

# planning for international mobility

survey report



plus relocation®

# planning for international mobility

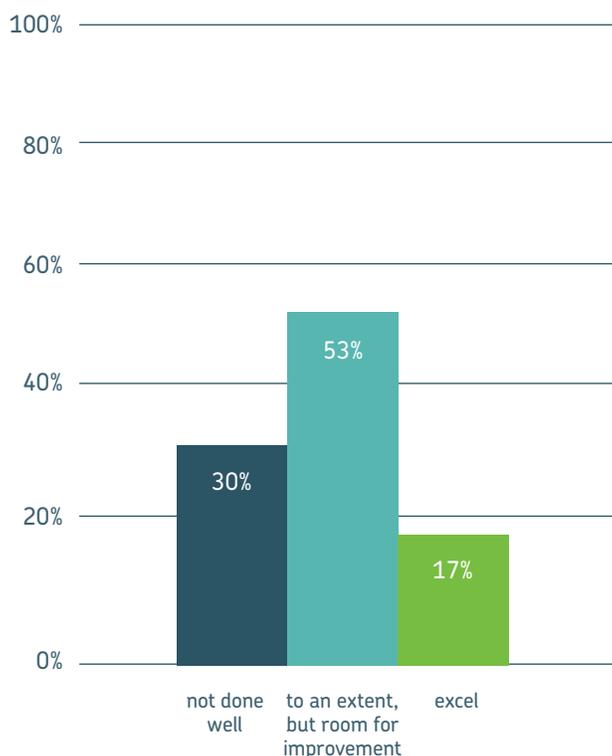
## survey report

Out of the corner of your eye, you see that a new email has landed in your inbox, and the subject line reads “New Assignment”. There’s exciting news – Jill from your London office has accepted a two-year assignment in Sao Paulo, beginning next month!

It’s time to hit the ground running!

Organizations are increasingly faced with the challenges of planning for international assignments and transfers. Proactive planning is foundational to a successful talent mobility strategy. The results from our recent “Planning for International Mobility” survey indicate that only 17% of respondents feel that their companies consistently excel with the coordination, education, processes, and preparation that comprise the candidate stage of a cross-border move. In our report, we’ll identify gaps and pain points, and examine what that 17% is doing to achieve success.

### how companies rate their planning processes



When considering the multiple facets of the planning process, most survey respondents feel their approach is lacking. Nearly one-third identify themselves as using poor processes, while less than one-fifth rate their planning as excellent. This finding indicates a significant weakness in meeting the overall objective of a mobility program, which, at its core, is getting the right people in the right place, at the right time.

In the following pages, we take a closer look at the areas in which companies struggle, and how they outline a clear gap between talent management and global mobility. We also identify practices of the 17% that excel at planning for international mobility. The three key elements to their success with highly-rated programs include the following:

- Providing greater time to prepare
- Focusing on the employee selection process
- Paying special attention to employee support during preparation

