Lost in Translation

Going international is more than translation. Why multi-country recruitment multiplies complexity, and how to build for it.



RECRUITMENT TECH MASTERS BV
Vendor-neutral recruitment technology advisory
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About Recruitment Tech Masters

1. More than a translation

Great recruitment feels personal. Candidates want to be understood and spoken to in their own language or jargon. Managers need a process built around how they actually hire. That is hard enough for different jobtypes and departments within the same country. But when you hire internationally the game changes: every market has its own language (or even multiple), laws, sourcing channels and habits, and the complexity does not add up, it multiplies.

Going international in Recruitment is never a copy of your home setup and market. Next to the obvious like languages or different local jobboards there are so many factors that come into play. A local team may be smaller, with less specialists, where recruitment is a side job of an HR generalist, not a dedicated function. Probably not everyone speaks English at the same level, or is equally tech savvy, so your global templates and training materials land differently. And the demand and market may be different: in France you may need agencies to headhunt that one niche food scientist, while in Brazil you organically receive thousands of applicants overnight for a traineeship. Same company, same system, two completely different realities.

The trap has two sides. Copy one country's setup to all the others and it fits none of them. Give every country its own instance and you lose all the benefits of scale and synergy. The complexity sits in between: Recruitment has many components that seem similar across countries, yet each value within (language, law, channels, content, process, data, integrations) still need their own local version in order to really work.

This paper is for the person who owns that project. Who's looking for quality and avoiding rookie mistakes. Together we're going to unravel the complexities of supporting Recruitment in a multi-language, multi-country setup. Whether you are a TA leader or HRIT lead who is selecting a new ATS, launching a new career site, or scaling an existing landscape into new markets.

It is deliberately technical in certain places, because the reality is that technical characteristics limit the business result.

> ***Multi-country setup is not a copy-paste configuration exercise. It is an architecture decision with Business re-design. Finding a Global model, that can operate Local.***

We'll talk you through business process re-design with localisations, without falling into the pitfalls of customisations. Only when you really adhere to strict (global) design principles will you actually meet the promise of efficiency through synergy and centralisation.

At RTM we have run or consulted many International Recruitment programs: from leading a global ATS rollout across 60 countries, to balancing international recruitment requirements on a 12 country Workday roll-out, or revamping 15 separate country careersites into 1 single version in 22 languages. Our consultants have been on all sides: either on the global team leading the transition, or on a local team having to adhere to global guidelines, and have even worked on the supplier side balancing all the layers of requirements from the client. The patterns in this paper are not theory. They are what really shows up once you cross the border.

> **This whitepaper is for you if...**
>
> You are a Recruitment leader (TA manager, recruitment architect) or an HRIT lead responsible for recruitment technology in a multi-language, multi-country market.
>
> You are about to select, implement or scale a careersite or ATS across multiple countries, languages or brands.
>
> You want a vendor-neutral, architectural view of what actually makes multi-country hard, and a practical way to get it right the first time.

Even if you don't have a foreign office at all, chances are you still have non-Dutch target groups, or you source candidates abroad, which means you are probably running multi-language recruitment inside your country. The same charactersics apply, just closer to home.

Disclaimer: while culture and local habits absolutely come into play in our projects: this whitepaper focuses mostly on the organisational and technical aspects.

2. The case for Global recruitment

In Dutch we say 'no need to invent the wheel twice'. It pretty much sums up the urge of re-using best practices, centralisation and standardisation. It's pretty much the same for Recruitment operations. The case for global recruitment is pretty simple: standardise and scale. However there are four different drivers:

- **Recruitment process.** One global process instead of fifteen local ones. Fewer process variants to design, fewer trainings to run, and best practices you build once and re-use everywhere. A recruiter who recruits on both German and Austrian markets can do so in one system, and you can run shared services across markets.
- **System and landscape.** It's cheaper to buy and run a single system. One career site, integrated with one ATS and one HR system, costs less than fifteen separate environments. You configure tooling and integrations once, against one standard, instead of maintaining fifteen slightly different connections to the same HRIS. Every country after the first is a configuration, not a project, so it gets cheaper each time. Especially when you consider (Recruitment marketing) integrations, like those to jobboards: you don't want 15 separate integrations to LinkedIn, Indeed, or SEO programs competing against each other.
- **Manageability** and consistency. A single, governed landscape you can support centrally: central support, central services, one datamodel, one set of job characteristics. A central admin can run all of it, instead of a patchwork that has to be changed fifteen times, by fifteen people, with fifteen chances to get it wrong. Especially for Employer Branding consistency it makes sense to centralise your storyline.
- **Reporting and steerability.** Cross-country analytics is one of the main reasons to run a central ATS, and it only works when the underlying fields and values are the same everywhere. More importantly: if everybody actually handles the same definition.

