



# Cryptocurrency Index (IRCI)

SINGAPORE 2022

The IRCI Singapore annual survey measures Singapore residents' shifting attitudes and perceptions around cryptocurrencies and blockchain technology.

# IRCI highlights

## 61

### **Index declined by 2 points from 63 to 61.**

Despite a slight decline in interest due to the recent bear run after a strong year-long bull market, Singapore's sentiment and outlook towards crypto remains positive. Learn more on [page 3](#).

## 48%

### **Awareness of Ethereum grew from 44% to 48%.**

Bitcoin remains king at 87% awareness, whilst Dogecoin has 37% awareness due to the publicity by Elon Musk. Learn more on [page 7](#).

## 40%

### **Singapore residents own crypto.**

76% of crypto investors hold two or more cryptocurrencies. Learn more on [page 8](#).

## 51%

### **Invested in crypto because of recommendations from family and friends.**

44% of respondents revealed they invested to diversify their portfolio, making this the second most popular reason for getting into crypto. Learn more on [page 10](#).

## 82%

### **of respondents who invested in crypto reported that they either made money or broke even.**

Learn more on [page 14](#)



**61**  
IRCI 2022

# About the index

The Independent Reserve Cryptocurrency Index (IRCI) is an annual survey of over 1,500 Singapore residents by Toluna, an independent consumer insights provider. It is a cross-sectional and unbiased sample of everyday Singapore residents and is designed to represent the nation as a whole, including all genders, age-groups and backgrounds.

This year, the survey has evolved to incorporate recommendation rate and questions around the number of cryptocurrencies people owned and why they invest in cryptocurrencies to help us better understand the outlook and aspirations people in Singapore have towards cryptocurrency and blockchain technology.

The index is a single rating out of 100 designed to reflect attitudes towards cryptocurrency in four key areas:

 **Awareness**  **Adoption**  **Trust**  **Confidence**

The survey was conducted in February 2022, marking the second year of the IRCI in Singapore.



## Methodology

Independent Reserve engaged Toluna, a respected global consumer research institution, to conduct a cross-sectional survey of **over 1,500 everyday Singaporeans and residents**. The sample reflects the gender, age, and geographic distribution of the nation.

# Foreword

**2021 was a milestone year for the crypto industry in Singapore, with the introduction of a new level of regulatory rigour. This has strengthened the nation's position not only as Asia's global financial hub, but also as one of the most progressive crypto markets in the world.**

It was also a milestone year for Independent Reserve as an organisation. After setting up our first overseas operations in Singapore in 2019, last year, we became the first licensed crypto exchange available to all Singapore residents, enabling them to quickly and securely buy and sell crypto. The licence is a means by which individuals and companies in Singapore can better identify trusted crypto operators, allowing them an easy and safe entry into cryptocurrency. At Independent Reserve, we work closely with regulators across the globe and have been impressed by the comprehensive regulatory process and standards being upheld in Singapore. We are proud to be a positive and valuable contributor to the fast-growing crypto sector in this region. We look forward to working with the Singapore Government and industry to continue to advance the sector, and enhance consumer protection to provide greater fairness, trust, and opportunities for digital currency investors.



## **Raks Sondhi**

**Managing Director,**  
Independent Reserve SG

On behalf of the team at Independent Reserve, we are delighted to be able to bring you one of Singapore's most robust crypto industry surveys.

The insights are a clear demonstration of how crypto is becoming even more popular and accepted by the mainstream.

It is with great pleasure that we invite you to read our second annual IRCI in Singapore.

*Raks Sondhi*

## Executive Summary

**Singapore is a global crypto hot spot, having earned itself a reputation as Asia's global financial hub and an innovator in the digital currency space. The nation recognises that the benefits of having a well-regulated local cryptocurrency industry extend well beyond the crypto sector itself; helping create jobs, increase productivity and drive economic growth.**

The Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) has been vocal about the importance of preparing Singaporeans for an "economy of tokenisation"<sup>1</sup> in the future, which has seen MAS take purposeful and proactive steps to ensure it has tailor made rules for the cryptocurrency sector.

