



# ITAM Forum 2026 FinOps Research

ITAM Meets FinOps. Defining Responsibilities in Hybrid Cloud Management

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June 2026

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# Executive Summary

Cloud costs are now a board-level concern. As organisations scale their cloud footprints, two disciplines have emerged to manage the financial consequences: IT Asset Management (ITAM) and FinOps. Both claim relevance. Both are active. But in most organisations, the boundary between them is undefined, undocumented, or simply contested.

This report draws on survey responses from 91 enterprise IT practitioners across 54 organisations, conducted in Q1 2026 by the ITAM Forum and Flexera. The findings are clear: ITAM and FinOps are already operating in overlapping territory, but the structural foundations such as clear ownership, shared governance, and integrated tooling are largely absent. The ITAM profession is at an inflection point, and the organisations that define the model now will be better positioned as cloud complexity continues to grow.

Three themes run through every finding in this research.

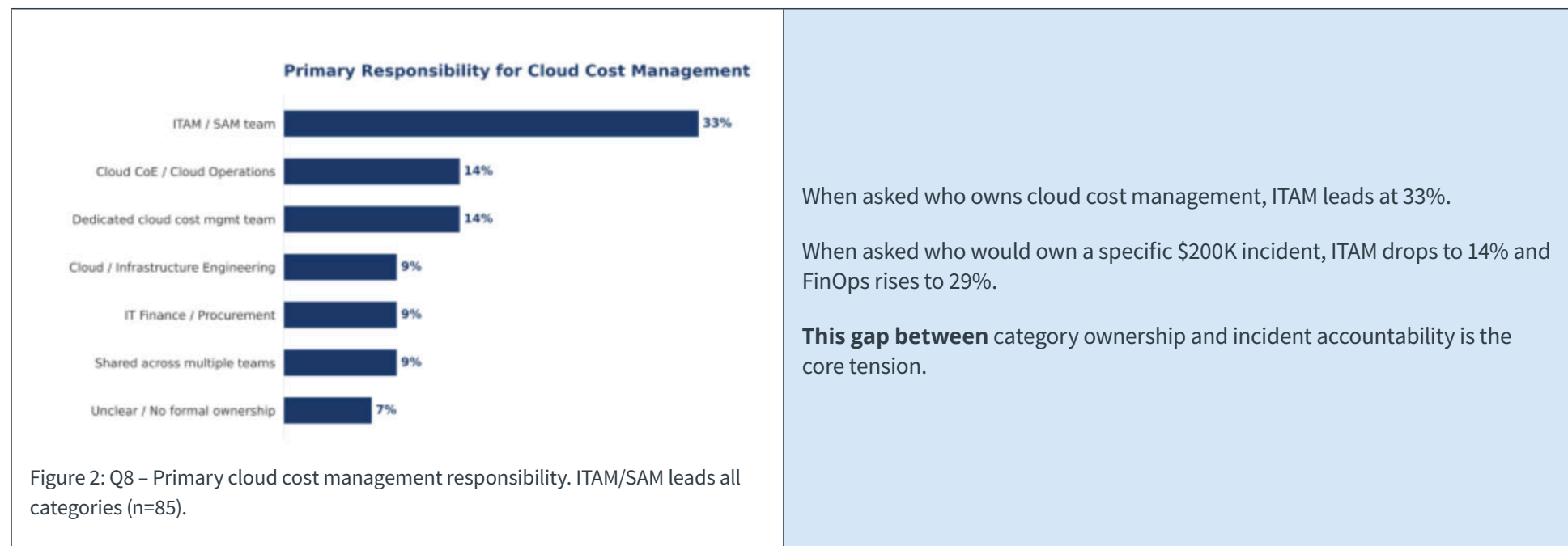
1.	ITAM’s involvement in cloud cost management is real but informal – teams have stepped in by necessity, without mandate or documented accountability.
2.	The governance gap is larger than the technology gap – role clarity outranks tooling integration as the #1 improvement priority, by a significant margin.
3.	The preferred direction is integration, not separation – more than half of respondents favour either a unified function or an ITAM-led model; fewer than 7% want completely separate teams.

