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# THE GUIDE TO FINDING GLOBAL TALENT

Where to Look for International  
Candidates in 2022-2023

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# Introduction

Remote work is the new normal. For company leaders building teams in a post-pandemic world where the entire workforce functions virtually already, a question comes to mind: Why not hire the best talent, anywhere in the world you can find it? Why not take advantage of top-tier skill sets in lower-cost jurisdictions?

With this goal in mind, we've compiled this guide to help you in your search for global talent. Where can you find the best person in the world for your open role at the most appropriate cost?

## Building talent hubs

The guide is organized by hemisphere partly to reflect time zones. While there are parts of the world, such as India and the Philippines, where people work a schedule to align with different time zones, companies often benefit from hiring talent in "hubs."

Instead of spreading a wide net and opening up a job location to anyone anywhere in the world, hiring in a central hub in different geographic regions helps focus recruiting efforts and delivers additional benefits to the company.

## Factors to consider when identifying a talent hub



### 1. Time zone and geography:

Hiring talent in nearby time zones aids in team-wide collaboration.



### 2. Talent pool:

Onboard bilingual employees with international business experience.



### 3. Cost:

Choose lower-cost jurisdictions where you can preserve resources and still offer a highly competitive salary and benefits package.

Additional factors to consider when choosing a talent hub include:

- Economic and geopolitical stability of the country and/or region.
- Infrastructure, including internet reliability.
- Cultural norms related to work.
- Business friendliness of the country.

We've considered all these factors to suggest locations that will provide a clear opportunity for success.



# The Americas



First, consider the type of talent you wish to add to your team.

Many companies are looking for back-office, skilled support outside of the tech hubs where they traditionally hire, but within the Americas' time zones, and at an advantageous cost.

But other companies are searching for world-class global experience. In general, for these executive, highly specialized roles, cost quickly becomes a secondary factor.

A vice president of product with experience at Google or a chief financial officer from a pre-initial public offering (IPO) tech company probably command similar salaries in any location, because the skill sets required are so refined that you'll pay top dollar no matter where the talent lives.

On the other hand, when you need to fill a lot of roles, choosing a jurisdiction in a location where the cost of living is a bit lower creates good jobs in new areas and saves dollars in your budget, too.

Examples of roles we'd fill in a hub location might include customer service agents, business development representatives, content writers, accountants, lawyers, financial analysts, etc. For these types of roles, you can find well-educated, bilingual talent in the following locations:

## Mexico City

A vibrant city with 20 million people, Mexico City is a prime location to find English-speaking talent: 13 percent of the population, or 2.6 million people, speak English fluently. The professional class is well educated, ambitious, and hardworking.

2.6 million people speak English fluently.

Some examples of roles you can fill with professionals who are college educated, bilingual, and with experience working at Fortune 500 companies include:

- Customer service agent
- Business development representative
- Accountant
- Project manager

## Costa Rica

Costa Rica is home to four million people. With a highly educated population where most schools and universities are public, it is common to find bilingual talent with college degrees, especially because most classes offered at these schools are in English.

## Atlanta, Georgia or St. Louis, Missouri

Atlanta and St. Louis are thriving talent hubs where companies can benefit from lower-cost benchmark salaries while building out teams in a new location. In addition, as highly diverse cities, Atlanta and St. Louis make it possible to fill roles with a diverse mix of candidates.

## Tech talent hubs in the Americas

The U.S. has a shortage of almost one million IT industry jobs, and only produces 65,000 IT graduates per year. Many other countries face similar tech talent shortages. With visa restrictions tightening, companies must look outside their home market for tech talent. But where?

Shortage of 1 million IT graduates  
in the U.S.

## Uruguay

Small but powerful, Uruguay is a modern country with a well-educated population, a functioning democracy, and a relatively high number of engineers. Many companies establish their back office in Uruguay.

