

# GLOBAL PAYROLL 2025WEEK

**Getting the World Paid Survey Report**





**By Robert Gerbin, CPP**  
**Senior Director**  
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The 2025 PAYO survey shows global payroll is growing more complex. Over a third of respondents manage payroll in 6 or more countries, often using a mix of systems and providers. While most have a global HR system, time and attendance tools vary widely.

Only a small number have a clear global payroll strategy, and hybrid service models are the most common. Key challenges include hiring skilled payroll talent, managing compliance, and dealing with poor-quality data. In addition, a large percentage of organizations still are not tracking payroll performance or achieving high levels of standardization, making it harder to scale or improve.

Please use these insights to reflect on your own payroll operations. This report can help you identify gaps, set priorities, and guide your strategy, whether it's improving systems, enhancing compliance, leveraging smart technologies, or aligning payroll with your wider business goals.

Thank you to all who participated in the survey and who are assisting with advancing the global payroll profession forward, one country, one community, and one payroll professional at a time.

**GLOBAL  
PAYROLL  
2025WEEK**



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# About the Survey

## The Profile of the Survey Respondents

More than 36% of the 585 respondents indicated they manage payrolls in 6 or more countries, with 7% even indicating they manage payrolls in 51 or more countries.

The respondents have many years of global payroll experience, with 51% indicating they have 6 or more years of global payroll experience, while 49% indicating 5 years or less.

Most of the respondents have these roles within their organisations: Global Payroll Manager, Specialist, or Analyst or a Regional/Country Payroll Manager or Analyst.

The location of the organisation they are working for spans across all the regions, with most of the respondents located in the United States.

Overall, the respondents are a fair representation of the global payroll professionals who were kind enough to share their insights through completing the survey.

## 2025 Global Payroll Week

PayrollOrg (PAYO) celebrates the 8th annual Global Payroll Week (GPW) from 28 April and 2 May. GPW aims to increase the global payroll professional's skill level through education, training, and networking opportunities.

This week supports elevating the profession through webinars, knowledge sharing, the Global Payroll Titan Award, and this report of the 2025 "Getting the World Paid" survey.

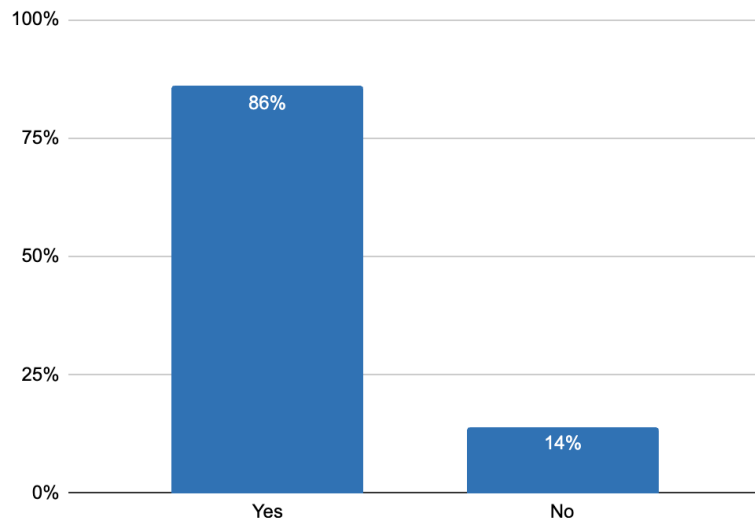
## 2025 Getting the World Paid Survey Report

This report reveals the results of the survey's responses from 3 February through 3 April.

**PAYO is pleased to share the full results and actionable insights of this survey. We hope you find this report informative and engaging.**

## 01. System Landscape

Do you use your HCM/HRIS as your global system of record for employee data?



### System of Record for People

Successful payroll results are reliant on the data it receives from key end-to-end stakeholders, such as Human Resources, Benefits, Equity, Finance, and others. Establishing partnerships with them and understanding how data travels is pivotal to payroll's success.

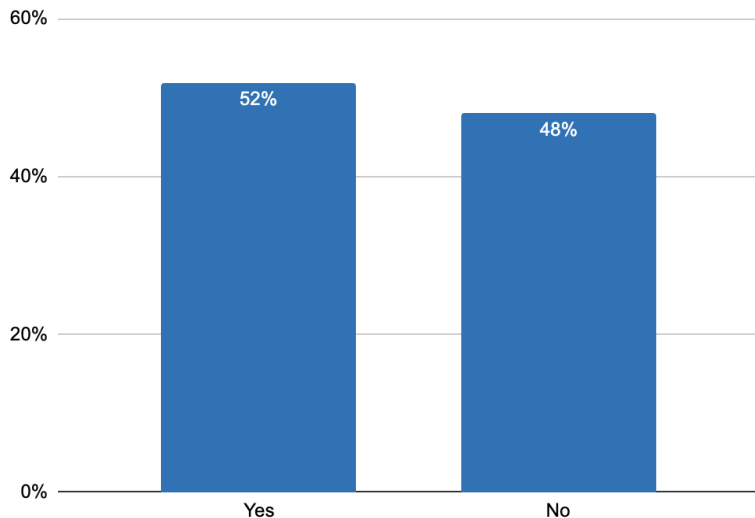
This already complex area becomes increasingly complex if you manage a payroll in many countries, such as in global payroll. The Human Resource Information System (HRIS) is usually the main source of information feeding data onto payroll. Our survey reveals that the HRIS deployment has become increasingly global, with 86% indicating their HRIS is used as global system of record for employees.

### What About Time and Attendance?

Often, time and attendance is either managed within the (global) HRIS or separately via best of breed systems; whether in-house or outsourced. 66% of respondents indicate they manage this process in-house. Out of those outsourcing it, 64% indicate they have up to 5 vendors.

# 01. System Landscape

Do you have one single global payroll system for processing payroll?



## One Global Payroll System, or Not

Managing payrolls in multiple countries opens the debate on whether a global payroll system is feasible and should be explored. While our results show that 52% indicate that they process payroll in one global system, a closer look at those results shows the majority process payroll in 1-5 countries, with the US and Canada being the primary countries.

The respondents (48%) who indicate not having a single global payroll system pay employees in 6 or more countries. This means that, while there are many global systems, there is a hybrid approach to the global payroll system landscape as we will further explore later in the report where we cover global payroll strategy.

With a global HRIS and a less unified time and attendance systems landscape, global payroll professionals are encouraged to explore how data travels in this landscape across systems to ensure high quality payroll inputs and smartly integrated landscapes.

## 02. Global Payroll Strategy

### The Importance of Having a Global Payroll Strategy

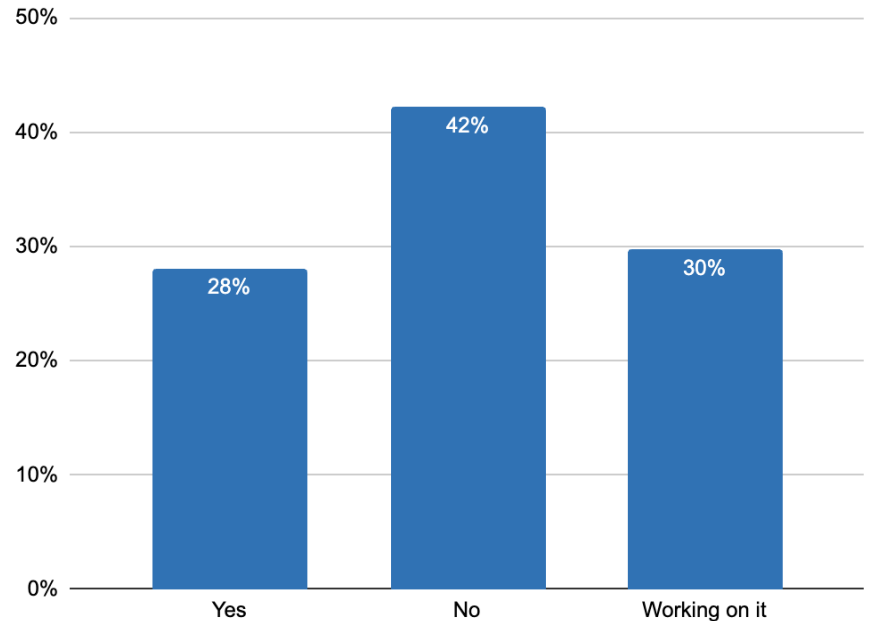
A global payroll strategy is essential for organisations to ensure efficiency and effective payroll operations. By aligning with the wider business strategy, it elevates global payroll's strategic value and business mission success. The survey reveals there is work to be done, as only 28% have a formalised global payroll strategy while 30% indicate it is in progress, and the majority (42%) have not started working on their strategy.

Global payroll leaders are encouraged to start formalising their strategy with these key activities:

- Understanding their end-to-end data and processing landscape
- Developing a purpose statement and key objectives
- Aligning with global business operations

In addition, they are encouraged to develop fit for purpose service delivery models, while partnering with key stakeholders and the business to ensure continuous strategic alignment.

### Do you have a formalised global payroll strategy?



## 02. Global Payroll Strategy

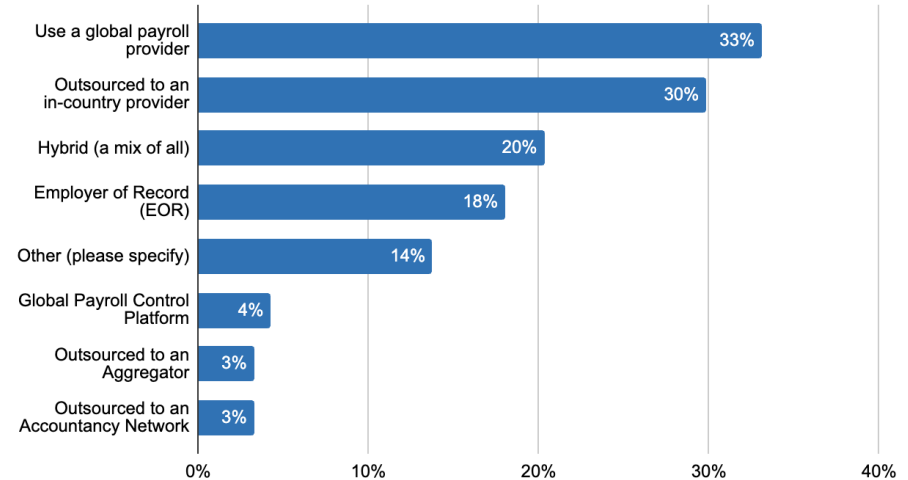
### Service Delivery Models

An important part of the global payroll strategy is designing service delivery models which, amongst others, includes a provider strategy (e.g., global payroll provider, in-country provider) and service levels (e.g., in-house, outsourced). The results show there is no one-size-fits-all solution for managing global payrolls.

Out of the 33% indicating they use a global payroll provider, more than 26% still use additional providers (2 to 5) to serve parts of their footprint. The majority (39%) use a mix of service levels and therefore manage payrolls both in-house and outsourced. For managing the long-tail countries (low employee populations), they use a mix of global providers, in-country providers, or a popular hybrid approach.

A common approach to service delivery models is a hybrid approach with mixing different providers and including fit-for-purpose service levels (in-house and outsourced).

Please indicate how you process payroll for low employee populations (i.e., long-tail countries). Select all that apply.



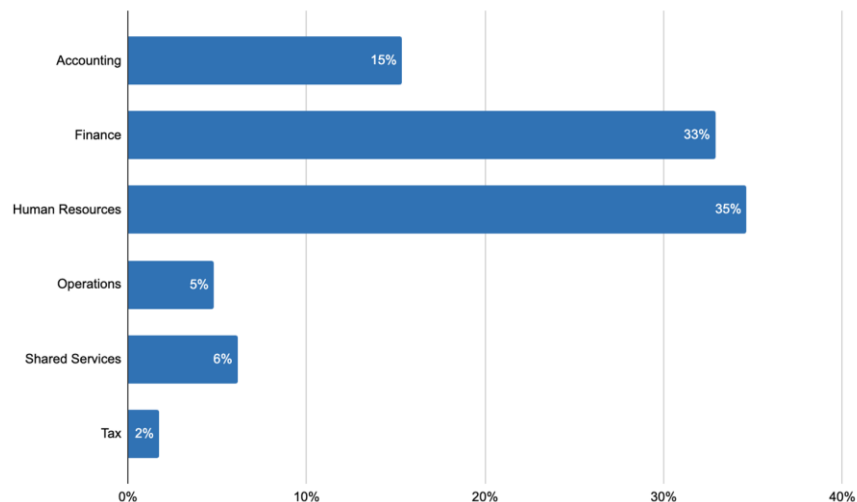
“Think globally, act locally!”

