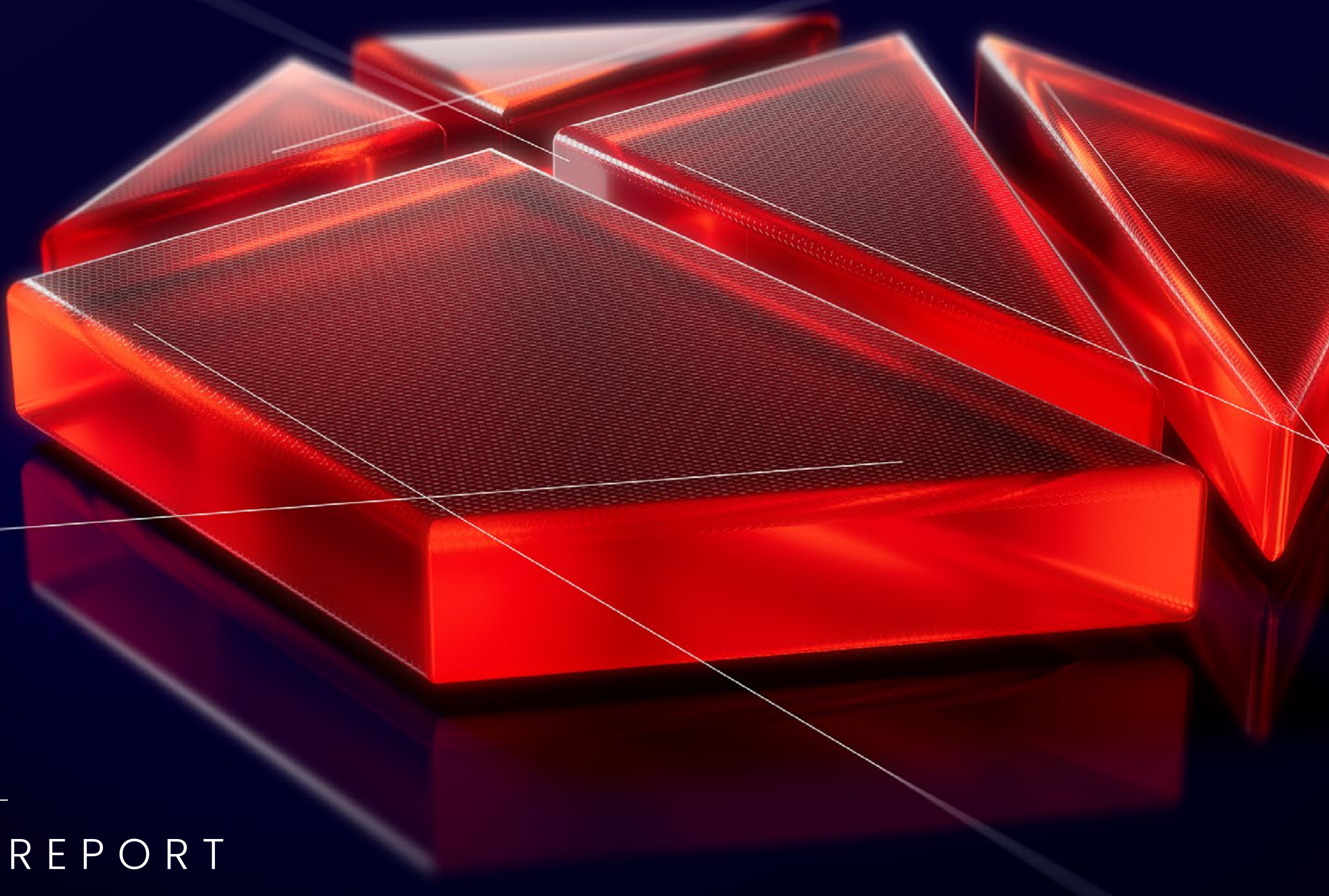
ABSL

BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR IN POLAND 2025



REPORT

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FOREWORD

As we move into 2025, profound macroeconomic and geopolitical forces are redefining the European business landscape. From global trade realignments to the accelerating consequences of war, policy uncertainty, and regulatory fragmentation, the terrain upon which businesses operate has become increasingly complex. Within this environment, Poland's business services sector continues not just to adapt but to lead.

This report offers a powerful lens through which to understand both the headwinds and the opportunities that characterize the center-based business services sector in Poland. The sector again proves its importance to the Polish economy through its growing share in GDP, overall employment, and exports.

The strategic challenges we face are substantial. Labor costs are rising, the pressure for AI-powered productivity intensifies, and volatility across global markets continues to disrupt existing business models. And yet, talent remains our greatest asset. We look at the changes both ways – the growth but also the mergers and closures of the business, which generate movements and talent shifts within the sector.

Poland's diverse, highly skilled, and increasingly international workforce is at the core of our competitive advantage. With nearly 500,000 professionals and a growing share of knowledge-intensive roles, our centers have become capability centers. The ability to upskill, reinvent roles, and grow leadership capacity is an existential imperative. That's why it was so important to look at the 3Ts – Talent, which is the foundation; Technology, which is the enabler; and Transformation, which is the means to reach the ultimate goal, to improve the competitive advantage of our businesses.

Technology, particularly AI and cloud-native infrastructure, is a powerful enabler in this transformation. What matters most is how we integrate it with human potential to reshape business models, co-create value, and drive outcome-based service ecosystems. This is the essence of Global Business Services 3.0 (GBS 3.0) or even its possible next evolution Generative Business Services.

For the first time, we also draw the context of a broader definition of the business services industry in Poland and Europe, where center-based business services are the most efficient and optimized element.

At the European level, Poland's role has never been more central. With one of the largest business services sectors, both in employment and value creation, we are a key node in the evolving European service economy. Our sector is not isolated but embedded in a broader continental effort to foster innovation, ensure resilience, and build sustainable economic foundations.

I encourage you to explore this report with a strategic lens—challenge assumptions, spark new ideas, and inform the decisions that will shape your organization's future. I believe that anchored by talent and empowered by technology. We are ready not just to navigate the transformation but to lead it!

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Poland's business services sector in the age of reinvention

As Poland's center-based business services sector (the sector) enters 2025, it stands at both a strategic inflection point and the frontier of a new operational paradigm. The sector has evolved from serving as a transactional, efficiency-focused function into a high-value-added and knowledge-intensive sector, with its competitiveness based on high value for money[1].

With **2,081 active centers,** nearly **489,000 employees,** as well as a **5.7% contribution to GDP and a 7.6% share in the total employment in the enterprises' sector in Poland (as of Q1 2025),** it can no longer be considered as a supporting sector for other vertical industries. It is one of the engines of competitiveness of the Polish economy. Foreign-owned centers account for 84.3% of total employment, and the export value generated by our centers reached USD 42.3 billion in 2024 – nearly 25% of Poland's total commercial services export value. **Exports per worker** rose to **USD 64,300 per FTE in 2024,** with further increases projected for 2025. **At the same time, productivity in our centers (according to ABSL BI estimates in 2023) was more than 20% above the GDP per worker in Poland.**

In a world shaped by technological upheaval fueled by the AI revolution, extreme policy uncertainty driven by decisions of the new US administration, deepening geopolitical fragmentation and regional tensions, coupled with growing sustainability expectations, **Poland's position in the global value chain is under pressure but remains resilient.** This resilience is due to the sector's skilled, adaptable workforce, embeddedness in the EU and NATO frameworks, and proven delivery capability. The pressure emanates from rising labor costs, talent shortages in critical roles, and the rapid restructuring of work through AI, automation, and business model redesign.

The pace of center expansion continues, albeit at a slower rate. **Sixty-one new centers were opened between the start of 2024 and Q1 2025.** Foreign investors led the wave, responsible for 90.2% of new centers and 93.4% of related employment, mostly concentrated in Tier 1 and 2 cities. Warsaw led the way with 429 active centers, followed by Kraków (324), Wrocław (258), and Tricity (232). Warsaw and Kraków were clearly at the forefront and ahead of the other main locations. Warsaw has been growing particularly rapidly in recent years and, in 2024, became a leader, with employment in the capital city's centers at 111,500 in Q1 2025, with Kraków at 107,800. Wrocław, the third Tier1 city, now employs 70,300.

Among the new entrants, the IT segment accounted for 42.6% of centers and 39.3% of new jobs. R&D centers followed closely, with 26.2% of new centers and 32.6% of employment, proving the gradual shift toward high-value and more knowledge-intensive work.

Strategically, three forces now shape and will continue to shape the future of business services in Poland. These are **Talent, Technology, and Transformation.**

[1] Please note the differences between the sector – center-based business services, the industry – broadly-defined business services, and knowledge-intensive business services (KIBS) in the methodological section of the report.

Talent: from roles to reinvention

The most urgent shift in the sector is not technological; it is people-driven. In a world where concrete tech skills expire in less than three years, **talent has become the key factor, a defining constraint, and an opportunity** for the business services sector.

Poland continues to offer a strong talent base with close to 500k professionals currently employed by our centers. In 2024 employment rose 6.2% (YoY) despite global headwinds. Foreigners, originating from over 50 countries, now comprise nearly 20% of the sector's workforce. Several announced layoffs will take place only in 2025-26. Thus, some cracks are emerging. Technical obsolescence, underinvestment in reskilling, and a limited pipeline for mid-senior AI-fluent talent may threaten future competitiveness.

Upskilling and upgrading are defining trends, as we have continually stressed. **The share of mid-office process work** in our centers at the end of Q1 2025 stood at 54.2%. Back-office share decreased by more than 10% over the last five years. At the same time, the share of knowledge-intensive work (requiring at least six months of employee onboarding to reach the required productivity level) in sectors' centers had risen to 58.6%.

At the same time, the **rise of AI-enhanced and AI-integrated roles** has been gradually transforming what is meant by "to work" in our sector. Organizations must act now to:

Develop internal **AI literacy** across all job families,

Embed **agile learning cultures** to future-proof mid-senior roles,

Elevate **leadership development**, especially for the Polish sector's professionals aiming for global roles.

However, leadership is not keeping pace with ambition. Although Poland has a growing executive presence, it still faces barriers in transitioning from **operational leaders to global strategic roles.**

Technology: intelligence as infrastructure

The technology story is no longer about digitalization. It is about **intelligence orchestration** – embedding AI, cloud, data, and cybersecurity into every layer of business services delivery.

By early 2025, **74.1% of centers in Poland's business services sector had implemented Intelligent Process Automation (IPA),** up from 65.2% a year earlier, which could signal near-saturation in adoption intent. Only 9.2% of centers reported no plans to implement it. Despite having a currently low **mean automation rate of 22.4% (median 17.5%),** most centers expect this to exceed 50% within five years. Still, only 7.7% reported outcomes beyond expectations, and 69.2% said automation merely met expectations, highlighting moderate ROI and tempered ambitions.

Generative AI is broadly seen as a strategic opportunity by 84.6% of firms, but capability gaps persist. While 67.8% planned to scale AI across business units and 67.1% aimed to train more staff, 44.8% had trained only 1-10% of employees, and just 7.8% had trained over 75%. HR (25.4%), business intelligence (24.6%), and IT (22.8%) led GenAI deployment, with a growing presence in finance and customer support. At the same time, managers reported that at this stage, AI has had a limited positive impact on centers' productivity and has had no impact on cost efficiency so far.

Nonetheless, the sector is shifting toward **GBS 3.0 or even Generative Business Services,** where AI does not just optimize tasks. It co-creates solutions. This shift includes:

GenAI systems are redesigning business processes end-to-end,

Adaptive AI enabling real-time personalization in CX and fraud prevention,

Edge computing drives low-latency responses in logistics, energy, and healthcare,

Cybersecurity transitioning from IT back-office to **strategic board-level risk management.**

The implications are profound. AI, cloud-native infrastructure, and data-centricity are no longer competitive advantages – they are prerequisites. Yet only 14% of firms reported reliable, real-time data governance. Without trusted data, AI fails, and without AI, operational relevance could be lost. Meanwhile, quantum or even post-quantum cryptography, multi-cloud resilience, and hybrid environments are becoming foundational. The infrastructure must scale as fast as the intelligence it enables.

Transformation: from cost to capability and value

In 2024, 56.4% of companies in Poland's business services sector expanded their service scope, with 5.8% reporting significant growth, while only 7.0% scaled down. An Ansoff Matrix analysis indicated a shift from market penetration to **product and service development.** At the same time, the ABSL Transformation Cube reveals increasing **maturity in automation, hybrid work, and service personalization practices.**

Strategic transformation is now mainstream, with 77.4% of firms actively implementing or continuing transformation strategies. Most companies expect greater AI and digital integration by 2030, aligning with Poland's broader evolution from cost-based delivery to value-creation hubs. Innovation is widespread. **74.5% reported introducing integrated products or services over the past three years, focusing on process redesign and global capability centers.** The sector reports innovation higher than in the economy at large and commercial services specifically.

However, **41.7% said productivity gains had been moderate relative to cost increases.** Transformation is shaped by geopolitics, labor market pressures, and technological acceleration, with India, Romania, and the Philippines emerging as Poland's key global competitors.

The final pivot is strategic: transforming from **cost centers to value creators.** The sector is undergoing a radical operating model shift – anchored not on a transactional scale but in **modular, industry-specific, AI-powered solutions.** Centers should be moving:

From supporting strategy to **shaping it,**

From transactional delivery to **vertical specialization,**

From centralized hubs to **hybrid, distributed, and outcome-based ecosystems.**

It is clear that industry-specific knowledge, particularly in financial services, healthcare, and the manufacturing sector, **is becoming the new differentiator. The best-performing centers use their deep knowledge to create custom solutions, not just offer standard solutions or generic support.**

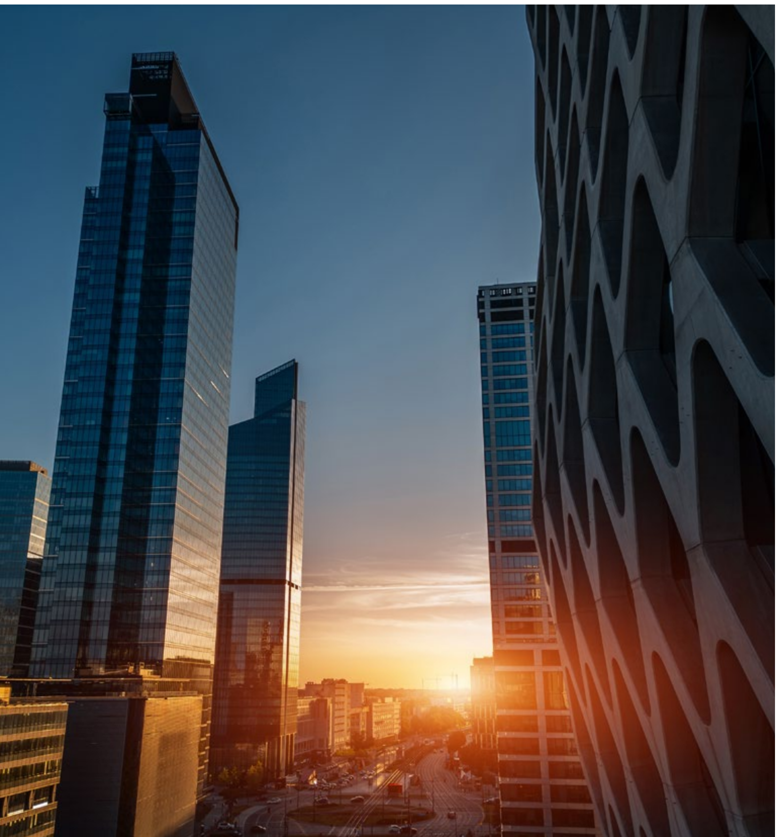
Overall, three scenarios for the sector offer different paths forward:

The **Baseline Scenario, with the highest probability,** assumes steady growth with structural adaptation: 504,300 jobs in 2026, with rising productivity via AI,

An **Optimistic Scenario, which is less probable,** sees nearshoring and AI-driven expansion: up to 523,000 jobs, fueled by strategic investment and workforce scaling,

A **Adverse Scenario, with moderate probability,** anticipates stagnation due to global trade shocks and automation-led contraction: 494,200 jobs, but with rising productivity per FTE.

Each path demands different priorities – from cost containment and specialization to bold scaling and talent acquisition. But across all of these possible futures, the need for **resilience, reinvention, and relevance** remains constant.



Conclusion

Poland's business services centers sector has moved firmly into the spotlight. **It is now a key part of both the national economy and Europe's services landscape. Its continued role as a nearshoring hub, innovation center, and talent destination will depend on how well it adapts to the global shift toward more intelligent, flexible, and inclusive service models.**

Looking ahead to 2025-2026, the sector is not just evolving – it is undergoing real structural change. A business-as-usual approach will not be enough. **The focus now is on working smarter, adapting faster, and shaping the next chapter of global services offered from Poland.**

EMERGING TRENDS IN THE GLOBAL INDUSTRY

Business Services at the Edge of Transformation: Intelligence, Agility, and Purpose

A New Curve: The Business Services Sector Reimagined

As was the case in prior years, in 2025, the business services sector is evolving and transforming. The sector, which was initially involved in a race for operational efficiency driven by labor arbitrage, centralized structures, and transactional excellence, is now entering an era of intelligence, creativity, and purposeful agility with a focus on the needs of specific industry clients.

No longer seen as a mere back-office utility, the sector is increasingly recognized as a strategic growth driver. It is embracing new responsibilities: to innovate, partner with the business, drive sustainability, and lead through disruption. In this new paradigm, three forces are defining the future: AI-powered transformation, talent reinvention, and intelligent operating model – technology, talent, and transformation nexus are clear. It does seem that the sector could be on a new curve.

GenAI: From Incremental Automation to Business Redesign

We are not witnessing, as yet, another mere wave of automation. However, we could be witnessing the birth of intelligent systems capable of redesigning the work itself. Generative AI (GenAI) has shifted the conversation from RPA and task automation to full-process reinvention. As of 2025, over 20% of global organizations have deployed GenAI-related solutions, with over half actively planning implementation. We also see it in the sector in Poland. Please refer to Chapter 3. However, Gartner warns that 30% of these initiatives may fail before they can scale up.

> **AI is the defining technology of our time. Every organization will need to not only adopt it but build their own AI capabilities.**
>
> **Satya Nadella**
> CEO, Microsoft
> World Economic Forum, 2024

The issue is not technology; it is preparedness, overall adaptive capacity, and the ability to adjust to new requirements. Organizations need more than AI models; they need data stewards, AI champions, cybersecurity experts, as well as resilient and efficient infrastructure. It all requires a skilled AI-native talent pool. These are not optional roles; they are essential for translating AI from proof-of-concept to performance.

According to ABSL's 2025 survey results, the share of automated processes in the Poland-based center has already reached 22.4%, but automation is no longer the endgame. Instead, AI-augmented jobs are emerging across our organizations. Routine work is being eliminated or reshaped, with strategic, creative, and interpretive tasks rising in prominence.

While AI is a business model amplifier, it introduces new ethical, legal, and operational risks. New EU AI regulations, specifically the AI Act, and increasing scrutiny on bias, explainability, and intellectual property require organizations to move as cautiously as they do ambitiously. At the same time, recent research by Lee et al. (2025) shows that high confidence in GenAI systems may reduce users' engagement in critical thinking, suggesting a growing need to balance efficiency with deliberate reflection and verification in AI-assisted work environments.

> **Start using AI deeply. It is not about automation. It is an intelligence amplifier – and the sooner you use it, the faster you evolve.**

Reid Hoffman
Co-founder, LinkedIn
TechCrunch Disrupt, 2024

The Evolution to Generative Business Services

Traditional Global Business Services (GBS) models, anchored in scale and cost-efficiency, are now maturing to **GBS 3.0 or even evolving in some cases to what though leaders call Generative Business Services.** This model integrates advanced automation, embedded AI, modular delivery, and customer co-creation. The focus has shifted:

from **labor centralization** to **platform orchestration,**

from **process execution** to **end-to-end value creation,**

from **supporting strategy** to **shaping it.**

The implications are profound. Service centers are becoming intelligence hubs, blending industry-specific insights with digital capabilities. Multidisciplinary teams are emerging, designed not around functions but around **business outcomes.**

> **The traditional GBS model is dead. The future is about generative business services – where innovation, data, and experience converge to drive real enterprise value.**

Saurabh Gupta
President, Research and Advisory, HFS Research
Horses for Sources, 2023, "GBS is Dead. Long Live GBS"

Intersections with Industry Verticals: Specialization as Strategy

As centers, including GBS centers, evolve beyond cost optimization and transactional efficiency, a new frontier is emerging – vertical specialization. The one-size-fits-all model gives way to sector-specific expertise, where value creation is driven by deep domain knowledge, regulatory fluency, and contextualized delivery models.

This trend reflects a broader maturity shift. **GBS centers are no longer just executing cross-functional tasks. They are partnering with business units to design and deliver tailored solutions that directly impact competitive performance** in healthcare, financial services, and industrial/manufacturing sectors.

These industries' growing complexity and regulatory demands urgently need GBS centers that understand specific verticals' language, rhythms, and risks. Those who invest in domain-aligned teams, training, and tooling will position themselves as indispensable strategic partners rather than just service providers.

However, as centers double down on vertical fluency, they face the challenge of scaling bespoke solutions across global markets while managing higher training and compliance burdens.

> **Our clients are not looking for generic support. They want partners who understand their industry as well as they do – and can deliver outcomes, not just outputs.**

Julie Sweet

CEO, Accenture
Accenture Industry X Keynote, 2023

Edge Computing: Intelligence at the Periphery

As data volumes surge and service expectations rise, businesses are pressured to process and respond to information in real-time. Edge computing enables this by moving computation closer to where data is generated – at devices, branches, or field locations – rather than relying solely on centralized cloud platforms.

This shift is particularly relevant for industries requiring low-latency processing, such as logistics, manufacturing, and energy. Business services centers supporting these sectors increasingly need to manage and integrate distributed processing architectures, ensuring seamless performance and continuity.

While edge promises real-time decisions, the complexity of integrating edge and cloud architectures and managing distributed networks while ensuring data consistency can create operational friction.

> **The future is distributed. Edge computing is how we bring intelligence and responsiveness to where things happen – in factories, hospitals, and cities.**

Pat Gelsinger

CEO, Intel
Intel Vision Conference, 2023

Cybersecurity: The Expanding Front Line

The rapid adoption of cloud-native tools, distributed systems, and remote work has fundamentally redrawn the cybersecurity landscape. With data and services no longer confined to centralized systems, organizations face growing risks across endpoints, APIs, user devices, and third-party environments.

Business services centers now play a critical role in protecting enterprise ecosystems. This includes enforcing zero-trust architectures, securing data flows in hybrid and multi-cloud environments, and enabling real-time monitoring. Compliance, identity management, and incident response are becoming integral parts of service delivery models. According to Gartner, post-quantum cryptography (PQC) will be the next step to safeguard against the anticipated threats posed by advancements in quantum computing around 2030.

Cyber resilience should no longer be perceived as a technical exercise but as a strategic one that comes with increasing costs and persistent talent shortages. The growing complexity of multi-cloud, BYOD (Bring Your Own Device), and distributed data environments makes securing operations a moving target.

> **Cybersecurity is not just an IT concern anymore. It is a board-level conversation about trust, resilience, and reputation.**

Nikesh Arora

CEO, Palo Alto Networks
World Economic Forum, 2023

From Roles to Readiness: Talent as a Growth Engine

The shelf life of tech skills is now estimated at just 2.5 years. Pluralsight reports that 74% of IT professionals fear obsolescence. However, this volatility creates opportunity. Agile learning cultures are becoming a competitive advantage. The future workforce is:

- AI literate across all roles,
- Fluent in cloud-native, low-code, and data analytics tools,
- Capable of critical thinking and problem-solving in complex, AI-infused environments.

However, role reinvention matters more than technical proficiency. AI will not just replace jobs; it will **redefine them.** We will see more **AI-enhanced** and **AI-integrated roles,** especially in areas such as legal operations, finance, compliance, and data intelligence.

Reskilling remains one of the sector's most underfunded mandates. The widening skills gap risks leaving many professionals behind, particularly in mid-senior roles, creating potential talent mismatches and moral issues. More targeted internal talent development strategies and closer cooperation with the wider public sector will be required to redefine the curriculum.

> **Talent is no longer a cost center – it is a value center. Skills, not roles, are the new currency of growth.**

Tanuj Kapilashrami

Chief Human Resources Officer, Standard Chartered
World Economic Forum, 2023

Embedding ESG and CX into the DNA of GBS

Customer experience (CX) is no longer peripheral. It is the organizing principle of modern service design. GBS is increasingly tasked with delivering **hyper-personalized, customer-tailored, and outcome-based services. Omni-present, seamlessly available, real-time services embedded across different environments and platforms in a multi-channel fashion, while at the same time being multi-domain, have already started to emerge**. Meanwhile, new compliance landscapes, such as the **European Accessibility Act (June 2025),** push digital inclusivity to the forefront.

In parallel, sustainability has become strategic. ESG goals are not side projects but are integrated into delivery models, cloud design (green cloud), and procurement. GBS leaders are expected to act as **ESG propagators.**

> **Digital transformation is all about experience. Those who focus on customer experience will lead.**

Shantanu Narayen
CEO, Adobe
Adobe MAX Keynote, 2022

> **Europe must lead in setting the digital age standards – not just follow them.**

Ursula von der Leyen
President, European Commission
Political Guidelines for the Next Commission, 2024–2029

The Path Ahead: Resilience, Reinvention, Relevance

The sector is facing consolidation across geographies, functions, and technology stacks. Business and IT processes are becoming inseparable. The next phase of evolution involves:

- Industry-specific service integration,
- Strategic partnerships with hyper-scalers and startups,
- Full-stack capabilities with modularity and flexibility,
- Centers moving closer to business P&L responsibility,
- Need for greater resilience in the face of geostrategic fragmentation and increased policy uncertainty.

> **The auto industry is not just transforming vehicles – it is transforming how business is done, end-to-end.**

Mary Barra
CEO, General Motors
WSJ CEO Summit, 2023

Cloud & Infrastructure: Building the Backbone

Organizations face a reckoning with their infrastructure. Many rushed into cloud adoption without laying proper foundations. Now, with GenAI workloads surging, they must stabilize. Kubernetes, multi-cloud strategies, and edge computing are no longer fringe but foundational.

Hybrid environments dominate, but the rise of **AI-specific infrastructure** brings with it a resurgence of **on-premises cost latency and data sovereignty strategies.**

> **Technology does not just support the business anymore – it is the business.**

Michael Dell

CEO, Dell Technologies
World Economic Forum, 2023

From Data-Driven to Data-Centric

The GenAI era amplifies one truth: **data quality is of paramount importance.** Organizations invest in data fabric architecture, real-time analytics, and governance models to support AI and personalization. Without trustworthy, timely, and relevant data, AI is useless.

However, adaptive AI, already deployed in customer experience, fraud detection, and pricing, pushes real-time responsiveness to new levels. Service personalization is becoming the norm, and predictive analytics is transitioning from dashboarding to **embedded foresight.**

Only 14% of companies said that they had reliable, real-time data governance (Deloitte, 2024). As demand for data grows, so do the risks related to poor data quality, technical debt, persistence of legacy systems, and ballooning infrastructure costs.

> **Being data-driven is no longer enough. The winners will be data-centric – able to create value from data in real-time, securely, and at scale.**

Thomas Kurian

CEO, Google Cloud
Google Cloud Next Keynote, 2023

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MACROECONOMIC TRENDS AND OUTLOOK

Navigating the Increased Uncertainty

Global Perspective. Navigating the New Global Disorder

> The global economy in 2025 is firmly entrenched in a **VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous)** and **BANI (Brittle, Anxious, Non-linear, Incomprehensible)** poly-crises environment.

Geopolitical shocks, trade tensions, and rapidly shifting policy landscapes are reshaping the global order in ways not seen since the end of World War II. The resurgence of protectionist trade policies – most notably the aggressive trade agenda of the re-elected U.S. Trump administration – has become a defining feature of this new landscape.

The **April 2, 2025 "Liberation Day" announcement of sweeping tariffs** by the US administration, including **10% on all imports globally, 20% on EU later cut to 10%, 25% on Canadian and Mexican goods, and 100%+ on Chinese products,** sent shockwaves through financial markets, triggering massive sell-offs and widespread uncertainty. Although most of these tariffs were temporarily **frozen under a 90-day moratorium** following market turmoil, the damage to global confidence is lasting. **The U.S.-China trade war** has become a reality, with a new phase of decoupling underway, and at the same time, trust in the U.S. as a stable economic partner has been fundamentally shaken. It could have a tectonic impact on the current global order and the dominance of the US in the current global economic system.

This erosion of trust is driving a deeper shift. A move away from the **rules-based global order** toward a more fragmented system of **regional blocs,** with major implications for **global trade, foreign direct investment (FDI), and service delivery models.** The result is an increasingly **asymmetric and unpredictable** economic environment where growth is **uneven,** risks are **elevated,** and traditional playbooks no longer apply.

Global Growth – Slower, Riskier, Fragmented

The **IMF's April 2025** forecast downgraded global GDP growth for 2025 to **2.8%,** a full 0.8 percentage points lower than its January projection, citing heightened trade tensions and policy uncertainty as key drivers. Advanced economies are expected to grow by just **1.4%,** with the **U.S. slowing to 1.8%** (down 0.9 points) and the **Eurozone stagnating at 0.8%.** The **World Bank** echoes this cautious tone, highlighting that growth will remain well below pre-pandemic averages, insufficient to drive poverty reduction or broad-based prosperity.

Global trade, after a weak 2023, saw a modest rebound of **2.7% in 2024,** but the WTO projects a **3.0% growth** in 2025 **before the impact of the April 2025 U.S. tariffs.** The imposition of sweeping tariffs, coupled with retaliatory measures by key partners such as China and the EU, has disrupted trade flows, intensified **cost pressures,** and **fragmented supply chains.** The services sector, in particular, faces **rising delivery costs** and **regulatory hurdles,** compounding risks for global business services providers.

FDI flows have declined for a second consecutive year, falling **8% in 2024,** particularly in China. While **M&A activity** may revive flows in 2025, investor sentiment remains fragile, and **financing conditions are tightening** amid higher interest rates and geopolitical risks.

Global Inflation and Monetary Policy – A Fragile Balance

Inflationary pressures are **easing but uneven.** The **IMF** expects global headline inflation to decline to **4.3% in 2025 and 3.6% in 2026,** while the **OECD** projects a G20 average of **3.8%.** However, these figures mask persistent inflation in many emerging economies, where **tariff-induced price shocks** and strong wage growth have pushed inflation expectations up to **4.6%** by the end of 2026, compared to projections for advanced economies at 2.2%, thus coming close to official policy targets.

Central banks face a delicate balancing act. While markets anticipate further **rate cuts in H2 2025,** policymakers remain wary of inflation persistence, geopolitical risks, and renewed supply shocks. The FRB began to cut rates and simultaneously continued quantitative tightening (QT), as indicated by its decreasing balance sheet, specifically the Total Assets of the Federal Reserve.

This volatile monetary landscape creates **asymmetric risks.** Sudden asset repricing, sharp currency fluctuations, and destabilizing capital flows, particularly in **emerging markets** and **leveraged sectors** such as commercial real estate (CRE), can play a role. Regardless, rate cuts are to be expected, but probably less abruptly and with some time lag.

Global Financial Stability

The April 2025 **Global Financial Stability Report (GFSR)** of the IMF highlights a marked deterioration in global financial stability, with rising risks fueled by heightened economic policy uncertainty and trade tensions, particularly following the U.S. announcement of tariffs on April 2, 2025, and the subsequent volatility in financial markets. The IMF's Growth-at-Risk model estimates a 5% probability that global growth will decline below 0.4% over the next year, which is significantly worse than previous forecasts. The report emphasizes three key vulnerabilities: the risk of further asset price corrections, especially in equities and corporate bonds, where valuations remain stretched; potential strains in highly leveraged nonbank financial institutions (NBFIs), which are increasingly interconnected with the banking system and could face forced deleveraging; and turbulence in sovereign bond markets, exacerbated by high debt levels in both advanced and emerging economies. The report urges policymakers to prepare for potential shocks by strengthening prudential supervision, ensuring that liquidity provision frameworks are ready, addressing data gaps for NBFIs, and continuing the robust implementation of Basel III standards. It also highlights the need for scenario analyses that account for geopolitical risks, emphasizing that financial markets remain vulnerable to sudden shocks, especially amid a fragile macroeconomic environment.

Poland's Economic Outlook. Resilience Amid Global Headwinds

Amid global turbulence, Poland's economy stands out for its resilience. After experiencing near-stagnation in 2023, GDP growth accelerated to 2.9% in 2024 and is forecast to rise further **to 3.7% in 2025** (NBP, March 2025). This rebound is driven by.

Strong private consumption (+3.1% in 2025), supported by real wage growth and low unemployment.

EU funds from the 2021–2027 budget and the **National Recovery Plan,** unlocking public and private investments.

Nearshoring/allyshoring tailwinds as global companies reconfigure supply chains away from distant/ more risky markets.

However, Poland is not immune to external pressures. Soft demand in Germany and the eurozone poses risks to exports. The **PLN's appreciation,** the strongest since 2022, has been a mixed blessing, aiding disinflation but squeezing exporters' price competitiveness, especially in EUR- and USD-denominated markets.

Inflation, after briefly falling below target, **rebounded to 5.4% in Q1 2025,** driven by **the liberalization of energy prices and the reinstatement of VAT.** The NBP forecasts CPI to be between 4.1% and **5.7% in 2025,** with a possible dip in Q3 followed by renewed pressures. The policy target is to be reached by 2026. **Core inflation remains sticky,** particularly in the services sector. On May 6–7, 2025, the Monetary Policy Council (RPP) of the NBP reduced the benchmark interest rate by 50 basis points to 5.25%, marking the first rate cut since October 2023.

The labor market remains tight. **Unemployment at 5.4%,** wages exceeding **PLN 9,000** in March 2025, and strong wage growth supporting consumption. Yet, rising labor costs challenge the **cost competitiveness of Poland's business services sector, a critical factor.** Overall, we are still on the vertical long-term Phillips curve.

Poland's fiscal position is stable, but **fiscal space is narrowing.** The deficit reached **3.4% of GDP in 2024,** driven by higher defense spending and structural obligations, including pensions and the energy transition. As of May 2025, Poland's general government debt is projected to reach approximately **58.0% of GDP** by the end of the year, according to the European Commission's Spring 2025 Economic Forecast. This marks an increase from 55.3% in 2024 and reflects a steady upward trend driven by high deficits, substantial defense spending, and significant investments in infrastructure and social programs. The Polish Ministry of Finance forecasts a slightly higher debt-to-GDP ratio of **58.4% for 2025.** **Fiscal position was affected by** political gridlock ahead of the 2025 presidential election. The race was exceptionally tight between two candidates representing divergent visions for Poland's future: Rafał Trzaskowski and Karol Nawrocki.

Karol Nawrocki's victory in the 2025 presidential election ushers in a new chapter for Poland's economy. One marked, potentially, by a more nationalist, conservative policy stance, closer alignment with the United States, and a likely cooling of relations with the European Union. While Nawrocki's presidency is expected to maintain macroeconomic stability, it also introduces heightened uncertainty for Poland's business environment, as cohabitation with Nawrocki could be even tougher than with President Andrzej Duda for the ruling coalition government of Donald Tusk, particularly in relation to EU funding flows, reform of the judicial system, regulatory frameworks, and Poland's position within the European single market. With persistent inflation pressures, projected to range from 4.5% to 5.5% in 2025, and a strong zloty weighing on exporters, the government faces difficult trade-offs between supporting the domestic economy through potential protectionist measures and avoiding further friction with key trading partners. While nearshoring trends and Poland's strategic location may continue to attract investment in manufacturing and business services, the risk of **policy unpredictability** could partially undermine investor confidence. Moreover, Nawrocki's victory may lead to a more populist economic agenda, prioritizing social transfers, defense spending, and traditional industry over green and digital transformation priorities championed by the EU. To sum up, the outlook for Poland's economy under Nawrocki is one of continued **resilience but also elevated risk, with the potential for slower progress in structural reforms** and greater internal political instability.

Business Services Sector in Poland

Poland's **business services sector** is efficiently navigating this complex global and domestic landscape with a blend of **resilience and adaptability.** However, the challenges ahead are formidable.

In a world of rising **geopolitical risks, economic and geostrategic fragmentation,** and **policy unpredictability,** Poland's business services sector is both vulnerable and poised for growth. By embracing **agility, technology, and talent strategies,** firms can turn challenges into competitive advantages. The road ahead will not be easy, but for those who adapt, Poland and the CEE region, in general, remain a resilient hub in the global services industry.

Key Risks

Trade Policy Uncertainty.
The unpredictability of U.S. trade policies and the escalation of tariffs pose risks to global supply chains,

Inflationary Pressures.
Rising wages and energy costs erode profit margins, while clients – especially from advanced economies – tighten budgets,

Labor Market Tightness.
Talent shortages may intensify, particularly in IT, analytics, and finance roles, making scaling difficult; however, this risk is temporarily mitigated as the pendulum swings toward the employer's market,

Geopolitical Shocks.
Escalation or further stall mate in Ukraine, the Middle East – in Israel, Yemen, or Iran, on the border between India and Pakistan or Taiwan could disrupt trade flows and client relationships,

Internal political instability.
The win of Nawrocki marks greater internal instability in the Polish political scene, making it harder for the ruling coalition to implement the required structural reforms that could boost the sector's potential,

Currency Overvaluation.
A stronger PLN undermines cost competitiveness in export-oriented services.

Emerging Opportunities

Nearshoring Boom.
As global clients seek resilient delivery hubs, Poland's geographic and talent advantages position it as a prime nearshoring destination,

Digitalization.
The AI revolution, cloud services, and data analytics open new service lines and higher-value opportunities,

EU Funding Flows.
Continued access to EU funds supports digital infrastructure, skills programs, and green transition investments that benefit the sector,

Resilient Consumption.
Strong domestic demand provides a cushion for firms targeting local markets, supporting national economic dynamics.

SCENARIOS FOR THE BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR IN POLAND

Based on a review of the central economic outlooks and considering our understanding of the sector's status in Poland, we propose three scenarios for the short-term (2025-2026) development of the business services sector in Poland: baseline (most probable), optimistic, and adverse (least likely). Each provides a short narrative and potential action plans. These should only be considered discussion points for ABSL stakeholders.

The **base case scenario** (most probable) requires strategic adaptation to AI, talent shifts, and productivity-driven growth. If the **optimistic scenario** (likely) materializes, scaling operations and nearshoring investments will be key to capitalizing on an expansion. If the **adverse scenario** (likely) unfolds, centers must pivot toward automation, specialization, and operational efficiency to sustain profitability.

Baseline Scenario – Moderate Growth with Structural Adjustments (most probable)

Poland's business services sector (BPO, SSC, GBS, IT, R&D) is expected to grow steadily but slower, as the global economy stabilizes and businesses adjust to new cost structures and automation trends. The sector remains an attractive nearshoring destination due to its skilled workforce and EU membership, but AI-driven automation and hybrid work models will reshape hiring patterns. New centers will continue opening at a reduced pace, with employment increasing by 3.2% annually. Companies will shift towards higher-value services and technology-oriented (AI, cybersecurity, and cloud-based solutions) rather than purely labor cost arbitrage.

Exports of business services will grow by **6.0% YoY in 2026,**

New centers (2025-2026) – **35-50 per year,**

Employment growth 3.2% annually to approx. **504,300 in 2026,**

Productivity (exports per worker) – **USD 67,200 per FTE by 2026.**

Action Plan – Adaptation to Gradual Structural Changes

Invest in AI & Automation Integration – Accelerate intelligent process automation (IPA) and AI adoption to enhance efficiency while upskilling employees for higher-value tasks,

Enhance Productivity Metrics – Focus on value-added services rather than headcount growth, improving exports per worker through data analytics, cybersecurity, and cloud computing,

Talent Retention & Upskilling – Develop leadership and technical skills to meet the increasing demand for AI, R&D, and knowledge-based roles and ensure adaptability to the evolving business environment,

Optimize Hybrid Work Models – Balance hybrid work arrangements to attract top talent while maintaining operational efficiency and office space optimization,

Diversify Client Base – To hedge against demand fluctuations and expand beyond traditional outsourcing markets (US, Western Europe) into rapidly growing economies (Middle East, ASEAN, and Africa).

Optimistic Scenario – Expansion Driven by Nearshoring and AI Adoption (likely)

In this scenario, there is a faster economic recovery in Europe and the U.S., and a wave of nearshoring due to geopolitical risks boost demand for Poland's business services centers. Poland strengthens its position as the top destination in CEE, attracting higher-value service operations (R&D, data analytics, AI development, and financial services). Investment in AI, cloud computing, and cybersecurity increases productivity, allowing companies to expand headcount while maintaining cost efficiency. Poland's stable economic environment and EU funding further enhance investor confidence.

Exports of business services will grow by **8.0% YoY in 2026,**

New centers (2025-2026) – **50-70 per year,**

Employment growth 3.8% YoY to approx. **523,000 in 2026,**

Productivity (exports per worker) – **USD 69,800 per FTE by 2026.**

Action plan – Expansion & Nearshoring Boom

Proactively Attract New Investors – Leverage Poland's EU membership, stability, and nearshoring appeal to attract companies relocating from China and high-cost Western markets,

Expand Workforce and upskilling Initiatives – Increase hiring and reskilling efforts, particularly in data science, AI development, and automation consulting, to support knowledge-intensive processes,

Strengthen AI & Cloud Infrastructure – Invest in advanced AI-driven operations and cloud computing, positioning Poland as a hub for high-value tech and digital services,

Develop Regional Hubs – Expand presence beyond Tier 1 cities (Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław) into Tier 2 cities (Poznań, Łódź, Tricity) to lower costs and improve service coverage,

Strengthening Public-Private Collaboration – Work with government agencies and universities to increase AI and IT talent pipelines and incentivize foreign direct investment (FDI) in high-tech services.

ABSL BI's assessment of the state of affairs at the beginning of Q2 2025 shows that the risks associated with adverse scenarios are on the rise, mainly due to the impact of the US new administration on global policy uncertainty. Thus, downside risks to the base scenario should be seriously considered.

Adverse Scenario – Stagnation due to Trade Barriers, Economic Slowdown, and Accelerated Automation (likely)

This scenario assumes slower global economic growth, trade, and FDI disruptions and accelerated automation adoption, reducing the need for labor-intensive services. Tightening budgets among multinational corporations lead to outsourcing cutbacks, and companies shift investment to lower-cost locations (India, Vietnam, Latin America). AI-based solutions replace traditional customer service, HR, and transactional finance roles, while Poland's higher labor costs make it less competitive. Employment levels stagnate, with only high-value services (R&D, cybersecurity, AI integration) expanding, requiring fewer but highly skilled workers (who are not easy to recruit).

Despite the adverse impact of tariffs and trade shocks on global demand, AI's boost in productivity allows the value of exports to grow **by 3.0% YoY,**

New centers (2025-2026) – **10-20 per year,**

Employment growth up to 2.0% YoY to **494,200 FTE in 2026,**

Productivity (exports per worker) – **USD 70,600 per FTE by 2026** (mainly due to automation-driven efficiency).

Action Plan – Cost Optimization & Resilience Measures

AI-First Approach – Rapidly transitioning to AI-powered service delivery, automating routine processes, and focusing on high-margin services (consulting, cybersecurity, data analytics),

Cost Containment Strategies – Review operational costs, renegotiate lease agreements, and optimize workforce costs through flexible work arrangements (hybrid, part-time, contractor models),

Expand Nearshoring Alternatives – Hedge against trade disruptions by strengthening partnerships with European and North American clients, reducing exposure to US-China tensions and trade barriers,

Specialization & Market Differentiation – Focus on niche, high-skill services to differentiate Poland from low-cost competitors (India, Latin America),

Geopolitical Risk Mitigation – Diversify service offerings and geographic exposure to reduce reliance on specific industries or regions and ensure resilience in volatile global markets.

THE BUSINESS SERVICES INDUSTRY IN POLAND

Implementing the new definition from ABSL's European Report

In this section of the report, we aim to build a bridge between the traditional center-based oriented definition of the sector, utilized in previous ABSL Annual Reports, and the broader approach that we refer to as the industry adopted in the *European Business Services Sector Report 2024*. For the first time, we take a more inclusive view of business services that extend beyond specialized service centers.

From this broader perspective, the business services industry, the functions and processes traditionally associated with business services – along with transformational and operational activities – are now recognized as being performed not only within dedicated service centers employing 25 or more people, as is our approach in the ABSL centers' database, but also across companies of all sizes and sectors. These include industries as diverse as agriculture, fisheries, and forestry, as well as manufacturing, mining, utilities, and both private and public services.

In this broader context, the **business services industry refers to a wider array of functions and processes essential to an organization's day-to-day operations, operational efficiency, and long-term growth. These services may be delivered internally or externally, in-house or outsourced, regardless of location or organizational structure.** Our definition focuses primarily on horizontal processes and functions but also incorporates selected verticals, such as IT services. For the sake of conceptual clarity and consistency in categorization, we excluded from our definition of the industry services delivered within public sector institutions and those related to personal services and functions classified purely as physical labor (as per the blue-collar definition).

