

Business Service Centres in Portugal

2022



aicep Portugal Global





Welcome to the second edition of the Business Service Centres in Portugal Report! This edition is marked by the re-emergence of the pandemic, during which business services proved not only to be resilient and agile, but also capable of taking the lead on innovation, transformation and digitization.

A key outcome from this Survey is the quality of the talent present in Portugal. There is a clear recognition not only of the technical skills in the market, but also of the flexibility, commitment, problem solving capabilities and open mindset of the professionals, positively impacting performance levels.

According to this survey, Business Services' leaders are now facing multiple challenges such as the new hybrid working environment and the need to be at the forefront of automation and digital transformation. Moreover, when looking ahead they see the potential the country may offer to grow in terms of people, businesses, activities and technological capability.

For the first time, this Report features 10 case interviews, conducted with Business Services' leaders, to showcase some successful examples of foreign operations established in Portugal in different domains, location or scope of activity. These cases bring invaluable insights and contribute to a deeper understanding of this dynamic sector in Portugal.

Overall, Portugal proves once again to be a preferred location for many international players, placing the country as a hub for high value-added services, business partnering and technology implementation, benefiting from our unique talent, our main asset.

Luís Castro Henriques

AICEP, Chairman & CEO

Welcome to the second edition of the report on Business Services Centres in Portugal!

The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive and in-depth view of the industry of business service centres in Portugal. It provides an overview of where the industry stands today and features the voice of the leaders that chose Portugal as the best place to establish their Business Services Centres.

The study was based on a survey and interviews conducted by IDC, namely with 81 top managers of service centres, representing more than 40% of all the companies with centres established in Portugal; and 10 in-person interviews with the top management of these service centres.



The report covers the following topics:

- Number of companies, sites and full-time employees in this sector
- Main reasons to choose Portugal as a location
- Countries and regions served
- Key industries investing in Portugal
- Main services provided
- Best practices in recruitment and talent retention
- Remote working models
- Satisfaction levels
- Outlook for the next 3 years

It also contains specific case studies, with an overview of 10 companies with service centres established in Portugal.

The study concludes that Portugal is one of the European countries with an accelerated growth in services centre establishment, attracting a fair amount of foreign investment originating in different industries.

Despite the slowdown in the economy caused by the pandemic, 14% of the centres opened between 2020 and 2021. There were nearly as many centres established outside Lisbon as those established in the capital. These centres are also becoming more sophisticated, moving from routine activities to activities with greater added value. In terms of functions, 63% of the centres in the study provide finance & accounting services, but Portugal has been increasingly chosen as a location for technological services, either software development (61%) or other IT services such as IT Infrastructure and service desk (58%).

The key factors for this growth are competitive costs, the availability of qualified talent and geographical proximity. The rationale is not of a low-cost location but of value-for-money, where companies can profit from their investment and turn it into earnings.

Looking forward and taking into consideration how Portugal responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, its location, security, infrastructure and qualified talent, we at IDC believe that Portugal will continue to increase its competitiveness as a nearshore location in the coming years; and companies worldwide will continue to choose Portugal as one of the best places to establish a Business Services Centre!

Gabriel Coimbra

IDC Portugal, Country Manager

INTRODUCTION



Concepts and Methodology

INTRODUCTION

IDC and AICEP have teamed up to develop this study for a second time, in order to obtain an overview of the industry of business service centres in Portugal. This activity continues to grow and evolve, with a strong impact on employment, export of services and the economy in general.

In the scope of this analysis, we have considered service centres and organisations that are aligned with one or more of the following concepts:

- Shared Service Centre / Global Business Service Centre: organisational unit or company within a large business group, created with the purpose of cost optimisation and efficiency, executing specific administrative processes to serve several group companies.
- IT Service Centre: same concept as a Shared Service Centre, but specialising in information technology tasks like service desk, software maintenance and development, infrastructure operations, among others. In this case, the concept also applies to professional services companies that create these centres to serve several different customers.
- Competence Centre: usually an organisational unit within a large business group, specialised in a set of specific or complex business processes, or technological areas. These teams develop deep knowledge in their areas of specialisation and serve other areas or companies within the group, as well as external customers.
- Business Process Outsourcing Centre: a profit centre within professional services companies, specialised in specific processes, such as customer support, telemarketing or any other administrative or effort consuming business process. Its purpose is to provide outsourcing services for organisations interested in cutting costs, moving from CAPEX to OPEX, achieving greater flexibility and disposing of non-core business activities.

This study targeted organisations with one or more service centres operating in Portugal and exporting all or part of their services. Those that only provide services for customers in Portugal were not included.

Primary Research

This study was based on the results of a primary research carried out between November 2021 and January 2022:

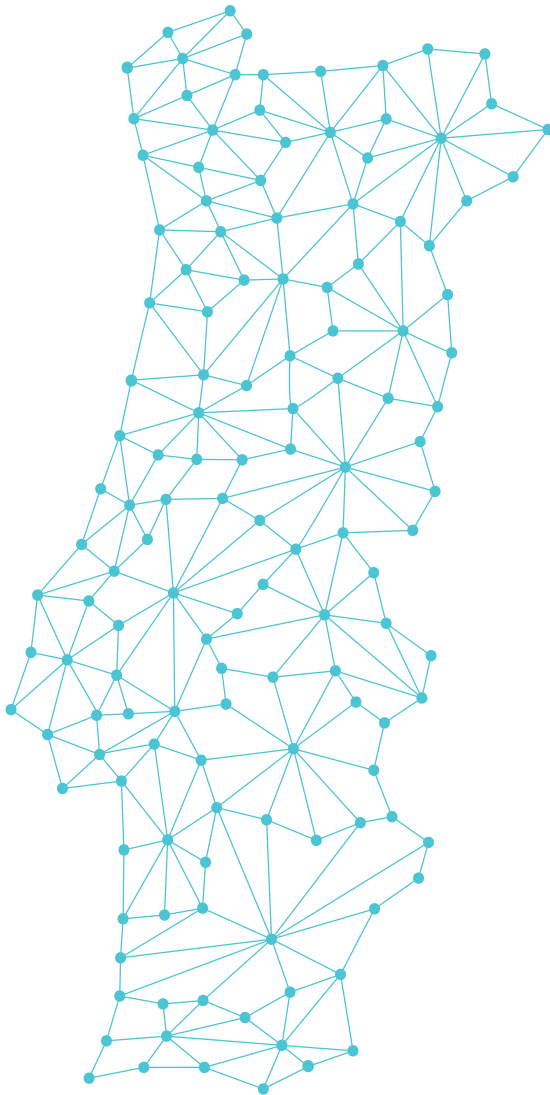
- Online survey delivered to 182 companies resulting on 81 collected answers (45%)
- 10 in-person interviews with the top management of service centres

Industry size estimate

AICEP develops a continuous and close work with the companies in this industry, supporting new and existing business centres in the country. Therefore, the industry's figures are based on AICEP's data and estimates from the previous 8 years. These are based not only on direct contacts with the organisations, but also on information gathered from multiple sources, such as press releases, job offers and media. All data is kept fully confidential and for statistical purposes only. It does not reflect an accurate or extensive overview of the industry, though it does provide an estimate of its current size.

Country: key figures

INTRODUCTION



Population: **10.344.802** (Censos 2021)

GDP Growth: **4,9%** (2021)

Unemployment rate: **6,3%** (2021)

Inflation: **2,8%** (Dec 2021)



TALENT POOL

Students in Higher Education: **411.995** (2020|2021)

Graduates: **87.733** (2019|2020)

STEM Areas: **23%**

Foreign Students: **≈55.000** (2020|2021)

Universities: **288** (2021)



Qualified professionals at competitive costs, geographical location and easy connections with universities for the attraction of highly qualified employees for service centre operations are highlighted as key factors for investing in Portugal.

Industry: key figures

INTRODUCTION

The sector is very dynamic with a continuously growing number of new companies setting up their service centre operations in Portugal.



Number of companies:
200



% foreign companies:
95.3%



Number of FTEs (Full Time Equivalent):
72,000

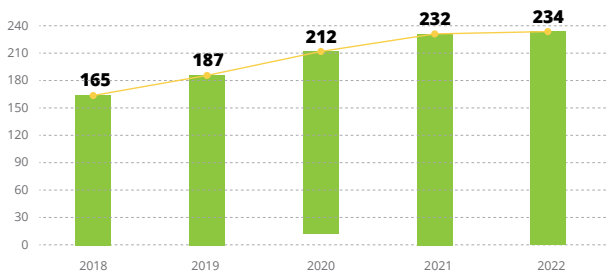


Number of sites:
234

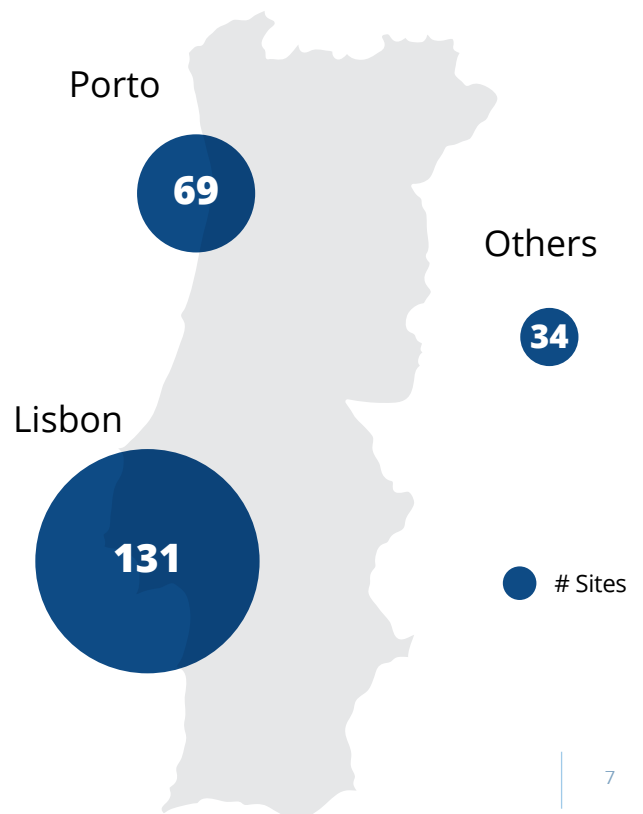


Average size (number of employees):
325

The number of sites from 2018 to 2022:



As expected, the biggest metro areas, Lisbon and Porto, are the main selected locations for setting up service centres. However, interest in other locations is growing.



SURVEY RESULTS



Location is key

SURVEY RESULTS

Why choose Portugal? For its qualified talent at competitive costs.

Portugal is presently a preferred location by several multinational corporations to establish their service centres. There are several successful case studies attracting the attention of other companies in the process of choosing a location for their service operations.

The most important factor to choose Portugal, mentioned by all participants in the study, is the availability of qualified talent at competitive costs. According to many companies, cost is, among others, a top criterion when assessing locations for a service centre.

The availability of highly skilled workers trained in well-ranked universities and with good language skills are key factors, which combined with other aspects place Portugal at the top of the list when assessing different locations.

Its geographic location, bridging Europe and the USA, and a convenient time zone compatible with regions on both sides of the Atlantic are also important for multinationals with operations around the globe.



A peaceful country with a pleasant climate and good quality of life also appeals to foreign talent — an important aspect for the recruitment processes — and enhances Portugal’s attractiveness.

Good infrastructures, namely in communications, were mentioned as an important aspect since they are particularly relevant for centres with heavy volumes of activity and people working from different locations.

The traits of the Portuguese people regarding hospitality towards foreigners, combined with their engagement towards quality service, were also mentioned as a contributing factor.

A growing culture of entrepreneurship that contributed to the emergence of several technological startups and unicorns in the country also created a favourable environment for the establishment of new centres, as mentioned by some participants.

When enquired about the reasons to choose Portugal, participants ranked the top reasons in the same order as in the first edition of this study. However, the companies regard the presence of multiple service centres in the country as a key factor.

What were the main reasons to choose Portugal as a location for a Service Centre?



Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=64
 Respondents were asked to choose 3 or more reasons and rank them (1 being the most important). The graph shows the percentage of respondents that picked the reason

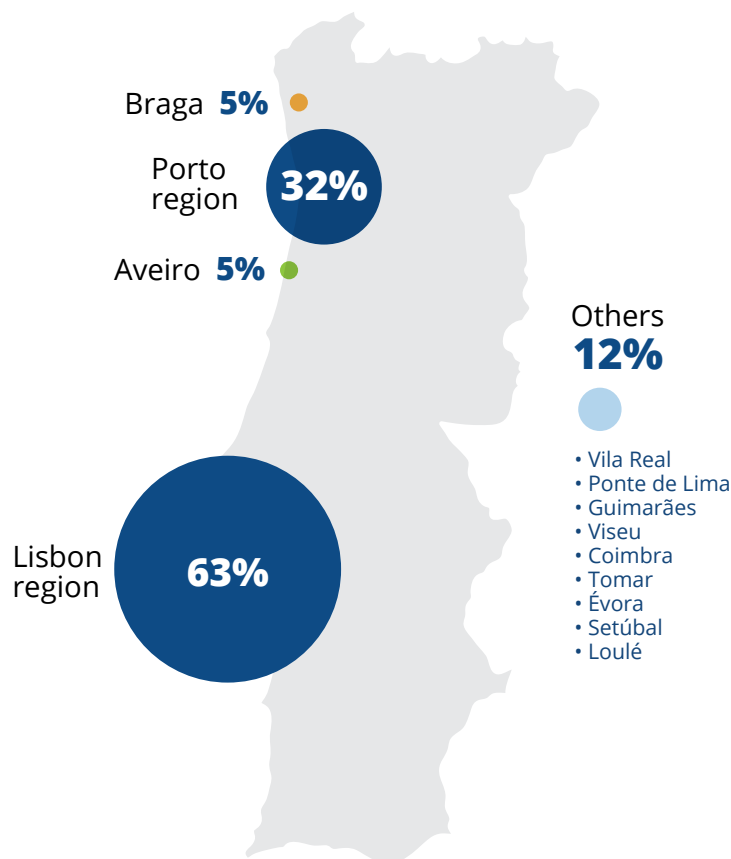


Many multinational corporations are choosing Portugal for its qualified talent at competitive costs — a clear advantage that has weighed in Portugal’s favour, making it a competitive hub for this type of operation.

