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Powering the Digital Future Staffing for Sustainable and Resilient Data Centres

Due to increasing energy demands and the rapid advancement of technology, data centres are an imperative infrastructure to help support end-markets. In 2025, the global data centre market size was estimated at \$383.82B USD and is projected to grow to \$902.19B USD by 2033.

Fuelled by increasing demand for cloud services, AI workloads and sustainable infrastructure, data centres are seeing unprecedented growth and investment. However, this is predicated on capacity being able to keep up with demand. The speed at which data centres need to be built to keep pace with demand means organisations need to have a ready supply of specialised talent. In this whitepaper, we will explore how companies can ensure their staffing strategy is fit for purpose and can keep up with demand.

Middle East: Data Centre Project Overview

Data centres help support almost every sector from energy and finance, to healthcare, retail, manufacturing, government, telecom, and more. They also enable cloud computing, AI, IoT, and digital transformation. As such, there are several ongoing and upcoming global projects that are helping to support the growth of this sector, which ultimately will require specialised talent to plan, build, and operate these data centres.



Middle East: Data Centre Project Overview



NEOM ZEROPOINT/DATAVOLT - OXAGON// SAUDI ARABIA

Built within Oxagon, the industrial district of NEOM on Saudi Arabia's northwest coast, the ZeroPoint/DataVolt AI campus is emerging as one of the world's most ambitious digital infrastructure projects. With a planned 1.5GW of capacity, the development is designed to support next generation AI workloads, hyperscale cloud environments, and high density compute clusters. Backed by a multibillion dollar investment and integrated into NEOM's renewable energy ecosystem, the campus will deploy advanced liquid cooling and high efficiency power systems to meet the demands of large scale GPU environments. As construction progresses through 2025 and 2026, ZeroPoint is positioning Oxagon as a global hub for sustainable, AI ready hyperscale infrastructure.



KHAZNA AUH6 HYPERSCALE CAMPUS// MASDAR CITY - ABU DHABI, UAE

Located within Masdar City, Abu Dhabi's pioneering low carbon innovation district, Khazna's AUH6 hyperscale campus is emerging as one of the UAE's most significant new data centre builds. Designed with an initial capacity that can scale toward 100-200MW, the facility is optimised for AI ready, high density compute and modular expansion. The project incorporates energy efficient cooling systems and is positioned to leverage Masdar City's renewable energy ecosystem, aligning with the UAE's national sustainability targets. With its proximity to major fibre routes and a rapidly growing digital economy, AUH6 is poised to become a central hub for hyperscale and AI workloads across the Gulf.

Middle East: Data Centre Project Overview



G42/US-UAE 5GW AI CAMPUS (STARGATE UAE)// ABU DHABI, UAE

The Stargate UAE AI campus in Abu Dhabi represents one of the world's most ambitious compute infrastructure initiatives, with a planned capacity of up to 5GW dedicated to AI training, inference, and high performance computing. Developed by G42 in collaboration with U.S. technology partners, the project is designed as a next generation AI “gigafactory,” integrating advanced liquid cooling, high density GPU clusters, and renewable energy pathways. Its scale positions it alongside the largest AI compute facilities globally, whilst its location in Abu Dhabi provides stable grid access, strong connectivity, and sovereign AI alignment. As construction progresses, Stargate UAE is set to anchor the region’s leadership in large scale AI infrastructure.



Middle East: Data Centre Project Overview

CENTER3 (STC) RIYADH HYPERSCALE CAMPUS// RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA

Center3's new hyperscale campus in Riyadh is a cornerstone of Saudi Arabia's plan to deliver 1GW of capacity by 2030. Designed to support hyperscale cloud platforms, AI workloads, and enterprise digital transformation, the facility incorporates high efficiency cooling, robust power redundancy, and scalable modular architecture. Its location within Riyadh's expanding digital corridor provides direct access to national fibre networks and key enterprise clusters. As one of the country's largest new data centre builds, the campus reinforces Saudi Arabia's ambition to become a regional digital infrastructure powerhouse, mirroring the scale and strategic intent of Europe's leading hyperscale developments.



