Scenario one: the Asian hub consolidated

Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP
Of Counsel, KGP Legal LLC
Attorney-at-Law (Switzerland and Germany), Solicitor (England & Wales and Hong Kong)

Assumptions

The first scenario extends the trends of the period since 2020. Asian wealth continues to grow faster than wealth in Europe and North America. The Boston Consulting Group projected that the financial wealth of mainland China would grow by 9 per cent a year until 2030 and that the emerging markets would add nearly US$7 trillion in financial wealth over the same period.[1] Trade tensions persist without closing the channels of capital and commerce. The world economy remains open enough for an intermediary located between the great powers to serve both. Singapore avoids a major scandal while its regulators keep the balance between openness and control that Part E described.

The scenario also assumes that the policy of the Singapore government continues. The Monetary Authority of Singapore remains both the regulator and the developer of the financial sector, as Part C showed when it described the founding of the Authority on 1 January 1971.[2] The incentive schemes for funds and family offices, examined in Chapter III of Part E, remain available on their tightened terms. The state continues to invest in infrastructure, education and the reputation of the courts and arbitration institutions described in Part F.

The picture in 2035

In this scenario, Singapore in 2035 is the leading financial centre of Southeast Asia and South Asia and one of the two leading centres for the wealth of East Asia, alongside Hong Kong. Its asset management industry continues to grow. A simple arithmetical illustration shows the scale: if assets under management grew at 7 per cent a year from S$6.7 trillion, they would roughly double to about S$13 trillion by 2035. Such a calculation is an exercise in compounding, offered to show what continued success would mean. The family office segment grows with the transmission of Asian fortunes created since the 1980s. The variable capital company becomes the standard vehicle for Asian private funds.

The centre also diversifies. Its commodity trading houses, described in Part G, follow the energy transition into metals, liquefied natural gas and carbon credits. Its banks and insurers finance the transition of the region, under a carbon tax that the government raised from S$25 per tonne in 2024 and 2025 to S$45 per tonne in 2026 and 2027, with a view to reaching S$50 to S$80 by 2030.[3] Chapter II of this part examines the sustainable finance strategy on which this element of the scenario depends. Singapore's courts and arbitration institutions continue to attract the disputes of the region, while its law firms, trust companies and fund administrators employ a growing share of the workforce.

Copyright © 2026 Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP – Of Counsel, KGP Legal LLC. SingaporeIQ is an information website and gives no legal advice. For Singapore law advice through KGP Legal LLC, please write to alexander.ressos@kgplegal.com.sg

Conditions

The consolidated hub is the base case, but it depends on decisions that have yet to be taken. The first concerns capital markets. The listed equity market has remained shallow compared with the size of the asset management industry. In June 2026 the Singapore Exchange had 601 listed companies with a total market capitalisation of S$1.129 trillion.[4] The managing director of the Authority, Chia Der Jiun, said in July 2026 that discussions with the industry on the competitiveness of financial market activities would be completed shortly. He stressed that Singapore's competitiveness rested first "on our position as a trusted financial hub with access to a deep and diverse financial ecosystem and talent pool".[5] A centre that manages S$6.7 trillion while listing only a fraction of the region's growth companies leaves value creation to other exchanges.

The second condition is competitiveness in wealth management against Hong Kong and Dubai, which Chapter III of this part examined. The Boston Consulting Group reported that more than 60 per cent of the managed assets in Hong Kong came from mainland China, against just under 30 per cent in Singapore.[6] Singapore's diversity of clients is a strength in this scenario, since it spreads the risk across India, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Europe. The third condition is capacity. Housing, office space, energy and schools must keep pace with growth. The politics of a visible foreign wealthy class, examined in Chapter V of Part I, must remain manageable.

Risks within success

The consolidated hub carries the seeds of its own difficulties. Growth in private wealth raises the cost of living and the price of property for Singapore citizens, which can turn public opinion against the instruments that attract it. The concentration of wealth from a few source countries makes the centre vulnerable to changes in their politics, including capital controls, tax amnesties and campaigns against officials who hold assets abroad. Success also attracts money that the centre does not want. The family office boom preceded the money laundering case of 2023, in which the persons convicted used companies, bank accounts and property in Singapore, as Chapter VI of Part E showed. The first scenario therefore depends on the vigilance that the fourth scenario tests.

Signposts

Indicators that the first scenario is unfolding include net inflows of assets under management that stay above S$300 billion a year, a rising number of new listings on the Singapore Exchange, a stable or rising share of Singapore in global foreign exchange turnover in the BIS survey of 2028, and family office applications that continue to come from a widening range of countries.

Notes

1. Boston Consulting Group, press release of 27 May 2026 (bcg.com): mainland China's financial wealth projected to grow "9% annually through 2030"; emerging markets expected to add nearly US$7 trillion in financial wealth by 2030, led by India, Brazil and Mexico.

Copyright © 2026 Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP – Of Counsel, KGP Legal LLC. SingaporeIQ is an information website and gives no legal advice. For Singapore law advice through KGP Legal LLC, please write to alexander.ressos@kgplegal.com.sg

2. Wikipedia, "Monetary Authority of Singapore" (accessed November 2026): MAS "was founded on 1 January 1971"; Gan Kim Yong chairman from 15 May 2024; Chia Der Jiun managing director.
3. National Climate Change Secretariat, "Carbon Tax", nccs.gov.sg (accessed November 2026): S$5/tCO2e in 2019–2023, S$25/tCO2e in 2024–2025, S$45/tCO2e in 2026–2027, "with a view to reaching S$50-80/tCO2e by 2030"; eligible international carbon credits may offset up to 5 per cent of taxable emissions from 2024.
4. Wikipedia, "Singapore Exchange" (accessed November 2026): "As of June 2026, there were 601 listed companies" with "a total market capitalisation of SGD 1.129 trillion"; in July 2026 SGX introduced its first Singapore Depository Receipts based on US-listed companies, expanding the depositary-receipt programme to 38 instruments.
5. *Business Times*, 29 July 2026 (above): Chia Der Jiun at the media briefing on the MAS Annual Report, on the review of competitiveness in financial market activities amid competition from Hong Kong, expected to be completed "shortly", and the quoted statement.
6. finews.asia, "Global Wealth Report: Hong Kong Overtakes Switzerland" (2026): more than 60 per cent of managed assets in Hong Kong from mainland China; "just under 30 percent" in Singapore. The BCG press release of 27 May 2026 gives no such shares.

Copyright © 2026 Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP – Of Counsel, KGP Legal LLC. SingaporeIQ is an information website and gives no legal advice. For Singapore law advice through KGP Legal LLC, please write to alexander.ressos@kgplegal.com.sg