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UK-India Tech Skills Exchange:
Unlocking Growth Through Talent

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Published by
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Foreword

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) presents this whitepaper developed in collaboration with upGrad Enterprise - “UK-India Tech Skills Exchange: Unlocking Growth Through Talent”.

The whitepaper comes at an opportune time when the iconic India UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) has been signed and is awaiting ratification by the UK Parliament.

The CETA has made several provisions to ease business mobility without any impact on net migration. The Double Contribution Convention (DCC) is noteworthy and exempts Indian workers and their employers in the UK from social security contributions for three years, benefiting more than 75,000 Indian professionals and over 900 companies.

This whitepaper reflects the dynamic nature of the skills exchange process between the UK and India before the implementation of the CETA. It explores five interlinked themes: the widening digital skills gap in the UK; India’s pivotal role in sustaining delivery excellence; policy-related barriers to talent mobility; evolving corporate strategies around work execution and location; and the shift from transactional hiring to strategic enablement of Indian professionals.

Based on a survey of 1400 leaders in HR, legal, and operations, along with executive interviews and secondary research, the paper highlights the challenges and opportunities in tech talent exchange. It emphasizes the need to create new "Skill Bridges” which are beneficial to both nations.

The findings are significant. Nearly half (48%) of UK firms report difficulty in filling data-related roles, with project management and cybersecurity also posing recruitment challenges. These gaps threaten to slow down the UK’s AI ambitions at a critical moment. In this context, 82% of UK operations and delivery leaders consider their colleagues based in India essential to the success of projects, commending their extensive expertise and strong commitment to learning. However, 86% of legal and compliance advisers caution that increasing visa costs and complex regulations could hinder this vital resource, especially as global competition for talent intensifies. Already, 40% of HR leaders are limiting overseas hiring to essential roles, while prioritizing automation, offshoring, and targeted reskilling.

Access alone is no longer sufficient – enablement must take centerstage. Forward-thinking organizations are embracing a hybrid approach, combining selective mobility with strong offshore hubs, academic collaborations, and deliberate cultural integration. This model fosters agile, innovative teams that are better equipped to compete globally.

Looking ahead, the evolution of the India-UK economic corridor will hinge on policies that are predictable, cost-effective, and growth-oriented. The CETA is poised to catalyze new skill partnerships across sectors, strengthening economic ties and unlocking shared potential.

We extend our gratitude to the many companies, policymakers, and scholars whose insights and contributions have shaped this report. Their commitment lays the foundation for a future of shared prosperity and responsibility.

This whitepaper aims to both inspire and motivate action. As we shape the future of work, it is our collective duty to ensure that talent is directed where it is most needed and that the digital ambitions of India and the UK are achieved collaboratively.

Chandrajit Banerjee
Director General
Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)



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Executive summary

CETA provides certainty at a time of global volatility

CETA reinforces confidence for businesses operating across the UK–India corridor by embedding continuity and predictability in trade and investment rules. Its scope reflects a shared ambition to support high-value, knowledge-driven economic activity over the long term.





Business mobility provisions enable structured, time-bound talent exchange

The agreement formalises existing routes for business visitors, intra-corporate transferees, and service suppliers, without creating new migration pathways or altering domestic immigration controls. For technology and IT-enabled services (ITeS) firms, this clarity supports project-based professional deployments while preserving labour market safeguards.

The Double Contribution Convention (DCC) removes a key cost barrier to mobility

Negotiated alongside CETA, the proposed DCC addresses a longstanding friction by eliminating dual social security contributions for eligible professionals on temporary assignments, for up to three years. Modelled on existing UK agreements, it improves the financial viability of cross-border assignments without expanding visa volumes.



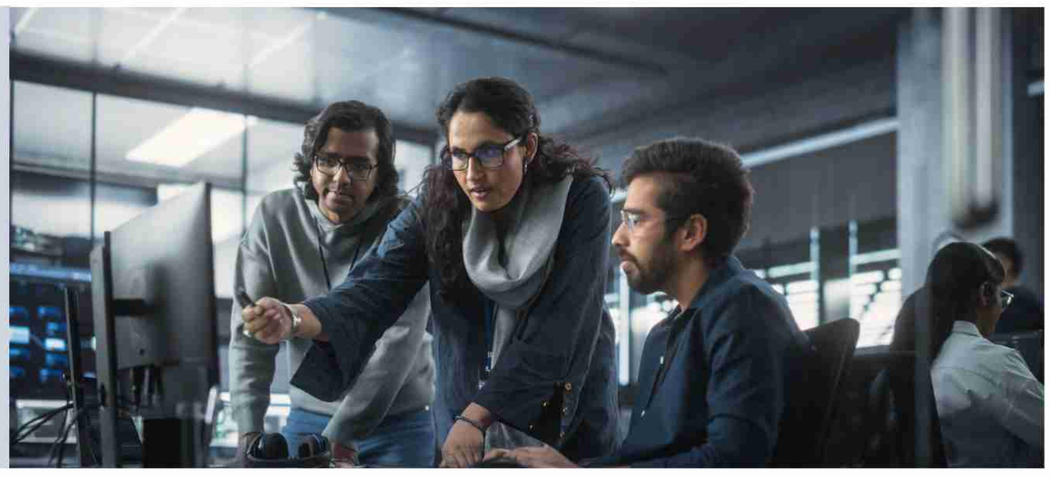


Pre-CETA findings highlight persistent digital skill gaps in the UK

Survey data and industry perspectives from the spring of 2025 point to ongoing shortages in advanced digital capabilities, particularly in AI, cloud, cybersecurity, and data roles. These gaps are more pronounced outside London and continue to test the resilience of local talent pipelines

Indian professionals play a critical role in sustaining UK tech delivery

Despite constraints on mobility, Indian professionals are widely recognised for their technical depth, adaptability, and contribution to delivery continuity. Employers consistently cite their ability to scale skills quickly and operate effectively in distributed, fast-evolving environments.





Firms are recalibrating, not retreating, from global talent engagement

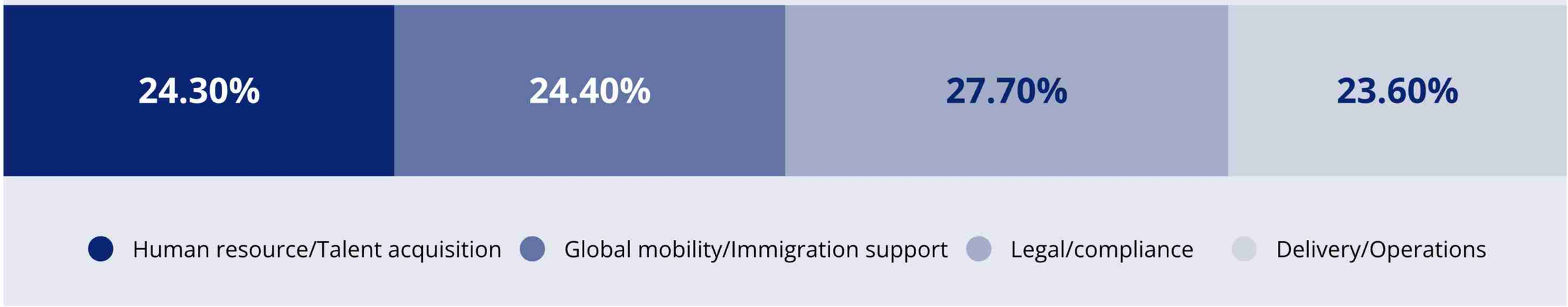
In response to cost and regulatory complexity, UK organisations are becoming more selective in international mobility while expanding hybrid delivery models, offshore capability, local skilling, and automation. These shifts reflect pragmatic adaptation rather than diminished demand for global talent.