Middle East: Data Centre Project Overview



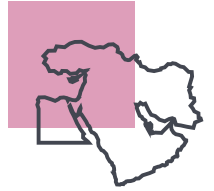
MEEZA HYPERSCALE HOSTING EXPANSION// DOHA, QATAR

Following a new 6MW hosting agreement with a major hyperscaler, MEEZA is expanding its data centre footprint in Doha to support rising demand for cloud and AI services. The project builds on MEEZA's Tier III and Tier IV facilities and is engineered for high density compute environments, with advanced cooling and power systems tailored for AI ready workloads. Strategically located within Qatar's growing digital infrastructure ecosystem, the expansion strengthens the country's position as a competitive regional hub for hyperscale deployments. With increasing investment in sovereign cloud and AI capabilities, MEEZA's latest build aligns with Qatar's broader ambition to scale its digital economy.





Regional Focus: Energy Demand & Workforce Implications



The Middle East data centre sector is entering a phase of hyper acceleration, driven by AI adoption, rapid cloud expansion, sovereign digital economy strategies, and a surge of hyperscale investment. Rather than a slow, incremental build out, the region is moving into large, multi gigawatt development cycles that are reshaping power demand, infrastructure planning, and workforce requirements.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE sit at the core of this shift. Both markets are backing ambitious digital infrastructure roadmaps, with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the UAE's national AI and digital strategies anchoring long term demand. New hyperscale campuses, sovereign cloud regions, and AI specific facilities are being announced and built in quick succession, with regional capacity expected to more than double over the next five years. This pace of growth is compressing delivery timelines and placing unprecedented pressure on grid capacity, cooling solutions, and specialist talent.

At the same time, the region's climate and sustainability context is impossible to ignore. Many Middle Eastern data centres operate in environments where summer temperatures can reach 50°C, significantly increasing cooling loads and overall energy consumption. Governments and operators are responding with large scale renewable energy investments, waste gas to power pilots, and more efficient cooling strategies, but the structural challenge remains; GPU dense, AI ready facilities can multiply power demand severalfold compared to traditional enterprise sites.

Sustainability is therefore emerging as both a differentiator and a constraint. Operators are targeting improved PUEs, integrating solar and other renewables, and exploring heat reuse and alternative cooling technologies to keep long term energy costs and emissions in check. Sovereign backing helps, but the need to align AI driven growth with national climate commitments is becoming more acute as mega projects move from concept to construction.

Regional Focus: Energy Demand & Workforce Implications

MIDDLE EAST



Overlaying all of this is a growing workforce gap. Even with strong sovereign funding and clear national agendas, the region does not yet have the depth of specialist data centre talent required to deliver the volume and complexity of projects now in the pipeline. Electrical engineers, commissioning managers, sustainability specialists, grid integration experts, and project controls professionals are in particularly high demand as build schedules compress and AI specific requirements become more complex.



The Middle East offers unique opportunities, but also unique challenges - visa regulations, cultural integration, and niche technical requirements. Our clients rely on us to navigate these complexities and deliver talent seamlessly. NES Fircroft's global footprint enables rapid deployment of experienced professionals into these high-growth markets.

Lee Bailey, Global Sales Director
NES Fircroft

As Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, and others compete to position themselves as global AI and digital infrastructure hubs, the ability to attract, develop, and mobilise this talent at scale is becoming one of the most decisive factors in whether the Middle East can fully realise its ambitions.

Regional Focus: Energy Demand & Workforce Implications

Whilst growth in the data centre sector is universal, regional dynamics vary significantly, influencing talent requirements and project timelines.

AMERICAS



The largest driver of data centre expansion is the Americas – particularly the United States, which remains the epicentre of data centre investment. Not only are there significantly more upcoming projects in the U.S., but current initiatives are also encouraging investment in creating more infrastructure, including energy projects and data centres. With over 5,000 operational facilities and more than 2,500 projects in the pipeline, the region is projected to experience a 47% increase in hiring demand over the next five years.



Clients in the U.S. are asking for talent solutions that can scale at hyperspeed. Electrical engineers, commissioning managers, and sustainability specialists are in short supply, and the ability to mobilise talent quickly is now a competitive advantage.

Dave Wood, Business Development Manager
NES Fircroft



Projects such as Meta's Project Sucre exemplify the scale and urgency. These initiatives require thousands of skilled professionals, from grid engineers to AI infrastructure architects, underscoring the need for robust talent pipelines.