Practitioners from both professions are pre-disposed to engage with stakeholders and share responsibility, and this trait will serve both well as the IT landscape changes. That change is happening more rapidly than even the shift from terminals to desktop client/server computing did. It’s vital that teams from across IT and beyond get aligned to manage and govern that rapid evolution.

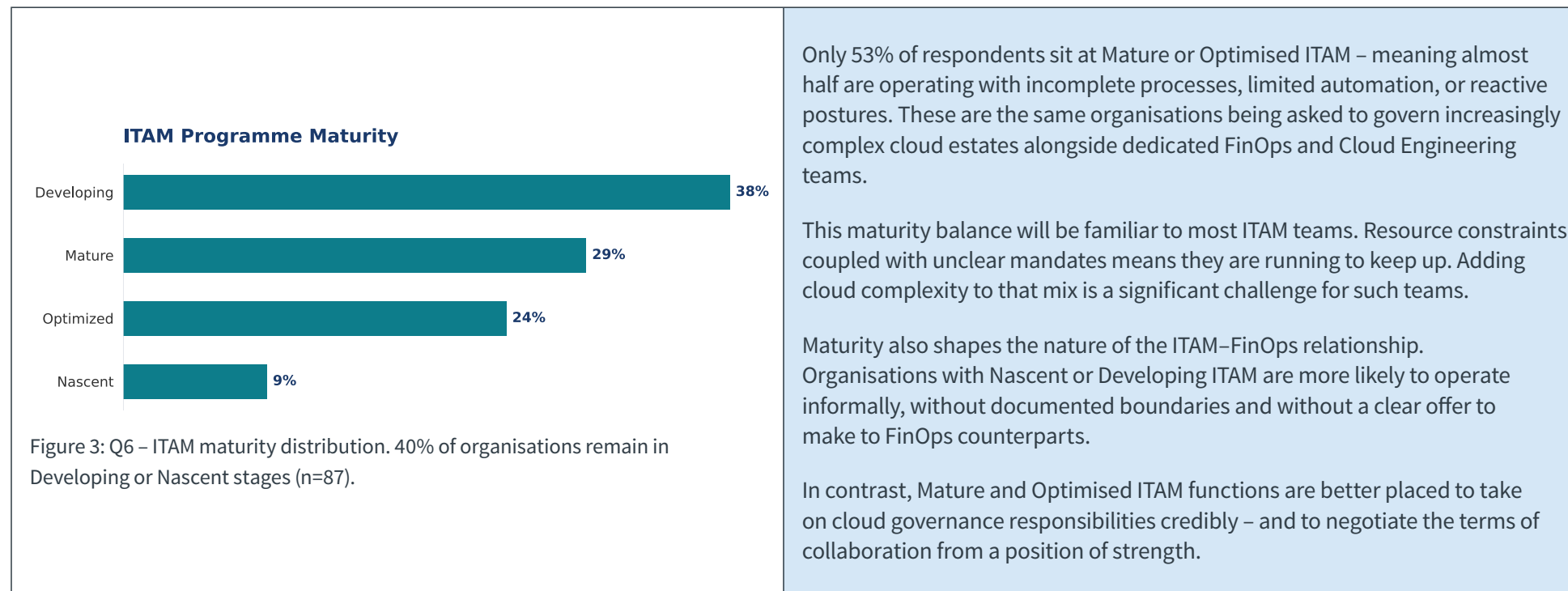
**The single most important number in this research is the gap between claimed ownership and actual accountability. ITAM claims primary responsibility for cloud cost management (33%), but when asked who would own a \$200K cloud spend investigation, that number drops to 14%. FinOps fills the gap.**

## Finding 1: ITAM Is Already in the Room – Without a Clear Mandate

ITAM teams have inserted themselves into cloud cost management by necessity. The data confirms this involvement but also reveals a significant gap between claimed ownership and operational accountability.