You do however need a shared set of (global) definitions: Most companies I know can't even report (globally) on a simple metric as Number of Hires. Example: Country A's system reported on #Jobreqs opened, while Country B's system could only report on #offers (for a high volume role, that was open continuously, but had a turnover of 6 months - imagine the reporting excel-workarounds on that). Centralisation and standardization go hand in hand with a shared terminology and definitions.

When Centralisation fails

Centralisation and standardisation of Recruitment promises to be cheaper and simpler. However: there is a high cost to getting Centralisation wrong as well, and it is rarely in the original budget. Where centralised international recruitment goes wrong:

- **No standardisation:** I've seen Global ATS's where every country could submit their own requirements. It ends up in a single tenant, but filled with every customisation and exception imaginable. Completely unscalable.
- **Stacking,** not redesign: true multi-language, multi-country requires redesign of processes, and components. If you want to re-use features and templates, they need to be connected on the one hand, but still hidden from users when not applicable for them.
- **One size, fits none:** Being tone deaf for local differences; in wording, channels, values. Low adoption comes from local teams being handed a system built for someone else's reality.
- **Overpromise, underdeliver:** Suppliers, consultants, HRIS consultants tend to promise you the world. Ask for Proof, not only technically, but especially in your real world context. Also: even when a system can be

flexible to meet all your needs, doesn't mean it should accommodate every exception. High Ambitions, low expectations is my motto on this.

Global ownership, but local budgets = fragmented and delayed business case

Here is the catch. While process and system ownership is often placed global, most of Recruitment and HR budget is still allocated and spent locally, as HR often reports into a local country, not Global HR.

The upper funnel recruitment marketing budget (sourcing, job boards, marketing, agencies) sits in local teams, and each country spends it its own way, often where you cannot see it. It's pretty hard to move these budgets central.

So the central saving (of having one system to configure and support, and only maintain a fraction of integrations) has a real business case on paper, but a) you'll need to do a big investment centrally first, and b) the savings (months or even years later) are fragmented over the countries.

AI as the great enabler of Global recruitment

As mentioned above, the real benefits of centralisation and standardisation were often hard to prove. AI is quickly changing that, and is proving to be one of the strongest reason yet to build one scalable landscape instead of local ones.

AI is about to automate a large share of the administrative work in recruitment: screening, scheduling, answering candidate questions, drafting job content, keeping data up to date.

But AI / automation has a hard prerequisite. A model can only take over a task reliably if the landscape underneath it is scalable, with *clean data* and *consistent definitions*. Feed it fifteen local setups, each with its own fields, its own values and its own idea of what a "job family" or a "stage" means, and the automation either breaks or quietly makes bad decisions at scale.

This flips the old business case. Centralisation used to be mostly about saving a bit of licence cost and getting a cleaner report. Now it is the entry ticket to automation of our core Recruitment process. The organisations that can actually let AI do the work are the ones that did the unglamorous job first: one datamodel, one set of definitions, quality data, a landscape built to scale. The pull toward centralisation, and therefore toward a single global landscape, is only going to grow.

> ***Want to become successful in AI? Then you need a unified landscape (systems, datamodel, processes, integrations)!***

What this means for your approach to International Recruitment.

The practical consequence is that scope and sequence matter more than speed.

You do not change your Recruitment engine in all countries at once. Phasing is healthy and needed. But the design, the datamodel, the Jobtypes, the integration architecture, should be set once, centrally, before the first country goes live. Countries are then configured within that design, not bolted onto it.

That is the whole argument for the chapters that follow. Get the architecture and the decisions right once, and every country after the first gets cheaper, faster and more predictable. Skip that, and every country gets a little more expensive than the last.

3. The decisions that determine your International architecture

The most expensive mistakes in multi-country recruitment technology are not made during implementation. They are made in the weeks before it starts, when a few foundational decisions are taken quickly, without a full view of their consequences. A few of them shape everything downstream.

Country, language, or both?

The first structural decision is how to organise the landscape across markets. There are three ways to do it.

- **By country.** One setup per country, regardless of how many languages are spoken there. Clean until you hit a multilingual market. Switzerland, Belgium and Canada break it immediately.
- **By language.** One setup per language, shared across countries. Loses the country context, and cannot carry the legal or content differences between two markets that happen to share a language. French in France is not French in Belgium.
- **By country and language.** One setup per country-and-language combination, all within the same instance. More content to maintain, but architecturally clean, legally sound, and the only model that scales without a growing pile of workarounds.

The right choice is a business-case decision, taken per market. Weigh the cost of an extra interface language (almost always a paid item on both the ATS and the career site side), the hiring volume in that market, the competitiveness of the local talent market, whether the country is a separate legal entity, and any compliance or Works Council requirements that force a local setup regardless of volume.

Do not forget multi-brand and labels. Next to countries and languages, you may have different brands or local labels. This usually does not affect your career site setup much, but it does shape the internal ATS setup: mostly user access (a recruiter who works for labels A and B) and an extra layer on your content library (template copy).

> **Recommendation**
> If you plan to grow into multiple countries, invest in a country-and-language structure from the start. Retrofitting it later (new URL structure, hreflang, CMS restructure, reintegration) costs far more than building it correctly the first time.