Regional Focus: Energy Demand & Workforce Implications



Asia-Pacific is emerging as a powerhouse for hyperscale projects. China and Australia lead the charge, with 703 and 191 upcoming projects, respectively, translating into 19% regional hiring growth. South Korea's Buk-Gu AWS AI Data Centre, housing 60,000 GPUs, highlights the region's pivot toward AI-centric infrastructure.



APAC clients are prioritising speed-to-market. The challenge isn't just finding talent; it's finding talent with AI-ready skills. Structured upskilling programmes will be vital to bridge this gap.

Fraser Canobie, Recruitment Manager
NES Fircroft

Regional Focus: Energy Demand & Workforce Implications

“European clients face a dual challenge: meeting sustainability targets whilst scaling capacity. We’re seeing strong demand for specialists in renewable integration and energy efficiency, alongside traditional construction roles.

Michael Lee, Business Development Director
NES Fircroft



EUROPE

By contrast, Europe’s growth trajectory is tempered by energy constraints and regulatory caution. Countries, like the Netherlands, have taken a more cautious approach to help mitigate the strain on their energy resources. For example, Amsterdam has indefinitely halted the construction of new data centres to avoid straining local energy resources, raising concerns about Europe’s workforce development in this sector.

Additionally, with many countries having significant climate goals to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, these data centres can put a real strain on these goals. Many countries lack the renewable energy infrastructure to support both data centre growth and their climate targets.

Despite these challenges, demand persists, particularly in Germany, the UK and Ireland, where Renewable Energy integration is a priority.

Ireland remains a strategic hub, hosting one of Europe’s highest concentrations of data centres. With net-zero emissions pledged for 2050 and a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, the country is supporting significant growth in the renewable energy sector. However, Ireland, like Amsterdam, has halted any new data centre connections in the greater Dublin area due to the limited energy supply being used across the network. Despite the additional restrictions in place to help cover the energy supply, the sector is still growing, and therefore, so is the need for specialised talent.

Addressing the Talent Gap

With the growing capacity required in the sector, the talent will need to follow suit quickly; however, there is a gap between the required skills expansion and the skills readiness in talent. There is also a gap in the number of available, qualified workers within the key markets. Across Europe, for instance, there is already a shortage of electrical trade workers, which will be instrumental in preparing these data centres to go online.

As the industry expands, we're seeing more widespread adoption of global certifications, such as ISO 27001, SOC 2, PCI DSS, GDPR, and HIPAA, becoming the expected standard. With standardised certifications in place, it can raise baseline requirements, increase lead times, and mean that candidates with certification will be favoured, so that a strong candidate pool will become essential. Additionally, companies and governments that put plans in place to help adopt certifications among their talent will lead the data centre boom.



Addressing the Talent Gap

IMPACT OF AI AND AUTOMATION ON STAFFING//

As AI workloads change data centres into high-density, high-performance environments, the demand for specialised talent is rising faster than supply. Especially as hyperscalers like AWS and Azure are driving record leasing volumes, data centre management, building, and engineering are ripe areas for growth.

There is a rising demand for new roles such as:



- AI/ML Engineer
- Cloud Solutions Architect
- Cybersecurity Engineer
- Data Centre Architect
- Site Reliability Engineer (SRE)

At the same time, the introduction of AI to data centres means that infrastructure monitoring, predictive maintenance, energy optimisation, and other repetitive tasks can be automated, removing them from human responsibility.

With increased automation, the skills required for each role change, making continuous training an essential tool.

Investing in retraining or upskilling current staff, such as through structured upskilling programmes and partnerships for pipeline development, allows talent to be redeployed effectively and enables existing staff to transition into higher-value roles.

When you treat AI as a partner that can help augment staff and allow them to focus on the tasks that require human intervention and innovation, it helps address the talent gap and creates resilient and adaptable teams that will strengthen retention over time.



Addressing the Talent Gap



INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE//

With the current shortage of electrical workers and the growing talent gap, it's the perfect time to expand upon diversity programmes and bring more people into the talent pipeline. A diverse workforce brings a variety of perspectives, experiences, and ideas to the table, leading to increased innovation, creativity, and problem-solving abilities.