## the missing link: talent management integration

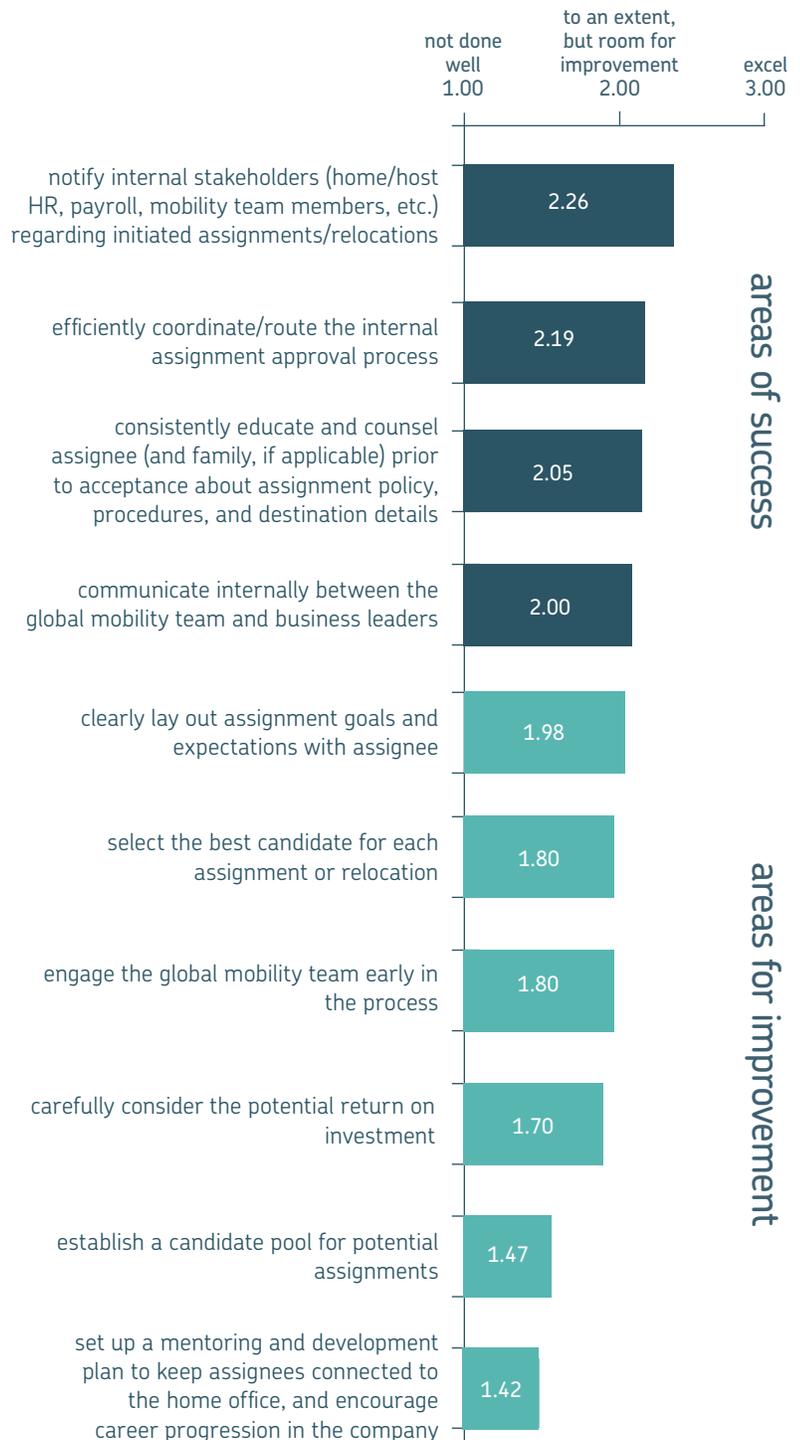
Survey findings point to a subject that has been at the forefront of the industry in recent years: the lack of integration between global mobility and talent management. A distinctive split still exists, with the four planning aspects companies scored themselves the highest falling under the global mobility function, and the six planning aspects with the lowest scores linking to broader business and talent management functions.

It's logical that mobility teams tend to succeed with coordinating relocation activities over which they have the most control. We believe, however, that a global mobility team can provide expertise and innovative approaches that go beyond strictly managing relocation services. Better alignment of these functions (shown as below average in the graph to the right) has the potential to create a streamlined, robust, and productive planning process, ultimately driving assignment success and maximizing the benefit to the company.

A recent E&Y survey found that among 56% of companies, the mobility team is only involved in deploying services, playing no role in talent management.

- *Your Talent in Motion: Global Mobility Effectiveness Survey 2013, EYGM Limited*

This finding is consistent with our identification of a gap between global mobility and talent management during the planning stage.



- global mobility function
- talent management and/or business function

# best practices from the 17%

## #1: timing is everything

63% of respondents state they do not have adequate time to prepare for an international assignment or transfer. While participants indicate that 4 to 5 months is an ideal timeframe, more than 82% often have less lead time.