The web standard: BCP47 and hreflang

The international standard for locale identification on the web is BCP47, which prescribes a language-COUNTRY format. Your career site URL structure and hreflang implementation should follow it. Without correct hreflang, your localised pages compete with each other in search, or the wrong version ranks for the wrong market.

Market	hreflang code	URL
Germany	de-DE	/de-de/
Switzerland (German)	de-CH	/de-ch/
Switzerland (French)	fr-CH	/fr-ch/
Switzerland (Italian)	it-CH	/it-ch/
Greece	el-GR	/el-gr/
Netherlands (English)	en-NL	/en-nl/

Switzerland alone makes the case for country-and-language: one country, three languages, three distinct candidate experiences. A country-only structure cannot handle it. A language-only structure loses the country.

Bonus: determine your default language (NL or EN, say). First, for copywriting consistency, the default language gets written and validated first, and the other languages are a localisation of it. Second, as a fallback, for visitors from other countries, for internal use, and so on.

Design principle: Localisation versus customisation

This Whitepaper covers many aspects of Recruitment in an international setup. It may be overwhelming. If you need to remember one thing, this is probably it.

> ***Localisation = good. Customisation = bad***

Most HR tech landscapes are hard to maintain, expensive to upgrade or impossible to scale due to one history: years of customisation. It always started reasonably. A location needs an extra field. A business unit wants its own dropdown value. A country asks for a slightly different process. Each request is granted. Each one adds a thread to a web that, over time, cannot be unpicked. The people who built it move on. An upgrade breaks three things that were never supposed to exist. A new country cannot be onboarded cleanly, because the datamodel has drifted so far there is no standard left to copy.

> ***Every customisation is a scaling problem you will face again later.***

Customisation is any change outside the suppliers standard datamodel, feature set or integration framework. It does not scale, it breaks on updates, and it makes you dependent on the individuals who built it. (note: 'supplier' in this context is also the service provided by your internal HRIS supplier to you as a business, as they own your configuration within the tools).

Localisation is your strength and desirable flexibility: using the configurable options that already exist inside the standard, to serve local needs. Not new fields, but local values inside existing fields. Not a bespoke process, but a country-specific version of the standard one.

	Customisation	Localisation
New field added for one country	X	
Existing field, local values		X
Bespoke approval flow outside the datamodel	X	
Country Jobtype using standard config		X
Custom integration bypassing the API	X	
Standard API with localised field mapping		X
Supplier workaround for a missing feature	X	
Feature request on the supplier roadmap		X

The same rule applies to the relationship with your supplier. Stick to their standard wherever you can. Where a feature is genuinely missing, push to put it on the roadmap, and keep away from workarounds that no-one will remember later or ever maintain.

There is a new reason this matters more than it used to. AI runs on definitions. A model that screens candidates, matches jobs or drafts content can only be trusted if "job family", "seniority" or "stage" means the same thing everywhere. Every customisation that bends a definition for one country is a place where automation later goes wrong. Standardise the model and localise the values, and you are not just easier to maintain, you are ready to automate. Customise, and you have quietly disqualified yourself from it.

This is not an abstract preference. It translates into a small set of design principles that keep a multi-country landscape scalable and manageable. We apply them on every transition we run.

Agree on these design principles early, and they'll most likely guide you through 80% of future decisions.



RTM design principles for a scalable, manageable landscape.

Choosing a supplier for multi-country:

Not every platform handles multi-country equally well, and suppliers are not always forthcoming about where their limits sit. Most demos are built to impress, not to reveal. The questions that separate a capable platform from a capable sales team are about languages, configuration and compliance, not features. Ask your supplier the following when you want them to support you in an international context:

- **Languages.** How many languages do you support? Distinguish between: UserInterface language (internally) and Candidate-facing languages (content, templates, careersite, chatbots, etc). What is the cost or effort of adding a new language?
- **Configuration.** Can apply forms, fields and processes be configured per country, language and Jobtype within the standard datamodel, without customisation?
- **Compliance.** Which legislation does the platform account for (GDPR, EU Pay Transparency, EEO/OFCCP), and how is that maintained as the law changes?
- **Team & Support:** Next to your tool: in which countries, languages, timezones are my contacts available to me?
- **Data residency.** Where is candidate data stored, and can it be scoped by country or region? What is the background / location of your sub-processors?
- **Proof.** Show us a live multi-country implementation at scale, not a demo environment, with a reference we can call.

> ***A supplier who cannot point to a live multi-country reference is selling a promise, not a proven capability.***

Data and supplier sovereignty, security and explainability.

We live in a world where governments wage into wars and put trade bans, and blacklists on their allies. Where privacy rules are at risk, and Big Tech algorithms are known to influence or discriminate major groups. Where cyberattacks are launched on HR Tools. And where AI is able to take life changing decisions autonomously.

