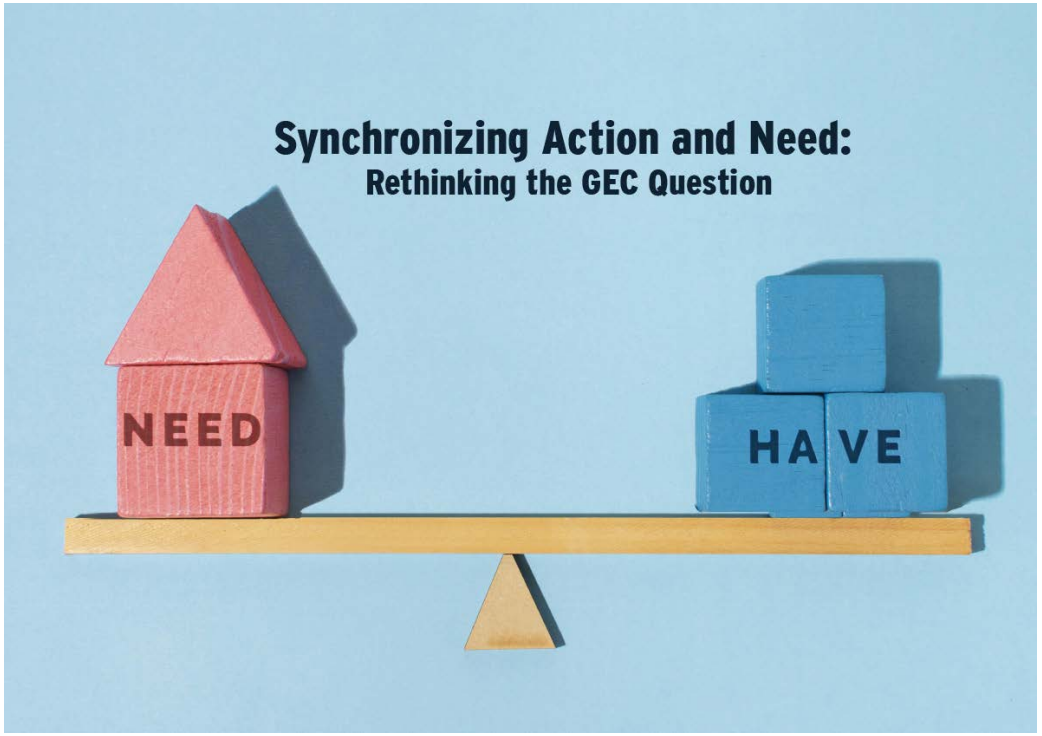
Synchronizing Action and Need: Rethinking the GEC Question



What can an organization reasonably expect from a subject matter expert? Let's think of a patient who regularly sees a trusted doctor for recurring, manageable issues: nothing critical, just the kind of things that get in the way of feeling fully well. The doctor, who is the expert in healthcare, treats the symptoms each time, and things improve, at least temporarily. However, far too often the doctor looks at every visit as an isolated case, without taking a step back to consider whether something more fundamental might be contributing to these patterns. The doctor is not negligent, but simply reactive and focused on solving the most immediate problem to bring quick relief, so you can go back to your normal daily life.

An analogous dynamic can sometimes play out in the complex world of Global Mobility. Mobility professionals work hard to keep things moving: deploying talent, solving compliance challenges, managing vendor coordination, and dealing with exceptions, often with limited time and resources. In the midst of this daily work, the idea of a Global Employment Company (GEC) can feel like a theoretical luxury or an unnecessary complication. As a result, it is often set aside quickly, without a detailed look at whether it might, or might not, serve the organization's needs.

However, the GEC question is not about trends or preferences, but rather a structural one. At its core, a GEC is a mechanism to simplify and centralize the employment of mobile talent. Hence, the key question is not whether a company wants one, but whether it needs one. And that need can only be confirmed (or ruled out) through a well-structured and objective analysis. There are really just four scenarios that such an analysis could reveal: a company either needs a GEC or it doesn't, and it either has one or it doesn't. Two of these scenarios are comfortable places to be: if a company needs a GEC and has one, it is likely to be enjoying benefits such as streamlined compliance, consistency of employment terms, and more efficient talent deployment. If a company doesn't need a GEC and hasn't set one up, that's also a good outcome, since unnecessary complexity has been avoided with no value lost.

The more problematic quadrants are the ones where action and need are out of sync. If a company has a GEC but it doesn't need one, the structure may be underutilized, adding unnecessary administrative overhead. That's not ideal, but it's usually visible and fixable, as soon as this misalignment is spotted.

More concerning is when a company needs a GEC but doesn't have one. Here, the consequences aren't always easy to spot. They show up in less obvious ways, such as extended deployment timelines, unrealized cost savings, inconsistent policies, unquantified tax exposures, or hidden inefficiencies. Over time, these can quietly erode value and effectiveness, often without ever being traced back to the absence of a centralized employment model. These impacts are rarely challenged because the underlying inefficiencies become "normalized". The opportunity cost of not having a GEC is rarely measured, let alone escalated.

The only way to know for sure is to perform a comprehensive and objective evaluation. The objective is not to prove that the organization needs a GEC, but to confirm with clarity and confidence whether it does or does not need one. Without an objective analysis, most organizations will never know for sure which quadrant they are in. And because mobility teams are (rightly) focused on delivering results with the tools they have, the absence of a GEC often goes unquestioned. While that is understandable, it also means that a potentially valuable option may never have been properly explored.

A GEC isn't a panacea for solving all problems, and it is certainly not for everyone. But understanding whether it could help is part of being a thorough and strategic trusted "Subject Matter Expert" to the organization. A short, well-structured evaluation may confirm that a GEC is not right for your organization, and that should be seen as a valuable insight. Or it may uncover a path to simplification and alignment that hadn't been fully considered. Either way, the goal is the same: to ensure that decisions about global employment structures are made intentionally, not by default, but by design.

Global Mobility is a complex, high-stakes domain. Professionals working in this space carry a wide range of responsibilities, and they deserve credit for the heavy lifting they perform every day. But in a world of increasing compliance scrutiny, cost pressure, and talent competition, it is no longer sufficient to rely only on incremental improvements. Sometimes, structural solutions need to be explored.