- Robert Gerbin, CPP, Senior Director, Global Strategic Initiatives, PayrollOrg



## 03. Global Payroll Operations

What department does your global payroll report into?



“Driving consistent high quality payroll results, while operating in a collaborative end-to-end process framework, is more important than worrying where payroll should sit.”

- Robert Gerbin, CPP, Senior Director, Global Strategic Initiatives, PayrollOrg

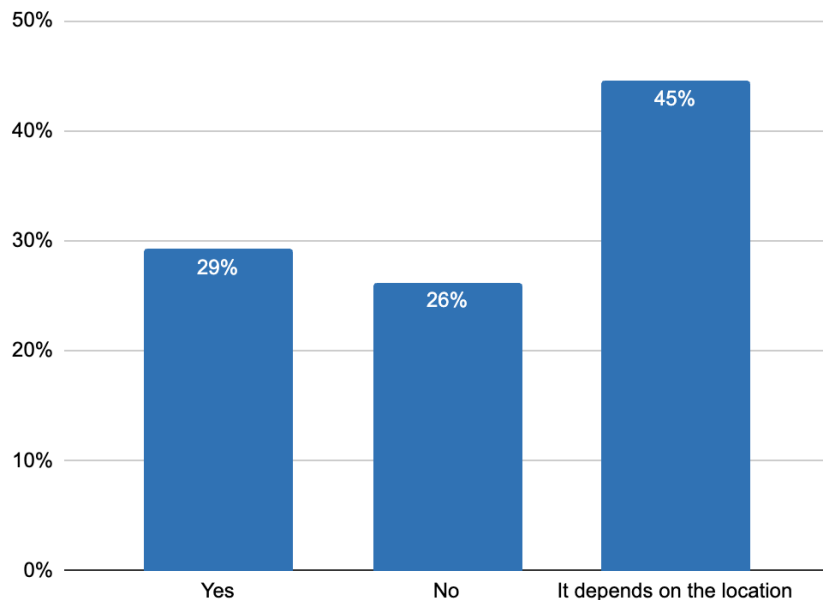
### The Key Link Between HR and Finance

There is an industry-wide debate on where global payroll should report into or if it should even be a department of its own with a “Chief Payroll Officer.” Our results show that most (48%) report into Finance (including Accounting) or HR (35%). Wherever global payroll reports into, it will always be a key and critical steward of all employment-related data and processes between HR and Finance. Regardless of reporting line, global payroll tends to organise themselves in a couple of organisational structures. Those indicating they have a Global/Central HQ (31%) in addition have a Shared Service Center (or Global Business Services) in regional hubs, while others who indicate they organise themselves locally are often located in the US (with 78% also the prime location of the largest employee population).

How global payroll is structured as a function depends on the overall location strategy of the organisation. Global leaders are encouraged to open up that strategic conversation with their peers.

## 03. Global Payroll Operations

### Do you find it difficult to find talent in global payroll?



### Global Payroll Talent Is Crucial, Yet Fairly Scarce

With many organisations expanding internationally, and payroll providers increasing their footprint, the need for highly skilled talent in global payroll is evident. When asked if it is difficult to find talent in global payroll, 74% indicated it is difficult (29%) or that it is difficult depending on the location (45%). Linked to the organisational structure, global payroll leaders should evaluate their location and hiring strategies based on the available talent pool in those locations. This can also point to a disconnect between supply (the talent) and demand (the hiring global leaders). What is clear is that global payroll leaders need to find ways to not only attract talent but also retain and develop employees. Leaders should look to grow cross-training opportunities, even outside the payroll department. For global payroll professionals, it proves they should continue to develop and diversify their skills. They should seek out new challenging objectives, even if they must do so on their own. Those who are not in global roles today might be in them tomorrow. Therefore, payroll professionals need to keep learning and be ready for new opportunities.

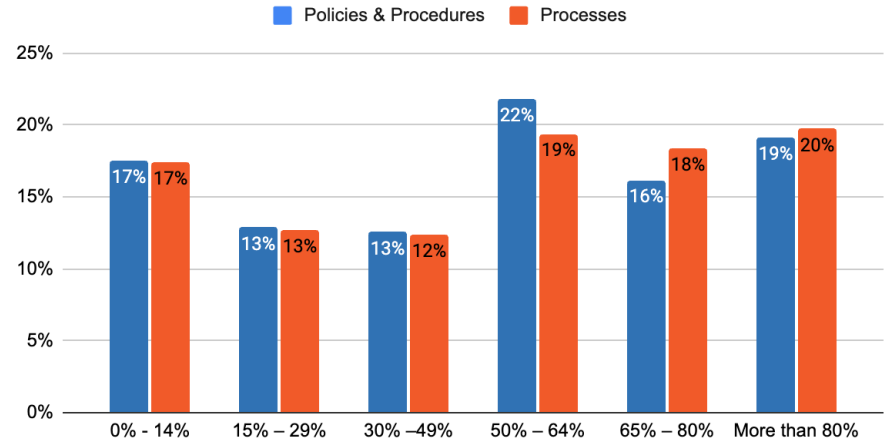
## 04. Global Payroll Governance

### Standardisation of Processes, Policies, and Procedures

In governance, a balance must always be achieved between standardisation and (local) flexibility in global payroll. This balance is often challenging due to (central) standardisation needs to operate an efficient and scalable function, while local (compliance and business) nuances demand flexibility. This is formalised in policies and procedures and executed in processes.

The industry norm, with justified exceptions, is to achieve an aspirational 80% or more rate of standardisation. Our survey results show that only 19% to 20% achieve this aspirational level. A closer look at the results show there is a correlation between those having high levels of standardisation in policies and procedures with having highly standardised processes, and the other way around. Policies and procedures along with processes go hand in hand. If you find yourself in lower levels of standardisation, you will likely be struggling to be scalable and have strong governance. The call to action is to get started.

How would you rate your standardisation of global payroll policies and procedures, and processes?



“Hope is not a strategy.”

**- Robert Gerbin, CPP, Senior Director, Global Strategic Initiatives, PayrollOrg**

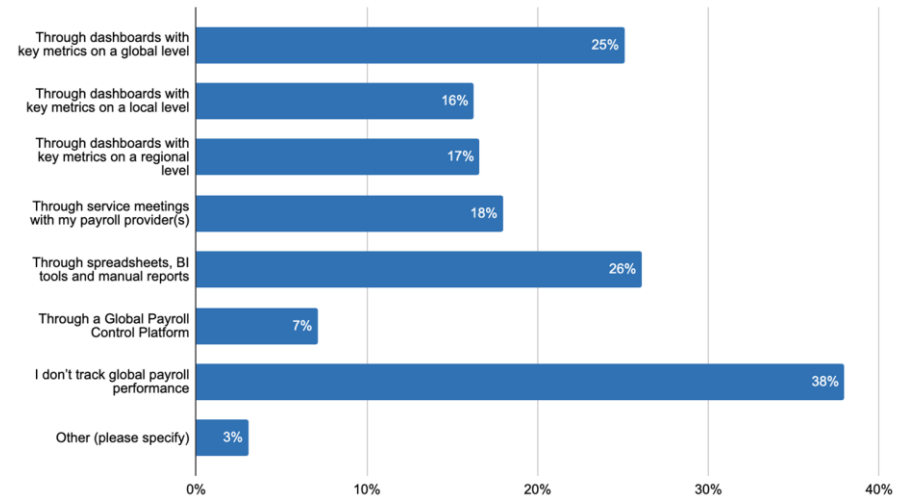
## 04. Global Payroll Governance

### Measure Performance to Improve, Cycle to Cycle

If you can't measure it, you can't manage it. This is an often-heard phrase and applies to global payroll, as its processes and results lend themselves to being measured. Usually, key performance indicators (KPIs) are defined around payroll accuracy, efficiency, compliance, and employee satisfaction or overall experience.

When we asked our respondents if, and how, they track payroll performance, 38% indicated they do not track performance. While this doesn't necessarily mean they can't manage payroll effectively, experience shows it becomes increasingly difficult to find root causes and make improvements. Additionally, it is challenging to demonstrate global payroll's performance without proper tracking. Those who indicated they track performance do this (global, regional, local) through dashboards, sheets, BI tools, their payroll providers, and manual reports. Whatever the tool or method, tracking performance, while having a process to implement any change quickly and accurately, is a key instrument for success.

How do you track your global payroll performance against objectives? (Select all that apply)



“By implementing industry standard KPIs and tracking performance, your function can achieve the highest standards.”

**- Max van der Klis-Busink, MCIPP, RPP, Vice President of Global Strategy on PayrollOrg's Board of Directors**

## 05. Global Payroll Challenges

### Top 3 Global Payroll Challenges

1. Ensuring local compliance
2. Automating inbound data (from the HCM and other data sources)
3. Automating outbound data (into Finance, data lakes)

### Top 3 Root Causes of Decreased Accuracy

1. Poor quality of data inputs
2. Late or inaccurate time-tracking data
3. Inputs after payroll cut-off

### Despite Technological Advances, Challenges Remain the Same

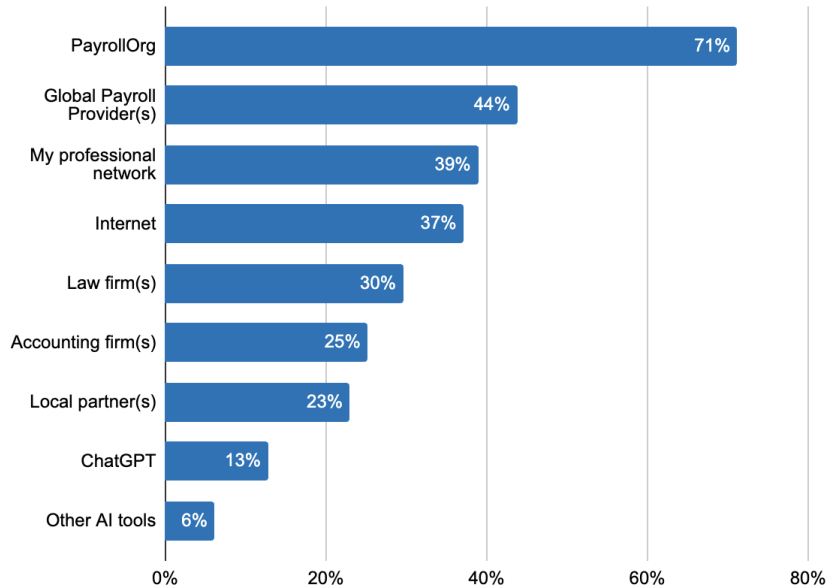
For many respondents, a global HCM is used as the system of record for global payroll. When we asked about the top 3 challenges in global payroll and causes for decreased accuracy, we see that 4 out of the 6 challenges relate to inbound data (mainly from an HCM).

This means that implementing a global HCM doesn't automatically remove automation and data quality challenges, especially if we also link this to the hybrid service delivery models where data needs to travel to multiple providers and systems. There is work to be done in the partnership between HR and global payroll in holistically assessing the need for accurate, timely, and complete data. In addition, the partnership with Finance remains an area to improve, as noted by the third challenge of automating outbound data. In 2025, these well-known industry challenges stay persistent, despite technological advancements.

The number-one challenge is ensuring that compliance is guaranteed down to the local level. Payroll compliance will always stay inherently local due to the regulatory requirements. This remains an area of concern. It's crucial to remember that the responsibility of making sure that all technology is ensuring compliance is with the payroll organization, not just with a vendor.