The coming years HR tech will see a major shift towards data security and sovereignty. Your procurement / privacy /compliance departments will have a major say in the following;

- **Supplier background & location.** Where is the supplier based, where does the data physically sit, and who can legally reach it? This weighs heaviest in the public sector, where it is often a hard requirement, but it is creeping into private-sector shortlists too. Which legislation and courtroom do you turn to when sh*t hits the fan?
- **Sovereignty.** Does this supplier come with (potentially harmful) dependencies on certain sub-processors, from certain countries? We will see an urge towards 'local' suppliers first, and even blacklists of ‘hostile’ suppliers / countries.
- **Security standards.** Does your supplier have its security in place: ISO 27001, 27017, 27018 and SOC 2 type ii will become part of your vocabulary.
- **Compliance.** GDPR, AI Act, pay transparency. Not only proving compliance of the candidate data, but also being able to explain how the AI was trained and how it gives its outcome. Human in the loop is still the standard, but for how long?

It changes supplier selection in a concrete way. The background and location of the supplier now count alongside the features, and a candidate's data crossing into the wrong jurisdiction can be a dealbreaker before the demo even starts. Expect this to sharpen. Organisations may come to prefer local suppliers, or even rule out suppliers from certain countries altogether.

It also changes the shape of the deal. You may still sign one central contract, for the buying power, the single datamodel and the consolidated reporting, while running separate local environments underneath it for sovereignty reasons. When that happens, be clear-eyed about where the benefit sits: in procurement and in reporting, not in a shared landscape. The synergy is in the contract and the data, not in the architecture.

4. Recruitment Architecture: don't think systems, think in Flows.

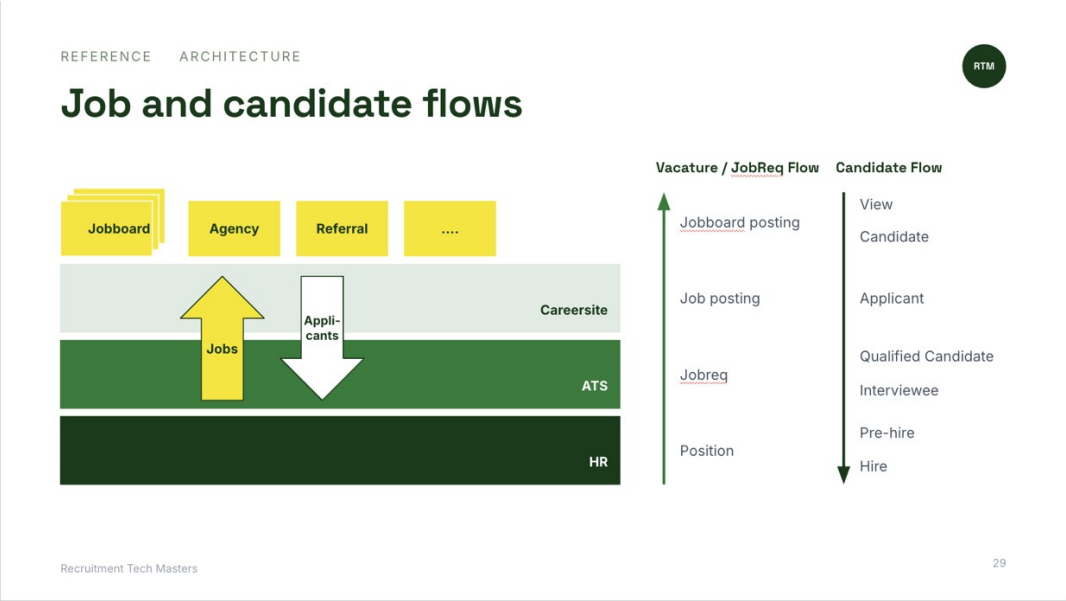
A recruitment landscape is more than just a couple of connected systems. Change one system, and it impacts the behaviour of others. The reference data used in one system, might originate in another. We tend to look at recruitment architecture not only in terms of Systems, but even more in terms of Flows.

The outbound flow of jobs aims at generating an inbound flow of candidates.

We usually distinguish four layers: the externally facing Upper-funnel part where you have your sourcing channels to reach candidates, and the career site to inform and convert (usually owned by Employer branding or Recruitment marketing). Lower funnel, more internally focused we have the ATS/CRM layer where most of the recruitment action happens, and the HCM as handover into the organisation.

When you think International recruitment, you'll need to assess the impact on all 4 layers, and the setup may vary. You may use 1 ATS, but have 4 different HCM's being used in the countries. You will most likely have different Jobboards being used per country. Different countries require different apply forms (for compliancy reasons, or e.g. differences needed in selection criteria).

So, how do you make sense of all this spaghetti? How to tackle this beast? How to eat an elephant? In small pieces. We'll help you understand and disect the Elephant into small pieces, and then put it back together again for it to function.



The four layers, and the two flows that run through them: jobs outbound, candidates inbound.