## Monterrey, Mexico

Another hub for tech talent is Monterrey, Mexico. Oracle, NetSuite, and other multinational companies have local offices there. Add in the total cost of employment, including social insurance and benefits, and still – highly skilled talent is easier to find and retain, at a lower cost.

“highly skilled talent is easier to find and retain, at a lower cost.”

**Tip:** It can be tricky and competitive to find engineers who speak English fluently and are the engineering mavericks you need. One solution? Hire a manager who is bilingual and let them translate to the other members of the team.



## Medellin, Colombia

Medellin, Colombia, has a budding startup ecosystem, and the country as a whole is one of Latin America's fastest-growing tech hubs, with a large engineering talent population.

## Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Toronto has emerged as the premier hub of engineering talent in the Americas, not least because their visa system is reasonable and easy – a beacon for highly skilled immigrants who want to come to North America. While you can find world-class talent, the cost savings aren't particularly great – about a 15 percent discount from standard costs in Boston or San Francisco, mostly due to exchange rates. That said, when you're hiring a tech team, you're looking for the best in class, and Toronto is a good place to find it.

“U.S. dollar exchange rates allow for 15 percent lower employment costs in Canada.”

# Asia-Pacific

Many professionals in Asia-Pacific are skilled at providing back-office, multilingual support.

People in this region are accustomed to working with international companies, smoothing their employer's transition to international operations. Moreover, budding tech hubs are emerging further afield from the capital cities where companies traditionally hire, so employers can broaden their talent pool and offer more competitive salaries to workers.

When searching for world-class global experience to fill executive, highly specialized roles, cost may be a secondary factor. Nonetheless, accessing more regions broadens opportunities to find the ideal candidate and build diverse, stronger teams.

When you need to fill a lot of roles, you might choose a jurisdiction where the cost of living is lower than the usual recruitment hubs. This creates good jobs in new areas and builds flexibility into your budget, too.

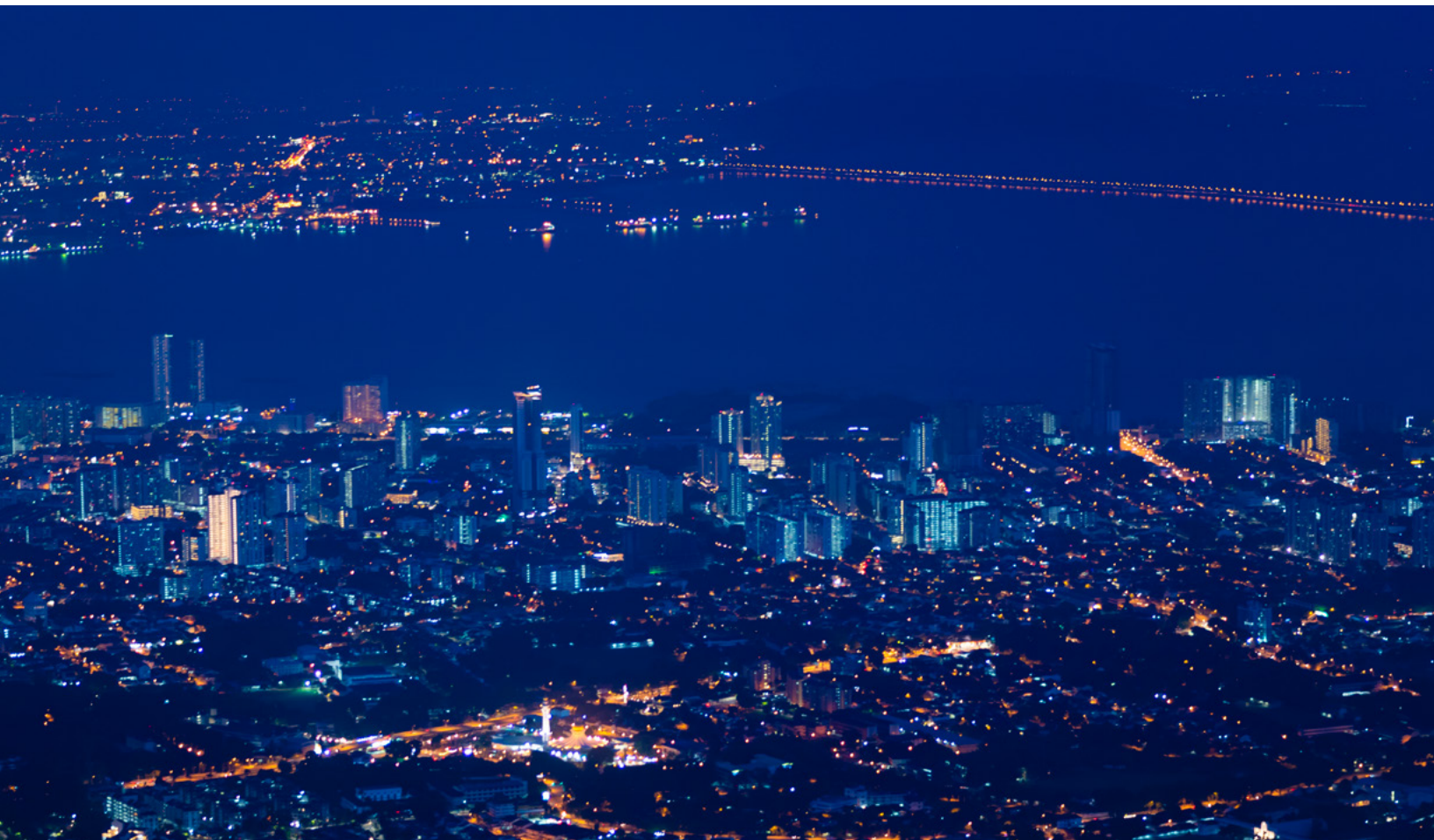
## Colombo, Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's primary contribution to the global workforce is thousands of qualified accountants.