Emerging competitiveness beyond major urban areas

Most companies operate from Lisbon and Porto. Among the survey respondents, 63% have at least one of their service centres in Lisbon and 32% in Porto. However, an increasing number of companies are selecting locations outside major urban centres. Aveiro and Braga— cities with important universities — are relevant locations and good sources of talent. In addition, there are centres located in the North (Vila Real, Guimarães and Ponte de Lima), Centre (Coimbra, Viseu and Tomar) and South (Setúbal, Évora and Loulé). About 22% of the companies operate outside large cities and 9% operate exclusively out of Lisbon and Porto. Small towns can offer many advantages: less labour competition, better quality of life and a lower cost of living, which contributes to a greater regional economic impact. The pandemic showed that it is possible to work remotely, creating a more flexible relationship between employees and the workplace. Some companies stated that they now have workers living in small towns, working remotely part of the time. Most companies have one single site in Portugal, but a significant 24% operate from 2 or more locations in the country. In the previous edition of the study this percentage was of 15%.

Where are your organization's Services Centres located?



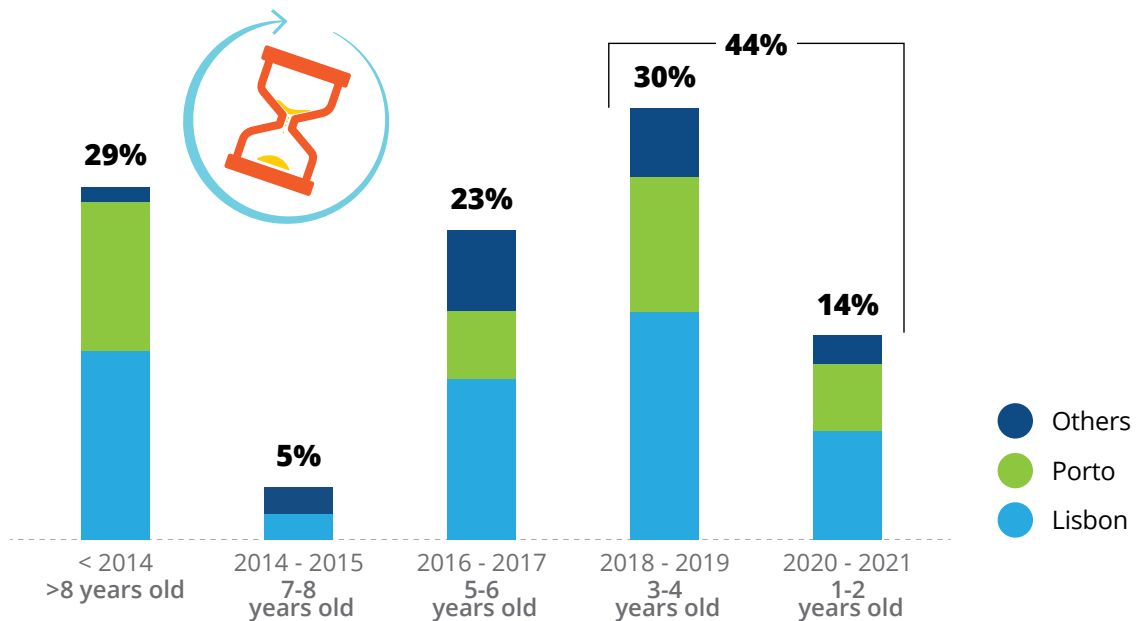
Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=81
Multiple choice

The number of centres continues to grow, particularly in recent years

44% the existing sites were established in the last 4 years. Despite the slowdown in the economy caused by the pandemic, 14% of the centres opened between 2020 and 2021. There were almost as many centres established outside Lisbon as those that were established in the capital, demonstrating the trend mentioned before.

Opening a business during the pandemic was a big challenge for some respondents, but their goals were accomplished.

When was your centre established? (% of centres established in the period)

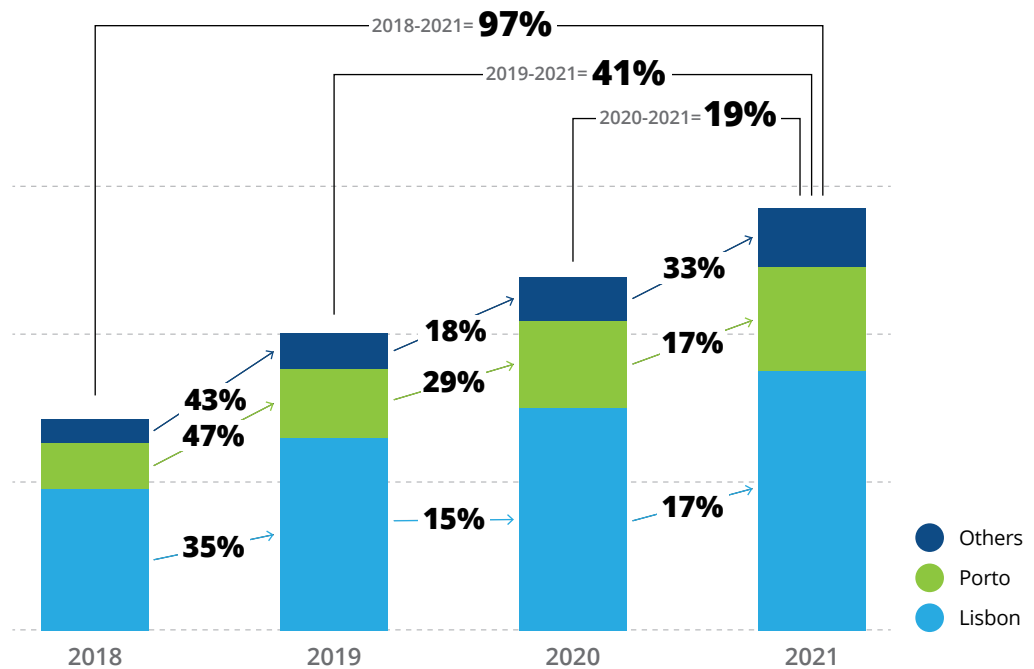


Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=84

From 2015 onwards there was an accelerated growth in the number of service centres in Portugal, considering that 67% of the inquired centres were established since then.

The number of sites continues to grow, which is mirrored in terms of the number of jobs created (FTE= full time equivalent). The figures show a 97% growth between 2018 and 2021. Despite the pandemic, there was a significant growth in the years 2020 and 2021. 87% of respondents increased the number of FTEs in 2021. In 2021, the number of jobs increased by 33% in the regions outside Lisbon and Porto when compared to the previous year, a much higher percentage than in the larger cities.

FTE growth per region in the last three years



Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=69



Service centres are important contributors to employment, particularly if we consider the role they play in the development of areas outside major urban areas like Lisbon and Porto.

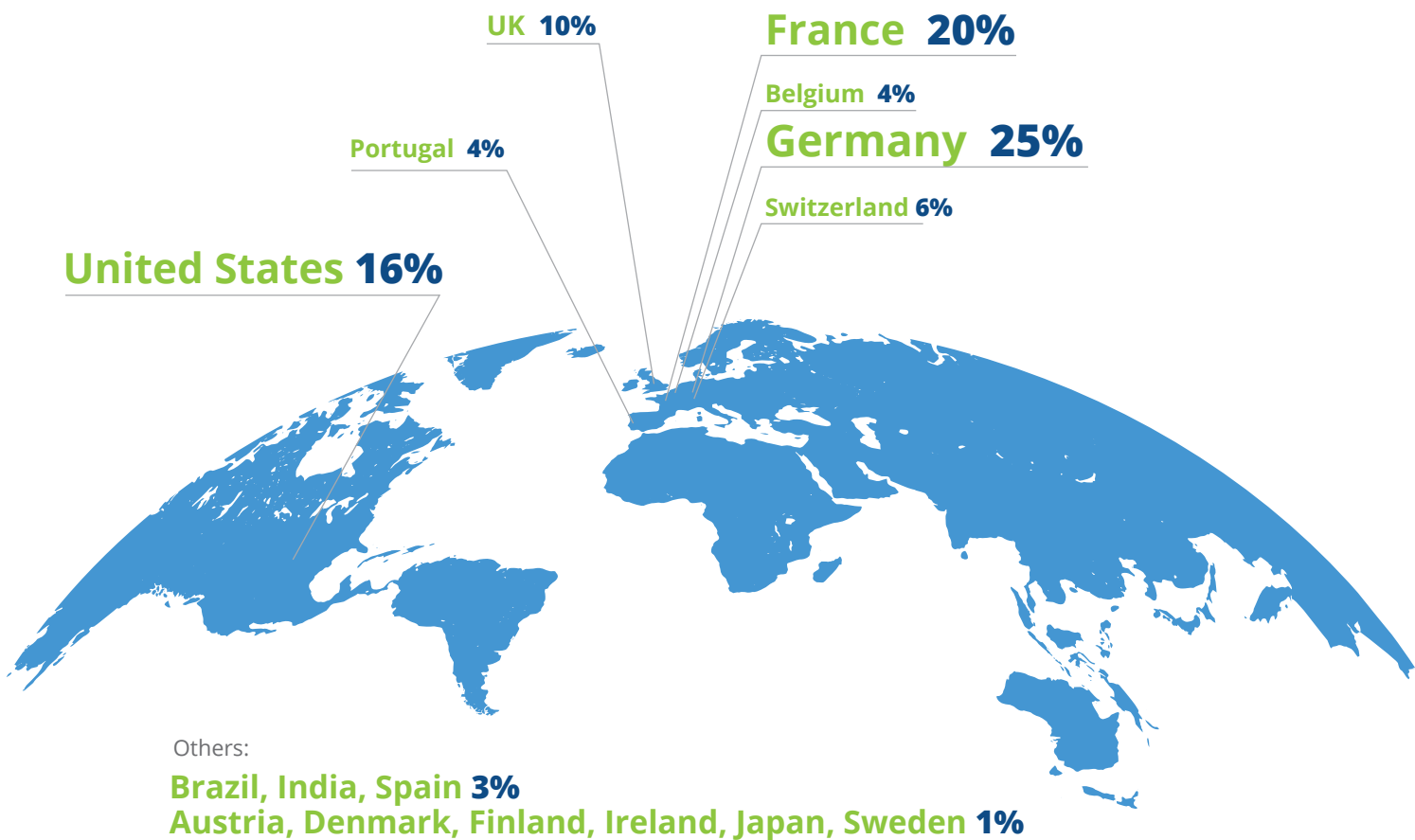
Location is key

SURVEY RESULTS

Proximity is important. Portugal is chosen mainly by European corporations

This study came to a similar conclusion as the previous one: 76% of the centres participating in the survey belong to a corporation headquartered in a European country. Germany (25%) and France (20%) are at the top of the list, but there is also a significant presence of U.S. companies (16%).

What is your organization's country of origin?



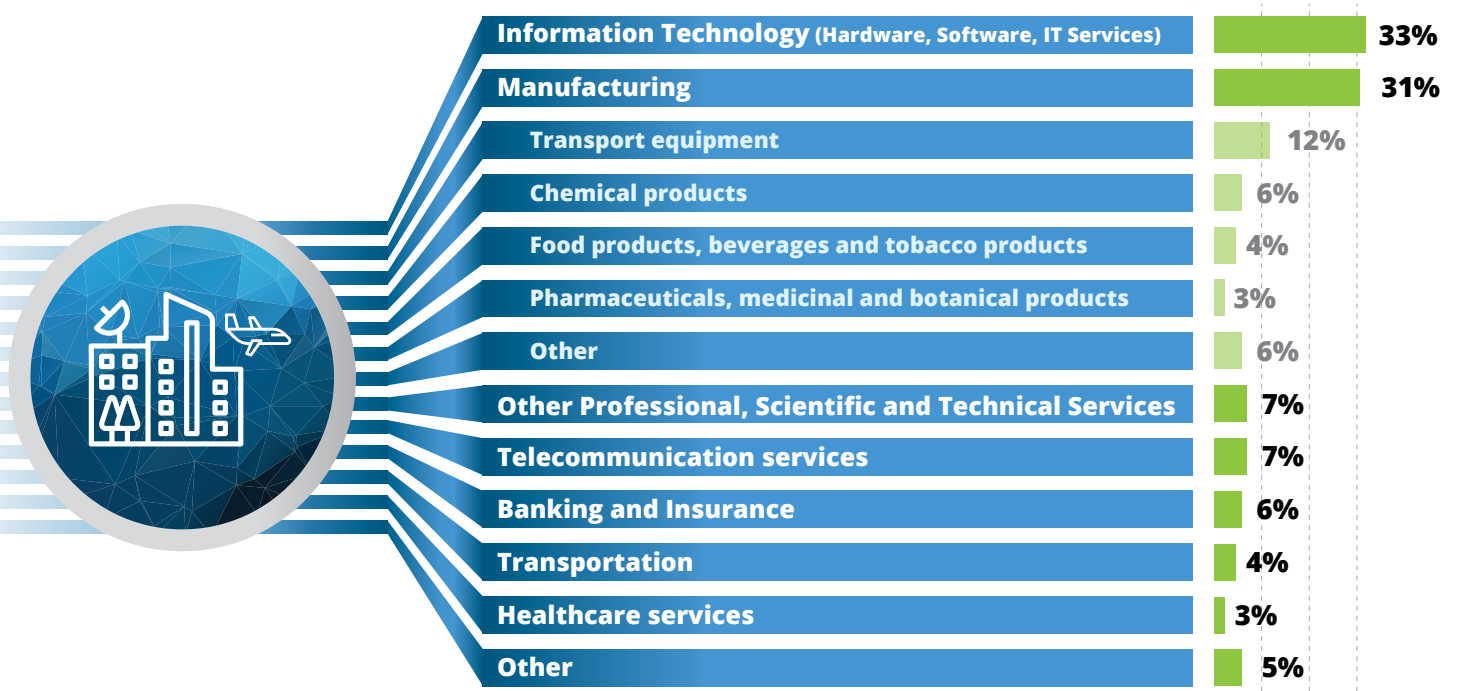
Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=81

Information Technology leading the investment

The companies participating in the study originate in very diverse industries, with Information Technology and Manufacturing (mainly automotive) being the most represented ones. The number of IT companies that participated in this year's survey was considerably higher than in the previous edition. The results show that several centres from IT companies have been established in Portugal from 2019 to 2021. In addition to these new centres from the IT industry, it was mentioned by companies from other industries that the number of FTEs working in IT roles is increasing. Portugal is definitely being recognized for its talent in technological areas.