Methodology

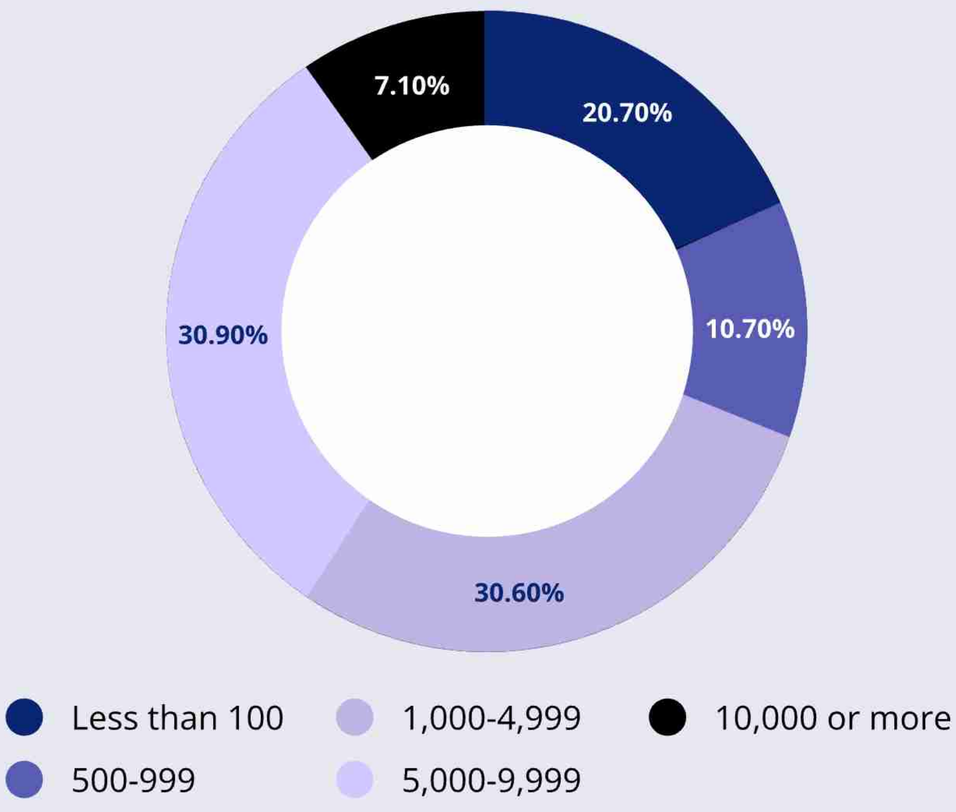
In quarter 1 of 2025 (April-June) we conducted a comparative study, surveying ~1,400 professionals across HR, talent acquisition, compliance, and delivery functions – all with direct exposure to Indian tech talent before and after the conclusion of the UK-India Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). Additionally, we interviewed leaders from nine UK-based technology and ITeS companies and extensively reviewed relevant secondary research, including UK government reports and news sources to arrive at the findings in this paper.