## 05. Global Payroll Challenges

What are the primary resources you use to answer questions relating to global payroll processing? (Select all that apply)



### Countries

The top 10 countries where the respondents indicated it is challenging to pay employees are:

- |                   |            |
|-------------------|------------|
| 1. United States  | 6. Germany |
| 2. Canada         | 7. India   |
| 3. France         | 8. Mexico  |
| 4. United Kingdom | 9. Brazil  |
| 5. China          | 10. Japan  |

With local compliance being the top challenge and many different countries worldwide listed as challenging, payroll professionals look to PAYO most for resources. PAYO's wide range of (global) payroll education, webinars, and news articles serve the needs of payroll professionals to stay on top of legislative changes.

In addition, they look to their global payroll providers, professional network, and the internet most. You are encouraged to invest in ensuring compliance through education and training.

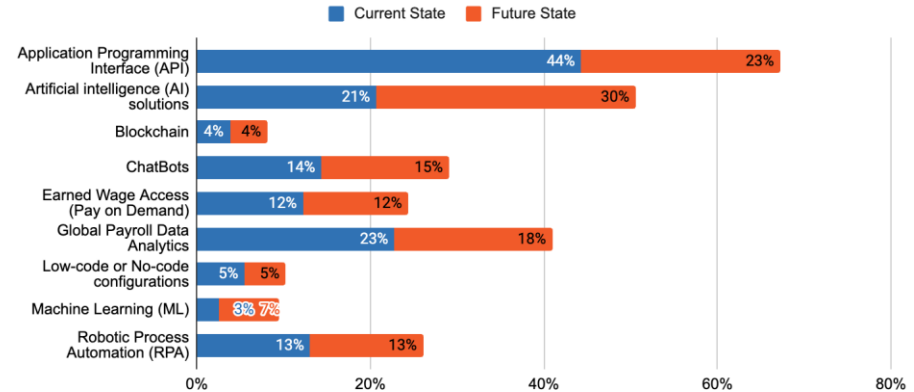
## 06. Emerging Technologies

### Advancing the Profession Through Smart Technologies

Connecting systems with end-to-end payroll processes is predominantly managed via application programming interfaces (APIs). Despite using APIs to automate the data flow, respondents still indicated that poor quality data at source is the main root cause of errors. This calls to not only focus on how data travels, but also on putting in validations and controls to ensure quality data at the source. Global payroll is only as good as the data it receives, validates, transforms, and approves in payroll results.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is already used in payroll processes, but it will see an expected significant rise in the future as 30% of the respondents indicate they will use AI more. While AI is on the rise, blockchain and robotic process automation (RPA) is staying steady in its deployment and future use. It is rewarding to observe that global payroll data analytics is being used to unlock the power of our data to drive strategic business value. Surprisingly, a decline is foreseen in the future use of global payroll data analytics, possibly replaced by AI.

Technologies used now, and in the future



"Smart technologies like AI, blockchain, and RPA enable payroll professionals to deliver strategic, business-focused solutions and impacts which go well beyond ensuring accuracy and timeliness."

**- Robert Gerbin, CPP, Senior Director, Global Strategic Initiatives, PayrollOrg**

## 01. System Landscape

- Many have a global HCM in place as system of record for employee data
- Time and attendance systems are more localised, with less global systems and more outsourcing
- Those who indicated having one single global payroll system predominantly manage payrolls in the US and Canada
- Those who indicated having one global payroll system generally manage 5 or more countries

## 02. Global Payroll Strategy

- While many are working on or have a formalised global payroll strategy, many (42%) do not have a strategy
- A global payroll strategy is seen as a must-have to elevate global payroll's profile
- Hybrid service delivery models (a mix of providers and service levels) is most often used to manage global payroll
- For managing long-tail countries, a mix of providers are chosen but it is mostly outsourced (not in-house)

## 03. Global Payroll Operations

- Global payroll reports into Finance more than to Human Resources, but rarely reports into another function
- The organisational structure is centralised in one location (e.g., HQ) with supporting Shared Services Centers, often in regions
- Leaders find it difficult to attract talent, and this often depends on the location
- Global payroll professionals are encouraged to develop and diversify their skills



## 04. Global Payroll Governance

- Achieving around 80% standardisation in global payroll is the industry norm
- However, only 19–20% reach this level due to the tension between global efficiency and local compliance needs
- Standardising processes, policies, and procedures enables scalability and governance
- Tracking payroll performance is essential for improvement and accountability, yet 38% don't measure it

## 05. Global Payroll Challenges

- Top 3 challenges in global payroll are ensuring local compliance, automating inbound data, and automating outbound data
- Top 3 causes of decreased accuracy are poor quality of data inputs, late or inaccurate time-tracking data, and inputs after payroll cut-off
- Top 5 countries with high complexity are the US, Canada, France, UK, and China
- PAYO is the most used resource for finding answers to payroll processing questions

## 06. Emerging Technologies

- APIs help automate payroll processes, but poor data quality at the source remains a key issue, highlighting the need for strong data validations and controls at source
- AI's usage in global payroll is expected to grow significantly, while blockchain and RPA adoption remains steady
- Despite its current use, global payroll data analytics is expected to decline, but it may be overtaken by AI (using this data)

# Acknowledgements

This report is by:



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**Max van der Klis-Busink, MCIPP, RPP**

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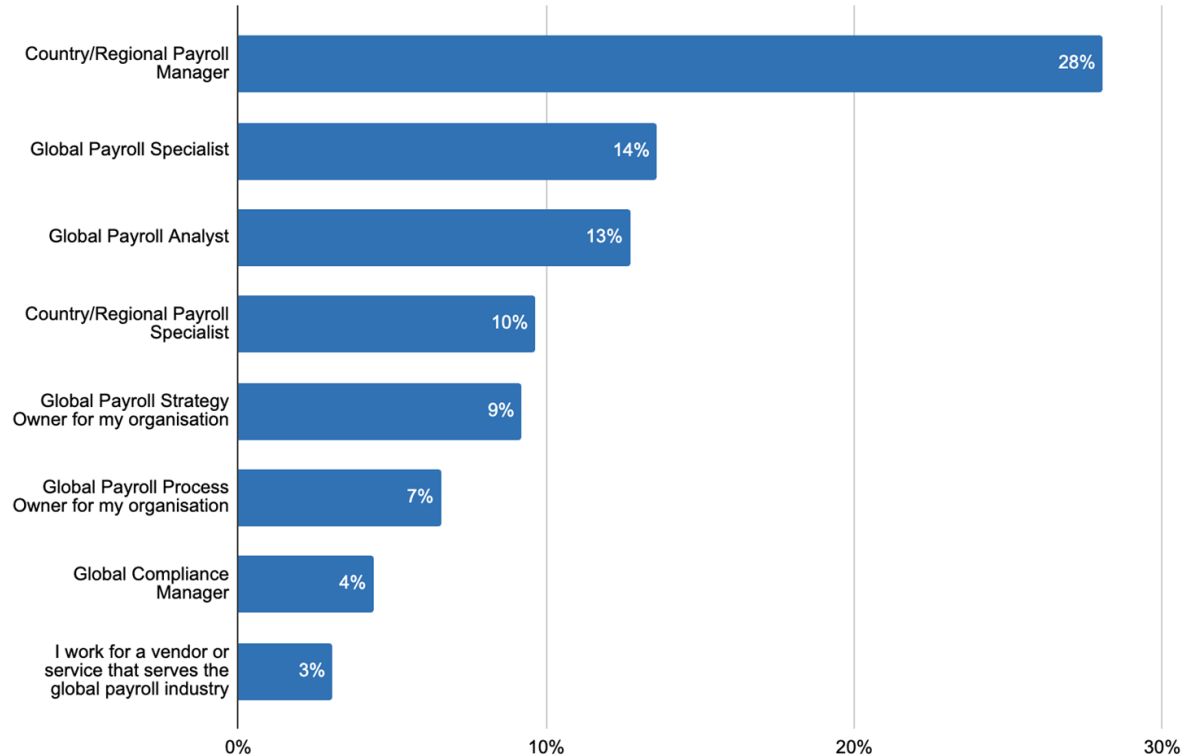
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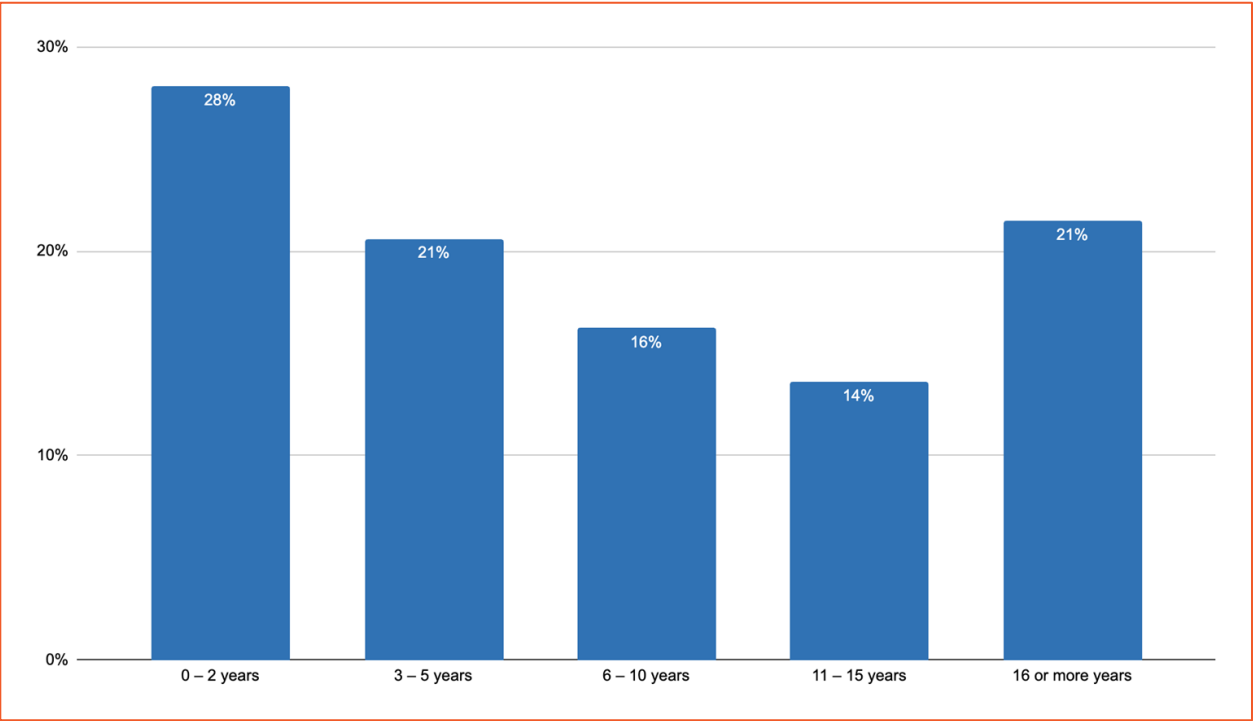
## Demographics

What best describes your role within your organisation?



