global talent mobility survey 2026

oil, gas, and energy: 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 and program sizes—including the energy industry—to see what the data tells us.

FOLLOWING ARE KEY FINDINGS FROM 8 RESPONDENTS.

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 this critical industry.

speed bumps and green lights

what's driving mobility trends?

In this segment, 38% of oil, gas, and energy companies saw an increase in volume during the last 2 years, 38% saw a decrease, and another 25% saw no change at all.

Companies of all sizes and industries in our **parent report** were more evenly spread across the board at about a third in each category.

oil, gas, and energy industries

top reasons for mobility increasing over the past 2 years

67% expansion into different markets / talent not available locally

top reason for mobility activity decreasing over the past 2 years

100% cost containment strategy

In our 2024 survey, top drivers were listed as company growth and talent development.

mobility matters

Mobility trends are diverging. Companies who are increasing activity are doing so to support market expansion and fill critical skill gaps. Those reducing activity point overwhelmingly to cost containment as the driver. The result is a sector where mobility remains essential, but the pace and volume of moves depend heavily on whether an organization is in growth mode or tightening spend. Whatever the motivation, mobility teams will need to navigate with precision in the year ahead.

mobility priorities vs. challenges

Here's where teams in this segment are directing their attention, and where they're feeling the most pressure.

key global mobility priorities	key global mobility challenges
1 improve in-house mobility processes and optimization (50%)	1 extended business travelers or remote workers/talent management/ immigration (tied) (50%)
2 compliance/investment in technology to support mobility team and reporting (tied) (38%)	2 meeting relocating employee expectations (38%)

It's interesting that two years ago, in addition to improving in-house processes, respondents in this industry also cited DEI, cost, and the employee experience as top priorities. It would appear that employee experience has moved out of the top three priorities, although it does make sense, as compliance appears to be a key focus across all industries, given the increase in immigration legislation around the world.

what's rising, what's holding steady

This year's shift shows mobility teams refocusing on the fundamentals: tightening internal processes, strengthening compliance, and investing in the right technology. At the same time, the challenges have moved toward managing remote and traveling talent, immigration demands, and rising employee expectations. The takeaway? Programs will need to be built for both operational efficiency and workforce complexity.

business on the go: which moves will rule 2026?

In 2024, 100% of participants in this segment listed long-term assignments as the most anticipated move type, followed by short-term assignments (83%).

It would appear the segment is shifting away from the reliance on long-term assignments toward a more balanced mix of activity. For HR and mobility teams, the challenge will be building flexible frameworks that can support multiple move types, business objectives, and employee needs.

most anticipated moves for 2026

- intra-country moves
- international short-term assignments
- intra-country assignments

measuring the move: what makes a relocation shine?

The data shows that this segment defines mobility success through a strong blend of employee satisfaction, operational efficiency, and business impact, all tied as top drivers (88%).

This alignment suggests a practical, outcome-driven focus for all stakeholders. It also reflects the realities of this sector, where assignments often support critical business needs and require close coordination across HR, mobility, and operational teams.

a potential gap

Talent outcomes rank noticeably lower than other success metrics at 63%, despite their importance in building long-term capability and leadership pipelines. For a segment that relies heavily on specialized skills and global readiness, this may signal an opportunity: long-term retention and talent pipelines are critical to sustaining business continuity and competitiveness. Programs in this segment would benefit from prioritizing these outcomes more intentionally to strengthen their mobility brand and long-term ROI.

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

A majority of companies (63%) in oil, gas, and energy industries are considering a policy review this year. Top factors influencing review decisions include reducing the number of exceptions and cost (both at 60%). This varied from the parent report, where employee experience was listed as the number one driver for policy reviews (58%), followed by cost (52%), and flexibility (50%).

