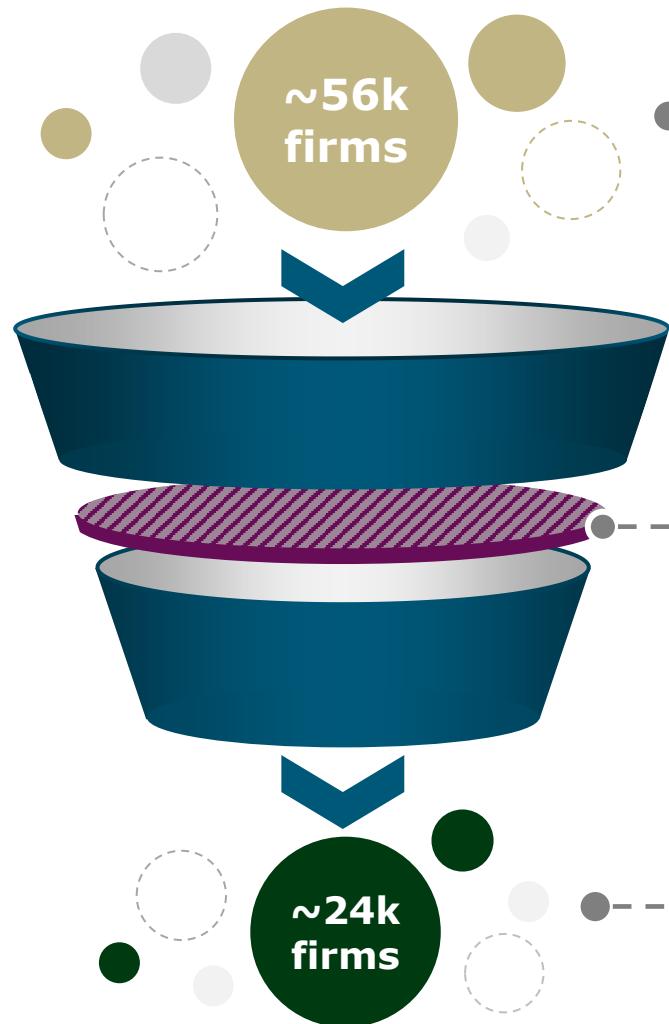
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# Of the ~56k identified companies offering development services, ~24k could be viewed as having development at core



Across the globe there are ~56k firms operating in custom software development and / or web development

per  
**Clutch**

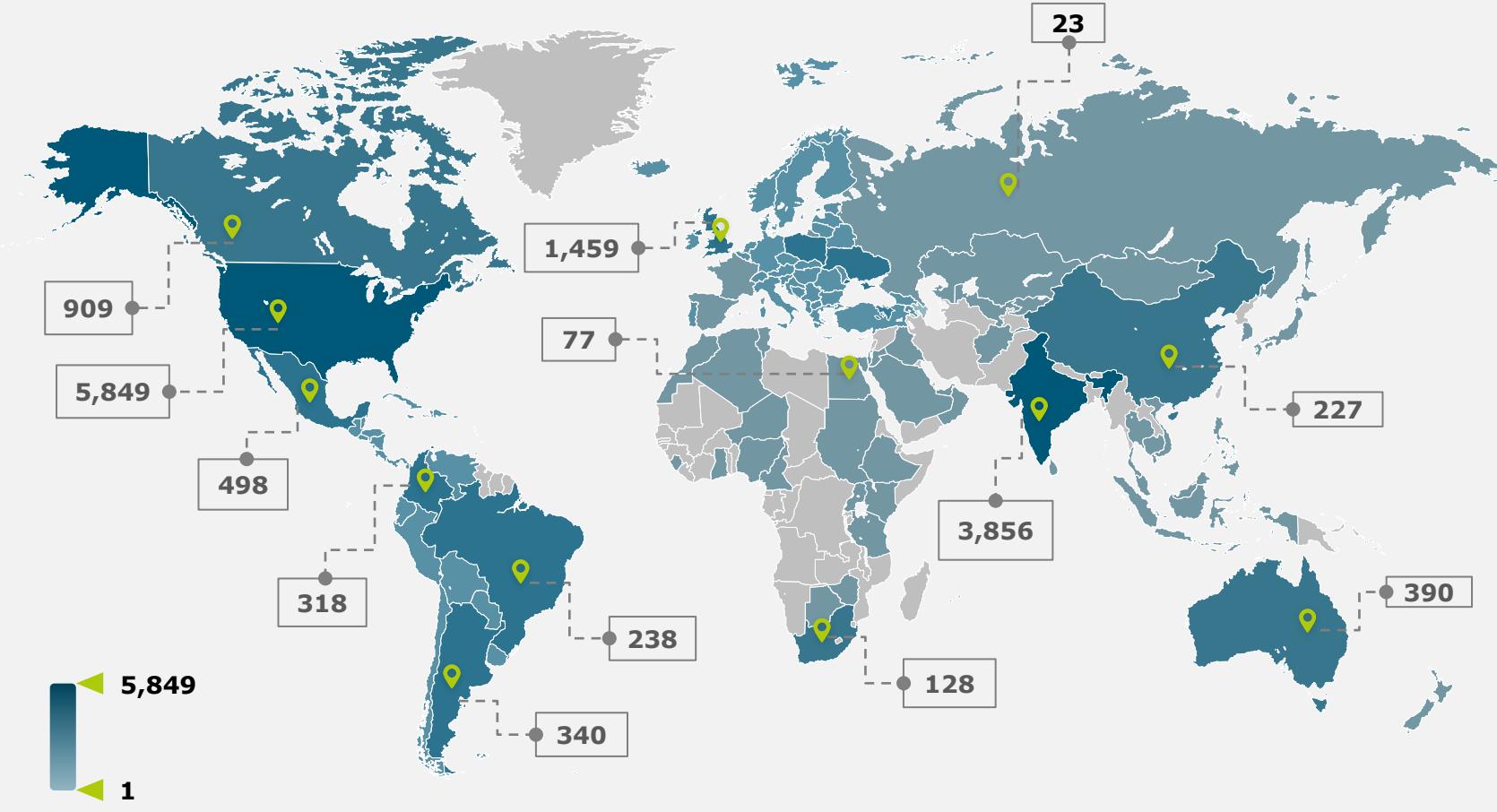
Equiteq filtered out firms operating predominantly in the mobile app & web development segments due to their service offering predominantly revolving around design consulting, SEO, e-commerce, branding, UI / UX etc, with development positioned as an adjacent service

The resulting pool of companies was enriched with Equiteq's proprietary database of known custom software development companies across the globe, yielding ~24k firms

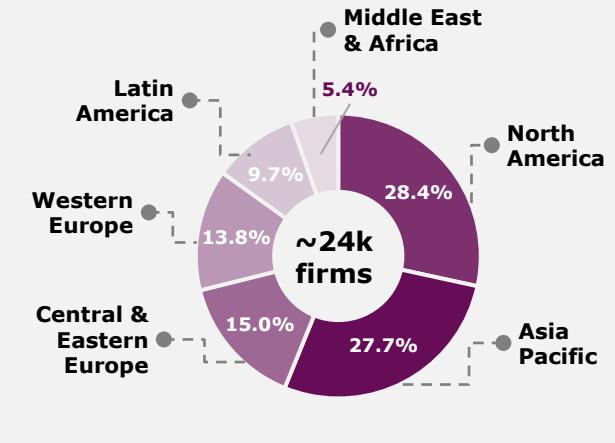
Summary on  
next page

# The global CSD space is notably fragmented yet concentrated, with most firms employing < 50 people

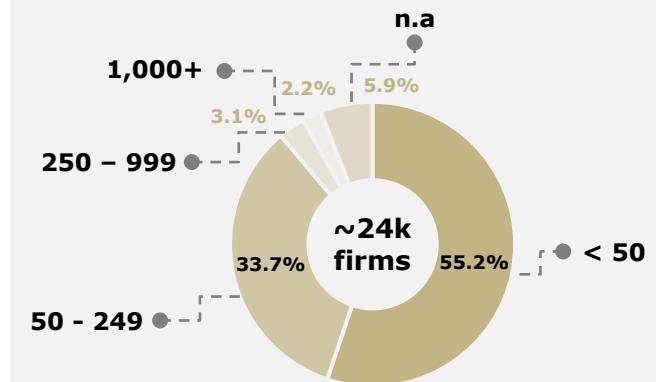
Heatmap of Custom Software Development Headquarters by country<sup>(1)</sup> (select countries showing # of companies)