Respondent demographic split at a glance

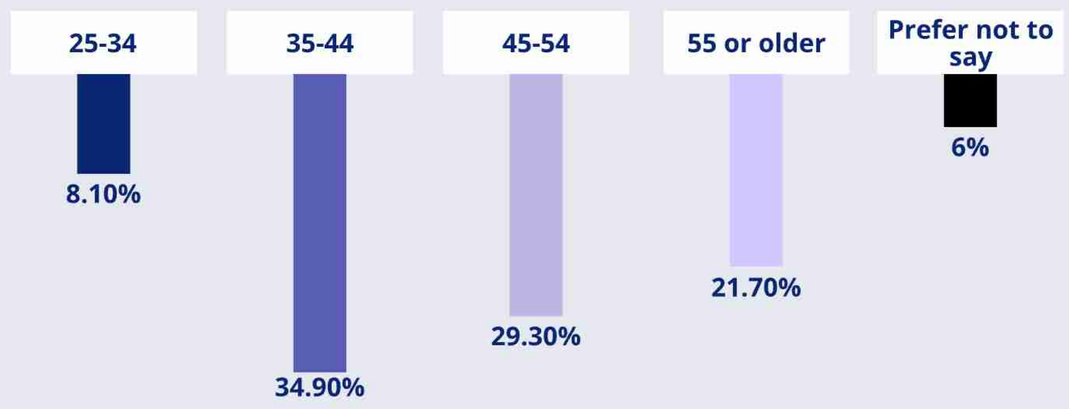
Functionality



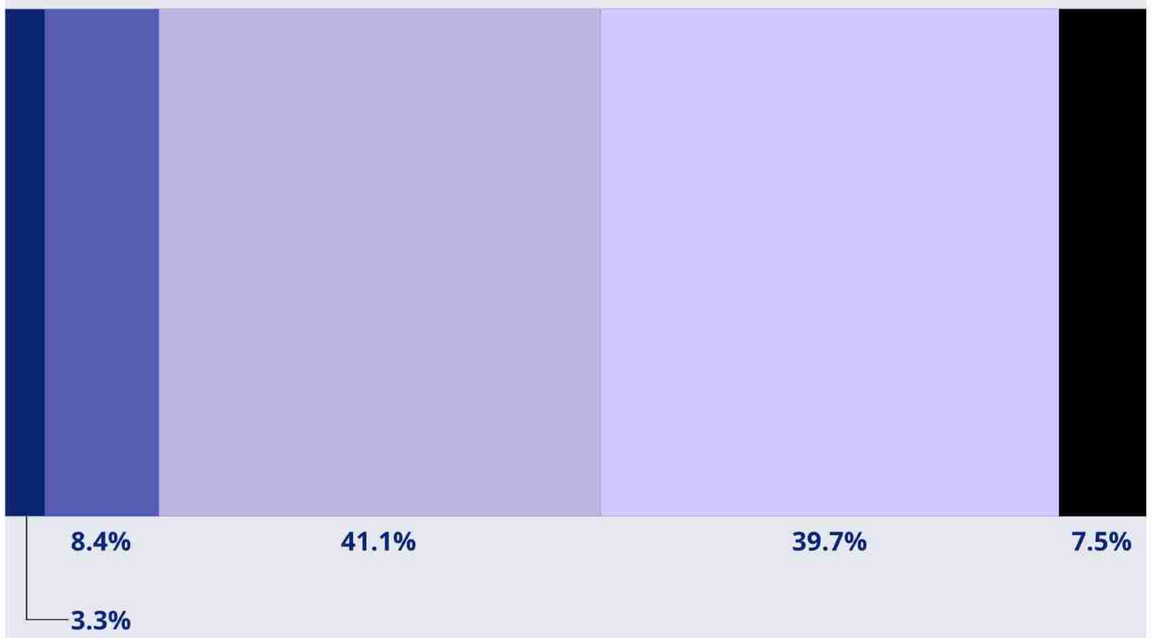
Company size



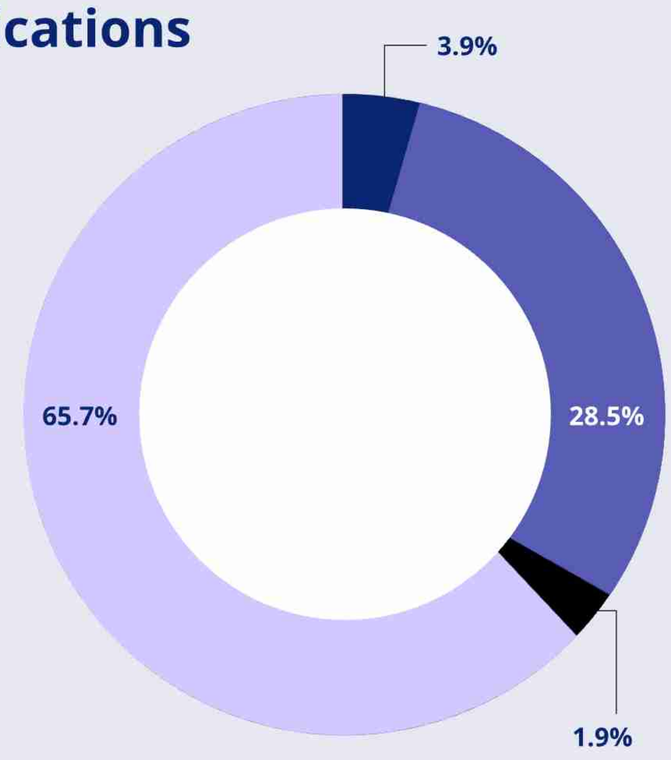
Age group



Work experience



Qualifications



CETA and the UK-India talent corridor

A new era of strategic collaboration

India has signed a landmark **Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)** with the United Kingdom, first of its kind, featuring substantive commitments that extend well beyond traditional trade in goods and services. This agreement opens new avenues for Indian exports to the UK, enhances regulatory alignment, facilitates smoother capital flows, and promotes ecosystem-level collaboration in key sectors such as pharmaceuticals, technology, and clean energy.



The Indian Express (Associated Press)

The CETA is poised to deepen trade and investment ties between Indian and UK industries. Its signing comes at a time of global uncertainty marked by trust deficits and policy volatility. By introducing greater predictability in trade policy, the CETA offers businesses a stable framework to expand operations and seize emerging opportunities in the years ahead.

Alongside trade and investment liberalization, the CETA also reinforces the framework for temporary business mobility between India and the UK. These provisions are intended to support the short-term movement of skilled professionals involved in service delivery, project execution, business expansion, and the transfer of specialised expertise, particularly in knowledge-intensive sectors such as technology and IT-enabled services (ITeS).

Importantly, the agreement does not introduce new migration pathways or alter domestic immigration controls. Instead, it formalises and provides continuity around existing routes for business visitors, intra-corporate transferees, and service suppliers. For organisations operating across the India–UK corridor, this added clarity supports more predictable workforce planning and time-bound professional deployments, while preserving regulatory oversight and labour market safeguards in both countries.

Market access: Mutual win-win agreement

The India-UK CETA significantly enhances market access for goods, with a progressive liberalization framework. Under the agreement, 99% of India's exports to the UK, representing nearly the entire trade value, will enjoy duty-free access from the date of entry into force.

The UK has committed to immediate tariff elimination across a wide range of sectors, including Electronics, Textiles & Apparel, Engineering Products, Mineral Fuels, Metals, Chemicals & Petrochemicals, Gems & Jewellery, Pharmaceuticals, Leather & Footwear.

99% **of India's exports to the UK will enjoy duty-free access from the date of entry into force**

India's commitments under CETA are more nuanced, involving a mix of immediate tariff elimination, phased reductions over 5-10 years, partial tariff reductions and TRQs across sensitive sectors.

Key sectors such as engineering, electronics, chemicals & petrochemicals, textiles & apparel, and pharmaceuticals will benefit from substantial or full tariff elimination from the outset. However, sensitive sectors including automobiles, select food items, animal products, and fruits & vegetables, will see more guarded liberalization through exclusions or TRQs.

In the automotive segment, India has provided differentiated TRQs for internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles and electric/hybrid/hydrogen passenger and goods vehicles. Additionally, out-of-quota duty reductions have been offered for ICE passenger cars.

For "other alcohol" categories, tariff reductions are linked to a Minimum Import Price (MIP) threshold, with distinct categories set at USD 5 per litre and USD 6 per 750 mL bottle.

Sectoral opportunities in goods under CETA

The India-UK CETA unlocks significant sectoral opportunities for Indian exporters across a wide range of goods. Key sectors poised to benefit include:



Agriculture & Marine Products



Textiles & Clothing



Leather & Footwear



Engineering Goods



Electronics & Software



Telecommunications



Pharmaceuticals & Medical Devices



Chemicals



Sports Goods & Toys



Gems & Jewellery

These sectors are expected to gain enhanced access to the UK market through reduced or eliminated tariffs, streamlined regulatory processes, and improved trade facilitation measures, positioning Indian industry for stronger global integration and growth.

Services to boom

The India-UK services are a core strength of both Indian and British economies. To facilitate the movement of people, the agreement provides for business visitors, contractual service suppliers, and independent professionals to access the UK under clear and predictable entry rules. Around, 1,800 Indian chefs, yoga instructors, and classical musicians can work in the UK every year under these provisions. India has made commitments across 11 broad services sectors and 108 sub-sectors. Meanwhile, India has secured services commitments on 12 broad service sectors and 137 sub-sectors.

Alongside the CETA, negotiation on reciprocal Double Contribution Convention would enable Indian employees temporarily working in the United Kingdom to continue contributing to their home country's social security system for a period of three years. This would address a longstanding industry concern and aligns closely with recommendations previously put forth by the CII, which had advocated for a 5-year exemption period.

Investment commitments to drive long-term growth

The United Kingdom ranks as the sixth-largest investor in India, accounting for approximately 5% of India's total FDI equity inflows. The CETA introduces robust provisions for investor protection, transparent regulatory frameworks, and effective dispute resolution mechanisms, creating a more secure and predictable investment environment.

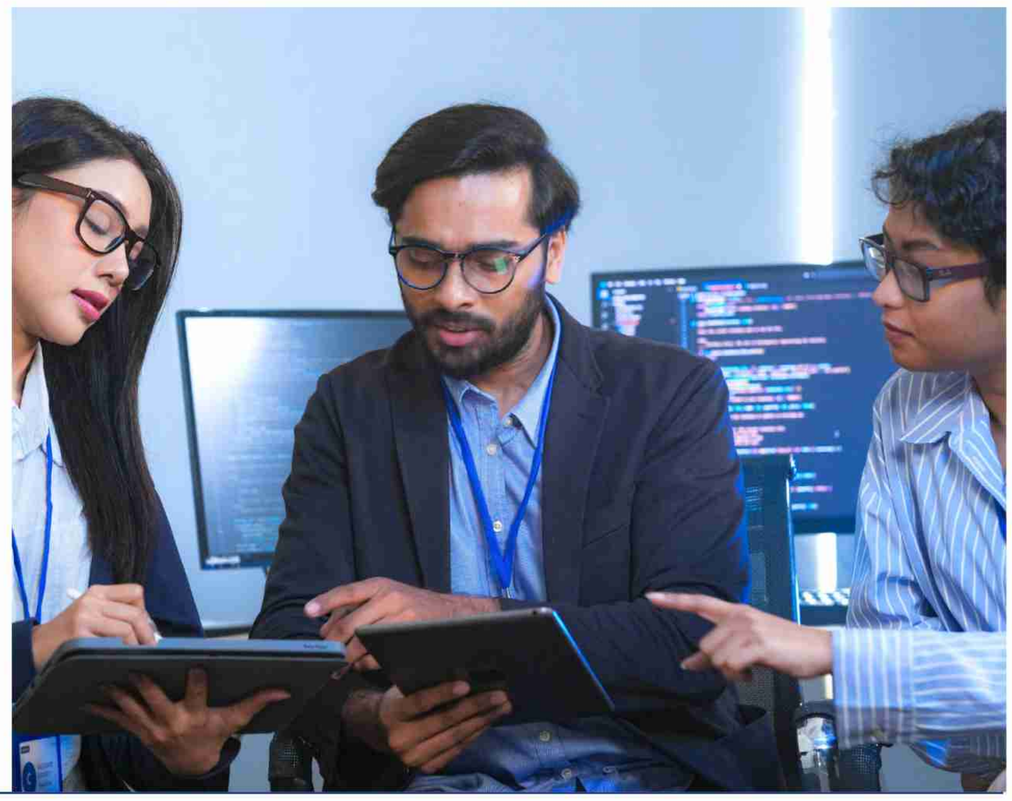
These measures are expected to significantly boost investor confidence, paving the way for increased bilateral investment flows. In particular, the agreement is likely to catalyse greater UK foreign direct investment (FDI) into India's key growth sectors, including financial services, manufacturing, and renewable energy, thereby supporting long-term economic development and industrial transformation.