As a result, Singapore has one of the clearest and most detailed licensing requirements of any jurisdiction in Asia. Such a well-regulated environment benefits both investors and crypto industry stakeholders and has worked to attract a significant number of crypto firms seeking to operate in the region. In fact, since the introduction of the new Payment Services Act in January 2020, around 580 companies<sup>2</sup> have applied for a licence to operate under the Act.

Whilst supportive of the innovative application of crypto, MAS has also said it considers the trading of cryptocurrencies "highly risky and not suitable for the general public". This is one of the motivating factors for its introduction of restrictions on crypto marketing and advertising activities directed at the general public, which came into effect in January 2022.

With these latest advertising restrictions, the need for clearer insights becomes increasingly important and, as Singapore's first regulated crypto exchange for all investors in Singapore, our role is equally critical in terms of providing accurate and timely information and knowledge to the market.

It is too early to say what the impact of these consumer marketing and advertising restrictions may be on attitudes towards crypto or, indeed, the uptake of crypto in Singapore, but one thing is abundantly clear: the future for crypto in Singapore is bright.

The slight dip in this year's index, when compared to last year, is largely due to the drop in crypto ownership and the number of people claiming to have made a profit as a result of the recent global crypto bear run. Despite the impact of the price volatility, the outlook for crypto in Singapore remains strong.

It is evident that Singapore continues to embrace cryptocurrencies. The recommendation rate for investing in crypto is high and there is a strong belief that cryptocurrencies will become widely accepted by businesses and mainstream in the future.

With greater awareness of alternative coins (altcoins) and increased diversification of crypto investment portfolios both key features of the 2022 IRCI, it's clear the fundamentals of crypto acceptance and understanding remain sound.

## Index **61** down from **63** 2021

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mas.gov.sg/news/speeches/2021/the-future-of-money-finance-and-the-internet>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/politics/mas-receives-over-580-applications-for-payment-services-licence-has-reviewed-half>

# Awareness

In 2022, the overall awareness remained high, as 90% of Singapore residents surveyed had heard of cryptocurrency (slightly down from 93% in 2021) and 87% had heard of Bitcoin (90% in 2021).

## Altcoins on the rise

Although awareness of Bitcoin dipped slightly, altcoins continue to gain awareness and momentum.

**Ethereum** is a particularly interesting case to consider in the evolution of crypto adoption. It is different to Bitcoin in that it is a programmable blockchain, with the ability to build and work on Decentralized Finance (DeFi), smart contracts and Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs). With 36% of crypto investors saying they're looking to diversify into other cryptocurrencies, NFTs and DeFi, its increase in popularity aligns directly with the recent NFT and DeFi boom.

**48% of respondents are aware of Ethereum, compared with only 44% last year.**

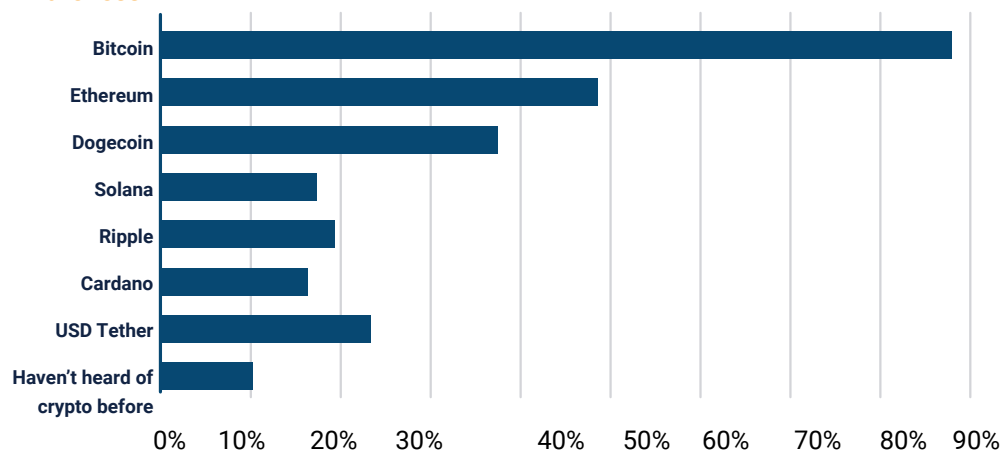
NFT transactions peaked to their highest ever monthly volumes in January 2022<sup>3</sup>. In fact, NFT investors spent \$20.4 billion, nearly half as much as they did throughout all of 2021, in the first two months of 2022. In addition, the continued integration of DeFi into more mainstream financial markets is tipped to continue to propel awareness of Ethereum, with many speculating that **2022 could be the Year of Ethereum**<sup>4</sup>. Excitement and investor interest are also being driven by the arrival of **Ethereum 2.0** - effectively an upgraded Ethereum - which is intended to be significantly faster, less expensive, and more scalable.