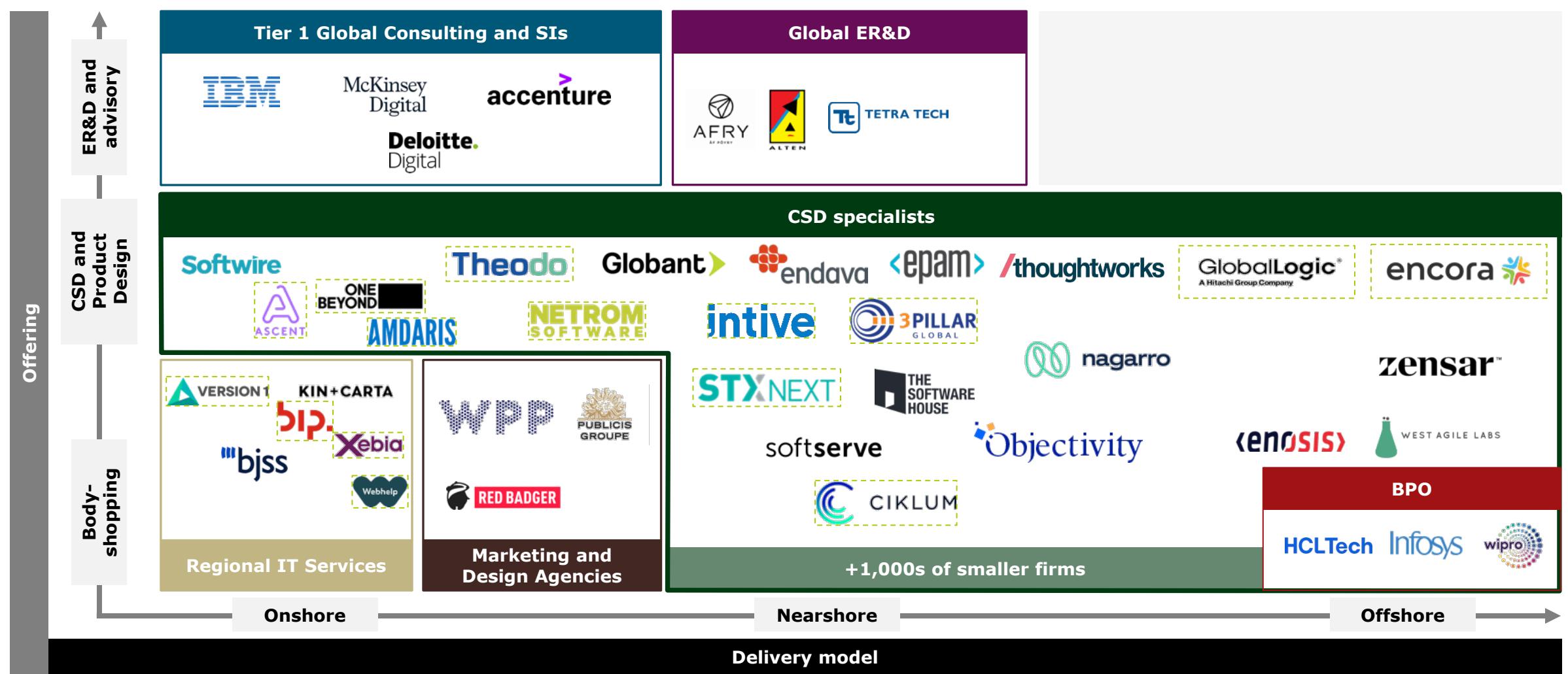
Breakdown by region of headquarters



Breakdown by # of employees



# CSD firms compete with a number of adjacent verticals with similar capabilities while focusing on perfecting their legacy delivery model



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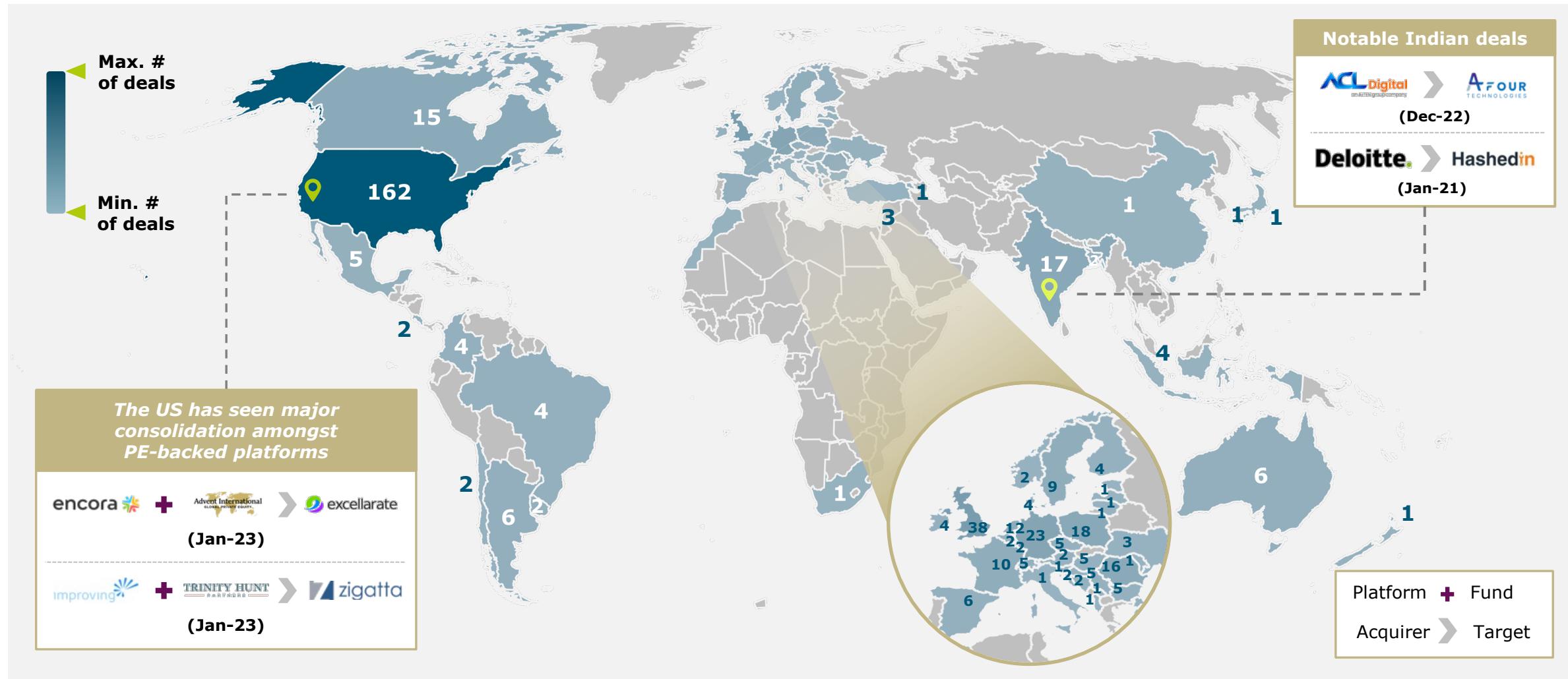
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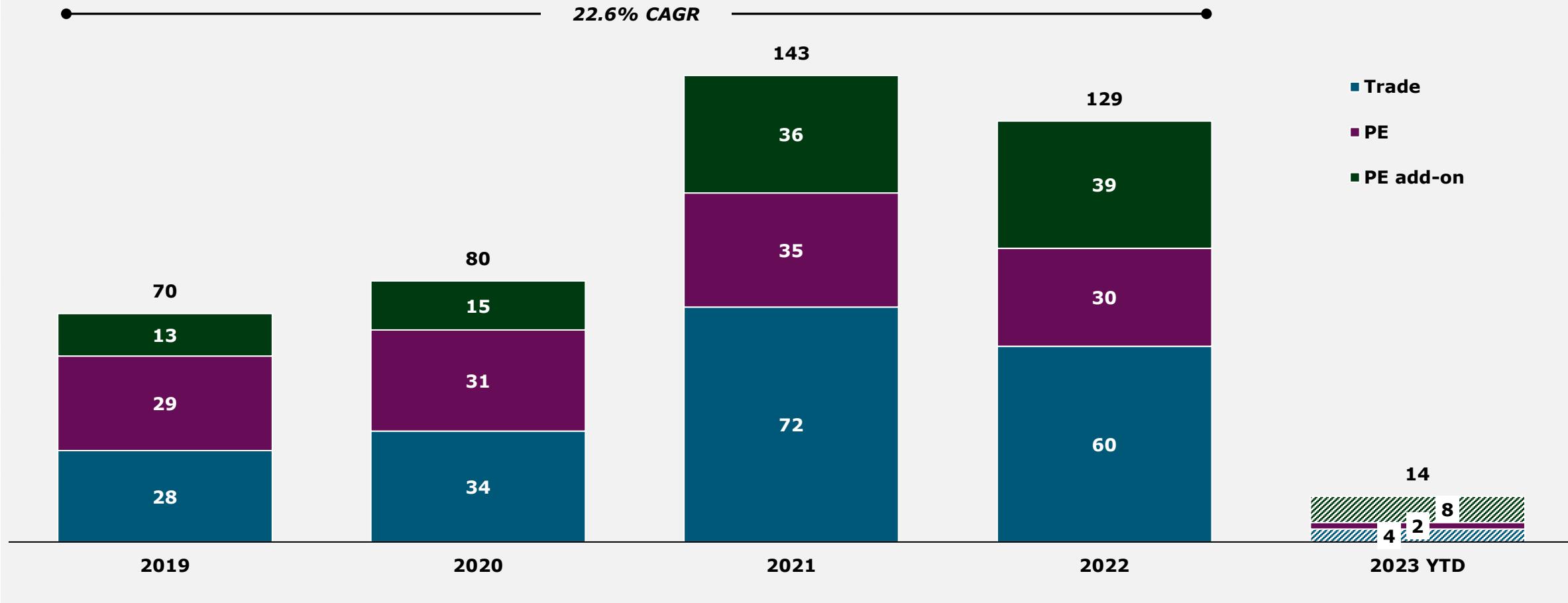
# The US and Western Europe have dominated deal volumes, though LATAM, CEE, and the Indian sub-continent have seen strong investment