The key estimates by ABSL are provided in the following table. The highlighted row in blue represents the estimated employment in business services across Europe in 2023, according to the latest available data from EUROSTAT, expressed in millions of workers. **In Poland, approximately 2.3 million people were employed in this broadly defined industry,** demonstrating the country's significant role within the broader European business services landscape. **Under the narrow sense of the EU27, the industry accounted for 32.5 million workers. However, when using the broad-sense geographical definition, which extends coverage to include EEA, UK, and Switzerland, the estimate rises to 39.4 million workers.**

Business service centers employ one in five workers in Poland's broadly defined business services industry, while at the EU 27 level, they were responsible for one in six. At the same time, the centers employ half of KIBS (knowledge-intensive business services)[1] workers and 6.2% of the total number of white-collar workers. At the EU27 level, it amounts to 43% of KIBS workers and 6.6% of white-collar workers.

We should understand our centers as integral and the most productive and sophisticated parts of the industry.

[1] For the formal definition of KIBS please refer to the methodological section of the report.

TABLE 0.1 **Estimates of employment in business services sector and industry across Poland, EU-27, and a broader Europe in 2023**

		Narrow-sense	Broad-sense
2023	**Poland**	**EU27**	**EU27 + EEC + UK + CH**
Center-based business services	0.44	5.0	5.7
Knowledge-intensive business services (KIBS)	0.87	11.6	14.2
Business services industry	2.30	32.5	39.4
White-collar workers	7.00	75.5	90.3

Source: ABSL estimates based on EUROSTAT's data.

This expansion in scope reflects a more comprehensive understanding of the sector's reach, acknowledging that business services are confined only to large, dedicated centers. They are embedded across organizations of all sizes and industries. The comparison underscores the growing strategic importance of business services to European economies, with Poland emerging as a strong player within this evolving framework. The relatively high numbers also underline the increasing reliance on professional, white-collar roles to drive operational efficiency, innovation, and growth in private and public sector organizations.

Regional potential in the center-based sector and broadly defined industry

In 2023, Poland's business services landscape at the NUTS-3 level revealed a highly concentrated structure, with Knowledge-Intensive Business Services (KIBS), business services industry (BSI), and business services centers overwhelmingly clustered in a small number of urban and metropolitan subregions. Warsaw remained the dominant hub, employing nearly 248,000 in KIBS and close to 469,000 in the broader BSI category. More than any other Polish subregion, the capital also hosted over 400 business service centers. This corresponds to 23.9% of national business services industry employment and 12.6% of KIBS jobs. However, its center s-to-KIBS ratio of 40.1 suggests that many services were embedded in broader organizational structures rather than formalized shared services or outsourcing centers.

Beyond Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław, and the Tricity subregion (Gdańsk-Gdynia-Sopot) also stood out in terms of specialization and service intensity. Kraków, in particular, was notable for employing over 98,000 people in centers, nearly matching Warsaw despite its smaller population. Its center-to-KIBS ratio of 109.6, the center-to-BSI ratio of 72.5, and the location quotient (LQ) of 3.43 indicated an exceptional concentration of business services activity. Wrocław and Tricity also demonstrated a strong alignment between high-value services and operational delivery, each with LQs above 2.0 and high ratios of centers per KIBS employee. The sector has matured in these cities and has become a key driver of the local labor market and economic dynamics.

Tier-2 cities such as Katowice, Łódź, and Poznań show more mixed profiles. Katowice and Łódź were characterized by large numbers of service centers and strong business processing operations, but with lower KIBS-to-BSI ratios, indicating a greater emphasis on transactional services. Poznań, by contrast, leaned more toward high-value KIBS, with a more balanced relationship between business services employment and center saturation. These cities retain strong potential for further KIBS development, though center growth may be approaching saturation.

Outside major urban hubs, regional disparities are clear. Many subregions, such as Kaliski – with over 34,000 BSI employees but no registered centers – illustrate this gap. Similar patterns appear in Nowosądecki, Piotrkowski, and parts of southeastern and northeastern Poland. These areas may host fragmented business functions but lack the infrastructure, talent concentration, or incentives to attract formalized center investments, stressing a structural disconnect between labor supply and investor demand.

The knowledge intensity of business services also varies widely across regions. The national average KIBS-to-BSI ratio stands at 34%, but leading urban areas such as Kraków (66.2%), Wrocław (55.6%), and Tricity (53.6%) far exceed this, reflecting their focus on innovation and high-value services. In contrast, regions such as Kielecki and Piotrkowski

TABLE 0.2

Employment in business services centers, knowledge-intensive business services, and business services in general in Polish NUTS 3 regions in 2023 – subregions with employment exceeding 1,000 people

NUTS3 SUBREGION	EMPLOY KIBS	EMPLOY BSI	EMPLOY CENTERS	NO OF CENTERS	SHARE KIBS	SHARE BSI	SHARE CENTERS	KIBS / BSI RATIO	CENTERS / KIBS RATIO	CENTERS / BSI RATIO	LQ KIBS	LQ BSI	LQ CENTERS
Miasto Warszawa	247,835	468,739	99,412	404	12.6	23.9	5.1	52.9	40.1	21.2	2.45	1.57	0.92
Miasto Kraków	89,752	135,608	98,347	296	17.1	25.9	18.8	66.2	109.6	72.5	3.32	1.71	3.43
Miasto Wrocław	51,196	92,015	63,190	239	11.9	21.4	14.7	55.6	123.4	68.7	2.31	1.41	2.68
Trójmiejski	41,632	77,690	38,795	212	10.8	20.1	10.1	53.6	93.2	49.9	2.09	1.33	1.84
Katowicki	23,439	59,284	28,877	125	6.3	15.9	7.8	39.5	123.2	48.7	1.22	1.05	1.42
Miasto Łódź	20,223	55,952	28,510	127	6.3	17.3	8.8	36.1	141.0	51.0	1.22	1.14	1.61
Miasto poznań	32,715	69,274	25,237	151	8.8	18.6	6.8	47.2	77.1	36.4	1.70	1.23	1.24
Bydgosko-toruński	14,407	45,825	13,445	60	4.7	14.8	4.4	31.4	93.3	29.3	0.90	0.98	0.79
Lubelski	11,358	36,882	9,495	81	4.1	13.3	3.4	30.8	83.6	25.7	0.79	0.87	0.62
Miasto Szczecin	10,418	26,124	7,971	67	6.2	15.6	4.8	39.9	76.5	30.5	1.21	1.03	0.87
Rzeszowski	11,401	34,548	6,053	51	4.5	13.6	2.4	33.0	53.1	17.5	0.87	0.89	0.43
Gliwicki	12,873	29,718	3,324	18	7.7	17.7	2.0	43.3	25.8	11.2	1.48	1.16	0.36
Kielecki	6,105	29,835	2,525	16	2.5	12.4	1.0	20.5	41.4	8.5	0.49	0.82	0.19
Bielski	8,042	34,049	2,413	16	3.2	13.5	1.0	23.6	30.0	7.1	0.62	0.89	0.17
Olsztyński	5,215	24,815	2,246	9	2.6	12.4	1.1	21.0	43.1	9.1	0.51	0.82	0.21
Opolski	4,717	26,081	2,035	21	2.2	12.0	0.9	18.1	43.1	7.8	0.42	0.79	0.17
Białostocki	7,796	25,191	1,932	25	4.2	13.4	1.0	30.9	24.8	7.7	0.81	0.88	0.19
Poznański	9,723	56,511	1,831	6	2.2	12.6	0.4	17.2	18.8	3.2	0.42	0.83	0.07
Krakowski	9,731	34,157	1,390	8	3.7	13.1	0.5	28.5	14.3	4.1	0.72	0.86	0.10
Łódzki	3,073	16,418	1,350	2	2.4	12.6	1.0	18.7	43.9	8.2	0.46	0.83	0.19
Radomski	4,999	21,681	1,170	9	2.8	12.0	0.6	23.1	23.4	5.4	0.54	0.79	0.12
Częstochowski	4,319	23,062	1,067	6	2.4	12.8	0.6	18.7	24.7	4.6	0.47	0.85	0.11
Overall	**782,760**	**2,304,014**	**447,066**	**2,023**	**5.2**	**15.2**	**0.0**	**34.0**	**57.1**	**19.4**	**1.00**	**1.00**	**1.00**

Source: ABSL BI estimates based on the data from Statistics Poland and Eurostat, following the definitions and methodology established in ABSL European Business Services Report 2024 and the data from ABSL's main centers database. BSI stands for broadly defined business industry encompassing sector centers as well as business services embedded in core business in accordance with ABSL's definition.

exhibit much lower ratios, dominated by lower-value, transactional functions. Location quotients reinforce this view: Kraków and Wrocław significantly exceed the national average, while many rural and post-industrial regions fall below 1.0, indicating underrepresentation and a lack of specialization.

Center saturation, measured by the number of centers per 100,000 KIBS employees, also underscores regional specialization. Łódź led with 141 centers per 100k KIBS employees, followed by Katowice (123.2), Wrocław (123.4), and Kraków (109.6). These figures suggest dense clustering and indicate that these labor markets are near their sustainable limits in terms of center-based employment. In contrast, despite its scale, Warsaw's lower saturation rate (40.1) suggests that its services were more distributed across industries or embedded within non-center structures.

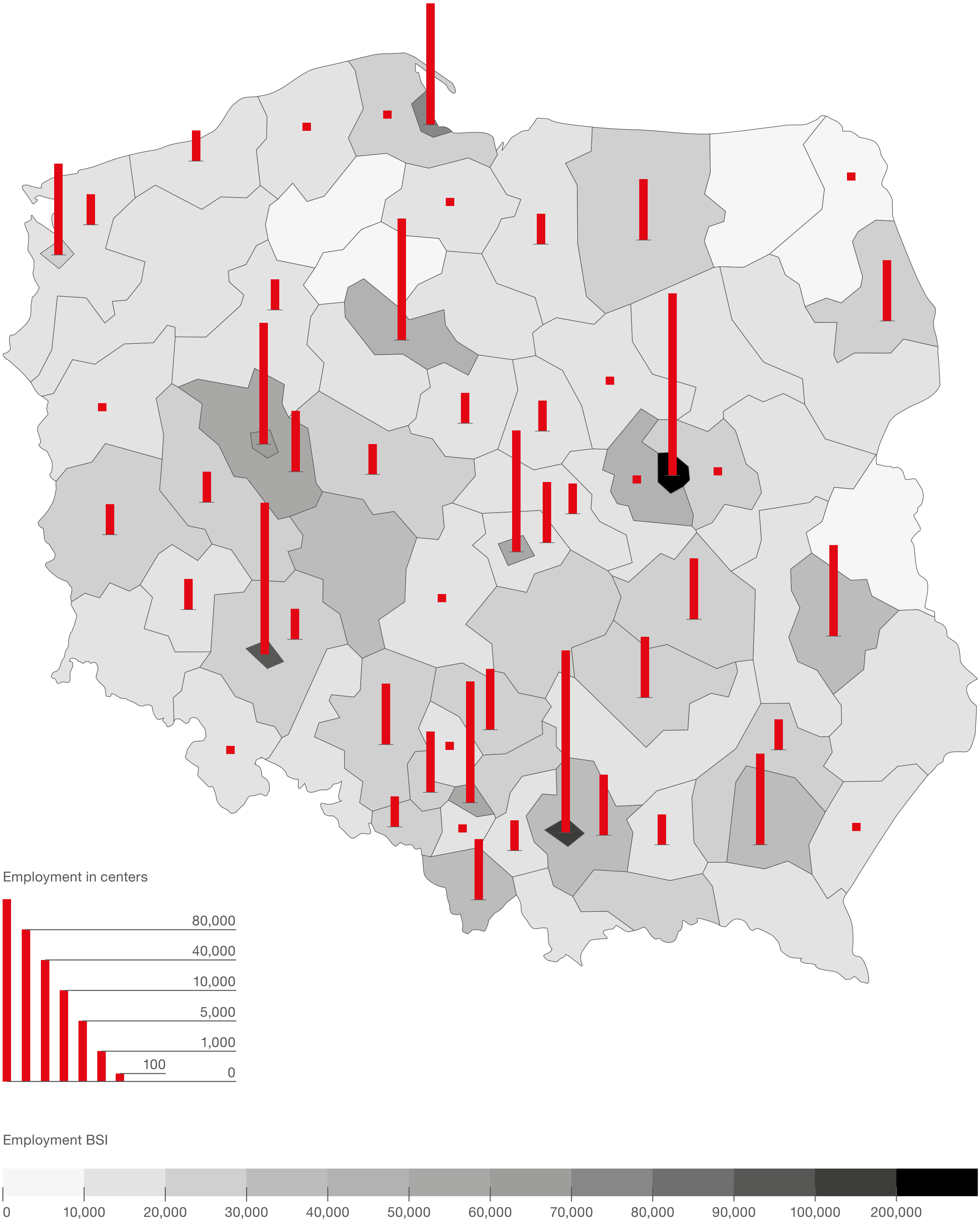
High saturation in core regions has not led to broad investment dispersal. Instead, post-pandemic trends show continued concentration in Poland's largest urban hubs – particularly Warsaw, which continues to grow despite already being the sector's largest market (see Chapter 1). Several reinforcing factors explain this deepening concentration: mature business ecosystems, deep and multilingual talent pools, predictable operations, and lower investment risk. Additionally, the hybrid work model allows companies to scale up in urban areas without the need to decentralize. Global investors increasingly seek locations with strong employer branding, academic links, and international visibility.

While regions such as Rzeszów and Bydgoszcz offer some cost and workforce advantages, they have not consistently attracted large-scale new entrants. Lublin, however, is showing signs of growth potential. Overall, investors appear to be doubling down on proven locations where infrastructure, talent, and services are concentrated. Most new centers over the next two years are expected to open in Warsaw, followed by a continued expansion in Kraków, Wrocław, and Tricity, where operational advantages outweigh labor market saturation concerns. This underscores the enduring strength of Poland's core cities as long-term global business services industry anchors.

For the first time, this analysis allows us to view centers as an integral part of a broader business services ecosystem – broadly defined industry. In this ecosystem, saturation metrics – center-to-KIBS and center-to-industry ratios – offer valuable insights into investment trends, upscaling patterns, and emerging signs of market saturation and structural gaps.

FIGURE 0.1

Employment in business services centers and business services in general in Polish NUTS 3 regions in 2023



Source: ABSL BI estimates based on the data from Statistics Poland and Eurostat following the definitions and methodology established in ABSL European Business Services Report 2024 as well as the data from ABSL's main database of centers.

The concept and methodology of the report

204

The number of companies that participated in the ABSL nationwide survey in Q1 2025.

44.6%

The share of companies in the total employment of business services centers operating in Poland that participated in this year's ABSL survey.

216,945

The number of people employed by companies in Poland that participated in the 2025 ABSL survey.

"The Business Services Sector in Poland 2025" report aims to provide comprehensive insights into the activities of the BPO/SSC, GBS, and IT/ITO R&D service centers in Poland and outline the sector's growth directions.

The report adopts a sector definition to include the activities of business process outsourcing (BPO), shared services (SSC), global business services (GBS), IT, and research and development (R&D) centers located in Poland and employing 25 people or more. By the sector or our sector in the report, we mean center-based business services.

In this year's report, we also refer to a broader definition from ABSL's 2024 European report, where we introduced the broader definition of the industry (or our industry). The industry is defined as a wide range of functions and processes that organizations need and leverage daily to manage and enhance their operations, increase efficiency, and drive growth. These services can be carried out internally or externally, in-house or provided by a third party, regardless of location or organizational setup. Thus, in our understanding, the center-based business services sector constitutes the most significant and productive part of the broader industry.

Its preparation was based on ABSL's internal database of business services centers in Poland (which currently contains information on over 2,000 centers and is updated regularly by the ABSL BI team) and the results of the annual ABSL 2025 manager survey.

The ABSL BI team conducted the survey using the CAWI (computer-assisted web interview) approach in January-March 2025 (we assume that the results reflect the state of the sector at the end of Q1 2025). This year's survey was completed by managers of 204 companies in Poland. These companies employ 216,950 people in their business services centers, representing 44.6% of the sector's employment. The ABSL 2025 report concerns business services centers (the sector), whose parent companies have headquarters in Poland or abroad. Each entity was assigned to one of the primary types (BPO, SSC, GBS, IT, R&D), taking the dominant profile of its operations into account. Contact centers providing services to external customers were classified as BPOs. IT centers were defined as entities that outsource IT solutions (e.g., system, application or infrastructure maintenance, technical support) and develop and sell (implement) software for external customers (software development).

Rather than running many shared services centers and independent management of suppliers, GBS centers ensure full integration of global governance and provide services for locations using all shared services and outsourcing throughout the enterprise.

Even when located in the same city, particular business service centers were treated as separate units for analysis. Accepting the geographic criterion, the requirement of being in two different places would have eliminated information about centers of various types, e.g., IT and BPO, which were in the same location.

This year's report considers centers with an employee base of 25 workers or more. It is worth emphasizing that direct comparisons with previously published ABSL reports should be avoided; it is better to rely on the information presented herein. The ABSL database is continually updated and includes data revisions for previous years. Because some values are rounded off, in particular tables or figures in the report, they may not add up to exactly 100.0%. The unit of analysis in the report is a metropolis/conurbation. GZM means Katowice together with the other cities of the Górnośląsko-Zagłębiowska Metropolis (Katowice & GZM) unless otherwise indicated. Tricity means Gdańsk, Gdynia and Sopot.

Classification of cities and metropolitan areas according to ABSL

Tier 1
Kraków, Warsaw and Wrocław

Tier 2
Katowice & GZM, Łódź, Poznań, Tricity

Tier 3
Bydgoszcz, Lublin, Rzeszów, Szczecin

Tier 4
Białystok, Elbląg, Kielce, Olsztyn, Opole, Płock, Radom, Tarnów and others

In the report, we also utilize the notion of knowledge-intensive business services (KIBS). We define KIBS in line with Schnabl E. and Zenker A. (2013) as "enterprises whose business operations rely heavily on professional knowledge and that provide knowledge-intensive services primarily to other businesses". KIBS are thus private or public organizations whose value-added is based primarily on professional knowledge and expertise and who supply services to other businesses or the public sector. From a statistical perspective, **core KIBS refers to divisions J62, J63, J69, M70, M71, M72, and M73 of NACE rev.2 classification of activities.**

The report can be downloaded free of charge in PDF format from the ABSL Shop (shop-absl.pl), both in Polish and English.

This report could not have been prepared without the information obtained from the nationwide ABSL survey respondents. We sincerely thank company representatives who took time out of their busy schedules to complete it. We are also grateful to the representatives of local governments and investor support institutions who supported this project.

We want to thank the co-authors of this report, particularly our strategic partners, who shared their expert knowledge and data and significantly enriched the report's content. Experts from Colliers wrote the section analyzing the real estate market, and representatives of Mercer, Randstad Randstad Enterprise contributed to the labor market section. We also extend our thanks to the OPI or National Information Processing Institute – National Research Institute, an important partner of ABSL annual reports – for providing data on the academic and higher education sector.

Last but not least, we would be grateful for any opinions and comments on the contents of this year's report so that it can help to enhance the quality of future editions and adapt them to the needs and expectations of the centers' managers and new investors.

ABSL BI team

Abbreviations

ABSL	Association of Business Services Leaders
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AMER	North, Central, and South America
AML	Anti-Money Laundering
AP	Accounts Payable (common in finance functions)
APAC	Asia-Pacific
AV	Audio Visual or Added Value, depending on the context
BANI	Brittle, Anxious, Non-linear, Incomprehensible
BCP	Business Continuity Plan
BDL	Bank Danych Lokalnych (Statistics Poland)
BFSI	Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance
BI	Business Intelligence
BoP	Balance of Payments
BPI	Business Process Improvement
BPO	Business Process Outsourcing
BSI	Business Services Industry

BYOD	Bring Your Own Device
CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CET	Central European Time zone
CoE	Center of Excellence
CSRD	Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive
CXO	is a Generic term for corporate executives (e.g., CEO, CFO, etc.)
DEI	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
DIB	Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging
DL	Deep Learning
EA	Euro area/Eurozone
EBOPS	Extended Balance of Payments Services classification
EMDEs	Emerging Market and Developing Economies
EMEA	Europe, Middle East, and Africa
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance
EU	European Union
F&A	Finance and Accounting
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
FX	Foreign Exchange
GBS	Global Business Services
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPT	Generative Pretrained Transformer
GUS	Główny Urząd Statystyczny (Poland's Central Statistical Office)
GVA	Gross Value Added
GVCs	Global Value Chains
HQ	Headquarters
IMD	International Institute for Management Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPA	Intelligent Process Automation
KIBS	Knowledge-Intensive Business Services
KPO	Knowledge Processes Outsourcing
KYC	Know Your Customer
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LLMs	Large Language Model(s)
ML	Machine Learning
NACE	Nomenclature of Economic Activities
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NFZ	Narodowy Fundusz Zdrowia (Polish National Health Fund)
NLP	Natural Language Programming
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPS	Purchasing Power Standard or Post-Processing Software
PQC	Post-Quantum Cryptography
QC	Quality Control
QE/QT	Quantitative Easing/Quantitative Tightening
QoQ	Quarter on Quarter
R&D	Research & Development
ROI	Return on Investment
RPA	Robotic Process Automation
RTO	Return to Office
SQL	Structured Query Language
SSC	Shared Services Center
UI	User Interface
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America
VBA	Visual Basic for Applications
VC	Value Chain
VDI	Virtual Desktop Infrastructure
VUCA	Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity
WFA	Work from Anywhere
WFH	Work from Home
YoY	Year on Year

Poland – key facts

Poland is the sixth-largest economy in the EU and has been one of Europe's leaders in economic growth over the past decade. It has the largest economy in Central Europe and has been a leader in growth and development since its economic transformation commenced in 1989. One of the essential branches of the contemporary Polish economy is the business services centers sector, our industry, which is growing in significance, as evidenced by a fast-growing share in employment and GDP.

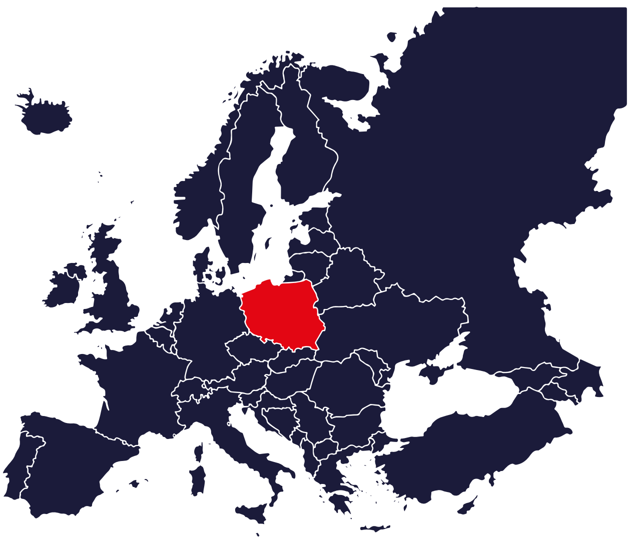
In recent years, the industry's impressive growth has enabled Poland to strengthen its position as one of the prime destinations in the EMEA region and globally. Poland is one of the prime locations for new investments in BPO / SSC, GBS, IT, and R&D centers.

Language: **Polish**

Currency: **Złoty (PLN)**

Number of cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants: **37**

Poland in international organizations: **EU** (2004), **NATO** (1999), **OECD** (1996), **WTO** (1995), **UN** (1945).



EUR 840.1 billion

GDP in nominal prices in 2024 (6th largest EU economy, EUROSTAT)

+2.9%

GDP real growth in 2024 (Statistics Poland)

36.620 million

Population of Poland in 2024 (Statistics Poland)

77.0%

GDP per capita in PPS in 2023, in terms of the EU-27 average

104.9

Consumer price index (CPI) – March 2025 (year on year, Statistics Poland)

EUR 22,410

Nominal GDP per capita in 2024 (EUROSTAT)

EUR 16,440

Real GDP per capita in 2024 (EUROSTAT)

5.3%

Unemployment rate (March 2025, Statistics Poland)

36th position

in World Talent Ranking 2024 (IMD World Competitiveness Center), 44th in 2023, +8 positions YoY

37th position

on Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2023 rankings (INSEAD), +2 positions

41st position

in World Competitiveness Ranking (IMD World Competitiveness Center), 43rd in 2023, +2 positions YoY

USD 335.5 billion

Value of the inward FDI stock in Poland at the end of 2023 (UNCTAD, World Investment Report 2024)

USD 28.7 billion

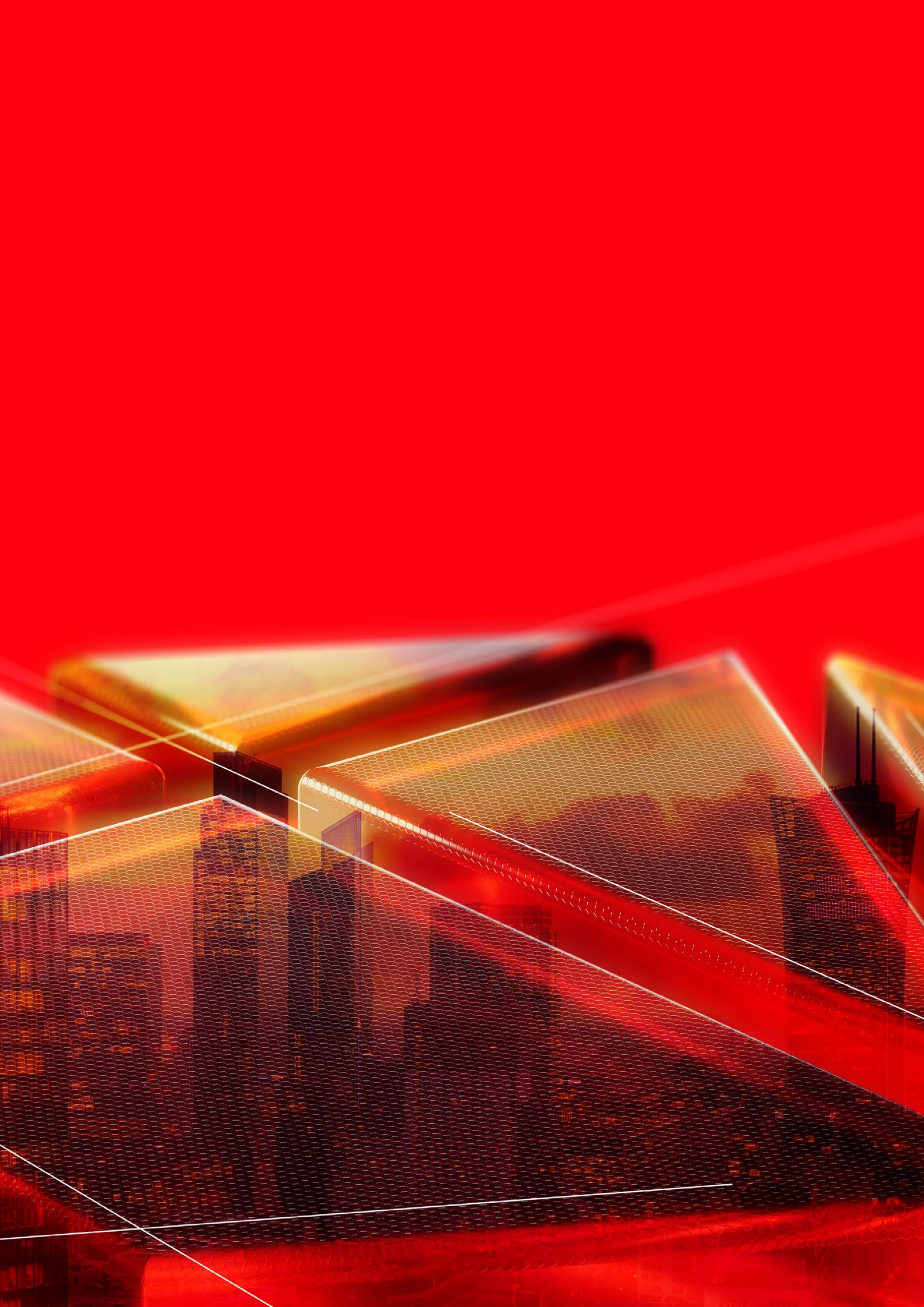
FDI inflows in 2023 (UNCTAD, World Investment Report 2024)

PLN 4.1839

EUR exchange rate on March 31, 2025 (NBP)

PLN 3.8643

USD exchange rate on March 31, 2025 (NBP)



1

STATE OF THE BUSINESS SERVICES SECTOR IN POLAND AT THE END OF Q1 2025

Overall characteristics of the sector

At the end of Q1 2025, more than **2,081** business services centers (+5% YoY), representing 1,258 companies (+2% YoY), were operating in our sector in Poland, comprising BPO, SSC/GBS, IT, and R&D entities. **They employed 488,700 people (6.2% more than the previous year).**

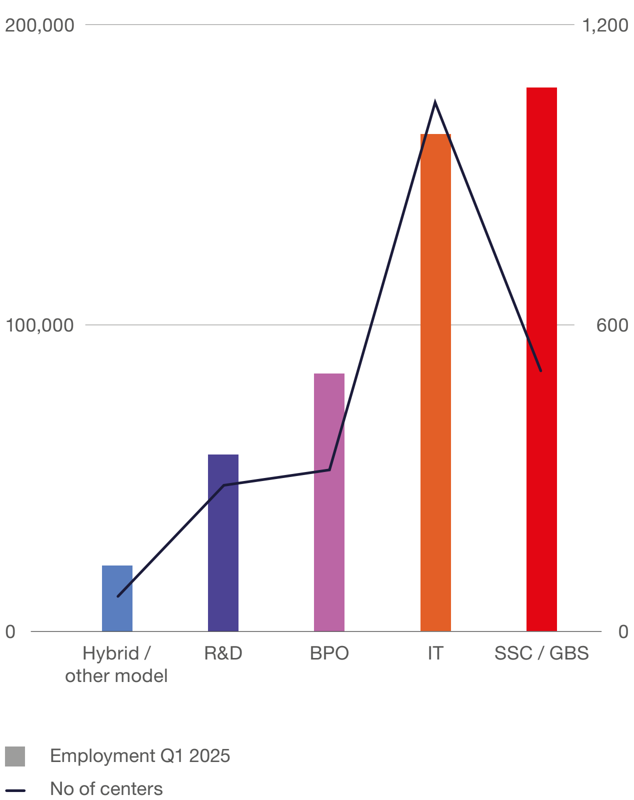
In Q1 2025, the employment landscape across various business services center segments or subsectors of our sector in Poland reflected a diverse distribution of workforce and operational centers. The SSC / GBS segment led with the highest employment, coming in at 172,396 individuals across 495 centers. The IT segment closely followed behind, employing 157,600 people in 1,002 centers. The BPO subsector employed 81,785 across 308 centers, while R&D employed 56,040 across 278 centers. Though smaller in scale, the hybrid/other model still contributed 20,842 employees working within 69 centers.

Fifty-five centers were established in 2024 and six in Q1 2025. The newly established centers created 5,400 jobs. As in previous years, foreign-owned centers dominated new investments (90.2% share in the number of centers). Foreign-owned centers created 93.4% of the total employment in these new centers. **Most new jobs were created in Tier 1 cities – 55.7% – and Tier 2 cities – 41.7%.**

ABSL

Chapter content developed by: **ABSL**

FIGURE 1.1 **Employment and number of centers by center type at the end of Q1 2025**



Source: ABSL business services centers database.

The most significant number of new centers were established in Warsaw (15), Katowice & GZM (nine), Poznań (nine), and Kraków (eight). In terms of jobs created by new centers, the top three destinations were Warsaw (23.7% share in work generated by new centers), Kraków (21.7%), and Poznań (12.0%).

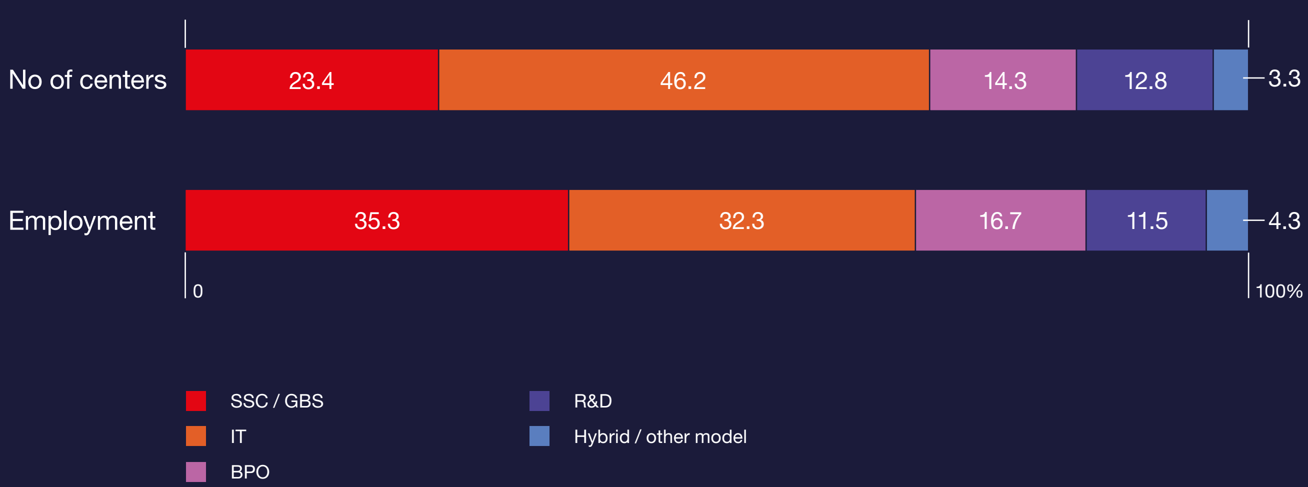
The number of centers in Poland continues to grow; however, the pace of new establishments is declining. It is important to note that despite this slowdown in new investments, total employment in the sector has maintained a long-term upward trend. This is driven by organic growth in existing centers and the arrival of new companies.

The growth in the number of centers occurred in two distinct waves: the first followed Poland's accession to the European Union, and the second came after the 2008 global financial crisis, as international corporations sought to optimize costs through large-scale outsourcing. The peak year for new center establishments was 2016, with 146 new centers.

Since the beginning of 2024, 61 new centers have been established, compared to 69 in 2023, emphasizing the ongoing deceleration in new entries.

As of the end of Q1 2025, most firms (73.3%) operated a single center in Poland. An additional 12.8% of firms ran two centers, while 10.7% maintained three to five

FIGURE 1.2 **Distribution of the number of centers and employment by type** (%) (at the end of Q1 2025)



Source: ABSL business services centers database.

Key facts on the business services sector in Poland at the end of Q1 2025

5.7%

The estimated share of the sector in Poland's GDP in 2025 (5.3% in 2024)

7.6%

The share of the sector in the total employment in the enterprise sector in Poland (7.0% in 2024)

2,081 centers of **1,258** firms

The number of BPO, SSC/GBS, IT, and R&D business services centers in Poland

61

The number of business services centers that began operations in Poland from the beginning of 2024 until the end of Q1 2025

USD **25.9** billion

Estimate of GVA in the sector in 2023 with GVA per worker at USD 57,900 or 20% above mean GDP per worker in Poland

USD **42.3** billion

The estimated overall value of the sector's exports in 2024 (USD 36.8 billion in 2023)

24.9%

Estimated share of our centers in the overall value of commercial services exports in 2024

USD **64,300**

Mean exports per worker in the sector's centers at the end of 2024 (USD 65,400 – estimate for 2025)

13.1 million m²

The total modern office supply in Poland at the beginning of 2025

Germany, the **US,** the **UK,** the **Netherlands,** and **Switzerland**

The sector's export destinations with a value exceeding USD two billion, with a value for Germany close to USD five billion

54.2%

Share of mid-office process work in the sector's centers at the end of Q1 2025

58.6%

Share of knowledge-intensive work in sector's centers at the end of Q1 2025

22.4%

Mean reported automation rate at the end of Q1 2025 (17.5% – median automation rate)

488,700

The total number of jobs in business services centers, 84.3%, in foreign-owned

6.2%

Year-on-year increase in the number of jobs in business services centers in Poland

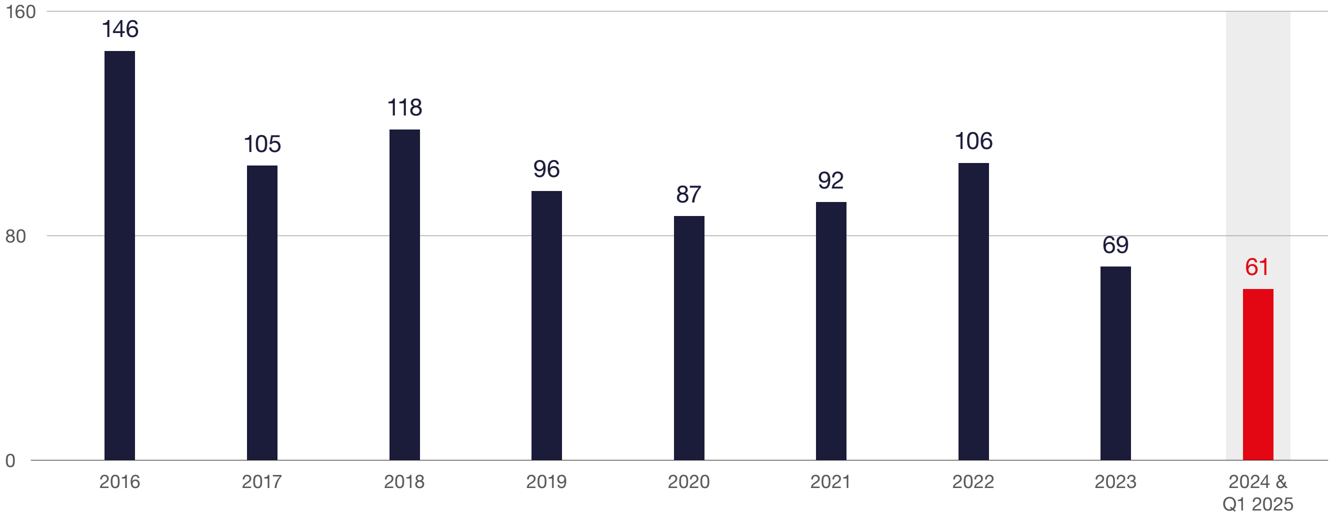
19.6%

The share of foreigners in overall employment, the number of countries from which centers operating in Poland originate – 50

9

The number of locations where business services centers employ more than 10,000 people. Two cities with employment exceeding 100,000 jobs – Warsaw and Kraków centers nationwide. Only 0.6% of respondents operated ten or more centers, often covering diverse service types. To date, the most expansive operator in the market manages 24 centers nationwide. According to the ABSL database, IT centers remain the most common type of center, accounting for 46.2% of all facilities. SSC/GBS follows these at 23.4% and BPO centers at 14.3%. R&D centers represent 12.8% of the total. As in previous years, hybrid/other model centers make up the smallest share at 3.3%.

FIGURE 1.3 | **Number of centers opened by date of establishment** (at the end of Q1 2025)



Source: ABSL business services centers database. The data for 2024 and 2025 reflect information available at the end of Q1 2025.

Number of centers and structure of new investments

As of the end of Q1 2025, Warsaw continued to lead in terms of the number of active business services centers, with 429 centers. Other major hubs with over 200 centers included Kraków (324), Wrocław (258), and Tricity (232). Locations with more than 100 centers per city included Poznań (173), Katowice & the GZM Metropolis (158), and Łódź (139). By contrast, the number of active centers is significantly lower in Tier 3 cities, such as Lublin (82), Szczecin (70), Rzeszów (54), and Bydgoszcz (52), as well as in Tier 4 locations, which host only a limited number of centers.

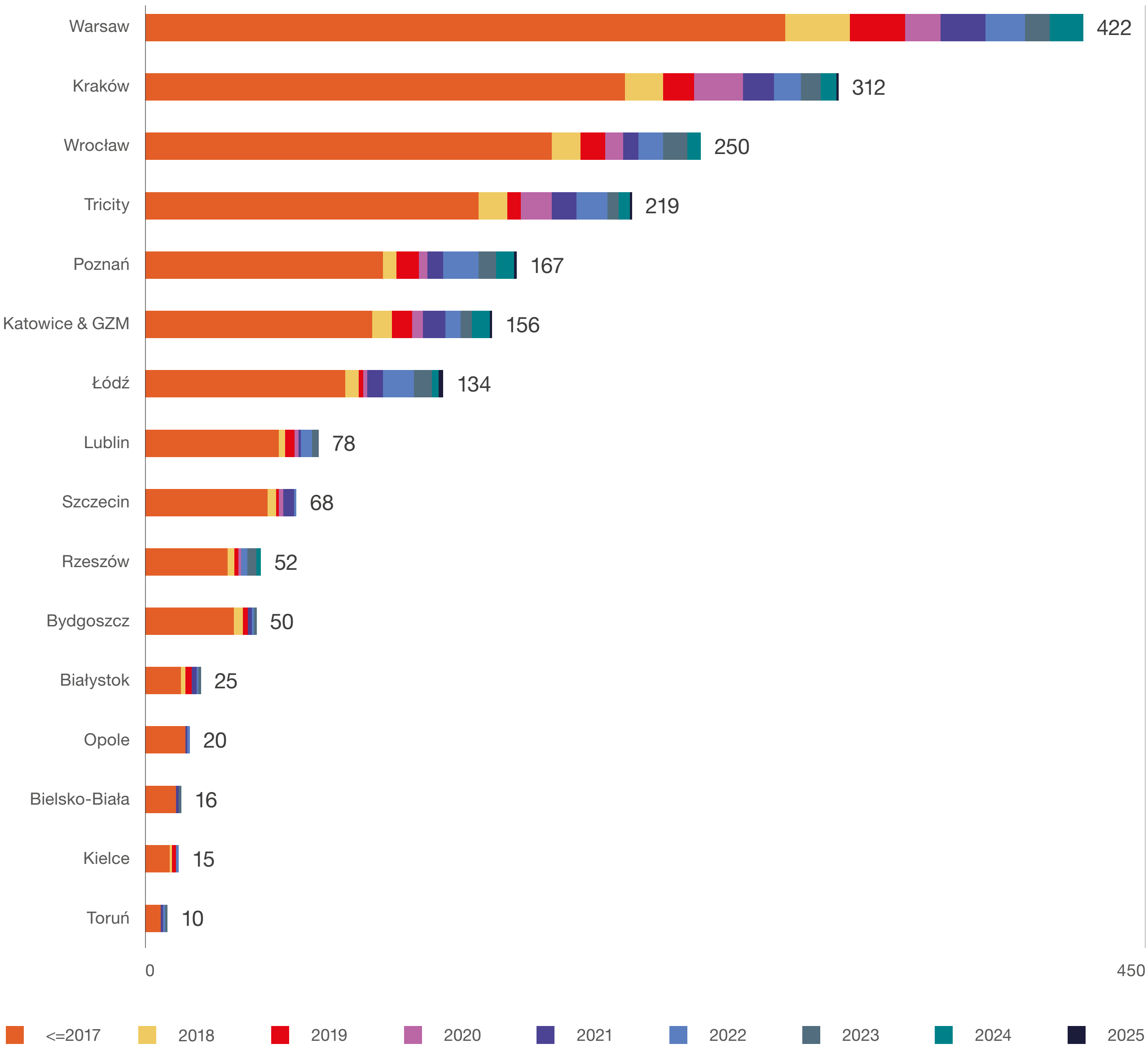
From the beginning of 2024 through the end of Q1 2025, the highest number of new business services centers was opened in Warsaw (15). Other active locations included Poznań and Katowice & the GZM Metropolis (nine centers each), Kraków (eight), Wrocław and Tricity (six each), Łódź (five), Rzeszów (two), and Zielona Góra (one).

Investors continue to favor established, already well-developed markets. Tier 1 cities (Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław) attracted 29 new investments, while Tier 2 cities (Tricity, Katowice & GZM, Łódź, Poznań) recorded another 29 new centers – especially as entry points for first-time investors in Poland. However, the overall number of cities attracting new investments has been contracting. Between 2018 and 2021, new centers were established in 17 locations; this number dropped to 15 in 2022, 14 in 2023, and only nine in 2024. This underscores the growing challenge of attracting new investors beyond Tier 1-3 locations.

Despite fewer new center locations, employment continues to grow, primarily driven by new investors. In the period, 5,356 new jobs were created – up from 4,920 the previous year, representing a 9% YoY increase. These new centers accounted for approximately 18.8% of total employment growth in the sector.

