IQEQ

RESEARCH REPORT · APRIL 2026

The transparency gap

LPs now expect look-through data in days. Most GPs still deliver spreadsheets in weeks. Inside the widening distance between what investors ask for and what fund operations can produce — and what it is quietly costing at re-up.

82%
of fund CFOs say LP data requests have grown materially more granular in the past 24 months

11 days
median time to fulfil a bespoke LP data request — against a typical LP expectation of 3

44%
have had a re-up or commitment conversation affected by their reporting capability

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The reporting arms race has a losing side

For a decade, "LP transparency" was a talking point. In 2026 it is a workload. Institutional investors — under pressure from their own boards, regulators and consultants — have converted transparency from a preference into a procurement criterion. They want look-through portfolio data, standardised fee and expense reporting, ESG metrics and operational due diligence detail. They want it quarterly, sometimes monthly, and increasingly on demand.

This study of 286 CFOs, COOs and heads of fund finance at private markets firms finds that **82% have seen LP data requests grow materially more granular in the past 24 months** — and that the operational reality behind the response has barely moved. **71% still fulfil bespoke LP requests primarily through manual spreadsheet work.** The median bespoke request takes 11 days to close; LPs, respondents report, typically expect an answer within 3.

The gap is not an inconvenience. It is commercially priced. **44% of respondents say reporting capability has surfaced in a re-up or new-commitment conversation**, and 29% believe it has cost them ground — a reduced allocation, a delayed close, or a commitment lost outright. Meanwhile the root cause is structural: **63% of firms hold their fund and portfolio data in four or more disconnected systems**, which means every "quick question" from an LP triggers a small integration project.

The firms closing the gap are not the ones hiring more analysts. They are the ones treating investor reporting as infrastructure — consolidating data foundations, automating the recurring 80%, and reserving human effort for the questions that deserve it. This report maps the gap in five findings and sets out where finance leaders should act first.

82%
report materially more granular LP data requests vs. 24 months ago

71%
fulfil bespoke LP requests primarily via manual spreadsheets

63%
hold fund and portfolio data in four or more systems

29%
believe reporting shortfalls have cost them LP capital

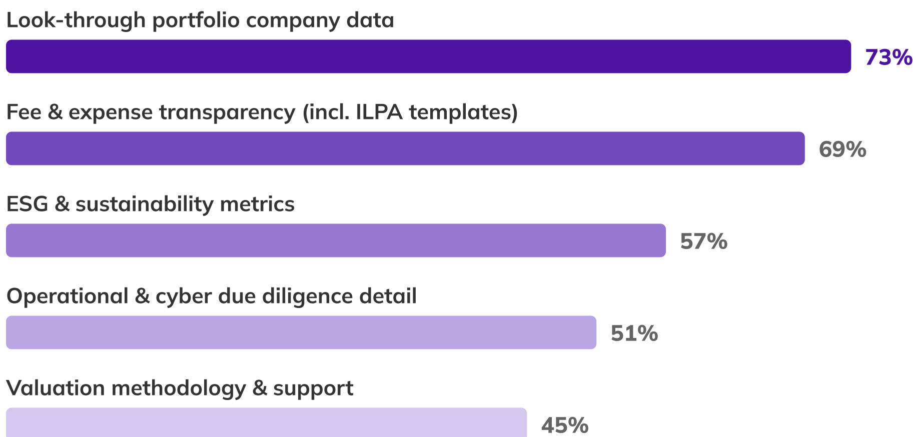
1 FINDING ONE

The demand curve has steepened everywhere at once

The growth in LP information demands is not confined to one reporting domain — it is broad-based. Respondents report the sharpest increases in look-through portfolio company data and fee and expense transparency, with ESG and operational due diligence requests close behind. Critically, 82% describe the overall change as material, not incremental: new templates, new frequencies, and new expectations of on-demand access.

Where LP requests have increased most over the past 24 months

% of respondents reporting a significant increase, by request type (multi-select), n=286



Source: Independent survey of 286 private markets finance leaders, April 2026

WHY THIS MATTERS

Demand growth is compounding across domains simultaneously, which defeats point solutions. A team that tools up for ESG reporting alone will meet next quarter's fee-transparency template with the same manual scramble. The only durable response is a common data foundation that serves every request type.

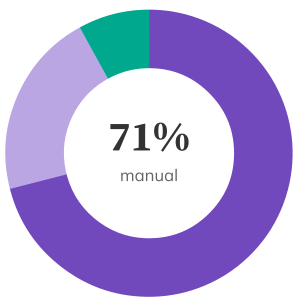
2 FINDING TWO

Behind the investor portal, it's still spreadsheets

Whatever the front end looks like, the production line behind most LP reporting is manual. 71% of firms fulfil bespoke LP requests primarily through hand-built spreadsheet work — extracting from multiple systems, reconciling by eye, and formatting one-off outputs that are discarded after use. Only 8% describe their process as substantially automated end to end.