Elon Musk's support of **Dogecoin** has had a significant impact on the increased popularity of the memecoin, even going as far as describing himself on Twitter as the 'Dogefather'<sup>5</sup>. Earlier this year, Musk's Tesla Corporation announced it would accept Dogecoin as payment for its merchandise, sending the price rocketing by 25%<sup>6</sup>.

Other Altcoins on the rise such as **Solana, Avalanche, Algorand and Cardano** are increasing quickly in market cap and adoption.

**90% of men and 83% of women were aware of Bitcoin, but men were up to twice as likely as women to have heard of Altcoins such as Cardano, Solana and Ripple.**

## Awareness



More than half of 18-26 year-olds had heard of Ethereum (57%) and Dogecoin (56%), whereas only a quarter had heard of Solana (26%), Cardano (24%) and Ripple (24%).

3 <https://www.fxempire.com/news/article/nft-trading-volume-to-set-new-7-billion-ath-this-january-882654>  
4 <https://www.marca.com/en/technology/2022/03/19/62359ddec474188078b4579.html>  
5 <https://cointelegraph.com/news/elon-musk-boosts-dogecoin-again-amid-fresh-strong-interest-in-altcoins>  
6 <https://cointelegraph.com/news/tesla-launches-dogecoin-payments-for-merch-but-there-is-a-catch>

# Adoption

Although the percentage of Singapore residents owning crypto (40%) has fallen slightly compared with 2021 (43%), crypto owners have diversified their holdings more than ever before. Of those respondents who own crypto, a whopping 76% own two or more different types of cryptocurrencies.

Bitcoin remained the most popular cryptocurrency to own with 78% of crypto investors holding it. Half of crypto owners hold Ethereum, and the third most popular cryptocurrency is Dogecoin, which was held by 25% of investors.

The younger demographic, **aged between 26-45 years, were most likely to hold two or more different types of crypto**, evidence of their dominance and strong interest in the sector.