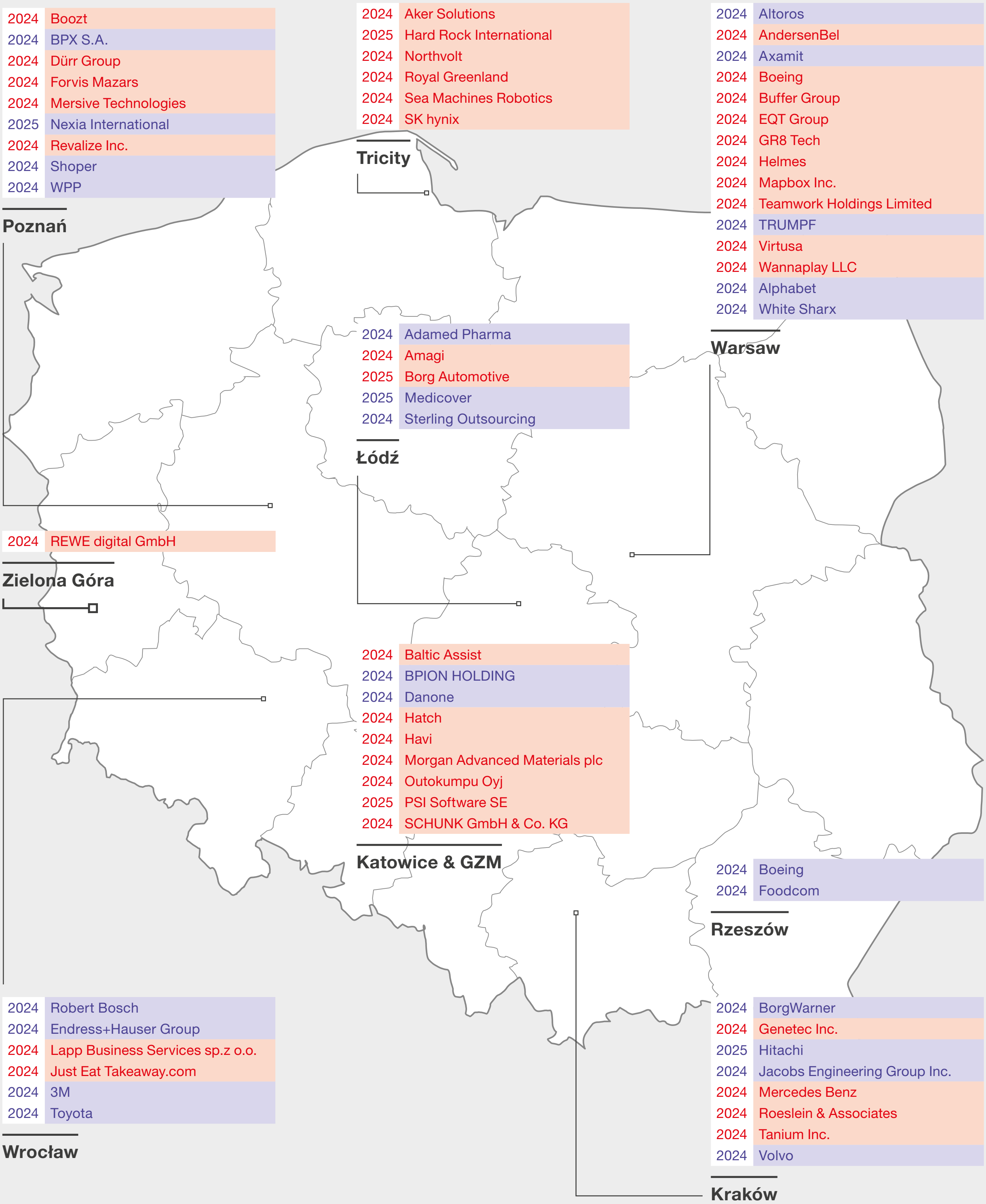
From 2024 to Q1 2025, the majority of new investments were made in IT centers (42.6%), followed by R&D (26.2%), SSC/GBS (18.0%), BPO (8.2%), and hybrid centers (4.9%). In terms of employment, IT centers led the way, accounting for the most jobs created (39.3%), with R&D centers in second place (32.6%), followed by SSC/BSG (18.1%). The number of R&D centers and jobs created in this segment has notably increased, indicating a shift toward more knowledge-intensive investments. Although new centers are now smaller, they are becoming more numerous. The average headcount per new center was 87, a more than fourfold increase on the 21 in the previous year. In terms of origin, new investors came from 22 countries, up from 16 in the previous report. However, Polish investors accounted for only eight % of new centers. New centers established from the beginning of 2024 until the end of Q1 2025 were mainly established by US investors (15 centers), ahead of German (eight) and Polish (six). Regarding employment numbers, new US investors created 1,620 jobs – close to a third of the total employment in new centers in the sector (30.3%), followed by German (10.6%), UK (9.2%), Canadian (7.3%), and Polish (6.6%).

FIGURE 1.4 **The number of active centers in the most important locations in Poland at the end of Q1 2025, by year of establishment**



Source: ABSL business services centers database.

FIGURE 1.5 | **New investments in particular business services locations in Poland** (2024 and Q1 2025)



New investors = first business services center established in Poland

Recent investments by existing investors = another business services center opened in Poland

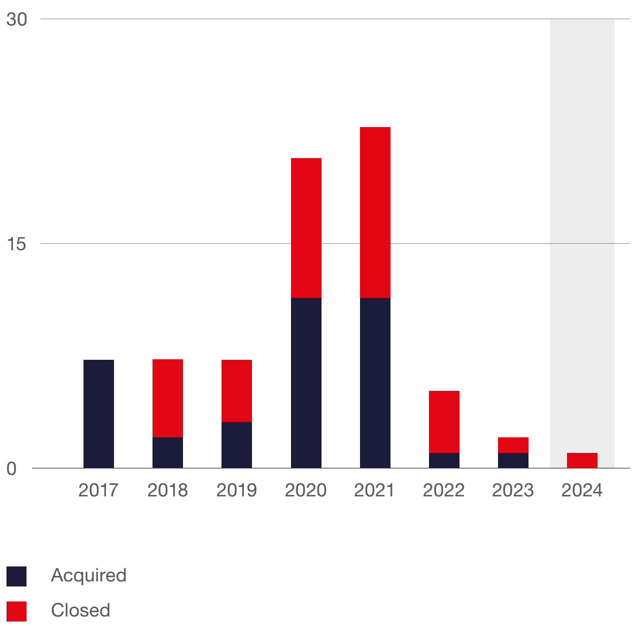
Source: ABSL business services centers database.

Mergers and closures of the centers

In contrast to prior editions, we have decided to show information on the disappearance of centers from the ABSL database. **For now, we have identified 71 centers that were either closed (35) or acquired (36) over the period 2017-2024. These 71 centers employed 9,120 people, the acquired ones – 5,420 people, and 3,700 in the closed centers.**

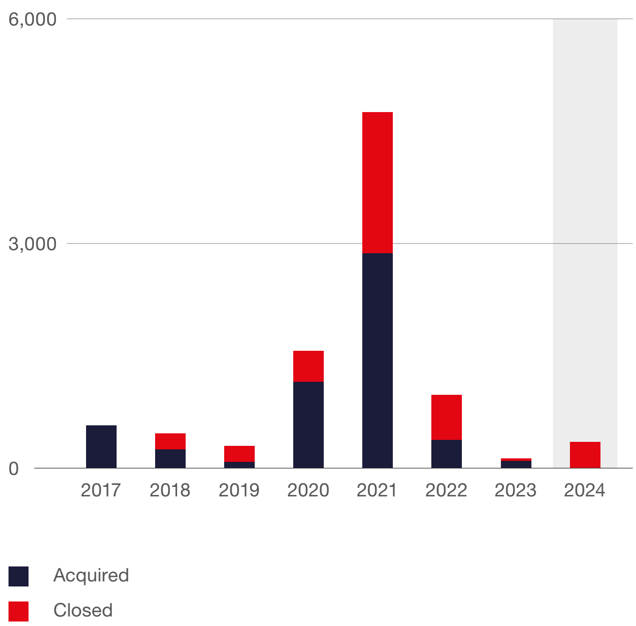
We know that already announced collective layoffs in 2024 in some large centers will impact employment in the sector in 2025 and 2026. Their impact on Q1 2025 figures was limited. In some cases, we are talking about the closure of business operations in Poland or the downsizing of headcount in Poland due to global M&As.

FIGURE 1.6 | **Mergers and closures of the centers**



Source: ABSL business services centers database.

FIGURE 1.7 | **Mergers and closures of the centers – impact on employment**



Source: ABSL business services centers database.

Services provided and operating models

The chart below shows the distribution of operating models among SSC and GBS centers. **Most centers (56.3%) used a multi-function model,** delivering services across areas such as F&A, IT, and HR.

GBS centers, which may be single- or multi-function, represented **37.5%,** emphasizing enterprise-wide service, digital transformation, and process optimization.

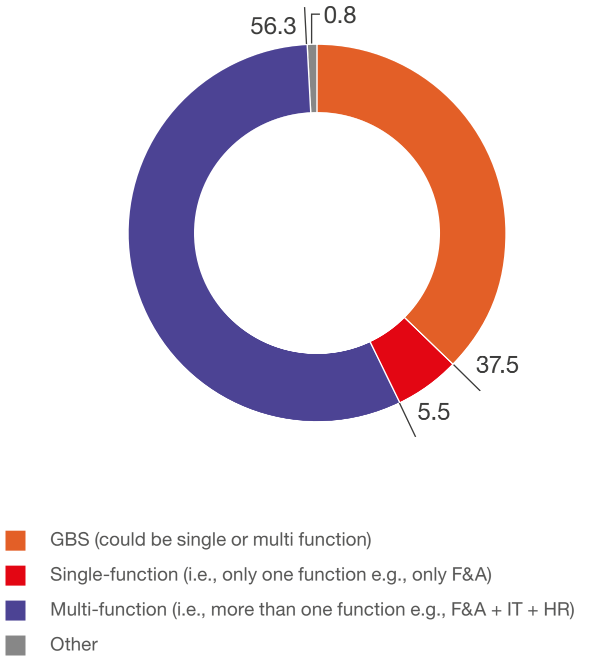
Just 5.5% of SSCs were single-function, stressing a shift away from narrowly focused models. Only **0.8%** fell into an “other” category, indicating hybrid or unique setups.

Overall, the data confirms the **dominance of multifunctional SSCs** and a growing **preference for integrated GBS models.**

The **fully in-house (captive) model was predominant, with 64.6%** of SSC and GBS centers operating entirely internally. This emphasizes a preference for full control over service delivery and quality.

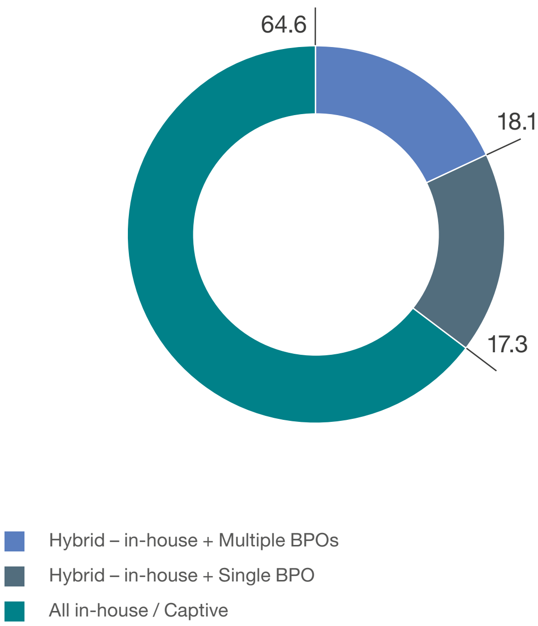
The remainder used **hybrid models,** combining in-house teams with BPO providers: **18.1%** with multiple BPOs, optimizing cost and expertise across functions, and **17.3%** with a single BPO, balancing internal resources with streamlined external support.

FIGURE 1.8 **What is your shared services operating model?** (SSC/GBS respondents only) (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=128).

FIGURE 1.9 **How is your shared services operating model resourced?** (SSC/GBS respondents only) (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=127).

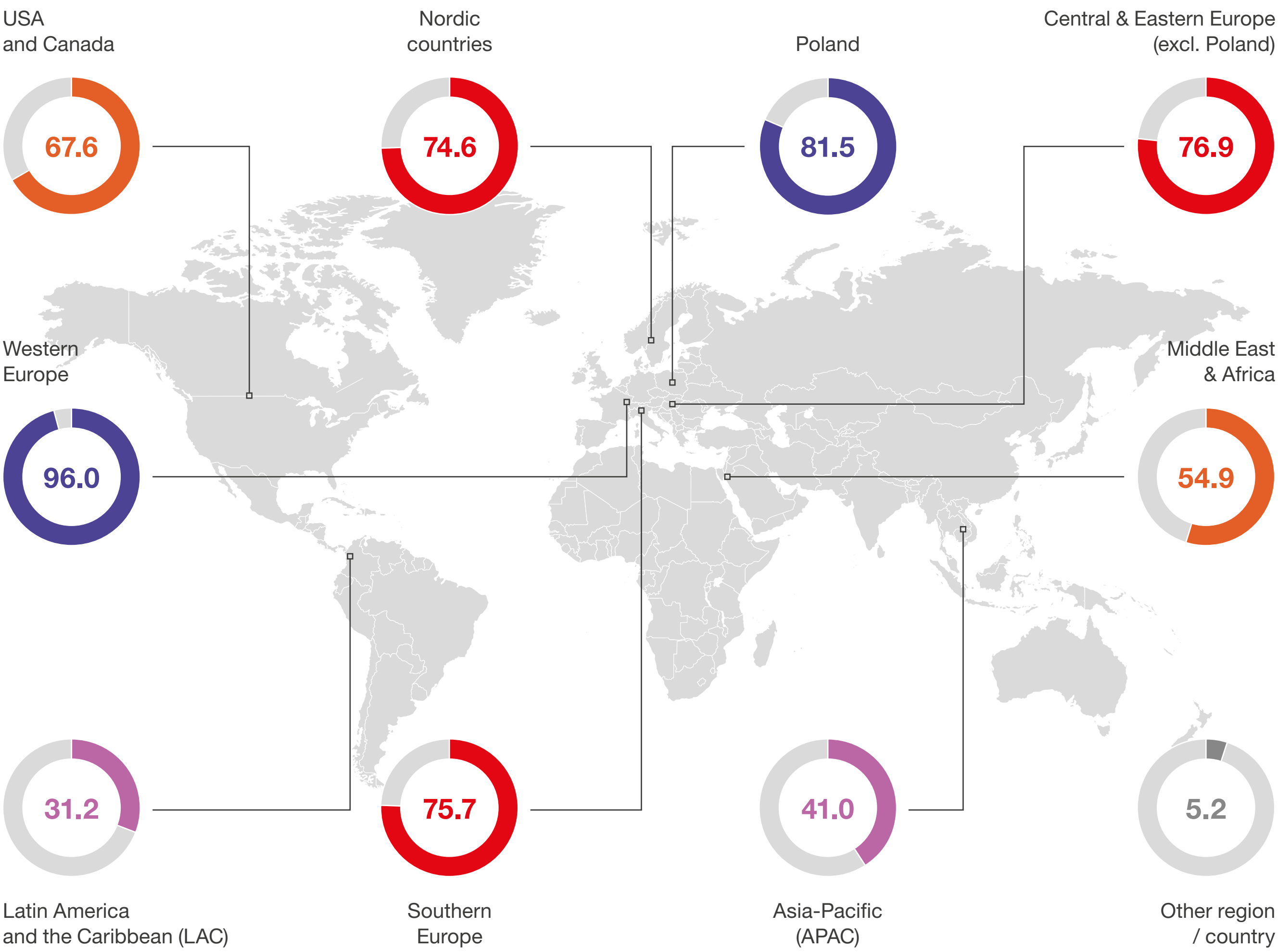
Geographic range of services

The geographical reach of services delivered from Poland underlines the country's strong integration with **European markets** and expanding global footprint. Western Europe is the top destination, served by 96% of respondents, followed by Poland (81.5%) and Central and Eastern Europe (76.9%). Southern Europe (75.7%) and Nordic countries (74.6%) were also prominently featured.

Beyond Europe, **North America** is the leading non-European market, with **67.6%** of centers serving the **U.S. and Canada.** Other regions include the **Middle East and Africa (54.9%), Asia-Pacific (41%),** and **Latin America and the Caribbean (31.2%),** while **other regions** accounted for just **5.2%**

Germany was the most significant recipient of services from Poland business service centers, with 76.3% of respondents citing it as a key market. **The UK** followed with 51.5%, stressing the strong economic ties between the two countries. **France** (47.3%) and the **US** (42.0%) also ranked highly, reflecting Poland's role as a crucial service hub for Western European and North American businesses. Poland itself was an important market (30.2%) due to the internal demand for business services. Spain (23.7%), the Netherlands (20.7%), Italy (20.7%), Switzerland (16.6%), and Sweden (16.0%) rounded off the top ten, showing a strong concentration of services provided to European markets. There was a notable but smaller

FIGURE 1.10 | **The geographical range of services provided from Poland** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=173).

presence in non-European regions, including Canada (5.9%), India (3.0%), Japan (2.4%), and Brazil (1.2%).

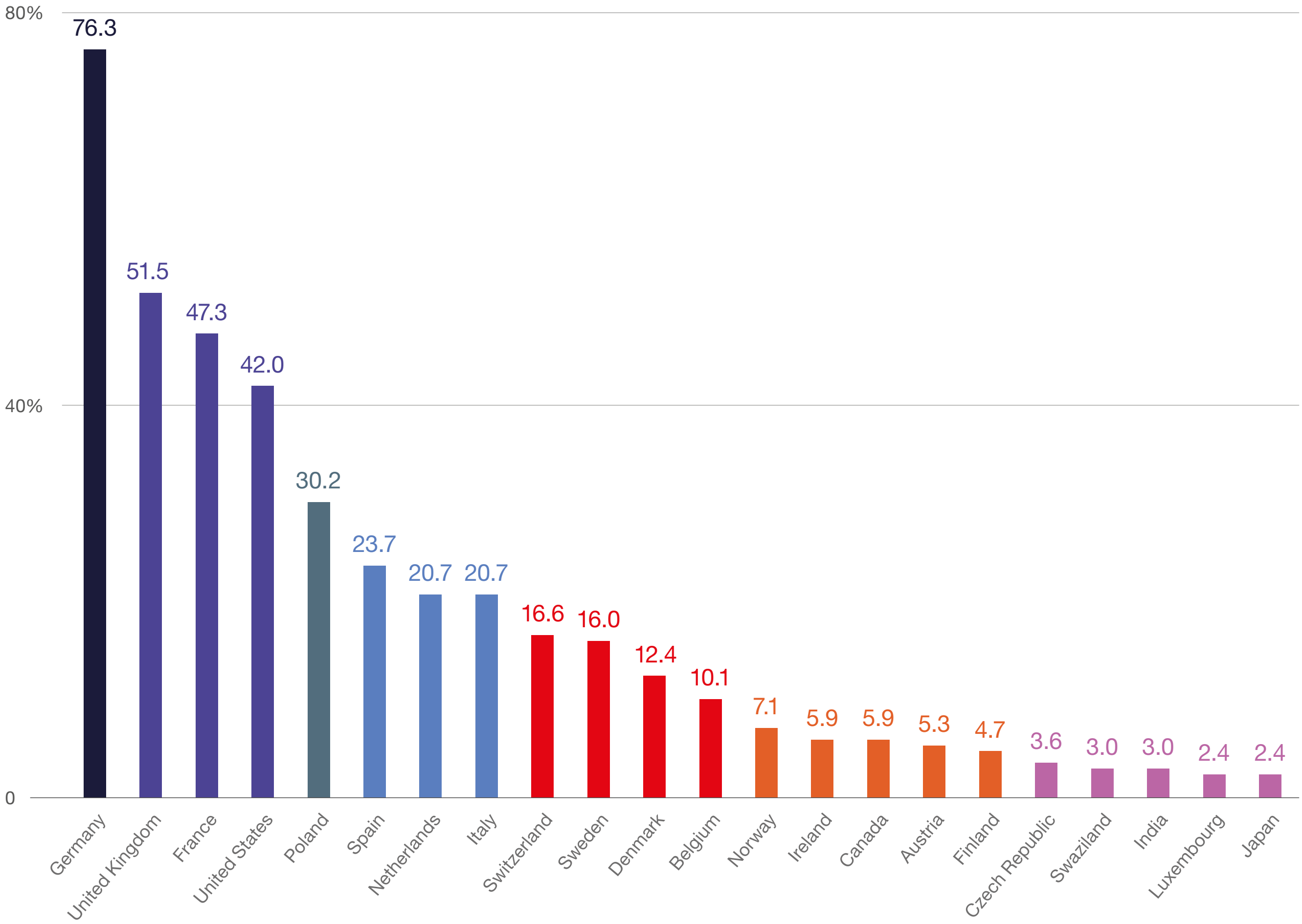
From a time zone perspective, **Poland's geographical distribution of services aligns well with the operational logic of the EMEA (Europe, Middle East, and Africa) region. Still, we can service clients in AMER (Americas) and APAC (Asia-Pacific), which shows our clear locational advantage.**

The dominant focus on Western Europe (96%), Southern Europe (75.7%), and Central and Eastern Europe (76.9%) makes strategic sense, as Poland operates in the Central European Time (CET) zone, which allows for seamless collaboration with key European markets. The strong presence in the Middle East and Africa (54.9%) is also logical, as many Middle Eastern financial and business hubs operate within one to two hours of Poland's time zone, facilitating real-time collaboration.

The provision to North America (67.6%) introduces moderate time-zone challenges, especially for the western regions of the United States and Canada, where there can be a time gap of 6-9 hours. This suggests that centers operate extended shifts or rely on asynchronous workflows to support clients in AMER markets effectively.

The lower share of services provided to the APAC region (41.0%) and Latin America (31.2%) is a natural reflection of smaller time zone alignment. With APAC being ahead by 5-10 hours and Latin America/AMER trailing by 5-7 hours, adjustments to work organization are required.

FIGURE 1.11 **The most important countries for which center(s) provide services from Poland** (%)

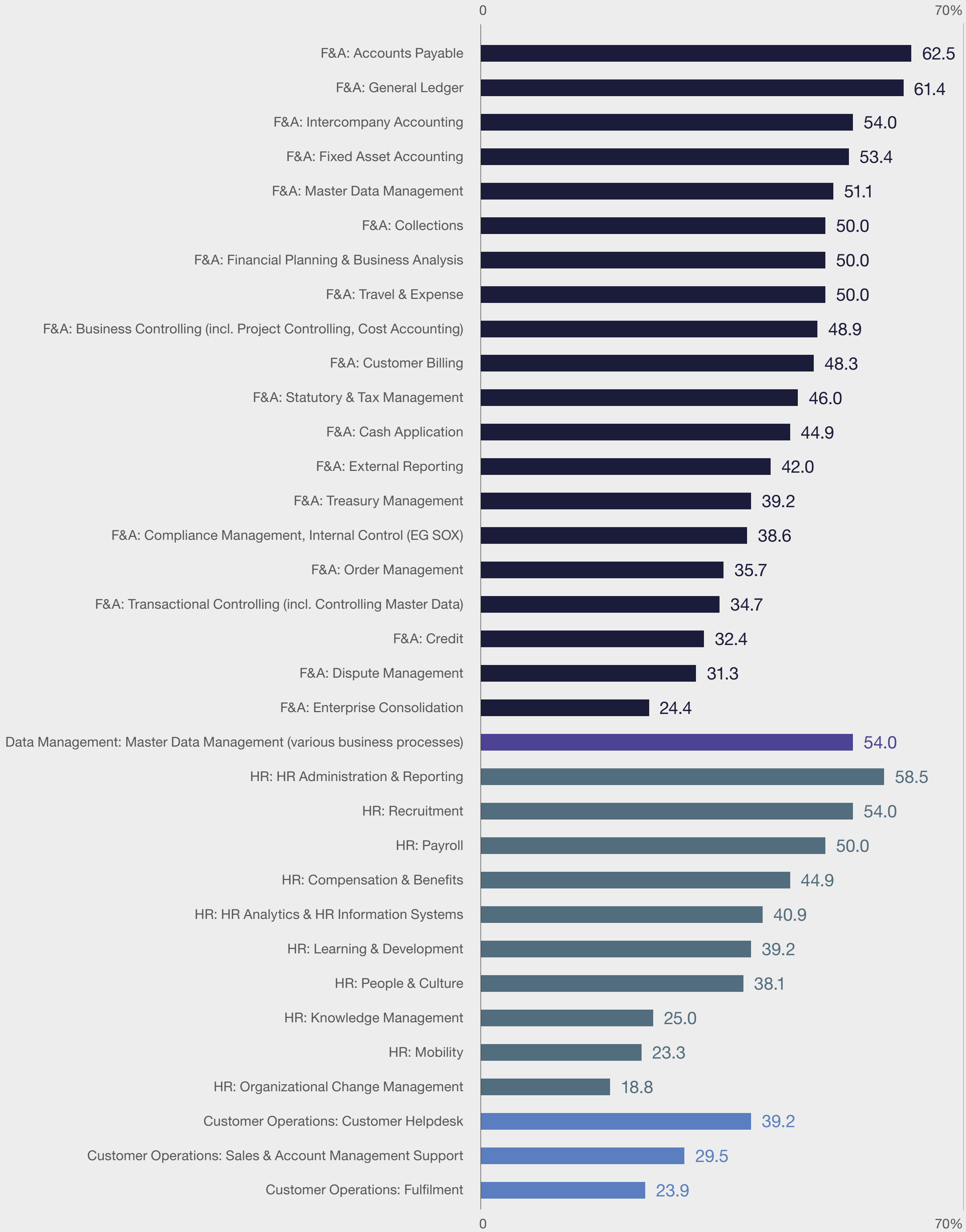


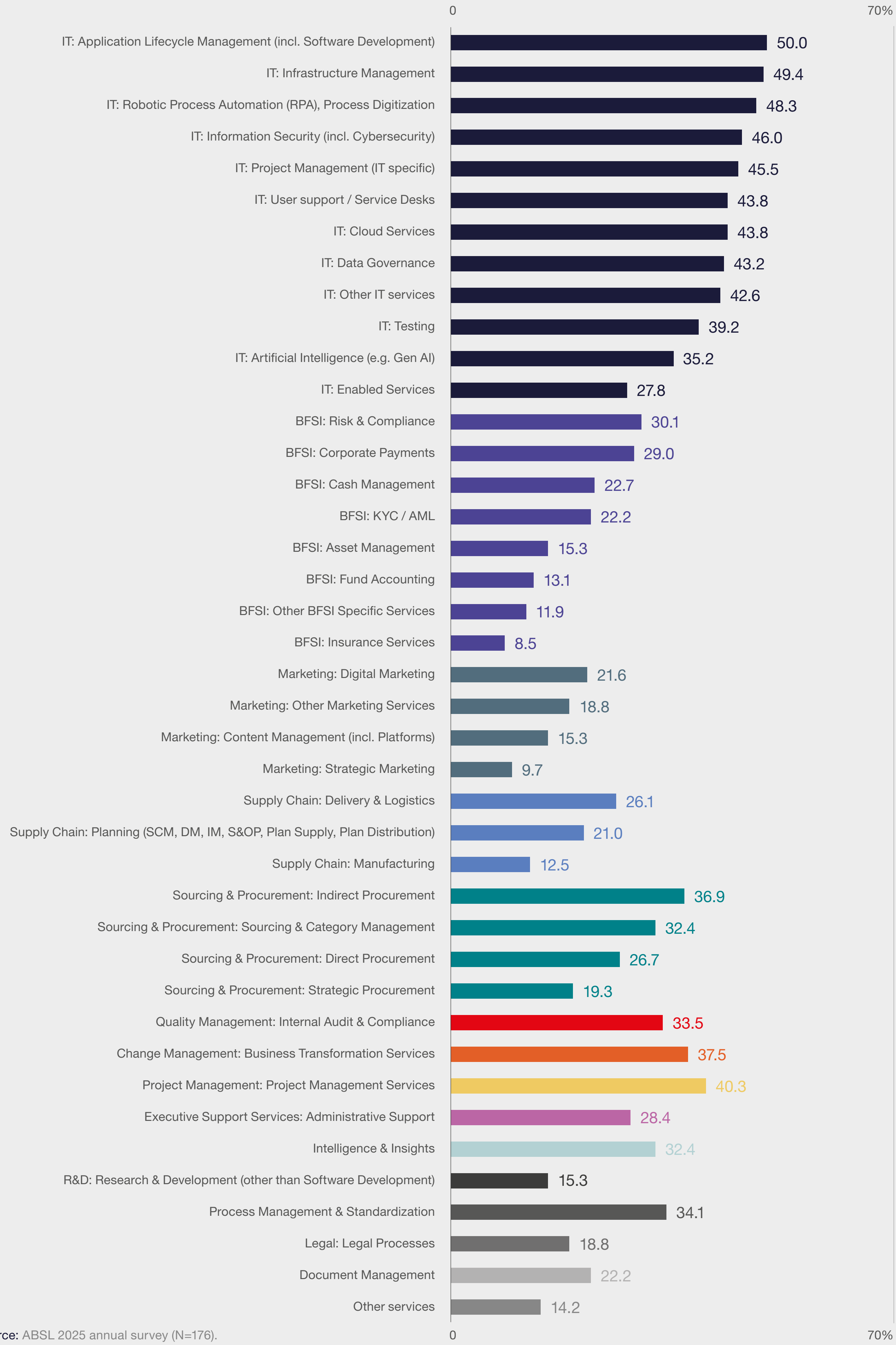
Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=169).

Categories of processes supported

Poland's business services centers deliver a wide array of functions, confirming its role as a global operations hub. Core areas include Finance & Accounting (e.g., AP, GL, FP&A, tax), Human Resources (e.g., payroll, recruitment, HR analytics), and IT services (e.g., cybersecurity, RPA, AI, cloud). Centers also manage customer operations, marketing, as well as risk and compliance. The BFSI sector is supported through functions such as KYC/AML, corporate payments, and asset management. Additional capabilities include supply chain, procurement, quality and change management, R&D, legal, project management, and business intelligence. Specialized services span sectors such as engineering, healthcare, real estate, and network services. This range of services reflects Poland's growing strength in knowledge-intensive processes and its strategic value in the global business services landscape.

FIGURE 1.12 | **Service functions provided by centers based in Poland** (%)





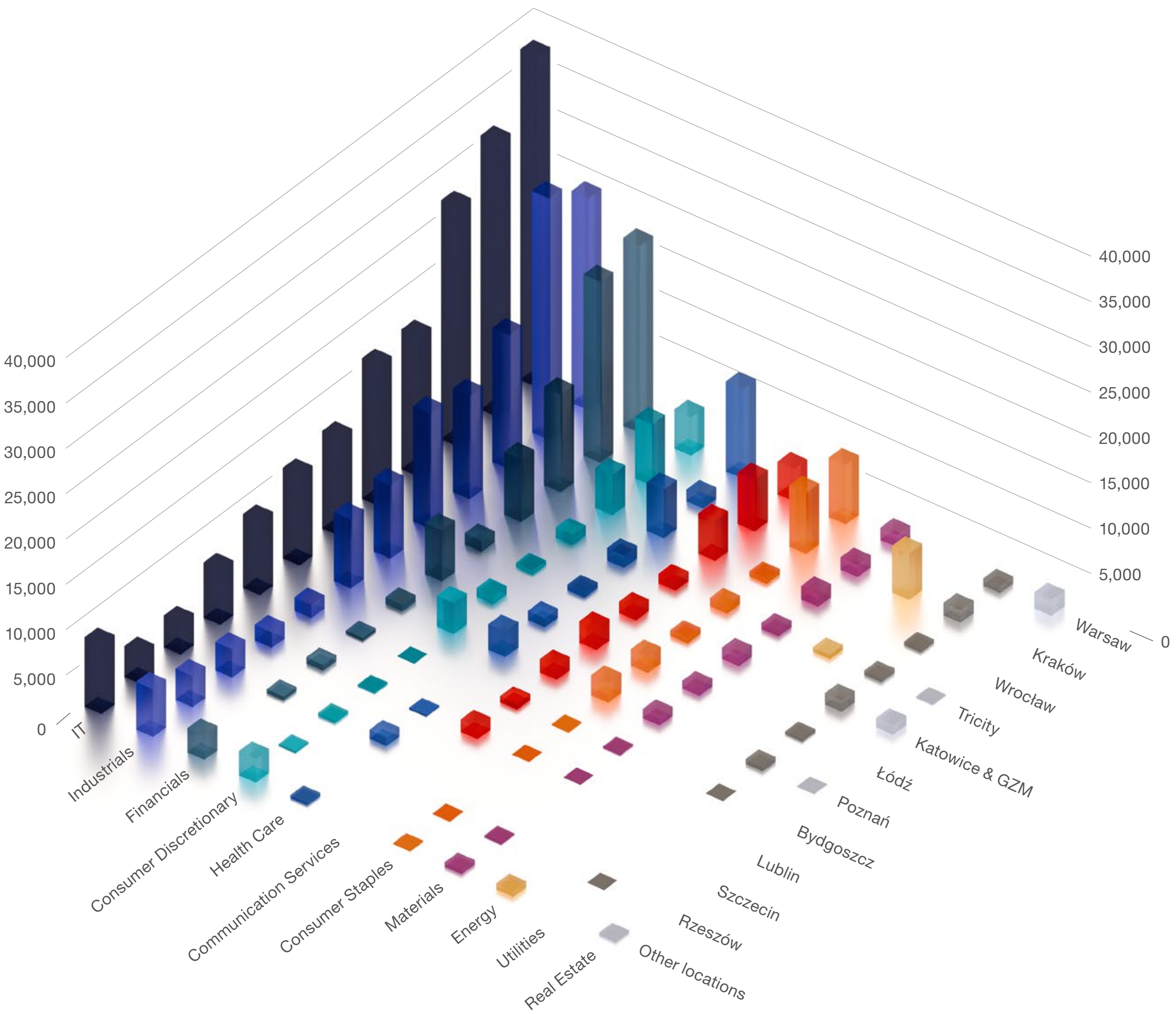
Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=176).

Vertical deep dive

What increasingly matters in our sector is the ability of our centers to serve specific industries and sectors. The chart below illustrates a clear vertical specialization. The IT sector dominates across all major cities – particularly Warsaw, Kraków, and Wrocław – indicating Poland's role as a regional digital hub. These locations support tens of thousands of employees in IT-focused centers, underlining their maturity and attractiveness for software development, infrastructure services, and advanced automation. Alongside IT, the Financial (BFSI) and industrial sectors show strong employment numbers in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities, demonstrating the sector's alignment with Poland's traditional economic strengths as well as the continued demand for finance, compliance, procurement, and engineering services in a nearshore setup.

There is also a visible diversification toward other verticals, such as Healthcare, Energy, and Consumer sectors, though on a smaller scale. These areas are gaining traction, particularly in Tricity and Katowice & GZM. The vertical view highlights sector depth as well as the increasing strategic orientation of centers toward industry-specific needs, including regulatory knowledge, process specificity, and AI readiness.

FIGURE 1.13 | **Employment by the main sector served and the location of a center**



Source: ABSL business services centers database.

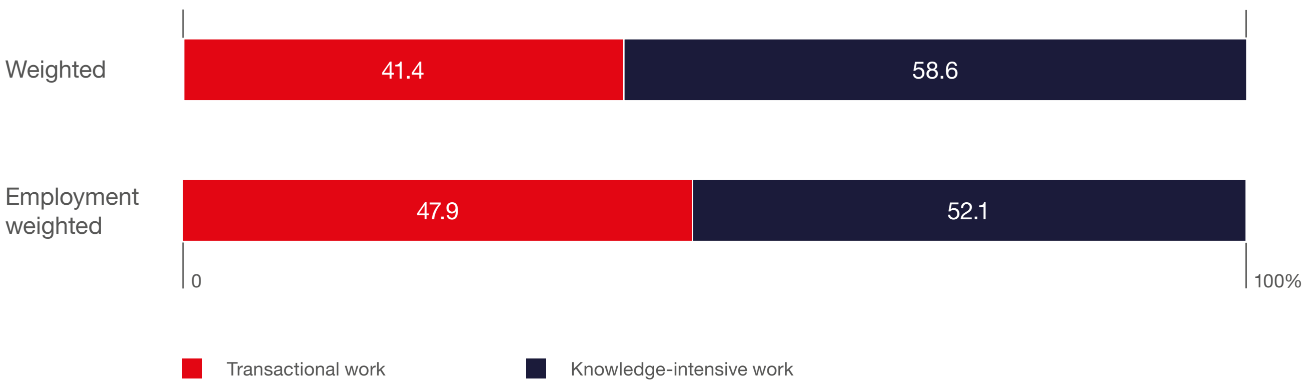
Sophistication of business processes

Poland's business services sector continues to evolve, steadily shifting toward more sophisticated operations. Respondents were asked to estimate the ratio of transactional to knowledge-intensive work. Transactional tasks require less than six months of training to reach efficiency, while knowledge-intensive tasks require six months or more.

The transition is evident when comparing Q1 2024 and Q1 2025. **Knowledge-intensive work rose from 55.5% to 58.6%** in employment-weighted results and from **50.2% to 52.1%** in unweighted figures, demonstrating a consistent upward trend.

This shift reflects growing investment in roles requiring deeper expertise and more extensive training, moving away from easily automated tasks. **The decline in transactional work signals a broader transformation of the sector toward higher-value, strategic functions – powered by Poland's talent pool of nearly 500,000 professionals.**

FIGURE 1.14 **The estimate of the transactional to knowledge-intensive work ratio in centers in Poland at the end of Q1 2025** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=176).

Back-office, mid-office, front-office functions

Process categories in business services centers align with their organizational role. Back-office functions provide administrative support; middle-office roles support complex tasks such as analytics and governance; and front-office positions are client-facing, often linked to HQ functions.

From 2021 to 2025, the **distribution of work across these categories in Poland** has shifted markedly. **Back-office work declined by 10.2 percentage points,** from 52.9% to 42.7%. In contrast, **middle-office work grew by 8.1 points,** reaching **54.2% in 2025,** showing a clear and sustained transition toward more complex and knowledge-intensive tasks. **Though still limited, front-office work rose from 1.0% to 3.0%,** suggesting a gradual emergence of customer-facing and advisory roles. This evolution signals a broader sectoral shift from transactional support to higher-value, strategic functions – reflecting the growing maturity and capabilities of Poland's business services sector.

TABLE 1.1 **Process categories supported by business services centers in Poland** (industry mean)

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	Change between 2021-25
Back-office	42.7	43.7	51.4	51.7	52.9	-10.2
Middle-office	54.2	52.9	47.6	47.2	46.1	8.1
Front-office	3.0	3.4	1.0	1.1	1.0	2.0

Source: ABSL's analysis based on the results of the ABSL annual surveys in 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025. Please be aware of the change in the classification of business processes in 2024. Prior values cannot be directly compared.

Sector's foreign trade

Poland's business services sector is a key driver of the country's modern export capacity. The sector is both deeply integrated into global value chains and highly internationalized and export-oriented. The primary driver of exports is the sector's superior productivity. Foreign ownership also plays a role, providing experience in servicing international clients. Most centers operate as "superstar firms", marked by their outsized contribution to total exports.

Melitz[1] (2003) shows that productivity largely determines a firm's ability to enter export markets – more productive firms self-select into exporting. Exporting in itself does not necessarily increase productivity (i.e., there is limited evidence for "learning by exporting"). Mayer & Ottaviano[2] (2008) further show that exporters differ significantly from non-exporters: they are larger, more productive, pay higher salaries, use more capital, employ more skilled workers, and generate higher value-added revenue. These "happy few" dominate export volumes with a highly skewed distribution and thus are significantly concentrated in a small number of firms.

Using the WTO's TiSMoS (Trade in Services data by Mode of Supply) database, WTO data on the value of commercial trade in services, and quarterly information from the balance of payments of the National Bank of Poland, we have estimated the value of exports and imports of business services in Poland.

It required assigning sector activity classifications from NACE rev. 2 to the EBOPS classification used in the TiSMoS database. The definition of KIBS needs to be clarified. We used the Schabel and Zenker approach (2013) to maintain methodological coherence with other studies using NACE rev. 2 classifications. We mapped the areas of activities indicated by the authors to the corresponding groups in the EBOPS classification.

We obtained data for 2018-2024 using the Balance of Payments from the National Bank of Poland. The switchover to NBP data from WTO data increased estimates for both imports and exports of KIBS from 2018 to 2019. Estimates for KIBS were secondly adjusted to fit our sector's contribution.

As of the end of 2024, ABSL BI estimates showed that the overall value of sector imports equaled USD 25.2 billion, with exports standing at USD 42.3 billion. Exports increased by 14.7% (YoY) and imports by 15.0% (22.9% and 25.2% in 2023, respectively). The surplus in trade surpassed 17.0 USD billion (15.2 billion in 2023). The sector has generated a clear surplus since 2008 and continues to grow constantly; it exceeded the USD 10.0 billion surplus threshold for the first time in 2021.

Despite global economic stagnation in 2023 and only a modest recovery in 2024, the WTO projects that 2025 global trade volumes will grow by 3.3% in 2024 and 3.4% in 2025, versus growth in global services trade at 8.3% and 10%, respectively.

[1] Melitz, M. J. (2003). The impact of trade on intra-industry reallocations and aggregate industry productivity. Econometrica, 71(6), 1695-1725.
[2] Mayer, T., & Ottaviano, G. I. (2008). The happy few: the internationalization of European firms: new facts based on firm-level evidence. Intereconomics, 43(3), 135-148.

Our sector **in Poland continues to demonstrate strong performance, with export growth rates clearly exceeding global means for trade volume in general and commercial services specifically.**

This underscores Poland's entrenched **comparative advantage in high-value services.** Brodzicki[3] (2024) notes that Europe – especially CEE – has become a global hub for the sectors, benefiting from nearshoring and deeper GVC integration. Poland is at the forefront of this trend, with high productivity and export orientation, making the sector a key engine of service export growth.

Our sector's impressive resilience is notable amid ongoing geopolitical uncertainty in the region due to the third year of the full-scale war in Ukraine. In this challenging environment, our sector is not only maintaining but expanding its export potential, underscoring its competitive edge and improving productivity, resilience, and structural robustness.

According to ABSL BI estimates, **the business services centers analyzed in this report account for at least 70% of Poland's total KIBS exports,** validated against EUROSTAT's export data by firm size.

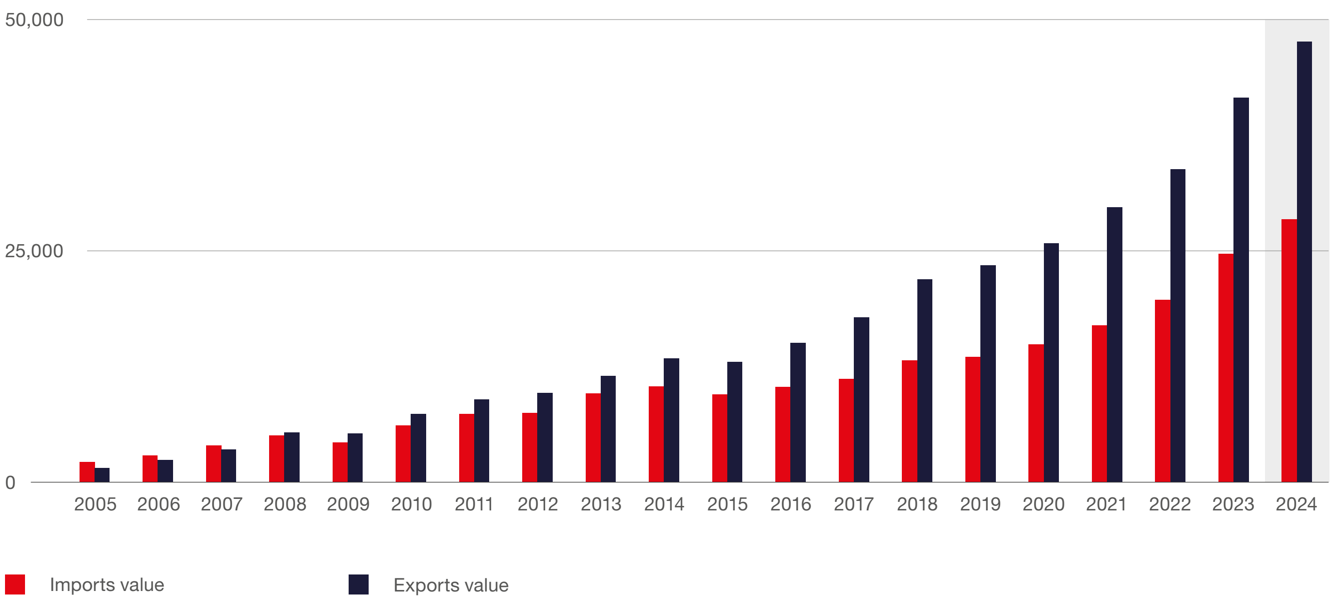
In 2005, the year after Poland's EU accession, the sector provided 7.6% of the value of commercial services exports from Poland (29.5% in 2019). In 2020, marked by COVID-19, it went up to 34.4% before dropping to 31.5% in 2022. **In 2023, a very good year for the sector, its share increased to 33.9%, reaching an impressive 35.6% in 2024. According to our conservative estimates, our centers are responsible for 24.9% of exports of commercial services from Poland in total!**

Poland's overall exports of commercial services from 2005 to 2024 had a CAGR of 10.4%. **Over the same period, exports of business services had a CAGR of 19.7%, nearly double the overall amount for commercial services.**

According to the WTO-OECD Balanced Trade in Services (BaTIS) dataset, **five countries played a crucial role in business services exports from Poland: Germany, the US, the UK, the Netherlands, and Switzerland** – each exceeding the USD two billion benchmark. In order of significance, was Germany close to USD five billion and the US above USD four billion with the UK and Switzerland above USD three billion. These countries were followed by Ireland and France, which both exceeded USD one billion in 2023.