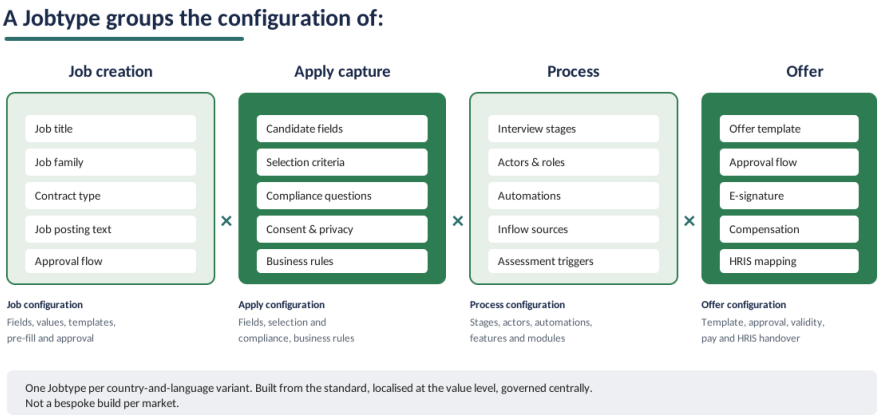
Both flows meet in the ATS: Jobs <to match> Candidates.

We often use the concept of Jobtype to distinguish requirements.

- Define your default recruitment process and architecture first.
- Then localise per Jobtype.

A Jobtype groups together a set of configurations in how a job is created, how applications are captured, how the process runs, and how offers are made. Get the Jobtype library right and most combinations of country, language and role are localisation, not a bespoke build per market.

e.g. Jobtype Traineeship HQ (localised for Apply fields 'study', Processstep Assessment) differs from Jobtype Store employee France (localised for 'Age', 'availability' and group interviews per month, with a standard France-contract).



A Jobtype groups job creation, apply capture, process and offer, into one configurable unit.

Outbound: the job going out

A job starts as an open position and has to end up as a live, localised ad. Four steps, and at each one the question is the same: what has to change for this country?

- **Position (HRIS).** One organisation, many countries. The position carries a legal entity, a country and a location, and those have to be modelled per country before anything downstream works. Watch the

location field most of all: the city that is obvious to you is not automatically geocoded, and it drives proximity search on the boards (see the box below).

- **Jobreq (ATS).** This is where country rules enter the job. A Jobtype that works in one country usually needs a localised variant in another: different mandatory fields in job creation, a different posting text, a different approval chain. Build a small standard library and localise it, rather than a bespoke requisition per market.
- **Job posting (career site).** The posting has to be local, not a translation. Put country-and-language in the URL from day one (careers.company.com/de-ch/, not a toggle). The framework comes from the supplier, but the copy, imagery and widgets are written by the local market, because tone and job-title conventions do not survive central translation.
- **Job ad (channels).** This is where the map changes completely per country. Indeed dominates some markets and is irrelevant in others, XING matters in German-speaking countries, WeChat is the channel in China, Jobnet is mandatory for some roles in Denmark, Pracuj owns Poland. Local-language copy beats English on volume and quality, and pay transparency rules (what you must publish, and in what form) differ per market and have to sit in a structured field, or the feed breaks.

Inbound: the candidate coming in

A candidate starts as an impression and, if everything holds, ends as a hire. The same four layers, the other way in, with the same question at each step: what is different in this market?

- **R** each & Source candidates (channels). Discoverability is per market and per language. The channels differ, search behaviour differs, and candidates increasingly arrive through AI-generated answers, so your structured data and schema have to be right in every language, not just the home one.
- **Applicant (the apply form, where the career site meets the ATS).** This is the sharpest international trap. The Apply form is almost always country specific: fields, consent and privacy language, data retention, AI opt-out, and the selection questions that are required in one market and forbidden in the next. In the US, EEO and OFCCP require candidates to self-identify on protected characteristics; in the EU, collecting that same data is prohibited under GDPR. One global apply form cannot serve both.
- **Qualified** applicants (ATS process). The recruitment process itself is most likely to vary slightly per country or jobtype: interview stages, who decides, what automation is allowed. A clean, standard Jobtype library is what lets you carry those variants and still automate, because AI pre-screening needs consistent fields, stages and meaning across countries, and the AI Act pulls screening and ranking into scope differently per market. Note: the recruiter/manager interface language is separate from the candidate-engagement language (emails, messaging), and some platforms run one interface language per instance, so system messages can go out in the wrong language. Ask before you sign. Offer and Onboarding requirements will always require country specific configurations . Never a one size fits all.
- **Hire (HRIS).** The hire can even land in a different local onboarding and payroll system in every country, so the hand-over fields and the moment of transfer are agreed per market. The dependency is real (a master-data sync plus the hire hand-off) however do not let the HRIS drive the architecture: teams that wait for full HRIS alignment on every field in every country wait far longer than they needed to. It's a myth to think OD in the HCM needs a cleanup first - Recruitment can work perfectly fine if OD differs slightly per country.