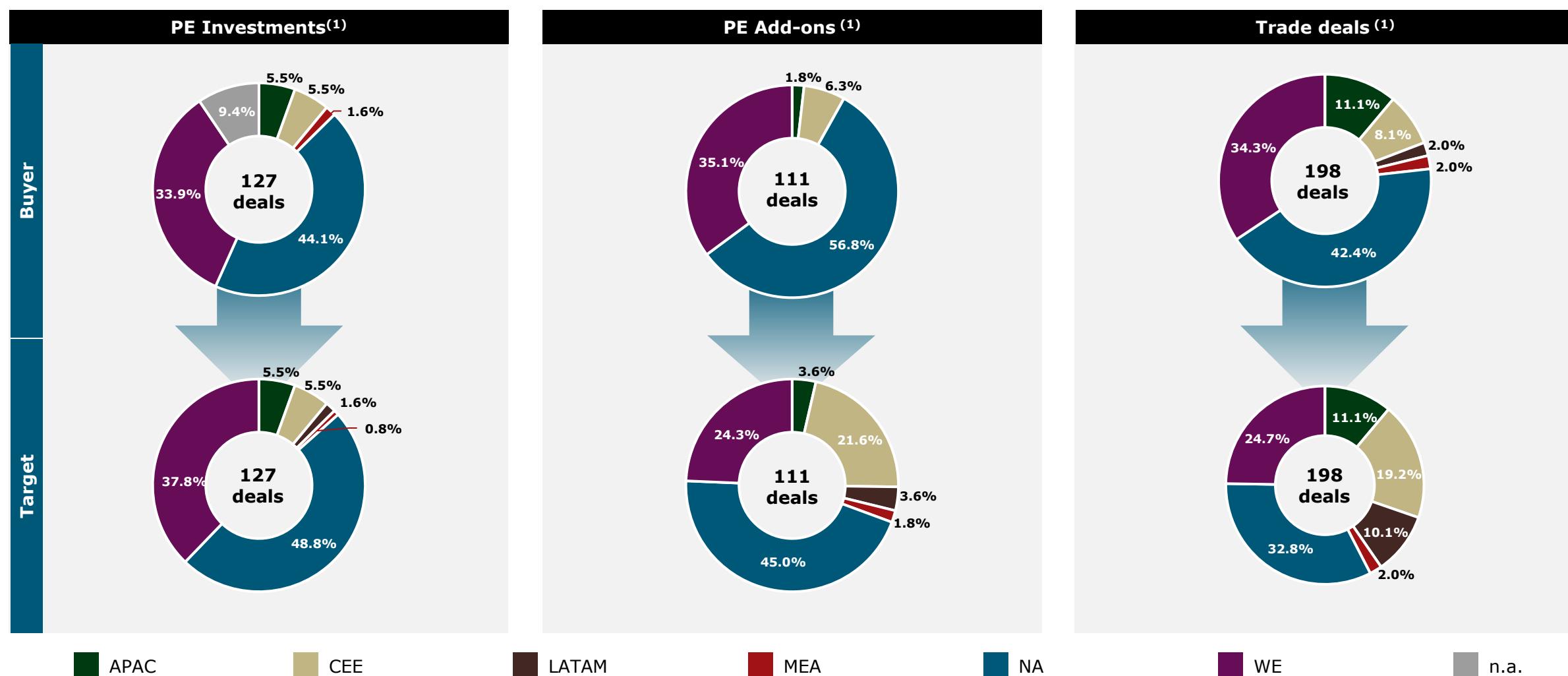
# Private Equity investments and add-ons now represent the majority of recent deals in the OCSD space