When you expand your current talent pool and remove barriers in hiring and development, you can tap into underdeveloped talent pools for a reliable source of skilled workers. Not to mention that inclusive hiring shortens the time to fill, reduces turnover, and helps strengthen community support for larger projects.





Addressing the Talent Gap

CREATING A DIVERSE TALENT POOL//

1. Expand your recruitment channels

Add job openings to boards and networks that cater to underrepresented groups, attend job fairs at colleges, universities or other schools with diverse student populations, or partner with community organisations that serve diverse populations.

2. Use inclusive job postings

Avoid gendered or exclusive language, such as “salesman” instead of “sales representative/associate.” Adopt inclusivity policies for neurodivergent, visually impaired, or other people facing difficulties, not just around language, but for every part of the job post.



3. Implement diversity training for hiring managers

Provide diversity training for hiring managers to help reduce unconscious bias. It helps them recognise their own biases and make more objective decisions, as well as creating a more inclusive and welcoming environment for candidates.

4. Offer diversity and inclusion programmes

Run mentorship programmes, employee resource groups, or diversity training for all employees to help them feel valued and supported, which can lead to increased engagement and retention.

5. Build relationships with diverse communities

Network with diverse communities, partner with community organisations or sponsor diversity events to help build relationships in your area and demonstrate your commitment to Diversity, Equality & Inclusion (DEI).