A nation of 10,000 certified accountants in a population of 20 million is handling HSBC's financial work and the numbers for insurer Aviva, among many other international brand names. These skilled professionals also earn, on average, a tenth of the average accountant's salary in the U.S. and a third less than financial employees in neighboring India, making top Colombo talent extremely accessible.

10,000 certified accountants work  
for HSBC and Aviva in Colombo.

Accountants are not all that Sri Lanka has to offer, however. Business process outsourcing (BPO) is an important part of Sri Lanka's economy and industry leaders expect this area of expertise to grow in 2022.



## Penang, Malaysia

In 2017, the digital economy was responsible for 18.3 percent of Malaysia's GDP. Malaysia ranks third in the world for companies embracing disruptive ideas, according to Michael Page. Highly sought-after roles in Malaysia include CTO, CFO, and change management consultants.

Cost of living in Penang is  
59 percent lower than NYC.

The Malaysian government is committed to growing its digital potential and proficiency, launching business and educational programs. These programs led to 18.3 percent of Malaysia's 2017 GDP being attributed to the digital economy. While locals speak Manglish (Malaysian-English), companies servicing multiple nations can also find ideal talent in Penang because English, Mandarin, and Hokkien are widely spoken. Plus, French is taught extensively in public schools.

Kuala Lumpur is, of course, also home to a diverse and educated talent pool, with professionals who are multilingual and have strong ties to India, China, and Indonesia, but capital cities always garner a country's highest salaries.

## Gurgaon, India (Delhi)

A leading city in terms of business conditions and innovation, the "millennium city" is a major satellite city of Delhi. However, companies benefit from improved costs and availability for business growth by looking beyond India's capital.

Gurgaon is becoming a preferred destination for both traditional and modern companies, thanks to a sizeable English-speaking talent pool. Existing international call centers in Gurgaon means professionals will have already received formal training in neutral pronunciation. This paired with proximity to the international airport has led multiple global and domestic corporations to set up back-office and front-office operations in Gurgaon.