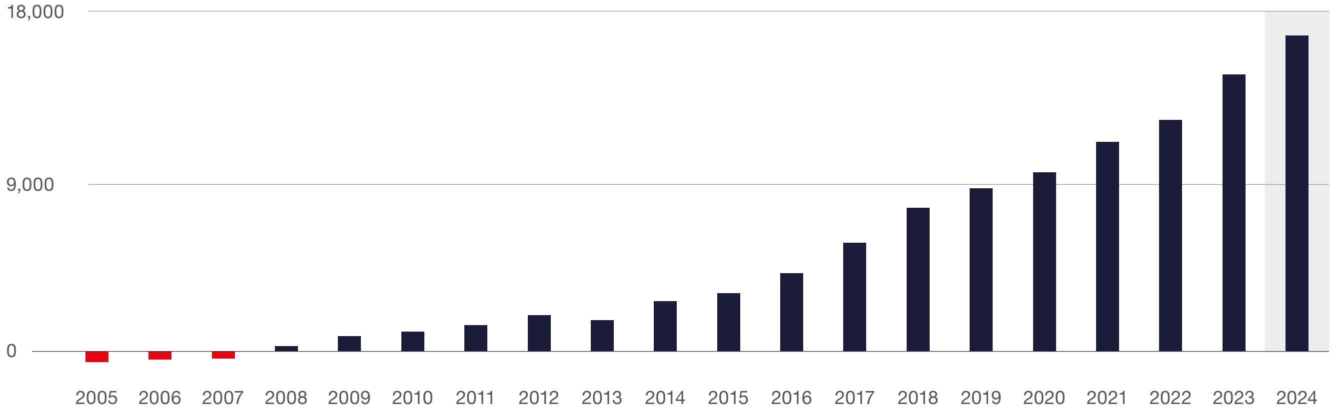
[3] Brodzicki, T. (2024). Global knowledge-intensive business services trade flows: The revealed competitive position of Europe and Central and Eastern Europe. Quaestiones Geographicae, 43(4), 151–167.

FIGURE 1.15 **The value of Poland's exports and imports of knowledge-intensive business services by the sector** (USD million)



Source: ABSL estimates based on WTO TiSMoS database & NBP Balance of payments data.

FIGURE 1.16 | **Poland's foreign trade balance in knowledge-intensive business services for the sector** (USD million)



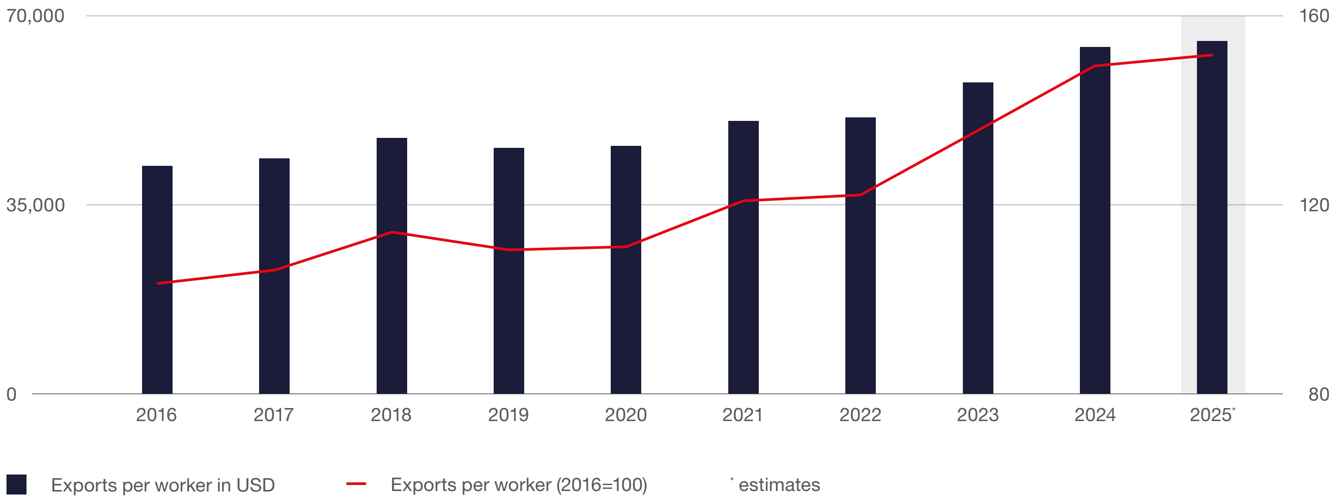
Source: ABSL estimates based on WTO TiSMoS database & NBP balance of payments data.

Given productivity's central role in driving export potential, we present updated statistics on **mean export per worker** – used by ABSL as a proxy for sector's productivity – for the third consecutive year.

Please note that minor revisions in this year's results from historical data adjustments made by the ABSL BI team in Q1 2025. **In Q1 2023,** mean exports per worker in our centers exceeded **USD 51,200,** up **21.1%** since 2016. By the **end of 2024,** this figure had risen to **USD 64,300,** marking a **52.3%** increase since 2016. By the end of 2025, we estimate it will have reached USD 65,400, a **54.9%** rise over 2016's levels.This consistent upward trend underscores the sector's rising **productivity, efficiency,** and **value-creation capacity.** The substantial productivity growth since 2016 reflects not only enhanced operational performance but also sustained **workforce upskilling** and **sector's sophistication.**

These gains further reinforce Poland's position as a **competitive, innovation-led nearshoring hub** in Europe. The sector's export performance, well above global service trade growth rates, demonstrates successful alignment with global trends in **digitalization, servitization of manufacturing,** and deeper **integration into global value chains.**

FIGURE 1.17 | **Exports per worker in the sector** (2016-2025)



Source: ABSL estimates are based on the NBP balance of payments data and the ABSL dataset on centers.

From employment scale to value leadership

In recent years, the narrative around Poland's business services sector has been dominated by its scale: nearly 489,000 jobs in over 2,000 centers and a 5.7% share of GDP. However, our new analysis based on data from Eurostat provides compelling evidence that the sector's true contribution lies not just in headcount but in **value creation.** When focusing on our sector's centers, the evidence points to an increasingly mature and high-productivity segment of the Polish economy.

What emerges is a clear hierarchy of productivity. **Our centers operate well above the national average, with the productivity of employees in the centers exceeding the mean productivity per worker by more than 20%.** While exports per worker in center-based exports still exceed GVA per worker, the gap is narrowing, which indicates that more of the value is being retained locally.

The value potential and export potential of Polish business services are heavily concentrated in our sector centers.

Stronger growth in value than in headcount

Between 2021 and 2023, net turnover in these enterprises, according to ABSL BI estimates and based on Eurostat's data, grew from USD 41.8 billion to USD 57.7 billion – a 38% increase. More importantly, gross value added (GVA) rose from USD 17.8 billion to USD 25.9 billion, or 46%, outpacing both turnover and employment growth (which increased by 22%, from 365,000 to 447,000 workers).

This implies a sector that is becoming more productive, more knowledge-driven, and more margin-rich even as it scales up. While headcount expansion was significant, the last two years have been defined by the quality of growth – not just quantity.

Strategic Implication

The results confirm that business service centers in Poland are no longer peripheral cost engines; **they are core productivity hubs.** Their GVA per employee aligns with or exceeds key international benchmarks. Their structure, dominated by larger, professionally managed firms, with a large proportion of foreign-owned firms, otherwise known as "happy few" or "superstar" firms, makes them scalable and resilient. Furthermore, their role is rapidly shifting from transactional support to strategic, high-value co-creation.

This value transformation positions Poland not merely as a location for outsourced labor but as a critical European node in the global knowledge economy.

Methodological Note

ABSL BI estimate of net revenue and GVA used Eurostat's Structural Business Statistics (dataset: *Enterprise statistics by size class and NACE Rev. 2 activity*) covering 2021–2023, focusing on NACE M and J activities relevant to our sector's definition. Only enterprises with 20+ employees were considered, consistent with ABSL's center-based sector's definition – 25+, and thus adjusted accordingly. GVA and turnover figures were converted from EUR to USD using end-of-year exchange rates from the National Bank of Poland. Worker numbers in centers reflect the values as reported by ABSL's main centers database. Export numbers are consistent with the preceding section and its methodology with data based on NBP BoP data. GDP per worker was calculated using Poland's nominal GDP divided by the economically active population (Eurostat 2024 data) and converted to USD.

TABLE 1.2 **Comparative productivity benchmarking** (2023)

Indicator	**Value** (USD per FTE)	**Source & Definition**
GVA per worker (20+)	**USD 57,900**	Eurostat SBS, KIBS firms, 20+ employees adjusted to the center's cohort
Exports per worker (centers)	**USD 57,700**	ABSL estimates average exports per worker in our sector centers
Net revenue per worker	**USD 129,000**	Eurostat SBS, turnover per FTE, 20+ KIBS enterprises adjusted to the center's cohort
GDP per worker (Poland)	**USD 48,300**	Eurostat GDP and labor market statistics

Source: ABSL BI estimates are based on the Eurostat Structural Business Statistics (SBS) database, ABSL center database NBP FX, and BoP data. Eurostat data is currently available for the period 2021-2023 and is internationally comparable.

Employment in the sector

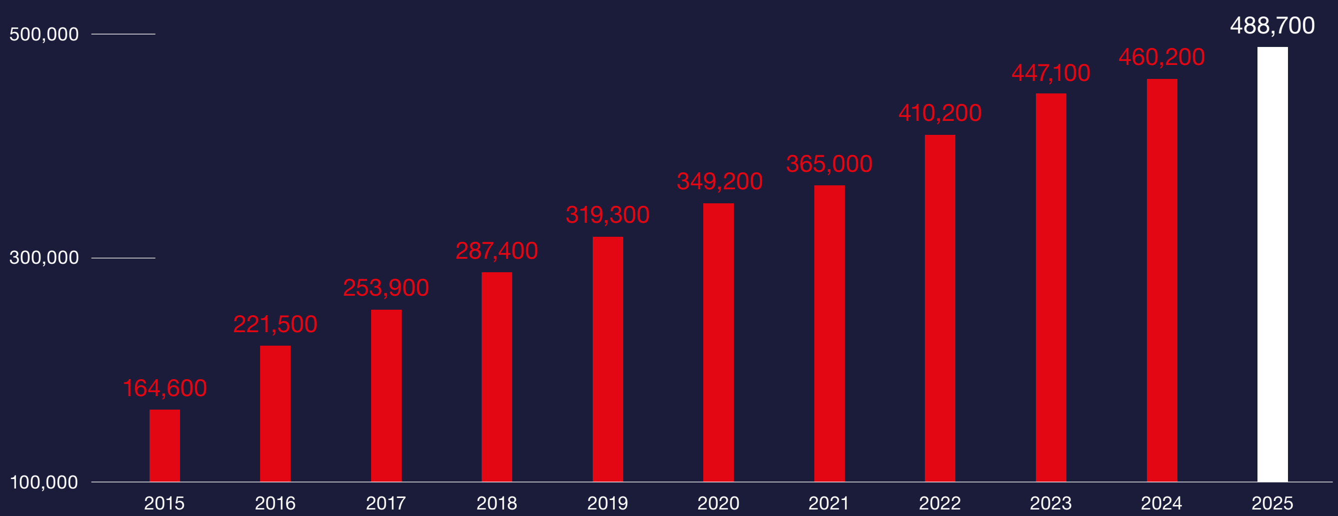
As of **Q1 2025,** Poland's business services centers employ **488,700 people,** reflecting a YoY **increase of 28,500 jobs (6.2%),** with **67.3%** of this growth concentrated in **Warsaw, Kraków, and Wrocław.** Over the 2020-2025 period, the sector's **CAGR for employment** reached **6.9%,** with the highest growth in **Warsaw (10.8%), Poznań (9.9%),** and **Tricity (6.8%).**

The daily rate of job creation rose to approximately 78 new jobs per day, up from the previous year, although the overall YoY growth rate is gradually slowing, reflecting a maturing industry.

Employment in Q1 2025 **exceeded the optimistic scenario** estimates (477,100) projected in last year's ABSL report. Meanwhile, total employment in Poland's enterprise sector **declined by 0.9%** in 2024, making the 6.2% growth in the business services sector significant. Consequently, the **sector's share in total enterprise employment increased to 7.6%,** up from 7.0% in 2024.

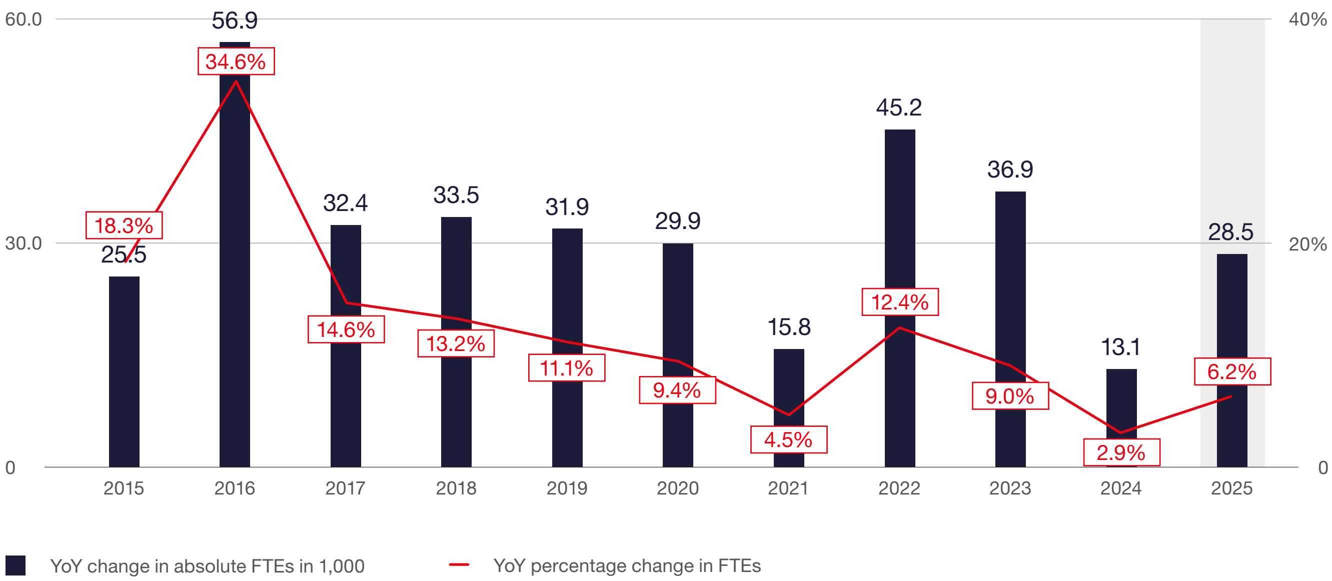
Of the 28,500 new jobs, **5,356** were created by **61 new centers** launched in 2024 and Q1 2025, while the remainder came from **organic growth** in existing centers.

FIGURE 1.18 **Employment in centers in Poland** (2015-2025)



Source: ABSL business services centers database. Headcount information has been rounded to the nearest hundred.

FIGURE 1.19 | **Employment changes in centers in Poland** (2015-2025)



Source: ABSL business services centers database. Headcount information has been rounded up/down to the nearest one hundred.

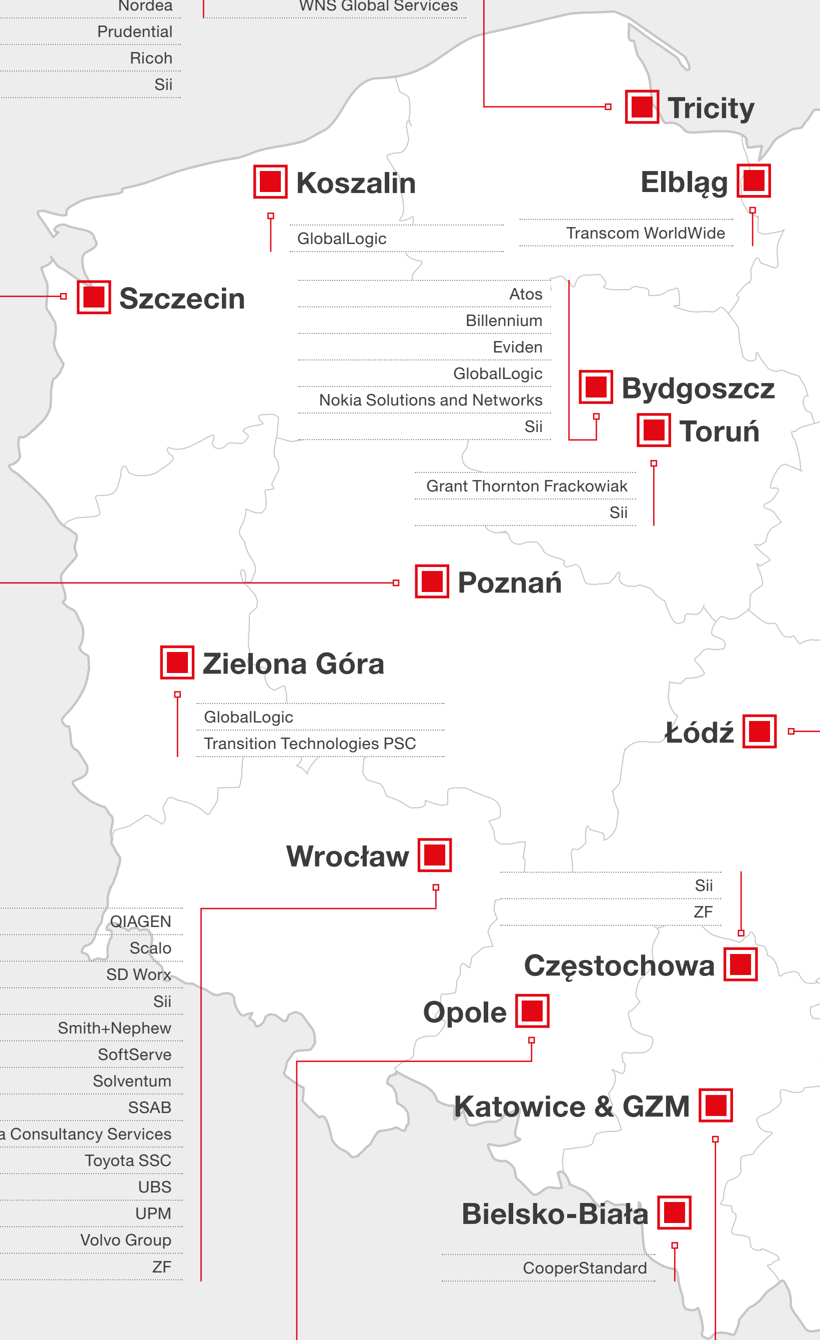
TABLE 1.3 | **Employment in the sector and the number of centers by country of origin** (2025)

Country (or region) of origin	Employment	Share in overall employment (%)	No. of centers	Share in the number of centers (%)
United States	139,600	28.6	432	20.8
Poland	76,500	15.7	597	28.7
United Kingdom	53,500	10.9	167	8.0
France	49,900	10.2	141	6.8
Nordic countries*	45,000	9.2	189	9.1
Germany	35,200	7.2	172	8.3
Asian countries**	24,900	5.1	101	4.9
Switzerland	18,000	3.7	57	2.7
Netherlands	17,100	3.5	62	3.0
Ireland	10,400	2.1	32	1.5
Other European***	4,400	0.9	39	1.9
Ukraine	2,600	0.5	22	1.1
Belgium	2,500	0.5	17	0.8
Spain	2,300	0.5	9	0.4
Canada	1,900	0.4	13	0.6
Italy	1,600	0.3	9	0.4
Luxembourg	1,500	0.3	7	0.3
Austria	1,100	0.2	5	0.2
Other non-European****	900	0.2	10	0.5
Overall	**488,700**	**100**	**2,081**	**100**

* Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Greenland, Norway, and Sweden.
** Asian countries: China, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Japan, Qatar, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates.
*** Other European: Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, and Slovenia.
**** Other non-European: Australia, Brazil, Mexico, and South Africa.

Source: ABSL business services centers database.

FIGURE 1.20 **Selected BPO, SSC / GBS, IT, and R&D business services centers in Poland**



Tricity

- Accenture Operations
- Amazon
- AMS
- Aras Software
- Arla Foods
- Arrow Electronics
- Atos
- Boeing
- Capgemini
- Cisco
- Connectis
- DNV
- EPAM Systems
- ERGO
- Eviden
- GlobalLogic
- Hempel Paints
- Intel
- ISS A/S
- Jit Team
- Kemira
- KMD
- LEO Pharma
- LSEG
- Lufthansa
- Metsä Group
- Nordea
- Prudential
- Ricoh
- Sii
- SoftServe
- State Street
- Swarovski
- Tata Consultancy Services
- Transcom WorldWide
- Wipro
- WNS Global Services

Koszalin

- GlobalLogic

Elbląg

- Transcom WorldWide

Szczecin

- Concentrix
- GlobalLogic
- Metro GSC
- Sii

Bydgoszcz

- Atos
- Billennium
- Eviden
- GlobalLogic
- Nokia Solutions and Networks
- Sii

Toruń

- Grant Thornton Frackowiak
- Sii

Poznań

- ADM
- B. Braun
- Beiersdorf
- Capgemini
- Carl Zeiss Shared Services
- Computacenter
- Conectys
- DFDS
- Enea Centrum
- EPAM Systems
- Exide
- FIS Global
- Franklin Templeton Investments
- Fresenius Kabi
- Grant Thornton Frackowiak
- GSK Services
- Haleon
- IKEA
- John Deere
- LyondellBasell
- Mars
- McKinsey & Company
- Miele Global Services
- Next Technology at "FlexDev"
- Phoenix Contact Wielkopolska
- PSI
- Roche Informatics
- Rockwool
- SD Worx
- Sii
- SKF
- Tata Consultancy Services
- Transcom WorldWide
- Transition Technologies PSC
- Żabka
- Wipro

Zielona Góra

- GlobalLogic
- Transition Technologies PSC

Łódź

Wrocław

- 3M Service Center
- airSlate
- AmRest
- Atos
- Becton Dickinson
- Beko
- Boehringer Ingelheim
- Capgemini
- DeLaval
- Deviniti
- DXC Technology
- EPAM Systems
- Eviden
- EY
- FIS Global
- Fresenius MEdical Care
- Gates
- GlobalLogic
- Grant Thornton Frackowiak
- HP INC
- HPE GBC
- IBM
- Infor
- Infosys
- LAPP Business Services
- MAHLE
- Merck
- NatWest
- Nokia Solutions and Networks
- OLYMPUS
- Parker Hannifin
- PPG Global Business Services
- QIAGEN
- Scalo
- SD Worx
- Sii
- Smith+Nephew
- SoftServe
- Solventum
- SSAB
- Tata Consultancy Services
- Toyota SSC
- UBS
- UPM
- Volvo Group
- ZF

Częstochowa

- Sii
- ZF

Opole

- Capgemini
- ista Customer Service
- PwC
- Vialto Partners

Katowice & GZM

- Aebi Schmidt
- Capgemini
- Concentrix
- Danone
- Dunlop Conveyor Belting
- EPAM Systems
- GlobalLogic
- Grant Thornton Frackowiak
- HAVI
- Henry Meds
- Honeywell
- ING Hubs
- ista Customer Service
- Keywords Studios
- Koch Business Solutions
- Lipton
- PwC
- Rockwell Automation
- Scalo
- SD Worx
- Sii
- SoftServe
- Strada
- TMF
- TUV Rheinland
- Unilever
- Vialto Partners

Bielsko-Biała

- CooperStandard

Warsaw

- Accenture Operations
- AkzoNobel
- Alcon
- Amazon
- Amway
- Aras Software
- Atos
- AWARESON
- BAT
- Baxter Business Services
- Billennium
- BNP Paribas
- Boeing
- Boston Scientific
- Bruker
- Capgemini
- CBRE
- Circle K
- Cisco
- Citibank Europe
- Colgate-Palmolive Services
- Concentrix
- Connectis
- Danone
- Danske Bank
- Dentons
- Deviniti
- DLA Piper
- DSV
- DXC Technology
- Elanco Solution Center
- EPAM Systems
- Equatex
- ERGO
- Eviden
- EY
- FIS Global
- Franklin Templeton Investments
- Goldman Sachs
- Google
- Grant Thornton Frackowiak
- GSK Services
- Haleon
- HP INC
- IBM
- Infosys
- ING Hubs
- iSourceTec
- Jit Team
- JPMorgan
- JTI GBS
- Keywords Studios
- KMD
- Lipton
- L'oreal
- LSEG
- Mars
- Mercer
- MMC GS
- Motorola Solutions Systems
- MSA Safety
- NatWest
- Nokia Solutions and Networks
- Nordea
- Novo Nordisk
- Orange
- Orsted
- Paragon Services
- Point72
- Procter & Gamble
- Prudential
- Roche Informatics
- Rockwool
- Scalo
- SCB
- SD Worx
- SEB
- Sii
- SIX Group
- Societe Generale
- SoftServe
- Sonova
- Tata Consultancy Services
- TMF
- UBS
- VELUX
- VFS Global
- Wipro
- Zimmer Biomet

Olsztyn

- Billennium
- Citibank Europe
- Transcom WorldWide

Białystok

- airSlate
- CERI International Sp. z o.o.
- Sii
- SoftServe
- Transcom WorldWide
- Transition Technologies PSC

- ABB BS
- Adaptive Group
- Amcor Specialty Cartons
- Atos
- Beko
- Billennium
- CERI International
- Commerzbank AG
- EPAM Systems
- Eviden
- Fujitsu Technology Solutions
- GlobalLogic
- Infosys
- Nordea
- Philips
- Sii
- Solar
- Takeda
- Transition Technologies PSC

The map presents only selected business services centers owned by companies responding to the ABSL survey in Q1 2025. If you want to enhance your visibility and contribute to the next ABSL survey, please contact research@absl.pl.

Source: ABSL business services centers database.

Kielce

- Transition Technologies PSC

Lublin

- Billennium
- Capgemini
- Concentrix
- Orange
- Sii

Rzeszów

- AmeriPol Staffing
- Boeing
- Grant Thornton Frackowiak
- Jit Team
- Safran
- Sherwin-Williams
- Sii

Kraków

- ABB BS
- Accenture Operations
- Amazon
- Amer Sports
- AMS
- Amway
- Aon
- Aras Software
- Arrow Electronics
- Atos
- BNP Paribas
- Brown Brothers Harriman
- Bystronic
- Capgemini
- Cisco
- Computacenter
- Danish Crown
- DYSON
- EPAM Systems
- Euroclear
- Eviden
- GE HealthCare
- GlobalLogic
- GPC Global Technology Center
- HAVI
- Heineken
- Hitachi Energy Services
- Hitachi Vantara
- Honeywell
- HSBC Service Delivery
- IAG
- IBM
- IG Group
- Imperial Brands
- Infogain Technologies
- Infosys
- International Paper
- Keywords Studios
- KFS
- Kimberly Clark
- Lufthansa
- Lundbeck
- Mercer
- Motorola Solutions Systems
- Nokia Solutions and Networks
- Novocure
- Orange
- PepsiCo
- PMI Service Center Europe
- Pontoon Solutions
- QVC Group
- Sappi
- Scalo
- Shell Business Operations
- Sii
- SoftServe
- State Street Bank
- StoneX
- Strada
- Sylvamo
- Tata Consultancy Services
- UBS
- Wipro
- Xceedance Consulting

TABLE 1.4

Employment and number of centers established in 2024 and Q1 2025 (by countries where headquarters are located)

Country of origin	Employment	No. of centers
United States	1,623	15
Germany	570	8
United Kingdom	495	4
Canada	390	3
Poland	355	6
Sweden	340	4
Belarus	308	4
South Korea	300	1
France	290	2
Others	685	14
Overall	**5,356**	**61**

Source: ABSL business services centers database.

TABLE 1.5

The largest investors in Poland in terms of headcount in business services centers at the end of Q1 2025

Investor	HQ location	Number of employees at centers
Capgemini	France	11,000-13,000
UBS	Switzerland	8,000-11,000
Sii	France	6,000-8,000
Nokia	Finland	6,000-8,000
Citigroup	United States	6,000-8,000
EPAM Systems	United States	6,000-8,000
Comarch	Poland	6,000-8,000
Atos	France	6,000-8,000
Nordea	Sweden	6,000-8,000
State Street	United States	6,000-8,000
Teleperformance	France	5,000-6,000
Kyndryl	United States	5,000-6,000
Shell	United Kingdom	5,000-6,000
Allegro	United Kingdom	5,000-6,000

Source: ABSL business services centers database.

Employment in the largest centers

Over the years, we have observed a growing number of centers in Poland with headcounts exceeding 1,000 FTEs. In 2025, this number stands at 90, unchanged from the previous report. These centers collectively employed 167,900 people, reflecting a YoY decrease of 1,100. They accounted for 34.4% of the sector's total employment.

Entities with foreign-owned capital were predominant among the largest centers operating in Poland. Only three of them are domestic companies. Among centers employing at least 1,000 people, 73.1% (122,700 employees) were in Tier 1 cities, while 20.2% (33,900 employees) were in Tier 2 locations. Functionally, 43.2% (72,600 employees) worked in SSC/GBS centers, and 25.3% (42,500 employees) were employed in IT centers.

There are fourteen major investors in Poland, each employing at least 5,000 people. Collectively, they account for 94,000 employees, representing 19.2% of the total workforce. Among these prominent investors is one Polish company: Comarch.

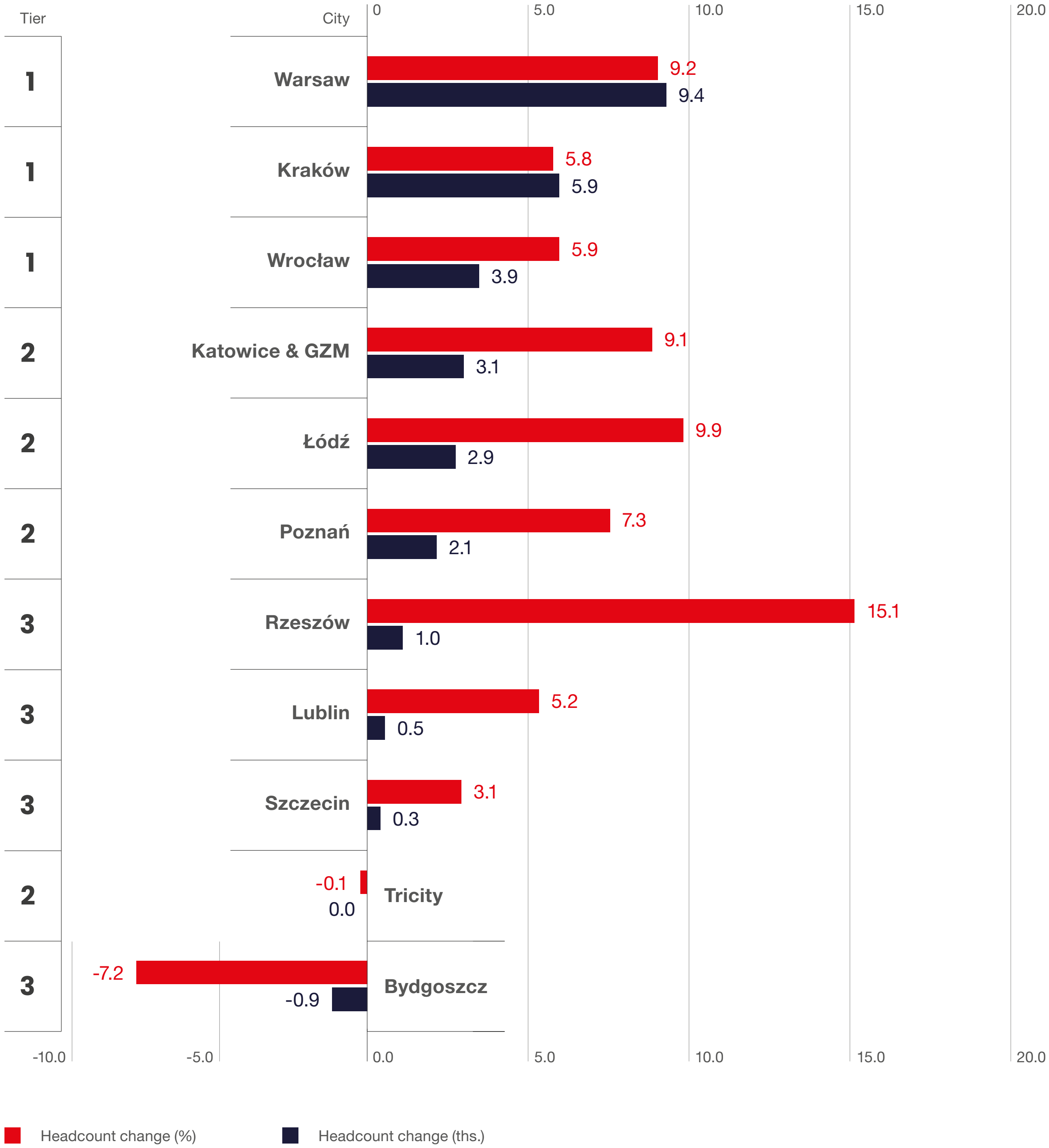
Location of business services centers

As of Q1 2025, business services centers operated in 91 locations across Poland, including 23 cities where employment exceeds 1,000. However, the sector's dynamics remain fluid, with job numbers fluctuating due to consolidation, talent shortages, and shifting business models.

The eleven largest locations accounted for 95.8% of total employment or 468,000 workers. The top three cities were Warsaw, with 111,500 employees; Kraków, with 107,800; and Wrocław, with 70,300. Last year, Kraków and Warsaw were level-pegged, but it was expected that Warsaw would become the main hub due to its elevated dynamics since the COVID-19 pandemic.

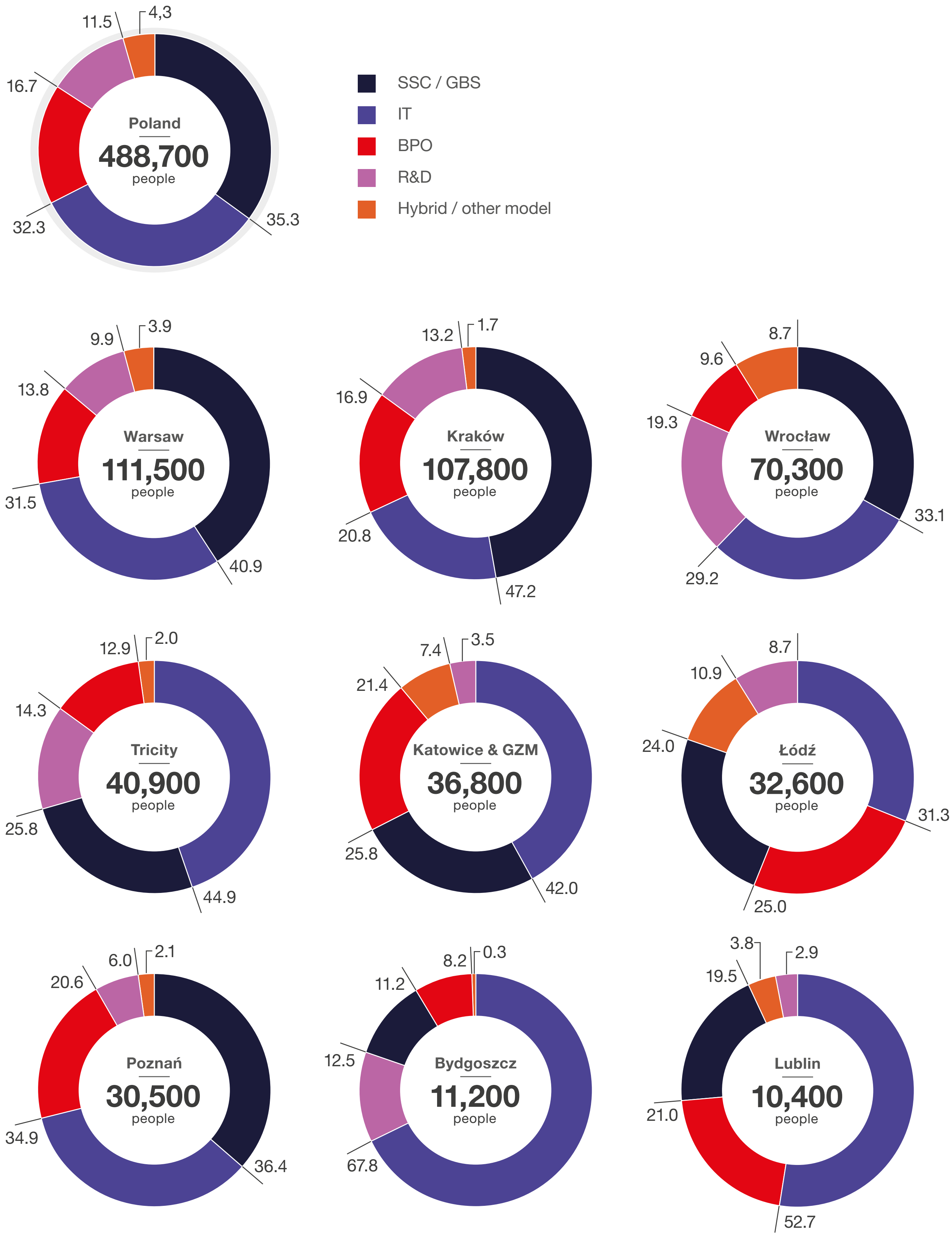
The sector grew by 6.2% YoY, with notable employment increases in Rzeszów, +15.1%, and Łódź, Warsaw, and Katowice & GZM (each at around 9-10%).

FIGURE 1.21 **Changes in employment (in Tiers 1, 2, and 3 locations) between Q1 2025 and Q1 2024**
(percentage change and absolute change in headcount)



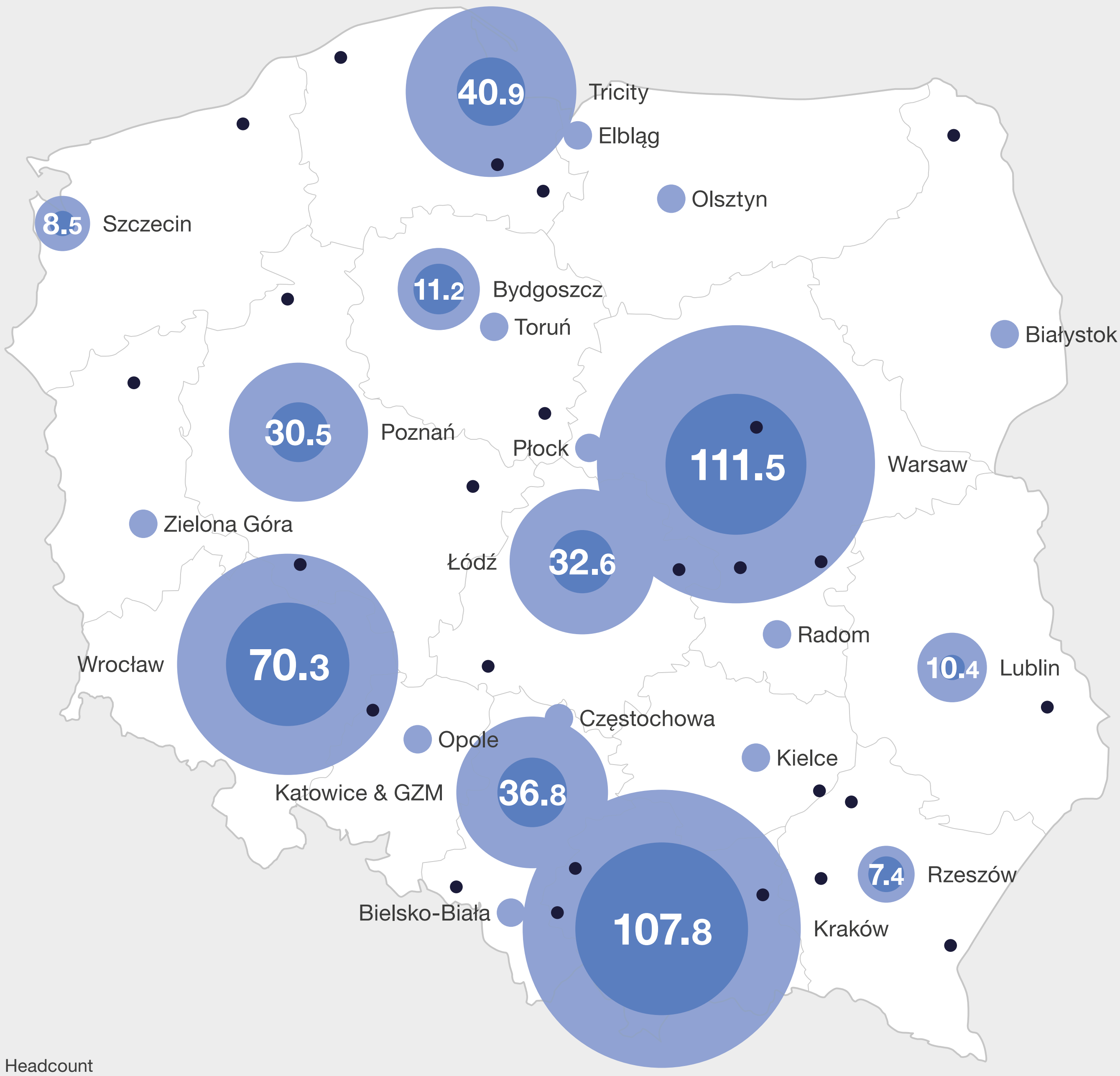
Source: ABSL business services centers database.

FIGURE 1.22 **Employment structure of selected business services locations (with employment exceeding 10,000) by type of center (according to the dominant profile of operations)** (%)

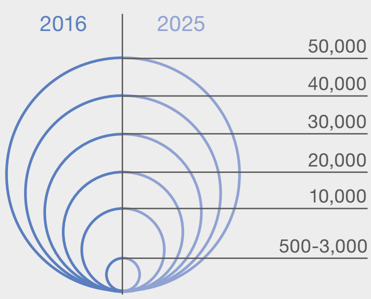


Source: ABSL business services centers database.

FIGURE 1.23 | **Headcount in business services centers by location**



Headcount



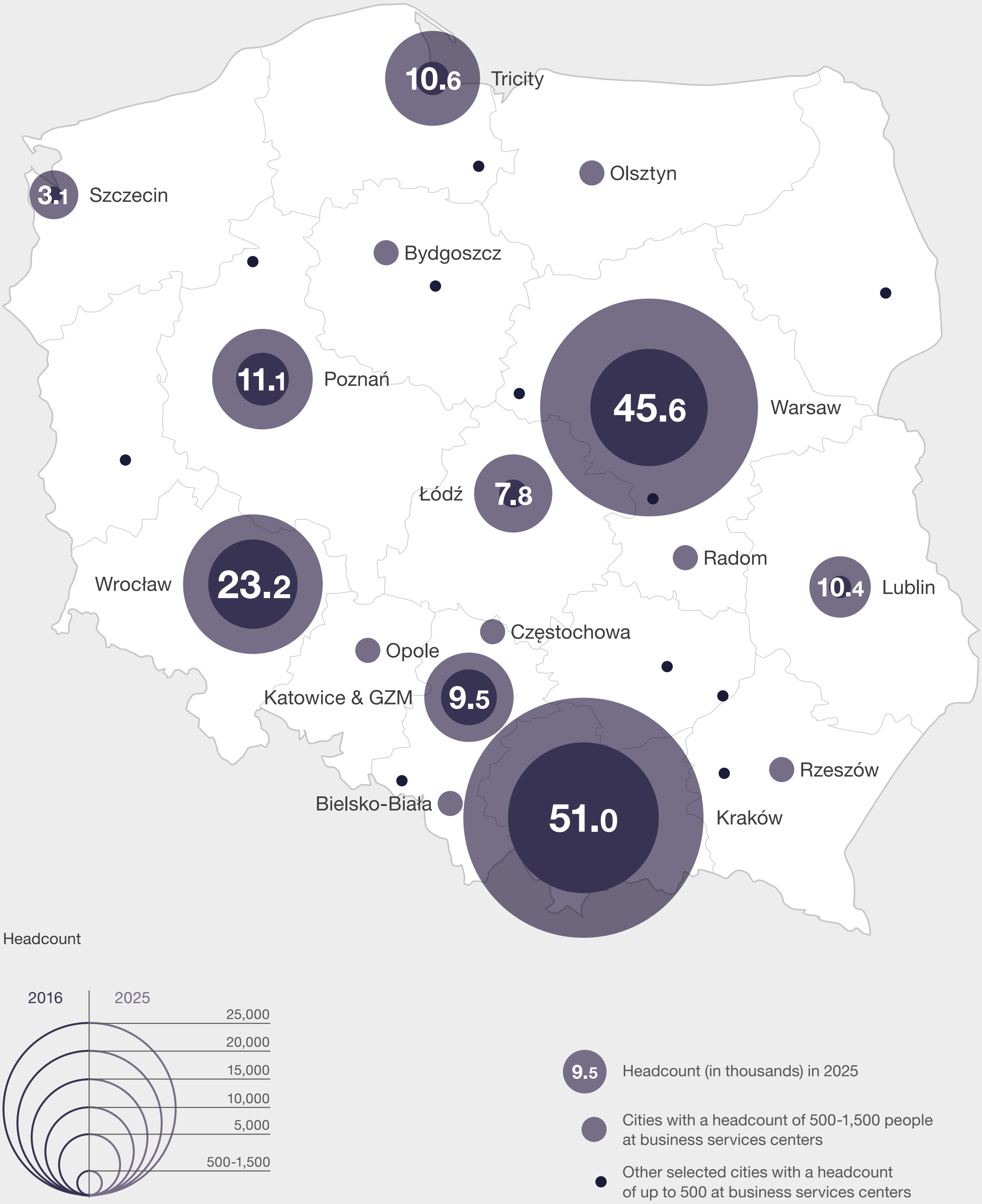
9.5 Headcount (in thousands) in 2025

Cities with a headcount of 500-3,000 people at business services centers

Other selected cities with a headcount of up to 500 at business services centers

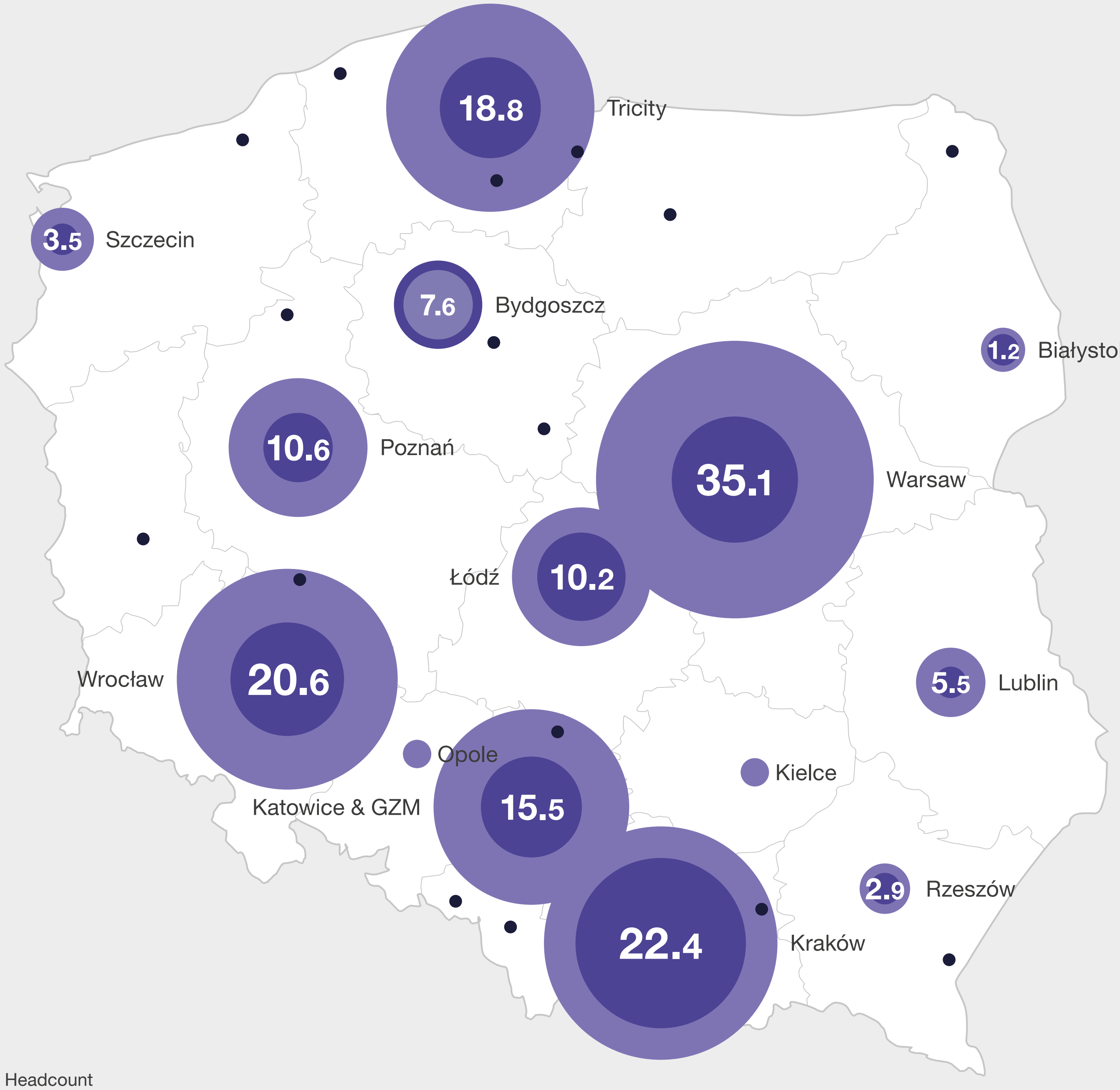
Source: ABSL business services centers database.