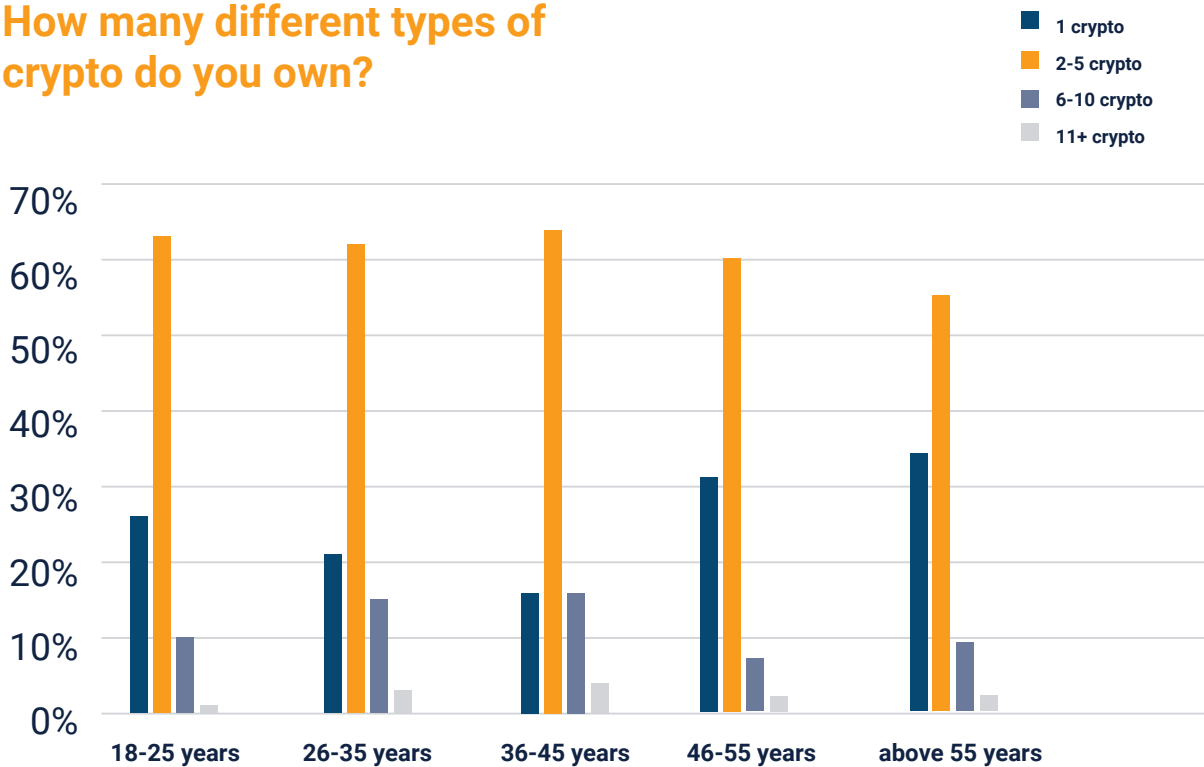
**40% of Singaporean residents own crypto, down from 43% in 2021**

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**76% of respondents own two or more types of crypto**

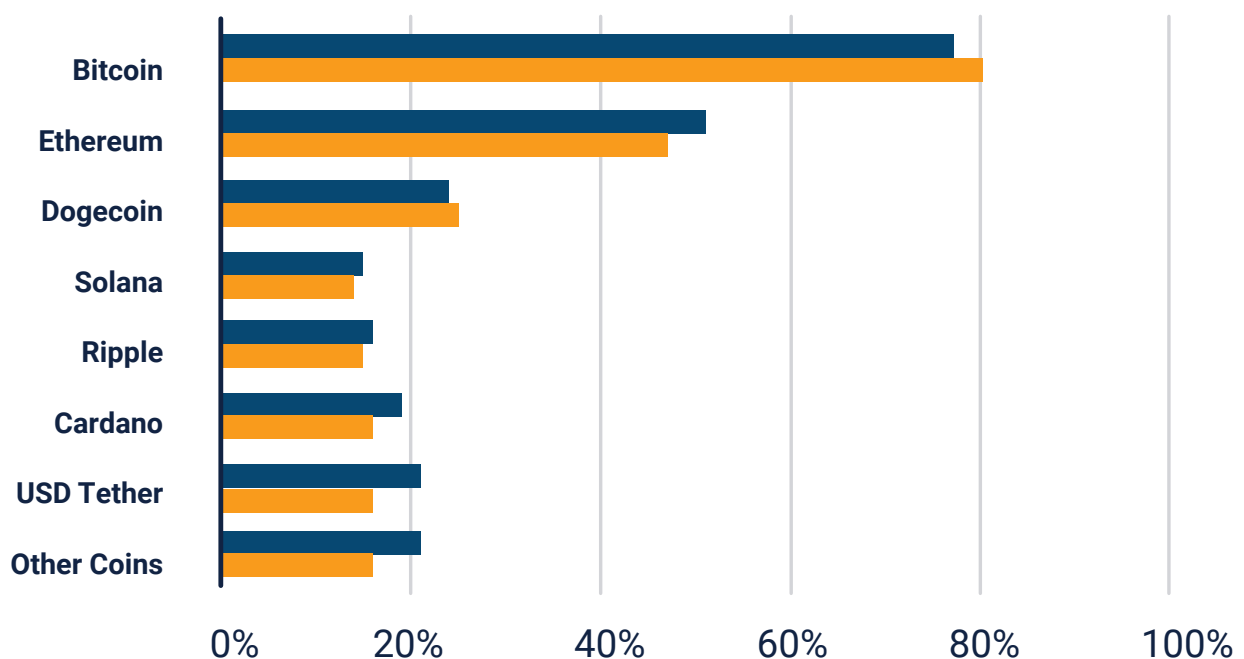


## How many different types of crypto do you own?



30% of women own crypto, down from 35% last year compared to 49% of men, down from 51% last year.