“Companies benefit from improved costs for business growth and availability by looking beyond India's capital.”



## Seoul, South Korea

Some of Asia-Pacific's largest technology parks among mature markets are located in Seoul and are home to a wide range of tech companies. While the local economy is very prosperous, South Korea is also open to foreign investment and working with remote teams in the capital is straightforward, since the city excels in internet connectivity.

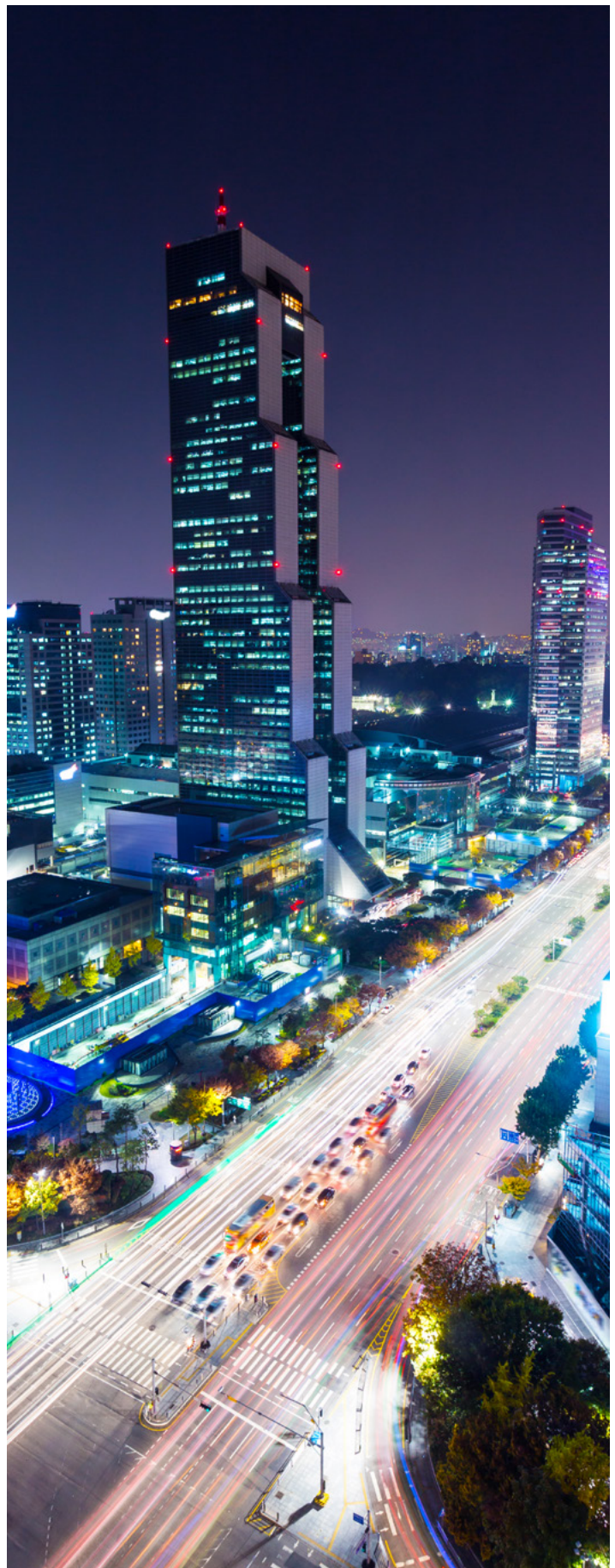
The city has high-quality universities and research institutions, so Seoul is an ideal location for companies' research and development (R&D) operations. Samsung, LG, Hyundai, and Kia are just a few international brand names operating from South Korea.

## Auckland, New Zealand

This well-established R&D hub is backed by government funding and welcoming regulations — it's known as a relatively easy place in which to do business, thanks to great governance.