FIGURE 1.24 **Headcount in SSC / GBS centers by location**

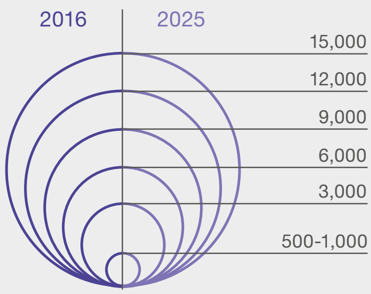


Source: ABSL business services centers database.

FIGURE 1.25 **Headcount in IT centers by location**



Headcount



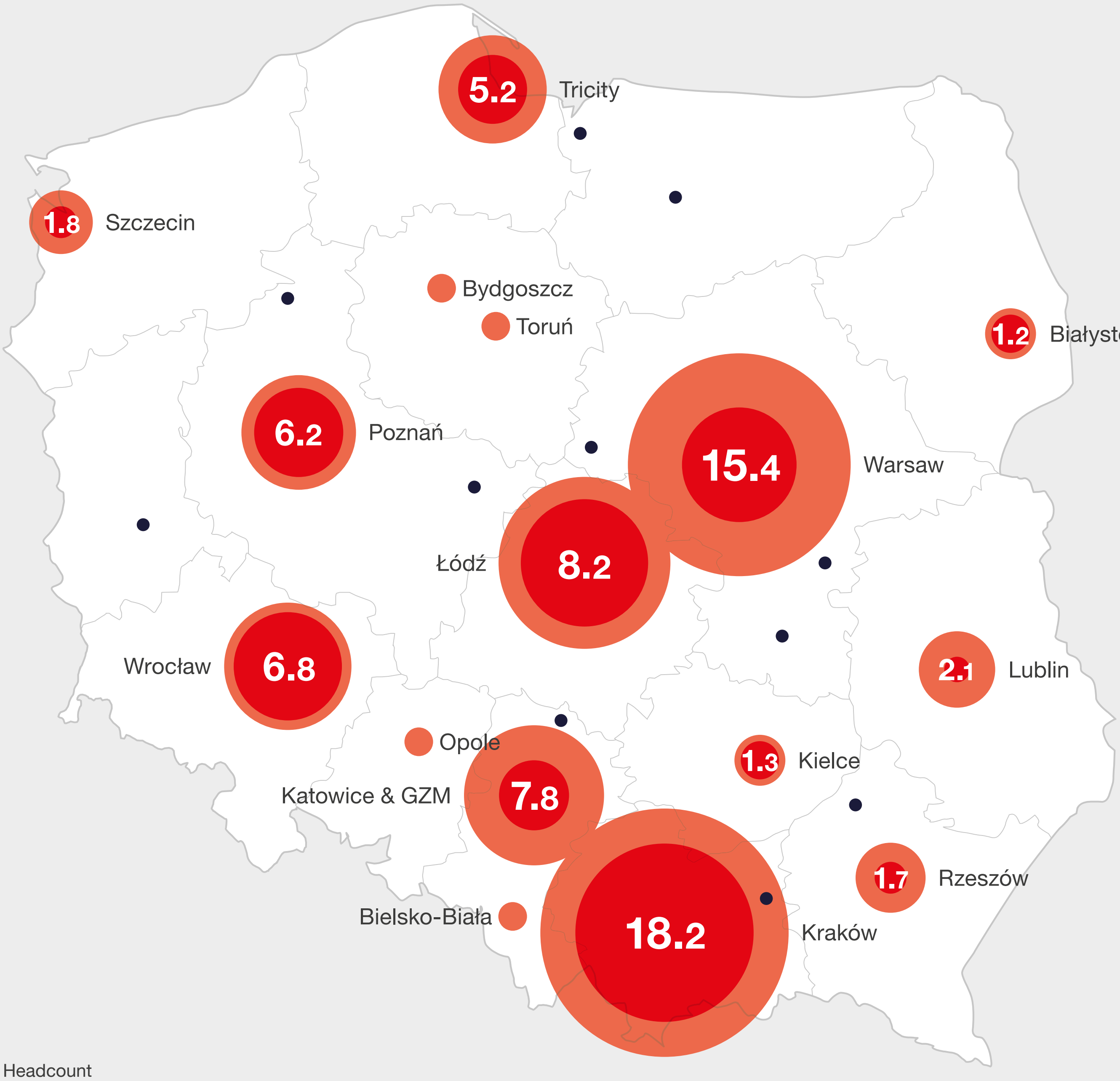
9.5 Headcount (in thousands) in 2025

Cities with a headcount of 500-1,000 people at business services centers

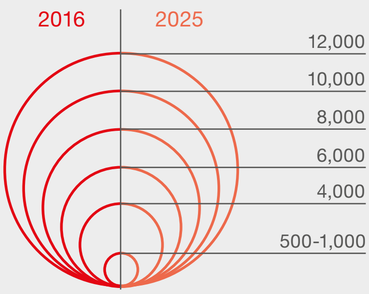
Other selected cities with a headcount of up to 500 at business services centers

Source: ABSL business services centers database.

FIGURE 1.26 | **Headcount in BPO centers by location**



Headcount



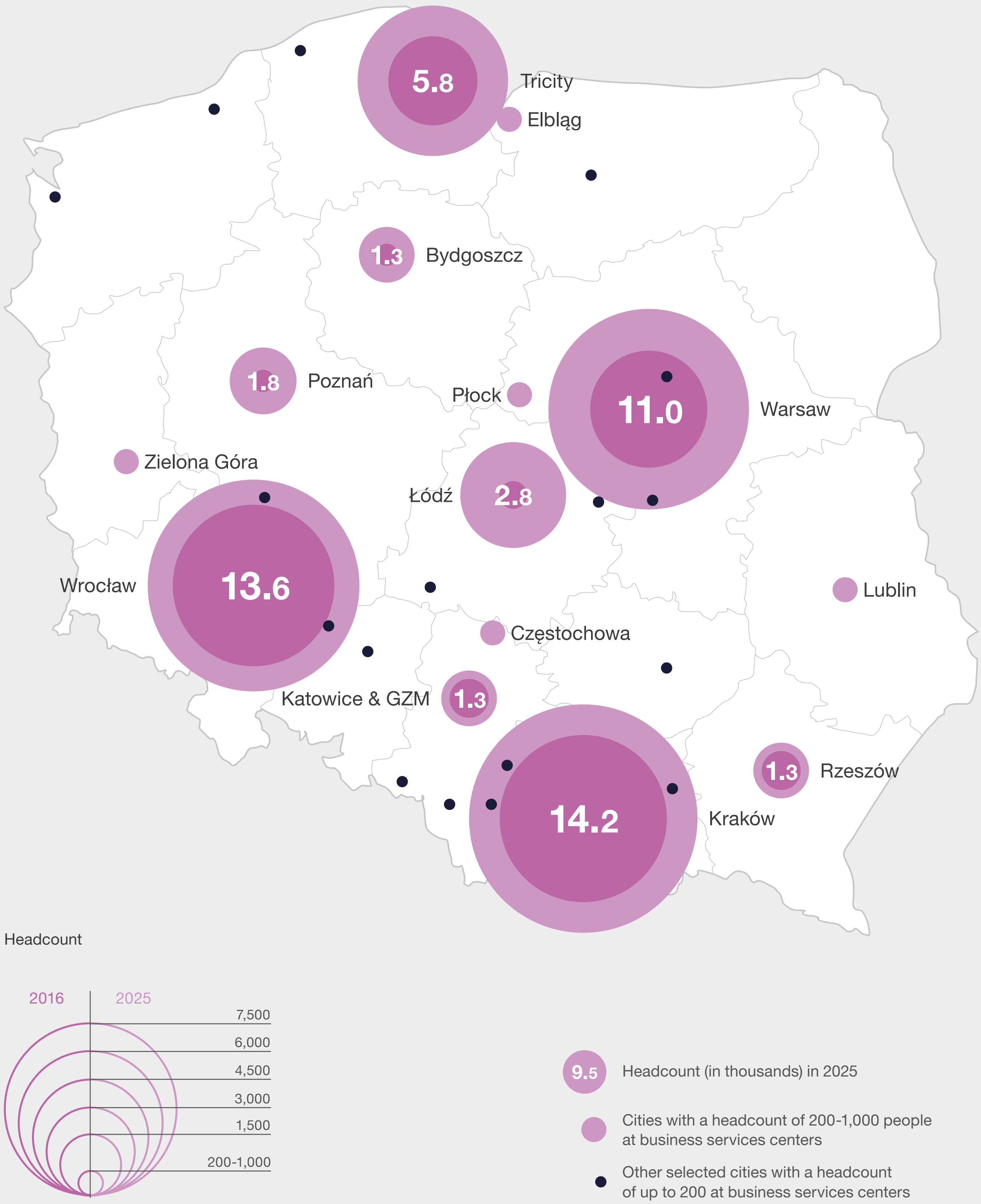
9.5 Headcount (in thousands) in 2025

Cities with a headcount of 500-1,000 people at business services centers

Other selected cities with a headcount of up to 500 at business services centers

Source: ABSL business services centers database.

FIGURE 1.27 | **Headcount in R&D centers by location**



Source: ABSL business services centers database.

The industry as a local specialization

$$LQ = \frac{\dfrac{\text{headcount at business services centers in a given location}}{\text{employment in a given location}}}{\dfrac{\text{total headcount at business services centers in all locations under analysis}}{\text{employment at all locations under analysis}}}$$

This section of the report identifies Polish cities where the business services sector demonstrates clear local specialization by using the location quotient (LQ) methodology as in previous editions. The LQ compares the share of employment in the sector within a specific location to the average share across all Polish cities hosting business services centers and is based on ABSL data as of the end of Q1 2025. An LQ value above 1.0 indicates over-representation, while values above 1.25 are generally considered evidence of strong local specialization.

The methodology remains consistent with last year's edition. Employment data is sourced from the most recent version of the Statistics Poland BDL (Bank Danych Lokalnych) database. From 2022 onward, due to adjustments made by Statistics Poland (GUS), data on employment registered by company headquarters is now drawn from the BDL dataset. As a result, LQ values from previous years are not directly comparable. These changes had the most notable impact on the values for Tricity, which were revised upwards, and Warsaw, which were revised downwards.

To improve accuracy, this year's report differentiates between Katowice and the broader Katowice & GZM area, as well as Gdańsk and the rest of Tricity (Sopot & Gdynia).

At the end of Q1 2025, Kraków emerges as the strongest local specialization in the business services sector, with an LQ of 3.4, followed by Wrocław at 2.7, Gdańsk at 2.1, Katowice at 2.0, and Poznań at 1.4.

While Lublin had an LQ of exactly 1.0. In contrast, Warsaw, Rzeszów, Lublin, and Szczecin had LQ values below 1.0, indicating a lower-than-average representation of the business services sector relative to their total employment base.

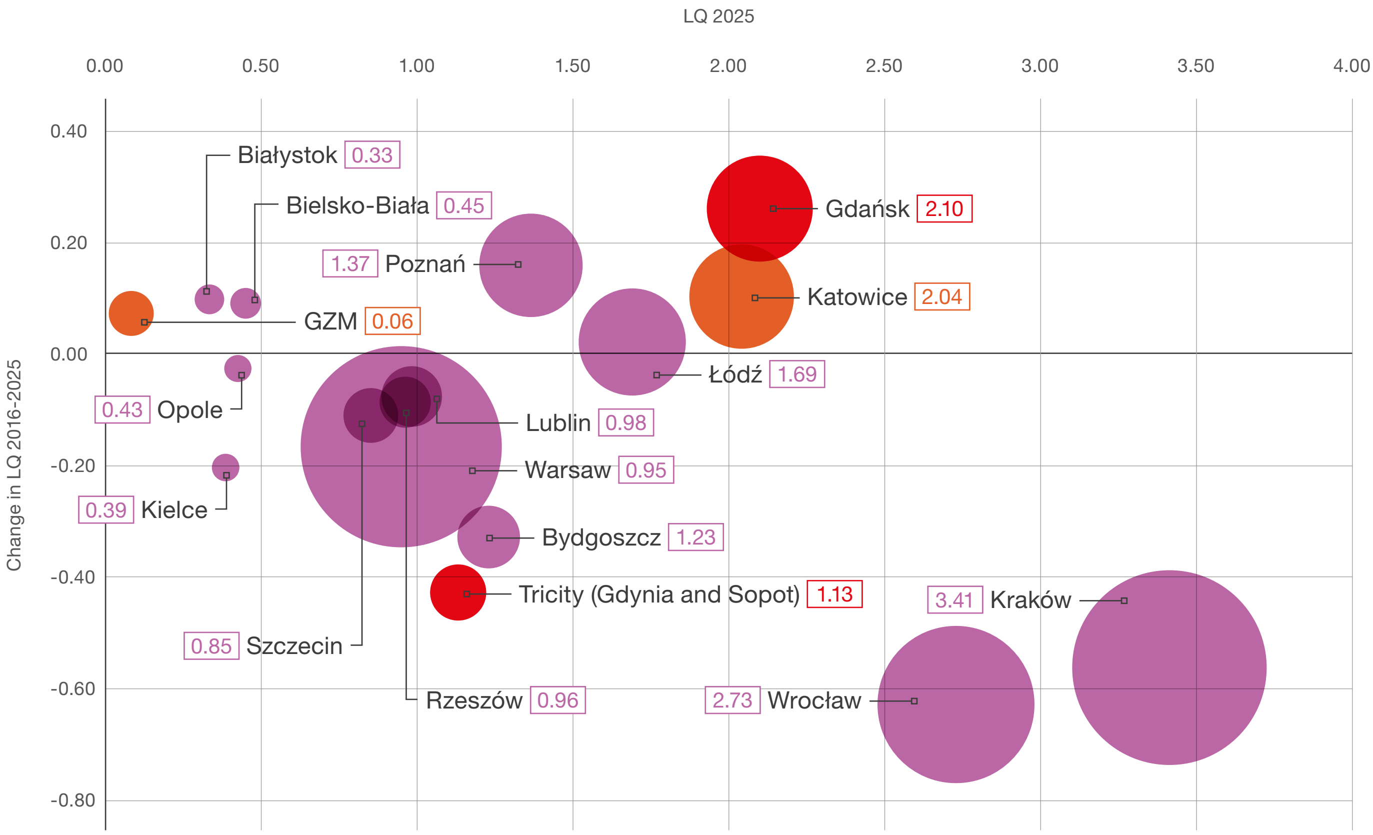
The bubble chart below illustrates the specialization of various Polish cities and metropolitan areas in our sector – business services centers – represented through the LQ for 2025 and its change from 2016 to 2025. Larger bubbles indicate cities with more full-time employees (FTEs) engaged in the sector.

Once again, Kraków and Wrocław emerged as the most specialized cities, with LQ values of 3.4 and 2.7, respectively, confirming their established role as sector's hubs. Other strong performers included Gdańsk (2.1), Katowice (2.0), and Poznań (1.4), all demonstrating above-average specialization but below Tier 1 size dimensions. In contrast, **despite being Poland's largest business hub, Warsaw had a lower-than-expected LQ (0.95) due to the city's diverse economy.** Lublin and Rzeszów were close to breaching the 1.0 threshold value.

Bydgoszcz (1.2) and Tricity – Sopot and Gdynia (1.1) showed moderate specialization, suggesting ongoing sector development. Meanwhile, cities such as Szczecin, Kielce, and Opole remained below the national benchmark, indicating weaker specialization.

Changes in specialization over time vary significantly. Some cities, such as Poznań, Gdańsk, and Bielsko-Biała, showed moderate positive changes in LQ, suggesting increasing specialization in the sector. Conversely, cities like Warsaw, Szczecin, and part of Tricity – Sopot and Gdynia exhibited stagnation or a decline in their relative specialization.

FIGURE 1.28 **The sector as a local specialization of cities and metropolitan areas**



Source: ABSL's analysis based on ABSL's centers, database, and GUS data on the population of cities.

Assessment of locations as a place for doing business

An assessment of factors affecting the conduct of business in particular locations in Poland is part of the ABSL annual survey. It is done by representatives of companies participating in the survey. In the case of companies with more than one center in Poland, the three most important centers that employ the most significant numbers of people were evaluated. We obtained information from respondents in 20 towns/cities. As in previous years, given the need to analyze a sufficiently large number of responses, we examined the seven cities for which we obtained the most information: Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław, Katowice & GZM, Poznań, Tricity, and Łódź. There were 244 responses concerning these cities. We applied the Likert scale, which enabled us to depict a more comprehensive assessment of individual cities. The respondents made an overall assessment of a given location as a place to do business; it was not as a result of calculations or weightings introduced by the ABSL team.

Two categories were introduced in the 2025 assessment:

the quality and security of the telecommunication infrastructure, and

the proximity of other firms in the sector.

The overall position of a city in the subjective ranking reflects the opinion of managers. **The top three cities in the overall ranking in this year's assessment were Tricity (1st), Wrocław (2nd), and Katowice & GZM (3rd).**

We have presented an additional overall score as in the previous year's ranking edition. ABSL has further elaborated this with the scores of cities in all the assessment categories averaged out, except for the "overall position in the ranking by managers." This alternative approach negates the case of a particular city ranking low in the majority of attractiveness assessment categories while obtaining high scores in its overall position. **Accordingly, the overall top scorers were Tricity (1st), Warsaw (2nd), and Poznań (3rd).**

TABLE 1.6 | **Assessment of locations as a place for doing business (2025)**

The overall position in the ranking*		
1	2	3
Tricity	**Warsaw**	**Poznań**
(Warsaw)	(Kraków)	(Poznań)

The overall position in the subjective ranking by managers		
1	2	3
Tricity	**Wrocław**	**Katowice & GZM**
(Warsaw)	(Wrocław)	(Kraków)

Categories of locations' attractiveness assessment	Position in the subcategories of the ranking		
	1	2	3
Availability of talent pool/highly qualified staff	**Kraków**	**Katowice & GZM**	**Warsaw**
	(Kraków)	(Warsaw)	(Wrocław)
City accessibility by airport	**Warsaw**	**Tricity**	**Kraków**
	(Warsaw)	(Kraków)	(Tricity)
City accessibility by road	**Poznań**	**Katowice & GZM, Łódź******	**–**
	(Warsaw)	(Katowice & GZM)	(Tricity)
City accessibility by train	**Tricity**	**Warsaw**	**Poznań, Kraków**
	(Warsaw)	(Tricity)	(Kraków)
Quality of public transport	**Warsaw**	**Poznań**	**Kraków**
	(Warsaw)	(Poznań)	(Kraków)
Perception of the general quality of life	**Tricity**	**Wrocław**	**Poznań**
	(Tricity)	(Poznań, Warsaw)	–
Quality of local universities	**Wrocław**	**Warsaw**	**Kraków**
	(Warsaw)	(Kraków)	(Poznań)
Availability of modern office space	**Łódź**	**Kraków**	**Katowice & GZM**
	(Warsaw)	(Kraków)	(Katowice & GZM)
Cooperation with local universities	**Łódź**	**Kraków**	**Katowice & GZM**
	(Łódź)	(Kraków)	(Wrocław)
Cooperation with a local investor support office	**Poznań**	**Łódź**	**Tricity**
	(Poznań)	(Łódź, Tricity)	–

Level of wages	**Łódź**	**Poznań**	**Tricity**
	(Poznań)	(Kraków)	(Katowice & GZM)
Cost of renting office space	**Łódź**	**Tricity**	**Wrocław**
	(Katowice & GZM)	(Kraków, Łódź)	–
Availability of flex/coworking office space	**Łódź**	**Warsaw**	**Wrocław**
	(Warsaw)	(Kraków)	(Wrocław)
Quality of the local natural environment	**Tricity**	**Wrocław**	**Katowice & GZM**
	(Tricity)	(Poznań)	(Wrocław)
Location of office premises relative to the city center (attractive location in the city center)	**Poznań**	**Katowice & GZM**	**Warsaw**
	(Tricity)	(Poznań)	(Warsaw)
Quality and security of telecommunication infrastructure	**Katowice & GZM**	**Warsaw**	**Wrocław**
	–	–	–
Proximity of other firms from the industry	**Warsaw**	**Poznań**	**Kraków**
	–	–	–

(City) 2024 rankings
* Calculated by ABSL
** Cities with the same position

The information presented reflects the opinions of a center's representatives. It is subjective and derived from many factors, such as the type of business conducted, preferences of the parent company, and perceptions of the importance of agglomeration's benefits. It is worth emphasizing that a given position in the ranking does not necessarily reflect the actual situation of the subject matter under analysis. The results may also be tied to the geographic distribution of the respondents' locations.

Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=168).

TABLE 1.7 | **Cities profiles**

	Number of employees in business services centers in 2025	Accumulated job growth in the sector (CAGR) 2020-2025	Number of jobs created since Q1 2020	Number of business services centers (Q1 2025)	Number of centers employing a minimum of 500 people (Q1 2025)	Number of new centers established in 2024 and 2025	LQ	The forecast for the number of jobs in the sector in Q1 2026
Warsaw	111,500	10.8	44,600	422	68	15	0.95	118,900
Kraków	107,800	6.4	28,600	312	49	8	3.41	110,800
Wrocław	70,300	5.9	17,400	250	37	6	2.73	72,600
Tricity	40,900	6.8	11,500	219	17	6	1.76*	42,300
Katowice & GZM	36,800	6.0	9,300	156	21	9	0.39**	38,000
Łódź	32,600	4.2	6,100	134	16	5	1.69	33,700
Poznań	30,500	9.9	11,500	167	17	9	1.37	31,700
Bydgoszcz	11,200	2.1	1,100	50	4	0	1.23	11,100
Lublin	10,400	4.9	2,200	78	5	0	0.98	10,900
Szczecin	8,500	5.8	2,100	68	4	0	0.85	8,600
Rzeszów	7,400	5.8	1,800	52	4	2	0.96	8,100

* LQ for Gdańsk only = 2.10
** LQ for Katowice only = 2.04

Source: ABSL business services centers database.

Grzegorz Mucha

Head of Shell Business Operations in Kraków

> Poland's business services sector has evolved into a mature, diverse and highly specialized ecosystem. Growth today is driven not by headcount, but by the depth of expertise, the sophistication of processes, and the ability to deliver strategic value on a global scale. We no longer speak of service centers, but about competence centers – places where innovation is tested, decisions are made, and new ideas take shape.

Increasingly, this value is delivered through digitally enabled solutions that directly support commercial outcomes. Whether through advanced analytics and forecasting, or automation at scale, digital transformation is no longer a support function – it is a business driver. GBS hubs located in Poland are not only adopting new technologies, but actively shaping them to create a measurable impact across global organizations.

This shift is also reflected in the types of initiatives Poland is now able to attract. A powerful example is the Shell Eco-marathon – a global educational event focused on sustainable mobility and future-ready technologies. In 2025, the event, for the first time, will be hosted in Poland, drawing students and young engineers from across the continent to showcase their ideas and compete in designing ultra-energy-efficient vehicles. It's an event that challenges the changemakers of tomorrow – encouraging them to think beyond today and solve real-world problems through innovation, creativity, and efficiency. The decision to bring such a forward-looking event here speaks volumes about how Poland is perceived today – not just as a capable delivery location, but as a credible innovation partner and talent incubator.

It also highlights a growing expectation for the private sector to take an active role in nurturing the next generation of leaders and innovators – through partnerships with education, knowledge-sharing, and long-term investment in youth development.

This fusion of business expertise, innovation capacity, and social responsibility is what drives the competitiveness of Poland's business services sector – and enables the country to secure its place in the global value chain.

OFFICE MARKET IN POLAND

Poland's commercial real estate market – particularly the office sector – is showing clear signs of recovery. 2024 brought a long-awaited rebound in investment sentiment, with the CEE-6 region standing out with a 50% year-over-year growth and a total transaction value of EUR 8.8 billion. Poland continues to play a key role in shaping the region's investment landscape, attracting EUR five billion in capital. Increasingly, Poland is being perceived not only as a gateway to the region but also as a strong, standalone investment destination.

This renewed activity has been particularly evident in the office sector, which accounted for nearly one-third of the total investment volume in Poland in 2024. The sector attracted EUR 1.6 billion, with the largest share of transactions taking place in Warsaw, where as many as 32 deals were concluded, involving almost 50 office buildings. Regional markets also gained investor attention, with 15 assets traded across 12 transactions, totaling EUR 300 million. The outlook for the office sector remains cautiously optimistic, fueled by anticipated interest rate cuts, which are expected to narrow the pricing gap between buyers and sellers – especially in the premium segment.

At the same time, the office market continues to evolve in response to the hybrid work model. Many tenants are grappling with the challenges of optimizing office space against the backdrop of reduced in-office attendance. Concerns around productivity, employee engagement, and organizational culture are prompting some companies to mandate office returns, though these measures often face resistance. As a result, a more nuanced, data-driven approach to workplace strategy is gaining traction, with a growing emphasis on flexible and sustainable space design.

For landlords, the ongoing transformation of the office environment brings both challenges and opportunities. High vacancy rates in outdated buildings, and growing ESG requirements are driving interest in adaptive reuse projects, such as converting obsolete offices into residential, educational, or data center spaces. At the same time, the demand for high-quality, amenity-rich, and centrally located offices remains strong.

With new supply in Warsaw expected to gradually increase in 2025-2026 and regional markets anticipated to follow suit after 2026, the coming years will likely bring further stabilization in vacancy rates. Rental levels are also expected to stabilize despite slight upward pressure in key cities. Tenants are increasingly seeking smart buildings that support hybrid work through technological solutions and promote wellbeing in the workplace.

Overall, the Polish office market is entering a new phase of development – it is more mature, more diverse, and increasingly aligned with global trends in workplace strategy and sustainable development.

Chapter content developed by: **Colliers**

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Office statistics for 2024

13.1 million m²
Total office supply in Poland

530,000 m²
Space under construction in 2024 YE

14.0%
Share of demand generated by BPO & SSC centers in Warsaw

EUR **28.50**
Highest asking rents in Warsaw (m² / month)

26.0%
Share of demand generated by BPO & SSC centers in Warsaw and regions

EUR **19.50**
Highest asking rents in regions (m² / month)

1,350
Number of lease agreements in 2024

380,000 m²
Office space leased by BPO / SSC companies in 2024

1.48 million m²
Volume of lease agreements in 2024

116,000 m²
Absorption in 2024

16
Number of lease agreements over 10,000 m²

14.3%
Vacancy rate in the 9 major markets in Poland

9
Number of developed office markets

FIGURE 1.29 | **Summary – Warsaw**

Q1 2025	Forecast for 12 months
Total modern supply (m^2): **6,244,900**	↗
New supply (m^2): **5,600**	↗
Vacancy rate: **10.5%**	→
Office demand (m^2): **160,500**	↗
Flex space supply (m^2): **230,000**	↗
Office space under construction (m^2): **240,000**	↘
Prime asking rents (EUR / m^2 / month): **19.00–28.50**	→

Warsaw

Warsaw is the largest office market in Poland, with over 6.28 million m² of office space. At the beginning of the Q2 2025, around 240,000 m² was under construction and renovation with delivery deadlines set for 2025-2027. A further 200,000 m² is scheduled for 2025-2028 and is in the planning phase. Buildings completed in the last five years represent around 17% of the existing supply.

In 2024, the Warsaw market grew by 104,000 m² of office space, a 40% increase compared to the lowest volume in history in 2023. Nearly 70% of the new supply was located in central zones – among the largest buildings were The Form (29,400 m²), Lixa E (16,900 m²), and Vibe A (15,000 m²), as well as Saski Crescent, reopened after the modernization (15,500 m²).

The volume of transactions registered in 2024 in Warsaw exceeded 740,000 m² and was on a par with the previous year. New agreements accounted for 43% of the total annual demand in Warsaw, while renegotiations represented 47%, expansions 7% and space for owner usage stood at 4%. Q1 2025 ended with a stable tenant interest of 160,500 sq. m.

Lease agreements concluded last year shaped the average transaction size to be comparable to the previous year – about 1,065 m², an increase of 18% compared to the previous year. Eight office space deals for over 10,000 m² were registered. The largest transactions from Q1 2024 to Q1 2025 included the pre-let of Santander Bank in The Bridge (24,500 m²), JP Morgan's renewal in Atrium Garden (13,900 m²), and renegotiation of BGK in Varso Place 2 (13,000 m²).

There is significant interest in flexible office spaces in the Warsaw market. Their supply continues to grow year on year and now stands at over 230,000 m². The main Warsaw flex space operators include WeWork, Regus, Spaces, New Work, and CiC.

The vacancy rate in Warsaw decreased to 10.5% at the end of Q1 2025, it was 11%, which represents 657,700 m² of available space. The increase in available space is a result of the high volume of new supply delivered in 2024, as well as the modernization of office supply and the exclusion of old projects due to a change of function or renovation works.

Rental rates for office space have seen a following year of rises after increases in recent years. In central zones, rents stood at EUR 19.0-28.5 m² / month, while in non-central locations, they were EUR 12.00-18.00 m² / month.

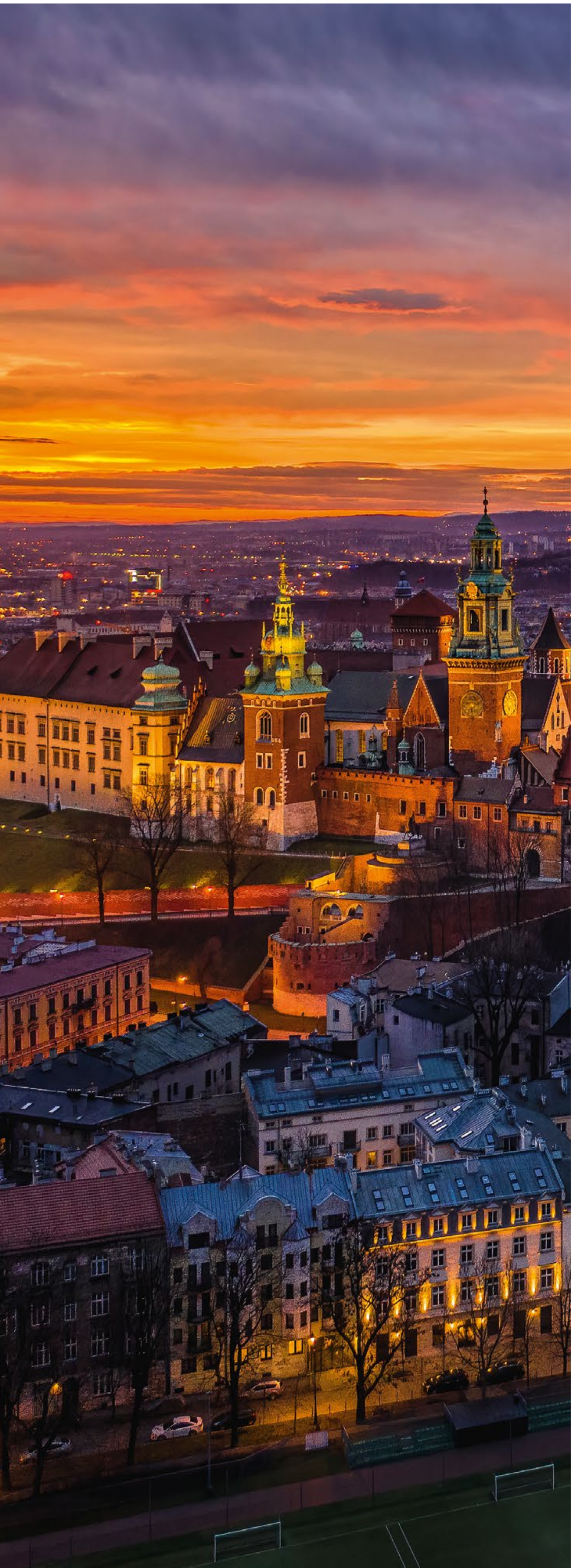

FIGURE 1.30 | **Summary – Kraków**

Q1 2025	Forecast for 12 months
Total modern supply (m^2) **1,834,700**	→
New supply (m^2) **0**	→
Vacancy rate **17.6%**	↘
Office demand (m^2) **56,600**	↗
Flex space supply (m^2) **70,000**	→
Office space under construction (m^2) **40,600**	→
Prime asking rents (EUR / m^2 / month) **14.00–19.50**	↗

Kraków

At the end of Q1 2025, the total office stock in Kraków exceeded 1.83 million m². The city is the second-largest office market in Poland, after Warsaw, and has been developing rapidly for years. Buildings completed in the last five years represent around 24% of the existing supply.

In 2024, around 27,300 m² of modern office space was delivered to the market, marking a record low supply.

The largest projects opened to tenants were Brain Park C (13,000 m²) and Medyczna complex (9,700 m²).

At the beginning of Q2 2025, approximately 40,600 m² were under construction, with completion planned for 2025 and 2026. A number of projects remain in the planning phase, with completion dates set for 2027 or beyond.

In terms of office take-up registered in 2024, Kraków remained a leader among the regional cities. Total gross demand amounted to 266,000 m², 32% more than in 2023. Renegotiations accounted for the largest share among all contracts signed in 2024, at 58%. New contracts made up 37% of the total annual demand, with expansions coming in at two%.

The lease agreements concluded last year had an average transaction size of 1,560 m², 42% more than in 2023. In 2024, five lease agreements in Krakow were signed for space exceeding 10,000 m². Among the largest transactions signed between Q1 2024 and Q1 2025 were the renegotiations for HSBC in Kapelanka 42A (16,400 m²), APTIV Services Poland in Enterprise Park F (10,300 m²), and State Street Bank International in Kazimierz Office Center (10,300 m²). In Q1 2025, tenant activity was 43,800 m².

At the end of Q1 2025, the supply of flexible office space in Krakow rapidly increased, with nearly 70,000 m² offered by At Office, chilliflex, City Space, Cluster Offices, Loftmill, Quickwork, Regus, and other operators.

At the end of Q1 2025, the vacancy rate had fallen to 17.6%, which represented more than 324,000 m² of available space.

Asking rents for office space have recorded an upward trend, while their range differs depending on the office zone. In modern A-class projects, they were EUR 14.00-19.50 m² / month in the central zone and EUR 10.00-13.50 m² / month in the non-central zone.

FIGURE 1.31 | **Summary – Wrocław**

	Q1 2025	Forecast for 12 months
Total modern supply (m^2)	1,365,000	↗
New supply (m^2)	0	↗
Vacancy rate	20.4%	↗
Office demand (m^2)	43,800	↗
Flex space supply (m^2)	41,000	→
Office space under construction (m^2)	28,700	→
Prime asking rents (EUR / m^2 / month)	14.50–17.00	→

Wrocław

Wrocław, with its office space inventory totaling 1.37 million m² by the end of Q1 2025, ranks as the second largest regional office market in Poland. Buildings completed in the last five years represent around 19% of the existing supply. Several areas in Wrocław are recognized for their high concentration of office space. Most resources (40%) are located in the Central Business District, which is divided between the heart of the city center and surrounding central areas. Other key office hubs include the Western Business Area and the Southern Business Axis along ul. Powstańców Śląskich.

In 2024, developers completed 38,050 m² of office space. The largest project delivered was Quorum Office Park A by Cavatina (18,200 m²), followed by B10 (14,100 m²) and Aleja Architektów 7 (6,000 m²).

At the beginning of Q2 2025, approximately 28,700 m² of modern office space were under construction, with completion set for 2025/2026.

In 2024, the gross demand for office space in Wrocław was 146,500 m², marking a 12% decrease compared to the previous year. Renegotiations dominated the contract structure, accounting for 57% of the total demand, while new agreements made up 36%. Expansions accounted for two% of demand, and owner-occupier deals for five%. In Q1 2025, tenant activity reached 43,800 m².

The average size of lease transactions concluded in 2024 was about 1,170 m², an increase of 30% compared to 2023. Among the largest transactions signed from Q1 2024 to Q1 2025 was the renewal of Google in Bema Plaza (8,500 m²) and a renegotiation of Schaeffler Global Services Europe in Nowy Targ (6,200 m²).

The flexible office space market in Wrocław is rapidly developing. In 2024, its supply increased by about 41,000 m², with numerous operators present, including At Office, Business Zone, Business Link, CitySpace, Concordia Design, L'abo, Loftmill, Quickwork, Ready Flex, Regus, Smart Office, and Spaces.

At the end of Q1 2025, the vacancy rate had increased by 20.4%, which represented 278,000 m² of available space. Office space rents have seen increasing upward pressure in the past year. In modern A-class projects, tenants pay EUR 14.50-17.00 m² / month in central zones and EUR 11.50-13.50 m² / month in non-central zones.

FIGURE 1.32 | **Summary – Tricity**

Q1 2025	Forecast for 12 months
Total modern supply (m²) **1,067,000**	↗
New supply (m²) **0**	↗
Vacancy rate **12.6%**	→
Office demand (m²) **26,400**	↗
Flex space supply (m²) **25,000**	↗
Office space under construction (m²) **57,600**	↗
Prime asking rents (EUR / m² / month) **14.00–16.00**	→

Tricity

The total stock in Tricity amounts to over 1.06 million m², which places Tricity in third place among all regional cities. Buildings completed in the last five years represent around 20% of the existing supply.

The largest amount of office space is available in Gdańsk (75%), followed by Gdynia (22%) and Sopot (3%). The modern stock is concentrated along the route of Szybka Kolej Miejska, Droga Gdyńska, and al. Grunwaldzka (Wrzeszcz, Oliwa). Office projects are also located in the vicinity of the Gdańsk airport and the center of Gdańsk.

In 2024, three office buildings were completed, providing 19,500 m² of modern office space. The projects included the new LPP Fashion Lab building – Silk (5,000 m²), and two phases of the Waterfront II project (9,000 and 5,500 m²).

At the beginning of Q2 2025, over 56,000 m² were under active construction, with delivery dates set for the next two years.

The volume of transactions registered in 2024 in Tricity exceeded 116,000 m², a 25% increase compared to 2023. Renegotiations dominated all transactions, comprising 50% of annual tenant activity, while the share of new contracts rose to 41%. In Q1 2025, tenant activity reached 26,400 m². The average size of lease transactions in 2024 was approximately 1,100 m², a 15% fall from the previous year. Among the largest transactions in the market from Q1 2024 to Q1 2025 was the renewal of State Street Bank in Alchemia II (10,500 m²) and the pre-let agreement of Arla Foods in the Punkt project (8,900 m²).

The flexible office space market in Gdańsk is rapidly developing, with approximately 25,000 m² of flex space offered by operators such as chilliflex, Collab, Mind Dock, O4, Quickwork, Regus, and Spaces.

The vacancy rate decreased by 12.6% by the end of Q1 2025, translating to 135,000 m² of available space. In Gdańsk, it was 9.3%, and in Gdynia, it was 23.2%.

Rents for office space in class A buildings have increased in the past year and are EUR 14.00-16.00 m² / month in central zones and EUR 11.50-13.00 m² / month in non-central zones.

FIGURE 1.33 | **Summary – Katowice**

	Q1 2025	Forecast for 12 months
Total modern supply (m²)	**772,000**	↗
New supply (m²)	**0**	↗
Vacancy rate	**21.1%**	↗
Office demand (m²)	**18,500**	→
Flex space supply (m²)	**21,000**	→
Office space under construction (m²)	**30,000**	→
Prime asking rents (EUR / m² / month)	**13.00–16.95**	→

Katowice

The total office stock in Katowice at the end of Q1 2025 amounted to 772,000 m². Projects completed in the last five years constituted 32% of the existing resources. Existing office buildings are clustered around the main arterial routes, such as Chorzowska, Korfantego, and Murckowska streets and Górnośląska and Roździeńskiego avenues.

Since the beginning of 2024, developers have delivered 26,600 m² in three buildings – an extension of Centrum Biurowe Tetris (900 m²), Grundmana Office Park A (20,700 m²) and Biurowiec Ceglana (5,000 m²).

At the beginning of Q2 2025, around 30,000 m² of office space was in the construction stage, with a scheduled completion date by the end of 2026. In the planning phase for the next two years, there is another 60,000 m² of office space.

In 2024, the total demand in Katowice was 47,600 m², which is a 22% decrease in 2023. The largest share of the market was new agreements at 51%. Renegotiations constituted 37% and expansions 7% of the total lease volume. The average transaction size was 670 m², which was 15% less than in 2023. In Q1 2025, tenant activity was 18,500 m².

Among the largest deals signed between Q1 2024 and Q1 2025 was a new agreement signed by Sopra Steria Polska in Grundmanna Office Park A (4,000 m²), Genpact in NKCB (3,800 m²), and the renewal of Vattenfall IT Services in Francuska Office Center A (3,600 m²). During this period, no deal above 10,000 m² was recorded.

The supply of flexible office space in Katowice continues to grow. The market operates about 21,000 m² of coworking space, with both Polish and foreign operators present, such as City Space, DL Space, Loftmill, Regus, and Quickwork.

The vacancy rate has been rising in recent quarters and stood at 21.1% at the end of Q1 2025. Approximately 168,000 m² of space is available for rent on the market. The increase is due to a limited number of tenants in the local market and the high volume of new supply delivered in recent years.

Rental rates in the best buildings in the city range from EUR 13.00 to 16.95 m² / month in central zones and from EUR 10.00 to 12.80 m² / month in non-central zones.

FIGURE 1.34 | **Summary – Poznań**

Q1 2025	Forecast for 12 months
Total modern supply (m²) **678,000**	↗
New supply (m²) **2,400**	↗
Vacancy rate **15.0%**	↘
Office demand (m²) **14,500**	↗
Flex space supply (m²) **10,000**	→
Office space under construction (m²) **58,300**	→
Prime asking rents (EUR / m² / month) **15.00–18.00**	↗

Poznań

The total office stock in Poznań at the end of Q1 2025 amounted to 678,000 m². Buildings completed in the last five years represent around 15% of the existing supply. Since 2024, developers have completed two office projects – one in 2024, a new headquarters of MJG (2,600 m²) and Dymka 188 (2,400 m²), which was delivered in Q1 2025.