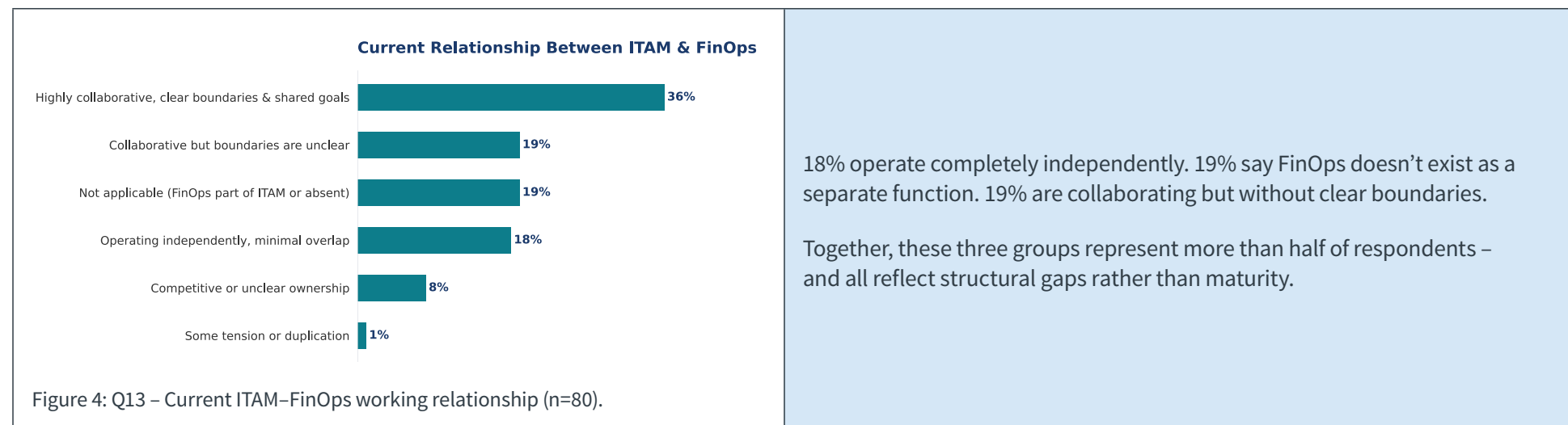
The ownership gap becomes easier to understand when ITAM maturity is factored in. Claiming broad responsibility for cloud cost management is one thing; having the processes, tooling, and organisational integration to deliver on that claim under pressure is another. The maturity data suggests a significant portion of the ITAM community is not yet in a position to do both.



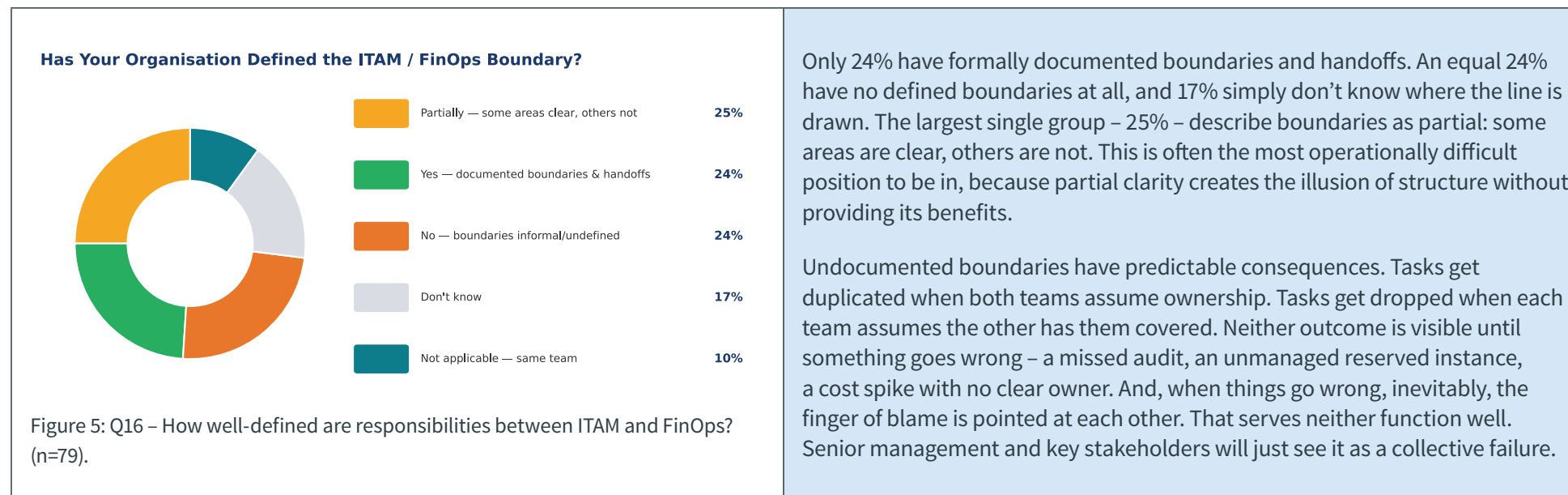
**ITAM maturity determines whether teams can make good on their cloud cost management claims.  
Closing the ownership gap requires closing the maturity gap first.**