For companies interested in expanding to the south of Asia-Pacific, Auckland salaries are lower than Sydney, albeit comparatively higher than other Asia-Pacific cities.

Finally, since English is the de facto official language in New Zealand, it is possible to source strong native-English-speaking candidates.



## Tech talent hubs in the Asia-Pacific

Across most developed markets, demand for expert knowledge and experience in the tech industry outstripped supply in 2020. As many companies face similar tech talent shortages, leaders must look outside their home market for better recruiting opportunities. Which countries are home to the top talent for building strong tech teams?

India and China have dominated

the IT market for decades, but many other tech hubs across Southeast Asia have emerged in recent years. As digital transformation continues across all industries in Asia-Pacific, in 2022 we expect to see employers vying for professionals with expertise in AI, cloud programming, UX, software development, and cybersecurity. Here are our top picks for hiring hubs when building a highly skilled tech team:

In 2022, employers will be vying for expertise in AI, programming, UX, software development, and cybersecurity.



“Singapore is a great location for finding executive talent.”

### Singapore

Singapore is the mature gateway city to Asia-Pacific for companies with no existing employees or branches in the region. One reason Singapore is a leading business city is its rigorous intellectual property laws, perfect for high-growth technology companies.

While not the cheapest destination for startups, costs and availability of talent here support business growth. Moreover, when you're launching in a new market, you're looking for best-in-class talent, and Singapore is a

good place to find it. We generally see Singapore as the go-to landing pad for companies establishing their first hires in Asia, with regional back-office hubs quick to follow. Singapore is a great location for finding executive talent.

As well as world-class talent and a sophisticated IT infrastructure, Singapore hosts the largest technology parks, and the government is planning more around the Changi, Woodland North, and Jurong districts to support the growth of the tech sector.

## Taipei, Taiwan

Taipei is part of a major high-tech industrial area, with infrastructure that closely connects the city with the whole island and two airports. This, one of the most progressive liberal democracies in Asia, is an amenable home for growing companies because laws and freedom of speech are held sacred by society and the government. The region as a whole is welcoming to residents from abroad and foreign investment — the Taiwanese government specifically applies measures to attract international white-collar professionals.

In Taipei, international companies able to pay above average local salaries will find high-quality talent.

The downside to hiring in Taipei, Taiwan, is that demand already surpasses supply, so the talent pool is highly competitive. Nonetheless, international companies able to pay above average local salaries will find high-quality talent, particularly engineers and specialists in R&D.



## Manila, Philippines

The Philippines has developed exceptional BPO talent and is an attractive destination for technology companies because local universities produce over 130,000 graduates in information technology and engineering each year. For leaders specifically looking for English proficiency in their new hires, Manila offers low labor costs and a large English-speaking, graduate-level talent pool.

Moreover, the country's workforce is young (with a median age of 24) and educated. Manila locals are intimately familiar with American culture after more than 30 years of colonial rule, so integration may be significantly smoother for westernized leadership, and

Universities in Manila produce 130,000 graduates in IT each year.

cheaper with median salaries of approximately USD 12,000 per year. However, with benefits, regulatory costs, etc., it would be wise to assume double the estimated compensation costs.

Another city in the Philippines to evaluate is prosperous port capital, Cebu City. While a lower population density may potentially reduce the talent pool, quality of living is higher while costs of living are lower.

## Bangalore, India

India's startup capital, Bangalore, is home to over 30 percent of the country's startups. This is thanks to government policies that promote startups and entrepreneurship in technology. The city also provides the easiest access to venture capital in India. Bangalore is high on the list of desirable destinations for tech companies planning to establish an operations base in Asia-Pacific.

Companies will find a vast pool of IT talent based here, many of whom are tech graduates, and preferable employment costs to comparable jurisdictions.

Bangalore is home to over 30 percent of India's startups.