Other professional, scientific and technical services, like Contact Centres or Telecommunication Services ranked third on the list with 7% of existing centres, followed by Banking and Insurance with 6%.

What is your organization's primary industry sector?

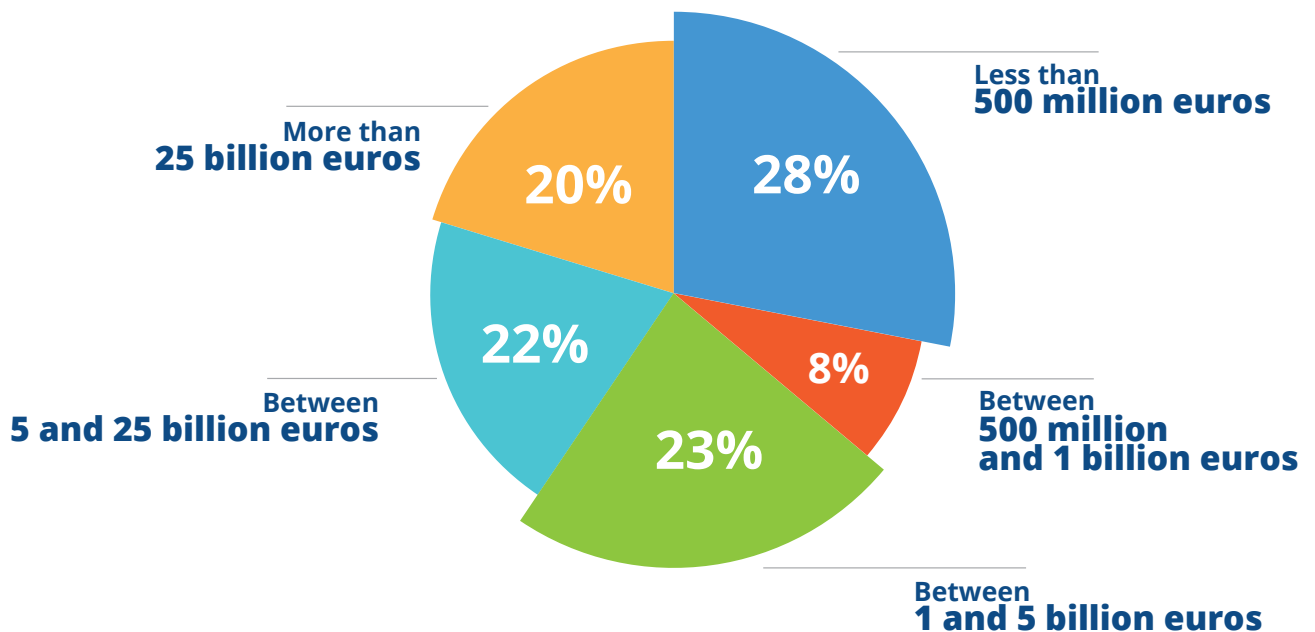


Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=81

Investors are mainly large multinational companies

The study shows that 63% of the respondents operating in Portugal have global annual revenues above 1 billion euros, with 20% having revenues exceeding 25 billion euros. This distribution is the same as in the previous study.

What is the annual revenue of your organisation?



Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=74



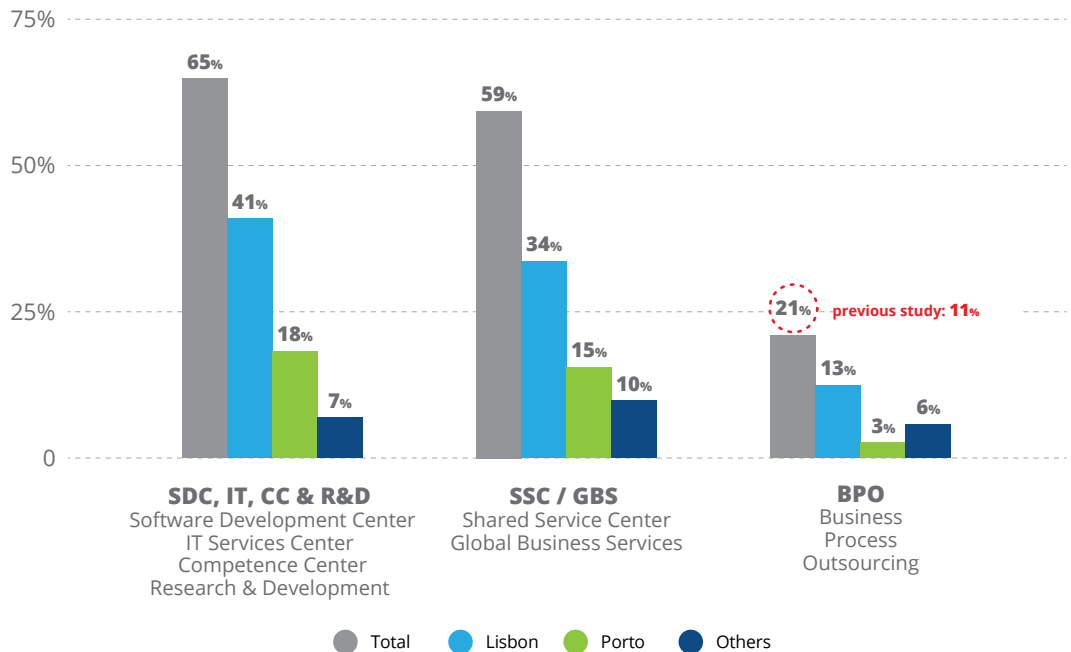
Coverage and scope

SURVEY RESULTS

Evolving towards greater value added activities

When asked to categorize the type of centre they've established, each company claims, on average, to fit into 2 of the options presented, technology-related being the most mentioned category - 65% of respondents. The study shows a trend towards greater specialization of service centres in Portugal. Some of the centres that were set up as Shared Service Centres have matured into Global Business Service Centres, and further consider themselves also as Competence Centre in some areas, since the scope of services initially offered grew from lower value-added activities to more specialised processes. This was mentioned by more than one of the interviewed companies. BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) centres also grew from 11% to 21% since the previous edition of this study.

Which of the following best describes your Service Centre?

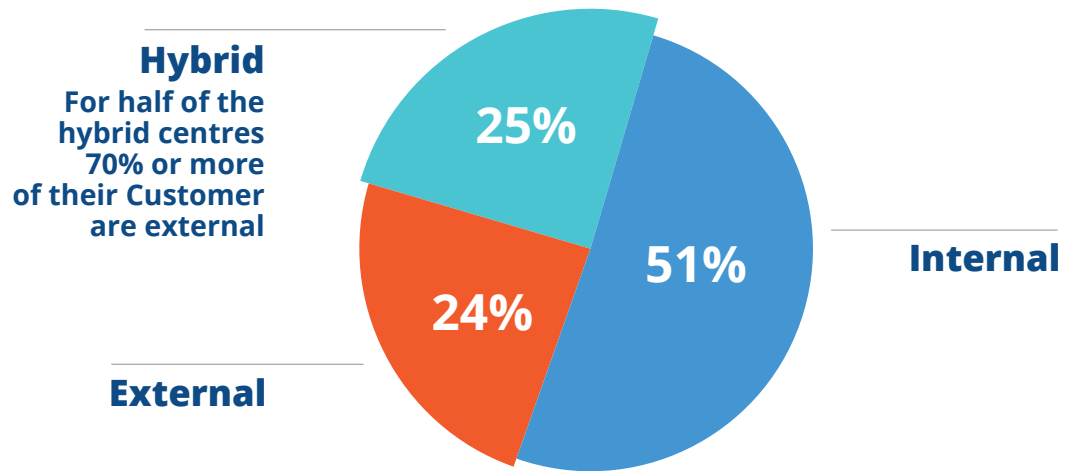


Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=71 / Multiple choice

The results also show that half of the sites work exclusively for the parent company and/or the group sites. The remaining ones are divided into service to external customers or hybrid models. The hybrid centres stated that, on average, 59% of their customers are external.

What type of customers is your Service Centre targeting?

Hybrid: What is the percentage of the centre's operations dedicated to external customers?

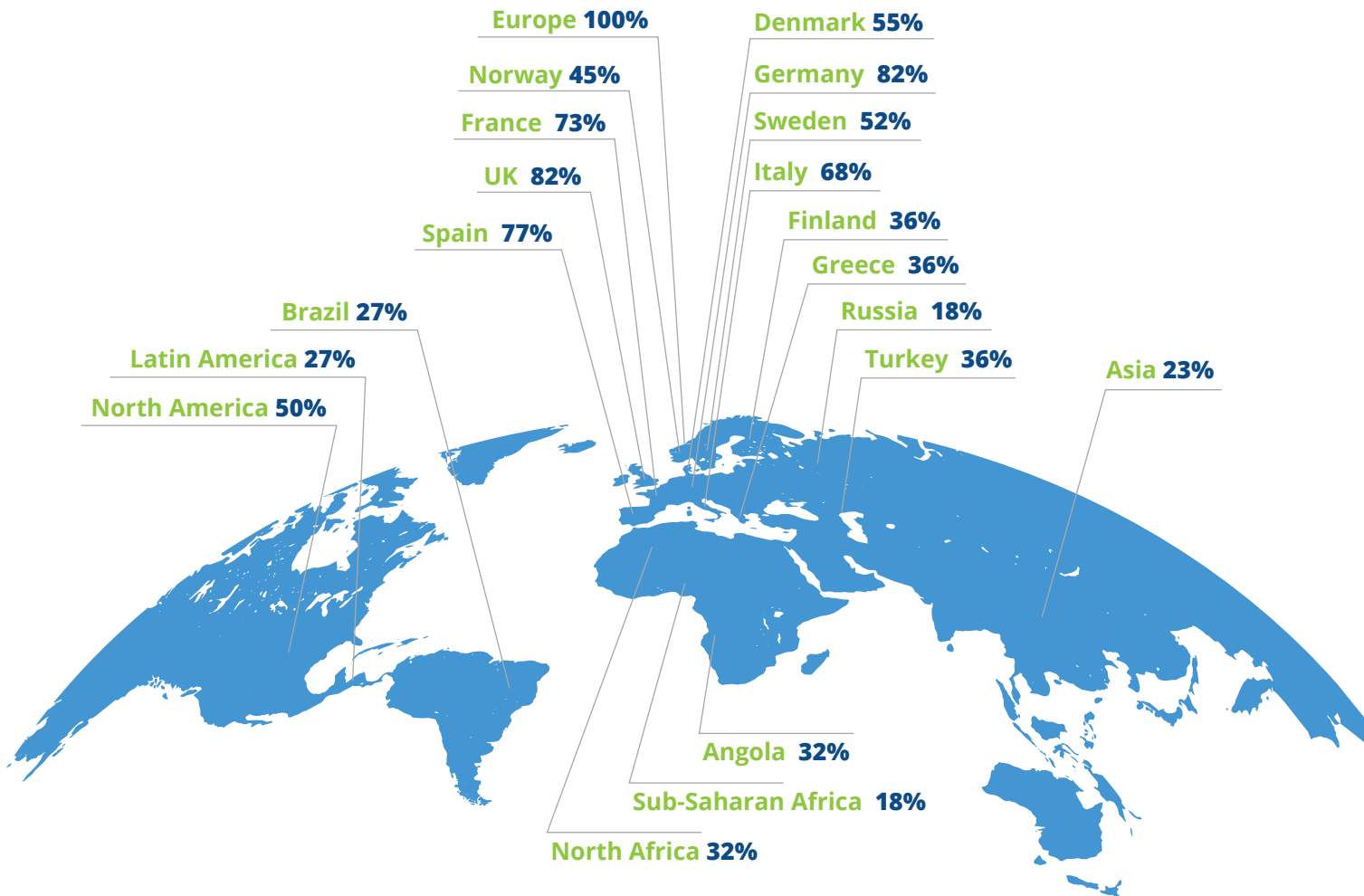


Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=71



Reinforcing the predominance of a nearshore priority, the results show that 100% of the service centres participating in the study provide services to Europe. However, other regions outside Europe are also covered, with a particular focus on North America.

Countries or regions served outside Portugal:



Others:

- Other countries in Western Europe 64%**
- Other countries in Central & Eastern Europe 55%**
- Other Portuguese-speaking countries 23%**

Source: Business Service Centres Survey

On a country level, Germany and the United Kingdom are the main markets covered, followed by Spain, France and Italy.

The centres are established in Portugal to respond to different geographies. According to the collected data, the vast majority of companies export nearly all of their services (90% or more).