How bespoke LP data requests are actually fulfilled

Primary fulfilment method, % of respondents, n=286



- Primarily manual spreadsheet work — 71%
- Partially automated with manual review — 21%
- Substantially automated end to end — 8%

Source: Independent survey of 286 private markets finance leaders, April 2026

The hidden cost is repetition: 66% of firms say the majority of "bespoke" requests are actually recurring questions in new clothing — the same underlying data, cut differently for each LP. The work is re-performed because the data foundation cannot re-serve it.

> *Every quarter we rebuild the same numbers four different ways for four different LPs. None of it is hard. All of it is slow. And the person doing it is the person I need on the audit.*
>
> HEAD OF FUND FINANCE, GROWTH EQUITY FIRM, $3.1B AUM

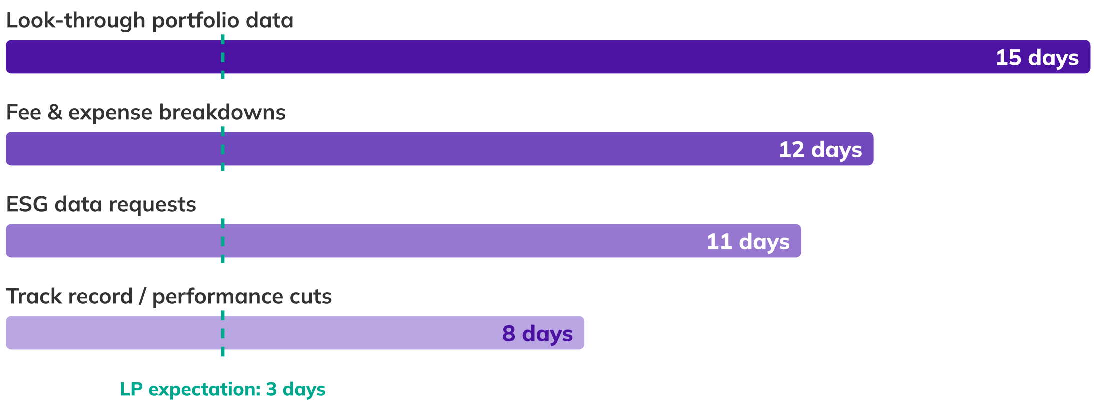
3 FINDING THREE

The 11-day answer to a 3-day question

Speed is where the gap becomes visible to investors. Across all request types, the median bespoke LP request takes 11 days to fulfil. Respondents report that LPs typically expect a response within 3 days — an expectation set by their experience of public-markets managers and, increasingly, of other GPs. The slowest category, look-through portfolio data, runs a median of 15 days.

Median days to fulfil a bespoke LP request, by request type

Respondent-reported medians, n=286 · dashed line = typical LP expectation (3 days)



Source: Independent survey of 286 private markets finance leaders, April 2026. Overall median across all request types: 11 days.

WHY THIS MATTERS

An 11-day turnaround is rarely read by LPs as "busy" — it is read as a signal about data quality and operational control. In diligence, response latency has become a proxy metric: several respondents reported LP operational due diligence questionnaires now explicitly ask for standard turnaround times on data requests.

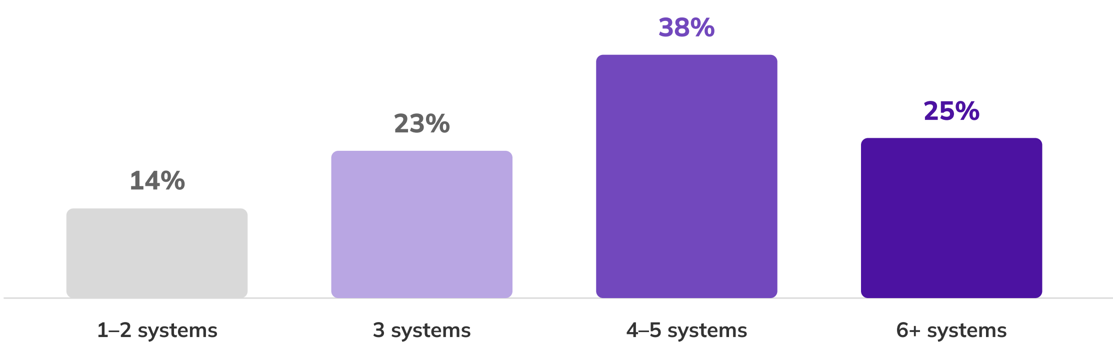
4 FINDING FOUR

Data debt is the root cause — and it grows with every fund

Underneath slow answers sits fragmented data. 63% of firms hold their fund and portfolio data across four or more disconnected systems — fund accounting, portfolio monitoring, CRM, valuation models, ESG tools and, inevitably, spreadsheets that have become systems of record by accident. A quarter of firms operate across six or more.

Number of distinct systems holding fund and portfolio data

% of respondents, n=286



Source: Independent survey of 286 private markets finance leaders, April 2026. 63% = share at four or more systems.

The correlation with speed is direct: firms running four or more systems report median fulfilment times nearly twice those of firms with consolidated data foundations. And the debt compounds — each new fund structure, jurisdiction or asset class typically arrives with its own tooling, adding another reconciliation seam that every future request must cross.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Data debt behaves like technical debt: invisible on the balance sheet, priced into every downstream task. Firms that consolidate to a governed data foundation don't just answer faster — they stop paying interest on every LP question, audit request and regulatory filing at once.