## Crypto owned by gender



# Why do Singapore residents invest in crypto?

Friends and family are the top influence on people's decision to first invest in crypto, with over half of all respondents who own crypto saying they began investing because of their friends and family. This was followed closely by those who were curious after seeing crypto in the media (40%).

Overall, 44% of respondents said they invest in crypto to diversify their portfolio, implying they have other investments and are active investors in the market. The benefits of owning cryptocurrency as part of a well-balanced portfolio are widely documented <sup>7</sup> and we're seeing an increasing number of high-profile investors and economists recommending crypto as an asset class <sup>8</sup>.

Women, it seems are more influenced by their family and friends, with **60% of females** who owned crypto saying they invested in crypto because of family and friends **versus 46% for men**. Men are more swayed by media, with 43% stating that was part of the reason they invested in crypto, versus 35% for women.

## Why did Singapore residents decide to invest in crypto?

**51%** of crypto owners invested because of family and friends

**44%** diversify portfolio

**40%** curiosity, media driven

**26%** attractive crypto exchange promotion

**26%** to get rich

**15%** believe crypto is the future

**10%** why not?

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.livewiremarkets.com/wires/crypto-a-must-have-in-a-balanced-investment-portfolio>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nasdaq.com/articles/5-famous-investors-who-are-on-the-crypto-train-2021-06-17>

# Barriers to crypto ownership

Price volatility is nominated as the number one reason people avoid investing in crypto (48%), while 37% said there is not enough consumer protection and regulation.

A lack of understanding of how to invest in crypto was responsible for a large cohort of would-be crypto investors not currently investing, with 28% finding it too confusing and another 23% saying they don't know where to start. In addition to this, another 20% said they would like to invest but are not currently in a financial position to do so.

It's no surprise that the higher the personal income, the more money per month is invested into crypto. The 2022 IRCI found that **most investors (55%) put between \$100 - \$1000 per month into crypto**. Another 19% invest \$1000 or more per month and this can be mainly attributed to higher earners with an income of more than \$10,000 per month.



Almost a third (28%) of those who don't own crypto said it was too confusing, 63% of whom are females.