## Finding 2: Relationships Are More Fragmented Than the Headlines Suggest

36% of respondents describe a highly collaborative relationship with clear boundaries – a number that looks positive on the surface; however, the wider picture reveals significant fragmentation, uncertainty, and ambiguity about where the two functions begin and end.



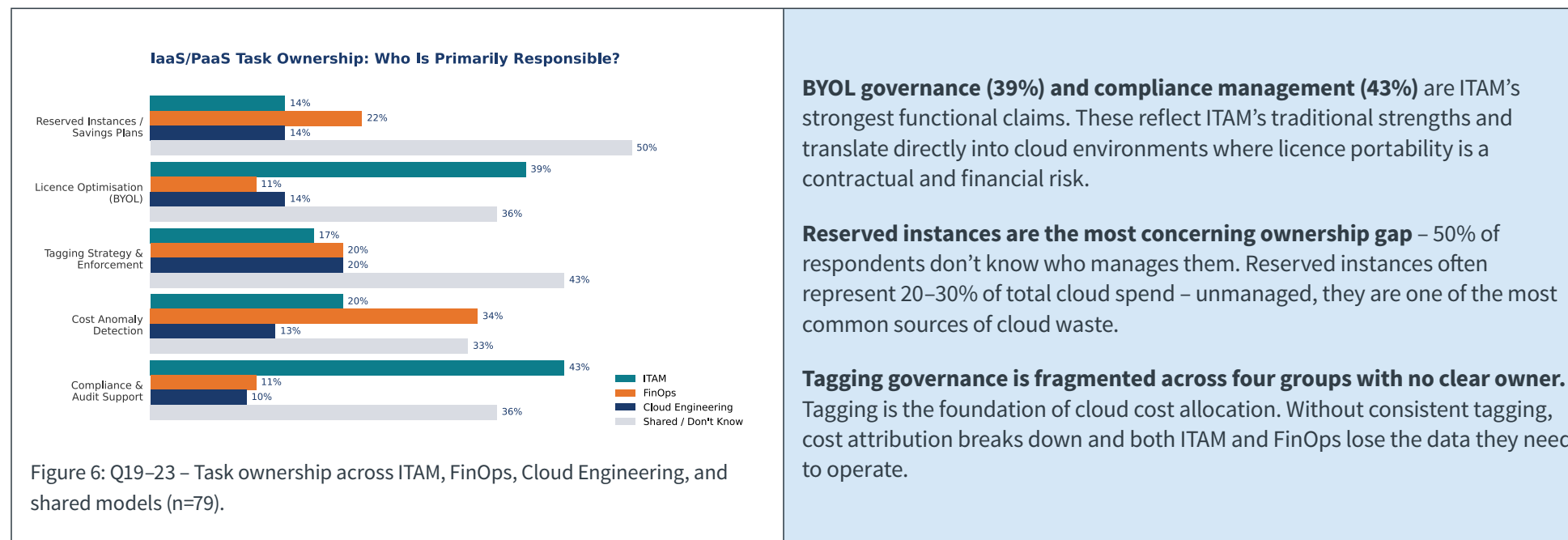
The boundary question sharpens the picture further. Collaboration is one thing; knowing precisely where one function ends and the other begins is another. When asked directly how well defined responsibilities are between their ITAM and FinOps teams, respondents painted a fragmented picture.