At the beginning of Q2 2025, 58,300 m² of office space were under construction with completion scheduled for the end of 2027. The planned pipeline stands at 80,000 m². However, these projects will be gradually developed in phases. Notable investments include the Stara Rzeźnia project, which is being developed by Vastint. The city's development will also be significantly influenced by a multi-stage investment by BPI Real Estate Poland and Revive, located in the center of Poznań on the site of a former military barracks, with plans to combine residential, service, and office functions as well as the revitalization of historic buildings in the Cavallia complex.

The total volume of lease transactions in 2024 amounted to 66,800 m², which was a 13% decrease compared to 2023. New contracts dominated the demand structure – 56%. Renegotiations accounted for 38% of the lease volume, while the share of expansions made up 6% of the total annual demand. In Q1 2025, tenant activity stood at 14,500 m². The average size of lease transactions in 2024 in Poznań was 1,000 m², which was 25% higher than in 2023.

Among the largest agreements signed from Q1 2024 to Q1 2025 was the renewal of Żabka Polska in Nowy Rynek A (10,300 m²), a renegotiation of the lease signed by GSK Services in Business Garden Poznań (6,900 m²), and a new agreement of Carlsberg in Nowy Rynek B (3,400 m²).

The flexible office space market in Poznań is in its initial stages of development, with a total supply estimated at 10,000 m² being offered by operators such as Biurcoo, Business Link, Concordia Design, eN Studio, and Regus.

At the end of Q1 2025, the vacancy rate stood at 15.0%, representing 101,400 m² of available space.

Rent rates for office space recorded an increase after being stable for several quarters. Tenants at modern A-class projects were paying rents of EUR 15.00-18.00 m² / month in the central zone and EUR 12.00-13.50 m² / month in non-central zones.

FIGURE 1.35 | **Summary – Łódź**

Q1 2025	Forecast for 12 months
Total modern supply (m^2) **642,300**	↗
New supply (m^2) **0**	↗
Vacancy rate **22.3%**	→
Office demand (m^2) **5,900**	↗
Flex space supply (m^2) **15,000**	→
Office space under construction (m^2) **12,700**	→
Prime asking rents (EUR / m^2 / month) **13.00–15.00**	→

Łódź

By the end of Q1 2025, the supply of modern office space in Łódź amounted to 642,000 m². Buildings completed in the last five years represented around 17% of the existing supply. Within the city center, three separate office hubs are becoming increasingly distinct: NCŁ, in the vicinity of Piotrkowska Street and the junction of Mickiewicza and Piłsudskiego avenues, and the vicinity of Marszałków on Piłsudskiego avenue covering Śmigłego-Rydza avenue and Kopcińskiego streets. The remaining office projects are in the northwestern part of the city (Teofilów) and the southeast of the city (Dąbrowa).

In 2024, three projects of 7,900 m² in total were delivered to the market, including the Rappa Port multifunctional complex with 4,700 m² of office space. At the beginning of Q2 2025, 12,700 m² of office space was under construction, with a completion date for the end of 2027.

The total gross demand in Łódź in 2024 was 59,700 m², which was a 32% YoY increase.

The major part of total tenant activity in 2024 comprised new agreements – 48%. Renegotiations accounted for 36%. Owner-occupier transactions made up 15%. In Q1 2025, tenant activity reached 5,900 m².

The average size of lease transactions in 2024 increased by 33% compared to 2023, amounting to 930 m². The largest transactions signed between Q1 2024 and Q1 2025 in Łódź included a lease for oner needs of Rossman in the new headquarters in Park Biznesu Teofilów C (8,700 m²), the new agreement of Ericsson in University Business Park B (6,300 m²) and a renewal of Takeda in Sterlinga Business Centre (5,700 m²).

The supply of flexible office space in Łódź is dynamically developing, estimated at about 15,000 m². Active operators include Avestus Flex, chilliflex, City Space, Loftmill, Memos, and New Work.

At the end of Q1 2025, the vacancy rate slightly increased by 22.3%, translating into 143,000 m² of available space.

Compared to other cities, Łódź is a competitive market – asking rents in prime properties amounted to EUR 13.00-15.00 m² / month in the central zone and EUR 9.00-12.00 m² / month in non-central zones.

FIGURE 1.36 | **Summary – Lublin**

	Q1 2025	Forecast for 12 months
Total modern supply (m^2)	220,900	→
New supply (m^2)	0	↗
Vacancy rate	11.1%	→
Office demand (m^2)	10,700	↗
Flex space supply (m^2)	2,200	→
Office space under construction (m^2)	6,200	→
Prime asking rents (EUR / m^2 / month)	12.00–14.25	→

Lublin

Lublin is the seventh-largest regional office market in Poland and the largest hub for modern offices in the eastern part of the country. At the end of Q1 2025, the total resources of modern office space totaled 221,000 m² across 49 modern office buildings. Buildings completed in the last five years represent about 18% of the existing supply. In the period between Q1 2024 and Q1 2025, no new office projects were completed. However, at the beginning of Q2 2025, three projects were in active construction or renovation, including the Zelwerowicza Office (3,700 m²).

Lublin saw a total volume of lease transactions amounting to 10,700 m², half of the demand in 2023. As much as 53% of the contracts signed were defined as new agreements, and 34% of the office space leased was through renegotiations.

The average size of lease transactions was approximately 630 m², which was 26% higher than in 2023. The largest transactions in the Lublin market between Q1 2024 and Q1 2025 included the renegotiation of an agreement by DataArt in Centrum Zana (1,600 m²) and a new deal of VCC in CZ Office Park A (1,400 m²). In Q1 2025, tenant activity was 10,700 m² due to a renewal signed by PKO BP in Gray Office Park A.

The market for flexible office space in Lublin is in the initial stages of development. Two major players are a

At the end of Q1 2025, the vacancy rate in Lublin decreased by 11.1%. Currently, there is 24,400 m² vacant space in Lublin, both in Class A and Class B/B+ office buildings.

Due to favorable rental conditions, Lublin is a competitive market compared to other regional cities. Rents for office space have remained at a similar level for several quarters. In Class A modern projects, tenants pay EUR 12.00 to 14.50 / m² / month in the central zone and EUR 9.50 to 12.00 / m² / month in areas outside the city center.

FIGURE 1.37 | **Summary – Szczecin**

	Q1 2025	Forecast for 12 months
Total modern supply (m²)	**187,300**	→
New supply (m²)	**0**	↗
Vacancy rate	**8.0%**	→
Office demand (m²)	**550**	↗
Flex space supply (m²)	**2,500**	→
Office space under construction (m²)	**2,000**	→
Prime asking rents (EUR / m² / month)	**12.00–15.00**	→

Szczecin

The existing modern office space in Szczecin totals 187,000 m², which is the lowest among all eight of the regional cities. Szczecin is a market that is relatively early in its development. Buildings completed in the last five years represent only five% of the existing supply. The supply develops cyclically – usually, after a period rich in new investments, there is a decrease in developer activity, which is a natural period needed for the absorption of existing office space. In 2024, one new project, Sky Garden, was completed, adding 1,800 m². At the beginning of Q2 2025, 2,000 m² were under construction.

The vast majority of office space in Szczecin (about 80%) is located in the city center around Al. Wyzwolenia, Al. Niepodległości, and in the area of Brama Portowa. This is where the city's office and commercial resources are concentrated. A new location is in the southern part of the city – Gumieńce, where large office projects such as Cukrowa Office and Szczecin Business Plaza have been recently completed.

In Szczecin, there is a moderate level of interest from office space tenants. As recorded by official sources, the gross demand in the past year was only 2,900 m². In Q1 2025, tenant activity was registered at 500 m².

The largest share among all contracts in 2024 was renegotiations and lease extensions – 53%, while new agreements accounted for 47% of annual demand.

The largest transactions from Q1 2024 to Q1 2025 included a renegotiation of Mobica in Posejdon (1,200 m²). The average size of lease transactions concluded in 2024 dropped to 600 m².

The flexible office space market in Szczecin is in the initial stages of development, with operators offering services including BeIn Offices, Biuro Aloha, and Marina cowork.

The vacancy rate increased to 8% at the end of Q1 2025, representing 15,000 m² of available space. This is the lowest rate among all regional cities.

Rents for office space have remained at a similar level for several years. In Class A modern projects, tenants in the city center must pay EUR 12.00 to 15.00 m² / month, while in areas outside the city center, the range is EUR 10.00 to 12.00 m² / month.

Secondary office markets

Poland's smaller office markets are gaining recognition for their long-term potential, though their growth remains stable and gradual. Rather than experiencing rapid booms, these regional cities are developing at a measured pace, driven by a growing demand for modern office space and the strategic decisions of developers and tenants alike.

Developers have begun to recognize the untapped opportunities in these locations. Local market players are modernizing existing properties to meet the expectations of international office tenants. Upgrades typically involve improving technical standards, enhancing energy efficiency, and creating workspaces tailored for hybrid work and global operational needs. Although Class A office buildings are still relatively rare in these markets, their share is slowly increasing as developers respond to the changing expectations of both local and international companies. This transition is supported by local authorities and infrastructure improvements, making smaller cities increasingly viable for office investment.

The modern business process outsourcing is playing a key role in this shift. Several international companies have already recognized the advantages of these regional markets. In Białystok, firms such as CERI International, Prudential, SoftServe, and Transcom WorldWide have established operations. In Olsztyn, companies such as Billennium, Citibank, Transcom WorldWide, and Medicover are active. Radom hosts Opinia24, while Atos and Sii have expanded into Rzeszów, Bydgoszcz, and Toruń. Capgemini, ista Customer Service Poland, PwC Service Delivery Center, and Vialto Partners Poland contribute to the local office ecosystem in Opole.

These investments are not just about cost optimization. They also reflect confidence in the regional talent pool and the cities' improving business infrastructure. The growing presence of reputable employers helps boost the attractiveness of these areas for further development. However, securing tenants remains essential for moving new projects forward. Pre-let agreements and early engagement from occupiers often determine whether a project proceeds. As such, developers must offer well-considered proposals that align with tenant expectations – particularly in terms of quality, location, and flexibility.

While developing office markets are unlikely to rival Warsaw or Kraków in size, they increasingly offer strong value propositions. Their stability, affordability, and access to skilled labor make them compelling alternatives for businesses seeking sustainable, long-term locations outside of the major metropolitan hubs.

TABLE 1.8 **Developing office locations in Poland**

	Total stock (m²)	Vacancy rate (%)	New completions 2024 (m²)	Under construction (m²)	Asking rents (EUR / m² / month)
Białystok	72,000	8.0	0	0	10.00-14.00
Bydgoszcz	155,000	19.0	5,200	0	10.00-15.00
Kielce	75,000	5.0	0	2,400	8.00-13.00
Olsztyn	70,000	9.0	0	0	8.00-14.00
Opole	80,000	7.0	4,500	2,900	7.00-14.00
Radom	53,000	8.0	0	1,000	7.00-13.00
Rzeszów	125,000	7.0	0	16,600	9.00-16.00
Tarnów	19,000	17.0	0	0	7.00-11.00
Toruń	94,000	7.0	5,600	14,800	7.00-14.00

Source: Colliers.

ABSL Form follows hybrid. Transforming the work environment – a case study of the new Colliers office

Karolina Dudek
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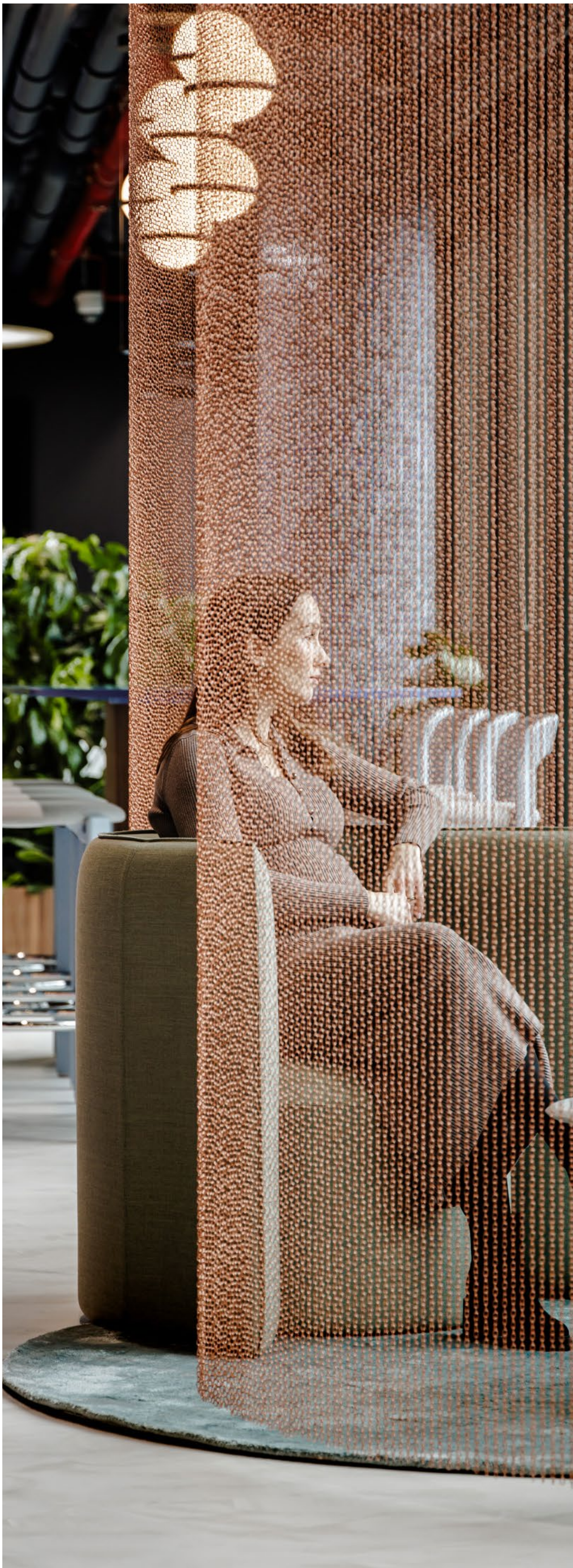

Hybrid work has created significant challenges for organizations across multiple dimensions: managing dispersed teams, cultivating organizational culture, and planning and maintaining office space. Many companies see fluctuating weekly attendance and substantial differences between average occupancy and peak levels on certain days. What should be taken into consideration when planning for demand? Do we always have to choose between flexible access to workstations and efficient use of office space? The transformation of the working environment at Collier's shows that this dilemma can be solved.

The hybrid work landscape has continued to evolve over the past three years, and observable trends are now emerging. Hybrid models are becoming increasingly diverse. The percentage of companies declaring a varied hybrid model has tripled since 2022, rising from 5% to 15%[4]. Recruitment strategies have also shifted. Of the organizations that planned changes in 2022, 33% have since begun hiring talent from across Poland, no matter how far away an employee lives from

[4] Colliers report Define, Hybrid and Beyond '24 – how is the work model evolving?

the office. Employees have grown to appreciate remote work, while companies face increasing resistance when enforcing stricter in-office attendance. The share of firms reporting difficulties in getting employees back to the office rose from 69% in 2022 to 88% in 2024. These trends reinforce the role of hybrid work models in Poland and contribute to what can be described as the hybridization of the hybrid model.

Most organizations that have offered hybrid work and given employees the flexibility to choose when to come into the office are now facing space management challenges. Companies that have decided to provide more desks, basing demand planning on peak occupancy levels, are left with underused office space. On the other hand, organizations that focus on space efficiency and have introduced desk-sharing ratios such as 6:10, 5:10, or lower struggle to provide enough workstations for teams that come into the office and to coordinate the work. Managers in this situation face two challenges. Firstly, their teams remain dispersed even when in the office. Employees continue to chat online and hold video calls instead of using the opportunity to collaborate face-to-face. Secondly, explaining why the team should be in the office or justifying a return-to-office policy becomes more difficult. Employees understandably question the need to be physically present: “We don’t even see each other anyway.” Traditional office space planning and presence management models no longer work in a hybrid world.

When designing our new office, we knew we would face the same dilemmas as everyone else – either a large empty office or a smaller space with overcrowding and limited access to workstations. Our search for innovative solutions stemmed from a powerful realization: developing a new model would create value for our company and other companies working in a hybrid way. We called our new integrated office concept Newffice (from “new” and “office”). It is built around three key areas and requires a complete transformation of the work environment: technology for managing the office (Bytes), spatial organization (Bricks), and our ways of working (Behaviors). Coordinating the different teams responsible for each area and delivering a coherent solution was possible because all aspects, from workplace strategy and change management to design, furniture and IT/AV selection, and fit-out execution, were handled by Colliers’ teams.

Dynamic allocation is at the heart of the new workplace model, which ensures that each team has the appropriate number of desks reserved on their coordination days. We developed this solution with Whirla, which provides desk booking apps and occupancy sensors. But what we created goes beyond just an app feature. It is a concept for managing team presence in the office, giving companies control over attendance while providing teams with shared space and allowing employees to choose when and where to sit. We defined three working modes based on mobility and how much time in the day is spent in meetings versus individual work: desk workers, nomads, and super-nomads. Crucially, the same person might work as a desk worker one day and a nomad the next. The office space was designed to support intuitive movement within the new work environment and to make the model easy to understand. Desk workers, who mainly focus on individual work, use traditional desks. Nomads, who typically move between meetings with only short breaks to check emails, use project tables. Both groups have access to lockers that are bookable via the app.

Transforming Colliers’ work environment required more than just new tech and a redesigned office. It also demanded a fundamental rethink of what an office is and how it can be used. The result is a shared resource that supports the dynamic nature of a hybrid organization, providing a place for every team without the “empty office” effect. Designing a work environment has always required an integrated approach across Bytes, Bricks, and Behaviors. Today, that approach is more essential than ever.

Monetary Policy in Central and Eastern Europe: Monetary easing when conditions enable

Grzegorz Sielewicz
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Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) is navigating a complex economic landscape, with inflationary pressures, geopolitical uncertainties, and domestic challenges shaping monetary policy decisions. Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Romania are at different stages of their monetary cycles, but all face the delicate task of managing inflation while supporting economic growth.

Poland: A dovish turn sparks anticipation of rate cuts

Poland has recently become the region's focal point of monetary policy discussions. After maintaining its benchmark interest rate at 5.75% for 19 months, the National Bank of Poland (NBP) cut rates by 50 basis points in May 2025. This shift reflects a more optimistic inflation outlook, supported by revised CPI weights and lower energy price assumptions.

Inflation in Poland has moderated to 4.3% YoY as of April 2025 but remains above the central bank's target range of 2.5% with a ±1percentage point tolerance band. Food prices and services inflation continue to exert upward pressure, with core inflation stabilizing at elevated levels. However, the NBP expects inflation to return to its target range by late 2025, paving the way for a more accommodative stance. Colliers anticipates rate cuts of at least 50 basis points in the remainder of this year, provided inflationary risks remain contained.

Another factor of concern for the Monetary Policy Council, i.e., persistent wage growth, has softened to one-digit levels from above 13% recorded in both 2023 and 2024. According to Colliers forecasts, nominal wage growth will weaken to 7.6% this year. Furthermore, the strong Polish currency combined with the more dovish approach of the Council could mean that the target interest rate is even lower than previously expected and could be 3.5% by the end of 2026.

Czech Republic: Easing amid lingering risks

In the Czech Republic, monetary policy has already entered an easing phase. The Czech National Bank (CNB) has cut its two-week repo rate by a cumulative 350 basis points since late 2023, bringing it down to 3.5% in May 2025 supported by the inflation rate dropped to 1.8% in April 2025. Further interest rate cuts are conditional, with one more cut expected. After that, the CNB could pause its rate-cutting cycle due to upward revisions in its inflation forecasts for this year. The CNB must tread carefully to avoid undermining price stability or excessively weakening the koruna.

Inflation in Czech Republic fell significantly throughout 2024 but is now projected to average 2.4% in 2025 – slightly above the central bank's target of 2%. This adjustment reflects ongoing wage pressures in the services sector and external risks stemming from Germany's fiscal stimulus measures, which could spill over into Czech exports and complicate disinflation efforts. The Czech economy has shown signs of recovery, with GDP growth accelerating to 0.7% quarter-on-quarter in Q4 2024 and projected to reach 2.2% in 2025. Domestic demand is expected to drive this growth, supported by rising real wages and improving consumer sentiment. However, weak external demand and structural challenges in key industries may limit the pace of recovery.

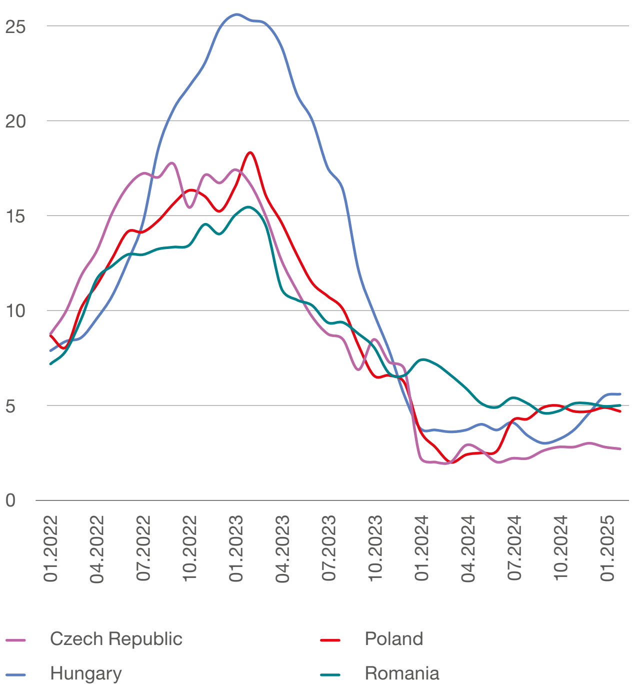
Hungary: High rates persist amid structural challenges

Hungary stands out in the region for its persistently high interest rates and elevated inflation levels. The National Bank of Hungary (NBH) has kept its base rate at 6.50% since mid-2024, prioritizing real positive rates to limit inflation and stabilize the forint. However, inflation remains high at 4.2% as of April 2025, driven by rising food prices and the cost of services. Core inflation has also remained high reaching 5%, reflecting tight labor markets and robust wage growth.

The Hungarian economy emerged from a technical recession in late 2024 but faces significant headwinds that could dampen its recovery prospects. EU funds allocated to Hungary remain frozen due to political disputes. This has limited public investment and reduced the GDP growth forecast for 2025 (1.9%). Additionally, structural issues in key sectors, such as automotive manufacturing, pose further risks to medium-term growth.

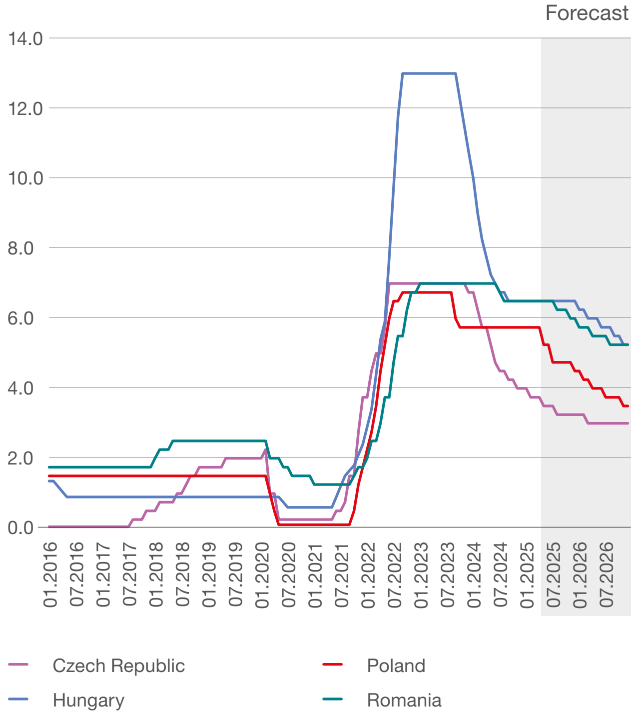
The monetary easing in the remainder of 2025 is unlikely at this stage. Government interventions in food pricing have temporarily eased inflationary pressures but risk distorting market dynamics if extended beyond May. Sustained disinflation trends could trigger interest rate cuts.

FIGURE 1.38 **CPI inflation rates in selected CEE economies**



Source: Colliers analysis.

FIGURE 1.39 **Central bank rates in selected CEE economies**



Source: Colliers analysis.

Romania: Uncertainty clouds monetary policy outlook

Romania presents a unique case within the region due to its combination of fiscal challenges and political uncertainty however the latter decreased once Romania elected pro-European candidate as the President in May 2025 elections. Despite moderating inflation trends, the National Bank of Romania (NBR) has maintained its benchmark interest rate at 6.50% since August 2024. Inflation fell slightly to 4.85% YoY in April 2025 and is projected to further decline from the second half of this year as energy prices stabilize and fiscal tightening measures take effect. However, underlying pressures persist, particularly in services inflation, which has been driven by strong wage growth in the public sector.

Despite a reduced political risk, Romania still faces a number of challenges including high budget and current account deficits, risk of losing EU funds if reforms are not enacted quickly, risk of a sovereign rating downgrade in the junk category as well as possible social unrest. Economic growth remains subdued but is expected to pick up gradually over the next two years as EU recovery funds are absorbed more effectively. For now, limited rate cuts could be anticipated – likely no more than 75 basis points by year-end if political stability materializes and fiscal risks are contained.

A region at a crossroads

The monetary policy landscape across Central and Eastern Europe reflects both shared challenges and country-specific dynamics. Inflation remains a central concern for all four countries discussed here – Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Romania – but their responses vary depending on domestic economic conditions and external influences.

While Poland appears poised for an earlier-than-expected easing cycle thanks to improving inflation trends, Hungary remains committed to high rates amid persistent structural challenges. Meanwhile, Czech Republic is cautiously navigating its path to an easing in monetary policy against a backdrop of lingering risks, while Romania faces delays due to uncertainty and internal challenges.

As we move through 2025, these countries will continue walking a fine line between supporting economic recovery and ensuring price stability. This balancing act underscores the complexities of monetary policymaking in today's uncertain global environment.

2

TALENT

Introduction

As Poland's business services centers sector matures, talent has emerged as its most critical asset and greatest challenge. This chapter adds to the basic overview presented in Chapter 1. It explores in greater depth how organizations are navigating a shifting labor market defined by demographic changes, increased mobility, digital transformation, and rising expectations from employees and employers. Drawing on insights from the ABSL 2025 survey and ABSL centers' database, we examine evolving employment structures, workforce demographics, contract forms, turnover trends, and the growing role of foreigners in the talent pool. We also analyze how companies respond through targeted development initiatives, flexible work models, diversity and inclusion strategies, and leadership development efforts. Ultimately, the chapter reveals how the sector is adapting its approach to talent to remain competitive, innovative, and resilient in an increasingly globalized and dynamic environment. We also consider the contributions of our strategic partners Mercer, Randstad, and OPI – National Research Institute, to obtain a more holistic picture of the talent pool in Poland at the end of Q1 2025.

New ways of working

The ABSL 2025 survey provides valuable insights into the evolving working models adopted by business service centers in Poland, stressing the sector's continued adaptation to post-pandemic realities. The employment-weighted results indicate that hybrid working has emerged as the dominant model, striking a balance between flexibility and organizational cohesion.

Fully remote arrangements now account for a smaller portion of the internal workforce, reflecting a partial retreat from the pandemic-era extremes. Most organizations seek a structured hybrid environment while remote work remains viable and valued – particularly in IT and knowledge-intensive roles. This model supports operational efficiency and employee autonomy while facilitating periodic in-person collaboration.

The data also shows that fully on-site work has become a minority model, used primarily where business functions or compliance requirements necessitate physical presence. However, even in such cases, many companies reevaluate their office usage patterns to optimize space, reduce costs, and improve employee experience.

Regarding the dominant approach to days worked from the office, most organizations have landed on a 2+3 or 3+2 week model.

ABSL

Chapter content developed by: **ABSL**

Key talent facts

The dominant work model is hybrid, aligned with post-pandemic norms. **60.1% of centers declared a mix** of work-from-home with work-from-office, with the two or three days working from the office format prevailing.

The return to the office has brought the most positive results in team collaboration and innovation. However, the picture is more nuanced for productivity and employee satisfaction.

The main recruitment strategy (51.7%) was a city of centers location. On the other hand, talent demand and talent pool scarcity make organizations source personnel from anywhere.

Employment contracts dominated (95.0%) among employment forms in non-IT centers. **In IT, B2B contracts accounted for 30.7%** of the employment structure.

The share of 35+ year-old workers has constantly increased (17 p.p. since 2019) and now **accounts for 46.0% of employment.**

Diversity, inclusion, and belonging have become **increasingly embedded** in centers. This reflects a shift from isolated HR efforts to core cultural and operational priorities.

A significant **portion of the workforce (36.0%) comprised employees with short – to mid-term tenure (up to three years). This depicts healthy inflows of talent (and dynamism)** but also stresses the retention challenge.

The average headcount has been growing over the years, and **centers have become bigger** (the average headcount is now 235 people).

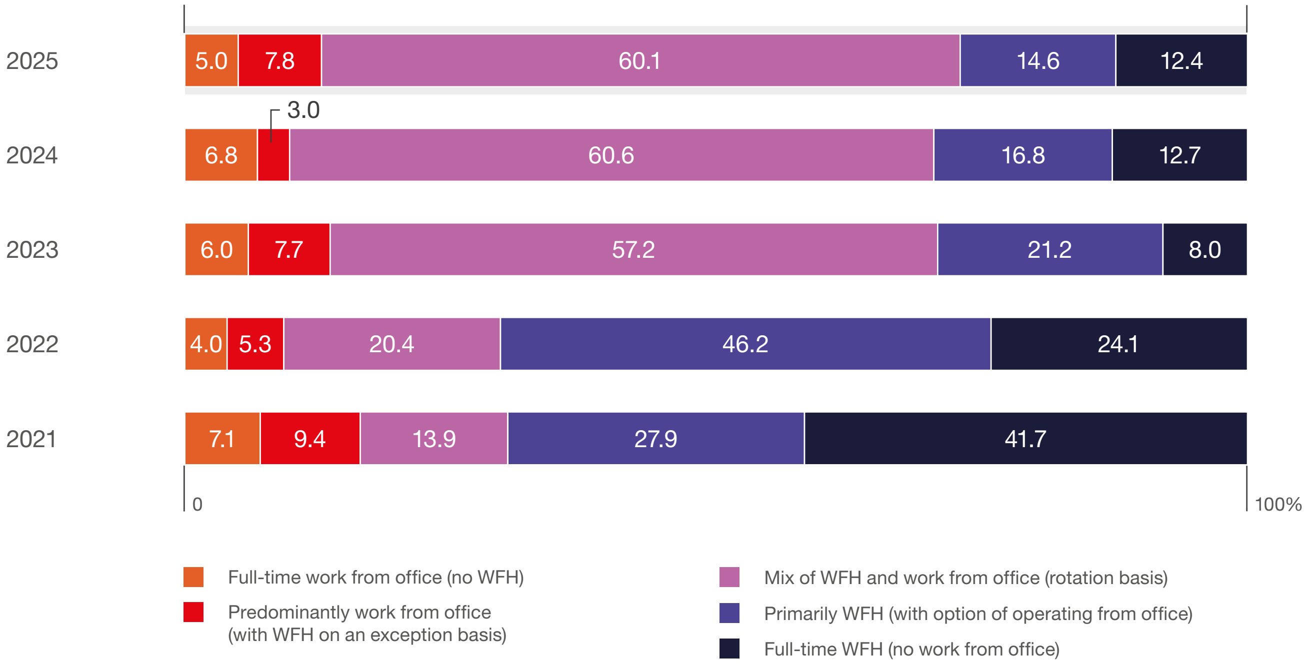
19.6% of the sector's workforce were foreigners. Ukraine continued to be the most frequently indicated country of origin for foreigners (23.4%), followed by India (10.9%), Belarus, and Italy (8.3% each).

Voluntary turnover dropped from 18.3% in 2022 to 9.1% in 2024. Involuntary turnover (initiated by the company) increased predominantly in IT centers.

The talent pool shortage was declared a less significant barrier / bottleneck **than in previous years.**

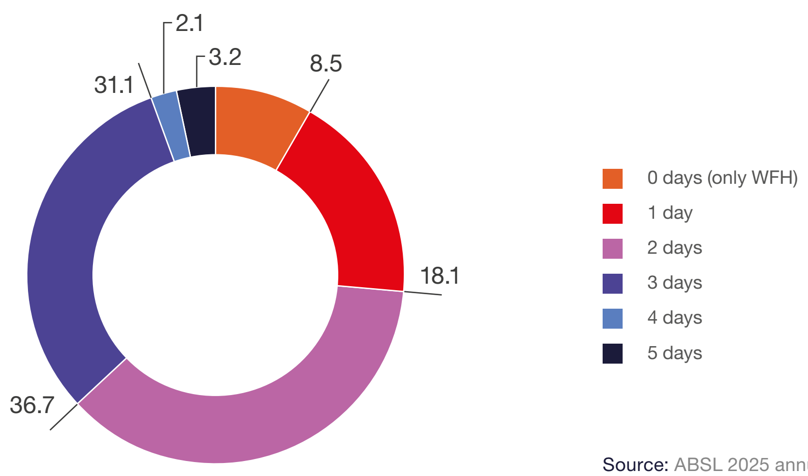
This compromise reflects an attempt to balance management's desire for face-to-face interaction and team synergy with employees' expectations for flexibility. A smaller group of centers continues implementing 4+1 or five-day in-the-office schedules, which are often associated with more traditional functions or senior leadership roles. However, some companies maintain a 1+4 or fully remote policy, usually when talent attraction or cost-efficiency takes precedence. To summarize, the Polish business services sector has embraced hybrid work as a strategic standard, supported by various flexible configurations. The prevailing 2+3 or 3+2 model underscores a shift from emergency adaptation to structured hybridization, aiming to combine the best of both remote and in-person work.

FIGURE 2.1 **Proportions of internal workforce in various working models** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=188). Employment-weighted.

FIGURE 2.2 **The dominant approach in Q1 2025 to days worked from the office** (number of days, %)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=188).

Return to office

The ABSL 2025 survey explored how the return to office (RTO) affects key operational aspects of business service centers in Poland. With hybrid and remote work models having become deeply embedded during the pandemic, reintroducing working in the office has generated mixed operational outcomes across the sector.

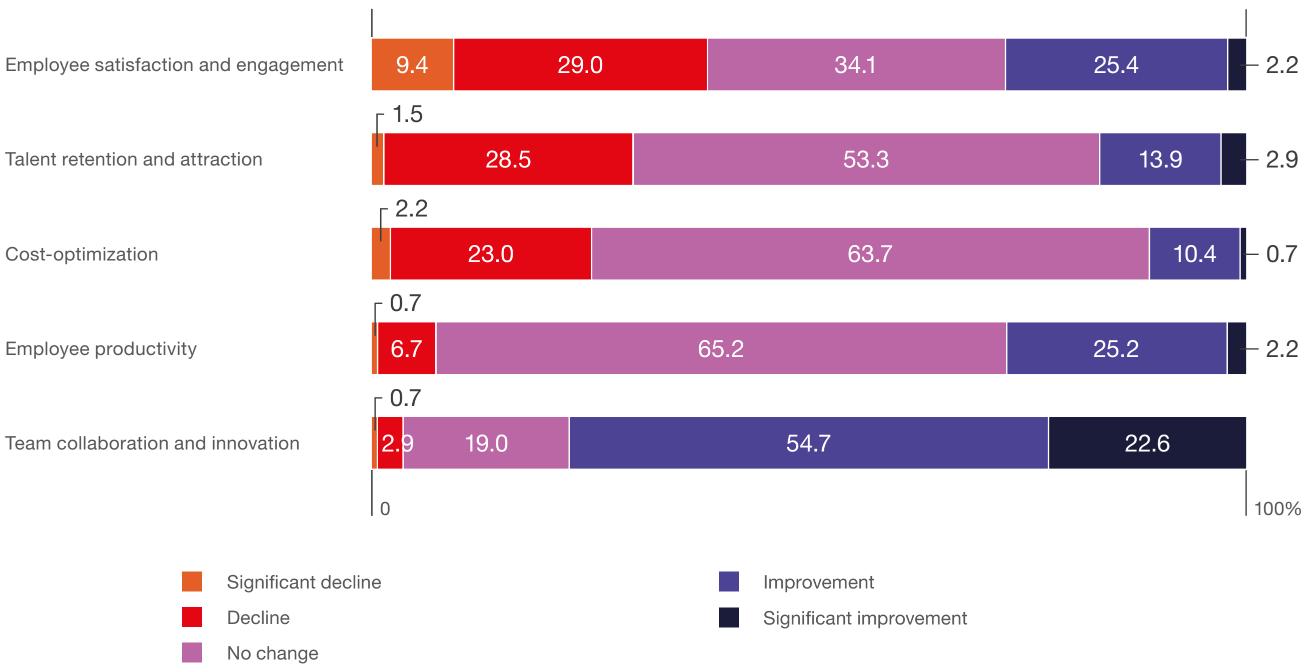
Huge improvements are reported in areas such as team collaboration and innovation. This suggests that in-person interactions offer unique value in fostering knowledge exchange and building stronger team dynamics. These benefits are especially relevant for innovation, onboarding, training, and cross-functional project work, where physical proximity can accelerate alignment and engagement.

However, the productivity and employee satisfaction responses indicate a more nuanced picture. A considerable number of centers observed no significant change or even some negative impact on these metrics. This may reflect employee preferences for flexibility and the efficiency gains realized in remote work setups. In some cases, RTO mandates may have introduced friction or reduced morale among workers accustomed to greater autonomy, emphasizing the importance of communication, purpose alignment, and flexibility in implementation.

Operational efficiency and cost management outcomes tied to RTO varied as well. While some centers experienced streamlined processes and a better handle on resource utilization, others noted logistical and infrastructure-related inefficiencies. These discrepancies suggest that the success of RTO initiatives is closely linked to the organizational model, maturity of digital tools, and employee engagement strategies.

In conclusion, the return to office has not been a one-size-fits-all driver of operational improvement. Its impact depends heavily on how it is executed, communicated, and integrated with broader workforce strategies. Organizations should adopt flexible, data-informed approaches that align with a team's needs, operational goals, and employee preferences – balancing structure with autonomy to sustain productivity, culture, and innovation so as to maximize the benefits of hybrid or in-person models.

FIGURE 2.3 | **Impact of return to office on the selected aspects of centers' operations** (%)

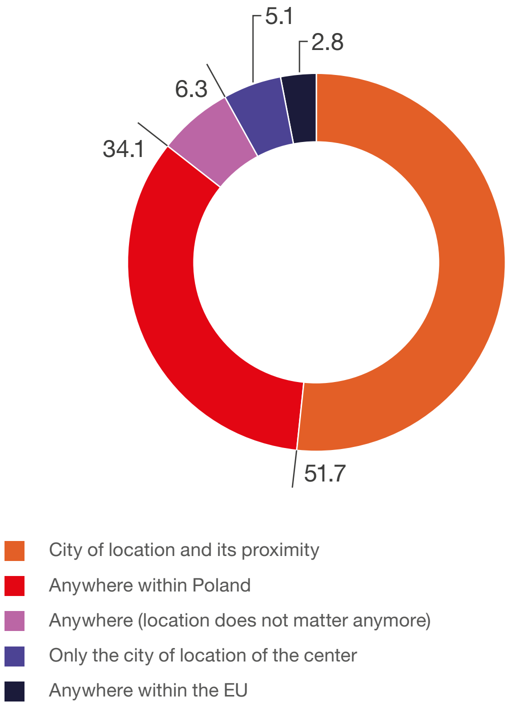


Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=138).

Our observations from the previous report are confirmed: the sector appears at a crossroads. On the one hand, many investors still perceive locations as offering specific/idiosyncratic talent pool competencies stemming from local business, culture, and tacit knowledge of organizations (and their interactions). On the other hand, talent demand and talent pool scarcity make organizations source personnel from anywhere.

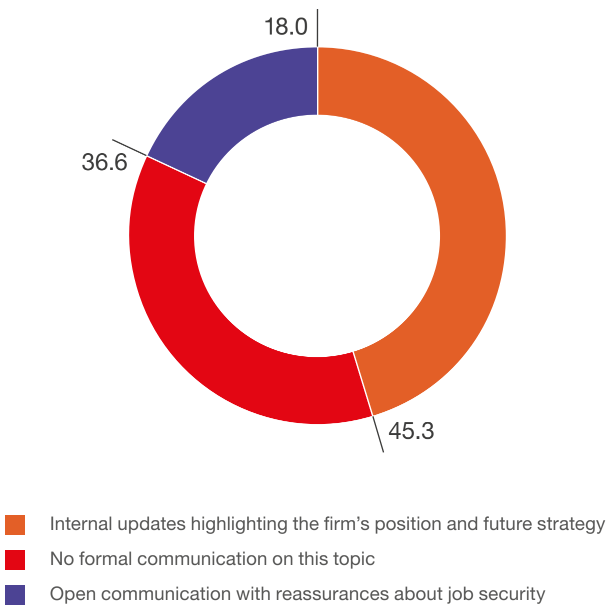
trust while offering Q&A formats to address concerns. This multi-layered approach has helped contextualize sectoral developments and reduce uncertainty. However, some organizations have relied solely on formal statements, missing opportunities to engage employees more meaningfully. The findings underscore the importance of clear, empathetic communication in navigating workforce challenges and preserving morale during times of change.

FIGURE 2.4 **What is your main recruitment strategy?** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=176).

FIGURE 2.5 **How did your firm communicate with employees about market-wide layoffs and operational changes?** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=172).

Reaction to industry-wide adjustments

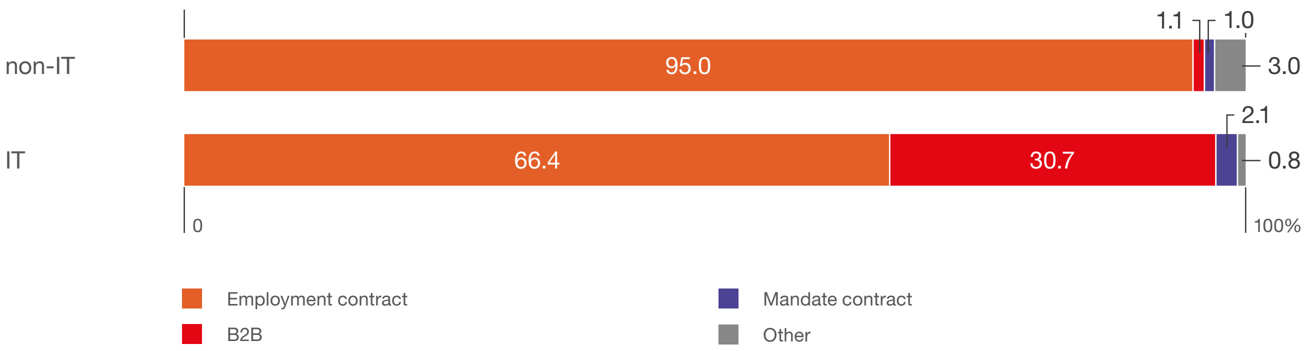
The ABSL 2025 survey shows that most business service centers in Poland approached communication about market-wide layoffs and operational changes with structured and transparent strategies. Companies commonly use leadership messages, town halls, and manager-led discussions to clarify and maintain

Contractual forms of employment

The previous report presented the importance of B2B contracts in the sector. As in other sectors of the economy, they have become common in business services, especially in IT processes. This has been possible primarily due to IT professionals' qualifications and unique, in-demand competencies. The development of B2B contracts stems from several factors. These include the ability to achieve better financial results, flexibility of operation, independence, and the possibility to provide services to various contractors. In the 2025 survey, a more comprehensive question was asked, including mandate contracts and other forms of employment.

The structure of the responses is presented below and divided into non-IT and IT centers.

FIGURE 2.6 **Employment structure in terms of employment form (excluding external providers – body/team leasing)** (%)

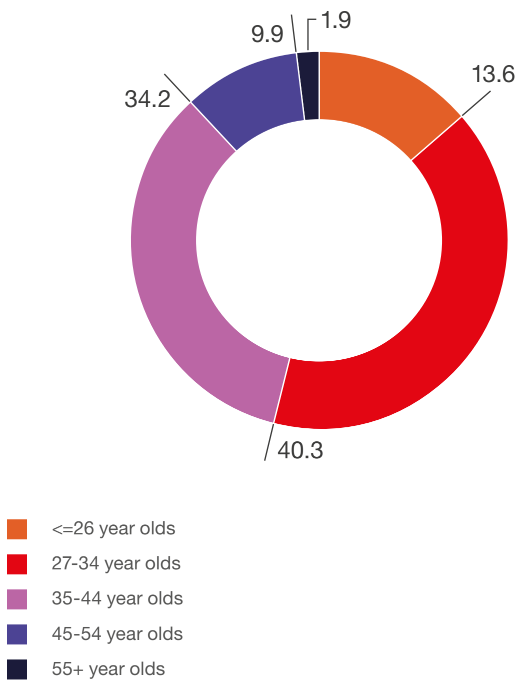


Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N for IT=20; N for non-IT=68). Employment-weighted.