Global coverage leads to Multilingual centres

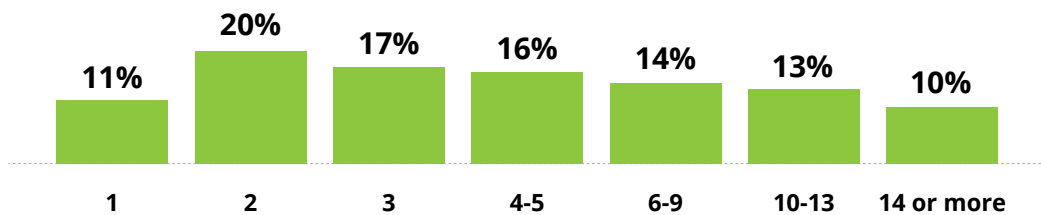
Global reach does require multilingual services and Portugal displays many centres operating as multilingual hubs. As mentioned by several participants in the study, this ability is one of Portugal's key assets.



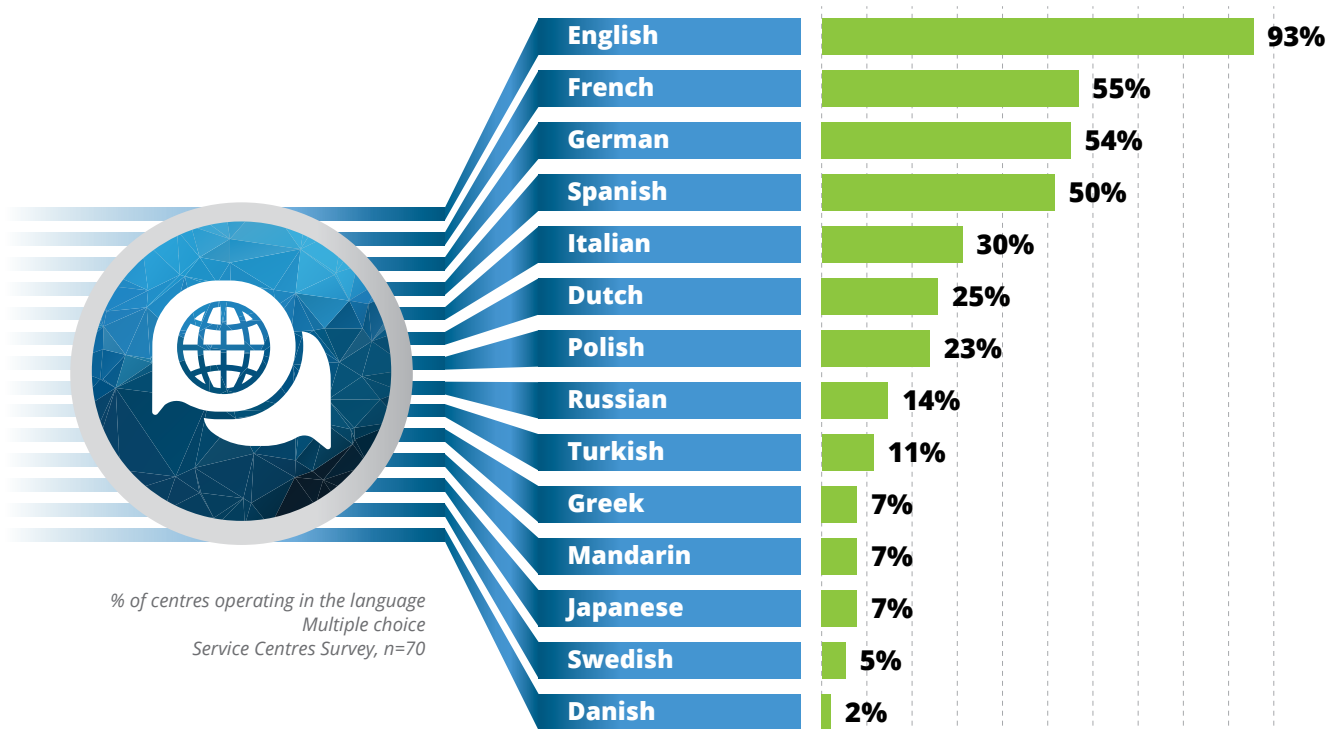
In how many languages does your Centre operate?

Average: 6 languages

English is a must-have language skill when providing services to several countries. Almost all the companies surveyed provide services in English (93%), followed by French, German and Spanish as the 2nd, 3rd and 4th most spoken languages, which is aligned with the top geographies covered, as previously mentioned.



How many FTEs provide services in the following languages?

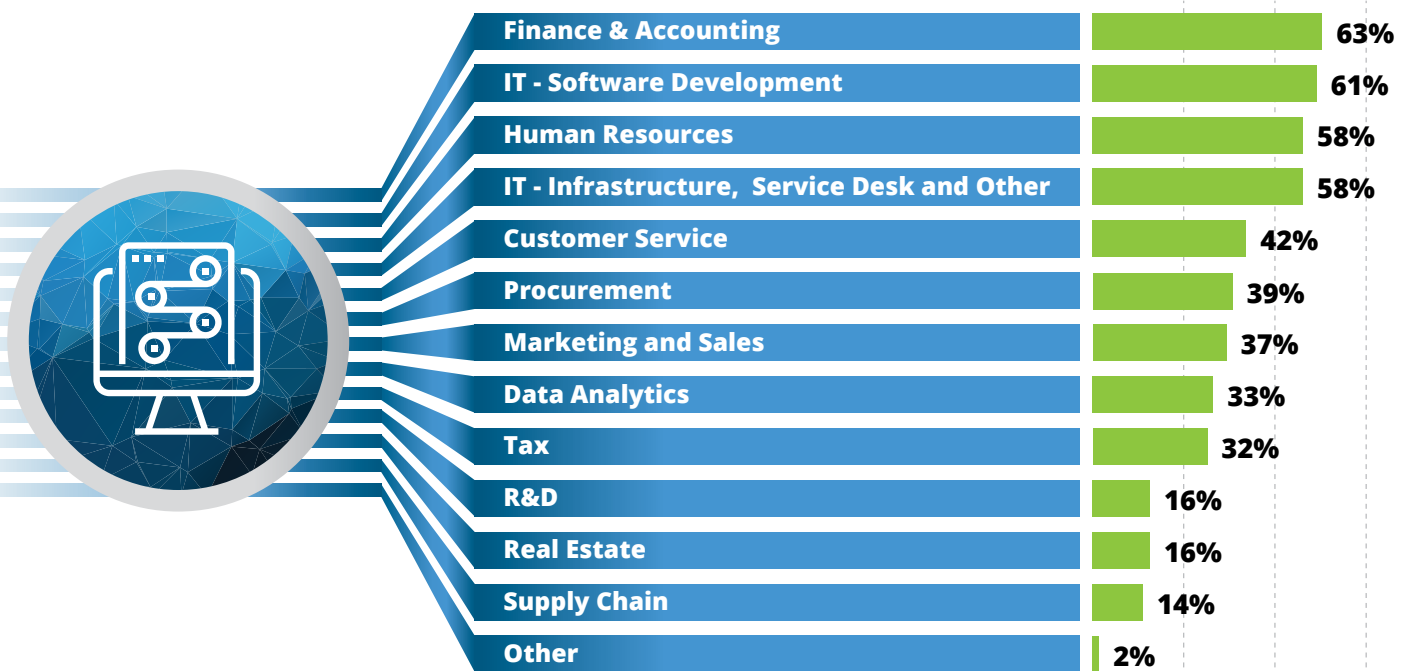


Most centres (89%) provide services in more than one language; 23% operate in 10 languages or more; and 4% in more than 20 languages.

Finance & Accounting and Software development are the most common functions

When large corporations decide to centralise administrative functions, they usually start with finance-related processes. Other common functions added to shared services are Human Resources processes. Results show that 63% of the centres in the study provide finance & accounting services and 58% provide human resources services. On the other hand, Portugal has been increasingly chosen as a location for IT services, such as software development, IT Infrastructure and service desk roles. Around 61% of the surveyed companies provide software development services and 58% provide other IT services.

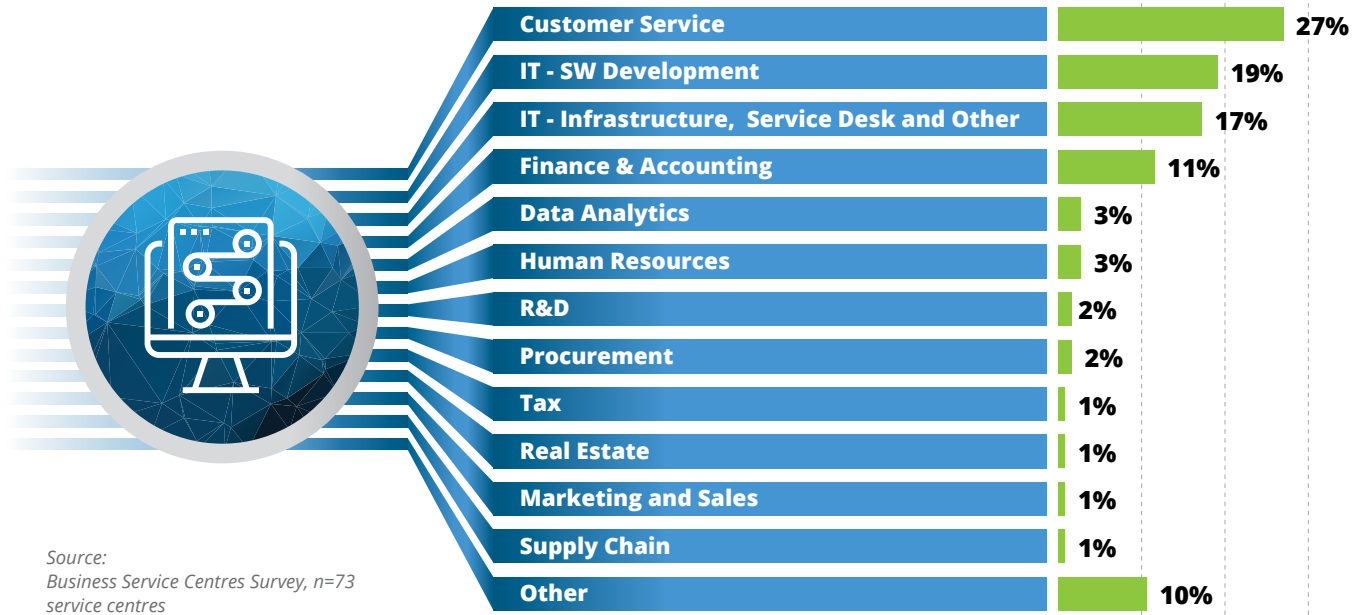
Does your centre perform the following functions?



Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=73 service centres

When analysing the number of FTEs performing each function, Customer Service has more people assigned, followed by IT and Finance & Accounting.

How many FTEs provide services in the following functions?

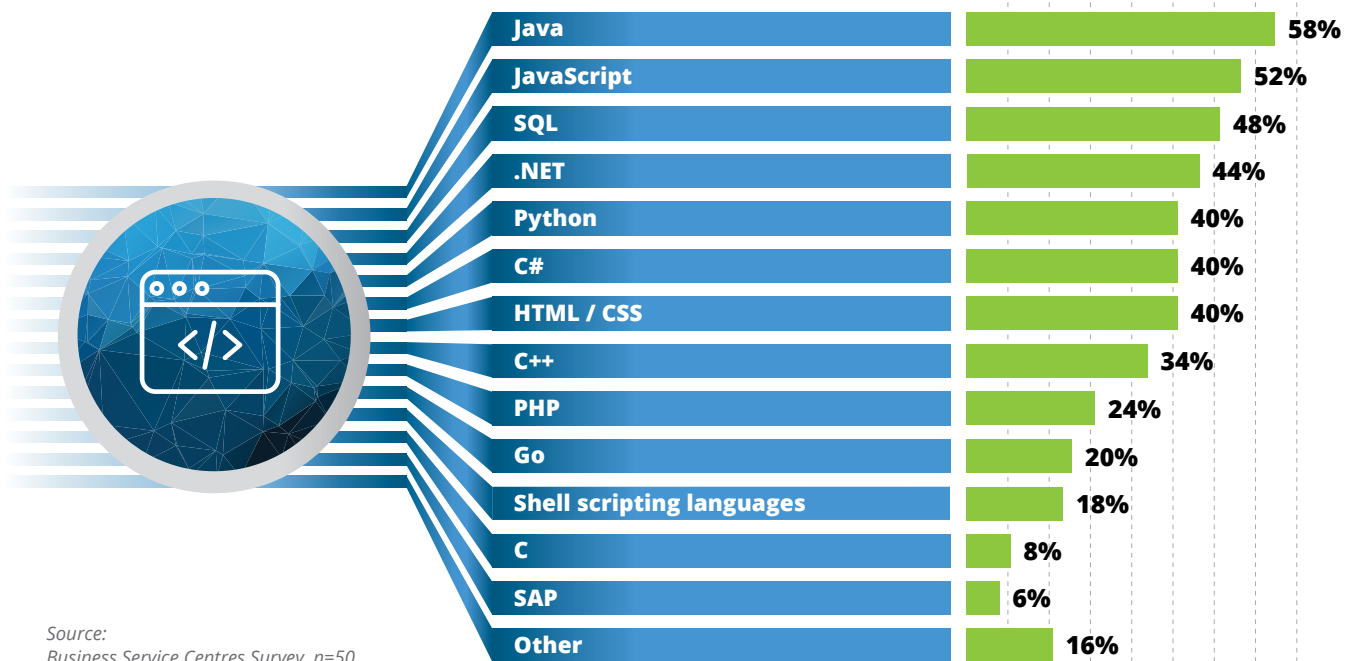


Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=73 service centres

Popular programming languages in IT centres

IT Centres commonly use multiple programming languages. The most common is Java, used by 58% of the centres participating in the study. The increasing use of Python ranks it in the Top 5, whereas in the previous edition of the study it ranked in the 8th position.