Understanding beyond traditional agreement

The agreement establishes a framework for mutual understanding on several emerging regulatory matters and outlines cooperation across multiple sectors. The digital chapter enhances the efficiency of cross-border digital trade by incorporating measures such as paperless transactions, electronic certification and signatures, and digital trade facilitation. Additionally, it addresses consumer protection and cybersecurity concerns to mitigate risks associated with digital commerce.

The CETA also opens each other's lucrative public procurement market, ensuring Indian businesses to be treated on par with the UK suppliers in public tenders, while UK suppliers will be eligible to participate as "Class-II local suppliers" under the Make in India initiative.

The CETA is anticipated to serve as a model for future trade negotiations involving wide-ranging commitments.



The Double Contribution Convention (DCC)

Reducing cost friction in cross-border assignments

Alongside the UK–India CETA, both governments are in the final stages of negotiating a reciprocal **Double Contribution Convention (DCC).** While distinct from CETA, the DCC operates as a complementary mechanism that addresses a long-standing cost and compliance challenge associated with temporary cross-border assignments, particularly in technology and services-led sectors.

The DCC seeks to resolve this challenge by **exempting eligible professionals and their employers from paying social security contributions in both countries** for the same period of work, **for up to three years.** Under the proposed framework, professionals would continue contributing to the social security system of their home country, while being exempt from parallel obligations in the host country during the assignment period. The scope of the agreement is deliberately narrow, focused on improving the economic viability of temporary international deployments without altering immigration policy or labour market protections.

Modelled on the United Kingdom's existing Social Security Agreements (SSAs) with non-EEA countries such as the United States, Canada, and Japan, the DCC is designed solely to eliminate double contributions for internationally mobile professionals. **It does not affect the volume or type of work visas issued,** an individual's access to social security benefits in the contributing country, or the obligation to pay the UK immigration health surcharge. The DCC is expected to come into effect alongside the broader CETA framework.

Reforms in context

Before DCC	With DCC
Indian professionals working temporarily in the UK were exempt from social security contributions for only up to 1 year.	**Professionals are exempt for up to 3 years.**
Beyond 1 year, they were required to contribute to both the UK and Indian social security systems.	**Contributions apply in only one country (the home country).**
Employers bore duplicate social security liabilities on short-term assignments.	**Employers avoid duplicate contribution burdens.**

Early impact estimates

The India POV

~60,000 Indian IT professionals expected to benefit

~20% increase in net income for eligible workers

Projected savings for Indian firms exceed USD 4.64 million

The UK POV

59% increase in UK exports to India (~GBP 15.7 billion higher by 2040)

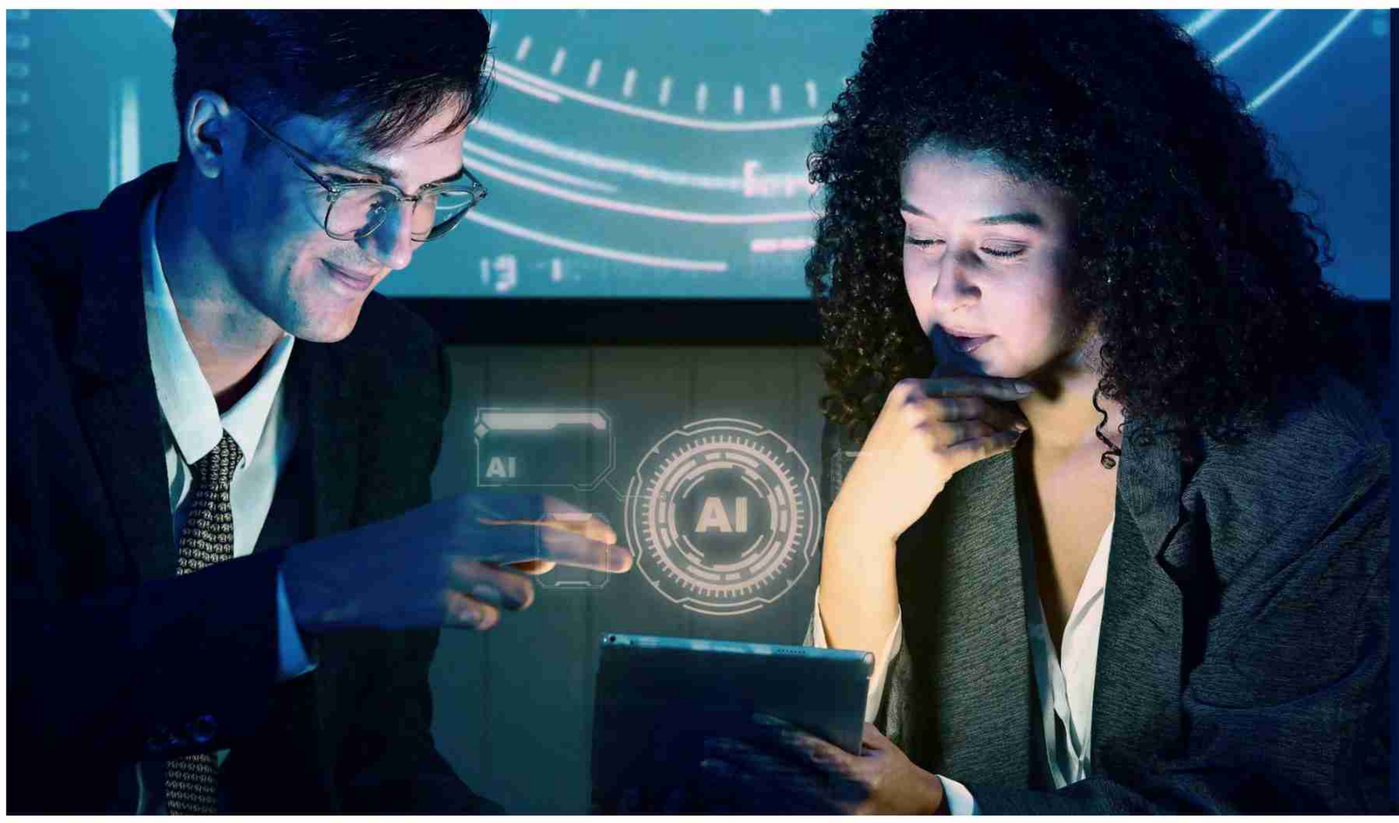
25% increase in UK imports from India (~GBP 9.8 billion higher by 2040)

0.2% increase in real wages

Taken together, the DCC addresses a specific but consequential cost friction in temporary cross-border employment. By reducing duplication in social security contributions, it strengthens the economic foundations of short-term professional mobility without altering the scale or nature of movement itself. In doing so, it complements the broader CETA framework by making international assignments more financially viable for firms and professionals in both countries.