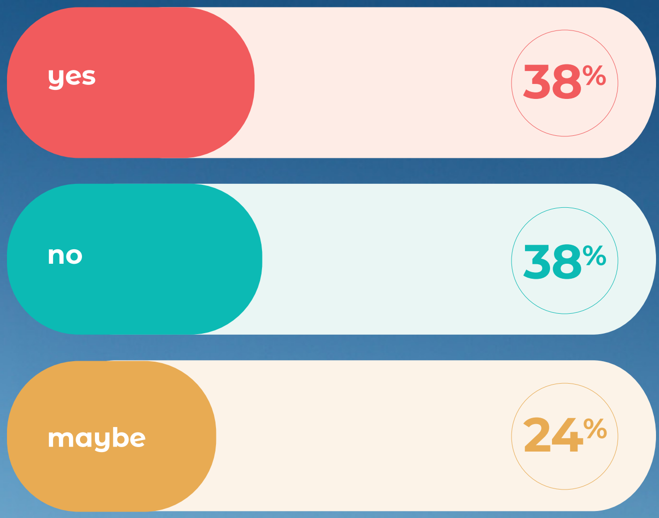
Zoom in: The data shows that companies in this segment are approaching policy reviews with a strong operational lens. Reducing exceptions and managing cost pressures are the top drivers, in contrast to the broader market's focus on employee experience. This reflects differing realities of the oil, gas, and energy sector, where volatile market conditions, shifting regulations, and high-stakes project timelines demand tighter control and predictable program structures. For mobility teams, this means a focused need for consistency, reduced risk, and ensuring mobility programs can withstand ongoing operational and geopolitical uncertainty.

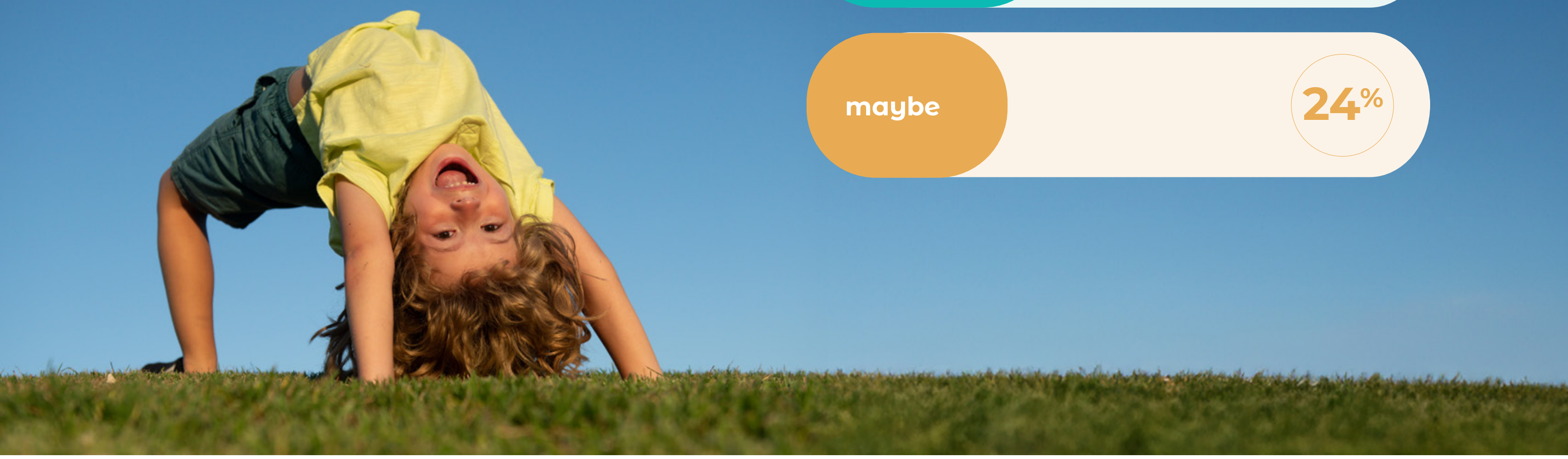
63%

of companies in oil, gas, and energy industries are considering a policy review this year

flex appeal: have it your way

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





fueling flexibility

In companies using a core/flex policy, the relocating employee was identified as the person most likely to select flex benefits (50%), followed by a hiring manager (25%) or an HR business partner (13%). The top 3 drivers behind increased flexibility were listed as:

- **Changing employee expectations / Need to reduce policy exceptions (tied) (63%)**
- **Changing employee needs (38%)**
- **Talent attraction (25%)**

However, it's important to note that another quarter said they aren't considering a core/flex program at all.

what it means

The split commitment to flexible mobility policies reflects the same operational challenges driving this segment's policy reviews. Striking a balance between rising employee expectations and the realities of a highly volatile, cost-sensitive environment is complex. Companies have to weigh any added choice or customization against the operational and compliance demands of the sector. PwC and Forbes note that oil, gas, and energy organizations operate under heightened volatility, regulatory pressure, and cost sensitivity; conditions that often push companies to prioritize stability, cost control, and risk mitigation.*

However, cost efficiency does not translate to cost cutting necessarily but rather a drive to source more sustainable options and better value for money. Indeed, in Cartus' experience, energy companies prioritize duty of care and build supportive and robust mobility programs, which are essential to organizational success in this sector.