**Partial clarity is its own risk. Teams with only partially defined boundaries face duplication in the areas both claim and blind spots in the areas neither does. Mapping the full boundary is a prerequisite for effective collaboration.**

## Finding 3: Clear Functional Splits – And Equally Clear Gaps

Some tasks have clear functional homes. Others are effectively unowned. Understanding which is which is the first step towards a functioning ITAM–FinOps model.



**BYOL governance (39%) and compliance management (43%)** are ITAM’s strongest functional claims. These reflect ITAM’s traditional strengths and translate directly into cloud environments where licence portability is a contractual and financial risk.

**Reserved instances are the most concerning ownership gap** – 50% of respondents don’t know who manages them. Reserved instances often represent 20–30% of total cloud spend – unmanaged, they are one of the most common sources of cloud waste.

**Tagging governance is fragmented across four groups with no clear owner.** Tagging is the foundation of cloud cost allocation. Without consistent tagging, cost attribution breaks down and both ITAM and FinOps lose the data they need to operate.

**The pattern is consistent: where tasks require audit skills and licence knowledge, ITAM leads. Where tasks require real-time cost data and cloud billing expertise, FinOps leads. In between – tagging, anomaly detection, reserved instances – ownership is contested or absent. Both teams should work towards establishing ownership in those areas.**

## Finding 4: The Direction of Travel Is Unsettled

### How Is the ITAM / FinOps Approach Evolving?

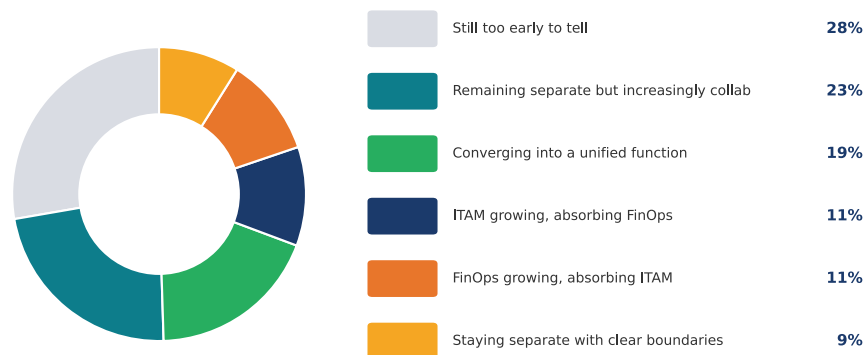


Figure 7: Q33 – Expected evolution of ITAM-FinOps relationship over 2-3 years (n=75).

When asked how the ITAM-FinOps relationship will evolve, respondents offered no consensus. The single largest response – ‘too early to tell’ – suggests the profession is in genuine transition, with the outcome still open.

### Ideal ITAM / FinOps Organisational Model (Greenfield)

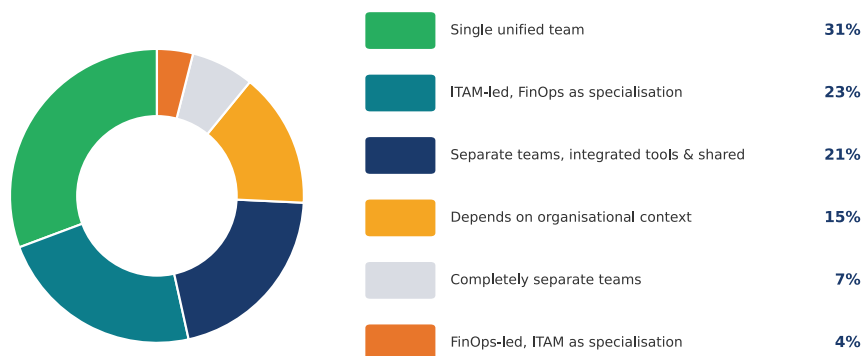


Figure 8: Q36 – Ideal future model for ITAM and FinOps relationship (n=75).