Employment by age group, job position, and business process

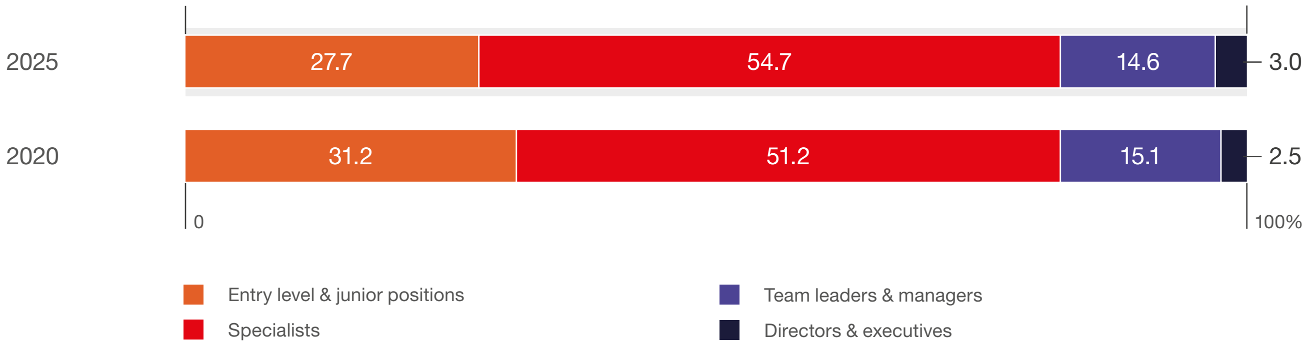
The sector has been changing and is now entering a mature phase. Over the years, there has been an increase in the share of the 35-plus-year-old group in overall employment. In 2024, this trend continued. Since 2019, the share of 35+ year-olds has increased by 17 p.p. A rise in the share of specialized positions in the employment structure of centers has accompanied these changes. The percentage of junior classes is decreasing. In the 2025 survey questionnaire, we asked about the structure of the center's employees in terms of tenure. The biggest category (27.5%) was the group working in the center for three to five years, followed by one to two years (23.1%). 14.4% of the headcount had worked in a center for ten years or longer. This is consistent with the sector's relatively high attrition rates and potentially indicates job-hopping within the main sectoral agglomerations in Poland, similar to the processes ongoing in typical industry clusters.

FIGURE 2.7 **The employment structure of business services centers according to the age of employees** (%)



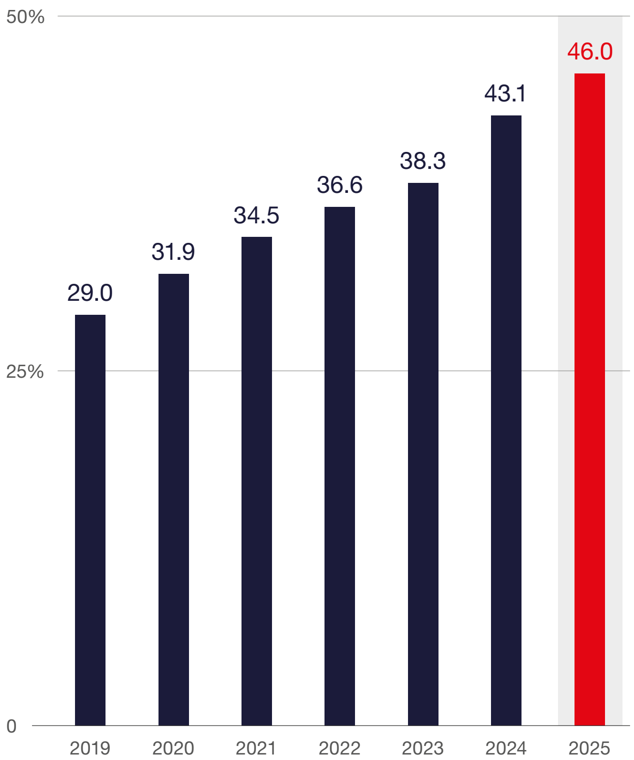
Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=164). Employment-weighted.

FIGURE 2.8 **Employment structure of business services centers by job category** (2020, 2025, %)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=174). The results are employment-weighted

FIGURE 2.9 **The share of 35+-year-olds in the industry's employment** (2019-2025, %)



Source: ABSL's analysis is based on the annual surveys. Employment-weighted.

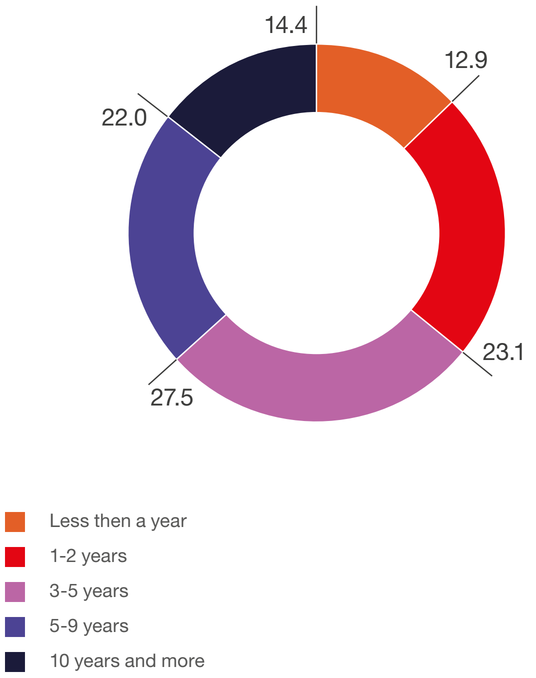
Tenure

The employment-weighted results show that a significant portion of the workforce comprises employees with short- to mid-term tenure, particularly those who have been with their centers for one to three years. This suggests healthy inflows of talent and a degree of dynamism within organizational structures. However, it also underscores potential challenges related to onboarding, training, and the retention of early-career professionals.

Longer-tenured employees with over five years of service represent a stable core within many centers. Their presence ensures continuity, operational knowledge, and leadership pipeline potential. However, their proportion is not dominant, indicating that while institutional memory exists, it may not be deeply entrenched across the board.

The data underscores the importance of career development frameworks, mentorship programs, and internal mobility opportunities to retain talent beyond the early tenure phase. In an environment marked by rising labor costs and talent shortages, service centers must cultivate retention strategies that move beyond compensation and focus on career progression, skill development, and workplace culture.

FIGURE 2.10 **Employment structure by tenure** (within a center) (%)

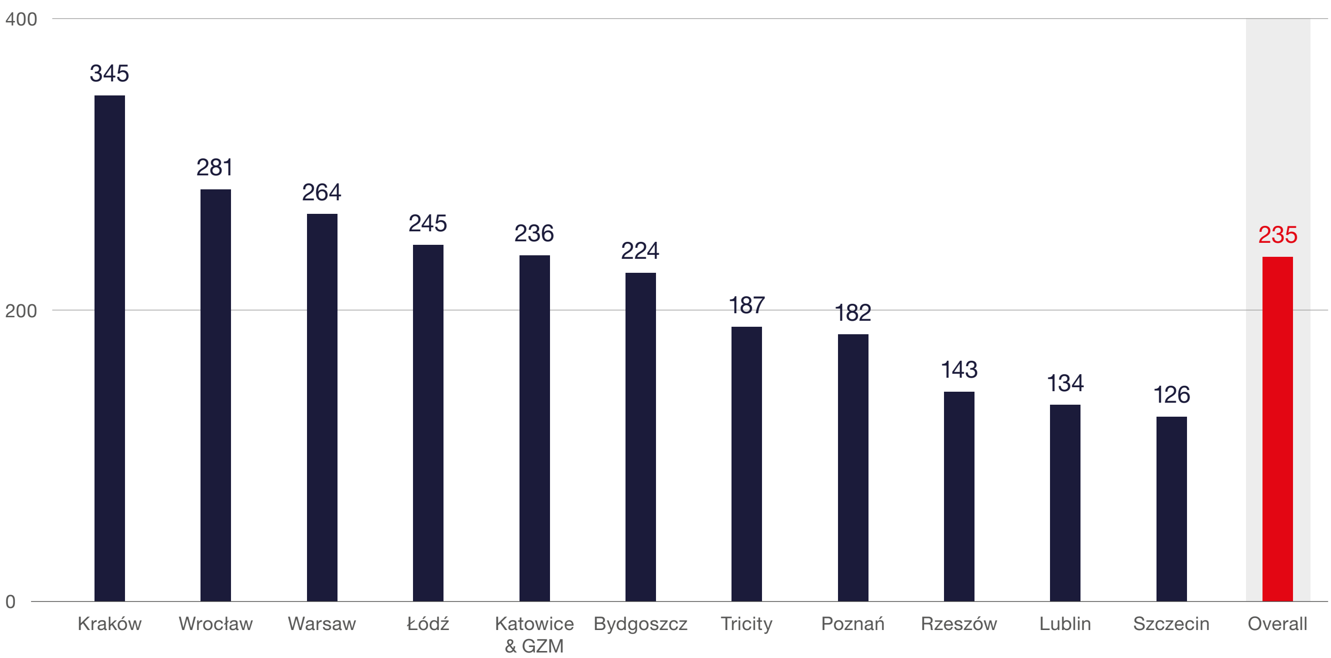


Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=167).
The results are employment-weighted.

Average headcount

Average headcount information is presented for the eleven main locations where centers employ at least 5,000 people. The highest average headcount was in Kraków (345). Twenty-seven centers in Kraków employ 1,000 people or more (57.0% of all overall employment in the sector in Kraków). Wrocław took second place (an average headcount of 281 employees, with eleven centers employing 1,000 people or more), with Warsaw in third position (an average headcount of 264 employees and twenty-two such centers). The average headcount in business services centers is 235. There is a difference in the average headcount between entities with foreign-owned and domestic capital (the main shareholder being a Polish entity). In foreign-owned companies, it is 278, while in domestic companies, it is 128. Such differences are also observed in the business services sector globally. Entities with foreign-owned capital are larger, more productive as a rule, and more internationally oriented. The highest average headcount is observed in centers whose headquarters are in France (354), Ireland (324), and the US (323).

FIGURE 2.11 **The average headcount at business services centers in Poland's main locations** (number of people, 2025)



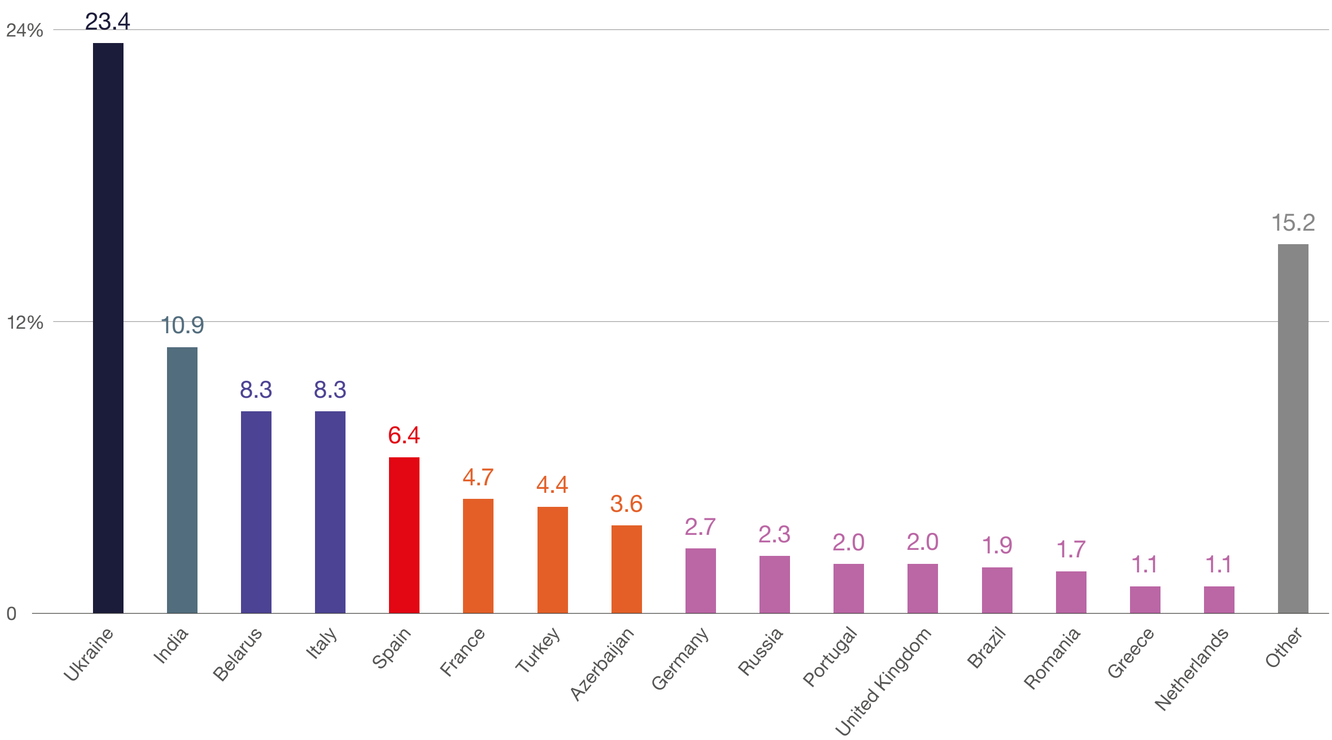
Source: ABSL's analysis based on ABSL's business services centers' database. Over the years, average employment in a center has grown, with fluctuations YoY.

Foreigners in business services centers

97.5% of business services centers covered by the survey employed foreigners. Multiculturalism is a characteristic feature of the sector in Poland. Diversity and inclusion play a significant role and are important for further growth. 54.0% of centers had over 10% foreign employees (up by three p.p. YoY). A diverse workforce is crucial and constitutes the foundation of the centers' competitive advantage. This will increase further, with talent being sought globally to meet growing demand. This is particularly true for the most prominent business services locations in Poland. Overall, we estimate the number of foreigners employed at service centers in Poland to be 96,000.

Respondents of the ABSL survey indicated the five leading countries of origin for foreigners working at a business center. The top three positions were those of employees from Ukraine, India, and Belarus (same as in the previous survey). Ukraine continues to be the most frequently indicated country of origin for foreigners. Ukrainians were the largest group of foreigners at 66.0% of the companies that employ foreigners (4 p.p. higher than in the previous report, 19 p.p. higher than in the 2021 survey). The number of countries where foreign-owned workers were sourced was 57 (five fewer than in 2024). The share of foreigners in overall employment in business services centers analyzed by ABSL was 19.6% (4.4 p.p. more than in the previous year). Over the years, it has been subject to fluctuations stemming from the situation in Ukraine and the relocation of activities and functions to Poland by large centers, increasing demand for talent pool as the sector in Poland grows (in terms of employment) and changes (in terms of business sophistication and maturity); the increasing application of AI, its consequences and related expectations.

FIGURE 2.12 **Countries of origin most often declared by foreigners employed in business services centers** (% of indications)



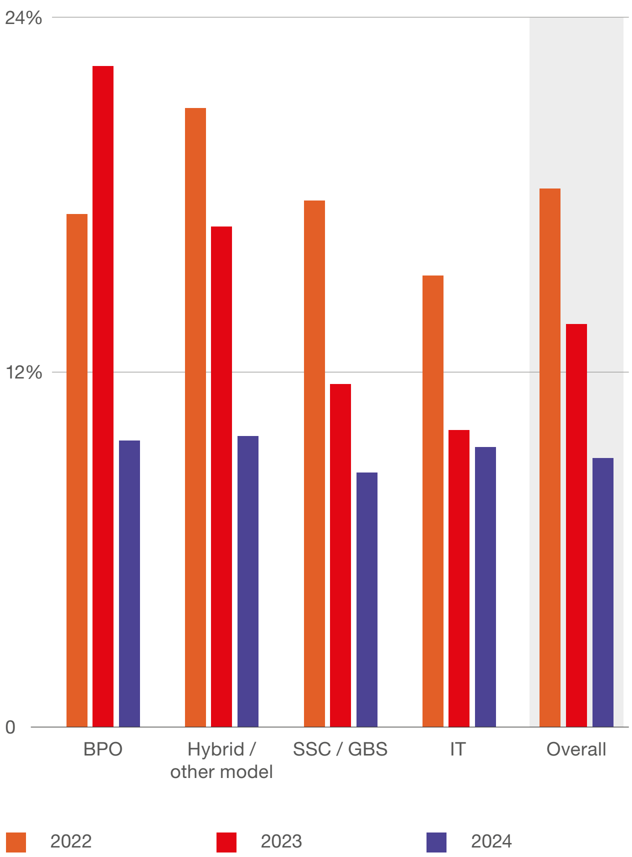
Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=168, the number of indications 640).

Employee turnover

The voluntary turnover rate in business services centers, as analyzed by ABSL, was 9.1%. This figure has been growing since 2020 and reached 18.3% in 2022. It dropped in 2023 and 2024 (YoY), which reflects the changing labor market conditions. Contrary to previous years, no substantial differences in voluntary turnover were reported across different types of centers.

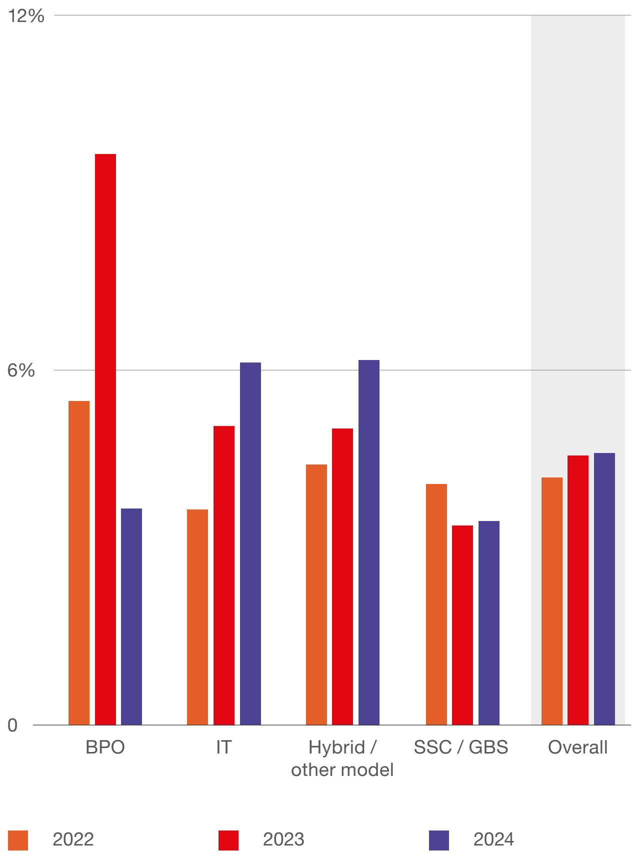
The involuntary turnover rate (not dependent on the employee) for 2024 was 4.6% (the same as in the previous year). IT and hybrid/other centers reported the highest involuntary turnover rate, which increased compared to previous years.

FIGURE 2.13 | **Voluntary turnover rate by center type** (%)



Source: ABSL's analysis based on the survey's results (N=158). Employment-weighted.

FIGURE 2.14 | **Involuntary turnover (initiated by the company) rate by center type** (%)

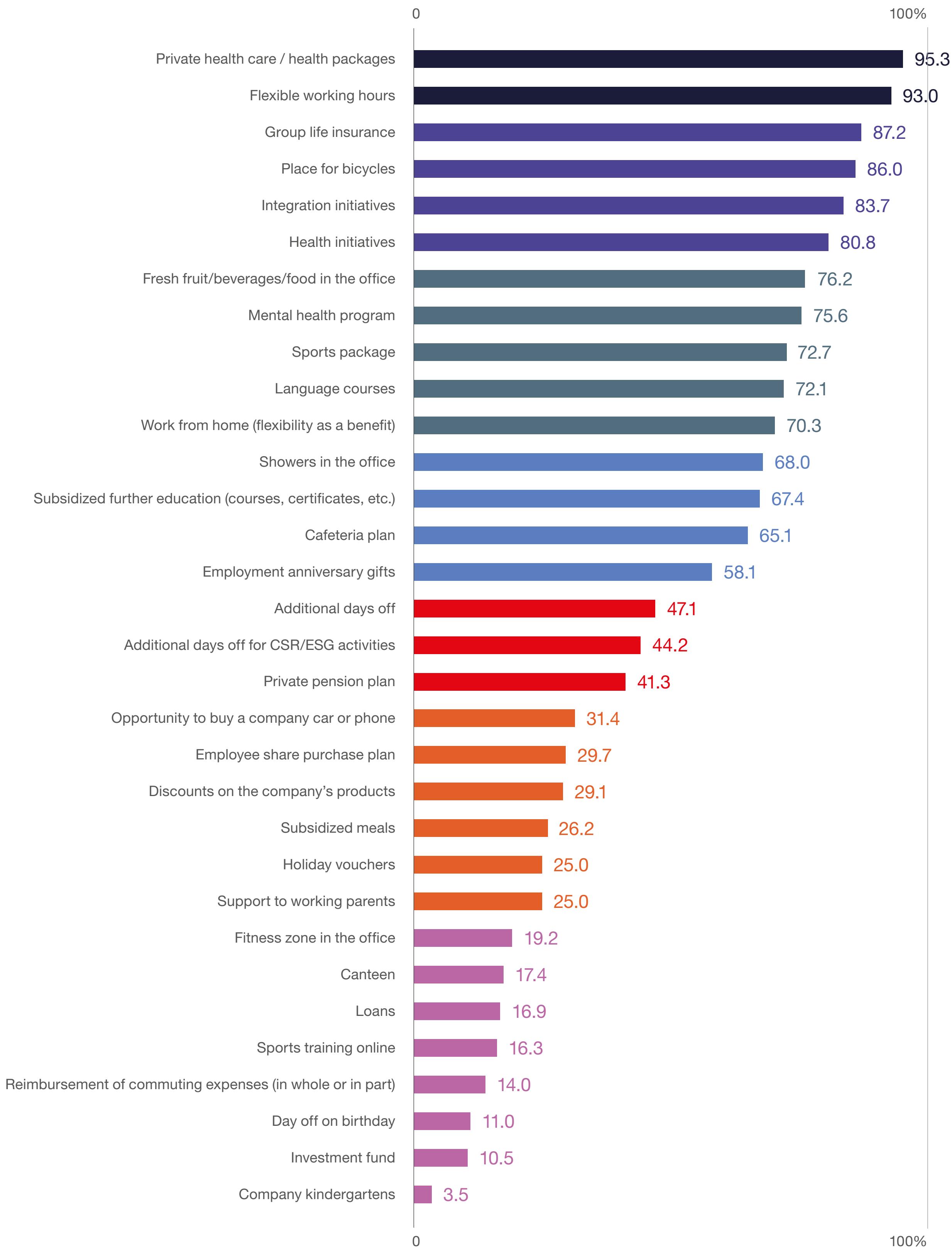


Source: ABSL's analysis based on the survey's results (N=153). Employment-weighted.

Non-payroll benefits

Highly skilled workers are the most critical asset. The sector in Poland offers competitive salaries and provides its employees with a wide range of non-payroll benefits that go well beyond what is standard in the Polish labor market. In this respect, the sector is a trendsetter for others.

FIGURE 2.15 | **Non-payroll benefits & allowances offered to employees at the end of Q1 2025** (% of respondents)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=172). Other benefits mentioned by respondents: benefit points to be exchanged for a variety of products and services; gifts for Christmas, Easter, and children's day; holiday supplement ("wczasy pod gruszą"); new-born pack; relaxation area; webinars; inhouse events and celebrations; company car; recognition awards, work from abroad.

Talent pool availability and development activities

Talent pool availability remains the top factor driving Poland's attractiveness for shoring activities. However, over time, the perception of talent shortages as a barrier to operations and growth has diminished.

Since 2022, survey responses have shown a decline in firms citing talent shortages as a significant bottleneck.

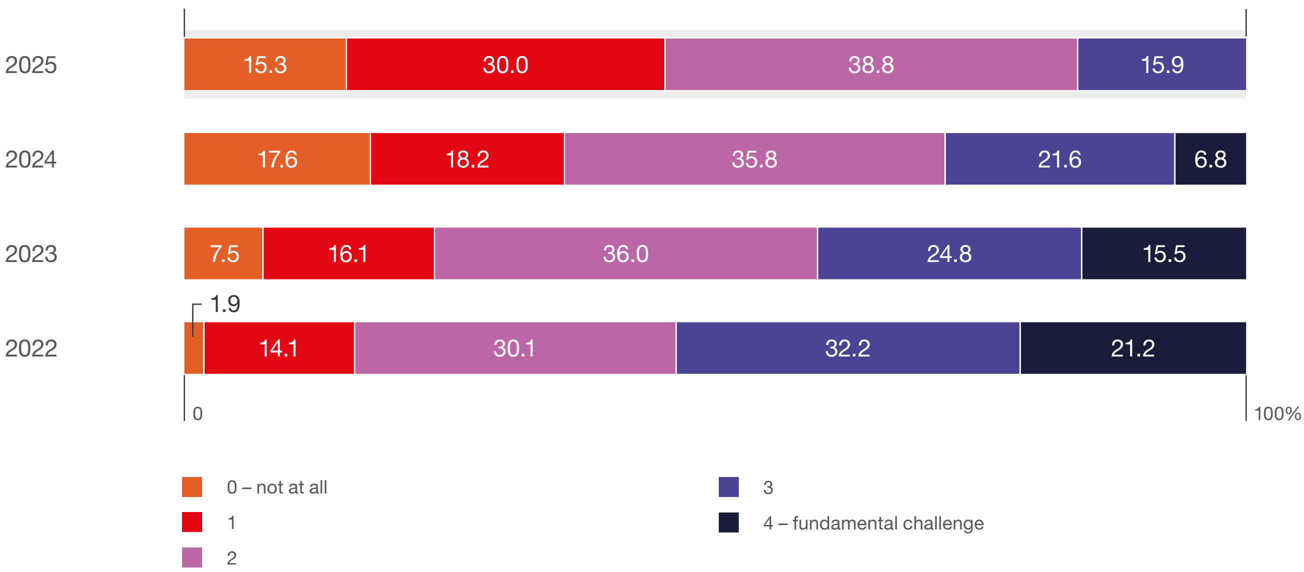
The sector has adapted to this reality by increasingly employing foreign professionals and workers aged 35 and above. In the longer term, the widespread adoption of remote work models (WFH and work-from-anywhere), along with the automation of processes and the integration of AI, are helping to mitigate talent constraints.

Notably, in the 2025 survey, no respondents identified talent pool availability as a "fundamental challenge," marking a significant shift in sentiment compared to previous years.

According to the ABSL 2025 survey, most organizations invested heavily in internal training (88.2%) and customized e-learning platforms (86.5%) to build workforce capabilities. External training (82.4%) and knowledge-sharing initiatives (78.8%) were also widely used. Over 70% rely on internal SMEs to lead development, while cross-departmental training (61.2%) and academic partnerships (42.9%) were less common.

The data strongly focuses on internal upskilling and digital learning solutions to meet evolving sector needs

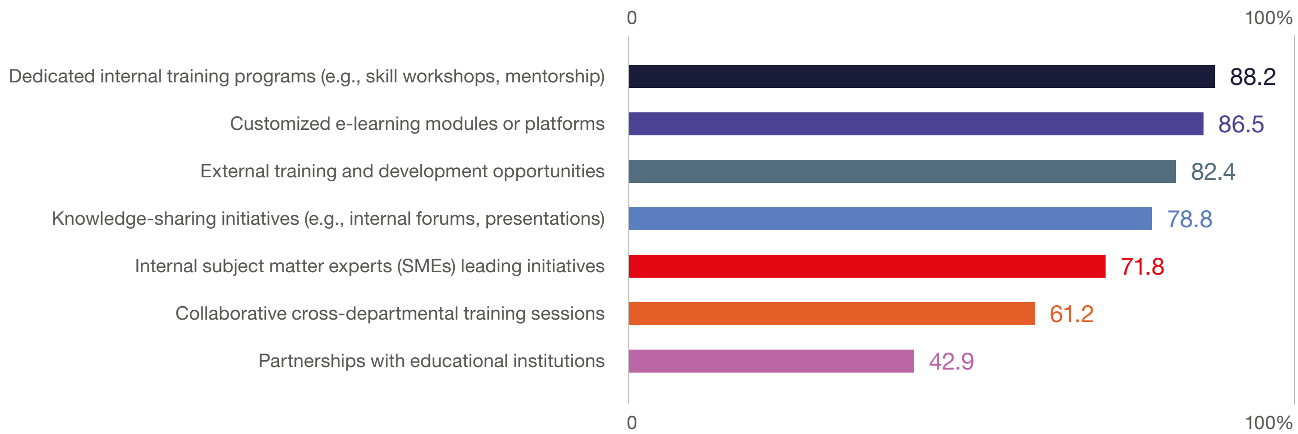
FIGURE 2.16 | **To what extent is the availability of a talent pool in Poland a barrier (a bottleneck) for your center(s) to operate and grow?** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (for 2025 N=170).

FIGURE 2.17

How does your organization leverage and enhance the competencies of its talent pool, including internal training schemes, to meet current and future demands in the sector? (% of respondents)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=170).

Employment plans

The business services sector operates in a VUCA environment – volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous – where adaptability to shocks is part of daily operations. However, recent years have brought exceptional challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the widespread adoption of WFH, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, geopolitical instability, and the rapid acceleration of AI.

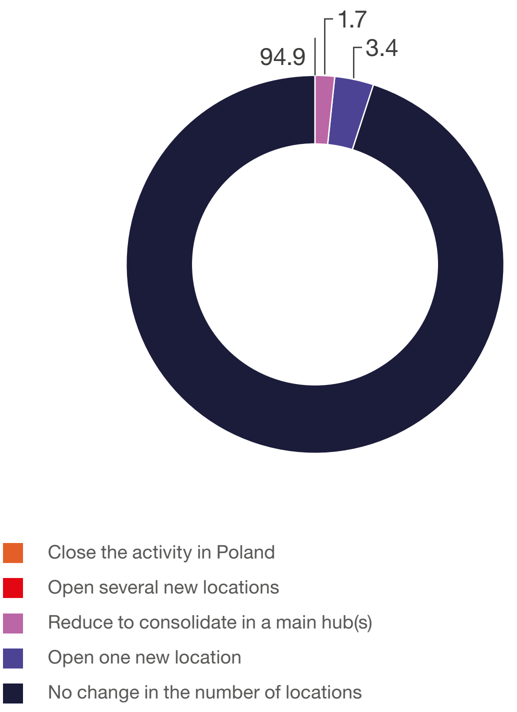
Despite these disruptions, sector in Poland continues to perform well. Employment grew by 6.2% YoY, contrasting with a 0.9% decline in Poland's overall enterprise sector. However, with the sector's ongoing shift toward higher-value, middle-office roles, headcount alone is no longer the sole performance indicator.

The pandemic accelerated trends already shaping the sector—AI, automation, soft skills, advanced data processing, and rising client expectations. The Q1 2025 survey shows that 59.8% of firms planned to increase employment in the next 12 months. While slightly lower than last year (down 5.7 p.p.), this remains a positive signal given the increasingly complex macroeconomic and geopolitical landscape.

In the 2025 survey, 94.9% of respondents reported no planned changes to their number of locations in Poland. 3.4% intended to open one new center, while 1.7% planned a reduction to consolidate operations in main hubs. No respondents indicated plans to close operations or open multiple new locations.

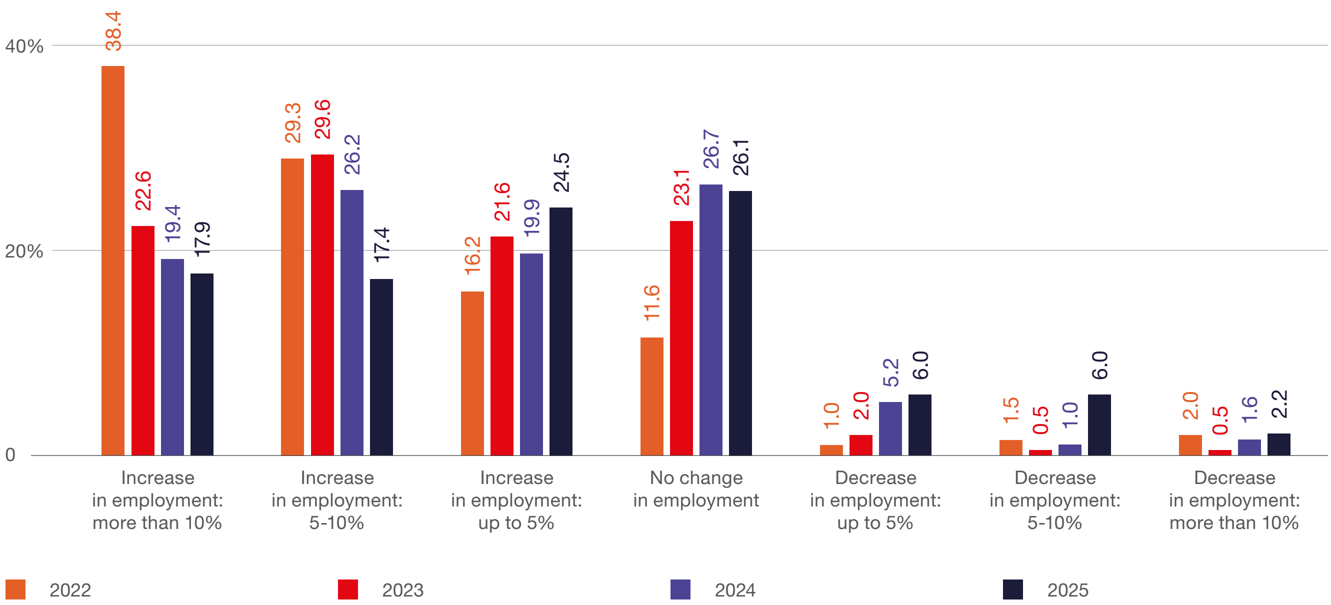
FIGURE 2.18

Plans to change your presence in Poland over the next 12 months (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=175).

FIGURE 2.19 **Centers' plans regarding changes in headcount by Q1 2026** (share of centers in %), **compared with the previous reports results**



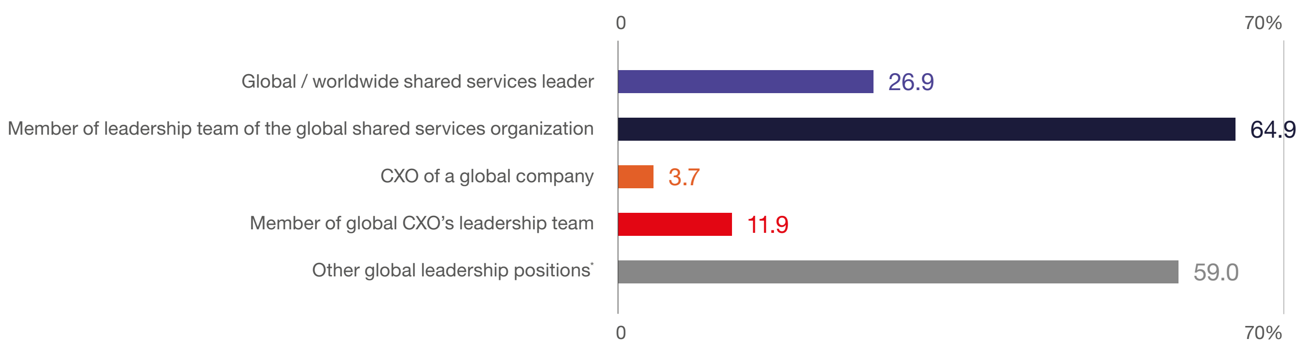
Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N =184).

Leadership

Global business services executive roles based in Poland

Survey results from Q1 2025 confirm that Poland is emerging as a hub for global leadership roles, particularly within business services. The most common roles included Global Shared Services leadership team members (42.4%) and global project leaders (38.5%), reflecting Poland's growing influence in operational and transformational functions. While 17.6% of centers hosted Global Shared Services Leaders, C-suite roles remained rare (2.4%), and only 7.8% reported participation in Global CXO's leadership team. This underscores Poland's position as a mature shared services hub, though not yet a core center for global corporate leadership. To strengthen its position as a global leadership hub, we may need to continue developing our strategic capabilities, innovation, transformative potential, and executive talent pipeline.

FIGURE 2.20 **Which of the following global business services executive roles are based in Poland?** (%)



* e.g., Transformational project leader for global project

Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=134).

Global business transformation work

Survey results show that Poland's service centers primarily execute and manage global business transformation projects rather than initiate or approve them. Key responsibilities included running operations (78.2%), project management (71.8%), and process and tech implementation (66.2%).

While 57.0% of centers also owned project execution, only 19.7% were involved in transformation approvals, stressing their operational focus. Still, 53.5% contributed to idea generation and proposal development, reflecting growing involvement in innovation and process design – though strategic decisions remain centralized at global HQs.

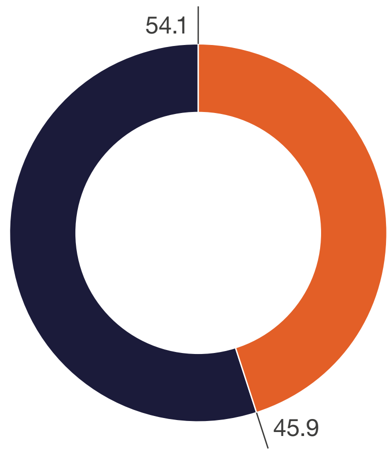
Barriers preventing leaders from Poland-based centers from transitioning into global leadership roles

Survey results reveal key barriers preventing leaders in Poland-based service centers from advancing into global roles. The most cited challenges were open-mindedness and creative thinking (62.7%) and a willingness to try new approaches (50.0%), emphasizing a need for greater adaptability and innovation.

Other significant gaps included information processing (43.0%) and entrepreneurial skills (32.4%), suggesting a need to strengthen strategic agility and initiative-taking. In contrast, influencing skills (16.2%) and risk aversion (4.2%) were less commonly seen as barriers.

To support global leadership readiness, organizations should invest in leadership development focused on strategic thinking, innovation, and a global mindset while fostering a culture of experimentation and cross-functional collaboration.

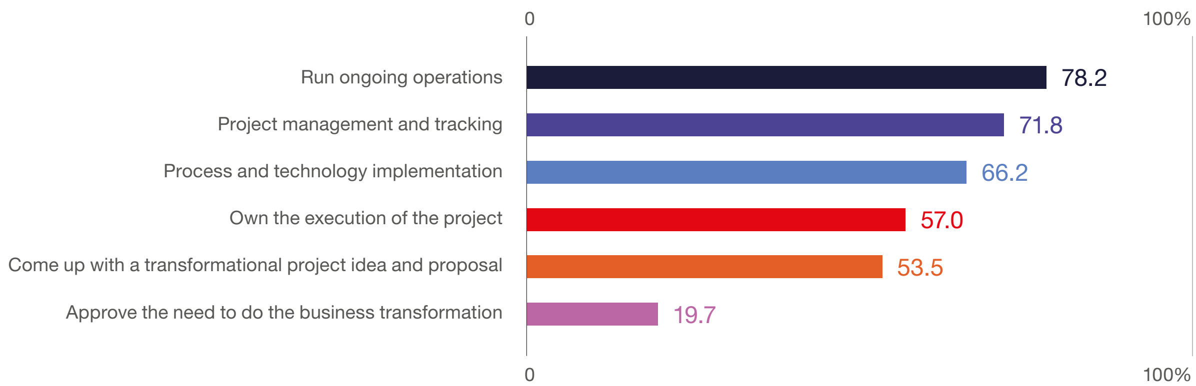
FIGURE 2.21 | **Do you believe there is a perception gap regarding the capability of Polish leaders in global roles?** (%)



Yes, Polish / Polish-based leaders are undervalued compared to counterparts in other regions.
No, the perception aligns with their global contributions

Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=148).

FIGURE 2.22 | **When it comes to global business transformation work (e.g., large global business reengineering projects), what type of roles does the Poland service center usually provide?** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=142).

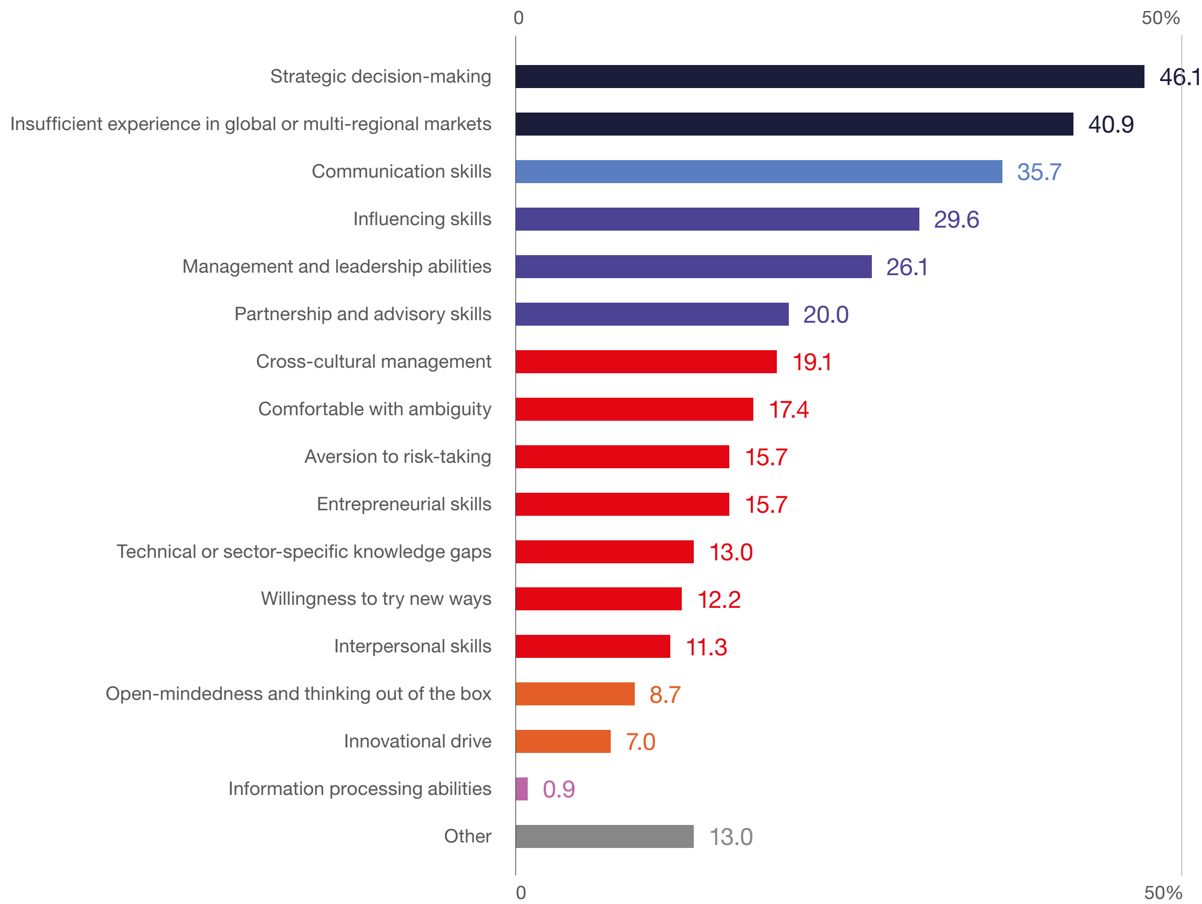
Perception gap

Survey results show a divided view on the global recognition of Poland-based leaders. 45.9% of respondents believed these leaders were undervalued, pointing to possible perception gaps driven by historical biases or limited visibility in strategic roles. Meanwhile, 54.1% felt that current representation accurately reflected their contributions, suggesting that while Polish leaders are competent, greater innovation, visibility, and global influence may be needed to reach top leadership positions.

Skills and experience gaps

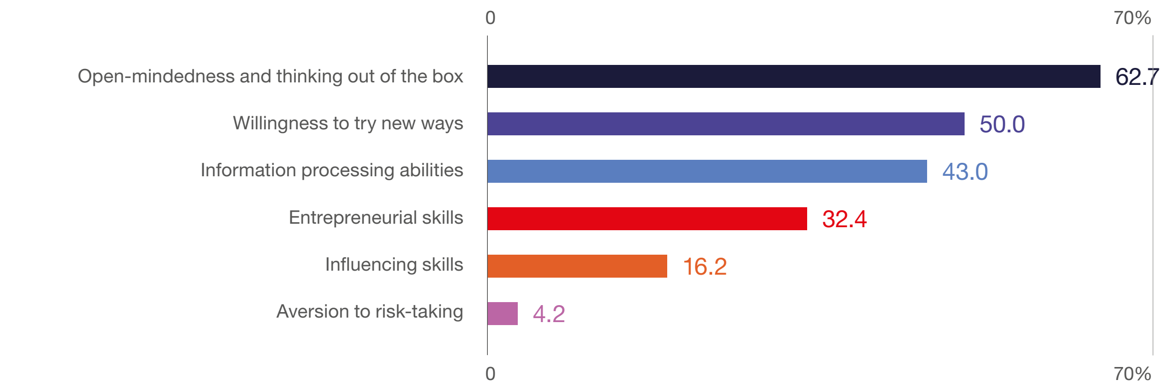
Strategic decision-making (46.1%), insufficient experience in global or multi-regional markets (40.9%), and communication skills (35.7%) were considered by our respondents to be **the primary barriers preventing our leaders from being considered for global roles.** These findings highlight a potential experience and leadership gap, suggesting that while Poland-based center leaders may possess strong operational expertise, they may lack exposure to higher-level global strategy, cross-functional leadership, and high-stakes decision-making at a multinational level. Influencing skills (29.6%) and management and leadership abilities (26.1%) were also significant factors, reinforcing the idea that while technical and execution competencies are strong, higher-level leadership capabilities, global influence, and decision-making power remain areas for development.

FIGURE 2.23 **Specific skill or experience gaps preventing Polish center leaders from being considered for global roles** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=115).