Which programming languages are used in your IT Service Centre?



Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=50

Several digital technologies are being implemented or planned

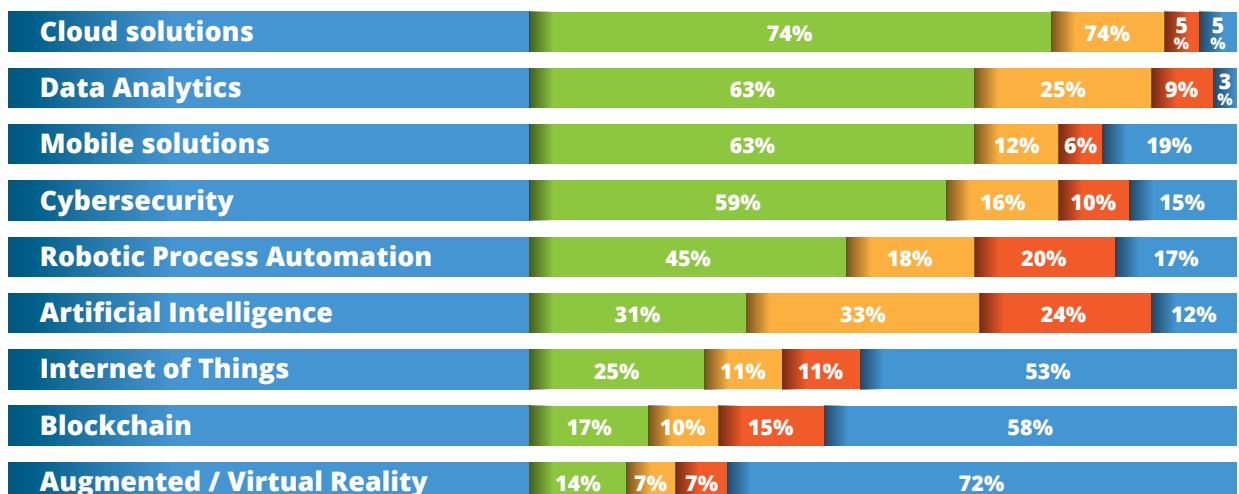
Regarding technologies employed in service centres, there are two angles: technologies as part of the services provided and technologies supporting processes like finance, human resources, procurement, among others provided by shared service centres.

At the start of their activities, service centres are focused on process and technology standardisation, since they usually migrate processes and systems from different group sites. As part of their optimisation initiatives, more established centres are undertaking their own digital transformation processes, focusing on technologies like Robotic Process Automation or Artificial Intelligence, among others. One common goal, in addition to cost reduction, is to automate repetitive tasks, freeing employees to engage in higher value-added activities. Software Centres and IT Competence Centres are specialised in certain technologies and follow the trends in their areas.

The organisations are at different stages of implementation of digital technologies. The results show that Cloud is the most implemented technology, followed by Data Analytics and Mobile Solutions. Data Analytics is also under implementation in 25% of the centres.

Artificial Intelligence and Robotic Process Automation were mentioned by several companies as areas under development or planned for a near future. According to the collected data, these are the technologies with the highest number of centres in an implementation phase, with 33% and 18% respectively.

Which of the following digital technologies are currently implemented, or planned to be implemented in your Service Centre to support centre operations?



● Implemented
 ● Under Implementation
 ● Planned for the next 12 months
 ● Not planned

Source: Business Service Centres Survey



As part of their own digital transformation, service centres are investing significantly in technologies like Robotic Process Automation or Artificial Intelligence, which will impact the scope of service centres in the near future.



Smart Automation in Business Services: A Success Story

The success story described demonstrates how automation can be achieved in a smart way, ensuring: re-engineering of processes to avoid the digitalisation of waste and the implementation of integrated digital solutions instead of ad-hoc tools.

Company and challenge

This case illustrates the operations of a business service belonging to a company in the financial sector. With the merger of the two platforms that provided support services to the entire group, the need arose to absorb the processes of 76 subsidiaries of the group. The first challenge faced at the time of this migration is related to the shortage of qualified talent and, on the other hand, to the growing pressure that this area feels regarding its digital transition. In addition, the fact that the NPS (Net Promoter Score) of this platform is historically very low highlighted the risks of this migration, which was anticipated to lead to higher costs and to worsen customer experiences.

Approach

The challenges were overcome through the implementation of a KAIZEN™ Transformation Programme with a special focus on the **Process Efficiency** pillar. To improve process efficiency, a process design tool was used, supported by a complete digital assessment.

Despite an already high degree of process digitalisation, during this exercise, opportunities were found, such as: processes with too many participants and validations; lack of systematic methods for identifying quality errors; or even the digitalisation of tasks that do not add value. To address these challenges in a holistic way, a **Digital Transformation Model** was designed, supported by three solution areas:

- **Artificial intelligence:** through the use of machine learning and complex algorithms to analyse data, it is possible to build a knowledge base and make predictions.
- **Business workflow automation** enables the automation of processes - increasing their agility and reliability.
- **Robotic process automation:** use of robots to automate back-office tasks - such as data extraction or form filling.

In addition to this pillar, the Continuous Improvement Model developed initiatives for process monitoring, measuring and improving the efficiency of the teams through OPE (Overall People Efficiency). Furthermore, digital routines of daily management of the teams were established with the definition of a format for NPS follow-up through a survey that provides the basis for the launch of improvement actions by the teams. To ensure process standardisation, more than 200 standards were created for critical tasks, which were integrated into a digital tool for training all the staff.

Results

The implemented solutions led to a **25% increase in capacity**. This increase in efficiency was used to absorb processes without expanding the team, representing an estimated gain of approximately 1.5 million euros. The customer experience element resulted in an increase in the NPS from -25 to 54, mirroring a reversal of the negative trend in satisfaction. In addition, the development of continuous improvement and indicator analysis skills fostered the cultural transformation of all teams, further developing a mindset more focused on the customer and on process efficiency.

Talent, the most valuable asset

SURVEY RESULTS

Higher education is a key aspect and multiculturality is growing

As previously mentioned, service centres have customers around the world, thus providing services in different languages. Recruiting foreign employees is very common and the results show that this practice is increasing - in the previous version of this study the percentage of foreign workers was 8% and this has now increased to 20%. In Lisbon, this figure goes up to 27%. There is gender balance among people working in service centres, with females representing 42% of the workers.

Female workers



42%

Employees with higher education



83%

Foreign workers



20%

Average age



34 years old

Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=46



The study highlights a key aspect of service centres' employees: a high percentage of workers with a higher education degree. Almost every centre has nurtured a partnership with local universities, creating synergies that facilitate the attraction and recruitment of highly qualified employees.

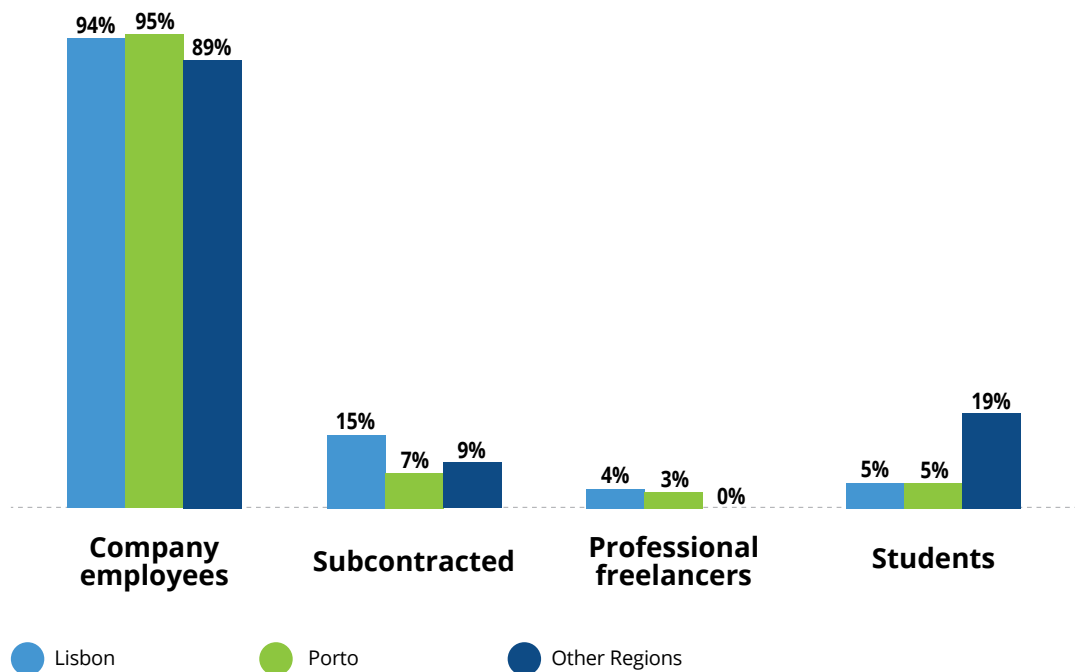
Centres prefer workers with strong ties to the company

Service centres make a strong investment in training and developing the skills of their workers. The results show that almost all surveyed service centres have a full-time employment relationship with their workers.

In Lisbon there are more subcontractors (15%) and outside the main metropolitan areas there is a strong presence of students (19%). Service centres close to renowned universities — in Aveiro or Braga, for instance — have internship programmes that attract students who can later become employees.

The use of freelancers is residual in Lisbon and Porto, and is non-existent in other regions.

What is the distribution of FTEs according to the following types of contract?



Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=63



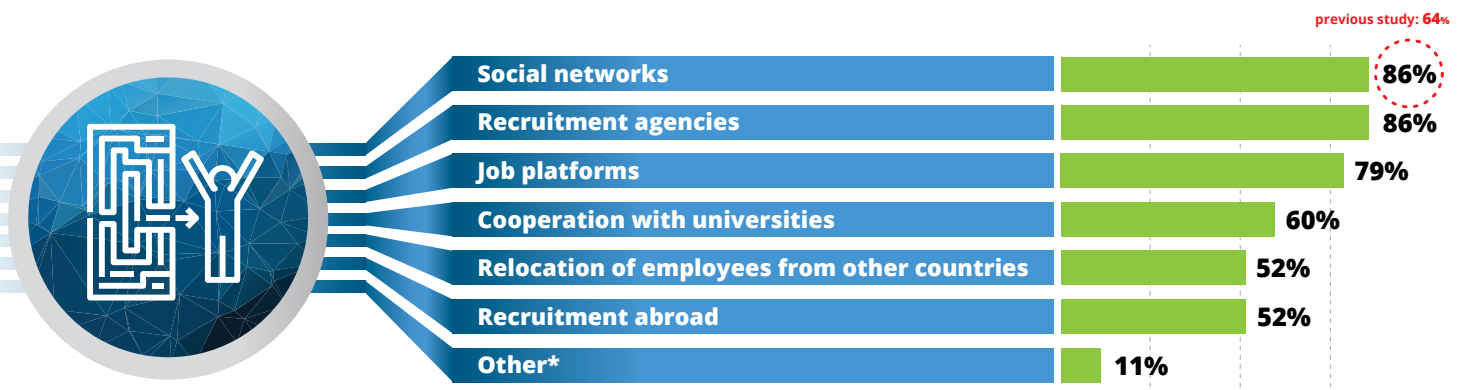
Talent management is a top priority for service centres. Interviewed participants mentioned that a strong company culture is very important in order to attract and retain their most valuable assets.

Social networks are gaining relevance as a recruitment method

Over the past 2 years, with all the physical constraints brought by the pandemic, companies' presence on social media has been key to attract new talent. Service centres made efforts to create, improve and boost their presence on social networks, namely on LinkedIn. Social networks as a recruitment method grew from 64% in the previous version of the study, to 86%. The support from recruitment agencies is equally important and one of the top approaches in use. Job search websites are the 3rd most preferred recruitment method, with a wide range of available options.

As mentioned before, cooperation with universities is an important source of talent acquisition, and different partnerships can be established, namely internship programmes. Recruiting abroad is usually handled directly by the Service Centre but can also be supported by the HR departments from parent companies.

What are the talent recruitment methods used by your organisation?



Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n= 62

*Associates recommendation, Internal Moves, Internal Recruitment, Referral bonus and Tech Conferences.

The average attrition rate is 14% (16% in Lisbon, 13% in Porto and 9% in other regions). This is something that companies know they must deal with, and one of the reasons why it is so important to focus on talent management, retention, and job attractiveness.