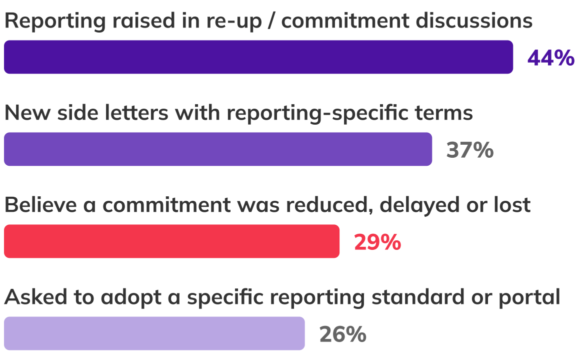
5 FINDING FIVE

The gap is now priced into fundraising

Transparency has crossed from operations into capital formation. 44% of respondents say their reporting capability has surfaced in a re-up or new-commitment conversation in the past 18 months — as a diligence topic, a side-letter demand, or an explicit condition. And 29% believe a reporting shortfall has already cost them: a reduced allocation, a delayed close, or a lost commitment.

Commercial consequences attributed to reporting capability, past 18 months

% of respondents reporting each outcome, n=286



Source: Independent survey of 286 private markets finance leaders, April 2026

> *In our last raise, an anchor LP's ODD team spent more time on our reporting stack than on our track record. We closed them — but the message was clear: next fund, the data room includes the data operations.*
>
> CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, BUYOUT FIRM, $6.5B AUM

IMPLICATIONS

What this means for fund CFOs and COOs

Five actions, sequenced by leverage, drawn from the practices of the firms in this study that report both fast turnaround and low manual load.

1 **Treat investor reporting as infrastructure, not correspondence**

Fund it, staff it and measure it like a production system. The firms in the top quartile for turnaround all track request volume, cycle time and rework as management KPIs — most firms track none of them.

2 **Consolidate the data foundation before automating anything**

With 63% of firms spread across four or more systems, automation on top of fragmentation just produces faster errors. Establish a single governed source for fund, entity and portfolio data first; every downstream request gets cheaper at once.

3 **Standardise the recurring 80% of "bespoke" requests**

Two-thirds of bespoke requests are recurring questions in disguise. Build a library of pre-approved cuts — ILPA templates, look-through packs, fee summaries — and reserve genuinely custom effort for the 20% that warrants it.

4 **Set — and publish — response-time standards to LPs**

LP expectations default to 3 days when GPs are silent. Firms that publish realistic SLAs (and hit them) report better diligence outcomes than firms that answer faster but inconsistently. Predictability beats heroics.

5 **Decide what you will never be great at — and partner for it**

Running reporting infrastructure at institutional grade is a scale business. If it is not yours, a co-sourced or outsourced administration partner converts the transparency gap from a fixed-cost problem into a service-level agreement.

METHODOLOGY

About this study

This research was designed to quantify the distance between LP information demands and GP reporting operations, and to identify the practices separating fast responders from the rest. Fieldwork, screening and analysis were conducted by an independent third-party research firm on behalf of IQ-EQ.

SAMPLE

286 completed responses: Chief Financial Officers (41%), Chief Operating Officers (28%), Heads of Fund Finance / Controllers (19%), Heads of Investor Relations with reporting ownership (12%).

FIRM PROFILE

Private equity, venture capital, private credit, infrastructure and real assets managers with $500M–$20B in assets under management.

GEOGRAPHY

North America (49%), United Kingdom & Ireland (26%), Continental Europe (17%), Asia-Pacific (8%).

COLLECTION

Online survey fielded 6–29 April 2026, supplemented by 15 qualitative interviews with opt-in respondents.

QUALIFICATION

Respondents screened for direct ownership of, or accountability for, investor reporting and LP data requests.

INDEPENDENCE

Conducted by an independent third-party research firm. Responses anonymised prior to analysis; quotes lightly edited for length.

Key metrics analysed:

- Change in LP request granularity and frequency over 24 months, by request type
- Primary fulfilment method for bespoke requests (manual / partially automated / automated)
- Median fulfilment time by request type, versus perceived LP expectation
- Number of distinct systems of record for fund, entity and portfolio data
- Commercial outcomes attributed to reporting capability in fundraising and re-up contexts

IQEQ

Transparency is no longer a report. It's a capability.

The next fundraise will be diligenced on data operations as much as on returns. The firms that win it will be the ones for whom an LP question is a query, not a project — because the data foundation, the process and the people were built for it.

IQ-EQ supports private markets managers with fund administration, investor reporting and compliance services across every major fund jurisdiction — administering over $857 billion in assets for clients including 10 of the world's top 15 private equity managers. Our IQ-EQ Switch platform gives CFOs and their investors real-time visibility into fund and portfolio data, backed by director-led service teams. Big enough to deliver, with a dedicated team small enough to care.

Close your transparency gap

Talk to our fund services team about consolidating your data foundation and putting LP reporting on institutional-grade infrastructure. Visit iqeq.com or make an enquiry with your local IQ-EQ office.

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