> **Location: the most underestimated field in recruitment technology**
>
> A single job can carry up to five different location values: the position location (HRIS, for cost centre), the job requisition location (ATS, actual workplace), the posting location (job boards, a city or region), the GPS location (aggregators, for proximity matching) and maybe even a different interview location. They live in different systems, are maintained by different people, and are rarely aligned by design. A text field saying Amsterdam is not automatically geocoded. Get it wrong and your job simply does not surface in a proximity search, with no error message to warn you. Check your source data, even for spelling (Den Haag or 's Gravenhage) and format and order (country, city, postcode, street)

Language is more than a translation

In France a job posting is an offre d'emploi, a job offer. In Belgium a formal employment proposal is a tewerkstellingsvoorstel, a word that in the Netherlands mostly reads as court-ordered community service. Use it in a message to a Dutch candidate and you have not made them feel welcome. You have made them feel sentenced. LLMs may not catch that. A local reviewer will, and candidates most certainly will. In Germany conversion rises by up to 50% when posted in German, even for international jobs.

The AI Act raises the stakes

The EU AI Act treats AI that screens, ranks or selects candidates as high-risk. This pulls your matching engine, your assessments and your conversational AI into scope: transparency to the candidate, human oversight, and a record of how the system decides. It lands differently per market (the US has its own patchwork, from New York City's bias-audit rule to state-level AI laws), so a feature that is fine in one country may need to be switched off, explained or audited in another. Treat AI behaviour as a per-country configuration, not a global default.

5. Governance and ownership: who owns what

A great Recruitment engine without clear ownership degrades within months. The hardest part of multi-country is not technical, it is deciding who decides: who owns the standard and the process, who may change it, who supports the recruiter in Warsaw at eight in the morning when the central team is still asleep in Amsterdam.

Localisation only works if someone owns and enforces the standard: what fields exist, what values are allowed, which Jobtypes and integrations are in scope. Local requests are measured against it first, and a genuine exception goes through a formal change process, not an informal workaround. Left alone, a well-governed datamodel drifts back into customisation within two to three years, invisibly, until it becomes a crisis. That same discipline (one owner, one standard, clean definitions) is also the prerequisite for your AI layer to able to work on top. Whoever owns the standard today, owns whether you can automate tomorrow.

The five stakeholder types in International Recruitment.

Governance in a multi-country landscape is a standing conversation between five stakeholders. Understand their position and interest:

- **Global business and global product owners.** Central TA plus a product owner per system (ATS, career site, and the rest). Owns the standard and the business need: the global process, the datamodel, Jobtypes, templates and the design principles. Represents recruitment, employer brand and recruitment-marketing needs, and is the only party that can say yes or no to a change, deciding on aggregated business value. This is where the architecture and its definitions are protected.
- **Local business and local admin.** The local recruitment teams plus the admin who maintains the country configuration within the central standard. Own the local reality: local values, content, channels, the local (marketing) budgets, and adoption on the ground. Closest to the candidate and the hiring manager, they flag where the standard strains, and they vary greatly between countries in hiring need, team size and professionalism. The local admin is the most underinvested role, and the most common single point of failure.
- **Central HRIS / functional manager.** Owns the recruitment configuration and the recruitment datamodel: which fields exist, which values are allowed, which Jobtypes are available. Governance made operational, the bridge between the global standard and what local admins may actually change. This middle role is the one organisations most often forget to staff.
- **HRIT.** Owns the whole technical landscape: the HR datamodel, integrations, security and data integrity. The gatekeeper between the organisation and the platforms, and usually the budget and contract owner

towards the suppliers, so it has a decisive say on major changes and priority. Nothing touches the landscape without going through here.

- **Suppliers and third-party integrators.** Supply the platforms, their roadmaps and the integrations between them, and deliver standard capability, not bespoke workarounds. Held to account on the configurability (not the configuration itself) of your required languages, compliance options and support coverage in your actual markets, not the demo ones.

The friction that sinks projects almost always lives in the gaps between these five, and most often between central TA and HRIT. TA owns the business need and the urgency. HRIT owns the system and the risk. When recruitment is not on the HR IT roadmap, or has no named owner on the business side, the project competes for attention against clean-up work with louder deadlines, and loses.

> ***Most Recruitment tech projects fail because they're run as an IT (replacement) project. Successful ones are driven by Business needs and strong TA ownership.***

6. Making it work

The previous chapters mapped the complexity. This one is practical: where the local reality will strain the standard, where to start now, and two checklists, one for choosing a supplier and one for adding a country.

The local perspective: why one rollout does not fit all

The fastest way to kill adoption is to hand a local team a system built for someone else's reality, and call it a rollout. A local operation is not a smaller version of head office. It is a different operation, and the differences are exactly the things that decide whether people use the system or route around it.

Before you roll out to a country, it pays to understand what is actually different there. Not as a box-ticking exercise, and not as absolute truth. This analysis will never be perfectly accurate, and it does not need to be. It is input for your adoption plan, a way to see where the standard will fit and where it will strain.

