Rethinking the Schedule Reliability Average

In our analysis of service-level schedule reliability (Issue 765 of the *Sea-Intelligence Sunday Spotlight*), we found that the global average masks a deeply fractured market. Instead of uniform operations across all trade lanes, some trade lanes are seeing a high percentage of highly stable services, while others are experiencing a rise in highly volatile services.

Fig. 1: Operational Tiers (Asia-NEUR Service Level Reliability) % of Active Services

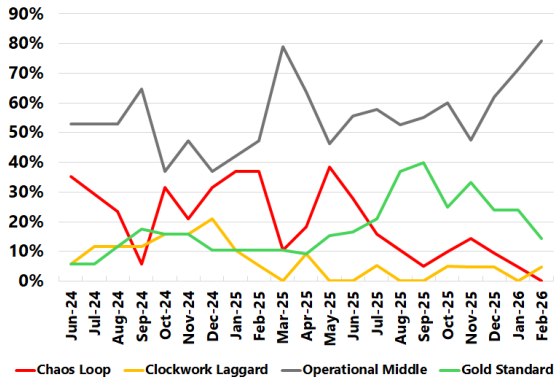
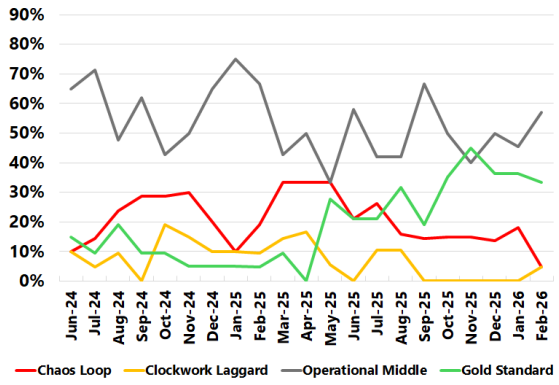


Fig. 2: Operational Tiers (Asia-MED Service Level Reliability) % of Active Services



Operational Tiers

Gold Standard: High reliability (≥75%) and low volatility (≤10%)
Clockwork Laggard: Low reliability (<50%) but low volatility (≤10%)
Chaos Loops: Any level of reliability but very high volatility (>30%)
Operational Middle: A catch-all for the remaining services (typically 50-74% reliability and 11-30% volatility)

This structural bifurcation can also be seen in the two primary Asia-Europe trades. Asia-Mediterranean represents the industry's most successful migration toward high reliability and stability. Following a volatile network reshuffle in early 2025 where high-volatility services peaked, the lane matured into a high-stability profile. By February 2026, 33% of the services were categorized as Gold Standard (high reliability/low volatility), with almost no network volatility, bringing Chaos Loops down to just 5%.

Conversely, Asia-North Europe shifted to near-total normalisation. After peaking at a 40% Gold Standard share in September 2025, that tier collapsed to 14% by February 2026. However, this did not result in a rise in volatile services; instead, a very high 81% of the trade lane now resides in the Operational Middle, and with Chaos Loops dropping to 0%, it has become the most predictable trade lane across the main East/West network.

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All quotes can be attributed to: Alan Murphy, CEO, Sea-Intelligence.

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