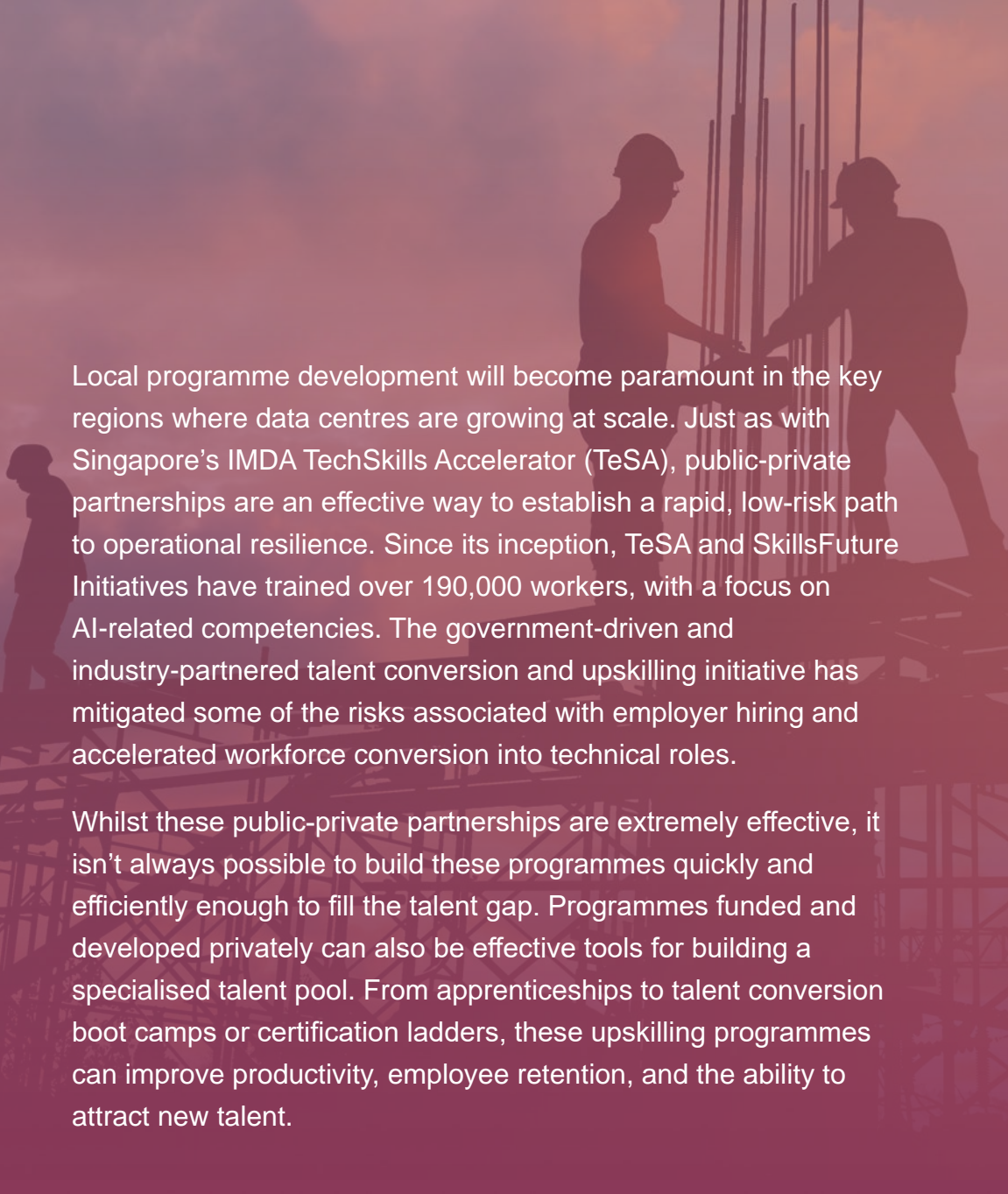
Addressing the Talent Gap



COLLABORATIVE TALENT DEVELOPMENT//

Though halts on building new data centres are occurring in Europe, staff can be redeployed to where capacity is needed. Importing expertise can be an effective short-term solution to help fill capacity whilst investing in local talent pipelines to prepare for long-term sustainability. Imported talent gives you access to specialised talent with experience that can help you train incoming talent pipelines.

Even with complex regulatory barriers, **Employer of Record services (EOR)**, such as those at NES Fircroft, can help mitigate the friction involved in mobilising talent to a new country. Employer of Record services can get operations going quickly, whilst local skills development gets built.



Local programme development will become paramount in the key regions where data centres are growing at scale. Just as with Singapore's IMDA TechSkills Accelerator (TeSA), public-private partnerships are an effective way to establish a rapid, low-risk path to operational resilience. Since its inception, TeSA and SkillsFuture Initiatives have trained over 190,000 workers, with a focus on AI-related competencies. The government-driven and industry-partnered talent conversion and upskilling initiative has mitigated some of the risks associated with employer hiring and accelerated workforce conversion into technical roles.

Whilst these public-private partnerships are extremely effective, it isn't always possible to build these programmes quickly and efficiently enough to fill the talent gap. Programmes funded and developed privately can also be effective tools for building a specialised talent pool. From apprenticeships to talent conversion boot camps or certification ladders, these upskilling programmes can improve productivity, employee retention, and the ability to attract new talent.

Addressing the Talent Gap



STAFFING FOR RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY//

Once the data centres are built, the operations will require ongoing staffing to ensure success. However, it's not enough to attract incredible talent; you also need to retain them. High staff turnover can erode operational resilience, increase costs, and hinder progress on sustainability and safety goals.



Addressing the Talent Gap

CREATING WORKFORCE RESILIENCE

1. Introduce flexible working policies

Studies have shown that working from home and flexible working policies have a marked improvement in a worker's job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and mental health. However, it's not just employees who reap the benefits of these flexible working policies; there is a distinct link between these policies and reduced turnover rates, absenteeism, and increased worker productivity.

2. Create clear development opportunities

Companies with strong internal mobility see better retention and pay growth outcomes. With a strong internal leadership pipeline that has transparent processes and manager training, the benefits to worker engagement and retention are clear. It's worth noting that this will require a strong leadership pipeline to be developed for the best leaders, both internally and externally. Ensuring your leaders understand the market, operations and have robust experience will result in stronger leaders and a more resilient workforce.

3. Offer formal mental-health and well-being programmes

The physical and psychological aspects of working environments can impact how an employee cares for themselves. By providing formal programmes, such as counselling and stress management workshops, or gym memberships, employers can support mental health and physical wellbeing, thereby reducing risk factors and ensuring a high standard of work.

4. Ensure a culture of safety

Organisations that adopt safety as a part of their work culture will produce lower staff turnover, higher workforce trust, and sustained improvements in performance. When safety is treated as a bureaucratic exercise, it will often lead to stagnation or perfunctory actions. Putting safety at the centre of company culture will reduce incidents, ensure dedication to the practice, and improve employee retention.

