global talent mobility survey 2026

apac: trends summary

Our biannual Global Talent Mobility Survey Report 2026 is a comprehensive exploration into the dynamic intersection of macroeconomic challenges, employee experience, and the ever-evolving landscape of mobility strategies.

With the **final report out now**, we've taken a deep dive into specific industries, program sizes, and regions—including the Asia-Pacific region (APAC)—to see what the data tells us.

FOLLOWING ARE KEY FINDINGS FROM 41 RESPONDENTS FROM COMPANIES WITH APAC VOLUME, INCLUDING BOTH INTER- AND INTRA-REGIONAL MOBILITY PROGRAMS.

why it matters

Whether you're managing challenging relocations, attracting key talent, or future-proofing operations, these insights give you a pulse on trends and opportunities for improvements to talent mobility in the APAC region.

NOTE: Throughout this report, the terms "intra-region" or "APAC-only" refer to programs within the APAC region. The term "companies with multi-regional programs" refers to companies with APAC volume (in addition to volume in EMEA and/or Americas).

speed bumps and green lights

what's driving mobility trends?

Unlike the parent report, where just a third of respondents saw an increase in mobility activity, 75% of APAC-only participants saw an increase in mobility volume during the last 2 years.

For 25%, activity stayed the same. Multi-regional programs were more closely aligned with the parent report, with 34% of companies seeing an increase, 39% seeing a decrease, and 27% seeing no change.

top reasons for mobility activity increasing over the past 2 years

apac-only programs		multi-region programs (including apac)	
67%	company growth	86%	expansion into different markets
67%	expansion into different markets	71%	company growth
67%	merger or acquisition	57%	merger or acquisition

mobility matters

Notably, participants with APAC-only and multi-regional relocation programs cite the same top drivers for increased mobility—growth and expansion—simply in a different order. This alignment indicates that whether organizations are moving talent within the region or beyond it, mobility remains a central priority when strategizing company growth. Since expansion often outpaces local hiring capacity, companies appear to be using mobility to seed expertise across markets and strengthen capability where gaps emerge.

where in the world

2026 vs. 2024

2 years ago, Vietnam was a leading destination for relocation, surpassing Australia, Malaysia, and Singapore. By 2026, none of these countries are among the top 5 preferred destinations, which now include Mexico, India, Canada, Saudi Arabia, and the United Kingdom. Notably, Vietnam has transitioned to a more challenging location for 2026, with competitive talent markets, language barriers, and immigration regulations presenting significant obstacles.

Based on Cartus' data, relocation activity within the APAC region remains robust. India consistently ranks as one of our top destinations, representing the 2nd highest inbound relocation volume after the United States, with other APAC locations also making the list, including Singapore in 4th place and Japan in 9th.

Regarding the cities most frequently chosen for employee relocations, Indian cities comprise 3 out of the current top 5.

Last year, we saw talent brought into India from 49 different locations, targeting 64 towns and cities across the country.*

top apac cities in 2025 by relocation volume

- Bangalore, India
- Hyderabad, India
- Singapore
- Pune, India
- Shanghai, China

* Based on proprietary Cartus data.

mobility priorities vs. challenges

Companies with APAC volume continue to balance operational priorities with growing structural challenges. These themes reflect the most common areas of focus and pressure points reported across the region.

	key global mobility priorities	key global mobility challenges
1	improve in-house mobility processes and optimization	immigration
2	improve the employee experience	rising mobility costs
3	compliance	current in-house mobility processes

what's rising, what's holding steady

Improving in-house mobility processes remains a top priority for companies with APAC volume in both intra- and inter-regional mobility programs, reflecting the region's long-standing reliance on internally managed programs. As mobility volumes grow and compliance demands intensify, these in-house models are being tested by rising complexity, making process optimization and employee experience more urgent than ever.

top 3 move models

When asked which move types were a priority for their organizations in this segment, respondents shared:

1. core/flex
2. managed move (fully coordinated by a relocation provider)
3. lump sum

here's the kicker

Flexible programs support both positive employee experiences (a top priority for this segment) and cost control (a top challenge) when designed and managed strategically. But when it comes to lump sums, organizations are often surprised when they don't benefit from the "up front" savings they expected. Mobile employees who don't know what they don't know often front-load spending, leaving insufficient funds for the end of the move. Lump sums are also riskier in volatile Asian markets where currency fluctuations can affect the relocation estimates. Thus, the administrative hours in-house teams spend troubleshooting add up, costing businesses time and money in the long run. If your organization plans to use a lump sum model, consider providing managed lump sum support and work more closely with data providers to avoid setbacks.

business on the go: which moves will rule 2026?