Looking back to move forward

Pre-CETA perspectives on tech and ITeS talent mobility



Skills supply and demand in UK tech and ITeS

As the UK advanced its ambitions in artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, industry stakeholders were, at the time of the survey in the spring of 2025, increasingly reflecting on the challenge of aligning local talent supply with the evolving demands of the technology and ITeS sectors. While the direction of growth was clear, many organisations reported that the **pace of technological change was testing the capacity of existing talent pipelines to keep up.**

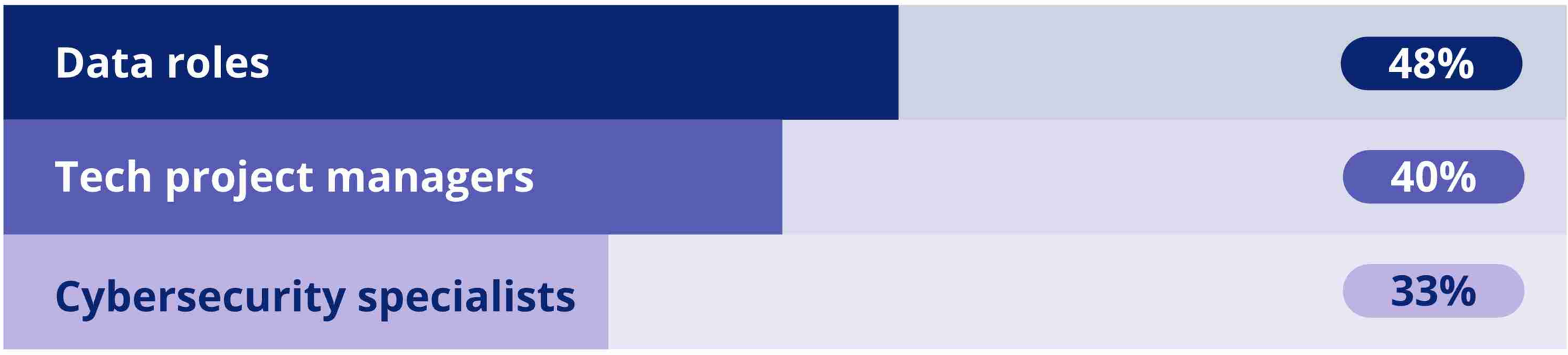
Insights from conversations with leaders across banking, technology services, and business logistics pointed to **persistent hiring difficulties in specific skill areas, including AI, cloud architecture, cybersecurity, and data engineering.** These roles were often described as remaining open for extended periods, influenced by a combination of regional talent availability and a perceived gap between academic preparation and workplace readiness. Employers across the sector frequently noted the difficulty of sourcing certain specialised capabilities at scale. As one Chief of Staff at a global telecom firm observed, "There's a massive skill gap around network engineers at the moment. You can train people through apprenticeships, but it's not something they go to university and study anymore." A senior leader at a business services company echoed this view, noting, **"Cybersecurity, cloud computing, machine learning, data visualization … these are the skills we cannot find easily in the local market."**

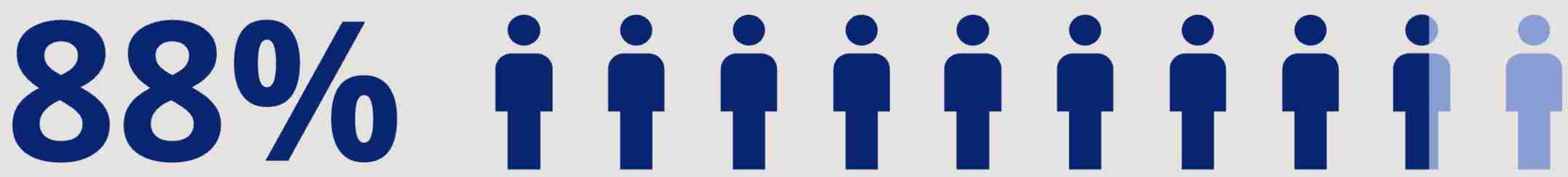
> **There's a massive skill gap around network engineers at the moment. You can train people through apprenticeships, but it's not something they go to university and study anymore.**
>
> **Chief of Staff,**
> **Global Telecom firm**

> **Cybersecurity, cloud computing, machine learning, data visualization … these are the skills we cannot find easily in the local market.**
>
> **Senior leader,**
> **Business services organization**

Survey findings from the same period reinforced these qualitative perspectives. 48% of UK-based HR professional respondents identified **data roles as the hardest to fill,** followed by tech project managers (40%) and cybersecurity specialists (33%). The challenge appeared more pronounced outside London, where 88% of HR professionals said hiring for tech and ITeS roles was harder, and half reported **"serious" pipeline challenges in regional hubs.**

Hardest-to-fill roles in the UK tech and ITeS sectors





HR professionals find tech and ITeS hiring to be particularly challenging in regional hubs

Respondents and interviewees alike pointed to structural factors underlying these patterns. Several leaders highlighted the **speed at which industry requirements were evolving relative to more fixed academic curricula,** resulting in graduates who were often well grounded in theory but less prepared for applied, role-specific demands. As one leader explained, "The pace the industry is changing is far quicker than universities' fixed curriculum, graduates have theory, but the application is missing." This view aligned with secondary research available at the time, including findings from Techmonitor, with **over 30% of UK** firms agreeing that academic training falls short of real-world tech requirements.