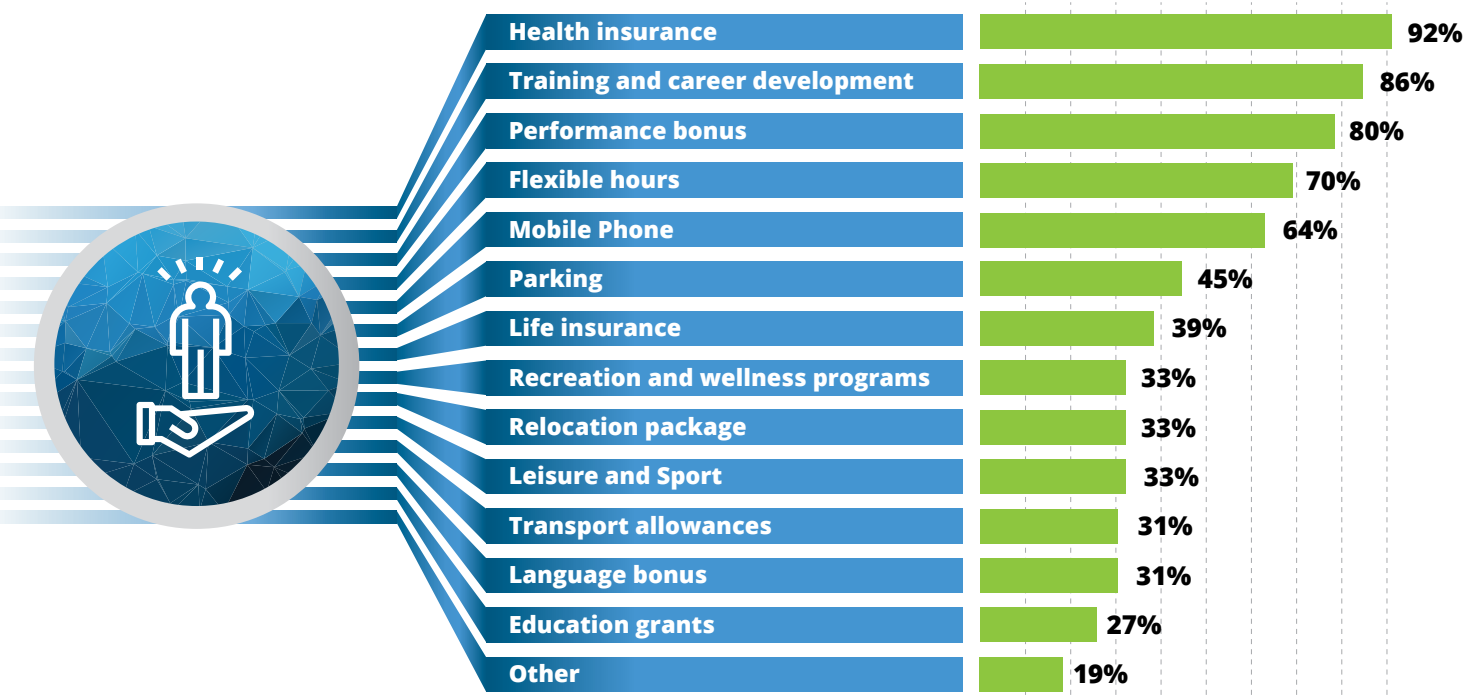
Adding benefits to salaries is part of the best practices

Benefits, as part of the compensation package, play an important role in employee attraction and retention. In Portugal, and according to the survey, the most common benefit is health insurance, followed by training and career development, performance bonus, flexible hours and a mobile phone.

“Happy employees make happy customers” was mentioned by a few interviewed managers, and the main goal is to increase the employees’ wellbeing and feeling of belonging.

When foreign language skills are required, a language premium is offered, varying from 5% up to 40% of the base salary. According to collected data, German, Scandinavian and Italian languages are the ones entailing a higher bonus.

What are the main benefits offered to your employees?



Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=64

Although Portugal holds a competitive cost advantage over other regions in Europe, the country is not considered a low-cost location by the companies interviewed in the study. It was mentioned that salaries are rising slightly: surveyed companies indicated an average salary increase close to 4% annually, over the past 3 years.

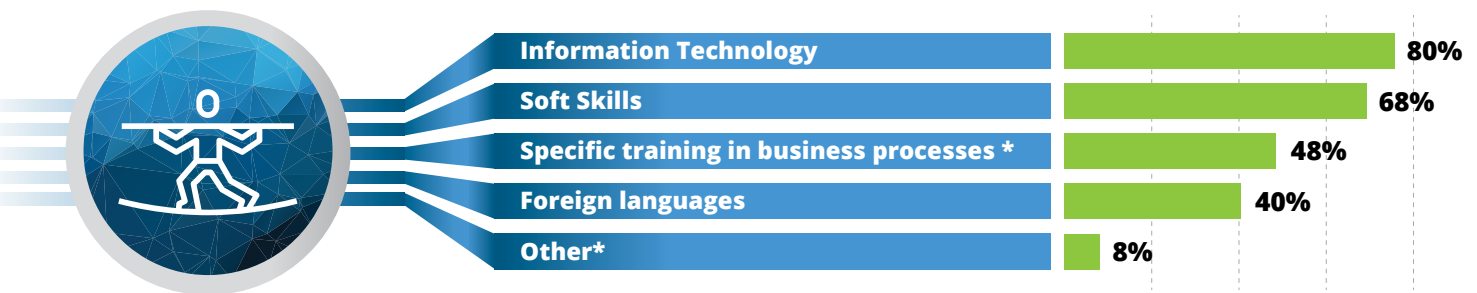
In terms of staff distribution, service centres have 71% of their workers in entry level and junior positions, 19% as team leaders and 10% as managers and executives.



Training is an ongoing investment in service centres

Reinforcing the trend towards an increasing presence of technological services in Portugal, 75% of the companies stated the need for IT training. Technology is not only the pillar of IT services centres but is also increasingly more embedded in the processes of any type of centre. If specific training is initially provided internally by the company, training in other areas, such as soft skills and non-business-related skills, is provided by external sources. A significant percentage of companies (40%) also mention foreign language as one of the training needs.

What are the main training needs?



**Technical training, Specific requirements for being NYSE listed company, Methodologies, Accounting and tax compliance, Internal technical/system/processes*

Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=63



Training is an important investment for every service centre. Training and career development plans were mentioned as one of the main benefits for employees. Service centres are not only an important talent employer but also a talent development entity.

Future: what's next

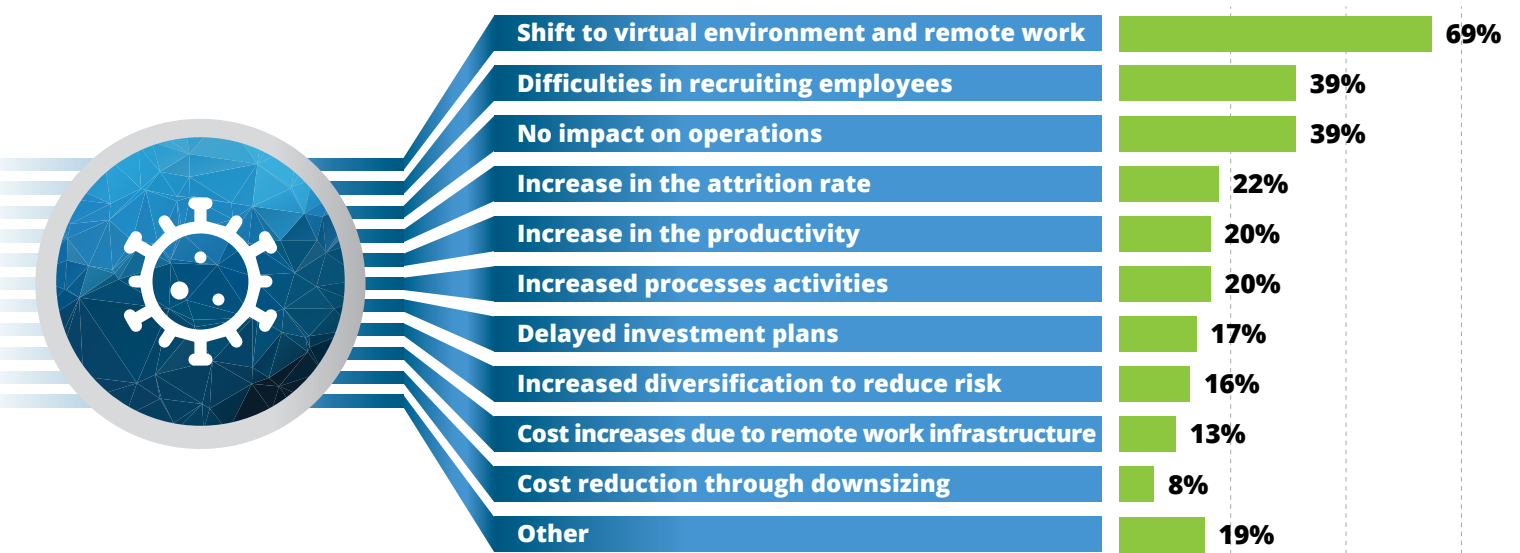
SURVEY RESULTS

Remote working models

When asked about the impact of the pandemic, interviewed companies said that they adapted very quickly and, in a short period of time, switched to remote work. It is important to note that 39% of respondents said there was no impact on operations. Social distance does, however, have an impact on recruitment processes and the attrition rate. It was more difficult to attract new talent virtually and with limited movement of people.

On the other hand, working from home, a benefit that some companies already offered before the pandemic, has become a common practice. The current practice is generally a combination of working from home with a few days a week at the office, for teamwork. This made it possible to work with people who live further away from the office, but keeping them involved and working as a team, an important aspect mentioned by the interviewees.

What was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the operations of your Service Centre?



Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=64

Working remotely is a strongly adopted trend, but the general opinion is that it should not be full time, since the physical presence in a common workplace contributes to strengthening team relationships, improves employee development and creates closer bonds with the company — all important aspects in this industry.



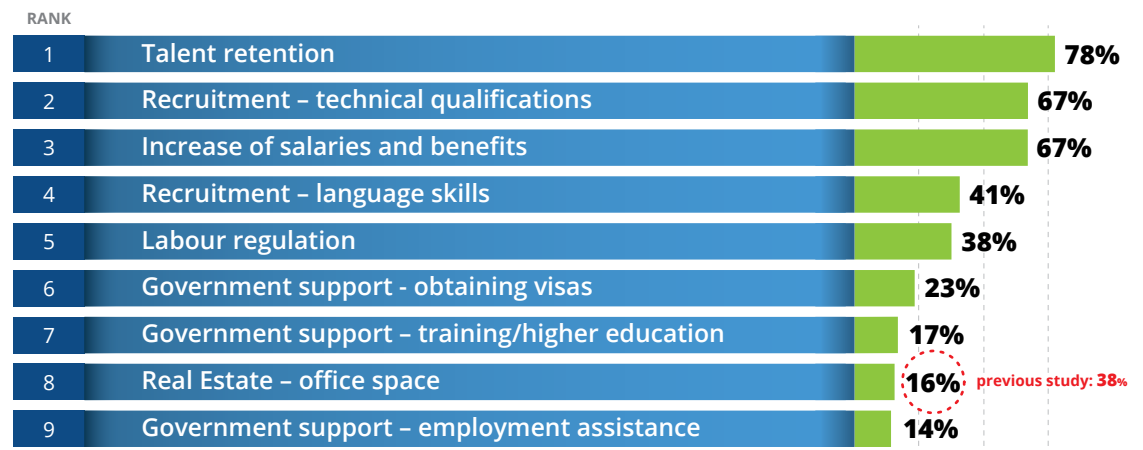
Challenging strategies for talent attraction and retention

Before the pandemic, talent retention was already the main challenge, as identified in the previous edition of this study, and it remains at the top of the concerns for managers and recruiters.

Hiring people with technical qualifications is also a challenge for 67% of the surveyed companies. This challenge is more noticeable in IT areas, according to them. Among the top 3 concerns are increasing salaries and competitive employee benefits.

With the increased prevalence of remote work, office space loses relevance (18% below the results of the previous study).

In your opinion, what are the main challenges your organisation is currently facing?



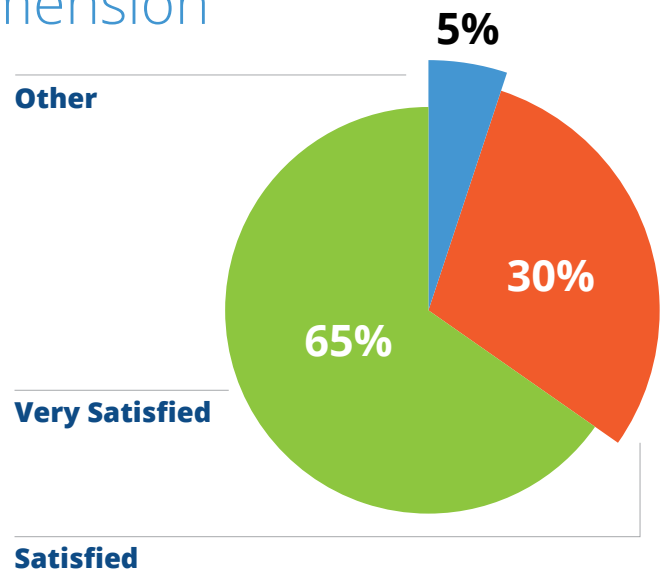
Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=64



Strategies to deal with the need for qualified talent and concerns about talent retention include moving away from major cities to establish new offices or to hire people working mostly remotely. The lesser-known brands in the talent market also focus on employer branding initiatives to become more dynamic and present on the radar of their future employees.

The success of service centres in Portugal will promote an increase in scope and dimension

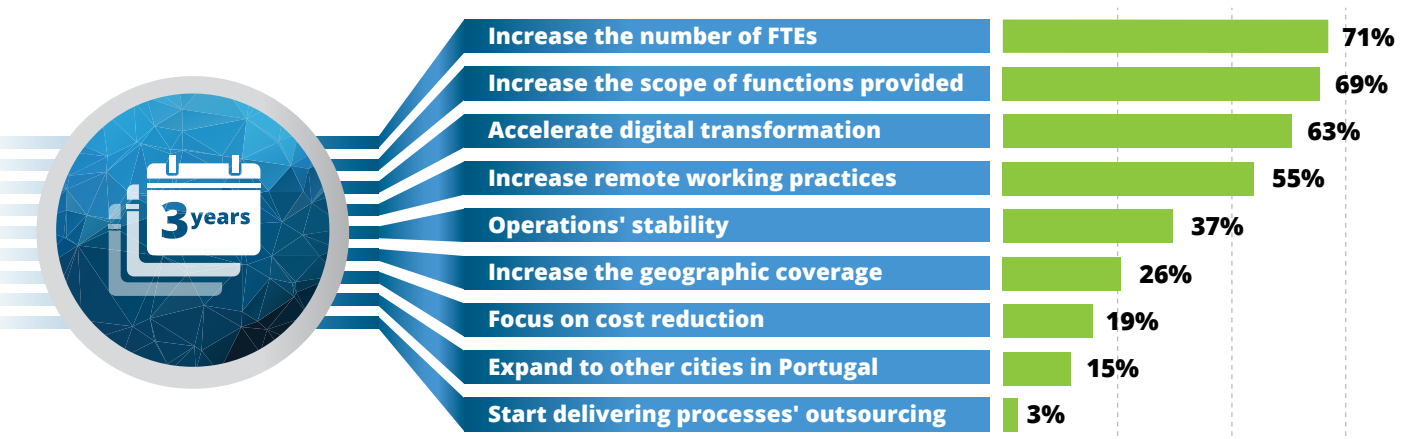
In your opinion, how satisfied is your organisation with their Service Centres in Portugal?



Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=63

Among the companies surveyed, 95% are satisfied or very satisfied with their service centres in Portugal. Looking ahead, most companies are planning to increase operations. Around 70% of respondents said they plan to increase the number of workers and/or the scope of services provided. The intention to provide a more comprehensive set of services does not always imply recruiting. It was mentioned in some interviews that the objective is to automate the most time-consuming tasks and to start offering activities with greater added value. Around 63% of companies mentioned that digital transformation is in their plans for the immediate future, and this includes Robotic Process Automation.

How are you planning to develop your Service Centres in Portugal over the next 3 years?



Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=62

Other relevant observations: 55% of the companies plan to increase remote work practices and 15% plan to expand to other cities. This sustains the strategies to attract and retain talent.

Talent quality is the key to success

As mentioned earlier, one of the main reasons to choose Portugal to establish a service centre is the quality of available talent. According to the study participants, Portuguese talent is recognised as one of the main success factors. Not only are their technical skills valued, but also their flexibility, commitment, problem solving capabilities and the open mindset of the teams. This impacts on the services provided, leading to high levels of performance and enabling the successful operation of the centres.

What are the main factors for the success of your Service Centres in Portugal?



Source: Business Service Centres Survey, n=40



CASE STUDIES





Decentralising from major cities and working remotely

Established in Lisbon since 2019, Air Liquide Europe Business Services (ALEBS) currently operates in two locations with 320 employees, providing finance and accounting process services to several countries across Europe.

In 2019, Air Liquide decided to centralise a few business functions, aiming for standardisation, efficiency and more robust processes. The centre was established in Lisbon with 111 people in a very smooth setup process, benefiting from the long-standing operation of Air Liquide in Portugal.

ALEBS started its activity with accounting and finance processes serving 11 countries and since then the focus has been to expand to other geographies. Currently, the centre works with more than 20 countries — mostly European — in the same area of expertise. In 2022, ALEBS will be adding human resources to its scope of services while continuing to broaden its geographical reach, namely in Africa and the Middle East.

Due to the difficulty in hiring qualified labour to meet its demands in the Lisbon district, Air Liquide chose to open a second office in the city of Tomar, presently employing 90 workers.

“We needed to recruit 100 people and we had to start thinking outside the box to find another solution. What if instead of continuing to attract people to Lisbon, we go after talent and open in a different location?” Isabel Duarte – Business Services Director

Attracting international talent (10% of the whole recruitment) to Tomar is easier, as the cost of living is lower than in large urban centres. The agile and generous support of the local government, the railway station, the city's proximity to Lisbon and the positive impact that Air Liquide will have on the city were decisive for the choice of Tomar.

“We think that of the 4 cities we studied, Tomar is the one where we can make a difference and be a company with weight in the community” Isabel Duarte – Business Services Director

As a result of the pandemic, and after having everyone working from home, the working model is now hybrid. The requirement is that each team works together at the office once a week, reinforcing team spirit and engagement with the company. This is key to reducing turnover.

The GBS is still at an early stage and expanding. Technologically, the focus is to standardise processes. Process automation is a goal, but first every process must be harmonised and optimised.

The operation has received highly positive feedback from the group and this was a key factor behind the expansion of its scope to Africa. Teamwork drives this success.

“In Air Liquide we have strong collaboration within the team, we have an open mind and the mental agility to search for solutions and that is a criterion in recruitment” Isabel Duarte – Business Services Director

Air Liquide GBS in Portugal

Establishment: **2019**

Number of employees: **320**

Locations: **Lisbon and Tomar**

Type of centre: **Global Business Services**

Functions: **Finance, accounting and treasury**

Why Portugal?

Main location decision factors:

- Existence of an Air Liquide operation located in Portugal
- Existence of a cluster of Business Service Centres
- Talent





Growing at a fast pace

Established in 2018, Critical TechWorks is a result of a joint venture between the BMW Group and Critical Software, created to be BMW's arm for automotive software solutions.

Portugal was selected, not from a list of countries, but because it was there that BMW found the company that meets all the requirements. The choice of the Portuguese company Critical Software was driven by expertise. Critical TechWorks is a software development centre working as a BMW department, covering its digital needs. The growth over the last 3 years was fast and huge, starting with 100 workers and presently with more than 1500. In 2019 it had one unit (a set of teams) working in factory automation with one or two BMW factories, and presently it works with all of them. All solutions developed by Critical TechWorks are aimed for the entire group and have a global application.

The company covers different technological domains like cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, robotics and advanced analytics, just to mention a few. As part of the recent evolution, and due to the trustful relationship with the BMW Group, Critical TechWorks was challenged to develop new domains, in particular the trendiest area in the automotive sector — autonomous driving.

Finding a high number of people in this technological field is not always easy, but Critical TechWorks has been gaining awareness in the market, and its culture regarding employee autonomy and social responsibility is very attractive for candidates. Employees come from several cities in the country, not exclusively from the main urban centres where Critical TechWorks is located. Most of the team is Portuguese, but the company is also bringing in talent from abroad. The working model is flexible and working remotely is part of the company's day-to-day life, although physical presence in the office — at least a few days a week — is essential so that teams can meet and work together.

"Success is due mainly to the quality of the people we hire with good training, but it is also developed in-house with several programmes we have to train people in the technical skills we need" Paulo Guedes - CFO

The company's culture is based on a flat organization structure with no strong hierarchical power. Teams have the autonomy to make their own decisions and are responsible for what they are developing, thus enabling greater agility in the delivery of solutions.

"There are no approval or decision loops here. We deliver very quickly and very quickly we test and fail, and do it again and do it better, doing things that are relevant to the group." Paulo Guedes - CFO



Critical TechWorks GBS in Portugal

Establishment: **2018**

Number of employees: **+1500**

Locations: **Porto and Lisbon**

Type of centre: **Software development centre**

Why Portugal?

Main location decision factors:

- Technical expertise
- Agility
- Culturally compatible

faurecia

Strong investment in recruiting and growth outside major cities

Faurecia Group is a French global automotive supplier, headquartered in Nanterre, Paris. In 2022, Faurecia ranked in the Top 7 automotive suppliers for the European Market and #1 for vehicle interiors and emission control technology. One in two vehicles is equipped by Faurecia.

The idea of an investment in a Global Business Services centre (GBS) emerged in 2017. Portugal already had a small shared service centre with 70 workers, created to meet the accounting needs of France and England. Portugal was by then well established to be considered as a GBS location. Presently, Faurecia has 5 GBS centres, the largest one being located in Portugal. This centre is responsible for large digitalization, automation and robotics projects for the entire group.

The first step was to centralise all finance activities, excluding tax. In this area Portugal serves all Western European and North African countries, managing around 45% of Group's cash and results. In 2019, sales and purchasing were added, serving the whole of Europe. In 2021, Faurecia started a 2-year project to develop an area of support for the controlling function for Europe. The centre also includes a logistics activities area to serve Europe, and several IT areas for worldwide service.

Faurecia has implemented strategies for talent acquisition and retention to respond to the centre's growth. They have partnerships with recruitment companies and universities (internship programmes and training) and have created a talent acquisition area. They also encourage and support their employees on a wide range of opportunities for career development. The pandemic has reinforced flexibility in terms of working from home 1 or 2 days/week.

"Attracting people is easy, retaining them is a different story, especially in this area of business services very present in Portugal. One way Faurecia retains talent is by giving its employees the opportunity to expand themselves, allowing for career progression, both in Portugal and internationally, in GBS or in an operational area." Cristela Ferreira, GBS Director.

The location in the Aveiro District allowed Faurecia to decentralize and seek talent outside the major cities. The GBS location enables recruitment in more inland cities in Portugal, increasing the talent pool of candidates.

The centre has been growing for the past 4 years and will continue to grow in 2022, with an estimated 750 employees by the end of the year. This growth has led to a new investment by Faurecia in Portugal with the construction of a new GBS Building, to be ready by 2024, in Santa Maria da Feira, adding to the already existing eight industrial plants located around the country.

"We haven't stopped growing. This is due to the trust we are establishing with the parent company and to the benefit brought by the GBS in terms of compliance, financial data control, agility and quality of the information provided." Cristela Ferreira, GBS Director.



Faurecia GBS in Portugal

Establishment: **2017**

Number of employees: **523**

Locations: **Aveiro District**

Type of centre: **Global Business Services / IT Centre / Competence Centre**

Functions: **F&A, logistic, sales support and procurement (55%) / IT (40%)**

Why Portugal?

Main location decision factors:

- Language skills
- Continuous improvement mindset
- Qualified young talent



Attracting talent across the country

Fujitsu is a global supplier of information technologies with a wide range of products and services, including hardware, software, consulting, projects and managed services in several technological areas. It currently has 126,000 employees supporting customers in 180 countries.

Fujitsu has been in Portugal for over 40 years. In 2005, benefitting from the accumulated knowledge and skills, the company decided to start serving clients abroad. The initiative came from the operation in Portugal. It started with 8 people providing service desk capabilities, it kept growing and today it is a Global Delivery Centre with around 2,000 employees. The operation is carried out from their largest hub in Lisbon, from Braga and throughout the country. Fujitsu has facilities in Beja, Viseu and Porto, which support people who work from these regions. Retaining talent is a management priority and has helped people establish a strong bond with the company.

“The pandemic has changed the paradigm a bit. We are now scattered all over the country.” Carlos Barros, Managing Director

The operation in Portugal serves around 70 customers spread across 150 countries, supporting 750,000 users. In addition to external customers, which represent 85% of the business, they serve other Fujitsu subsidiaries internationally.

There are a number of IT activities that are managed from Portugal, namely the service desk, and there are specialised competence centres spread around the world, as well as in Portugal – for analytics, automation, cybersecurity and blockchain, among others.

“In Portugal we are strong in terms of service desk and we are recognised as the best operation within the Fujitsu world. In addition, we are evolving into areas such as automation, voice recognition (...) We are developing some layers of innovation on top of what is our core” Carlos Barros, Managing Director

Fujitsu has a cloud competence centre that supports southern European countries, helping customers to migrate or operate application and data platforms. Cybersecurity is also an area of strong focus and the operation in Portugal was able to stand out. The company has also been developing the field of process reengineering and, following trends, the areas of automation, machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) — which are increasingly adopted and growing within the group.

“We already have small labs and we are integrating machine learning into our services and AI into our solutions” Carlos Barros, Managing Director

According to the Managing Director of Fujitsu in Portugal, the success is fundamentally due to the quality of the people, language skills and also to soft skills — characteristics of the Portuguese related to quality of services provision, the ability to adapt to other cultures and flexibility. The quality of the communications infrastructure is also a very relevant factor, especially when the service is provided from different locations in the country.



Fujitsu GDC in Portugal

Establishment: **2015**

Number of employees: **2,000**

Locations: **Lisbon and Braga**

Type of centre: **Global Delivery Centre**

Functions: **Service Desk**

Why Portugal?

Main location decision factors:

- Language skills
- Quality of resources
- Communications infrastructure
- Geographic location



Centralize and standardise processes

GKN Automotive is a British multinational manufacturer of drive systems for the automotive industry, and a supplier in 3 main areas: essential driveline components, all-wheel drive systems and electric drive systems. The company has 27.000 employees, working across 20 countries.

In 2020, shortly before the beginning of the pandemic, GKN set up a Global Business Service centre in Portugal, in the city of Porto. Initially they started by providing services to Poland and Sweden. Even in a pandemic context, the goals of expanding geographic coverage were met and, in 2 years, the centre expanded its services to the United States, UK, Spain, Mexico, Italy, France, Germany and Slovenia, and it is expected to reach Turkey in 2022.

“One of the factors that influenced the choice of Portugal was its geographic location, the ease of finding good talent with good technical and language skills, and acceptable costs. A calm, peaceful country, with good infrastructure and good technology.” Victor Alves, GBS Director

The GBS provides European and American countries with finance & accounting, human resources and procurement services. The centre started its activity with 30 employees and currently has 300 from 23 nationalities. Also in Porto, there is a team that works as an IT centre of excellence, and who is functionally integrated into the company's global IT structure.

One of the major projects that the centre in Porto is currently handling the standardisation of processes and computing applications for the various countries.

“At the moment we are consolidating and then we will start to standardise because the ways of working in each country are different. We are already implementing some technologies that have allowed us to standardise processes. Robotics and automation will also be fundamental for this project.” Vitor Alves, GBS Director

Starting the implementation of a new centre in the midst of a pandemic was a major challenge, particularly with regard to hiring and retaining people. GKN has been looking for innovative and attractive ways to better hire and retain. Partnerships with universities, the use of professional networks and international hiring have been key to meeting recruitment needs.

GKN plans to gradually expand the scope of functions within each of its areas of activity.