What to look at per country

- **Team size and level of professionalism.** Is there a dedicated recruitment team, or is recruitment a side job of an HR generalist? A system that assumes a full-time recruiter will overwhelm a team where no such role exists. The more junior or part-time the local setup, the more the system has to carry, and the simpler its local configuration needs to be.
- **Jobtypes and volume.** A market hiring a handful of niche specialists needs a careful, recruiter-led process. A market pulling thousands of applicants needs automation, short apply forms and self-service. Same company, opposite requirements. Your Jobtypes have to reflect that.
- **Sourcing channels and job boards.** The channel mix is local. The boards, the aggregators, the role of agencies, walk-ins and referrals all differ by market. A distribution setup that ignores the local channels simply does not reach the candidates.
- **Employer reputation.** A strong local brand pulls candidates with little effort. A weak or unknown one has to work much harder, through more channels, with better content. The same global EVP does not land the same way in a market where no one has heard of you.

Run this lightly across your countries and a map appears: where the standard fits straight out of the box, where it needs localisation, and where adoption will need real attention. That map is worth more than any rollout schedule, because it tells you where the effort actually has to go.

> ***A local team that was handed the wrong system does not complain. It just quietly goes back to email, spreadsheets and the agency it already trusted.***

This is the part a tooling project forgets, and the part that decides whether the investment pays off. The technology can be perfect and still fail, if the people who have to use it were never designed for. Adoption is not a phase at the end. It is a lens you apply from the start, country by country.

What you can do now

You do not need the full programme in place to make progress this week. Three concrete moves set the right foundation, and a fourth keeps you honest.

- **Map your countries as a matrix, not a list.** Language times legal framework times volume times recruitment model. The matrix shows you immediately where the complexity sits, and where it does not.
- **Build the business case at portfolio level, not per country.** What does ten times one country cost against one times ten? Put consistency, integrations, reporting and steerability in the calculation, not just licences.
- **Ask every shortlisted** supplier for one live multi-country reference, and call it. Not the demo. The real customer, in your kind of markets. This single question tells you more than a day of product sessions.
- **Involve your local teams now, not at go-live.** They are your adoption plan. The earlier they shape the local reality into the design, the less you rebuild later.
- **Follow the money.** The benefits of a centralised, international landscape should be made real. Check which global/local contracts you have, how much € is involved and when contracts end, specifically for (local) jobboards, Agency cost, CRM's, careersite(s), and ATS's.

Checklist 1: choosing a (true International) supplier

Use this when evaluating an ATS, a career site platform, or AI supplier for its International capabilities. The ATS and CS Careersite columns show which system each question applies to.

Platform capability

#	Topic	Question	ATS	CS
1	Interface languages	How many recruiter/manager interface languages, at what cost each?	X	
2	Engagement Languages	Which Candidate facing languages (engagement, emails, chatbots) are supported? Do they follow Job-language, or independent?	X	
3	Apply form	Can apply forms be configured per country, language and Jobtype without customisation?	X	X
4	URL structure	Does the platform support a country-and-language URL structure natively?		X
5	Jobtype	Does the Jobtype concept support country-and-language variation within the standard datamodel?	X	
6	User groups	Can user groups show only country-relevant content without changing the datamodel?	X	
7	Data residency	Where is candidate data stored, and can it be scoped by country or region?	X	X
8	Salary fields	Structured salary fields (min, max, period, currency) as standard, not free text?	X	

Compliance

#	Topic	Question	ATS	CS
9	Legislation	Which legislation is accounted for (GDPR, EU PTD, EEO/OFCCP), and how is it maintained?	X	X
10	Consent	Can consent and privacy language be set per country and language,	X	X

#	Topic	Question	ATS	CS
		with retention and AI opt-out?		
11	Field rules	Can a field be mandatory in one country and hidden in another, without customisation?	X	
12	Works Council	How are Works Council reviews handled in DE, NL and FR?	X	X

Support and implementation

#	Topic	Question	ATS	CS
13	Coverage	Which countries and languages does support cover, at what hours?	X	X
14	Contact	Dedicated contact or generic helpdesk? SLAs uniform across all markets?	X	X
15	Team	Where is the implementation team from, which countries and languages can they work in?	X	X
16	Proof	Can they show a live multi-country reference at scale, not a demo, with a contact to call?	X	X
17	Standard	What is their stance on customisation versus localisation, and how do they enforce it?	X	X

Checklist 2: adding a country to your existing Recruitment Landscape

You are live in a (couple of) countrie(s). Now it's time to scale and add a new language.

Use this checklist with your country manager, HRIS and supplier to clarify and assign the effort needed to add a new language.