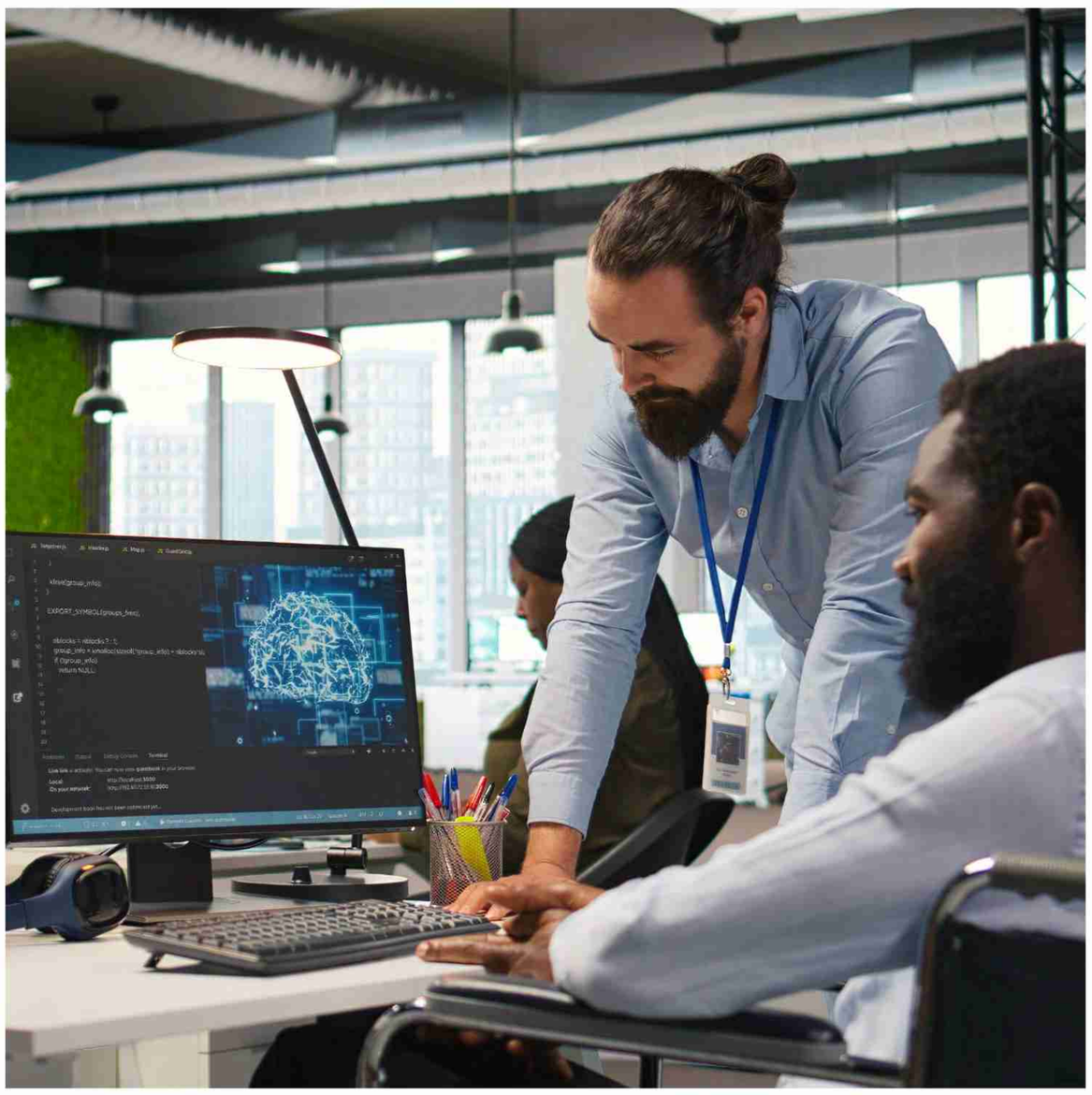
In response, organisations reported an increasing reliance on internal skilling initiatives and targeted training to bridge immediate gaps, alongside rising hiring costs in competitive skill segments. However, even then, there was broad recognition that **reskilling alone would be insufficient to meet longer-term needs.** Many leaders pointed to the importance of complementary approaches, including strategic global sourcing, selective talent mobility, and closer alignment between education systems and industry demand, as part of a more resilient and innovation-ready workforce strategy.

India's role in supporting UK tech and ITeS delivery

Against the backdrop of persistent skills constraints in the UK technology and ITeS sectors, Indian professionals are widely viewed by employers as an important part of how delivery challenges are addressed. This assessment extends beyond technical capability alone, encompassing adaptability, learning orientation, and the ability to operate effectively in distributed and fast-evolving environments.

Survey and secondary data underline this role. Despite just **11–25% of UK companies engaging in large-scale international hiring, Indian professionals make up two-thirds of that cohort.** Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), collated by the UK Home Office, confirms this trend, reporting that 33% of all UK skilled worker visa grant holders in 2022–23 were Indian nationals, surpassing other nationalities. These numbers indicate a strong preference for Indian professionals in the UK professional landscape, and on-ground conversations with UK operations and delivery leaders offer further validation, with 82% confirming their importance.

The case is compelling: Indian tech talent delivers critical skills, fast and at scale, where local talent falls short. **"Skills like solution and technical architects in Azure, AWS, Salesforce, Golang, Guidewire … I don't get that kind of talent very quickly,"** shares one executive. Their readiness to relocate is another edge. "More flexible and mobile," Indian professionals are often open to working from regional offices, notes a senior HR leader.



Beyond technical depth and geographical mobility, Indian professionals are consistently recognized for their **agility, accountability, and self-driven learning**. “People coming from India are able to reskill themselves, show agility in learning, and take roles with full authority and ownership,” says a Chief of Staff at a telecom company. This mindset is especially valuable in fast-moving domains such as AI, cloud modernization, and cybersecurity, where skill relevance has a short shelf life.

Adaptability is another hallmark. “People coming from India are the most flexible … that agility helps in 24×7 support or other types of hard jobs,” explains a senior technology executive. A talent leader reinforces this: “I find the Indian professional a lot more resilient … very adaptable … able to deal with ambiguity; they’ll jump in and say ‘let it evolve’ rather than wait for a perfect plan.”

Agility | **Resilience** | **Adaptability**

These behavioural traits translate to business outcomes. As one executive puts it, “There is a unique capability which Indians have got — multitasking and willingness to give extra hours; they want to learn more.” In client-facing, globally distributed environments, this mindset strengthens performance and reliability.

However, talent mobility remains constrained. **Fewer than 10% of India-based professionals are currently eligible for relocation,** according to India-based HR professionals for global IT firms, primarily due to visa delays (46%) and sponsorship challenges (42%). Consequently, cross-border movement is typically reserved for **critical roles, with most collaboration continuing through hybrid or distributed delivery models.**

In response, UK-based technology and ITeS firms adopt a **dual, pragmatic approach to engaging Indian talent by blending offshore depth with selective global deployment.** While it is increasingly clear that Indian professionals represent a strategic talent engine for sustaining digital delivery, leaders also acknowledge that the talent corridor continues to evolve, shaped by policy frameworks, operating models, and the need for greater predictability over time.

Talent on hold: Regulations and costs as a strategic constraint

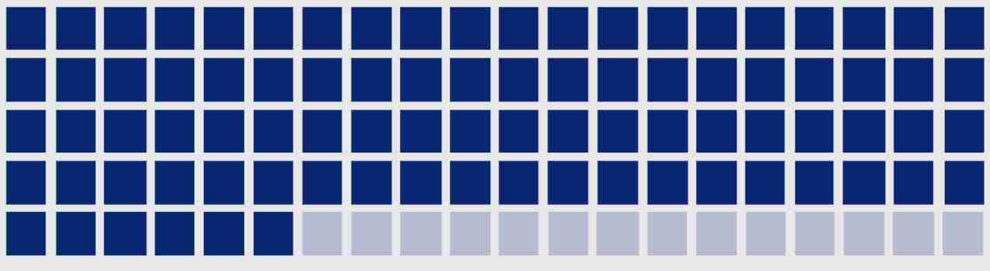
For a significant share of UK-based technology and ITeS firms, accessing high-quality technical talent remains closely linked to broader skill availability and cost considerations. **Nearly 75% of firms that report domestic skill shortages cite a combination of capability gaps and cost efficiency as key reasons for seeking external talent,** particularly from India. Within this context, international sourcing is viewed less as a substitute for local hiring and more as a complementary mechanism to meet specific, hard-to-fill requirements.





At the same time, regulatory and cost-related changes are shaping how firms assess and operationalise this access. Survey findings indicate that, at the time of the study, **86%** of UK-based legal and compliance professionals viewed increases in Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) fees, as significantly constraining access to skilled Indian technology professionals. A further 50% pointed to rising minimum salary thresholds and the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) as additional barriers influencing hiring feasibility.