As governments across Asia Pacific intensify their requirements for local talent development, including stricter regulations around employment passes and localization plans in countries like Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Japan, businesses face mounting pressure to prove skills transfer between foreign and local employees.

most anticipated moves for 2026

- business traveler 83%
- international short-term assignment 81%
- international long-term assignments/intra-country moves/repatriation 78%

This regulatory environment is fueling a shift from traditional long-term assignments toward short-term, project-based roles and increased business travel, as employers seek more flexible ways to meet both compliance and operational needs.

This trend is reflected in the survey results, where business travel stands out as the top move type this year. 75% of companies with APAC-only programs and 83% of multiregional programs ranked it first, mirroring the parent report, where 73% of respondents reported the same. By prioritizing these assignment types, organizations can better adapt to evolving government expectations while optimizing operational efficiency and business impact.

However, less expensive doesn't mean "complication free." Businesses will still need to keep a close eye on the soft-cost drivers that can erode ROI, especially the administrative time required to manage traveler-related activities and obligations across:

- Tracking and duty of care
- Cross-border tax and immigration compliance
- Oversight of remote work and extended business travel (EBT), often managed under the umbrella of mobility

measuring the move: what makes a relocation shine?

This year, our survey focused on answering a new question that aligns with both program optimization and employee satisfaction—top priorities for this segment:

Which metrics most effectively define your relocation program's success?

- 93% operational efficiency
- 88% employee satisfaction
- 85% business impact
- 63% talent outcomes

what it all means

Companies with APAC volume are defining relocation success first and foremost through operational efficiency, with employee satisfaction and business impact close behind. As mobility activity accelerates in the region—and as more in-house programs transition to outsourced models—organizations will increasingly need structured ways to track and demonstrate these outcomes. Clear, consistent measurement will become essential for optimizing programs, managing cost pressures, and ensuring that mobility strategies scale effectively.

100% of companies with APAC-only relocation programs cited operational efficiency as a key definer of mobility success.

driven to adapt: what's fueling mobility policy overhauls?

The majority of respondents in this segment are planning a policy review this year: 66% of companies with multi-regional programs and 75% with APAC-only programs expect to revisit their strategies. This level of activity isn't surprising given the region's mobility growth and the dual pressures of enhancing employee experience while keeping costs in check.

key factors influencing review decisions were:

APAC-only programs (tied)	
Business oversight	67%
Employee experience	
Flexibility	

Multi-region programs (tied)	
Cost	59%
Employee experience	
Flexibility	

here's the twist

It's interesting to note that employee experience is the through-line for both intra- and multi-regional mobility programs in APAC, with flexibility reinforcing that shared priority. Where the two models diverge is in what's driving policy change: APAC–only programs are responding to increased business oversight and the need to support employees navigating unfamiliar domestic markets, while multi-regional programs are pushed by cost pressures tied to cross-border complexity.

big picture check

Compared to the global dataset, APAC's appetite for policy review is noticeably higher—and more urgent. While just under half of global respondents (49%) are considering a domestic policy review this year, companies with APAC volume are revisiting their strategies at significantly higher rates. This may reflect the region's mobility growth and increasing shift away from in-house models that no longer scale.

international assignment compensation

who's running the show?

Much like the parent report—where 75% of respondents handed off their expat compensation duties to a global tax provider or relocation company—the majority of APAC participants with multi-regional programs do the same: 39% outsource to a global tax provider, 32% to a relocation management company, and 29% manage this function in-house. In companies with intra-regional programs, most outsource to global tax providers (50%). The rest either outsource to a relocation management company or handle compensation services in-house (25% each).

We've found that global mobility activity is rising faster in APAC than in other regions, driven by expanding cross-border business needs and rapid economic growth. WERC notes that organizations are increasingly shifting toward hybrid and outsourced mobility models as compliance demands and program complexity intensify. The Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) reports that the region's business travel spending is projected to exceed $700 billion in 2026, positioning it as the fastest-growing and largest business travel market globally. This trend represents an increased need for specialized relocation and tax expertise, and points to a natural move in APAC toward greater reliance on external RMC partners as mobility requirements accelerate.

read our two-part blog on what makes asia attractive for businesses and its complexities