### why 4 to 5 months?

This timeframe allows adequate time for visa and immigration processing, as well as utilization of the many resources available to the company and employee. Our survey results indicate that companies planning 4 to 5 months in advance have a higher utilization of key resources. For instance, these respondents more consistently leverage their tax provider (39% increase over the average), immigration provider (19% increase), and their relocation management company (15% increase). Many of these resources are either at no additional cost to the company, or are needed for compliancy and budgeting, reinforcing that lack of time is the barrier. Allowing 4 to 5 months also makes the long list of transferee pre-departure activities (everything from selling the car and finding someone to take the cat, to preview trips and new school applications) less stressful for an employee and family.

### finding the time

Visibility and Education: One key to gaining time for mobility planning is getting your message to the right audience. Help company leaders understand that adequate lead time correlates with the success of an assignment/transfer, and thus, the business objectives. Educate about tax and immigration compliancy requirements and employee transition activities, as well as their impact on employee success.

Collaboration: Are business leaders aware of the value global mobility can bring them in the way of candidate services, destination information, host resources, and compensation and benefits structuring? If global mobility can make the process easier, business leaders may be engaged earlier.

Be Proactive: Identify new business meetings you can attend or other ways to learn of upcoming projects. How long does the business prepare to launch a project, and could global mobility be involved at this introductory stage?

### rapid deployment toolkit

The reality is that there will always be situations in which timing is tight. When prioritizing:

#### get started with immigration

This allows document collection to begin early, and gives you a realistic timeframe or when the assignment can begin.

#### collaborate with partners

Request a cost estimate and assignment letter; ask your RMC, tax and immigration providers about considerations or red flags for the destination.

#### focus on the candidate

Arrange briefings on assignment goals, benefits, tax implications, and move logistics. Connect them with a mentor, and, make certain they feel prepared and supported.

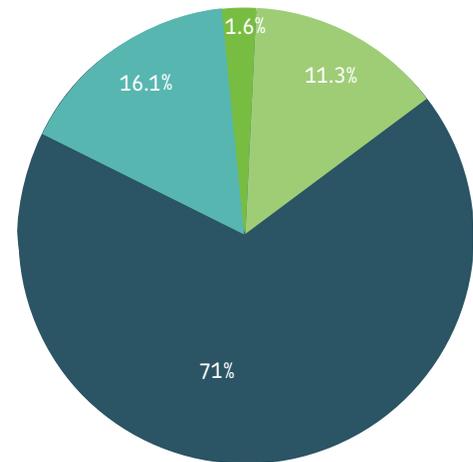
“...due to immigration, assignments often need to be delayed...”

“...very short lead times are common, which is a problem...”

“...would love to have 4-6 months...”

- participant comments

### current planning timeframe



- 0 - 1 month before the start date
- 2 - 3 months before the start date
- 4 - 5 months before the start date
- 6+ months before the start date

## #2: the right fit – intentional use of candidate assessments and pools

Very few respondents (8%) rate themselves as excellent when it comes to selecting the best candidate for each assignment or transfer.

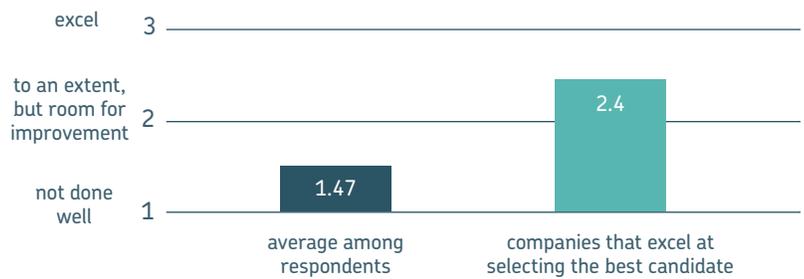
The strongest candidate selection strategies take into consideration employees’ unique knowledge and abilities, career development, and their adaptability. Companies that exemplify this, and report they excel at candidate selection, score 63% higher than the average at establishing a candidate pool for potential assignments.

Similarly, respondents with an established candidate pool perform higher on the other surveyed aspects of planning.

