

The 5 Best Places in the World to Work as Project Professional

May 14, 2024



In a previous article on working internationally as a project manager, we compared the opportunities of working abroad both as part of a large corporation and as a freelancer or independent contractor. [You can read that article here.](#)

In this article we will be looking at some of the top places in the world to consider growing your project career if your passion is to work overseas. Whilst our list is applicable if you are working within a corporate organization, the parameters listed are most likely to be a concern if you are considering from a freelancer's perspective. And given the specific opportunities, risks and challenge that you may face as a freelancer, and noting that in working for a corporate you will be insulated by your company from many of the parameters outline below,

Choosing the best place to work internationally as a project manager involves considering various factors such as tax regulations, visa rules, job opportunities, pay rates, presence of large corporate employers, and availability of diverse project opportunities.

Let's break down each of these parameters and explore how it impacts freelancers:

1. **Tax Regulations** – Low tax regions or countries with favorable tax laws can significantly increase your take-home pay. Whilst overall high tax regions may reduce net income significantly. Associated with this are also the tax laws of the region in which you will be based. This will impact the complexity of financial management and reporting requirements for contractor.

2. **Visa Rules** – You will need to consider visa regulations, if you plan to work internationally. Some countries have freelancer-friendly visa options, allowing for longer stays and easier work permissions. Complex visa processes or restrictions may limit opportunities for contractors and make the process of obtaining work and staying employed all the more difficult.
3. **Job Opportunities** – Cities or regions with a high demand for project managers offer more opportunities for freelancers. Emerging markets or regions undergoing significant infrastructure development may have a growing demand for project management expertise. Or alternatively look for sector hotspots, if you are seeking projects in specialist areas such as charity NGOs, banking, finance, regeneration, or technology. These established business and community hubs often have a steady flow of project management opportunities across their various industries.
4. **Pay Rates** – Pay rates vary significantly depending on the location and industry. High-cost-of-living areas often offer higher pay rates to compensate for expenses. You should research prevailing pay rates to ensure they are competitive and sustainable. Identify whether you will be paid in the local currency or if negotiated exchange rates can be embedded into your contractual arrangement.
5. **Large Corporate Employers** – The presence of large corporations means more potential clients for freelancers or the opportunity to act as a subcontractor. Corporate employers may offer long-term projects, stability, and higher pay rates compared to smaller businesses. And you will benefit from straddling both corporate and contractor benefits. Proximity to major corporate headquarters or business districts can also increase networking opportunities for freelancers and contractors. Helping you to develop future pipelines of work opportunities.
6. **Project Opportunities** – You will want to ensure that wherever you land has a diverse range of project opportunities which allow you to gain experience across different industries and sectors. Regions with a variety of projects, such as technology, construction, healthcare, and finance, provide more options as a freelancer to specialize or diversify your skills. The availability of both short-term and long-term projects will ensure a continuous flow of work.

Based on these parameters, here is my choice of the best places in the world to freelance as a project manager:

- **Singapore:** Low tax rates, a strong and growing economy, and a hub for multinational corporations. Challenges for living in Singapore include high Cost of Living** including expensive housing, transportation, and healthcare. Its competitive job market and strict Regulations. You'll be required to obtain a work permit or visas which may be challenging for some individuals.
- **Dubai, UAE:** Favorable tax environment, growing economy, and numerous large corporate employers. The Challenges of moving to Dubai include the cultural differences that many expatriates face together with challenges in adapting to the local customs and business practices. The climate of Dubai can be harsh, with extremely hot temperatures during the summer months.

- **London, UK:** Despite higher taxes, offers high pay rates, diverse job opportunities, and a concentration of large corporate employers. Among the challenges of relocating to the UK, include the market uncertainty as a result of the UK's departure from the EU. There remains a lack of clarity regarding immigration policies, trade agreements, and the overall business environment. London is one of the most expensive cities globally, with high rents, property prices, and transportation costs. This high cost of living makes finding a high paid role a necessity for any long-term prospects in the region. Despite this London attracts talent from around the world, resulting in fierce competition for both jobs and housing.
- **New York City, USA:** High pay rates, abundance of large corporations, and a wide range of project opportunities across industries. Similarly to London, New York City is known for its high cost of living, including expensive housing, utilities, and taxes. An equally competitive job market. And the fast-paced lifestyle of New York City can often lead to challenges in maintaining a healthy work-life balance. With burnout amongst workers common.
- **Sydney, Australia:** Good pay rates, stable economy, and a thriving business environment with a variety of project opportunities. Traffic congestion and limited public transportation options can result in long commute times for residents. And many who take up roles cite isolation due to being geographically isolated from other major cities, which may impact travel and access to certain amenities.

Whilst that freelancing as a project manager is a dream profession for many, with numerous advantages, including high salary rewards. Opportunity to meet and work with a range of colleagues from across the world, and a chance to fully experience the depth of a foreign culture.

It is important that you research and evaluate the downsides and challenges. Individuals should weigh the pros and cons based on their personal preferences, career goals, and lifestyle priorities.



Nicola Benjamin

Nicola Benjamin is a Project Management Specialist with 20+ experience in the project industry. Her career has seen her work in India, Middle-East and continental Europe. As well as on projects throughout the UK.