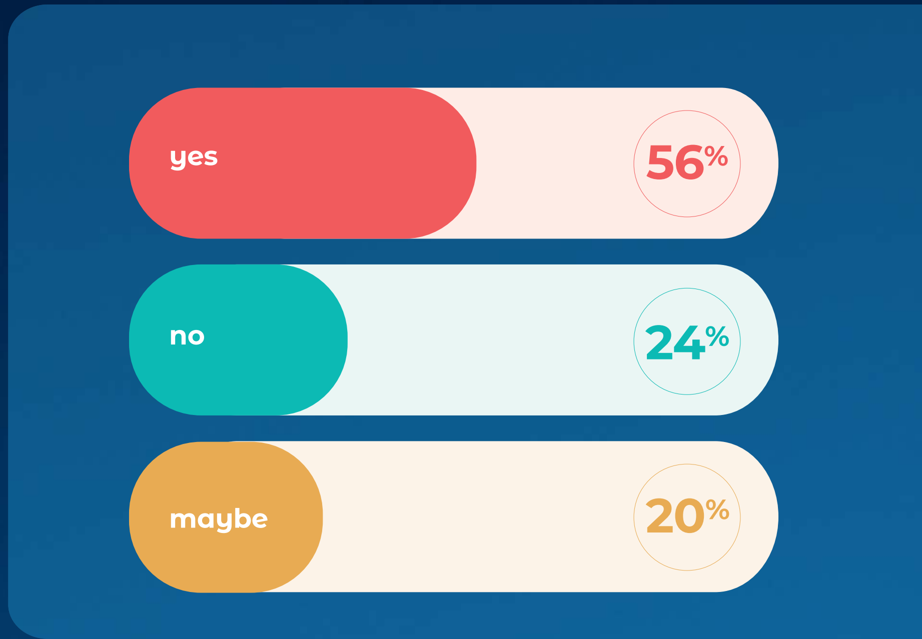
39% outsource to a global tax provider

32% outsource to a relocation management company

29% manage this function in-house

flex appeal: have it your way

When asked if they were planning to include flexible mobility policies in their relocation programs, participants shared the following:



fueling flexibility fever

56% of participants in this segment have or are planning to include flexible mobility policies in their relocation programs. Another 20% are considering it. The top 3 drivers for greater flexibility were:

- **Changing employee expectations (68%)**
- **Changing employee needs (66%)**
- **Need to reduce policy exceptions (49%)**

In companies specifically using a core/flex policy, the relocating employee was identified as the person most likely to select flex benefits (46%).

Interestingly, this segment showed a slightly higher focus on flexibility versus the parent report, where 48% shared that they have or are planning to include flexible mobility policies in their relocation programs. While budget constraints were listed as a top driver across all industries, APAC drivers were primarily employee-focused.

Notably, mobility program design in APAC is shaped by the distinct family structure realities, such as multigenerational households and the pressures of education—including access to reputable schools, language pathways, and exam systems. To address these nuances, core/flex policies offering customizable benefits tailored to the unique needs of relocating families align well with creating a positive move experience as well as achieving organizational goals.

Building on this employee-driven shift, as mobility activity increases across APAC, many companies are recognizing that employees' relocation needs are becoming more varied—even if those preferences may not be voiced as directly as they might be in other regions. Flexible policies offer a practical way to support this growth while keeping programs responsive, scalable, and aligned with real-world move patterns.

inclusive mobility

how relo programs are keeping up with employee needs

strategy sync

12% of companies with multi-regional programs have formally tied their mobility programs to their talent strategies, and another 56% have reported informal connections. This presents an opportunity for companies to formalize mobility's alignment with talent this year.

37% reported addressing emerging employee needs, and another 17% are currently considering changes to better reflect those needs.

equity matters

This year's results across all industries highlight a strong focus on supporting diverse employees and their families. The responses in this section reflect these priorities. Regional issues in APAC, like moves from low-cost to high-cost areas (and vice versa) and dual-career situations, also play a significant role.

employee/family scenarios covered in mobility programs

56%
dual-career couples
(partners with their own careers)

44%
support for employees moving from low to high cost-of-living locations

42%
pet relocation

37%
employees/family members with disabilities

34%
dependent parents of employees

global moves, local grooves

helping families thrive abroad

cross-cultural coaching

The majority of participants in this segment (78%) offer cross-cultural coaching to relocating employees and their families.

Policy power-up: 63% of organizations recommend cross-cultural coaching or bake it into policy. Another 16% make it mandatory, acknowledging how crucial it is for employee/assignment success

language-learning solutions

The majority of companies in this segment (88%) provide language training; this aligns with the parent report, where 78% of companies across all industries do the same.