Breakdown of Customer Software Development transactions by transaction type

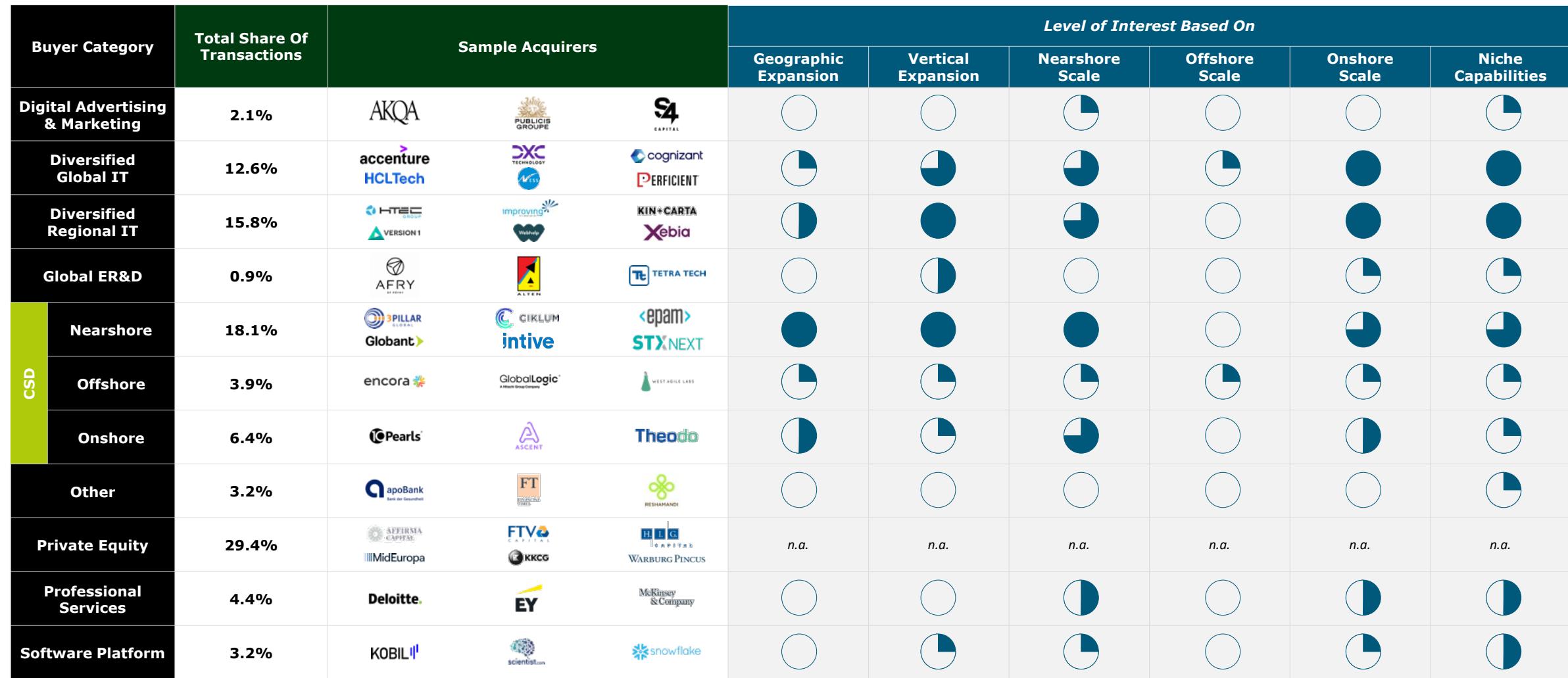
22.6% CAGR



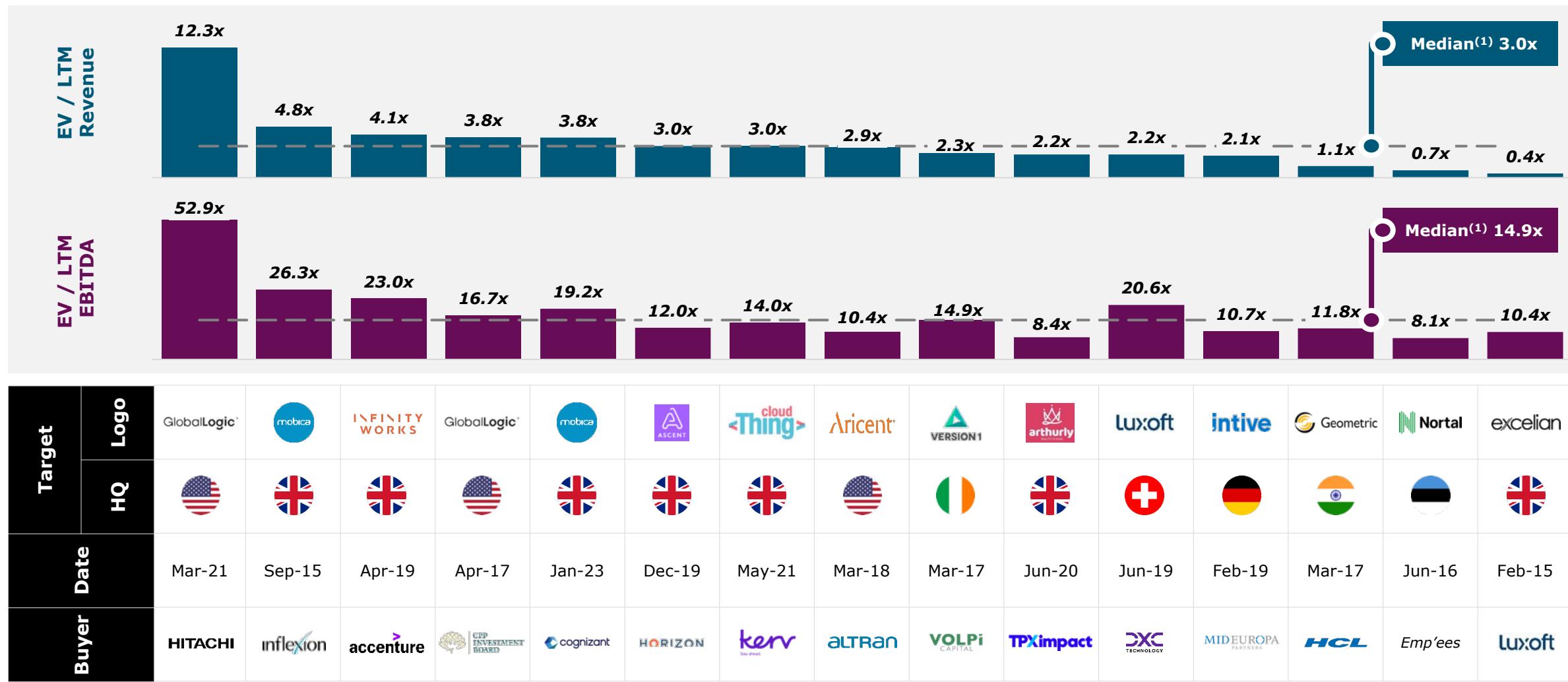
# Western investors have predominantly targeted local platforms, which, like trade buyers, seek inorganic scale across near & offshore hubs



# Capability driven M&A is a priority for larger, diversified IT services firms whilst CSD shops themselves prioritize scale



# Private markets have on average traded at lower multiples over the last years, though at-scale assets have attracted premium valuations