Beyond predicting what will happen, respondents were asked what they would actually prefer. The shift from forecasting to preference is revealing.

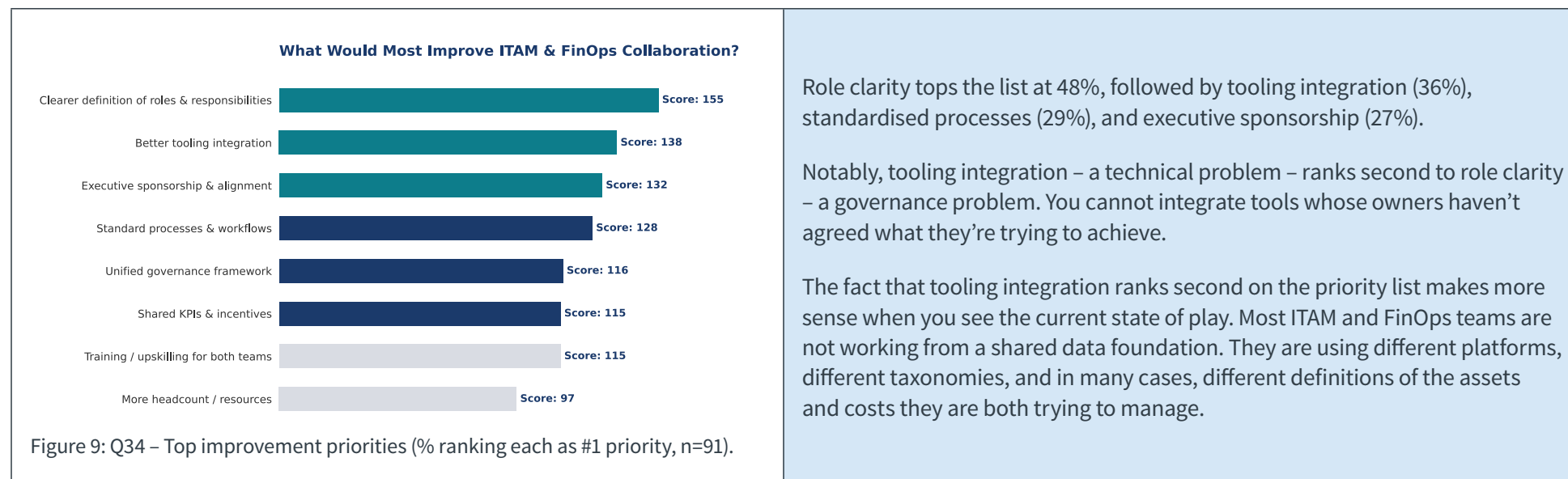
Even among those who expect convergence to happen organically, many have a clear view of what a good outcome looks like. The responses show a strong gravitational pull towards integration – with ITAM at the centre.

It’s encouraging to see that almost one third see a single, unified team as the ideal model. Furthermore, 23% prefer an ITAM-led model with FinOps as a specialist capability, meaning more than half of respondents favour integration or ITAM ownership. Fewer than 7% want completely separate teams. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given that most respondents are ITAM professionals, the least preferred option was FinOps leading with ITAM as a specialism.

Ultimately, there is no correct answer. The model that works best will depend on culture, maturity, company structure, executive sponsorship and pragmatism.

## Finding 5: What Needs to Change: Governance Before Technology

Respondents were asked to rank improvement priorities. The top answers reveal a consistent theme: the barriers to effective ITAM–FinOps collaboration are structural and organisational – not primarily technological.



**Are ITAM & FinOps Using the Same Tooling Platform?**

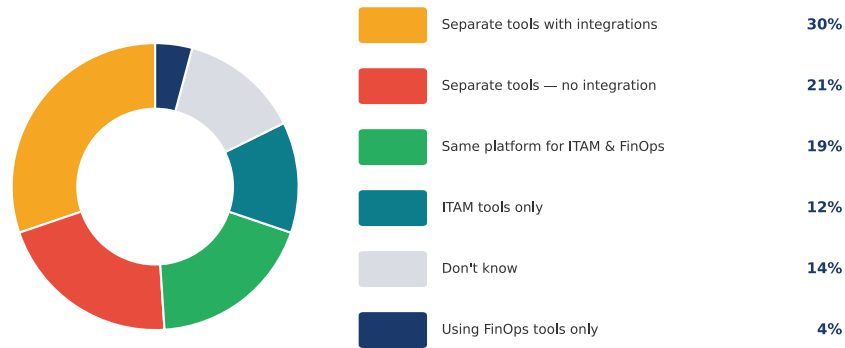


Figure 10: Q31 – Current tooling situation between ITAM and FinOps (n=77).