Career site

#	Topic	Action	Owner
1	Interface language	Request the new candidate interface language from the supplier (scope, cost, lead time)	PM + CS supplier
2	Job filters	Confirm whether filters are translated in the CMS or pulled from ATS values	HRIT / ATS admin
3	URL / hreflang	Confirm country-and-language URL structure and correct hreflang	CS supplier / HRIT
! 4	Local copy	Write local copy, from the default copy.	Local TA / CMS admin
! 5	Apply form	Build or clone and configure the apply form per country and language	CS supplier / HRIT
! 6	Apply compliance	Verify consent, privacy, retention, AI opt-out, local screening rules and config.	HRIT / privacy officer
! 7	Privacy statement	Trigger a formal privacy review, do not assume the existing one covers it	Privacy officer / legal
8	SEO / metadata	Localise titles, descriptions and schema markup	CS supplier / HRIT

ATS

#	Topic	Action	Owner
9	Interface language	Request the recruiter interface language (availability, cost, lead time)	PM + ATS supplier

#	Topic	Action	Owner
! 10	Single-language check	Check whether triggers or emails are limited to one language for this country	HRIT + ATS supplier
! 11	Job characteristics	Verify fields and values are present, translated and complete	ATS admin
12	HRIS alignment	Align job characteristics with HRIS position-management fields	ATS + HRIS admin
13	Jobtype	Create the country Jobtype: creation, apply, process and offer config	ATS admin / local TA
14	Templates	Create local email and messaging templates for every candidate touchpoint / engagement	Rec admin / local TA
! 15	User groups	Configure roles so local users see only what is relevant	ATS admin
16	End-to-end test	Test req to apply to pipeline to offer to hire, in the local configuration	HRIT / local TA

HRIS and distribution

#	Topic	Action	Owner
17	Org chart	Verify locations, departments and cost centres are complete	HRIT / HRIS admin
! 18	Location data	Verify all location values resolve to accurate GPS coordinates	HRIT / HRIS admin
19	Position fields	Verify job family, grade, contract and employment type are present and translated	HRIS admin
! 20	Triggers	Verify position-to-req and offer-to-onboarding triggers work for this country	HRIT
! 21	Salary fields	Verify structured salary for pay-transparency and board requirements	ATS admin / rec mktg
! 22	Channels	Set up local boards, aggregators, programmatic and feed field mapping	Rec mktg / HRIT
! 23	Legal distribution	Check local rules: mandatory state boards, non-discrimination, ad language	Legal / rec mktg
! 24	Local job copy	Ensure all job postings are written in the local language	Local TA / rec mktg

Across all layers

#	Topic	Action	Owner
! 25	Works Council	Start the Works Council review early where required (DE, NL, FR and others)	PM / legal / local HR
26	Reporting	Verify cross-country reporting reflects the new country correctly	HRIT / rec admin
27	Adoption & training	Train local admins and users in their language and configuration	PM / local TA
28	Go-live comms	Prepare candidate-facing and internal go-live communication locally	Local TA / local HR

Items marked ! are the ones most often missed or underestimated.

A final word

Going international is more than a translation. The benefits of centralization are real, but so are the dependencies. The complexity does not add up, it multiplies, across every layer at once. That is exactly why it pays to do the thinking once, centrally, and roll it out many times. Build once, localise per market, govern

centrally. Do that and every country after the first is cheaper, faster and more predictable. Skip it, and country four is where it bites.

And make no mistake, this one is on you. A failed go-live in Warsaw or São Paulo is your failed go-live, not your supplier's. The good news: it is avoidable, and the avoiding happens up front, in the decisions, not in the firefighting afterwards. Get the architecture right once and the countries follow.

The timing is on your side too. AI is about to take over a big slice of the admin work in recruitment, but only where the landscape can carry it: one datamodel, clean data, consistent definitions. The unglamorous work of going multi-country properly is the same work that lets you automate later. It saves money now and opens the door tomorrow.

It will be one hell of a ride across all those countries. Do the thinking up front, and it is absolutely worth it.

About Recruitment Tech Masters

Recruitment Tech Masters is a Rotterdam-based recruitment technology consultancy. We have run over 150 recruitment tech projects (strategy, selection, implementation, optimisation) and worked with just about every ATS, so we know their strengths and their gaps.

We have built and run international landscapes across 60 countries (a global iCIMS programme for Danone), 15 countries (Action), 12 countries (ASML) and 5 countries (ERIKS), among others. Our clients range from ASML, Rabobank, Danone, Action, KPN, ERIKS, Royal Terberg Group, Dirk van den Broek and WeFashion to public-sector organisations like Gemeente Amsterdam, Erasmus MC and Gemeente Helmond.

A new ATS, the best career site out there, a sharper candidate experience, AI matching, or sign-off from compliance: we have gotten our hands dirty on it, so you do not have to.

We are truly independent. No commercial ties to any supplier, no kickback fees, nobody paying us to recommend one platform over another. Our job is to help you make the best decision (whether, when and how to move) and then run that transition with you, from first assessment to go-live and beyond. And we have a team that makes it a smooth, and fun, ride.

Liked this whitepaper, or think we missed something? Want to talk multi-country recruitment, or just share experiences? We gladly take the time. Get in touch via wearertm.com.

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