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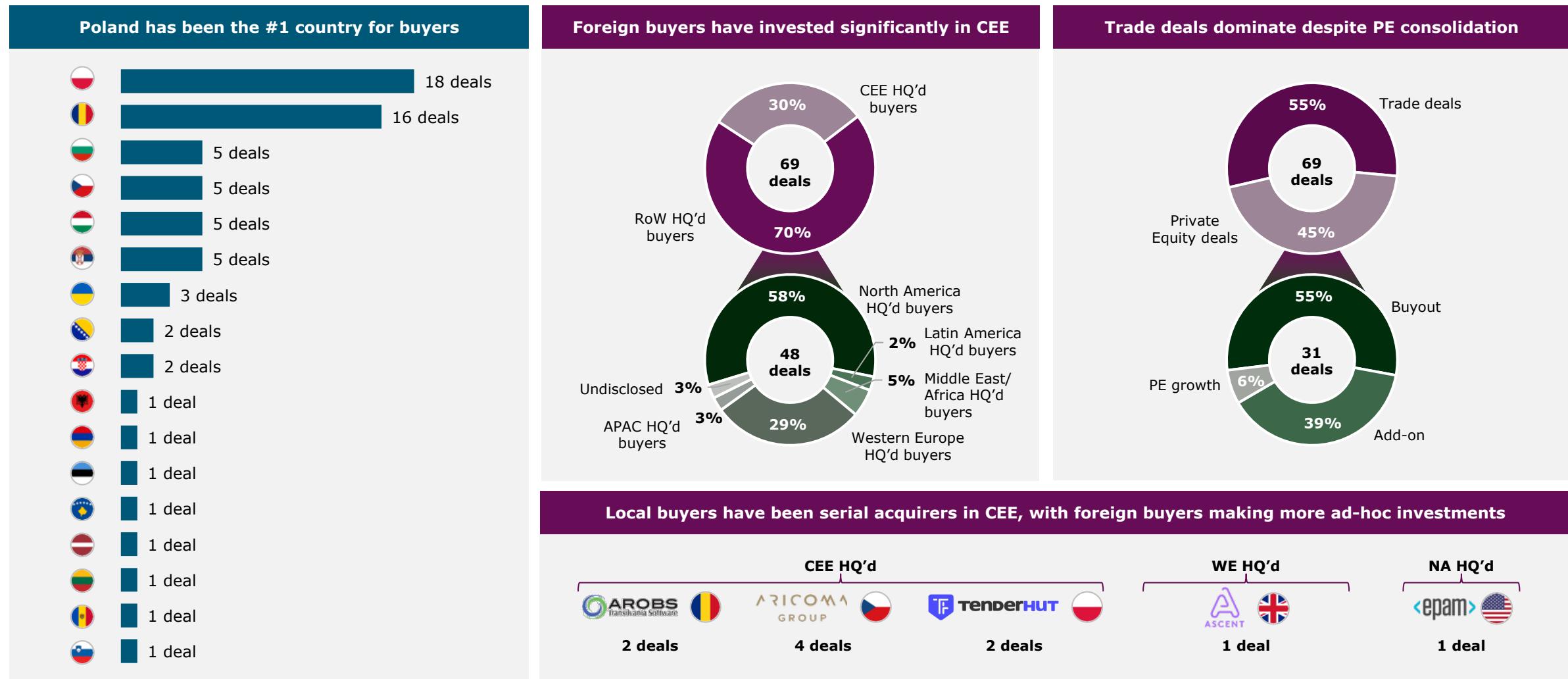
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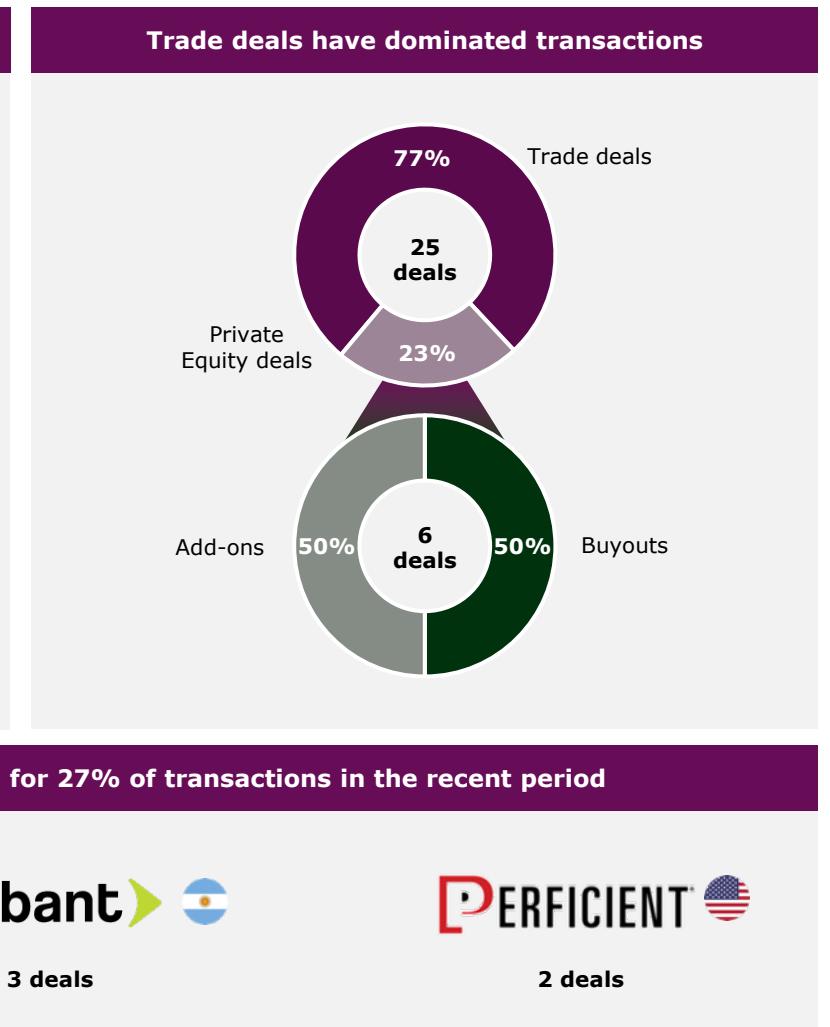
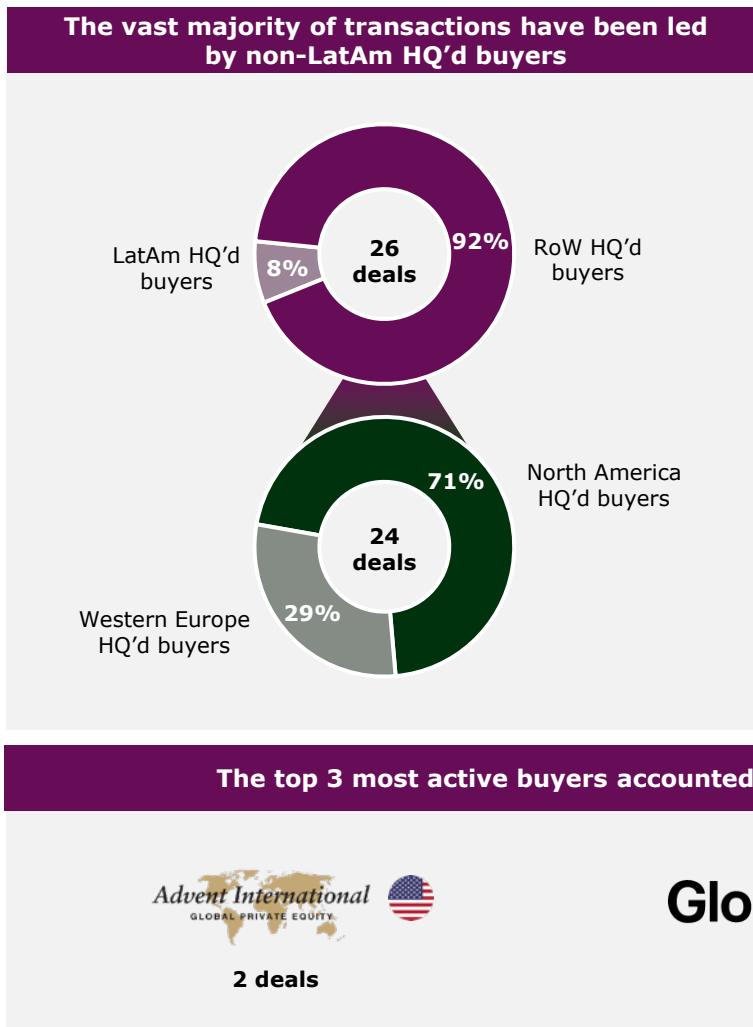
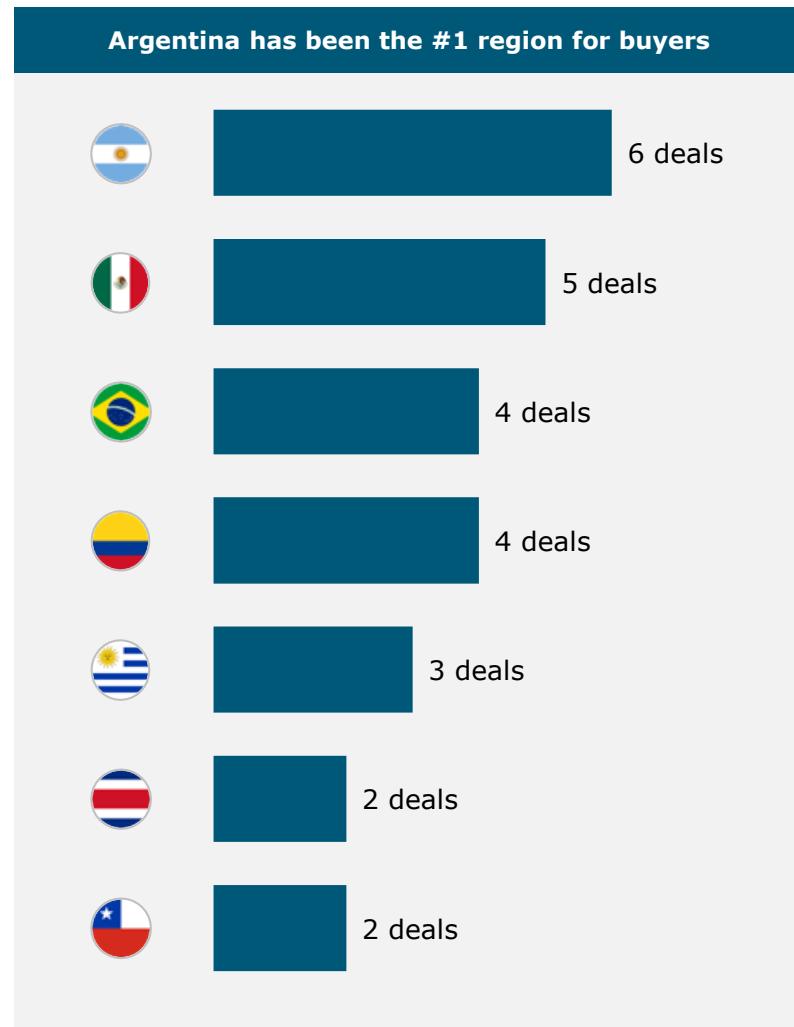
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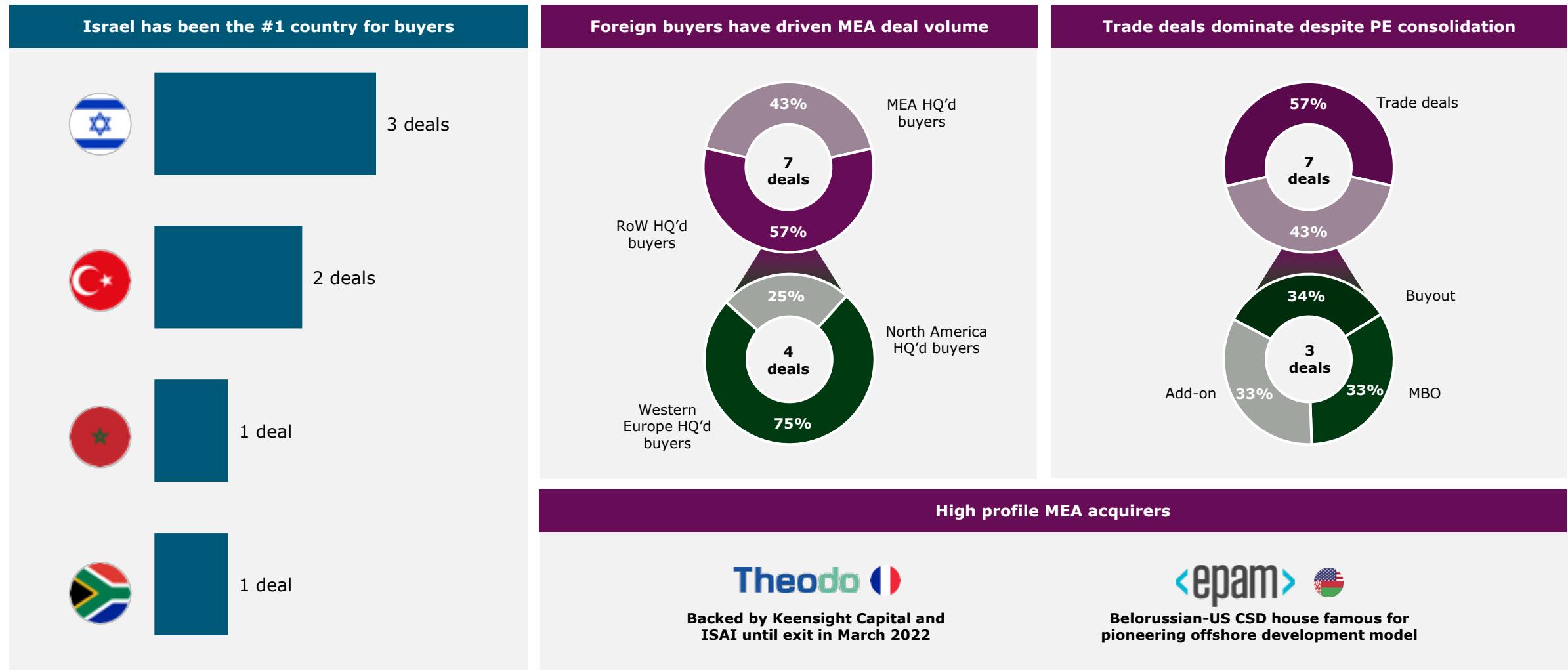
# Overview of recent<sup>(1)</sup> CEE M&A