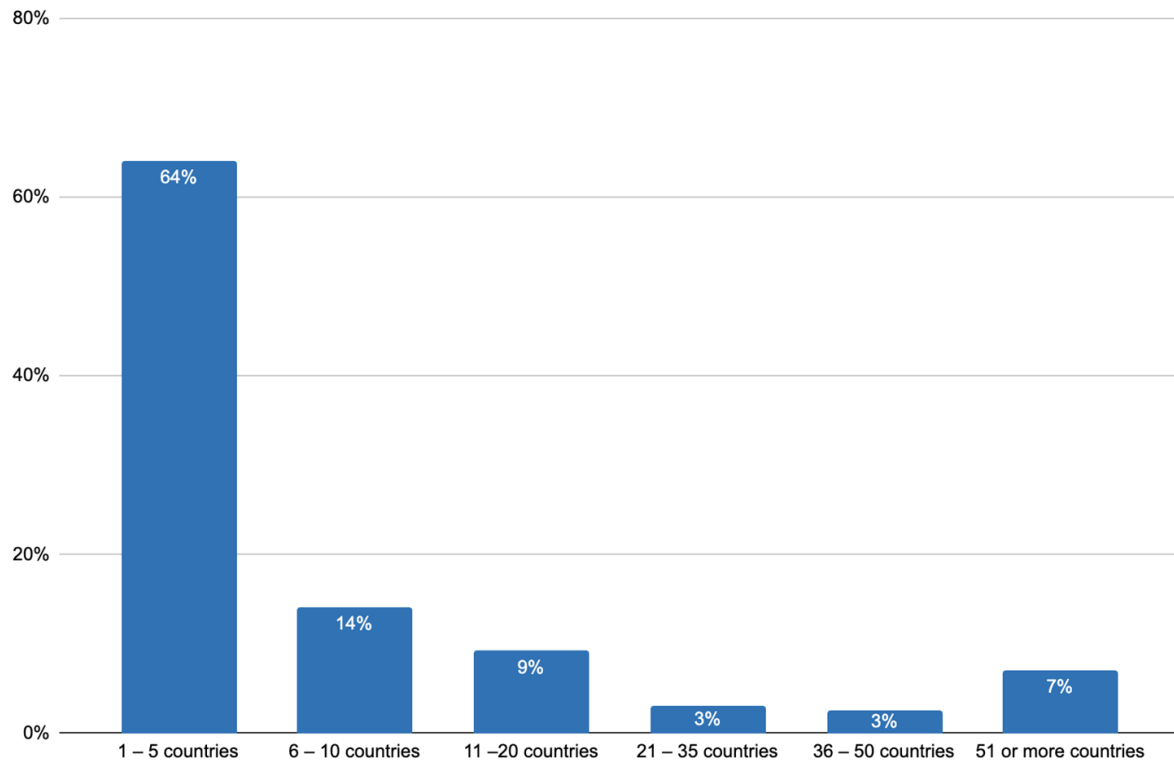
## Demographics

How many years of global payroll experience do you have?



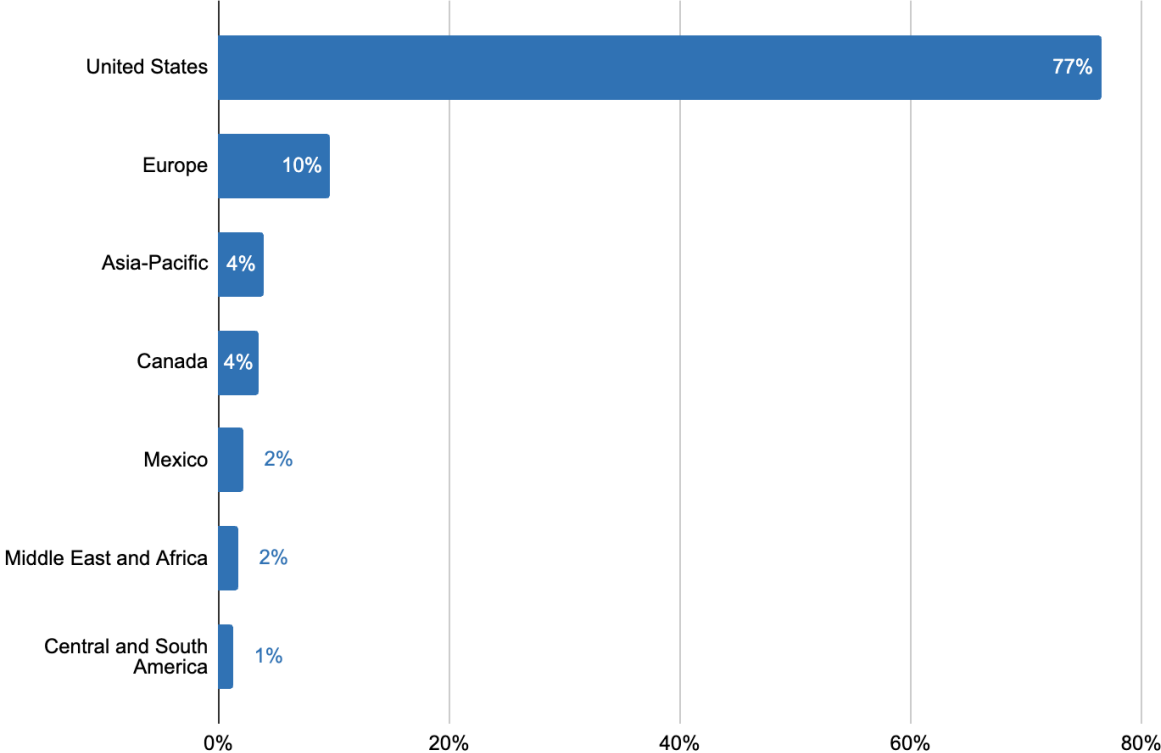
## Demographics

In how many countries do you pay employees?



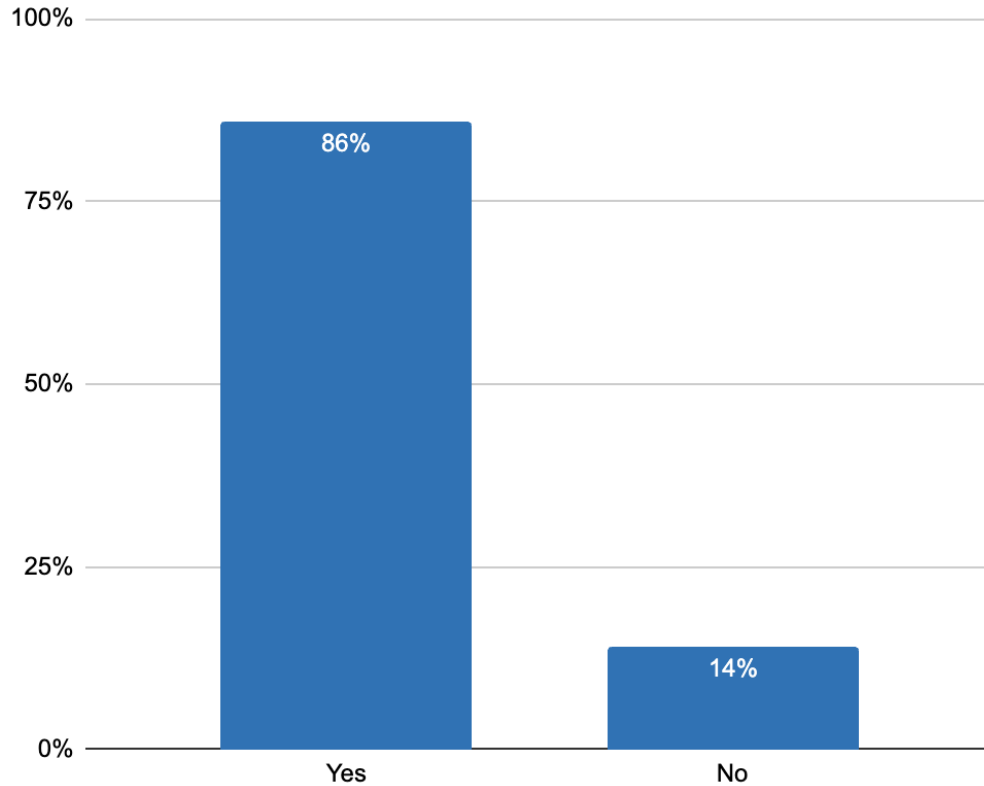
Demographics

Where is your organisation’s largest global employee population?



## 01. Systems Landscape

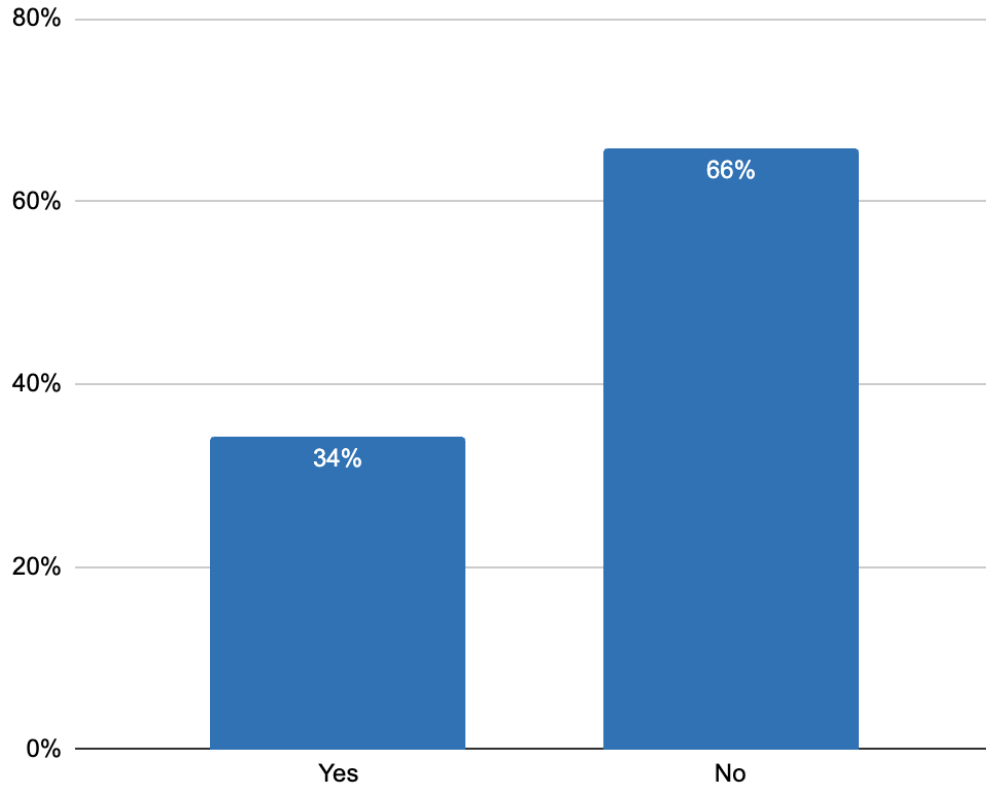
Do you use your human capital management (HCM)/human resources information system (HRIS) as your global system of record for employee data?





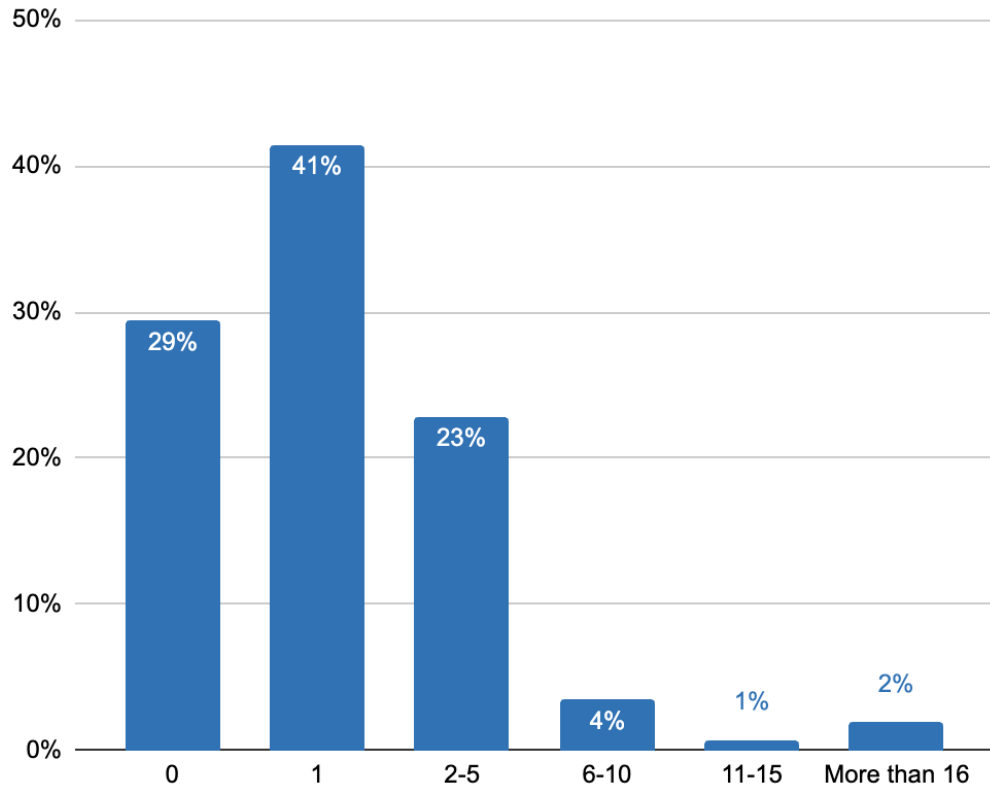
## 01. Systems Landscape

Do you outsource any aspect of time and attendance (T&A) for any of the countries or areas you are responsible for processing payroll?