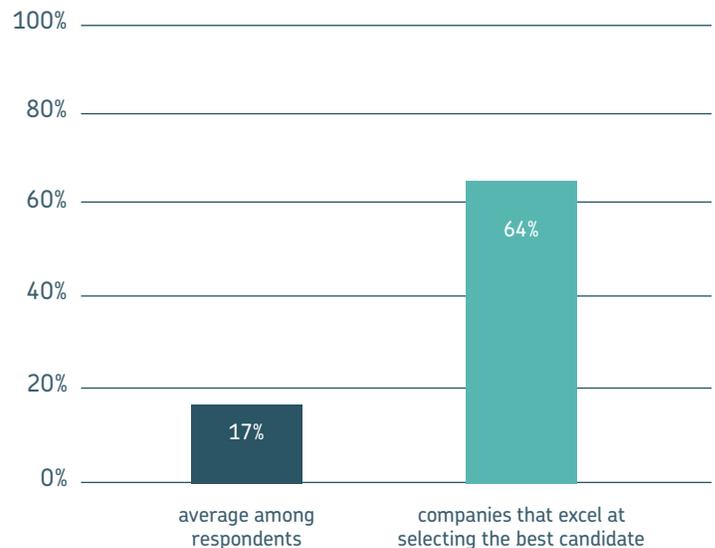
Establishing a pool of willing, adaptable, culturally-competent, high-potential candidates for future assignments/transfers, with the skills and expertise, ensures you get the right talent in place when the opportunity presents itself.

Further, 100% of the companies that excel at candidate selection indicate they leverage candidate assessment tools to support the process (60% always utilize candidate assessments; 40% sometimes utilize them). Of the companies that never utilize candidate assessments, none rate themselves as “excellent” in selecting the best candidates.

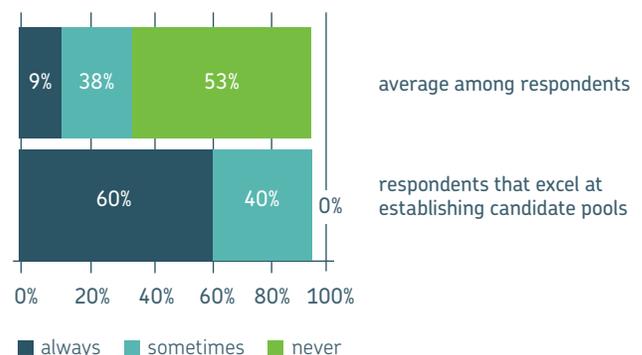
### establishing a candidate pool



### overall excellent planning



### use of candidate assessments



Candidate assessment tools help to determine a candidate’s suitability for a global assignment, addressing adaptability and intercultural competence. They can identify potential issues, and allow for training and preparation to increase the likelihood of assignment success.

### #3: strategic support – mentoring programs and cultural training

After the candidate selection stage, providing support as your employee prepares for the move and new job is essential to their success. Two key components include employee mentoring and development programs, and cross-cultural training tools. Our results indicate companies that excel at candidate selection score 69% higher than the average at coordinating a mentoring and development plan.

Likewise, respondents with an established mentoring and development program perform higher on the other surveyed planning aspects.

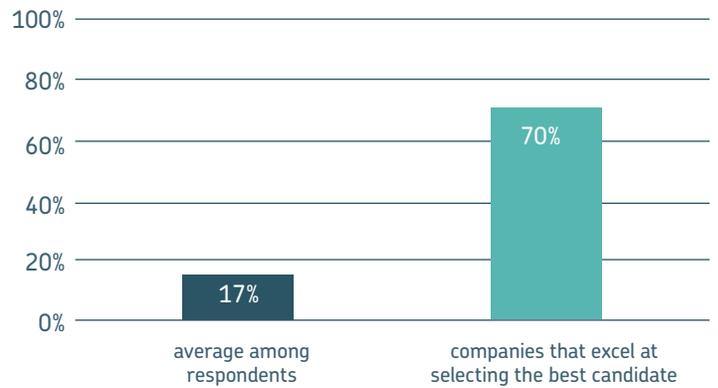
Mentoring and development programs keep employees connected to the home office and encourage career progression within the company. This can help set employee expectations prior to a move, provide personal and professional guidance throughout the experience, establish a continuing connection to headquarters or the home office, and aid in identifying a position when repatriating and reintegrating into the home country and office.

