

Asia Tech Salary Index

Software engineering pay across eight APAC markets by role and seniority, benchmarked against Silicon Valley, with hiring velocity and the skills actually being asked for.



The headline numbers

16 days

Average time to hire

89%

Offer acceptance rate

48%

Remote job postings

+52%

AI role demand growth

Chinese tier-one cities now pay senior AI engineers within touching distance of Western levels, while Southeast Asia still clears a 60 to 70 percent discount on the same seniority. Those two facts sit in the same region and increasingly call for different hiring strategies.

What these bands are

Annual gross salary in USD equivalent, full-time employment, excluding employer social contributions, bonus and equity. Employer burden varies from about 5 percent to about 20 percent across these markets and has to be added before two offers are comparable.

Salary benchmarks by role and market

AI and ML engineer salaries

Market	Junior (0-2 yrs)	Mid (3-5 yrs)	Senior (6+ yrs)	YoY
Beijing	\$72,000	\$108,000	\$155,000	+42%
Shenzhen	\$68,000	\$102,000	\$148,000	+38%
Hangzhou	\$70,000	\$105,000	\$145,000	+40%
Singapore	\$75,000	\$115,000	\$165,000	+22%
Bangalore	\$45,000	\$75,000	\$105,000	+32%
Ho Chi Minh City	\$38,000	\$62,000	\$88,000	+28%
Manila	\$32,000	\$52,000	\$72,000	+21%
Jakarta	\$35,000	\$56,000	\$80,000	+26%
Silicon Valley	\$128,000	\$168,000	\$230,000	+10%

Senior full-stack developer salaries

Market	Junior (0-2 yrs)	Mid (3-5 yrs)	Senior (6+ yrs)	YoY
Beijing	\$46,000	\$72,000	\$98,000	+18%
Shenzhen	\$44,000	\$68,000	\$94,000	+17%
Singapore	\$54,000	\$82,000	\$115,000	+11%
Bangalore	\$32,000	\$52,000	\$75,000	+22%
Ho Chi Minh City	\$26,000	\$42,000	\$62,000	+20%
Manila	\$23,000	\$37,000	\$55,000	+18%
Jakarta	\$24,000	\$39,000	\$58,000	+19%
Silicon Valley	\$102,000	\$145,000	\$192,000	+8%

Cloud and DevOps engineer salaries

Market	Junior (0-2 yrs)	Mid (3-5 yrs)	Senior (6+ yrs)	YoY
Beijing	\$52,000	\$80,000	\$108,000	+28%
Bangalore	\$36,000	\$58,000	\$82,000	+30%
Ho Chi Minh City	\$28,000	\$46,000	\$68,000	+27%
Manila	\$26,000	\$42,000	\$62,000	+24%
Silicon Valley	\$118,000	\$160,000	\$208,000	+12%

Total annual cost of a five-person engineering team

Mid-level, three to five years, twelve months, salary only.

Location	Annual cost	Versus the Bay Area
San Francisco Bay Area	\$725,000	Baseline
Beijing, China	\$360,000	50% saving
Bangalore, India	\$260,000	64% saving
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam	\$210,000	71% saving
Manila, Philippines	\$185,000	74% saving

Salary only. Recruitment, equipment, employer contributions and any entity or employer-of-record cost sit on top of every row, and they do not fall in the same proportion, so the percentage saving on a fully loaded basis is always smaller than the one on this table.

The skills being asked for

Share of APAC technical job postings naming each skill.

Skill	Share of roles
1. Large language models	52%
2. Python, PyTorch and TensorFlow	48%
3. AWS, Azure and cloud architecture	42%
4. React, Next.js and TypeScript	40%
5. Kubernetes, Docker and DevOps	38%
6. NLP and transformer models	32%
7. Computer vision	31%
8. Data engineering and ETL	28%
9. Rust, Go and systems programming	22%
10. Blockchain and Web3	18%

What changed after this data was collected

Re-checked in August 2026 against the sources below.

AI training became a job title, not a task

Cross-border AI trainer roles grew 283% during 2025, and the Philippines and India are two of the five largest hiring locations for them worldwide. This is a category that did not exist as a distinct line item when the Q1 bands were collected, and it pays on its own curve, between \$15 and \$75 an hour.

India's supply is growing faster than anywhere on earth

India added 5.2 million new developers to GitHub during 2025, roughly one in seven of every new developer worldwide, and passed the United States on total open-source contributors for the first time. Demand is still ahead of it: AI roles are forecast to exceed 1.25 million by 2027 against a supply gap near 51%.

Enrolment is running ahead of proficiency

India leads the world in generative-AI course enrolments, 2.6 million and up 107% year on year, while ranking 89th of 109 countries on Coursera's overall proficiency measure. Vietnam ranks 33rd. The gap is the screening problem every APAC hiring plan now has to solve.

English rankings did not move the way people assume

On the 2025 EF English Proficiency Index the Philippines scores 569 and ranks 28th worldwide, ahead of every Latin American market except Argentina. Vietnam sits at 500, India at 484, Indonesia at 471. Country scores describe adult populations rather than engineers, but the relative ordering is stable year to year.

Method

- **Collection period.** 1 January 2026 to 31 March 2026. Salary bands were collected in Q1 2026 and are carried forward unchanged. The market commentary was re-checked in August 2026 against the sources listed below.
- **What is counted.** Full-time employment compensation, annual gross, converted to USD. Contractor and agency day rates are excluded because they price risk and overhead the salary does not.
- **What is excluded.** Employer social contributions, bonus, equity, recruitment fees and equipment. Employer burden alone ranges from roughly 5 percent in India at senior pay to roughly 20 percent in China.
- **Seniority.** Junior is nought to two years, mid is three to five, senior is six or more. Titles are unreliable across these markets, so bands are assigned on scope of ownership rather than job title.
- **Limits.** These are market ranges, not a census. The spread inside a single market is wider than the gap between some of the markets listed, and a specific offer should always be benchmarked against the role rather than the country.

Sources

- Second Talent placement and offer data, 1 January to 31 March 2026.
- Deel, State of Global Hiring Report 2026, covering over one million worker contracts across 150+ countries.
- GitHub Octoverse 2025, The State of the Octoverse.
- Coursera Global Skills Report 2025, 109 countries.
- EF English Proficiency Index 2025, 123 countries and regions, 2.2 million test takers.
- NASSCOM and Deloitte, India AI talent demand and supply analysis.
- TopDev and ITviec, Vietnam IT Market and Salary Report 2025-2026.
- Public job-board postings across the eight APAC markets covered, aggregated quarterly.

Hiring engineers in APAC? Second Talent sources, vets and employs senior engineers across APAC on our own entities. Tell us the role and get a shortlist within 24 hours. secondtalent.com/find-the-talent-you-need

This index is general information, current as at the date shown, and is not compensation, tax or legal advice. Salary data moves quarterly and statutory contribution rates change, sometimes mid-year. Benchmark a specific role before making an offer.