# Overview of recent<sup>(1)</sup> LatAm M&A



# Overview of recent<sup>(1)</sup> MEA M&A



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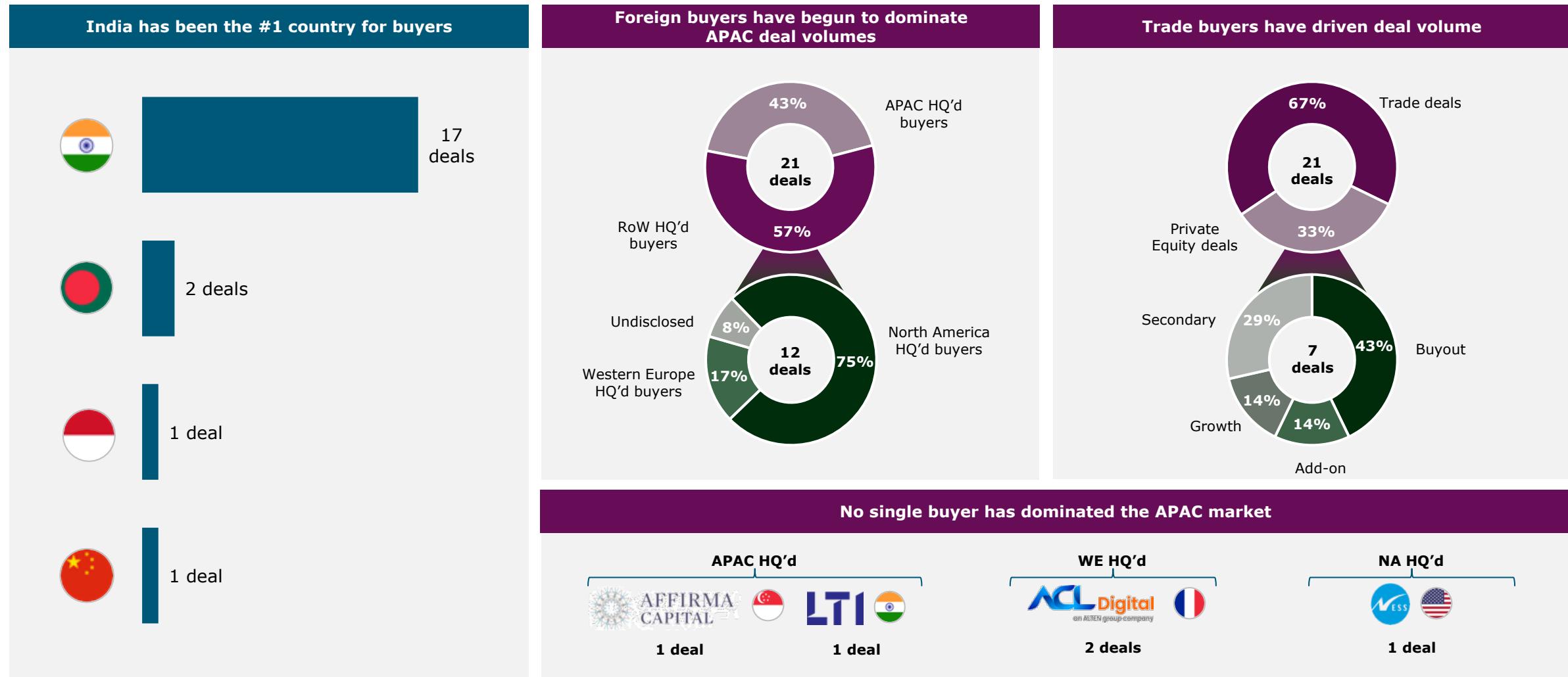
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# Overview of recent<sup>(1)</sup> APAC M&A



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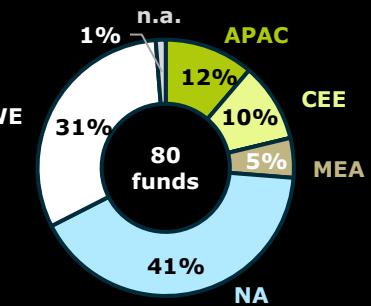
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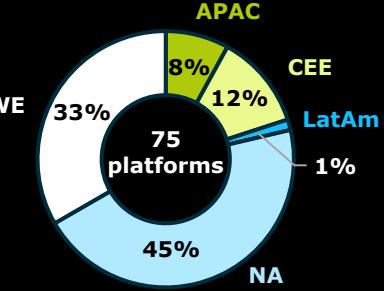
# PE investment in CSD platforms has been truly global, with firms often receiving multiples funding rounds