86%



of UK legal and compliance professionals flag rising visa costs and restrictions as significantly limiting access to Indian tech talent

These developments are reflected in how organisations approach sponsorship. **Many firms report adopting more selective strategies,** with sponsorship increasingly reserved for internal transferees or roles deemed critical to delivery and continuity. In practice, this has meant longer lead times, tighter prioritisation, and greater scrutiny of which roles justify the associated regulatory and financial commitments.

Taken together, the data and employer perspectives point to a shared assessment: **regulatory complexity, rising costs, and limited clarity** are influencing how UK firms engage with global technology talent. While demand for specialised skills remains strong, the mechanisms available to access this talent are perceived as more constrained, prompting organisations to recalibrate sourcing models and rely more heavily on hybrid and distributed delivery approaches.

Considerations impacting UK employers' access to skilled tech talent

50%+
Increase in minimum salary thresholds (Skilled Worker visas)

19%
Removal of the 20% salary discount for shortage occupations

80–86%
Increase in Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) fees

50%+
Rise in the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS)



From caution to recalibration: How UK firms are responding to cross-border talent constraints

Ahead of the conclusion of the UK–India CETA negotiations, policy-related barriers were widely cited by UK organisations as a growing source of complexity in international hiring. Within this context, firms also reported **navigating varying levels of internal alignment on the role of cross-border talent** in meeting technology and ITeS workforce needs. Survey findings indicate that perspectives on global hiring differ across organisational functions, adding another layer of consideration to workforce decision-making in an already constrained environment.

Delivery managers, often closest to execution pressures and client commitments, tend to express greater support for cross-border talent flows. In contrast, upstream functions such as HR and compliance demonstrate higher levels of caution, citing increased documentation requirements, uncertainty around eligibility thresholds, and heightened reputational exposure as factors shaping their risk assessments. This divergence in perspective can slow internal approvals and extend decision timelines, particularly for roles that require sponsorship or mobility-related clearances.



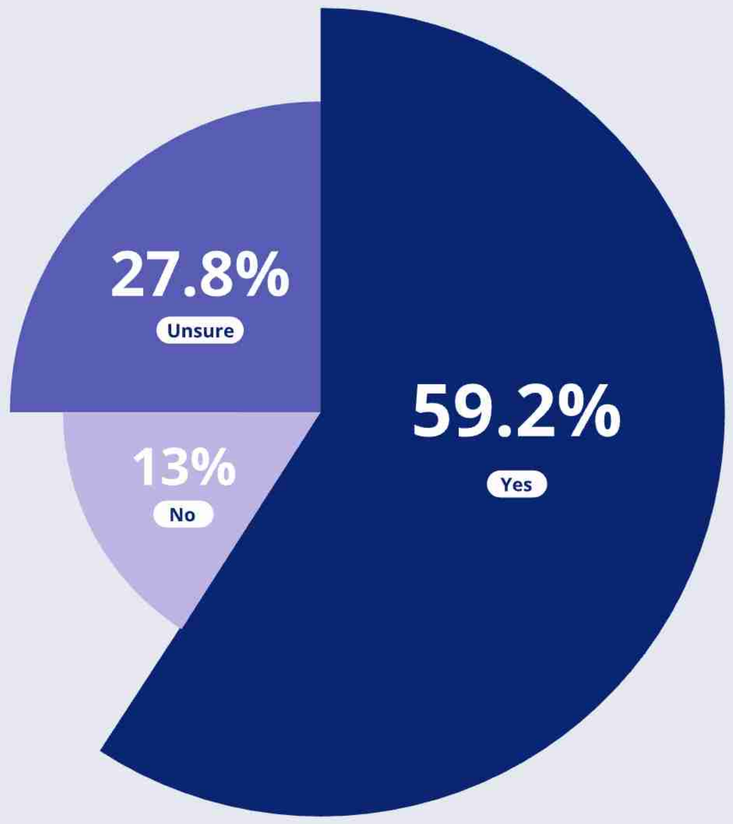
Despite these differences, a majority of respondents recognise the potential value of cross-border talent flows between India and the UK. When asked whether such movement offers benefits to the technology and ITeS sector,

→ **59.2% responded in the affirmative,**

→ while **27.8% indicated uncertainty**

→ and **13% expressed a contrary view.**

This distribution suggests broad, though not uniform, acknowledgement of the role international talent can play, alongside ongoing deliberation within organisations on how best to operationalise it.





At the organisational level, these dynamics translate into **pragmatic recalibration rather than wholesale retrenchment.** In the immediate to medium term, survey data shows that many firms narrow international mobility to roles considered critical to delivery, with approximately 40% of HR professionals reporting this approach. At the same time, 35.3% indicate relocating roles to countries with more accessible visa regimes, while a similar proportion prioritise increased investment in upskilling local talent.

Looking further ahead, respondents suggest that if constraints persist, organisations are likely to accelerate structural shifts in how work is organised and delivered. Increased reliance on automation and digitisation (approximately 41.5%), offshore expansion (37%), and contract staffing models (37%) are all cited as longer-term responses. While these strategies support continuity and flexibility, they also point to the possibility of value creation becoming more geographically distributed over time.

Immediate-medium term responses	%	Longer-term responses	%
Limit international mobility to critical roles	~40%	Automate or digitise more roles	41.5%
Relocate roles to easier-visa countries	35.3%	Shift more work to offshore teams	37%
Increase investment in local talent development	35%	Increase reliance on contractors	37%

Alongside these shifts, firms are **diversifying early-career talent channels to strengthen longer-term workforce resilience.** One senior technology executive describes an approach centred on deep academic engagement:

"We run an inspire–engage–employ academic interface across 50-plus UK and Ireland universities … micro-placements, sandwich-year sponsorships, six-month graduate training — that's our future talent pipeline."

However, employers also highlight persistent challenges in graduate readiness. As a senior HR leader in logistics notes:

"We took on a graduate cohort this year and none of them had a specific skill set that we could use. We've had to train them in all of our different areas of the business."



In response, a growing number of organisations adopt **hybrid workforce strategies that combine selective mobility, offshore capability, and internal capability-building.** These include internal academies, bespoke graduate pathways, and streamlined onboarding systems designed to accelerate productivity.

Taken together, the evidence suggests that firms placing greater emphasis on **talent adaptability,** alongside **availability,** are positioning themselves to navigate uncertainty while maintaining delivery continuity.

Unlocking Indian talent

From transactional hiring to strategic enablement



As UK organisations continue to refine workforce strategies, many report **narrowing international hiring to roles considered essential.** While some firms explore alternatives such as offshoring, automation, or expanded local skilling, others continue to rely on Indian professionals who are already embedded within their delivery ecosystems.

For these organisations, the central challenge has shifted. **Access is no longer the primary constraint; enablement is.** Indian professionals are widely described as present, high-performing, and critical to continuity. The focus, therefore, turns to how organisations can more effectively maximise their contribution within existing operating models.

