

## From Blueprint to Benefits: Best Practices in GEC Design and Implementation

For HR and Mobility professionals who have identified the Global Employment Company as a strategic solution for their organization, the next question (and arguably the most consequential one) is not whether to implement one, but how to do so effectively. A poorly designed or inadequately governed GEC can fail to deliver its intended benefits, erode stakeholder confidence, and generate costs that outweigh the efficiencies it was meant to create. The following best practices are intended to guide organizations through a structured, risk-mitigated path to implementation.

### Begin with Clearly Articulated Objectives

The foundation of any successful GEC is a precise understanding of the problem it is designed to solve. Whether the primary drivers are compliance, cost reduction, operational efficiency, or talent harmonization, these objectives sometimes referred to as “design drivers”, must be agreed upon by all relevant stakeholders before any structural decisions are made. Without this alignment, what constitutes success for one function may represent failure for another, depending entirely on each stakeholder’s expectations and priorities. Engaging leadership across HR, Finance, Legal, Tax, and Operations at the outset is not merely advisable; it is essential.

### Invest in a Rigorous Feasibility Study and Business Case

Once stakeholder interest has been established in principle, a detailed feasibility study and business case should be developed to reflect the organization’s specific circumstances, its mobility program profile, key challenges, and desired outcomes. This exercise serves a dual purpose: it provides the analytical foundation for a sound Go/No-Go decision, and it establishes



the baseline metrics against which the GEC’s success will ultimately be measured. Crucially, baselining the relevant performance indicators prior to implementation makes it possible to quantify the GEC’s impact objectively over time, rather than relying on anecdotal assessments.

Skipping this step is often a case of false economy. Organizations that proceed without a robust business case frequently encounter misaligned design choices, insufficient resource commitment, and an inability to demonstrate return on investment to the very stakeholders whose continued support the GEC depends upon. Conversely, choosing not to proceed without the benefit of a Feasibility Study is itself a decision made in the dark, one that forecloses a potentially significant strategic advantage without ever fully understanding it.

### Ensure you have commitment, not just agreement

It is relatively common for stakeholders to agree on a project’s objectives whilst remaining reluctant, or unable, to commit the time and resources necessary to achieve them. A clear implementation plan, supported by a structured change management approach, helps to surface and address

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this risk early. Resistance to change, limited bandwidth, or conflicting priorities are a predictable feature of any significant organizational transformation. Planning ahead and committing resources are indicators of implementation maturity. External support can help to accelerate the implementation and keep it on track despite having limited internal resources.

### **Let the Objectives Drive the Design**

A GEC's structural and operational design should be a direct reflection of its agreed objectives. An organization prioritizing governance and compliance will require robust controls, audit trails, and reporting mechanisms; one focused on deployment speed will need streamlined processes, clearly defined roles, and minimal procedural friction. The policies, employment contracts, payroll arrangements, and third-party vendor relationships that underpin the GEC should all be configured with the design drivers firmly in view.

Equally important is avoiding an overly narrow design scope. A GEC built exclusively around a single assignee profile or assignment type is inherently fragile. Business needs evolve, assignment volumes fluctuate, workforce strategies shift, and the types of talent requiring international deployment change over time. The GEC must be sufficiently versatile to accommodate this evolution, rather than requiring wholesale redesign each time organizational priorities change. Future-proofing the design from the outset is a prudent investment.

### **Recognize the cost of delays**

Once the business case is approved, implementation speed becomes a strategic priority in its own right. Every month of delay represents an opportunity cost in unrealized efficiencies, avoidable compliance exposures, and deferred cost savings. This cost is frequently invisible in the short term, but cumulatively it can run into millions of dollars, often on a recurring basis.

Organizations that treat implementation as a project to be managed at a comfortable pace, rather than an investment to be realized as swiftly as possible, routinely underestimate this exposure.

### **Consider Co-Sourcing to Accelerate Delivery and Manage Risk**

Organizations that attempt a fully in-house GEC implementation often encounter a longer and more costly journey than anticipated. Recruiting and training internal resources, selecting and procuring technology infrastructure, configuring international payroll systems, and designing operational processes from the ground up all take time and require specialist expertise that may not readily exist internally.

Co-sourcing or outsourcing key elements of the implementation to an experienced specialist provider offers a compelling and increasingly common alternative. Such providers bring existing resources, established technology platforms, and deep operational experience to bear from day one, eliminating lengthy internal procurement and training cycles. The evidence is persuasive: a co-sourced model can reduce implementation timelines by a factor of three or more, meaning that the anticipated benefits of the GEC are realized significantly sooner.

The advantages of co-sourcing extend well beyond implementation speed. On an ongoing basis, a co-sourced operating model delivers a range of structural benefits that an in-house model struggles to match. Scalability is one of the most significant: under a typical "fee per assignee" arrangement, costs contract naturally when assignment volumes decline, as was observed acutely during the pandemic, and expand without the need for additional internal recruitment or infrastructure investment when volumes surge. This dynamic contrasts sharply with the fixed cost base of a fully in-house operation, where headcount, real estate, and technology licensing costs remain largely constant regardless of the program's volume.

Business continuity is another critical consideration that is often underweighted in the early stages of GEC planning. An in-house model is inherently dependent on the continued availability of a relatively small

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team, whose departure, illness, or redeployment can create significant operational vulnerability. A specialist provider, by contrast, is structurally equipped to ensure continuity of service irrespective of individual resource changes, with documented processes, redundant expertise, and governance frameworks designed precisely for this purpose.

Finally, the co-sourced model offers something that internal delivery cannot: contractually guaranteed performance standards. Service Level Agreements with the provider establish clear, measurable KPIs, covering areas such as response timelines, payroll accuracy, and compliance standards, and provide the organization with enforceable recourse if those standards are not met. Internal resources can be managed and developed, but they cannot be held to a contract. For organizations seeking to demonstrate the GEC's value to senior stakeholders in a rigorous and transparent manner, this distinction is material.

**Establish Metrics and Monitor Continuously**

Regardless of the operating model chosen, a GEC without defined success metrics is difficult to defend and harder to improve. Organizations should establish a concise set of meaningful KPIs, aligned to the original design drivers, and monitor these on a regular basis. Where performance gaps emerge, targeted adjustments should follow promptly. Where organizational priorities shift materially, a more substantive redesign may be warranted.

Communicating performance data to stakeholders in a clear, accessible format is equally important, ensuring that the GEC retains its visibility and recognition as a core component of the organization's international workforce strategy.

In summary, GEC is only as effective as the rigour applied to its design and implementation. Organizations that invest appropriately in stakeholder alignment, feasibility analysis, thoughtful design, and expert operational support are consistently better positioned to realize the full strategic value of the GEC, sooner, more sustainably, and with greater confidence in the outcomes they can demonstrate.