## Hangzhou, China

China already hosts multiple technology industry sub-sectors and has demonstrated sound performance with tech companies operating across the country. While leaders might think of Beijing and Shanghai first, Hangzhou has the lowest office and technology park rents of the three. Plus, it is home to 15 tech unicorns, including Alibaba and NetEase.

Luckily for bootstrapped startups and emerging tech firms, Hangzhou has the lowest labor costs in China. The local government also rolled out policies to lure high-skilled tech talent in 2018, including giving household registrations to excellent employees.

Hangzhou is home to 15 tech unicorns.



# Europe, the Middle East, and Africa

Entering Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) can be a milestone for a company in its international growth. But EMEA is a broad catch-all accounting for dozens of religions, climates, values, and capabilities, not to mention languages.

This diversity means companies looking for their first hire in EMEA should think hard about what they want to achieve. U.S. companies in particular should take the focus off the popular choice for expansion (London) and evaluate other cost-effective or strategically placed countries. Many jurisdictions have wider and more affordable talent pools but simply aren't on recruiters' radars.

Leaders seeking English-speaking talent in budget-friendly jurisdictions may look to any of 24 countries in Africa in which English is the official language. Egypt, Iraq, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are examples of Middle Eastern countries with populations that have widely mastered the language at school or speak it as their mother tongue. Across Europe, English is part of compulsory education: 72 percent of Poles, 67 percent of Finns, and 61 percent of Belgians are fluent. Serbia, Romania, and the Czech Republic also figure high on EF's global English proficiency ranking.

EF's global English proficiency ranked these countries high:

- Poland
- Finland
- Belgium
- Serbia
- Romania
- Czech Republic

Multilingualism has major benefits for business, such as creativity and proficient problem-solving, and many countries in EMEA actively promote multilingualism. The European Union runs the Barcelona Objective, encouraging citizens to communicate in two languages other than their mother tongue. African citizens may be trilingual, using one language for local identity, another for national identity, and a third for international communication. Working across cultures and building diverse teams is a business must for resilience in global markets.





Filling roles in EMEA can secure a vast number of skills for recruiters who dare to cross borders, as many countries in the region are pioneering in technology to stay ahead of the curve. When hiring in EMEA, recruiters can find highly educated and hardworking talent in the following locations:

### Berlin, Germany

Berlin is home to the highest per capita density of graduates and researchers in Germany. Plus, upwards of 40,000 new people move to the city every year, 18 percent of whom are skilled technology professionals – no wonder this is the fastest-growing startup hub in Germany. Domestically, Berlin stands out in attractiveness for venture investors. The Federal Government and the state of Berlin operate various funding programs, helping the city retain its spot as the leading producer of European unicorns.

18 percent of newcomers to Berlin  
are skilled tech professionals.

Several cities in Germany have specialties in tech: Munich is already home to tech giants as well as promising small entities; Hamburg is known for gaming development — an industry that is well-supported by local authorities building connections between industry players in the city; Frankfurt's expertise lies in fintech, because this is where the European Central Bank and Frankfurt Stock Exchange are located.



## Cracow, Poland

Poland is the most populous country in Central Europe and home to a consumer market surpassing 38 million people, positioning the market well for product launch testing. The country also fared much better than the rest of Europe through 2020's economic downturn and was ranked as the best country for doing business in Central and Eastern Europe by Bloomberg. The reason for this is Poland's modern judicial system — it provides sound support to investors and excels in terms of providing companies with access to credit.

IT employs 450 million people in Poland.

Tech is a major player in Poland — its tech industry generates more than 29 percent of jobs, 250,000 of

Cracow is home to 100,000 engineering students.

which are for programmers. IT employs 450 million people and generates EUR 26.2 million a year, approximately 8 percent of GDP in 2018, while cloud technology generated EUR 300 million in the same year.

When it comes to hiring in Poland, Warsaw has the largest population and is considered the business center of Eastern Europe, but Cracow is best for companies connected with science and computers specifically. Cracow is home to 100,000 students from its many highly ranked engineering schools. This means there are many more graduates and young people job seeking in the former capital.