GKN's GBS in Portugal

Establishment: **2020**

Number of employees: **300**

Locations: **Porto**

Type of centre: **Global Business Services**

Main Functions: **Finance & Accounting,
Procurement, HR**

Why Portugal?

Main location decision factors:

- Geographic location
- Technical skills
- Language skills
- Cost
- Good infrastructure

HCL

A reference in digital transformation

HCL Technologies is a global technology company with more than 40 years, offering an integrated portfolio of products and services through three business units: IT and Business Services, Engineering and R&D Services, Products and Platforms. HCL is focused on supporting big companies in their digital journey. The company has its headquarters in India and has around 198.000 employees working across 52 countries.

In 2019, HCL implemented a Global Delivery Centre in Lisbon, aimed at serving multinational companies worldwide, in more than 16 different languages. This centre is perceived by HCL as the one exhibiting the best global performance.

Portugal was chosen as it is very well connected with the roots of HCL, considering the past of the Portuguese people in India, its well-developed technological infrastructure and fundamentally, the availability of highly qualified resources, with excellent language skills and good universities, providing a capable workforce.

The centre in Portugal carries out activities of Remote Support Services (technical support to different devices), Service Delivery Management, Sales Support, Reporting and Data Analytics Services, and Automation.

HCL believes that satisfied employees provide a better service to its customers and for this reason finds it essential to work towards continuously improving its human resources policy, to facilitate the attraction and retention of talent.

“If people are satisfied and well trained, customers will feel it (...) HCL has been featured in the list of the ‘World’s Best Employers’. We are attractive to work with, as being number 1 Best Employer in Professional Services according to Forbes” Adolfo Asensio, Country Manager

HCL understands that flexibility is very important for employees, allowing for remote work beyond the pandemic, but the company has been working on the implementation of hybrid models, ensuring that teams can work together, which HCL finds important for business development and success.

HCL considers that a contributing factor to success is their commitment to exceed customer expectations. The technical qualifications and language skills of their employees are key success factors. Another aspect that contributes to the success of the centre in Lisbon is that Portugal’s time zone has an adequate time difference between the centre and the countries they work with.

The pandemic has accelerated the digitalisation of customers — not only in Portugal, but globally — and, in order to keep up with their needs, HCL has invested heavily in training programmes to develop the digital skills of the Lisbon team.

HCL intends to maintain the Global Delivery Centre’s position in Portugal as number 1 in Europe and to increase the scope of digital services provided, namely in Engineering, Process Automation, IoT or Analytics.



HCL GDC in Portugal

Establishment: **2019**

Number of employees: **400+**

Locations: **Lisbon**

Type of centre: **Digital Process Operations,
IT Services Centre**

Why Portugal?

Main location decision factors:

- Great perception about the country in most of the European clients
- Portugal has invested in digital transformation
- Technical and Language skills



Entrepreneurship and innovation culture

Natixis in Portugal is a Centre of Excellence for the Global Financial Services, the global arm of Groupe BPCE with two main brands and businesses: Natixis Investment Managers and Natixis Corporate and Investment Banking. Global Financial Services are present in 35 countries and count 12.500 employees.

In 2017, Natixis launched its IT centre of expertise in Portugal, in the city of Porto. The idea of creating an IT centre of expertise emerged as part of a strategic plan to provide all IT functions in-house, which until then were dispersed and provided by outsourcing companies. The goals were to optimise costs, minimise operational risks and internalise technological knowledge, which is important from a business digitalisation perspective.

“The centre is fully involved in the new strategic plan, in projects that are based on digitisation, process automation and many topics related to robotics and AI.” Nádía Leal Cruz – Communication and Marketing Manager at Natixis.

The choice of Portugal to install the IT centre of expertise was based on 4 factors: education, innovation & entrepreneurship, cultural proximity to France and international mindset. The other options, in addition to Portugal, were Romania, Poland and Spain.

The growth was fast and in 3 years the company created an IT team of about 800 people, which required a great recruitment effort that benefited from the dynamism of the brand in professional and social networks, the approach to universities and technological communities. Natixis has also resorted to international recruitment and currently has around 28 different nationalities working at the Porto centre.

The centre serves 38 countries and covers all IT functions: development in different technologies, quality assurance, data management, business intelligence, among others. In 2020, as a result of the success of the Porto centre, Natixis decided to invest in new areas, opening a new department: BSA – Bank Support Activities. Together with Porto Business School, the company created a scholarship programme to find talent with some experience in banking and willingness to consolidate knowledge in areas of expertise, for example, risk analysis. Natixis expects to continue to grow at the same pace as in recent years and intends to diversify its areas of activity, both in IT and BSA.

At the core of the centre’s success is the Portuguese talent, the ability to adapt and the culture, which has been translated into agility, flexibility and informality.

“We were able to recruit employees who realised they were part of something being built from scratch. It is true that we are a multinational company, but at that stage, when we began, we were a start-up. And we naturally managed to cultivate that entrepreneurial spirit, which was part of Natixis’ ‘culture book’.”
Nádía Leal Cruz – Communication and Marketing Manager at Natixis

In order to continue to attract and retain talent, Natixis invests a great deal in continuous training, both in soft and hard skills, in several fringe benefits, flexibility of working hours and inspiring facilities, which have a great location and a disruptive concept.



Natixis Centre in Portugal

Establishment: **2017**

Number of employees: **1,600**

Locations: **Porto**

Type of centre: **IT centre of expertise**

Main functions: **All IT, Banking Support Activities**

Why Portugal?

Main location decision factors:

- Education
- Innovation and entrepreneurship
- Integration and proximity to France
- International mindset



Becoming process specialists

With over 100 years of experience in manufacturing products for the automotive industry, SEG Automotive is a global lead supplier of powertrain components for conventional cars, hybrid vehicles, and electrification. SEG Automotive is present in 14 countries and has around 7,000 employees.

A new Shared Services Centre was born in Portugal, in 2016, with the purpose of being a global services provider for Bosch Starter Motors and Generators. After two years, as part of the business strategy, the Bosch engine solutions division completed its sale and SEG Automotive emerged as a new brand.

The choice of Portugal to host the Shared Services Centre was the result of an analysis that considered more than ten locations. The decision was based on the good classification of the country in a set of criteria, such as the competitive cost of labour, availability of qualified human resources, foreign languages proficiency, accessibility of infrastructure, national security conditions, business environment and quality of life.

The team in Portugal provides services to SEG Automotive entities in 14 different locations across a variety of critical business processes, including: finance, controlling, purchasing, commercial coordination, HR services, Information Technology (IT), legal, compliance, marketing, and communication.

"I like to say that we provide services in all areas that are not production or R&D" Albano Magalhães, General Manager SEG Automotive

In terms of human resources policies, in addition to various benefits, internal and external training and flexibility for the employee, the company works with variables such as team spirit and purpose, which have been reflected in the ability to adapt to the needs of clients, particularly during the pandemic. Nowadays it has 160 employees from 18 different nationalities and provides services in 14 languages.

With the aim of becoming an innovator not just with its products but also thanks to its processes, SEG Automotive Portugal has been developing and investing in the area of automation.

The intent is that the implementation of new and automated processes is first applied in the service center, so that later they can be proposed to the rest of the organization, whenever they prove to be good business cases. For example, until now, the automation of these processes made it possible to remove the most basic tasks from people and to upgrade to tasks with higher added value, namely in decision making. This has allowed them to become process experts rather than mere performers.

As future plans, SEG Automotive is developing new business areas, which will translate into new processes in the Portuguese SSC within a period of 1 to 2 years.

"The operation in Portugal has shown other countries the spirit of cooperation, effort and diplomacy of the Portuguese people, and their ability to meet the challenges and overcome the difficulties that SEG Automotive has faced, especially during the pandemic. We are an enabler with knowledge across functions here, who can help the global SEG Automotive organization to achieve the best results." Albano Magalhães, General Manager SEG Automotive



SEG Automotive GBS in Portugal

Establishment: **2016**

Number of employees: **165**

Locations: **Porto**

Type of centre: **Shared Services Centre**

Main functions: **Finance, Purchasing, Sales, Controlling, HR and IT**

Why Portugal?

Main location decision factors:

- Qualified people
- Cost economy
- Language skills

SIEMENS

Growth in value-added services

Siemens has been present in Portugal for over 115 years, providing solutions and services for energy, industry, mobility, health, infrastructures, and buildings. Siemens has a factory in Portugal and several services and competence centres that export worldwide.

Siemens has been operating shared services centres in Portugal for nearly 20 years. Over time, Siemens' Global Business Services (GBS) has grown through its increased portfolio areas and customer base and relationship. Siemens GBS employs, in Portugal, people from more than 50 nationalities that speak more than 25 different languages and provide services for customers around the globe.

The country's stability, availability of talent, education system and quality, language skills and factor-costs (although this was not the main factor) were key reasons for choosing Portugal.

Siemens' shared services organization, in Portugal, already has a very high understanding of the business value chain. Because of that it's easy to add other services on top of it and there are plenty of opportunities to do so. The centre intends to consolidate its position in the role it already plays and to offer more value-added services, for example engineering services.

"...we aim to grow in services that add more value, and engineering is one of them. Next year, we would like to transfer part of Siemens' engineering services from other parts of Europe to Portugal."

Lisbon Tech Hub, the IT centre in Portugal and partner of GBS in technological projects, was created in 2014 and is focused on the Mega-IT-trends and in supporting the digital transformation of the Company.

The Global Business Services centre, in Portugal covers a wide range of functions: Record to Report, including Accounting, Tax, Controlling, Master data and Real Estate Services, Opportunity to Cash, including order management and receivable management, Purchase to Pay including procurement and payable management, Hire to Retire, focusing on HR related topics and Digital Solutions, including IT platforms development. The Lisbon Tech Hub delivery units provide services in areas of data analytics, cybersecurity, application life cycle management, infrastructure services, among others.

Siemens' centres take digitalisation and process optimisation very seriously. The goal is to automate all transactional processes. It is fundamental to increase productivity and enable the management of customer expectations regarding cost development, but it is also aligned with the aim of growing more oriented towards higher value-added processes.

The existing Global Business Service centre, in Portugal, is one of the most relevant in the Siemens world. The ability to adapt to different situations and the flexibility of its employees has largely contributed to its success.

"the contribution to the success has been ... the culture in Portugal, the spirit to discover new things and also the willingness to find solutions to grow in new services. And of course, the people! They are a mix between Latin and Central European cultures, and it works very well. Our customers love it!"

Centers in Portugal

Establishment: **2005**

Number of employees: **≈ 1,800**

Location: **Lisbon**

Type of centre: **Global Business Services, IT Centre, R&D**

Main functions: **Information Technology, Finance & Accounting, logistics**



Why Portugal?

Main location decision factors:

- Country stability
- Talent
- Technical skills
- Language skills
- Costs



Process centralisation and standardisation

Solvay is Belgium's largest chemical company, operating in 63 countries and employing over 21,000 people. Its business areas are Materials, Chemicals and Solutions. The Solvay group has been in Portugal since 1934 and currently has a production unit and a service centre installed in the country.

In 2005 Solvay chose to establish a service centre in Portugal for transactional activities in order to drive simplification and standardisation. The services in Portugal are global and have been constantly evolving into more specialised activities supporting the business worldwide.

The centre started its activity with only 20 people 16 years ago and its growth has been consistent ever since. Throughout the years, its activity began to expand to more specialised services. Solvay's centre in Lisbon ceased to be only a service provider, becoming a competence centre that currently employs more than 600 people of 25 nationalities, working in different areas.

The activities in all financial, purchasing, human resources and CRM processes are centralised in Lisbon. While the finance and purchasing areas are more focused on European countries, HR and CRM processes are provided worldwide. Over the years, Solvay has also been centralising IT activities in Lisbon, including the implementation of tools, software development and a robotics team.

The latter team, Robotics, has widened the range of opportunities for the service centre, particularly when it comes to performing repetitive tasks. The increase in requests from the different departments has led to the necessity to expand the team, as well as to search for new talents in this field.

"We have been creating plenty of robots, namely related to finance. We will have to recruit more people because requests continue to come from different teams and different processes." Luís Mendes, Country HR Manager & Labour Relations

Solvay's Lisbon centre has been renowned for its success and is considered a reference in the shared services market. The clarity of the company's objectives, people and work policies, and in particular the employees' capabilities are the the main factors that contributed to its success.

"Often our team beats teams out there 10-0. We have a lot of resilience and ability to adapt to change." Luís Mendes, Country HR Manager & Labour Relations

In 2022 Solvay's plans are to continue to grow, focusing on added value specialised tasks in certain Solvay business areas, as well as in the IT sphere.



Solvay GBS in Portugal

Establishment: **2005**

Number of employees: **630**

Locations: **Lisbon**

Type of centre: **Global Business Services**

Main functions: **Finance & accounting, procurement, HR**

Why Portugal?

Main location decision factors:

- Language skills
- Technological capabilities
- Costs
- Support of the IEFP (Employment Office)



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aicep Portugal Global

About AICEP

aicep Portugal Global - Trade & Investment Agency is a government business entity focused on encouraging the best foreign companies to invest in Portugal, as a one-stop-shop agency. It provides support services to foreign companies, counselling and coordinating contacts with Portuguese entities involved in investment processes. AICEP works as a Government business entity, flexible, with streamlined free of charge services, offering a dynamic approach focused on the client / investor and allowing direct negotiation with companies, through a tailored approach to their requirements.

AICEP is a single point of contact to foreign investors in all phases of the decision process:

- Enquiry-handling phase: provides comprehensive accurate information, data and benchmark reports;
- Site Location: provides different site proposals according to project specifications. Help partnerships with local entities;
- Fact-finding visits: organizes site visits to meet local authorities, recruitment firms, office space providers, universities, among others;
- After care: a key account manager will provide assistance on a regular basis.

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