The use of cross-cultural training also differentiates respondents that excel at mobility preparation. 100% of the companies that select the best candidates said they leverage cross-cultural training tools to support the selection process (60% always utilize cultural training; 40% sometimes employ this type of training). Cross-cultural training frequently proves valuable to companies and employees alike. This training sets expectations regarding what life in the new country will be like, and equips your employee with strategies to work effectively with their new colleagues.

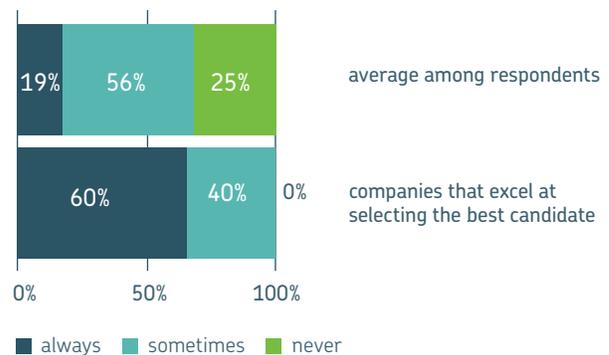
#### setting up a mentoring and development plan



#### overall excellent planning rating



#### use of cross-cultural training tools



## conclusions

We anticipate that companies will continue to fuse global mobility and talent management functions. As you seek to streamline the planning process, consider three immediate strategies that the highest-rated mobility programs are employing in planning for international mobility.



To increase planning timelines and better utilize key resources, sell the value global mobility can bring to the planning process of an international transfer or assignment to business leaders. Even if there is no action for global mobility to take, see if mobility can be included in the first stages of a project.



Help select the best-suited employees with the use of a candidate assessment tool and candidate pools. Consider how this nominal investment can pay off through increased talent development and retention, as well as assignment effectiveness.



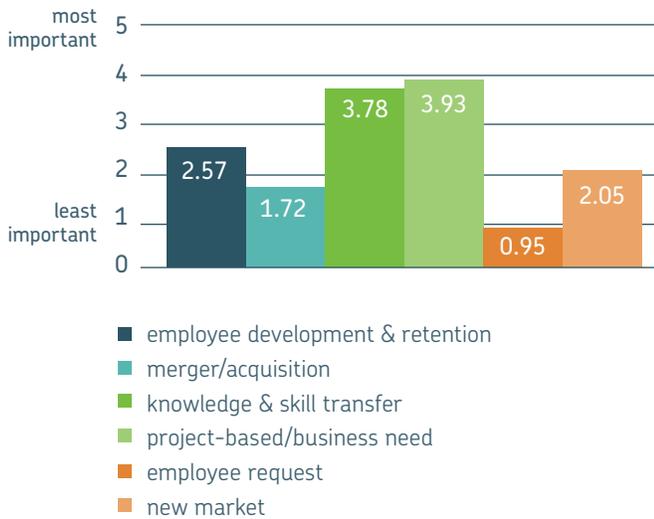
Support your employees with mentoring programs and cross-cultural training to increase retention and prepare candidates for success.