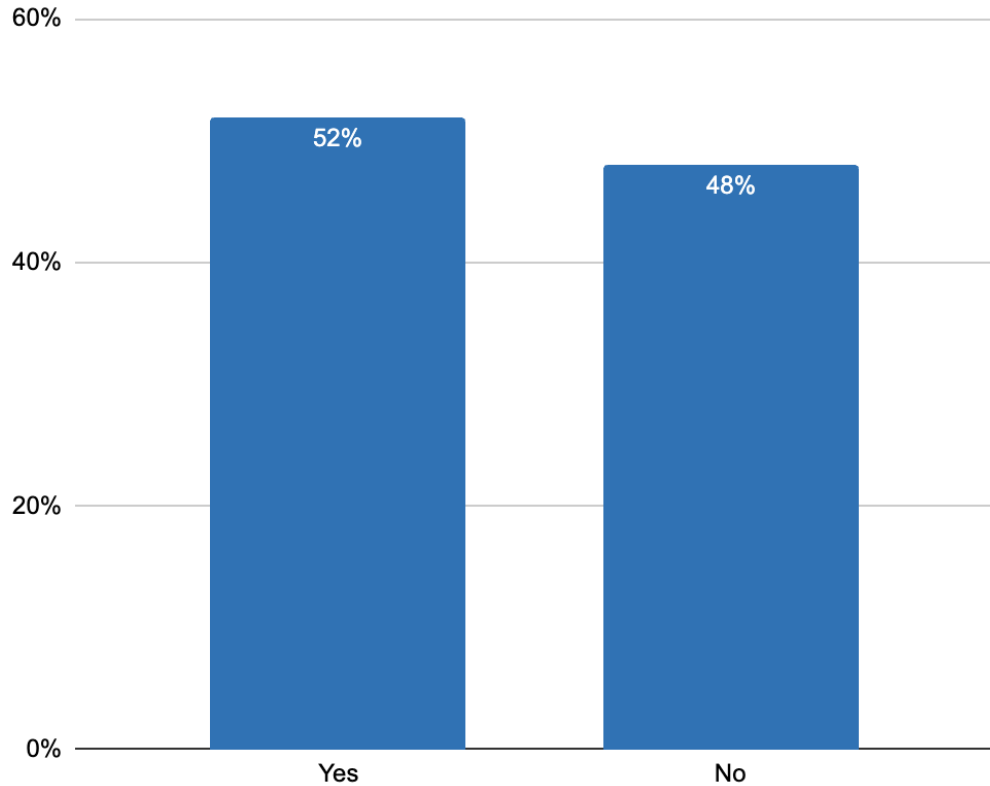
## 01. Systems Landscape

How many third-party payroll providers are you using for time and attendance (T&A)?



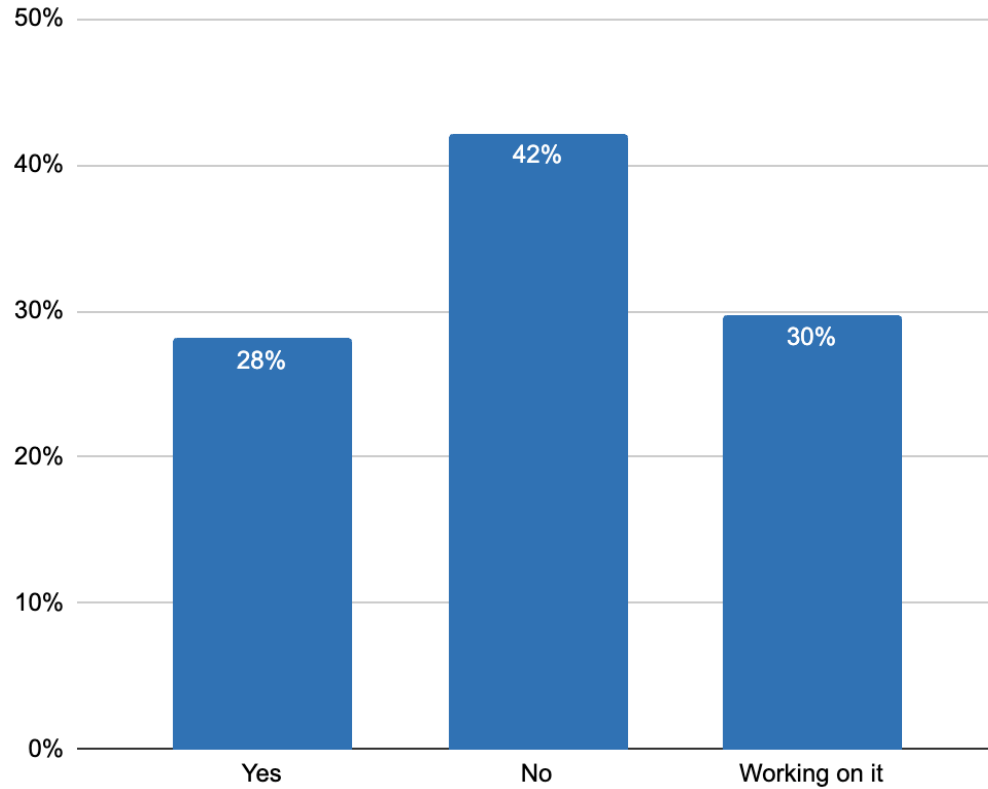
## 01. Systems Landscape

Do you have one single global payroll system for processing payroll?



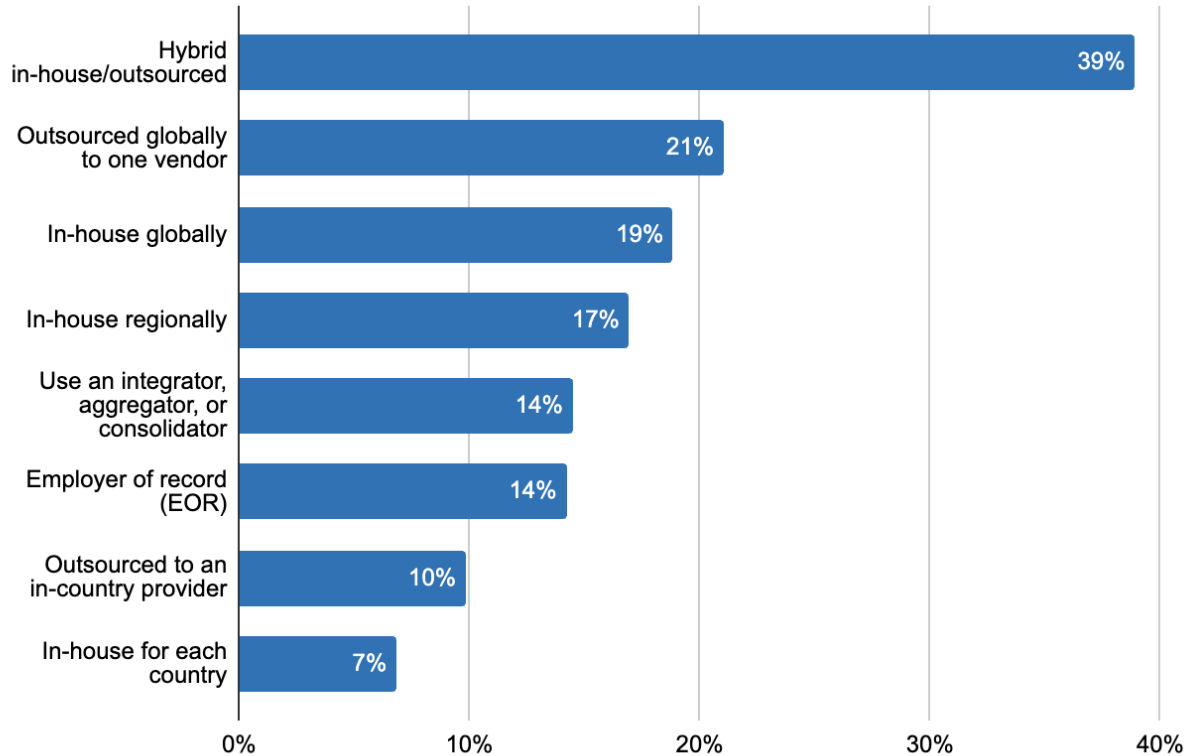
## 02. Global Payroll Strategy

Do you have a formalised global payroll strategy?



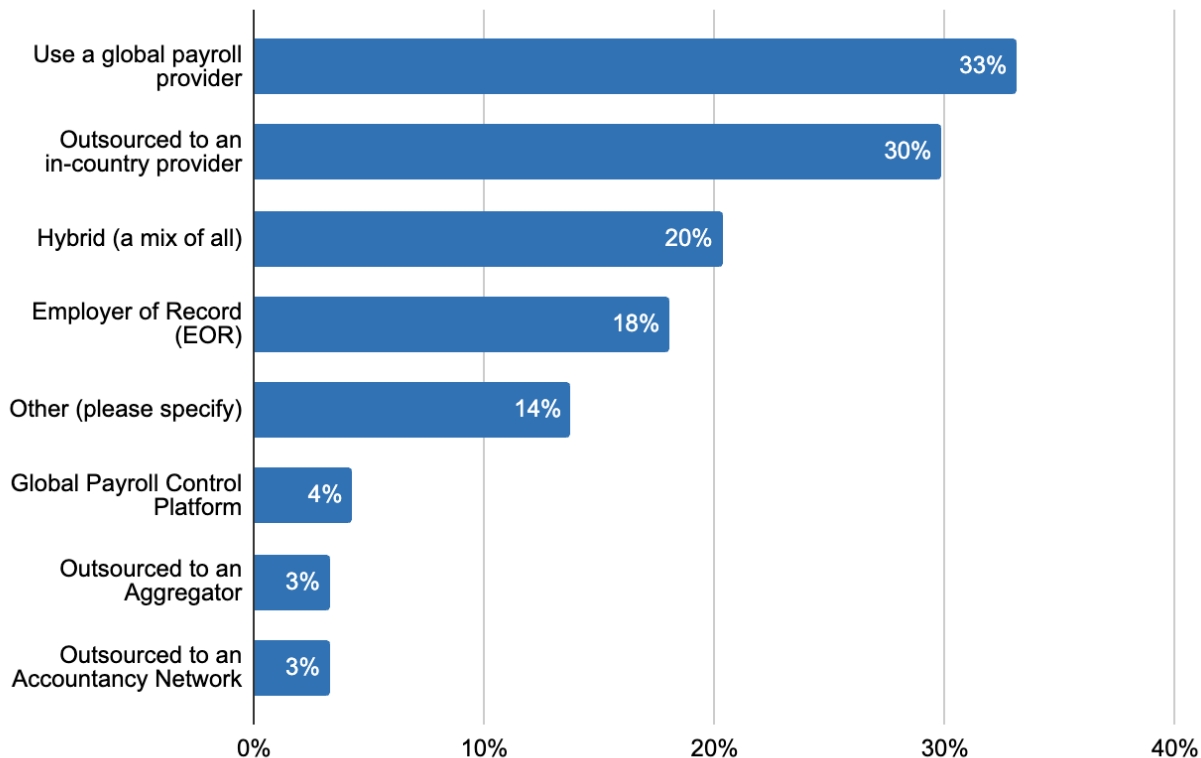
## 02. Global Payroll Strategy

What is your global payroll service delivery model?



