

Asia's data center workforce outlook 2027

Asia Pacific has 4.8GW of data center capacity under construction and 53% of operators already struggle to hire. This report sets out where the build is happening, which roles are short, what they pay, how fast pay is moving into 2027 and which policy changes raise the cost of imported staff.



The Headline Numbers

Asia Pacific, H1 2026 unless stated. Sources: Cushman & Wakefield; Uptime Institute; Aon.

26.5GW

Development pipeline, 4.8GW of it under construction

50%

Share of capacity under construction in Southeast Asia

53%

Operators struggling to find qualified staff, up from 46%

5.2%

Projected 2027 salary rise across Southeast Asia, all industries

The build is moving to markets with small operating bases. Johor's capacity under construction rose from 315MW to 602MW in six months, Bangkok's from 347MW to 859MW and Greater Jakarta's from 186MW to 395MW. Singapore, the region's second-largest operating market, had 20MW under construction at year-end 2025.

Where Asia Pacific Is Building

Megawatts at year-end 2025. Source: Cushman & Wakefield, Asia Pacific Data Centre Update, year-end 2025 (27 Mar 2026).

Market	Operational	Under construction	Planned	Vacancy
Greater Tokyo	1,179	228	1,705	5.6%
Singapore	1,043	20	237	4.9%
Johor	897	315	2,099	0.7%
Sydney	786	189	1,102	3.0%
Mumbai	768	323	998	6.3%
Greater Seoul	601	223	698	6.9%
Hong Kong	581	161	510	19.1%
Greater Jakarta	322	186	901	24.9%
Bangkok	113	347	702	17.6%

Colocation vacancy as reported. Neither the operational nor the pipeline figures state whether they are IT load or facility power. JLL expects Asia Pacific to deliver 4.8GW of new supply by 2027, 78% of it already preleased, and reports that more than half of projects in 2025 experienced construction delays of three months or more. JLL's regional totals include on-premise and self-built capacity, so they are not combined with Cushman & Wakefield's here.

The Roles Operators Cannot Fill

Share of operators. Sources: Uptime Institute Global Data Center Survey 2026 (July 2026); Uptime Institute Data Center Staffing and Recruitment Survey 2025 (Oct 2025).

Role	Skills gap, 2026	Highest turnover, 2025
Electrical	38%	29%
Junior and mid-level operations	38%	57%
Operations management	35%	30%
Mechanical	34%	21%

The two columns come from two different Uptime surveys and answer different questions; read each column on its own.

- **Electrical gaps are widening.** The share of operators reporting electrical skills gaps has risen 13 percentage points since 2023.
- **Competitors poach staff.** 28% of operators say rivals hired their staff away in 2026.
- **Pay is already moving.** 55% of operators increased salary spend in 2025.
- **A narrow pool.** 74% of operators say women make up around 10% of their data center staff.

Most of the hiring comes before a site opens

AMRO's analysis of Malaysia found that most data centers create only 30-50 permanent jobs, with the lion's share of employment in the pre-operational stages. Demand in 2027 is weighted to construction, MEP and commissioning, followed by a small, experienced operations team.

What Data Center Roles Pay

SGD a month, basic wage, full-time resident employees. Source: Ministry of Manpower, Occupational Wages 2025, Table 4 (June 2025).

Occupation	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile
Network/infra manager	SGD 8,500	SGD 10,680	SGD 14,720
Facilities manager	SGD 5,911	SGD 7,922	SGD 11,079
IT infra specialist	SGD 5,300	SGD 7,777	SGD 11,065
Data centre engineer	SGD 5,323	SGD 7,020	SGD 11,296
Mechanical engineer	SGD 4,354	SGD 5,660	SGD 7,739
Electrical engineer	SGD 4,369	SGD 5,638	SGD 7,250
IT infra technician	SGD 3,880	SGD 5,043	SGD 6,140
Electrical technician	SGD 3,174	SGD 3,868	SGD 4,946
Air-con technician	SGD 2,496	SGD 3,508	SGD 4,524

Singapore. Excludes bonuses and employer CPF. Private establishments with 25 or more employees.

In Tokyo, Robert Walters puts a data centre engineer at ¥10m to ¥12m a year in base salary and an infrastructure manager at ¥10m to ¥15m, with data center job changers taking raises of 15-20% in 2025. The Singapore and Japan figures measure different populations and are not converted or compared.

Salary Growth Into 2027

All industries, percent. Source: Aon Salary Increase and Turnover Study, Southeast Asia (23 Sep 2026).

Market	2026 increase	2027 projected	2026 attrition
Vietnam	6.6%	6.7%	16.2%
Indonesia	5.4%	5.5%	15.5%
Philippines	5.0%	5.3%	17.3%
Malaysia	4.6%	4.8%	17.4%
Thailand	4.5%	4.6%	16.4%
Singapore	4.1%	4.1%	16.8%

Southeast Asia overall: 5.0% in 2026, 5.2% projected for 2027, 16.6% attrition.

Attrition runs at 2.4 to 4.1 times the projected raise in every market above (our arithmetic, within Aon's figures). In India, Aon projects 9.1% for 2027 overall, 9.8% in real estate and infrastructure and 9.9% in energy.

Policy Changes That Raise the Cost of Imported Staff

- **Malaysia, 1 June 2026.** Expatriate salary bands double; Category III Employment Passes need RM5,000 to RM9,999 a month. Succession plans become mandatory for Category II and III applications from 1 January 2027.
- **Singapore, 1 January 2027.** The Employment Pass qualifying salary rises from SGD 5,600 to SGD 6,000 a month. The 2026 shortage occupation list includes no data center facility roles.
- **Singapore capacity.** 200MW was provisionally allocated to four operators in August 2026, with another call to be reviewed in 18 to 24 months.
- **Malaysia power.** Applications for data center power supply passed 11,000MW by December 2024, and about 30% of Johor applications between June and October 2024 were rejected (AMRO).

Method and Limits

- **One source per figure.** Capacity figures from Cushman & Wakefield and JLL use different scopes and are never added, subtracted or averaged across trackers. Each salary table comes from a single survey.
- **Global staffing data.** Uptime Institute does not publish an Asian breakdown of its staffing results; the figures are global and are used as the best available proxy.
- **Pay definitions differ.** MOM reports basic monthly wages for resident employees; Robert Walters reports base salary ranges for roles it advertised; Aon reports all-industry salary increase budgets.
- **Company job figures.** Hyperscaler job estimates include indirect and supply-chain roles and are not data center headcount.

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Hiring around a data center build? Second Talent helps US startups hire vetted AI-native engineers from Asia, including infrastructure, network and site reliability engineers, and employs on-site staff through its employer of record service. secondtalent.com

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