*Source: PWC (Jan, 2025); Forbes (Jan, 2025)

inclusive mobility

how relo programs are keeping up with employee needs

13% of companies within the oil, gas, and energy segment have formally tied their mobility programs to their talent strategies, and another 38% have reported informal connections. This presents an opportunity for companies to formalize mobility's alignment with talent this year.

38% reported addressing emerging employee needs, and another 25% are currently considering changes to better reflect those needs.

38% addressing emerging employee needs

25% considering changes to better reflect emerging employee needs

global moves, local grooves

helping families thrive abroad

cross-cultural coaching

The majority of participants in this segment (88%) offer cross-cultural coaching to relocating employees and their families.

Policy power-up: 43% of organizations recommend cross-cultural coaching, including it in policy. Another 29% make it mandatory, not only acknowledging how crucial it is for employee/assignment success but also understanding that their business imperatives globally depend on employee and family success (this industry notably lands 11 points higher than responses in the parent report).

language-learning solutions

Most companies in this segment (88%) provide language training, even higher than the majority across all segments included in the parent report, which came in at 78%.

Talk the talk: 25% of respondents say their companies recommend language training or include it in their policy, another quarter make it optional, and 13% require it. For others, it's offered at the business' discretion or is based on host country requirements.

local leaps: intra-country moves

75% of respondents in this segment reported implementing intra-country moves outside of the United States, and 100% of these have specific policies in place to support these move types.

Relo realities: Among participants from oil, gas, and energy industries, half report no failed assignments for domestic moves, while the remaining 50% are unsure. It's important to note that uncertainty isn't necessarily a sign of failure; in many cases, programs are so large and complex within this sector that an individual survey respondent may not have visibility into outcomes beyond their own scope. This underscores the need for more robust tracking mechanisms to better understand program impact, employee experiences, and the links to retention and mobility ROI.

repatriation done right: mobility roi

25% of participants don’t formally measure assignment success at all

how do businesses measure international assignment success?

- **63%** completing the assignment
- **50%** employee experience
- **38%** career path progression post-repatriation

It is also important to note that assignments do not always result in repatriation, instead the relocating employee could have consecutive assignments or become localized.

Repatriation coaching: While 37% of companies offer repatriation coaching (training and formal debriefs at the end of an assignment) for globe-trotting employees and their families, 63% don’t. This also represents a missed opportunity to support career transitions, talent pipelines, and employee retention.

Mobility ROI roadblocks: Measuring mobility ROI is essential to securing mobility’s strategic influence and remains a major gap for the half of companies not formally assessing assignment outcomes. This lack of measurement also limits visibility into employee retention, talent pipelines, and succession planning.

Cause for concern: Data for this segment reveals a critical opportunity in that 50% of respondents don’t know whether they’ve had failed assignments, and 63% don’t offer repatriation coaching, creating a visibility gap that limits organizations’ ability to assess retention risks, talent pipeline health, and the overall effectiveness of their mobility programs. The gap is amplified by limited repatriation support, despite this being both a vulnerable point in the mobility lifecycle and a prime moment to evaluate assignment success, employee satisfaction, and overall experience. For companies in this segment, strengthening these connections is essential; aligning these efforts enables more informed workforce planning in a sector already challenged by volatility and cost pressure; one that stands to benefit most from closing these gaps. This sector values intercultural competence and language skills as key factors for improving Mobility ROI.

humans + high-tech: the ultimate mobility dream team

As companies lean more heavily on digital tools to support employees through a relocation, here's where they stand on their approach:

- Most organizations strike a balance, combining personal attention and smart tech (63%)
- Many rely only on a human-centered approach (37%)
- 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)

63%
do not use ai technology

25%
use ai technology

12%
remain undecided

sustainability in motion

making every move matter

Many companies within the energy sector are leading the charge in new and innovative ways to support sustainability goals.

When it comes to mobility strategy, sustainability is a developing focus for this segment, with 50% of participants reporting a broader corporate policy where mobility has limited or no involvement (slightly behind the parent report's 53%). Meanwhile, a quarter of respondents in this segment say their organization has extensive sustainability goals that include mobility, closely aligned with the 26% reported in the parent report. Together, these findings suggest that while corporate sustainability commitments exist, mobility's integration into those efforts is still emerging.

Companies in oil, gas, and energy industries face unique challenges. 2026 is an opportunity to address them while elevating your overall mobility strategy.

ready to pressure-test your playbook?
contact your cartus representative or email cartussolutions@cartus.com.