The tooling gap is real, but it is a symptom. The underlying condition is unresolved ownership.

Only 19% share a single platform, representing the most mature integration.

This fragmentation means when ITAM and FinOps teams do collaborate, they often spend a disproportionate amount of time reconciling data rather than acting on it.

Integrated tooling removes that friction – but as the data makes clear, agreeing on who owns what has to come first. A shared platform with unresolved accountability is just a more expensive version of the same problem.

The FOCUS reporting standard may address some of these concerns as it branches out into traditional ITAM domains from its Cloud birthplace.

## Conclusions & Recommendations

This research does not offer a blueprint for how ITAM and FinOps should be structured. It offers an honest account of where most enterprise organisations actually are – involved but informal, collaborative but undocumented, and uncertain about the direction of travel.

Three practical conclusions follow from the data.

<p><b>Map boundaries before fixing tools</b></p>	<p>Only 24% of organisations have formally documented responsibilities between ITAM and FinOps. Before any tooling investment, hold a workshop to agree who owns what across tagging, reserved instances, BYOL, anomaly detection, and compliance reporting. The exercise will surface both overlaps and blind spots.</p>
<p><b>Use ITAM’s strengths as the entry point</b></p>	<p>Trustworthy data, BYOL governance, licence compliance in cloud, and audit-readiness are things FinOps teams need and ITAM can provide. Rather than defending ITAM’s relevance in the abstract, make a concrete offer: “We have licence data that reduces your cloud audit risk. Here is what we need from you in return.”</p>
<p><b>Don’t wait for perfect clarity</b></p>	<p>28% of respondents are still waiting to see how the relationship will evolve. That uncertainty is not a reason to delay. Identify one joint objective – reserved instance planning, tagging governance, or a shared cost allocation model – and build trust through a shared outcome before attempting structural change. FinOps has a fast cadence – use the Crawl, Walk, Run methodology to find common ground and create shared value.</p>

This research is the beginning of a conversation, not the end. The ITAM and FinOps communities are still working out how to collaborate effectively, and the profession will benefit from more practitioners sharing what is – and isn’t – working within their organisations.

To explore further, contribute to the ongoing discussion, or access related resources:

- **ITAM Forum FinOps & ITAM hub:** <https://www.itamf.org/assets/?topic=finops-intersection> – guidance, community discussion, and further research on the ITAM-FinOps intersection.
- **Flexera resources & white papers:** [flexera.com/resources/white-papers-reports](https://flexera.com/resources/white-papers-reports) – the latest research and practical guidance on ITAM, FinOps, and technology value management.

## Appendix: Survey Demographics

The following charts provide a full breakdown of respondent demographics. The final sample comprises 91 respondents across 54 organisations.

