Is Your GEC Doing Less Than It Could? Beyond the Original Mandate



Many Global Employment Companies in use today were not designed with today's workforce in mind. They were built, often years or even decades ago, around a specific and usually narrower need, perhaps a particular nationality group moving between two markets, or a defined population of senior executives whose compensation needed to sit outside any single country's local structure. That original mandate made sense at the time, and the GEC has likely done its job well within it ever since. The question worth asking periodically is whether the mandate has kept pace with everything that has changed around it.

The population an organisation now needs to support internationally looks considerably more varied than it did when most GECs were first established. Long-term expatriates sit alongside short-term and project-based assignees, third-country nationals, global nomads who move between multiple locations without a fixed home base, rotators cycling through a sequence of roles, young graduates on international development programmes, external hires recruited directly from abroad, and increasingly, remote employees working across borders without a conventional assignment at all. A structure built for one or two of these categories can usually be extended to cover several more, but that extension rarely happens automatically. It tends to require someone to deliberately ask whether it should.

Recent survey data on how organisations actually use their GECs confirms this versatility: in fact most companies have more than one type of assignee profile in their GEC. Across all industries, the most common profiles hosted by GECs are Long-Term assignees, especially Third-Country Nationals, as well as Senior Executives. Other profiles commonly supported by GECs include Global Nomads, young graduates and international foreign hires. Not surprisingly, in project-based industries such as Oil & Gas, Mining and Engineering, the GEC is also highly likely to host Rotators. Survey and anecdotal data strongly suggests that in most organisations the GEC could be better utilised to extend support to a broader population of cross-border employees.

One capability in particular tends to go unnoticed. Once a GEC is established, it does not always have to become an assignee's direct employer to add value. Through a "service mandate", the GEC can also act as a centralised administrative hub for employees who remain on a home-country contract, managing shadow payroll, benefits coordination, compliance tracking, and vendor management on their behalf, without the organisation needing to restructure anyone's actual employment relationship. The same applies to employees deployed on local-plus terms, where a GEC can extend selected international benefits, retirement, medical, or insurance cover, to address gaps in local provision without making that employee a GEC hire.

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For an organisation that assumes a GEC only serves people it directly employs, this administrative layer is often the most immediately available source of unused value, since it requires no change to anyone's employment contract to activate.

Needless to say, a GEC's scope should not be expanded indiscriminately, but it should be reviewed periodically. A structure built around yesterday's workforce is unlikely to be the best possible structure for the one an organisation is managing now. The review itself is a low-risk exercise, essentially asking which current assignment types and populations the GEC was never built around, and for most organisations that have had one in place for several years, the honest answer is very likely to be more than they expect.

If you would like to measure and improve the agility of your current Global Mobility model, please ***reach out to ITX***.