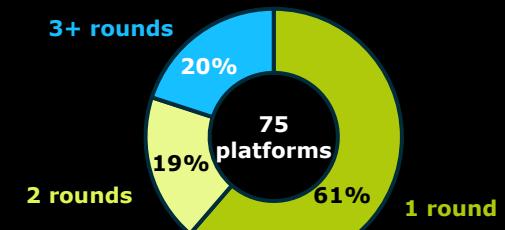
## Active PE funds by region



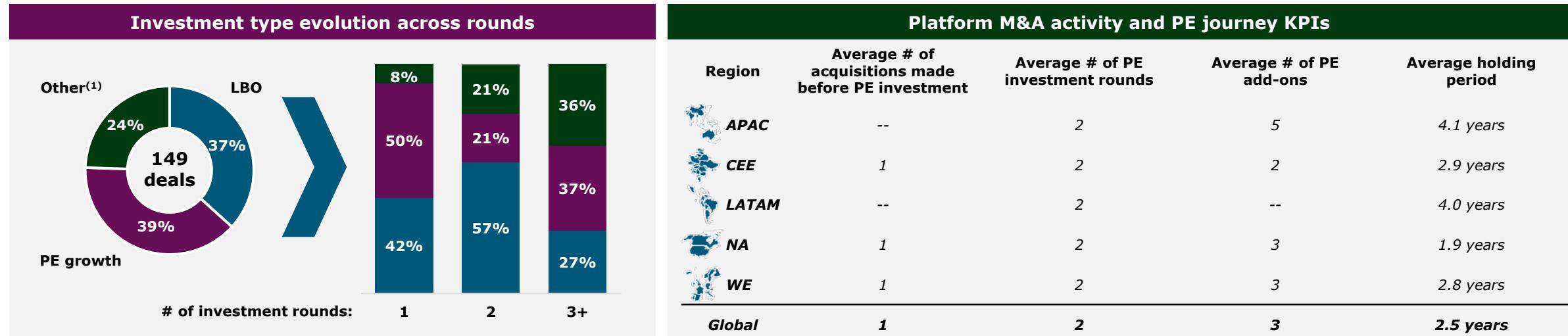
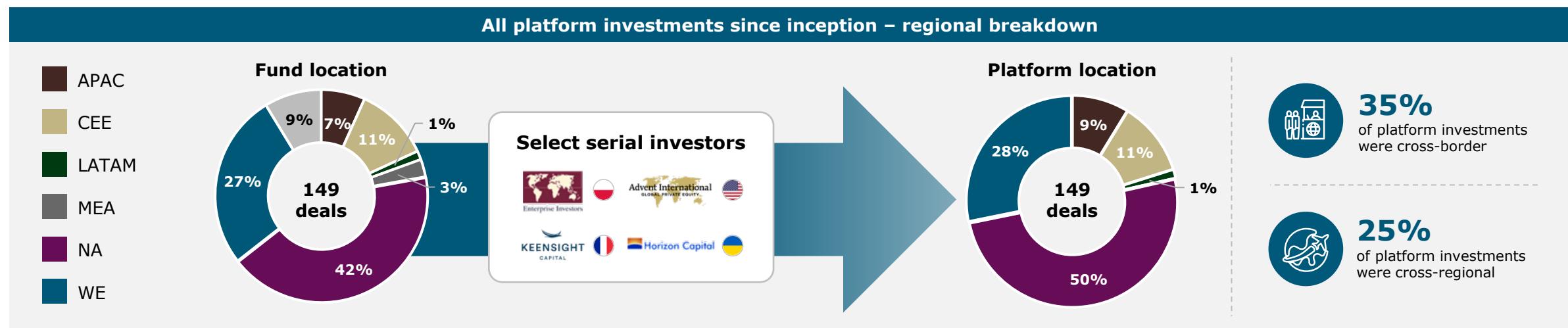
## Platforms by region



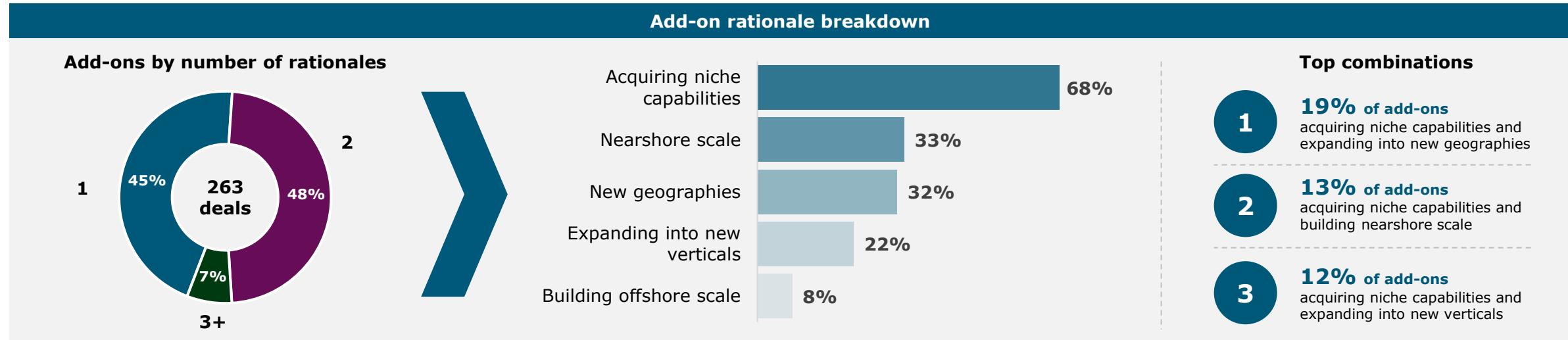
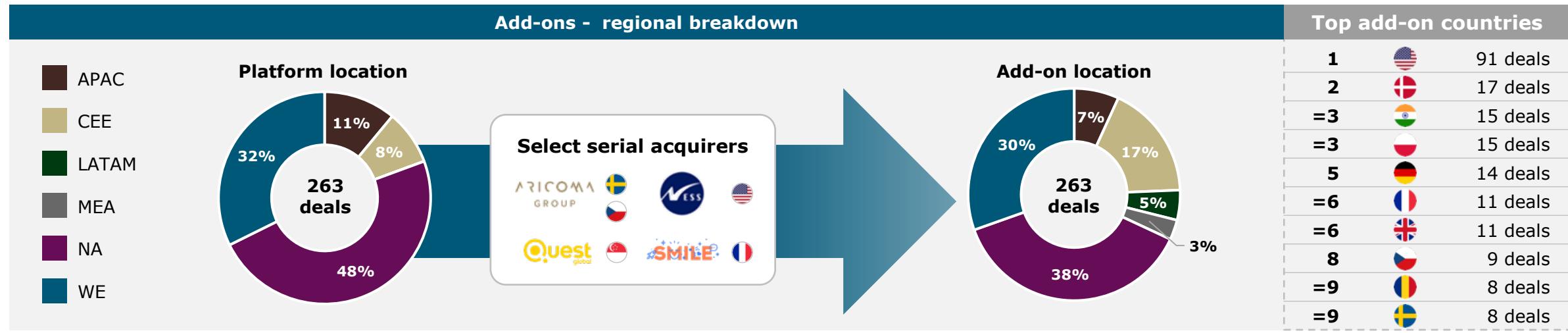
## Platforms by # of investment rounds



# More mature markets see most platform investment and have shorter holding periods compared to nearshore and offshore regions



# PE platforms have shown outsized interest in near and offshore locations for inorganic growth, with add-ons being capability driven