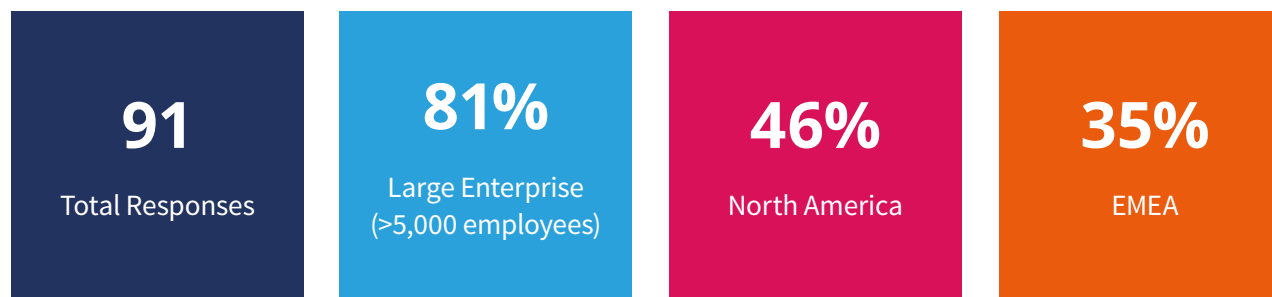
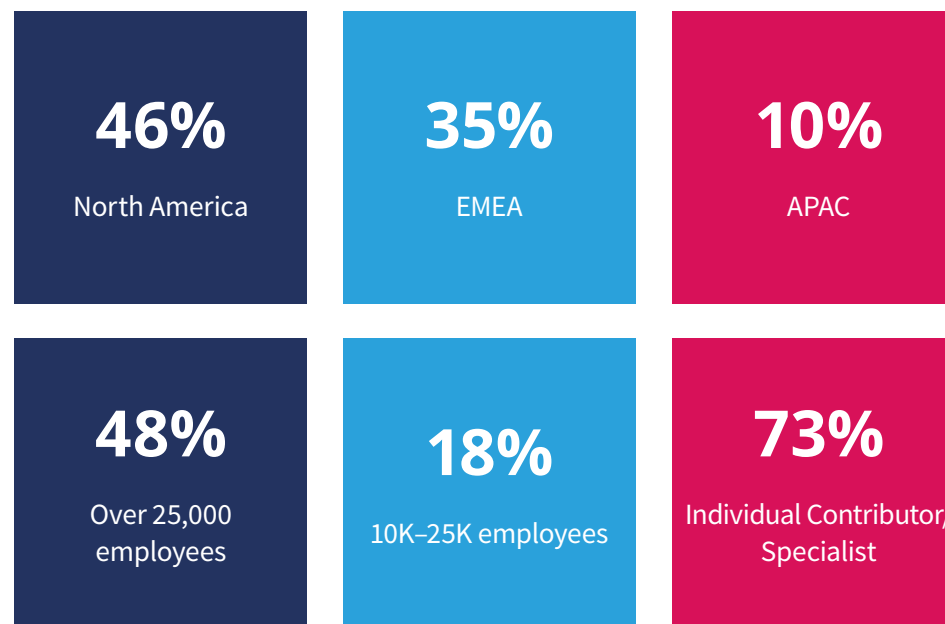


Figure 1: Headline metrics (n=91)



## Top Industries Represented

Industry	Count	%
Information Technology	21	23.1
Financials	20	22.0
Consumer Discretionary	20	22.0
Industrials	10	11.0
Consumer Staples	5	5.5
Health Care	4	4.4
Other	11	12.0

## Cloud Spend Distribution

Annual Cloud Spend	Count	%
Don't know	38	42.2
Over \$50M	21	23.3
\$5M-\$20M	11	12.2
\$1M-\$5M	8	8.9
\$20M-\$50M	8	8.9
Under \$1M	4	4.4

## Seniority Distribution

Seniority Level	Count	%
Individual Contributor/ Specialist	57	73.1
Director/Manager Level	18	23.1
VP/C-level/Business Owner	3	3.8

**About the research:** This survey was commissioned by Flexera and conducted by ITAM Forum in Q1 2026. The final analytical sample comprises **91 respondents across 54 organisations**. The sample skews towards large enterprise (48% with 25,000+ employees) and ITAM-adjacent professionals – findings should be interpreted with that lens.



## About the ITAM Forum

The ITAM Forum is a project of The Linux Foundation, alongside organisations like the FinOps Foundation and the Cloud Native Computing Foundation. With members from 40+ countries, the ITAM Forum is dedicated to the advancement of the IT Asset Management industry through knowledge sharing, best practices and education.

It is the first organisation to bring to market an ISO/IEC 19770-1 certification scheme, so organisations can demonstrate the business value of their IT Asset Management function.

[itamf.org](https://itamf.org)



## About Flexera

Flexera delivers SaaS-based IT management solutions that enable enterprises to accelerate and multiply the return on their technology investments.

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