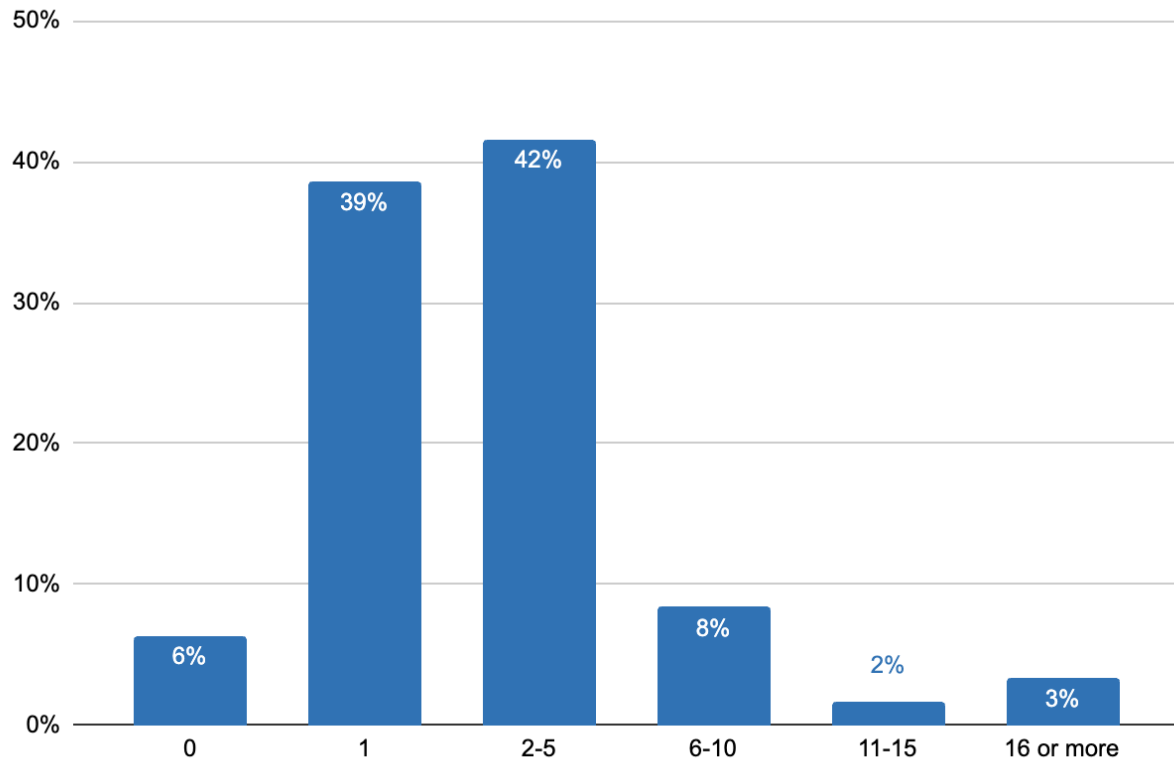
## 02. Global Payroll Strategy

How do you manage low employee populations (long tail countries)?



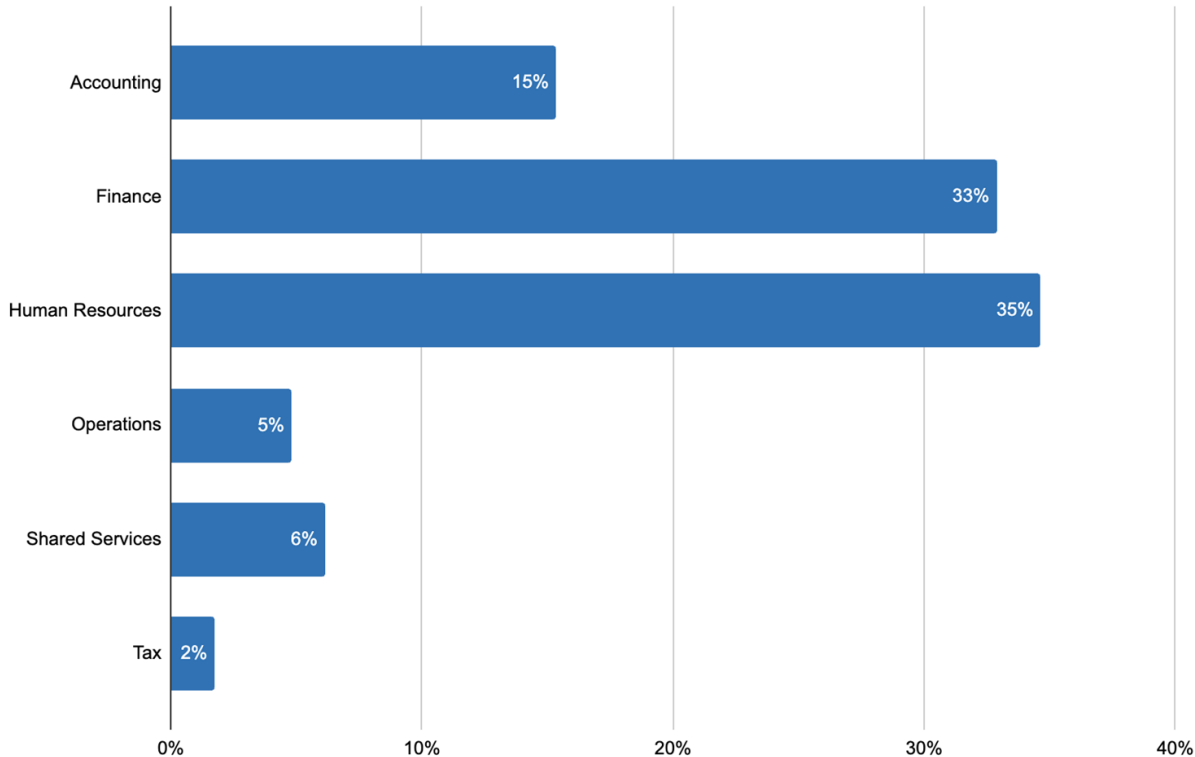
## 02. Global Payroll Strategy

How many payroll service providers are you using today?



## 03. Global Payroll Operations

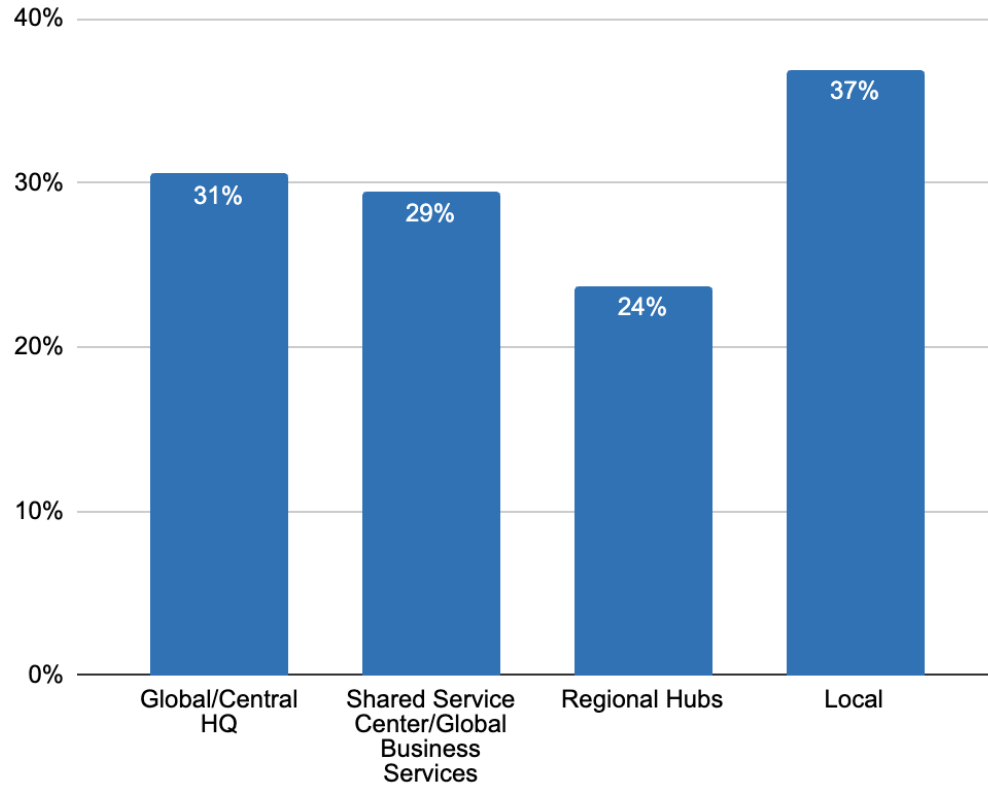
What department does your global payroll report into?





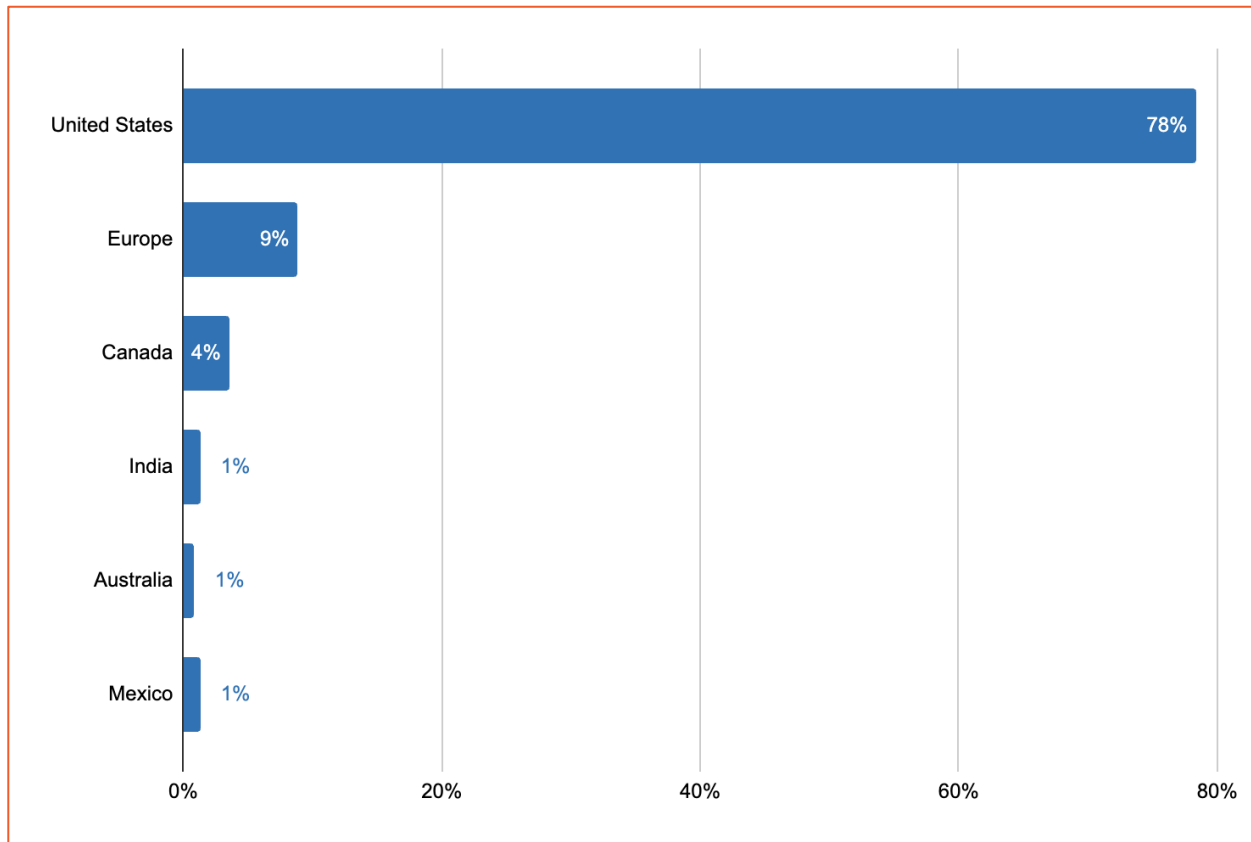
## 03. Global Payroll Operations

What best describes your global payroll organisation structure? (Select all that apply)