## Kyiv, Ukraine

During 2020, the number of software developers in Ukraine reached 20,000. Ukrainian programmers top Hackerrank's list as having the best cybersecurity knowledge and rank in the top five in mathematics and distributed systems skills. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Ukrainian developers who are open to emerging tech and innovations find the earliest adopters in the country.

The Ukraine IT industry grows 26 percent per year.

The local IT industry is growing approximately 26 percent per year. Part of this growth is attributed to Ukraine's more than 800 higher education institutions. The resulting graduates add to both a wider and cost-competitive tech talent pool compared to other European tech hubs, such as Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK — the Ukraine is home to 8,000 JavaScript programmers, 9,000 PHP developers, and 8,000 Java software engineers. The average salary of a software developer in Ukraine is USD 30,000 per year. The local government is also promoting tech companies growing into the country, removing value added tax for IT-related companies and dropping income tax to only 5 percent.



## Tallinn, Estonia


Companies that are willing to look to other jurisdictions when hiring can benefit from major savings, and Eastern European talent specifically can come at half the cost of Western European hires. Moreover, those companies will find a welcoming business environment in Estonia, backed up by policies such as an e-Residency, pioneered by Estonia and later adopted by countries around the world. E-Residency allows entrepreneurs to launch an EU-based business online and have access to Estonian services such as company formation, banking, payment processing, and taxation,

Estonia pioneered e-Residency policies for entrepreneurs to launch businesses.

even without citizenship.

The ease of establishing an online business has led Tallinn specifically to foster one of the largest pools of tech employees per capita, not only in Estonia, but in all of Europe. The capital and coastal city is a hub for location services, electronics and hardware, STEM, and cybersecurity.

“ The capital and coastal city is a hub for location services, electronics and hardware, STEM, and cybersecurity.”

A wide-angle photograph of the Dubai skyline at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, pink, and purple, with the city lights reflecting on the water in the foreground. The skyline includes several prominent skyscrapers, including the Burj Khalifa.

“ Payments, transfer, and remittance services in the UAE represent 85 percent of fintech firms in the Middle East and North Africa.”

## Abu Dhabi, The United Arab Emirates

Remittances and fintech are crucial for countries with a large expat population like the United Arab Emirates. Expatriates form the majority of the population — only 20 percent of UAE residents are local Emirati. As a result, fintech companies are growing in both size and number. Payments, transfer, and remittance services represent 85 percent of fintech firms in the Middle East and North Africa.

Dubai and Abu Dhabi are known for their wider technology ecosystems. Abu Dhabi's government is taking steps to grow even more as a tech hub — signing partnerships with academic institutions to upskill local talent and attract skilled

professionals in science and technology.

Sometimes, salaries might be lower in Dubai, because the city's inherent entertainment and connectivity is appealing to young professionals, ensuring firms don't have to work hard to attract talent. Abu Dhabi-based companies, on the other hand, may pay more to attract outstanding workers, but this is not a country to look to for cheap labor. The UAE is one of the world's richest countries based on GDP per capita, according to the World Bank: Salaries across all industries average USD 43,000 per year. The UAE is a hiring destination for top-shelf talent.

80 percent of the UAE population are expatriates.



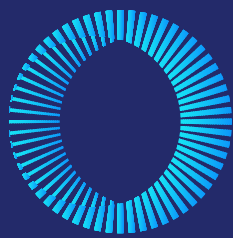
## How We Help

Finding your talent is step one. Hiring them is step two. That's where we come in.

You can hire anyone, anywhere, quickly and easily with Globalization Partners. Our AI-driven, fully compliant global employment platform allows you to grow your team in 187 countries.

Before you begin your global search for talent, connect with our international hiring experts and line up the infrastructure you need to send a compliant employment offer as soon as you find your ideal candidate.

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