

# Darwinbox Due Diligence Checklist for Southeast Asia



## 10 questions to ask before you sign

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### **Q1. Is Philippines and Malaysia payroll native to your platform, or is it built through local partnerships?**

#### **Why it matters**

Platforms built for India often handle SEA payroll through local partners or add-on modules. This means separate logins, delayed updates, and integration issues. With Philippines' 13th month pay, SSS, PhilHealth, and Pag-IBIG requirements—plus Malaysia's EPF, SOCSO, EIS, and PCB calculations—you need payroll that's truly native, not an afterthought.

#### **What good looks like**

Built-in payroll for Philippines and Malaysia in the same platform as core HR. Same database, same interface, same support team. No partner dependencies.

#### **Red flags**

- "We have local partners who handle payroll"
- "Our India payroll is native, SEA is through integrations"
- Can't show Philippines or Malaysia payroll in a live demo

### **Q2. Do you have a dedicated support team in the Philippines or Malaysia, and what's your average response time?**

#### **Why it matters**

India-based support teams may not understand SEA compliance nuances or operate during PHT/MYT business hours. When payroll breaks at 4pm PHT on the 15th, you need someone who understands BIR requirements and responds immediately—not someone who escalates to Bangalore and gets back to you tomorrow.

#### **What good looks like**

Dedicated SEA support team operating in PHT/MYT hours. Average response time under 4 hours for urgent issues. Support team understands local compliance requirements without escalation.

### Red flags

- "Our support team is based in India"
- "We provide 24-hour email support"
- Can't name a specific support contact in Philippines or Malaysia

### **Q3. Show me your all-in pricing for 50, 100, and 200 employees across the Philippines and Malaysia. What requires add-on modules?**

#### Why it matters

Enterprise platforms often have complex module pricing. "Core HR" might not include performance, analytics, or even basic reporting. Multi-country setups can trigger additional implementation fees per location.

#### What good looks like

Transparent, written quote showing total cost at each scale. Core features (payroll, performance, analytics, approvals) included in base price. No per-country implementation fees.

#### Red flags

- "Let me check with the pricing team"
- Separate modules for: payroll, performance, analytics, approvals, custom fields
- Per-country implementation fees not disclosed upfront

### **Q4. How long does implementation take for a company our size, and what's required from our team?**

#### Why it matters

Enterprise HRIS platforms often require 3-6 month implementations with dedicated project teams. For growing SEA companies, this is too slow and resource-intensive.

#### What good looks like

2-4 week implementation for companies under 200 employees. Vendor handles data migration, configuration, and testing. Go-live support included.

#### Red flags

- "Implementation takes 12-16 weeks"
- "You'll need to assign a dedicated project manager"
- Professional services fees required for basic setup

## **Q5. Can you show me—live, right now—SSS, PhilHealth, Pag-IBIG calculations for Philippines and EPF, SOCSO, EIS, PCB calculations for Malaysia?**

### **Why it matters**

If the platform was built for India first, SEA compliance might be incomplete or handled through workarounds. BIR, DOLE, MOHR, and LHDN compliance is non-negotiable—you can't afford to discover gaps after you've migrated.

### **What good looks like**

Live demo showing actual Philippines and Malaysia payroll with current contribution rates and tax tables. 13th month calculation automatic. Vendor can explain recent regulatory changes in both markets.

### **Red flags**

- Shows India payroll instead of Philippines or Malaysia
- "Our local partner handles the calculations"
- Cannot answer "What changed in the latest SSS contribution table?" or "How does your system handle EPF rate changes?"

## **Q6. As we scale from [current size] to 3x, will we need to upgrade to enterprise tier or add modules?**

### **Why it matters**

Enterprise platforms often have tier-based pricing with feature gates. What works for 50 employees might require an expensive upgrade at 150. Some lock critical workflows or custom fields behind enterprise tiers.

### **What good looks like**

Same features and functionality from 10 to 1000+ employees. Pricing scales linearly per employee. No forced tier migrations.

### **Red flags**

- "Advanced workflows require enterprise tier"
- "Custom fields are an add-on module"
- Cannot show customers who started at your size and scaled 3x without upgrading

## **Q7. When SSS, PhilHealth, EPF, or SOCSO rates change, how quickly does your system update?**

### Why it matters

If SEA compliance is handled through partners or is deprioritized, regulatory changes might lag. SSS and EPF contribution rates change multiple times per year –delayed updates mean compliance penalties.

### What good looks like

Automatic platform updates within 48 hours of government announcements. In-app notifications for Philippines and Malaysia regulation changes. Historical change log visible.

### Red flags

- "Updates happen in quarterly releases"
- "Our partner notifies us of changes"
- Cannot show update history for recent Philippines or Malaysia compliance changes

## **Q8. Give me 3 customer references in the Philippines or Malaysia at my company size using payroll and performance modules.**

### Why it matters

Give me 3 customer references in the Philippines or Malaysia at my company size using payroll and performance modules.

### What good looks like

3+ Philippines or Malaysia references at your company size and industry. References using the same modules you're buying. Willing to discuss challenges, not just successes.

### Red flags

- Only India references provided
- SEA references are all enterprise companies (1000+ employees)
- References only using core HR, not payroll

## **Q9. Can I build custom workflows, approval chains, and policies myself, or do I need professional services?**

### Why it matters

Enterprise platforms often require professional services for customization. Your Philippines leave policy with service incentive leave, 13th month pay split across payouts, Malaysia annual leave variations, or 3-level expense approvals shouldn't require a \$10,000 consulting engagement.

### What good looks like

Visual workflow builder accessible to HR admins. Create policies, approval chains, and custom fields without IT or vendor help. Changes go live immediately.

### Red flags

- "We offer professional services for custom workflows"
- "Custom fields require development work"
- "That customization is on our roadmap"

## Q10. What's your data export process if we leave, and how long is the notice period?

### Why it matters

Enterprise vendors sometimes make it difficult to leave. Long notice periods, export fees, or data locked in proprietary formats create expensive switching costs.

### What good looks like

Complete data export (all employee history, payroll records, documents) in standard formats. No export fees. 30-60 day notice period.

### Red flags

- "Data export requires professional services engagement"
- 90+ day cancellation notice with penalties
- Only exports data from past 12-24 months

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### Why we made this

Southeast Asia companies pick HRIS based on brand recognition and regional demos, then discover deal-breaker gaps 6 months in. These 10 questions reveal what matters: real SEA capabilities, not India success stories.



Use this for any vendor - Omni, Darwinbox, whoever. Good vendors welcome tough questions.

**Compare Omni vs Darwinbox:** [omnihr.co/1p-collection/omni-vs-darwinbox](https://omnihr.co/1p-collection/omni-vs-darwinbox)



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