# survey methodology

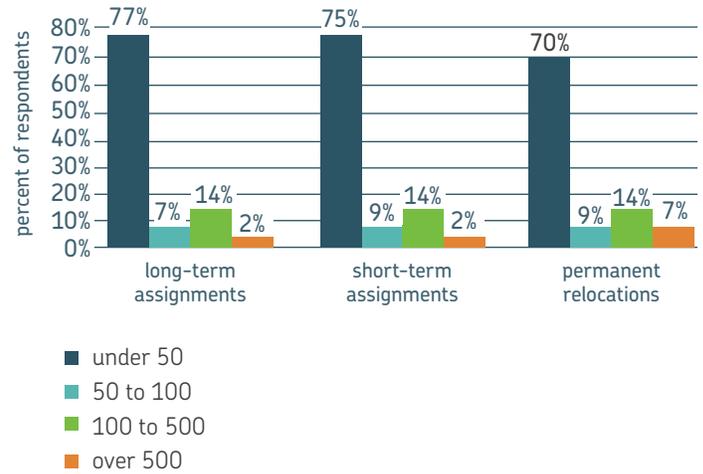
Survey responses are compiled from 68 companies representing diverse industries, with varied global mobility programs. Participants were asked 12 questions relating to the tools, processes, and people involved in the planning stage of their international programs.

## respondent demographics

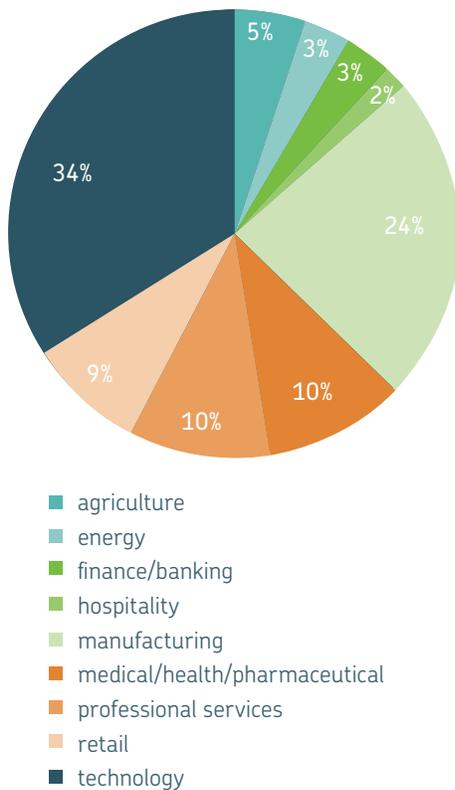
### reasons for international mobility



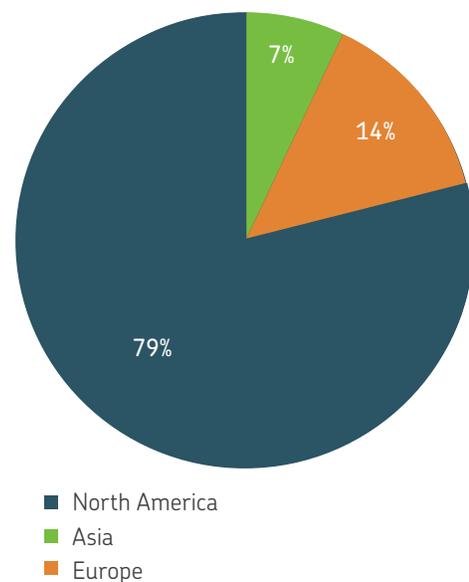
### volume



### industry

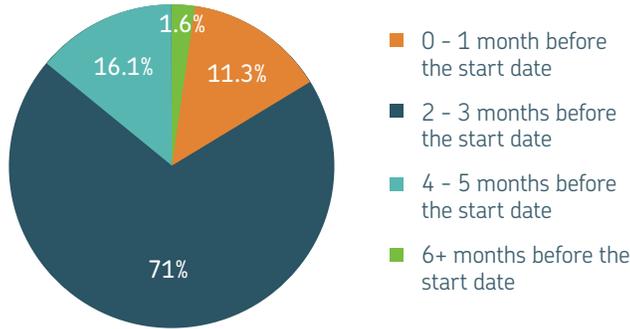


### headquarters location

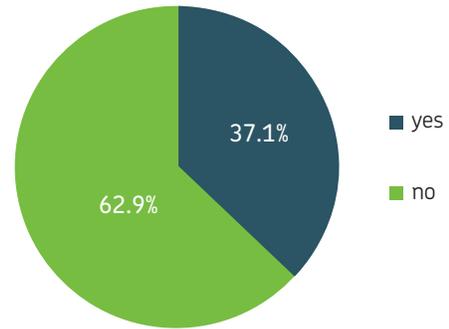


# benchmarking statistics

On average, when do you initiate planning for an international assignment/relocation?