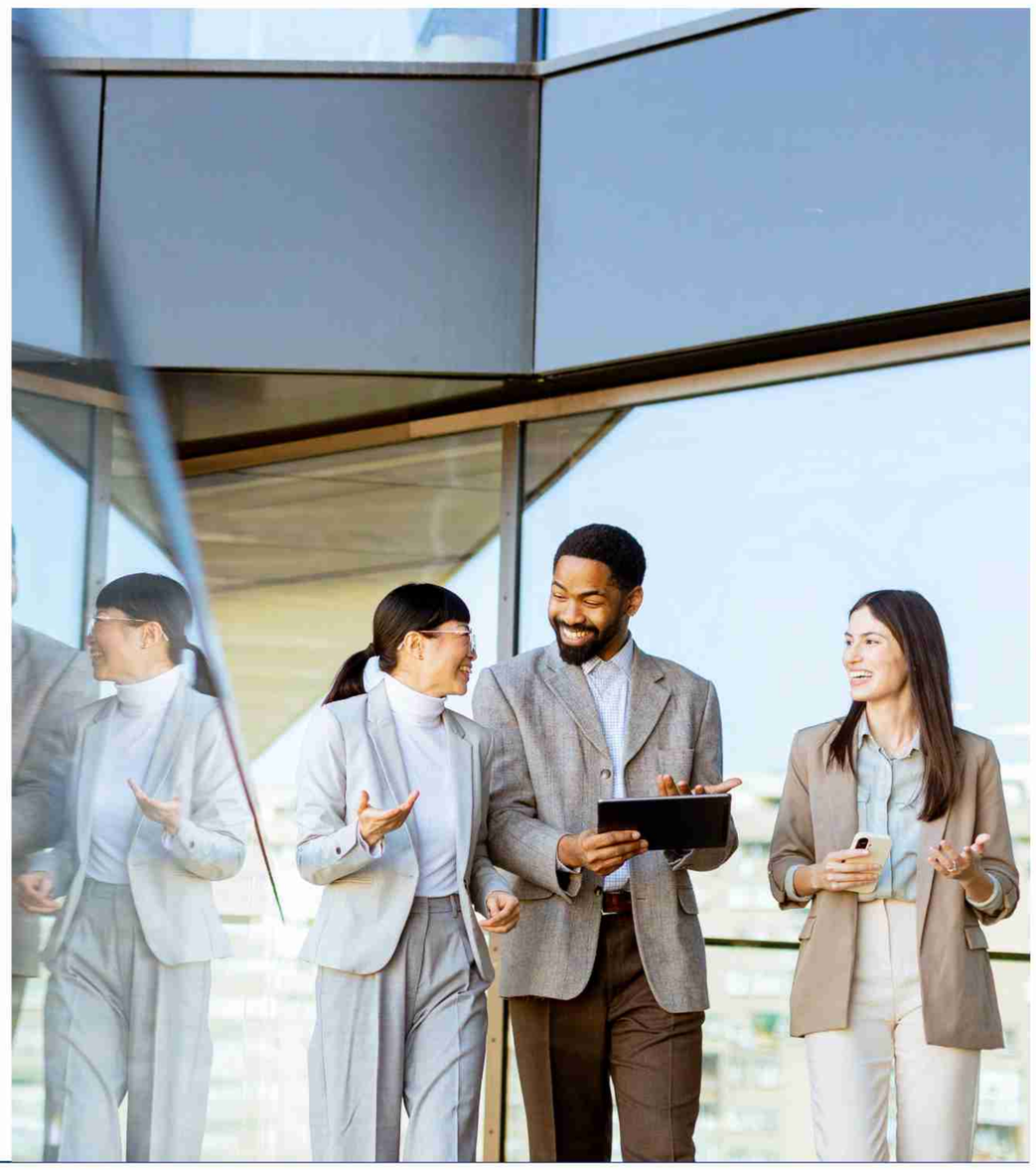


Insights from UK leaders who have built sustained, high-trust working relationships with Indian talent point to a common conclusion: realising full value requires moving beyond transactional hiring models. Employers who report stronger outcomes emphasise trust, empowerment, and cross-cultural readiness as foundational enablers. Where ownership is matched with autonomy, performance is often described as exceeding expectations.

Integration also emerges as a recurring theme. While hybrid work is broadly accepted as the operating norm, leaders continue to stress the importance of periodic in-person interaction to support deeper integration, strengthen personal connections, and reinforce shared accountability across teams.

Soft skills development is highlighted as another area of focus, particularly in client-facing and cross-functional roles. As one executive observes, “Indian professionals tend to have very good technical skill sets, but very poor storytelling ones.” Targeted investment in **communication, consulting capability, and contextual awareness is seen as an important lever** for amplifying impact and influence.

Career progression and visibility form a further dimension of enablement. Leaders across the technology and ITeS sector note a growing willingness to position Indian professionals beyond traditional delivery roles. Increasingly, organisations describe an **appetite to support this skill-rich talent pool into leadership and decision-making forums,** reflecting a shift in how global capability is perceived and utilised.



Trust & autonomy

Integration & communication

Career pathways & inclusion



Sustainability rounds out the discussion. As workplace expectations evolve, driven in part by younger and more vocal generations entering the workforce, employers are placing greater emphasis on **inclusive practices and long-term engagement** when collaborating with global teams. This includes **clearer growth pathways, transparent feedback mechanisms,** and **deliberate efforts to build shared culture across geographies.**

Collectively, these perspectives point to a broader shift in how Indian talent is engaged within UK technology and ITeS organisations. Years of collaboration have already demonstrated the operational value Indian professionals bring. What distinguishes more mature approaches is a deliberate focus on enablement through trust, integration, and career development rather than reliance on placement alone. This evolution reflects changing organisational expectations around global collaboration in the period preceding CETA's conclusion.

Conclusion

Establishing a baseline for the next phase of the UK–India talent corridor

This report set out to examine the UK–India technology and ITeS talent corridor at a moment of transition. Drawing on primary survey data and industry perspectives captured ahead of the conclusion of the UK–India Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), it establishes a baseline view of how employers, leaders, and practitioners assessed skills availability, talent mobility, and workforce strategy in the period preceding formal implementation.

Across chapters, several themes emerge with consistency. UK organisations face persistent skill gaps in advanced digital roles, particularly in AI, cloud, cybersecurity, and data. Indian professionals are widely recognised for their contribution to delivery continuity and adaptability, even as access to cross-border mobility remains constrained by cost, complexity, and uncertainty. In response, firms are recalibrating—becoming more selective in mobility, investing in alternative delivery models, and placing greater emphasis on enablement, integration, and long-term capability-building.

At a policy level, CETA provides a framework for greater predictability in business mobility, while the proposed Double Contribution Convention (DCC) addresses a long-standing cost friction associated with temporary assignments. Together, these instruments signal intent and direction, even as their full impact will depend on implementation and organisational uptake.

Once CETA is validated by the British Parliament, expected in the summer, the next phase of the corridor will begin to take shape. The real test will lie not in intent alone, but in how effectively policy clarity translates into operational outcomes for businesses and professionals on both sides.

This report therefore serves as a reference point rather than a verdict. As the agreement moves from negotiation to execution, we plan to follow up with a subsequent survey later this year to track how sentiment, access, and workforce strategies evolve in practice. That future assessment will offer a clearer view of how policy, organisational behaviour, and talent outcomes align as the UK–India technology partnership enters its next chapter.



About us

Confederation of Indian Industry

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the development of India, partnering Industry, Government and civil society through advisory and consultative processes.

For 130 years, CII has been engaged in shaping India's development journey and works proactively on transforming Indian Industry's engagement in national development. With its extensive network across the country and the world, CII serves as a reference point for Indian industry and the international business community.

In the journey of India's economic resurgence, CII facilitates the multifaceted contributions of the Indian Industry, charting a path towards a prosperous and sustainable future. With this backdrop, CII has identified "Accelerating Competitiveness: Globalisation, Inclusivity, Sustainability, Trust" as its theme for 2025-26, prioritising five key pillars. During the year, CII will align its initiatives to drive strategic action aimed at enhancing India's competitiveness by promoting global engagement, inclusive growth, sustainable practices, and a foundation of trust.

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