## Singapore residents will be using crypto in multiple ways

58%

Will save their crypto for the future

33%

Want to obtain financial independence

39%

Will use crypto to purchase goods, services and subscriptions

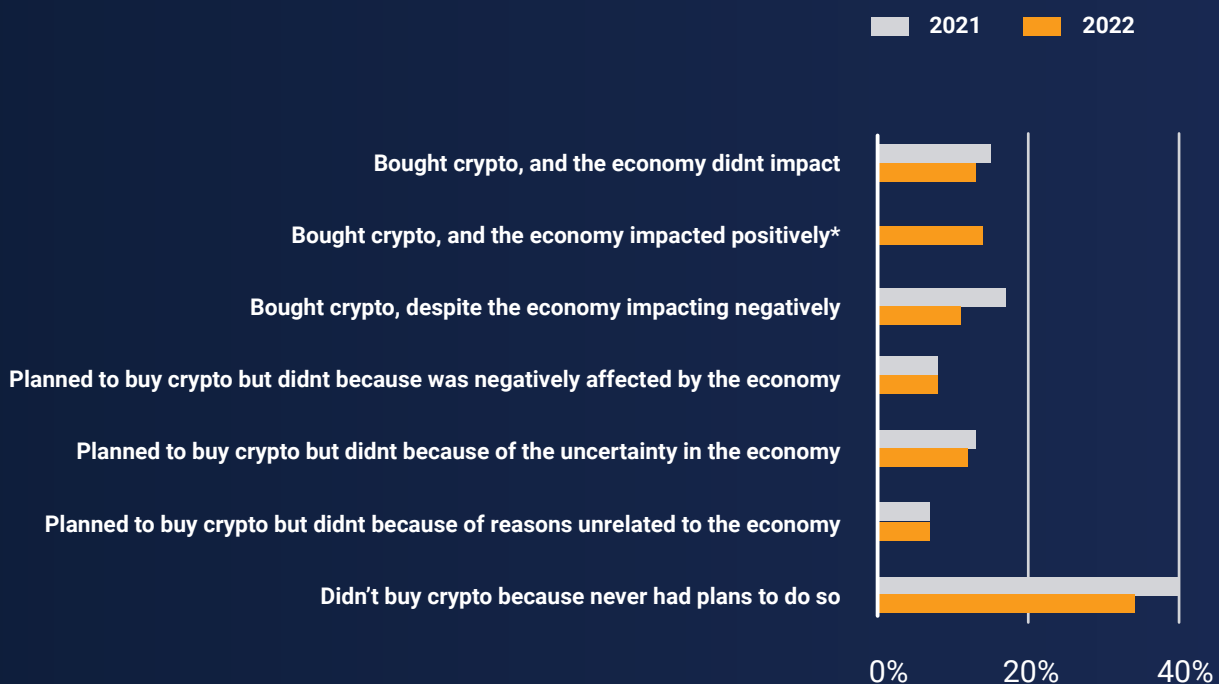
26%

Will use crypto to invest in art and Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs)

# Impact of COVID-19 on crypto investment

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted financial markets around the globe and Singapore has not been immune to this. When asked how the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted their cryptocurrency investment decisions, 20% of respondents said they had planned to buy crypto but didn't go ahead because of the uncertainty of the economy or because they were negatively impacted by the economic conditions during covid.

## Impact on investment decisions into crypto



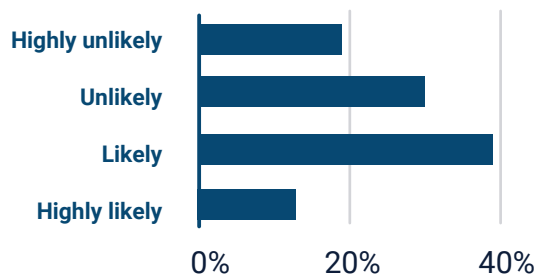
\* This question was not included in the 2021 edition

# Trust and confidence

Despite the small drops in awareness and ownership, Singaporeans have maintained a high degree of trust and confidence in the future of crypto, with 59% believing crypto will become widely used by businesses and everyday people in the future. More than 50% will recommend crypto to their friends and family.

Of those who had heard of Bitcoin, almost 58% view it as an investment asset or store of value, while 15% consider it as money and 9% think Bitcoin is a scam. 59% believe crypto will become widely used by businesses and everyday people in the future.

## How likely are Singapore residents to recommend crypto to their friends and family?



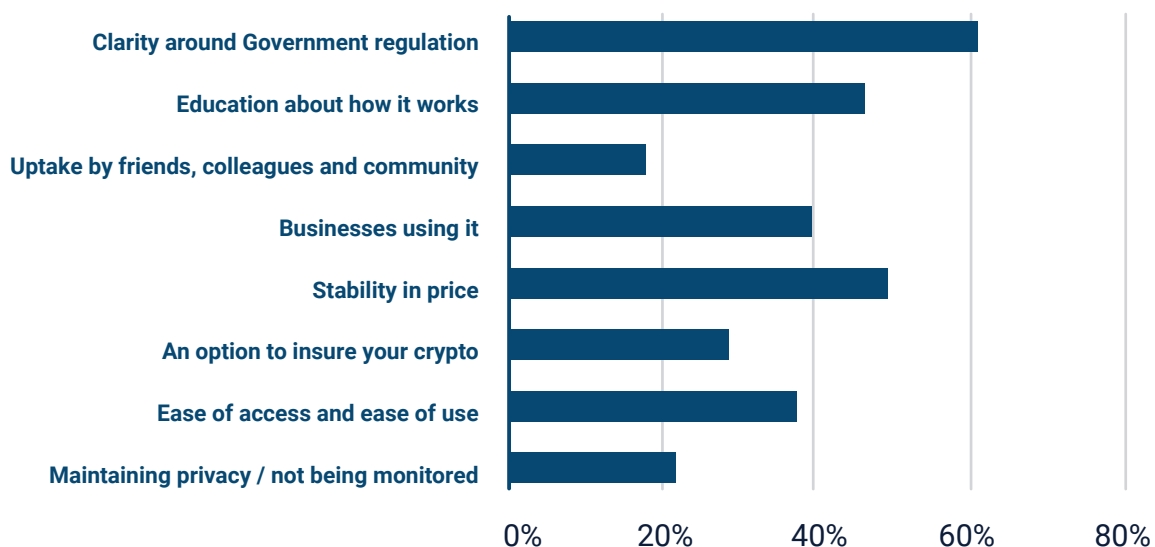
The top three factors that would increase trust in cryptocurrency are:

Clarity around government regulations (62%)

Stability in price (50%)

Education (47%)

## Factors that increase trust in crypto



# Future investment in crypto

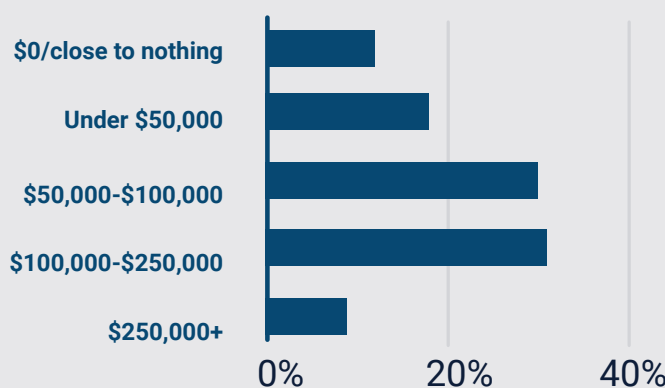
The outlook for ownership remains positive, with 47% of investors planning to increase their investment in their crypto portfolio in the next 12 months. 26-35 year-olds are the most bullish age group with 61% planning to increase their investment. Interestingly, this age group is also the most successful in their crypto dealings, with 88% reporting they had made a profit or broke even. When you consider this number to the majority of other investments, it emphasises how popular investing in cryptocurrency has become for that active younger age group.

**47% of Singaporeans are planning to bolster their crypto investment in the next 12 months.**

The youngest cohort – 18-25 year olds – were the most willing to invest in Decentralised Finance (DeFi) or NFTs, with 43% saying they wanted to diversify into DeFi or NFT projects, while 7% of respondents planned to sell out of crypto entirely.

## What will Bitcoin be worth in 2030?

People were asked what price they thought Bitcoin would reach by 2030, after having reached S\$90,000 at a point.





# Conclusion

Over the past year, the crypto sector as a whole has continued to advance at pace and is becoming more mainstream in the economic and social environment across the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in Singapore.

The opportunities that DeFi provides are being embraced by a mix of ages, genders and socio-economic backgrounds. Across a range of investment groups - from retail investors to institutions - crypto is consistently the investment of choice and a favoured diversification mechanism<sup>9, 10</sup>.

Looking forward, the key focus for increased, but well-reasoned adoption will be getting more people educated about cryptocurrency and having a clear understanding of its risks and opportunities, as well as the evolution of applicable government regulations. With the former, industry players such as Independent Reserve are taking the driver's seat to guide and support consumers, providing investors with the ability to make informed decisions. This is supported by the MAS' active consultation with the industry, which we believe will further evolve the regulatory environment in Singapore to keep up with the pace of change and progressively mitigate any risks or regulatory gaps in order to advance the use cases and trust in cryptocurrency and blockchain technology.

<sup>9</sup> <https://news.yale.edu/2018/08/06/assessing-cryptocurrency-yale-economist-aleh-tsyvinski>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.nasdaq.com/articles/5-famous-investors-who-are-on-the-crypto-train-2021-06-17>



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