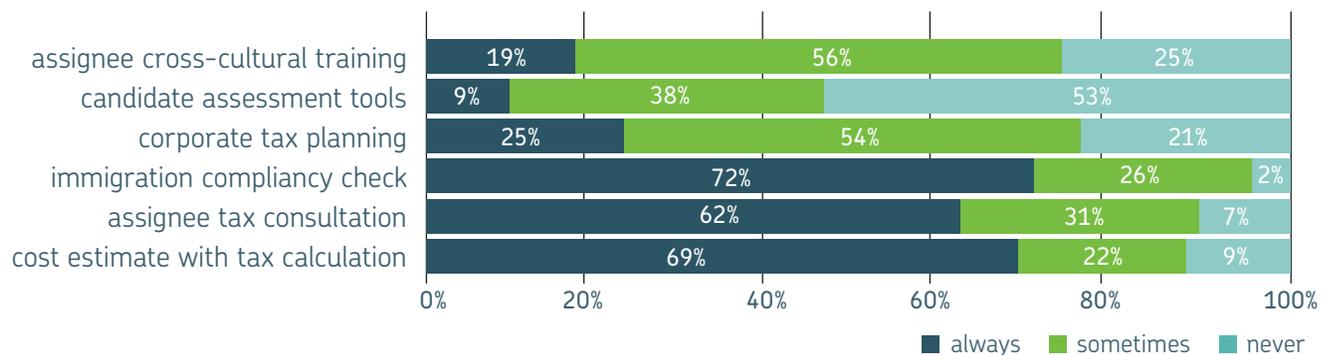
Do you feel this is an adequate amount of time?



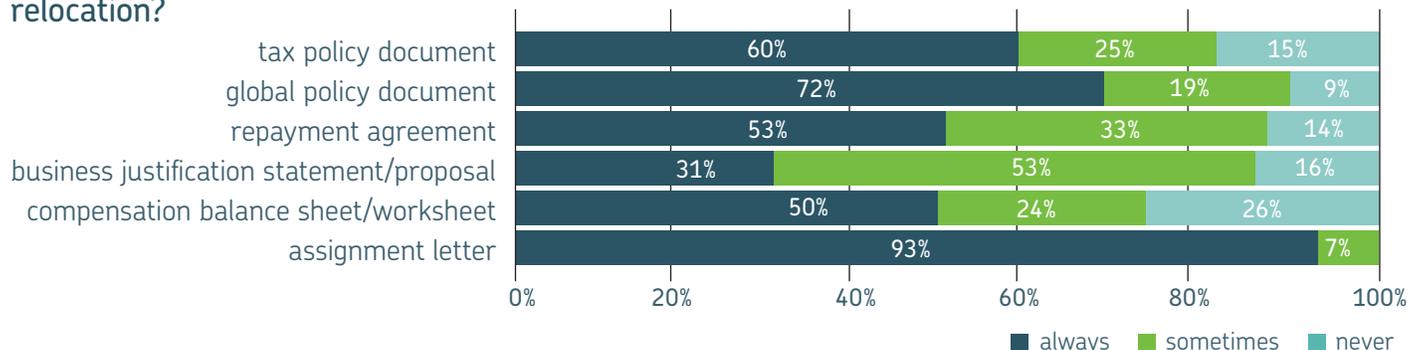
What resources do you leverage for destination information when preparing for an international assignment/relocation?



Which of the following tools do you use when preparing for an international assignment/relocation?



Which of the following documents do you use when preparing for an international assignment/relocation?



## about Plus

Plus Relocation designs and implements completely customized mobility solutions that are perfectly aligned to your needs and deliver outrageous results. Our unwavering commitment to service excellence comes to life in the perfect balance of personal service with innovative technology. Plus has offices in the United States, London and Hong Kong.