5. Demonstrate Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) policies

Global surveys have demonstrated that workers prefer organisations that take their environmental and social responsibility seriously. Incorporating social and environmental governance into the employee value proposition influences how well talent is attracted and retained. With a robust ESG programme in place, talent is more likely to remain, engage and remain productive over time.



Addressing the Talent Gap

CREATING AN UPSKILLING PROGRAMME

- Upskilling programmes can include on-the-job training from experienced staff or specialised trainers, mentoring, and coaching. To capture different learning types and to maximise participant engagement, programmes should include a mixture of classroom training and online courses.

To ensure the success of upskilling programmes:

1. Align the training and development plan with the business strategy
2. Provide ongoing support and gather feedback from employees – to encourage honest commentary, ensure that the feedback can be kept anonymous.
3. Offer a variety of training methods to appeal to different learning styles.
4. Use technology to deliver modern and engaging training and development programmes.
5. Measure the effectiveness of the programme with the aim of making improvements.



Case Study

Our client is a world-leading digital infrastructure company that connects major organisations such as manufacturing, retail, transportation, finance, education, healthcare, and the government across a digital-first world. They're trusted globally to unite and connect the foundational infrastructure that powers their field.

CHALLENGE

Our client needed to source and mobilise technical personnel for their global data centres in Dubai, Turkey, Oman and Spain. Data centres in the Middle East are an emerging landscape, and being based in Dubai, the client was not equipped with the infrastructure or internal resources needed to fulfil the staffing requirements themselves, so they reached out to NESF.



Case Study

SOLUTION

Due to NES Fircroft's global reach and deep talent pools, we delivered Employer of Record Services (EOR) and mobilised 15 personnel from various locations onto the project. We're globally licenced and experienced in providing clients with a compliant, end-to-end staffing solution.



- We have global experience in sourcing specialist personnel for data centres and in providing EOR services to businesses with urgent deadlines.
- We explained that due to the emerging market, it would be challenging to find sufficient local personnel to fill the roles and that we would tap into our global talent pools as part of the hiring scope.
- Once we had exhausted our local search, we put our findings forward to the client and suggested several potential candidates from other regions with the transferable skills required for the project's scope.
- We identified candidates with the required skills in other regions, such as the U.S., UK, and Europe.
- Alongside coordinating all mobilisation logistics (including visa needs) for personnel, we communicated with one of the candidates in their local language, Turkish.

Case Study

OUTCOME

This would have been a complex challenge for less experienced agencies, but the NESF team found an efficient solution that meant personnel could be mobilised as quickly and compliantly as possible with minimal effect on the client and the project's timeline.

All personnel were hired based on long-term staff agreements except 1 placement that was in Spain. The client was pleased with the outcome and the level of support demonstrated by NESF. We placed and mobilised all required roles - Project Managers, Commissioning Managers, and Personal Assistants - in just a 1-3 week timeframe.



Key Takeaways

The overwhelming adoption of AI technology globally has led to a rapid rise in data centres and the requisite energy infrastructure. However, this is hindered by a key challenge: a growing shortage of highly skilled and specialised talent. As the industry grows worldwide, it will only exacerbate this issue, particularly in regions where shortages are already occurring within the sector. This talent gap slows the industry's growth, and without reliable data centres and a steady source of energy, outages will become commonplace.

To overcome the talent gap and have reliable data centres, organisations will need to have both the right people in place and develop beyond traditional recruitment. Allowing AI to augment existing roles, building new governance around AI, collaborating with an experienced partner to create upskilling programmes and build workforce resilience will all be a part of building a sustainable and resilient workforce.

Successful companies will not only have the best technology, but also the best-trained, most adaptable, and most inclusive teams. By investing in diversity, social inclusion, and upskilling, companies can attract and retain talent with the right mix of technical skills, adaptability, and industry knowledge. Collaboration across regions and sectors will be key to ensuring the long-term success of the data centre and energy infrastructure industry.





TALENT ACQUISITION SERVICES THROUGH NES FIRPCROFT //

We deliver talent solutions to nurture your growing business – our decades of market expertise means we know what it takes to hire efficiently and effectively, often in niche and challenging environments.

Contact our experts to discover how we can facilitate a seamless and hassle-free talent solution for your hiring needs >>