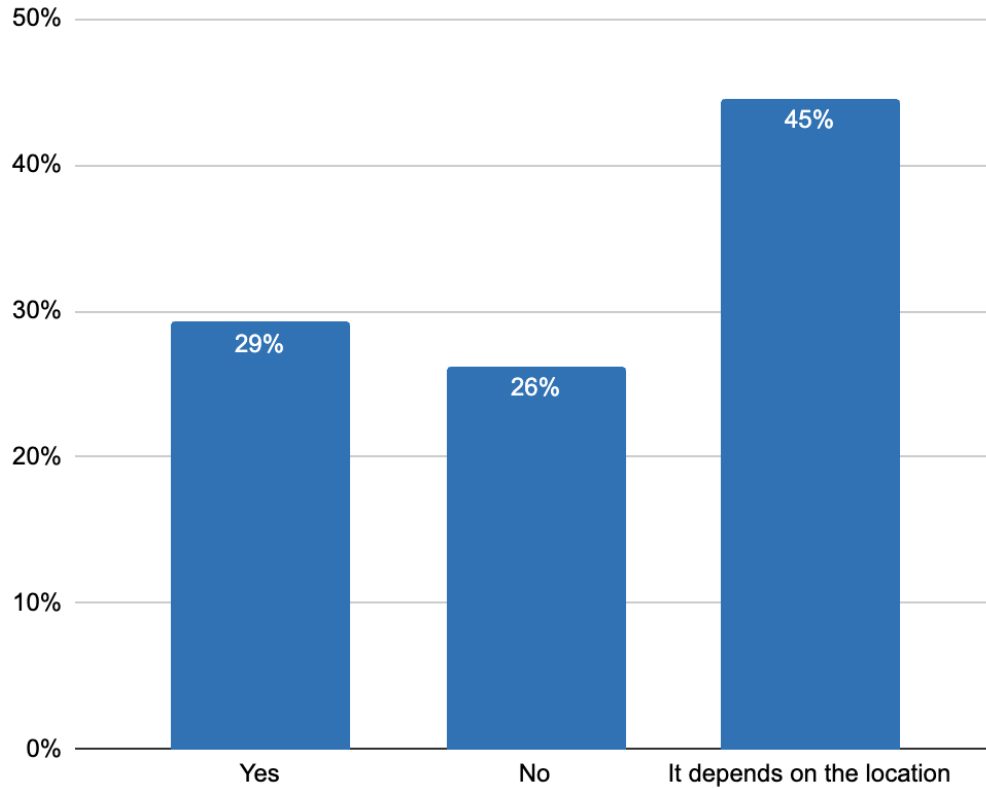
## 03. Global Payroll Operations

From which country or region do you manage your global payroll operations?



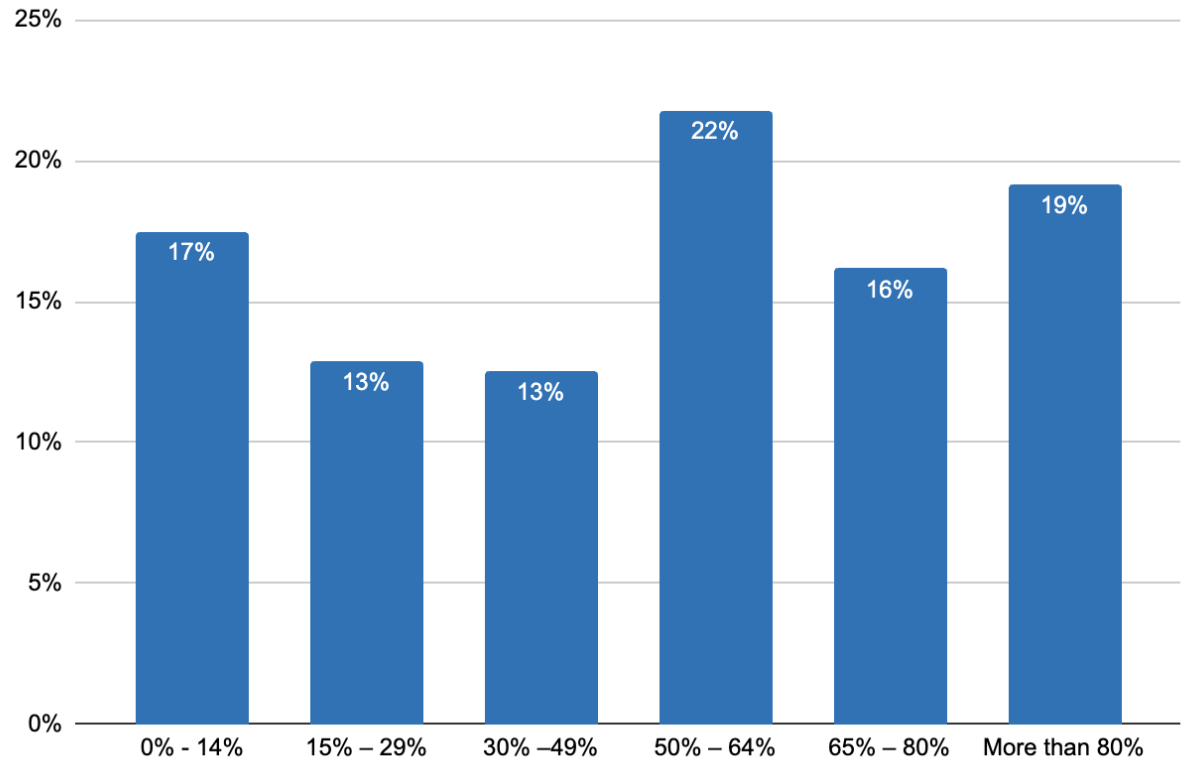
## 03. Global Payroll Operations

Do you find it difficult to find talent in global payroll?



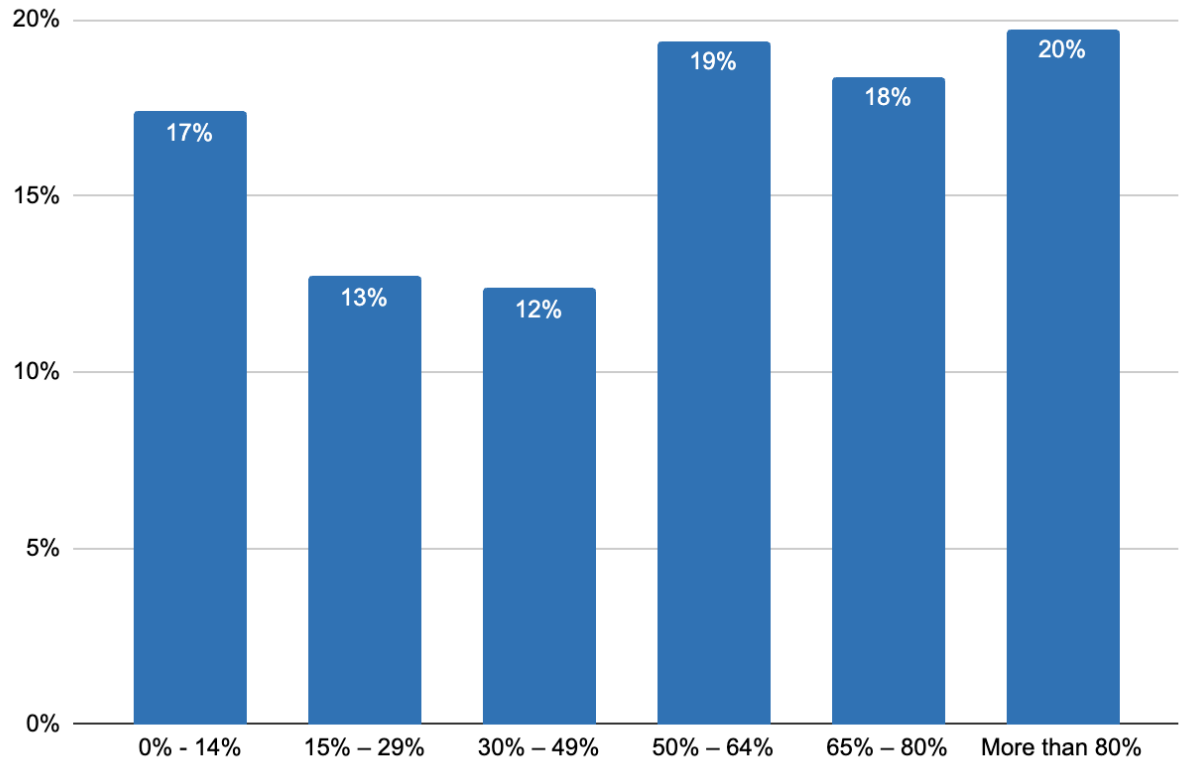
## 04. Global Payroll Governance

How would you rate your standardisation of global payroll policies and procedures?



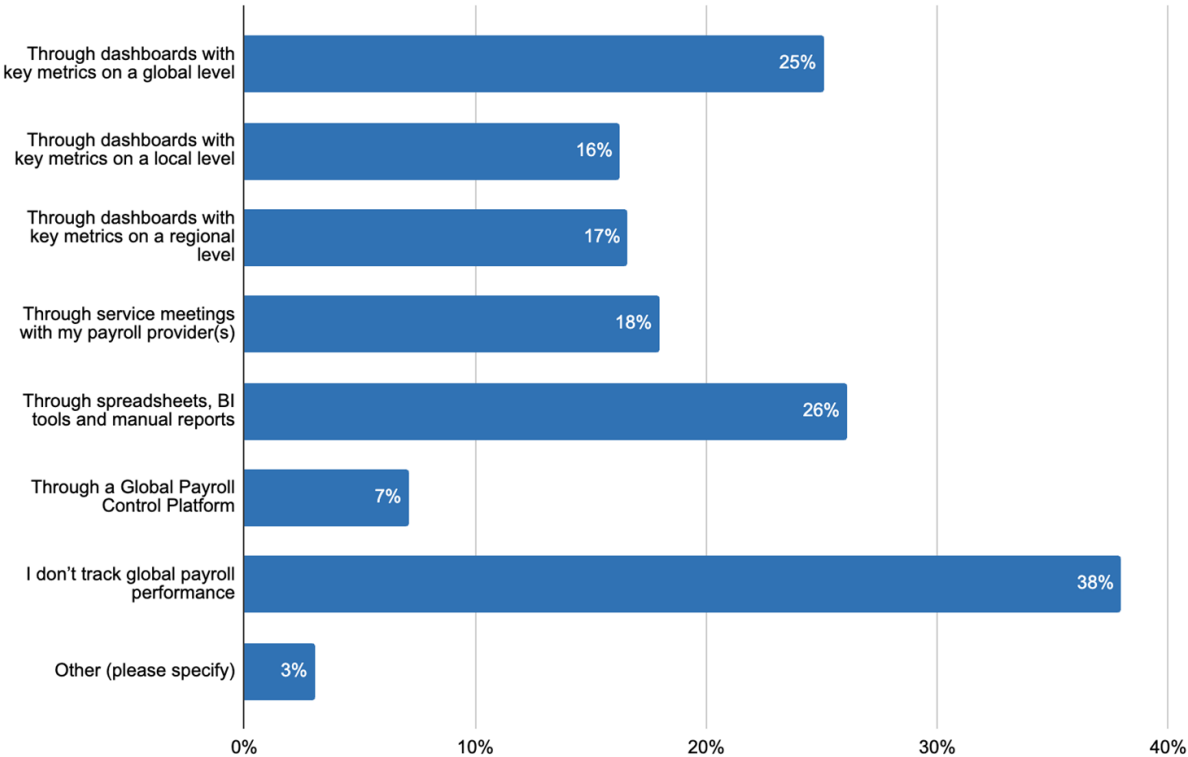
## 04. Global Payroll Governance

How would you rate your standardisation of global payroll processes?