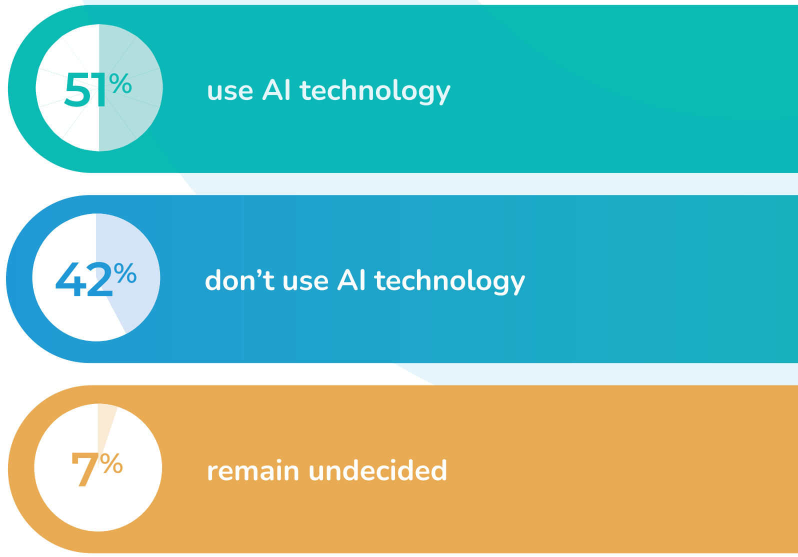
Talk the talk: More than half (53%) of respondents say their companies recommend language training or include it in their policy, although only 6% require it. For others, it depends on business needs or host country requirements, or it's offered as a flex choice (14%), or at the organization's discretion (19%).

humans + high-tech: the ultimate mobility dream team

As companies lean more heavily on digital tools to support employees through a relocation, they're prioritizing flexibility and choice while still aiming for a top-tier experience.

- Most organizations strike a balance, combining personal attention and smart tech (71%)
- Many rely only on a human-centered approach (29%)
- Zero respondents said they had a technology-only solution (a clear sign that most aren't ready to ditch traditional support for the latest tech trends)

These results closely mirror the parent report, where 42% use AI technology for business and process tasks. APAC's modest lead (51%) may reflect the region's strong digital-first culture and the influence of markets where tech innovation and automation are already deeply embedded in business operations.



sustainability in motion

making every move matter

Mobility-specific sustainability goals are still emerging, but they're gaining traction as companies respond to mindful talent and new regulations.

Here's where APAC programs stand:

- An extensive, organization-wide sustainability policy that includes mobility **(39%)**
- A broader corporate policy with little to no mobility involvement **(37%)**
- Unsure whether a policy exists, highlighting a disconnect between mobility and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) owners **(17%)**
- No policy **(12%)**

Slow but starting to grow: ESG in APAC is largely driven by regulatory compliance and top-down with a lack of internal stakeholder accountability. However, we are increasingly seeing companies linking mobility with overall sustainability goals, though specific targets remain uncommon. This shift is driven by ESG initiatives that help attract new talent, especially among younger generations, and by new regulations and standards from governments and industries. Consequently, our dedicated Cartus ESG team has noticed an increasing number of clients asking for shared ESG objectives, like carbon emission reporting, to support joint initiatives. Our team also collaborates with Cartus clients to provide information on program impact and commitment levels of downstream suppliers, as well as guidance on how we align with each organization's unique ESG goals.

repatriation done right: mobility roi

How do businesses measure international assignment success?

1. Completing the assignment **(51%)**
2. Employee experience **(46%)**
3. Meeting assignment objectives **(34%)**
4. Career path progression, post repatriation **(29%)**

46% don't formally measure assignment success.

It is also important to note that assignments do not always result in repatriation; instead, the relocating employee could go on another assignment or be localized.

ROI roadblocks: Measuring mobility ROI is crucial to earning mobility's seat at the table, but it will be a monumental challenge for almost half of businesses in this segment that don't measure assignment success.

Repatriation coaching: While 22% of companies offer repatriation coaching (training and formal debriefs) for globe-trotting employees and their families—78% don't. This represents a missed opportunity to support career transitions, talent pipelines, and employee retention.

Companies based in APAC are facing unique challenges due to rapid growth and a significant transition from in-house to outsourced mobility support.

2026 is an opportunity to address them while elevating your overall strategy. Ready to pressure-test your playbook? Contact your Cartus representative or email cartussolutions@cartus.com.