**1 Market overview and valuation trends**

**2 Global landscape overview**

**3 M&A activity – 2019 to present**

**4 Regional CSD M&A overview of nearshore hubs**

**5 Regional CSD M&A overview of offshore hubs**

**6 Select PE-backed platforms: M&A since inception**

**7 About Equiteq**



# About Equiteq

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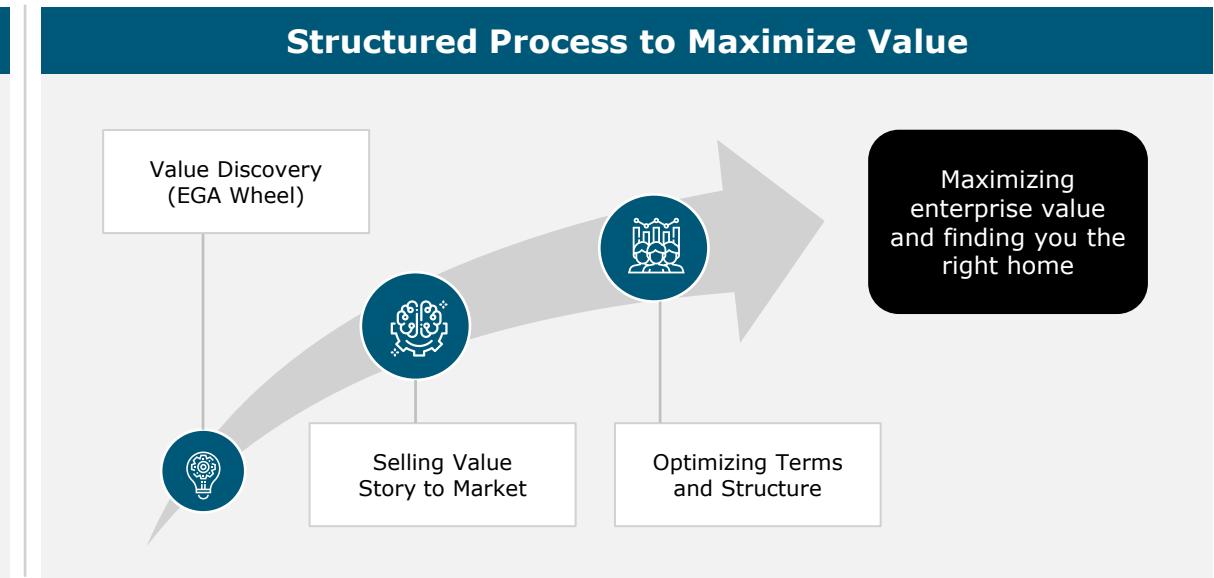
We are a global integrated team of passionate and specialized M&A transaction advisors.

Our goal is to shed the right light on and deliver outstanding transaction outcomes for owner-managers and private equity that are heavily invested across various segments of the technology services, consulting & outsourcing industry.



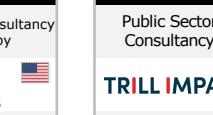
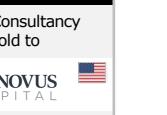
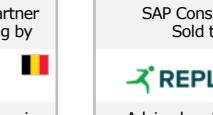
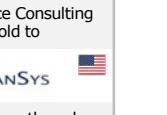
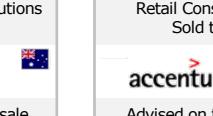
# Introduction to Equiteq

1	2	3	4	5	6
Focus on knowledge-specific sectors	Strong expertise in positioning knowledge economy businesses	Established relationships with the most relevant buyers	Deep understanding of client's strategic needs	Preparing companies for a successful exit is in our DNA	Global presence informs our unique approach to M&A
Through unique research and constant conversation with market participants, Equiteq maintains differentiated insights across the entire knowledge economy	Equiteq's experience with IT services and consulting firms ensures that we understand your business and the keys to unlocking maximum value	Equiteq's Market Intelligence team maintains continuous correspondence with the most active players in the market	Equiteq recognizes the importance of addressing all of your personal destination goals including the timing, synergy fit, and price	Equiteq boasts over a decade of proven success in running world-class, highly competitive processes and driving exceptional outcomes for clients	With six offices spread throughout North America, Europe, APAC, and Australia, Equiteq has a true global footprint



# We are the most active M&A advisor for the Knowledge Economy across the globe

## Selected Completed Transactions

<b>TSA</b>  Project Management and Advisory Firm Acquired  Advised on the acquisition May 2023	<b>nvm</b>  Private Equity Invested in  Advised on the investment April 2023	<b>cgconsus</b>  Procurement and Supply chain solutions provider Sold to  Advised on the sale April 2023	<b>HelloTech</b>  Software CPaaS firm company Sold to  Advised on the sale April 2023	<b>MML</b>  Private Equity Firm Invested in  Advised on the investment February 2023	<b>Talan</b>  Digital Transformation Specialist Acquired  Advised on the acquisition January 2023	<b>BAIN &amp; COMPANY</b>  Management Consultancy (ET) Acquired  Advised on the acquisition January 2023	<b>CLEARTELLIGENCE</b>  Data & Analytics Consultancy Recapitalized by  Advised on the sale January 2023	<b>Delivery Associates</b>  Public Sector Impact Consultancy Sold to  Advised on the sale November 2022	<b>HBR CONSULTING</b>  Legal Consultancy Sold to  Advised on the sale November 2022
<b>BIOS</b>  Managed Cloud Provider Sold to  Advised on the sale October 2022	<b>VALUE POINT</b>  Cybersecurity Solutions & Services Sold to  Advised on the sale October 2022	<b>LEXICON</b>  Digital Consultancy Sold to  Advised on the sale October 2022	<b>ALLATA</b>  CSD & Digital Transformation Consultancy Sold to  Advised on the investment September 2022	<b>NOVATIO</b>  RPA Consultancy Received investment from  Advised on the investment August 2022	<b>SOLVERA</b>  Digital Transformation Services Sold to  Advised on the sale July 2022	<b>risual</b>  Azure Partner & Cloud Specialist Sold to  Advised on the sale July 2022	<b>SCANQMI</b>  Anaplan Gold Partner Sold to  Advised on the sale June 2022	<b>Pexlify</b>  Platinum Salesforce Partner Sold to  Advised on the sale June 2022	<b>BEDFORD Consulting</b>  Anaplan Gold Partner Received investment from  Advised on the investment May 2022
<b>grit.</b>  Design & Innovation Consultancy Sold to  Advised on the sale April 2022	<b>infrata</b>  Infrastructure Consultancy Receives majority investment  Advised on the investment April 2022	<b>IST</b>  CX Tech Consultancy Sold to  Advised on the sale March 2022	<b>360</b>  PE-backed Cybersecurity Specialist Acquired  Advised on the acquisition February 2022	<b>Montville</b>  Financial Services Consultancy Sold to  Advised on the sale February 2022	<b>JUST ANALYTICS</b>  AI & Analytics Specialist Sold to  Advised on the sale January 2022	<b>4 MILE ANALYTICS</b>  Data Consultancy Sold to  Advised on the sale January 2022	<b>sa:global</b>  Microsoft Gold Partner Growth Financing by  Advised on the financing January 2022	<b>enowa.</b>  SAP Consulting Sold to  Advised on the sale January 2022	<b>GROUNDSWELL Global Solutions</b>  Salesforce Consulting Sold to  Advised on the sale January 2022
<b>intive</b>  Digital Consulting Acquired  Advised on the acquisition December 2021	<b>BLUEPOINT</b>  Private Equity Invested into  Advised on the investment December 2021	<b>BOYDAK AUTOMATION</b>  AI & Automation Consultancy Sold to  Advised on the sale December 2021	<b>PROKURA</b>  Procurement & Supply Chain Consulting Sold to  Advised on the sale December 2021	<b>HATCH</b>  Engineering Consultancy Acquired  Advised on the acquisition November 2021	<b>:roam</b>  Digital consulting Sold to  Advised on the sale October 2021	<b>MGAC</b>  Construction Consulting Acquired  Advised on the acquisition October 2021	<b>PDSGROUP</b>  Development Solutions Sold to  Advised on the sale August 2021	<b>hrc. RETAIL ADVISORY</b>  Retail Consulting Sold to  Advised on the sale July 2021	<b>Economists INCORPORATED</b>  Economics Consulting Sold to  Advised on the sale July 2021

# The Equiteq team is comprised of deeply experienced professionals who can help you navigate the M&A market

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