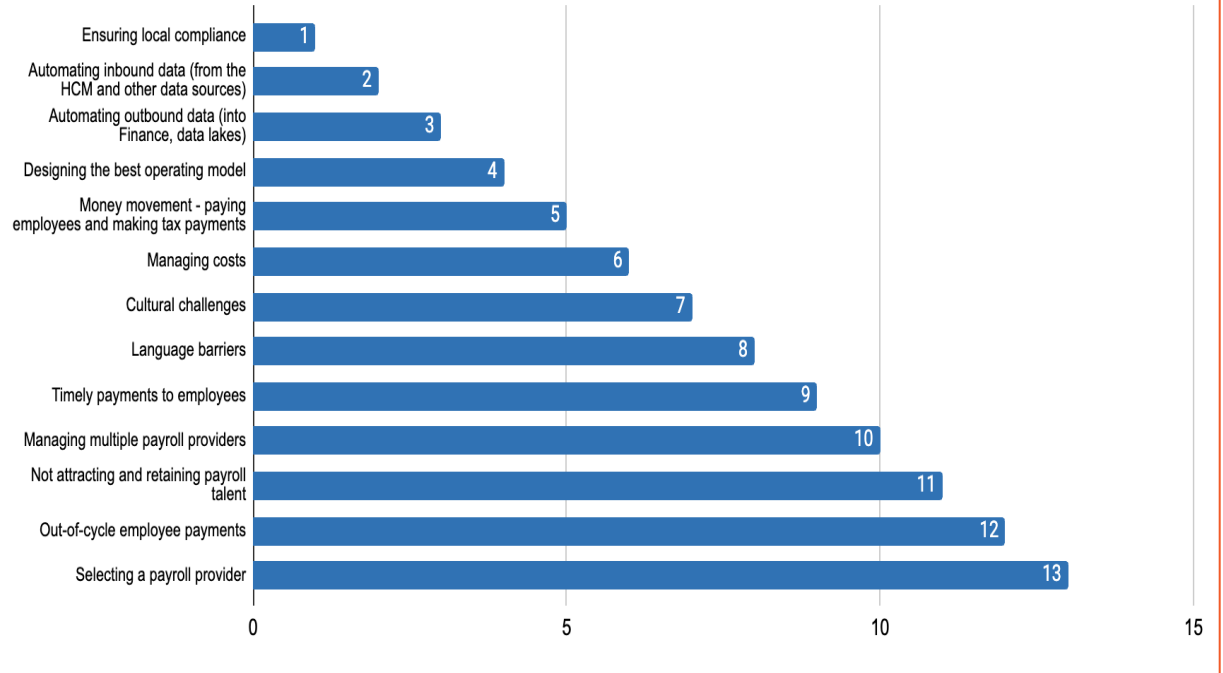
04. Global Payroll Governance

How do you track your global payroll performance against objectives?



## 05. Global Payroll Challenges

Please rank the following global payroll challenges in order of importance, with 1 being the most significant and ranking all items in order of their impact:



## 05. Global Payroll Challenges

Please select the three countries or areas you find to be the most challenging to pay employees.

- |                                |                    |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. United States               | 22. Turkey         |
| 2. Canada                      | 23. Zimbabwe       |
| 3. France                      | 24. Costa Rica     |
| 4. United Kingdom              | 25. Sudan          |
| 5. China                       | 26. Italy          |
| 6. Germany                     | 27. Israel         |
| 7. India                       | 28. Czech Republic |
| 8. Mexico                      | 29. Ireland        |
| 9. Brazil                      | 30. Singapore      |
| 10. Japan                      | 31. South Korea    |
| 11. Australia                  | 32. Switzerland    |
| 12. United Arab Emirates (UAE) | 33. Thailand       |
| 13. Belgium                    | 34. Indonesia      |
| 14. Hong Kong                  | 35. New Zealand    |
| 15. Argentina                  | 36. South Africa   |
| 16. Puerto Rico                | 37. Ukraine        |
| 17. Russia                     | 38. Finland        |
| 18. Colombia                   | 39. Peru           |
| 19. Spain                      | 40. Poland         |
| 20. Netherlands                | 41. Taiwan         |
| 21. Philippines                |                    |



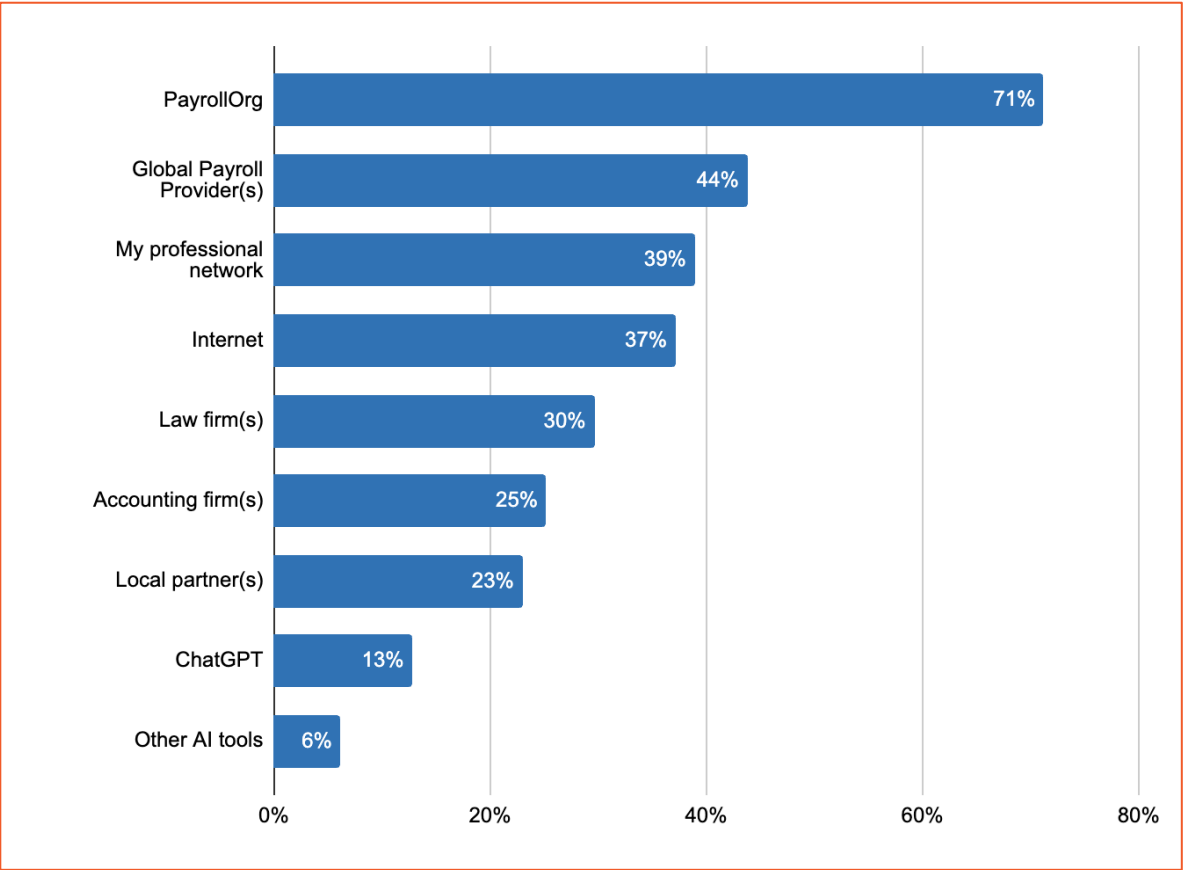
## 05. Global Payroll Challenges

Please rank the following root causes of decreased payroll accuracy in order of impact, with 1 being the most significant and ranking all items accordingly.

1. Poor quality of data inputs
2. Late or inaccurate time-tracking data
3. Inputs after payroll cut-off
4. Payroll provider performance issues
5. Manual processing of data inputs
6. Interface and/or integration errors
7. Lack of HR process standardisation
8. Lack of integration between data sources and payroll
9. Retroactive entries and corrections
10. Payroll calendar challenges
11. Unclear roles and responsibilities

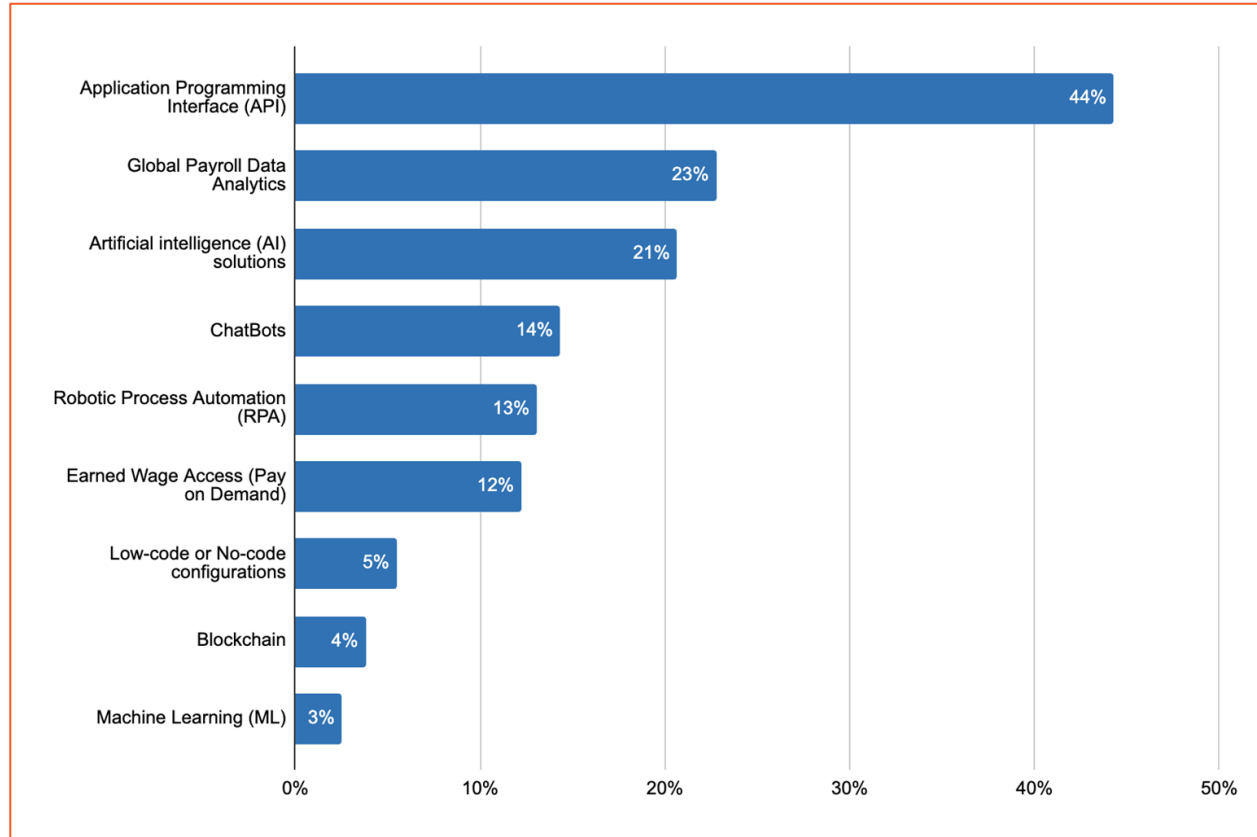
05. Global Payroll Challenges

What are the primary resources you use to answer questions relating to global payroll processing? (Select all that apply)



## 06. Emerging Technologies

Which of the following technologies do you and/or your payroll outsourcing partner currently use in your global payroll processes? (Select all that apply)



## 06. Emerging Technologies

Which technologies, if any, do you and/or your payroll outsourcing partner plan to integrate into your global payroll processes in future? (Select all that apply)