FIGURE 2.24 **What barriers prevent leaders from centers in Poland from transitioning into global leadership roles?** (%)

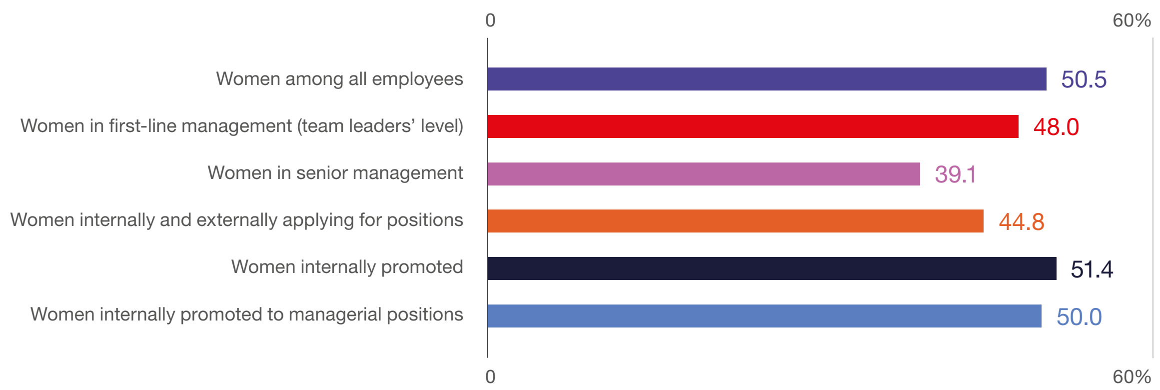


Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=142).

Women in the sector

The data indicates that **gender parity is relatively well maintained** in the sector at the overall employment level (50.5% women) and in internal promotion processes (51.4% of those promoted were women, including 50.0% to managerial roles). However, representation declined with seniority – while 48.0% of first-line managers were women, this dropped to 39.1% in senior management roles. This suggests a leaky pipeline, where women's progression slows at higher levels despite equitable promotion rates. Additionally, the lower share of women applying for roles (44.8%, both internally and externally) may point to confidence gaps, structural barriers, or misalignment with available roles, all of which should be addressed to support sustained career advancement.

FIGURE 2.25 **The share of women in overall employment** (%)

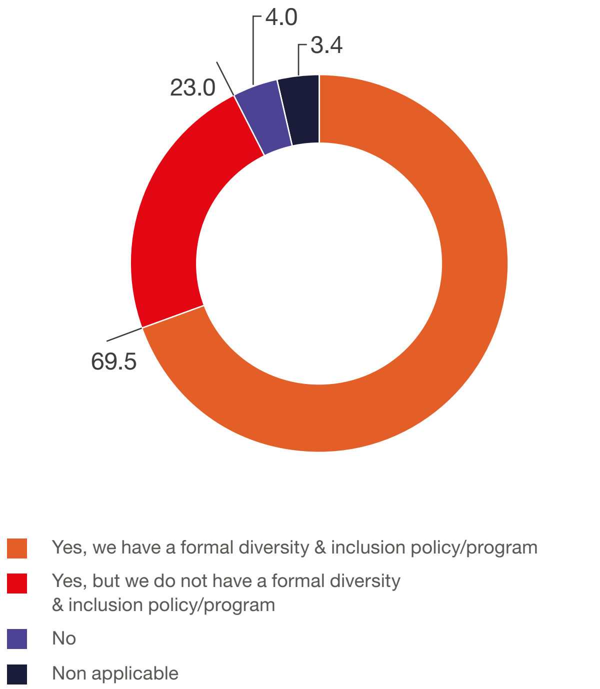


Source: ABSL's analysis based on the results of the survey. The results are weighted by overall employment (N=169).

Diversity, inclusion & belonging

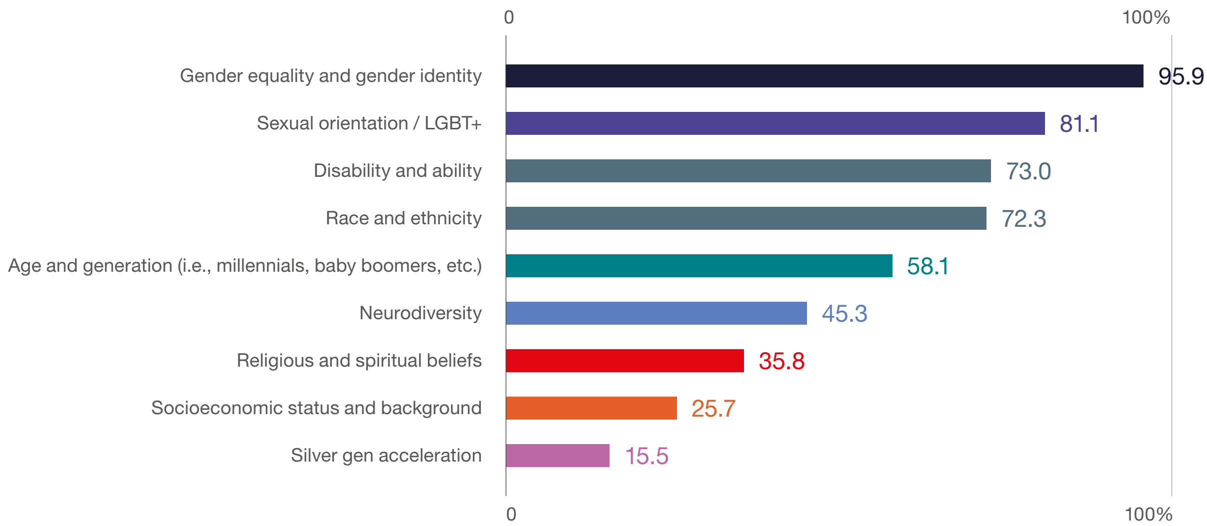
ABSL's 2025 survey shows that **diversity, inclusion, and belonging (DIB) are increasingly integrated into core business strategies across Poland's business services sector.** What began as HR initiatives has evolved into a broader focus on inclusive hiring, gender balance, and a sense of belonging. While representation has improved, deeper inclusion – rooted in psychological safety and shared purpose – remains a work in progress. As DIB becomes a competitive differentiator, leading firms align efforts with measurable outcomes, leadership accountability, and long-term workforce engagement.

FIGURE 2.26 | **Is diversity & inclusion part of your business strategy?** (% of respondents)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=174).

FIGURE 2.27 | **What is your diversity and inclusion policy / program focused on?** (% of respondents)

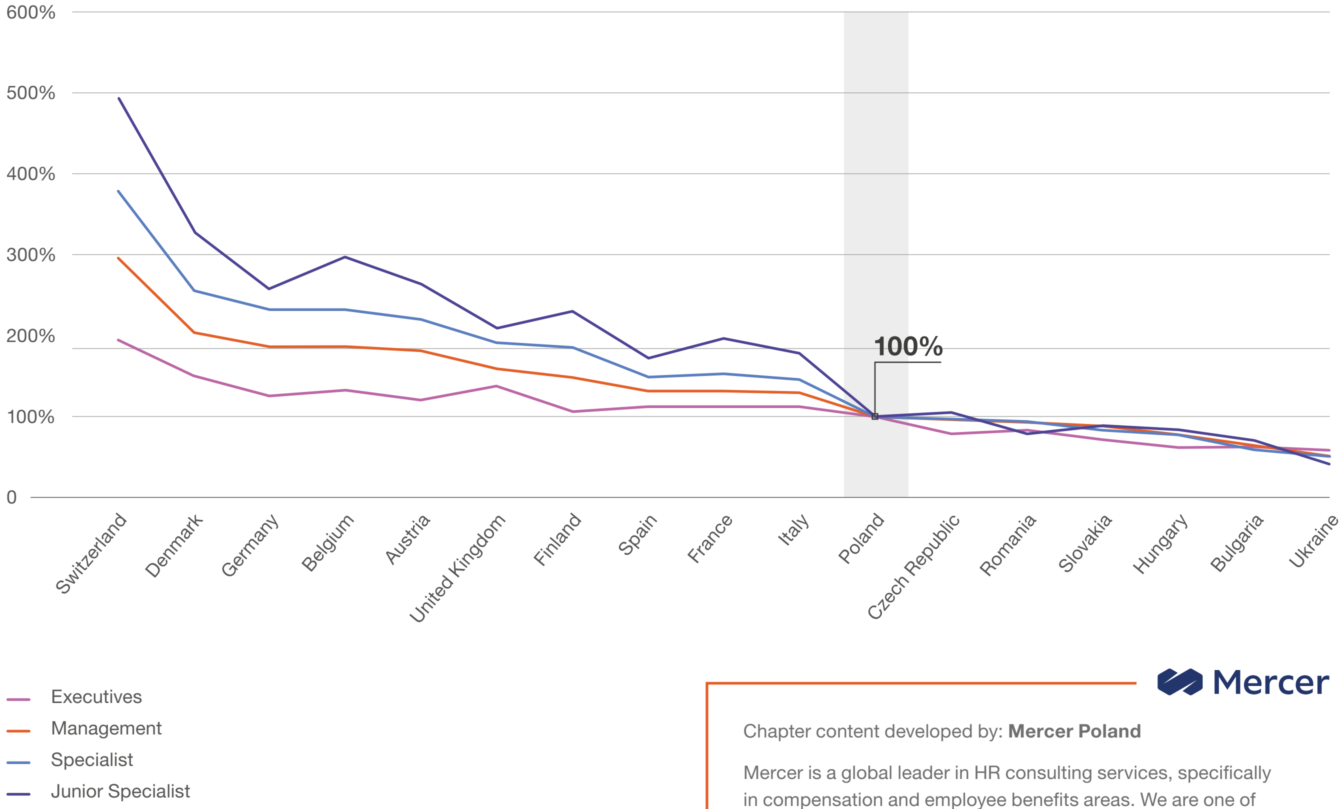


Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=115).

LABOR MARKET

Salaries at Business Services Centers

FIGURE 2.28 **Comparison of actual annual gross base salary between Poland and European countries at different job levels** (%)



Salaries in Poland are still competitive in comparison to Western European countries. Pay gap is significant especially at the lower job levels.

Source: Mercer 2024 compensation surveys.

Mercer

Chapter content developed by: **Mercer Poland**

Mercer is a global leader in HR consulting services, specifically in compensation and employee benefits areas. We are one of the 3 largest insurance brokerage companies in the field of risk benefits, personal insurance and medical care and the largest advisor in pension advisory services. Mercer is part of the MMC Group, a company listed on the New York Stock Exchange. Mercer employs over 21,000 employees in over 170 countries around the world, more than 700 in Poland. More at: **www.mercer.com.pl.**

TABLE 2.1

Comparison of actual monthly gross base salary in BPO / SSC / IT / R&D sector in Poland and other countries in the region in EUR

	Job Level	Base Salary Mean	Base Salary Median
Poland	Senior Manager / Manager	6,127	5,964
	Team Leader	3,888	3,780
	Senior Specialist	3,275	3,106
	Junior Specialist	1,744	1,666
Bulgaria	Senior Manager / Manager	4,422	4,114
	Team Leader	3,036	2,757
	Senior Specialist	2,581	2,422
	Junior Specialist	1,517	1,475
Czech Republic	Senior Manager / Manager	5,900	5,517
	Team Leader	4,084	4,032
	Senior Specialist	3,612	3,455
	Junior Specialist	2,133	2,071
Hungary	Senior Manager / Manager	5,488	5,419
	Team Leader	3,604	3,518
	Senior Specialist	2,530	2,486
	Junior Specialist	1,598	1,554
Romania	Senior Manager / Manager	5,680	5,290
	Team Leader	3,387	3,330
	Senior Specialist	3,139	2,940
	Junior Specialist	1,625	1,645
Estonia	Senior Manager / Manager	4,730	4,514
	Team Leader	3,671	3,439
	Senior Specialist	3,141	2,945
	Junior Specialist	1,979	1,896

Currency exchange rates

1 PLN = **0.2353 EUR** 1 BGN = **0.5113 EUR** 1 RON = **0.2010 EUR** 1 HUF = **0.0024 EUR** 1 CZK = **0.0398 EUR**

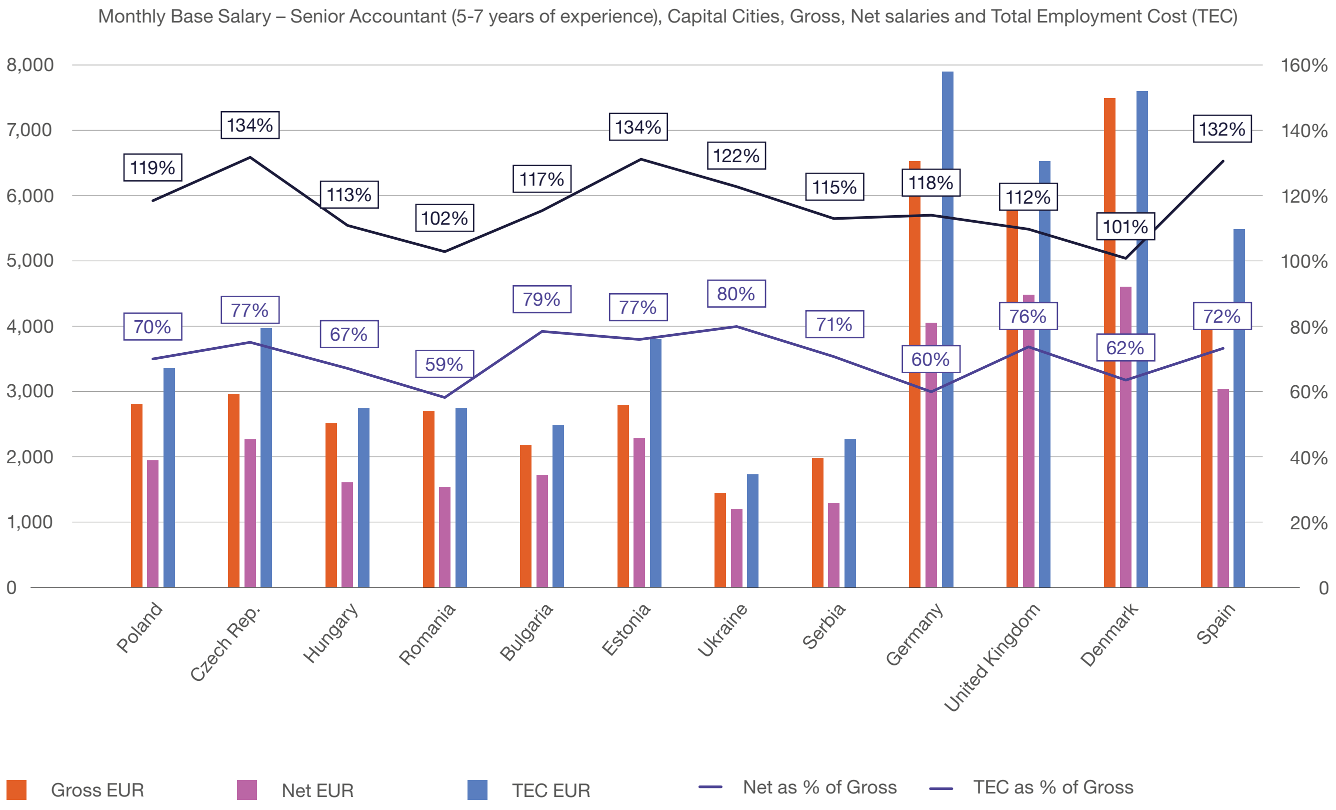
Sources: Mercer 2024 Poland SSC Industry Survey, Mercer 2024 Bulgaria TRS Survey, Mercer 2024 Czech Republic SSC Survey, Mercer 2024 Hungary TRS Survey, Mercer 2024 Romania SSC Industry Survey, Mercer 2024 Estonia TRS Survey.

Base salaries are significantly diversified across Europe. The salaries observed in Eastern Europe are still very competitive against those in Western European countries. In the example below, we have compared base salary of a Senior Accountant (professional, typically with 5-7 years of experience) in capital cities of selected countries. Besides the differences in gross salaries, it is also interesting to see how these vary in terms of net salary and total employment cost (TEC).

Senior Accountant's earnings are higher in the Czech Republic than in Poland, especially in terms of net salary. The total employment cost in Poland is much lower, compared to the Czech Republic, where the employer is required to contribute to social security, on top of gross salary (34% of gross salary). Even though gross salary in Romania is quite in line with the Polish one, the net earnings are much lower, given high tax burden in Romania, which is more than 40% of gross salary.

FIGURE 2.29

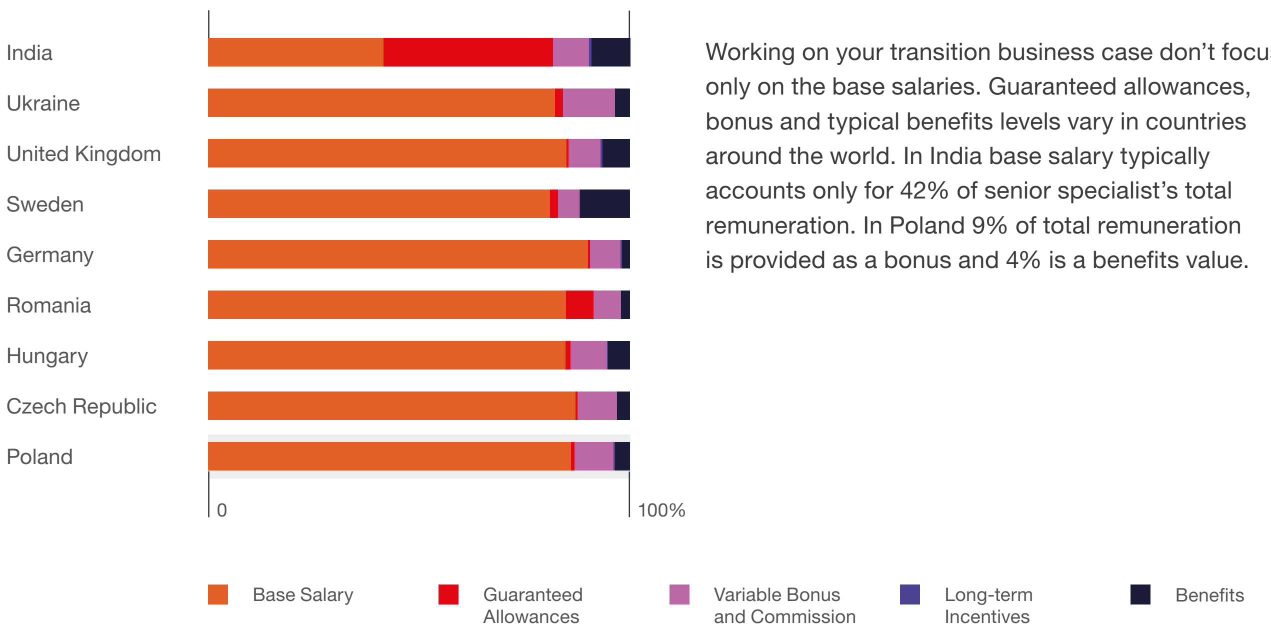
Comparison of actual monthly gross and net base salaries in selected countries in Europe. What is the Total Employment Cost?



Source: Mercer 2024 compensation surveys.

FIGURE 2.30

Percentage of total remuneration into base salary, guaranteed allowances, variable cash payments, long-term incentives and benefits (%)



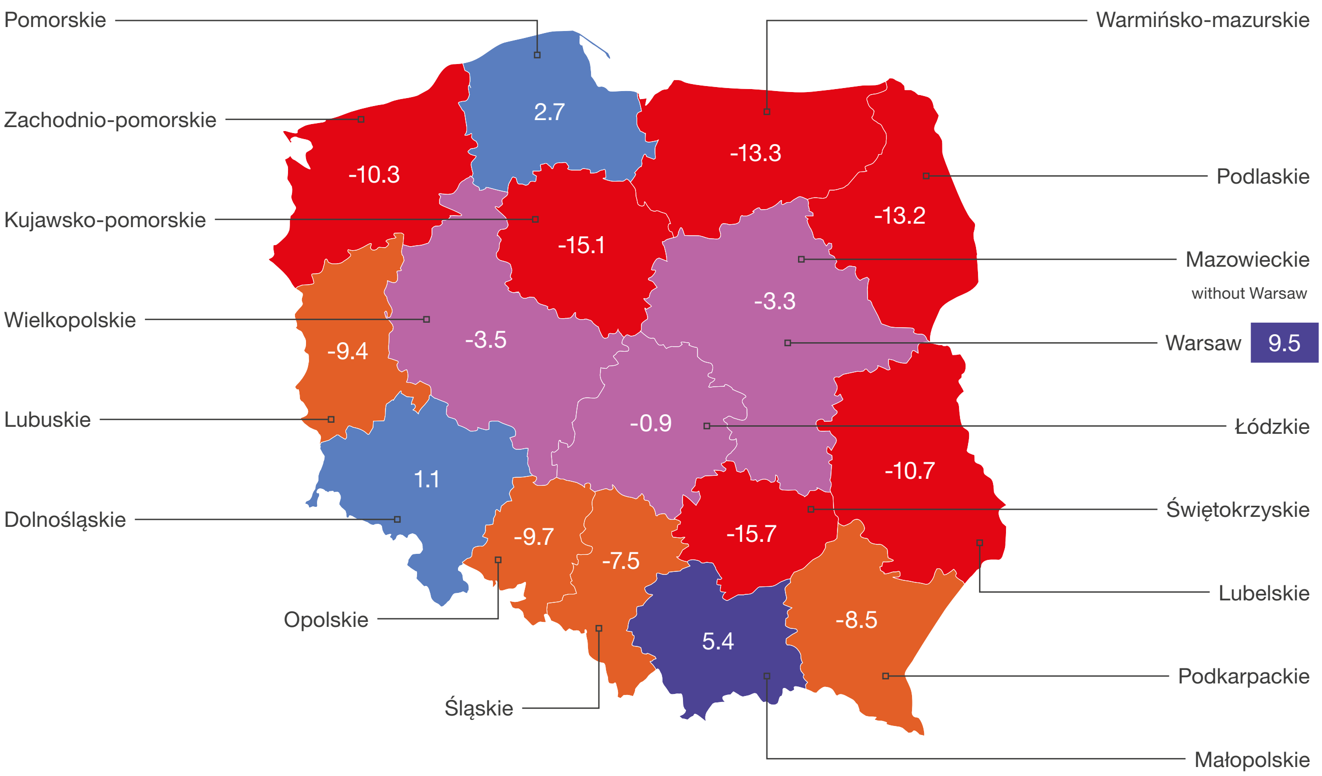
Working on your transition business case don't focus only on the base salaries. Guaranteed allowances, bonus and typical benefits levels vary in countries around the world. In India base salary typically accounts only for 42% of senior specialist's total remuneration. In Poland 9% of total remuneration is provided as a bonus and 4% is a benefits value.

Source: Mercer 2024 Remuneration Surveys.

FIGURE 2.31

Regional pay differentials in Poland (%)

Comparison of average annual base salary in regions in Poland, where average Poland is 100%.
Table is based on the analysis of actual remuneration of employees in Poland in 2024.



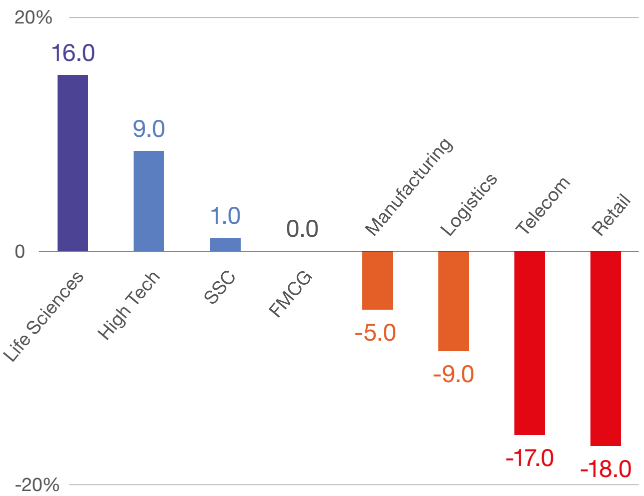
Compensation levels in Poland are diversified and the highest are in the capital city Warsaw.

Poland 100%

Source: Mercer 2024 Remuneration Surveys.

FIGURE 2.32

Salary differentials by industry in Poland (%)



The sectors that have been the strongest and have consistently positioned themselves well above the market average in terms of compensation are primarily the Life Science sector, with a 16%, and the High Tech sector, with a 9% above the market. On the other hand, sectors such as Logistics, Telecom and Retail, as in previous years, have reported earnings below market median. The Shared Services industry maintains a strong and stable position slightly above market value.

Source: Mercer Salary Reports 2024.

TABLE 2.2

Actual monthly gross base salaries in BPO / SSC / IT / R&D sector in Poland in EUR

Table is based on the analysis of actual remuneration of over 94,000 employees from 247 SSC organizations in Poland surveyed in 2024. Detailed cities compensation analysis was prepared based on the regional pay differences.

City	Poland	
Region		
Monthly gross base salaries	Mean	Median
Head of Center	12,088	11,876
Manager	5,395	5,362
Team Leader	3,912	3,824
Senior Specialist	3,197	3,108
Specialist	2,362	2,322
Junior Specialist	1,858	1,812

Currency exchange rates

1 PLN = **0.2353 EUR**

Manager	team up to 50 people (Team Leaders manager)
Team Leader	5-15 subordinates
Senior Specialist	minumum 4 years of experience
Specialist	2-4 years of experience
Junior Specialist	up to 2 years of experience, entry level position

City	Warsaw		Kraków		Wrocław	
Region	Warsaw		Małopolskie		Dolnośląskie	
Monthly gross base salaries	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Head of Center	13,238	13,006	12,736	12,513	12,217	12,004
Manager	5,909	5,872	5,685	5,650	5,453	5,420
Team Leader	4,285	4,188	4,122	4,029	3,954	3,865
Senior Specialist	3,502	3,404	3,369	3,275	3,232	3,142
Specialist	2,587	2,543	2,489	2,447	2,387	2,347
Junior Specialist	2,035	1,984	1,958	1,909	1,878	1,831

City	Tricity		Łódź		Katowice		Poznań	
Region	Pomorskie		Łódzkie		Śląskie		Wielkopolskie	
Monthly gross base salaries	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
Head of Center	12,419	12,202	11,981	11,772	11,178	10,982	11,662	11,458
Manager	5,543	5,509	5,348	5,315	4,992	4,924	5,205	5,173
Team Leader	4,020	3,929	3,878	3,790	3,618	3,536	3,775	3,689
Senior Specialist	3,285	3,194	3,169	3,081	2,957	2,874	3,085	2,999
Specialist	2,427	2,386	2,341	2,302	2,184	2,148	2,279	2,241
Junior Specialist	1,909	1,861	1,842	1,796	1,718	1,675	1,793	1,748

Source: Mercer 2024 Poland SSC Survey.

FIGURE 2.33 | **Hot jobs in the sector**

Roles the most difficult to fill or retain in organizations in BPO / SSC / IT / R&D sector in Poland in 2024

IT, Telecom Infrastructure & Internet	Finance	Engineering & Science	Sales, Marketing & Product Management	Customer Service & Contact Center Operations
Professionals	Professionals	Professionals	Professionals	Professionals

Less than a half (43.9%) of organizations in BPO / SSC / IT / R&D sector in Poland report they have difficulty in hiring or retaining talent in certain roles.

Source: Mercer 2024 Poland SSC Survey.

Pay increase in selected categories of services in Poland

TABLE 2.3 | **Actual salary increases awarded in BPO / SSC / IT / R&D sector in Poland in 2024**

The most common salary review dates in Poland are: March (33.5% of organizations surveyed) and February (29.8% of organizations surveyed). Individual performance is the most common criterion for a salary increase (94.5% of organizations surveyed).

	25th Percentile	Median	Average	75th Percentile
Head of Center	6.0%	7.5%	7.4%	8.5%
Managers	6.0%	7.0%	7.3%	8.5%
Specialist	6.0%	7.0%	7.3%	8.5%
Junior Specialist	6.0%	7.0%	7.4%	8.5%
Overall Budget	6.0%	7.0%	7.4%	8.5%

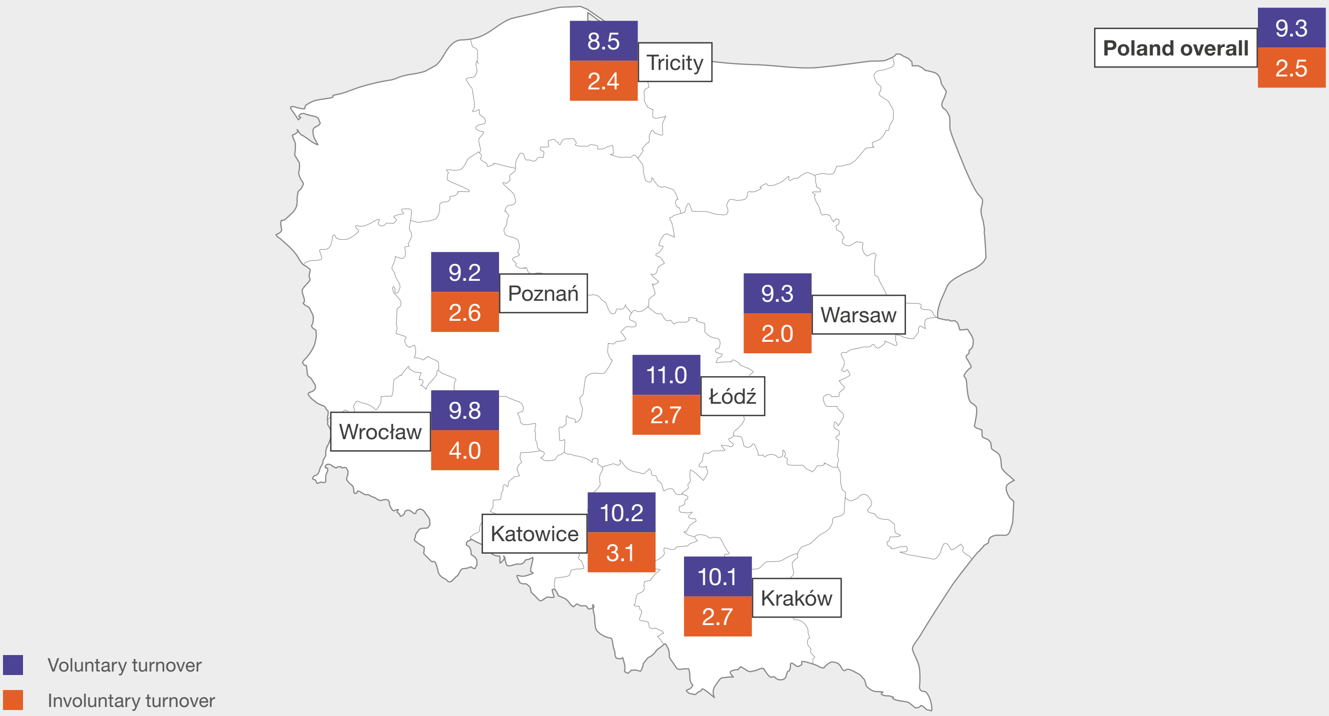
Source: Mercer 2024 Poland SSC Survey.

TABLE 2.4 | **Typical salary increase when promoting to higher level**

	25th Percentile	Median	Average	75th Percentile
Management	10.0%	15.0%	15.7%	20.0%
Team Leader	12.0%	15.0%	16.4%	20.0%
Specialist	12.0%	15.0%	15.8%	20.0%
Junior Specialist	12.0%	15.0%	16.4%	20.0%

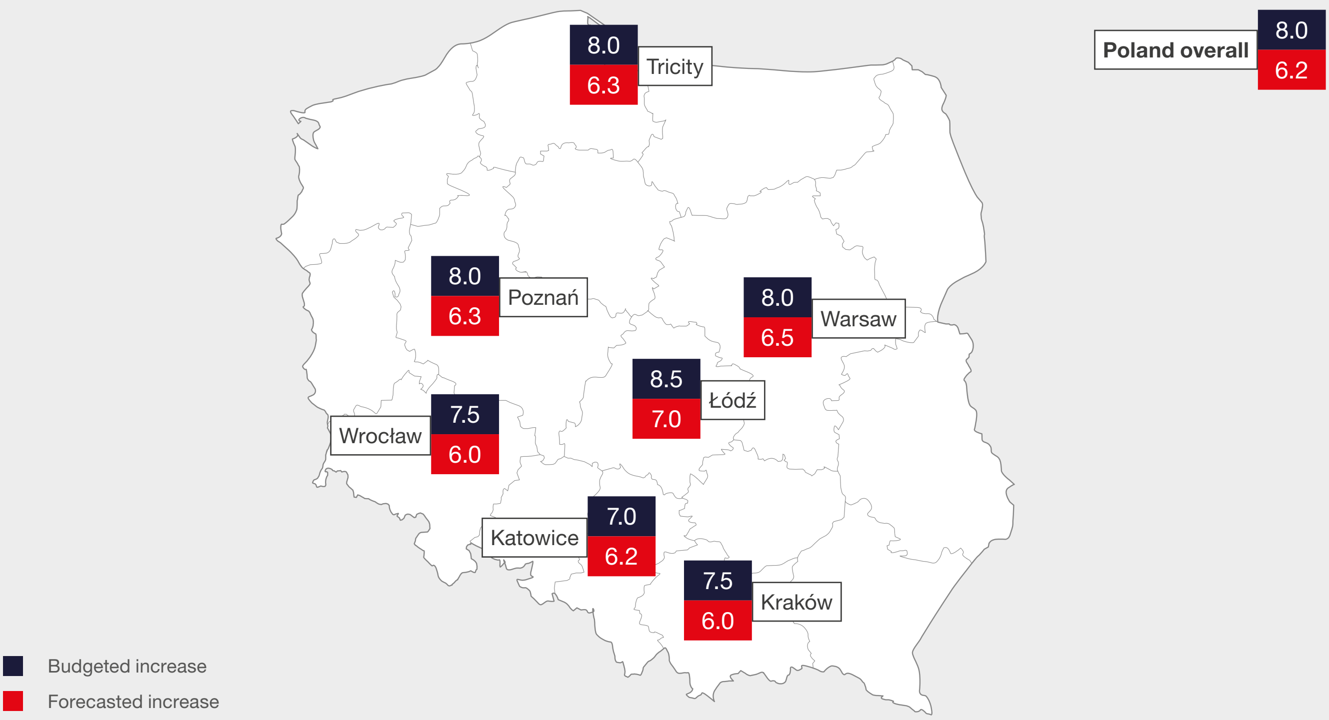
Source: Mercer PL Shared Services Spot Poll – December 2023.

FIGURE 2.34 **Turnover in BPO / SSC / IT / R&D sector in Poland recorded over 12 months** (1st November 2023 – 31st October 2024 time period, median) (%)



Source: Mercer PL Shared Services Spot Poll – December 2024.

FIGURE 2.35 **Budgeted and forecasted salary increase in BPO / SSC / IT / R&D sector for 2024 and 2025 by regions** (%)



Source: Mercer PL Shared Services Spot Poll – December 2024.

Language bonuses

FIGURE 2.36 | **Language allowances** (%)

60%

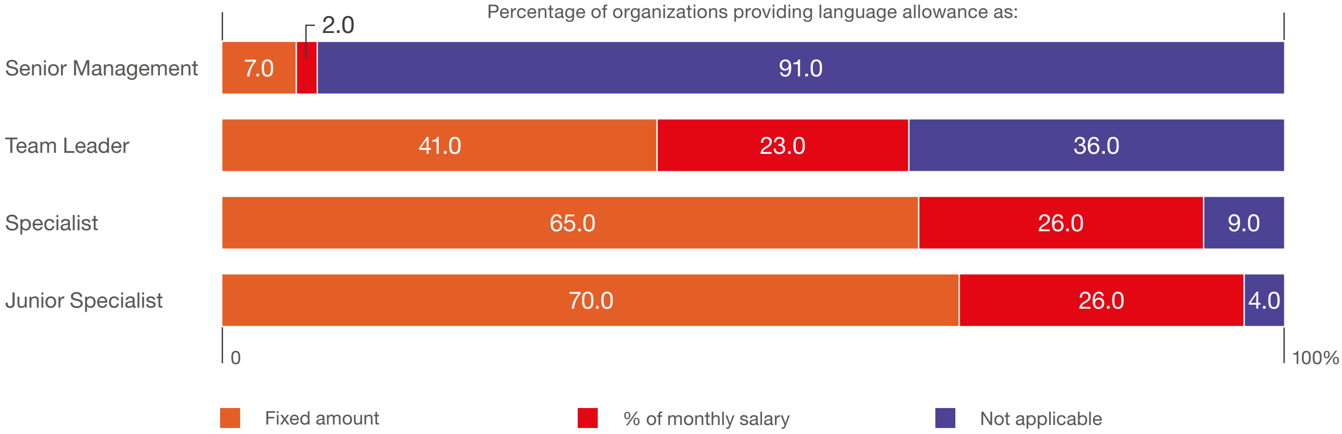
of organizations in BPO / SSC / IT / R&D sector in Poland differentiate salaries depending on foreign language knowledge.

44%

of organizations differentiate the language allowance depending on the level of language knowledge.

68%

of organizations clearly communicate policy on language allowances.



Source: Mercer PL Shared Services Spot Poll – December 2024.

FIGURE 2.37 | **Monthly language allowance depending on the foreign language**

Language	PLN	EUR
Finnish	2,000 PLN	470 EUR
Danish	2,000 PLN	470 EUR
Norwegian	2,000 PLN	470 EUR
Dutch	2,000 PLN	470 EUR
Swedish	2,000 PLN	470 EUR
Arabic	1,500 PLN	353 EUR
Greek	1,500 PLN	353 EUR
Hungarian	1,400 PLN	329 EUR
Romanian	1,250 PLN	294 EUR
Turkish	1,250 PLN	294 EUR
German	1,000 PLN	235 EUR
French	1,000 PLN	235 EUR
Portuguese	1,000 PLN	235 EUR
Czech	1,000 PLN	235 EUR
Slovak	1,000 PLN	235 EUR
Italian	950 PLN	223 EUR
Spanish	888 PLN	207 EUR
Russian	600 PLN	141 EUR

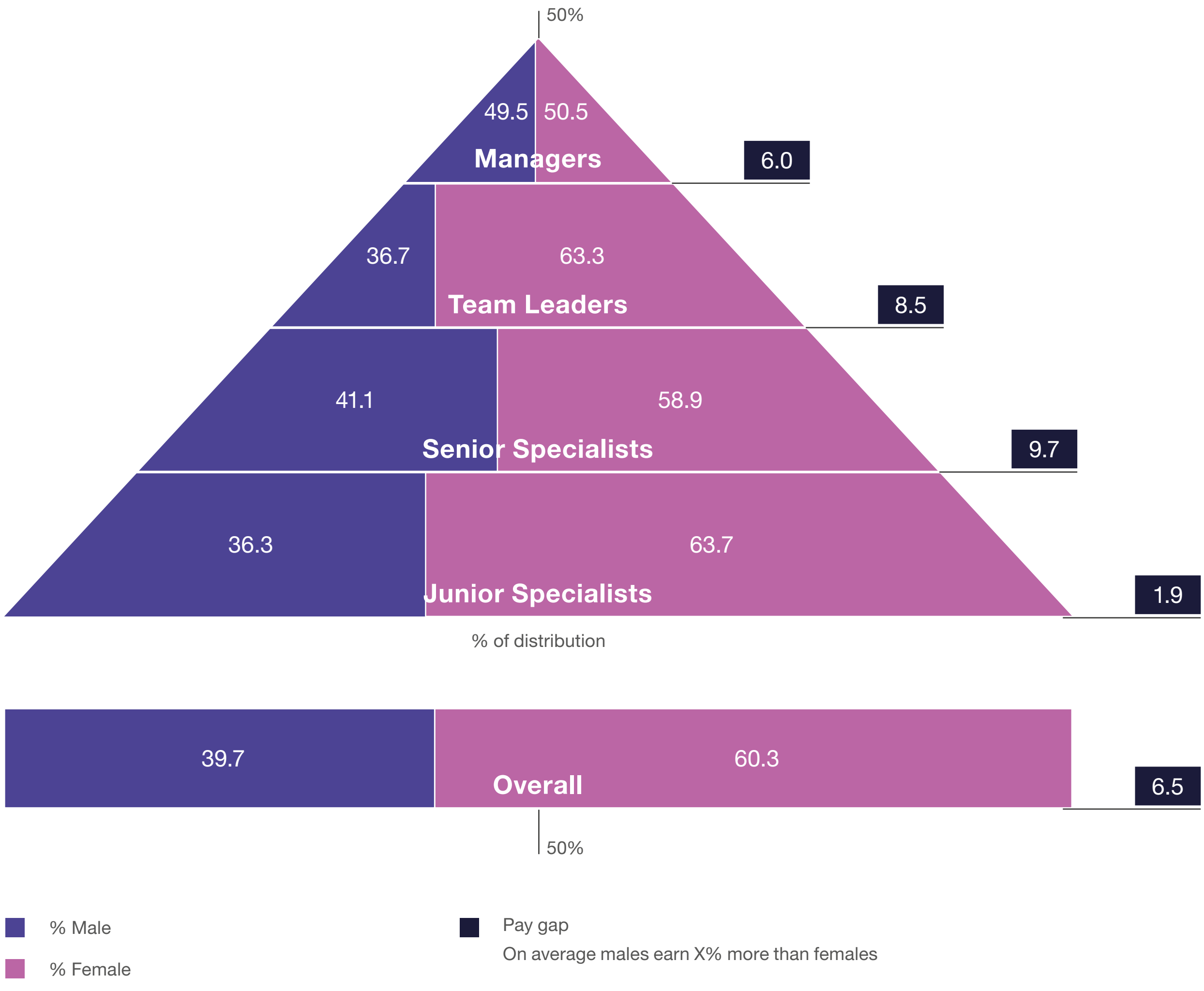
Source: Mercer PL Shared Services Spot Poll – December 2024.

Currency exchange rates
1 PLN = **0.2353 EUR**

Diversity and Inclusion

Females are majority in BPO/SSC/IT/R&D sector in Poland representing 60% of the entire workforce. While among junior specialist women take almost 64% of positions, on a managerial level there is almost equal number of positions taken by both genders. While most of the sector organizations are declaring that diversity and inclusion are part of their strategy, the average pay gap is 6.5%. Gender pay gap at entry level positions is only 1.9%, but among senior specialists it is 9.7%.

FIGURE 2.38 | **Gender distribution by employee grade in BPO / SSC / IT / R&D sector in Poland** (%)



Source: Mercer 2024 Poland SSC Survey.

Pay transparency, European Union directives

In the European Union, pay transparency has become an even more important matter, with only 37% of employees believing their organizations are open about salary ranges for specific positions. Historically, the focus has been on reporting pay gaps. However, similarly to the United States, the EU will soon require an openness regarding salary ranges. Member states will have until 2026 to implement these regulations into national law, with the first reports due from companies employing over 250 staff by 2027. The lack of transparency can significantly impact employee trust and satisfaction in Poland, where the process of aligning national regulations with EU requirements is ongoing.

As the EU strives to enhance transparency, Poland is beginning to adapt its labor law to meet these expectations, stressing the need for organizations to adjust to the evolving landscape. According to the 2024 Mercer Global Talent Trends report, fair compensation is the second most important reason employees choose to stay with their organizations after job security. Furthermore, research conducted by Mercer in 2024 indicates that nearly half (46%) of candidates would not apply for job postings that did not include salary details. Pay transparency encompasses a wide range of topics, with the communication of salary ranges often being the most visible aspect. Mercer's research shows a growing market trend toward disclosing salary ranges. Currently, 59% of respondents either communicated or planned to communicate salary ranges internally, while 48% intended to share them externally in job advertisements. Although many organizations recognize the importance of meeting employee expectations regarding pay transparency, only about a quarter were prepared to comply with global requirements. This gap presents a significant opportunity for organizations to enhance their practices and align with employee expectations.

Organizations exhibited varying levels of commitment to pay transparency. Some focused solely on meeting minimum legal requirements without taking further action, while others began to recognize the benefits of transparency but remained cautious about full engagement. A third group consisted of equality leaders who actively implemented their own practices and sought innovative ways to promote transparency and fairness. As 77% of organizations indicated, transparency initiatives remained the primary driver for pay compliance with emerging regulations. More than half of the organizations in Europe planned to increase the standard sharing of salary information, while two out of five companies intended to do so only to the extent required by law.

Poland's regulations on pay transparency do not extend beyond the minimum set by the EU Directive, which may be advantageous as they are concise and clear, though they may still raise concerns. A key issue is the lack of a precise definition for "work of equal value," which could affect the practical application of the regulations. Another concern is a very general definition of the obligation to disclose salaries during recruitment processes, which may lead to ambiguities. Employers will be required to provide information on average salaries within 14 days and ensure access to compensation criteria. Employees should also have access to the organization's compensation policies, promotion criteria, and conditions for bonuses and awards. However, it is worth noting that employers with fewer than 50 employees will be exempt from this obligation, meaning that the requirements will apply to all other employers.

The push for pay transparency presents significant opportunities for organizations, provided they are adequately prepared, but it also comes with increasing challenges. Over 40% of organizations struggled with employees' understanding of compensation programs and policies, as well as difficulties in navigating global legal regulations. Additionally, over 30% of organizations reported skill shortages among managers, the complexity of HR systems adapting to pay transparency requirements, and insufficient compensation frameworks. Commitment to transparency and equity will be crucial for building a fair and inclusive workplace, which will help organizations attract and retain talent while fostering a positive image on the job market.

Source: 2024 Mercer Global Talent Trends report.

The future of work: skills and jobs in the era of AI

Incorporating AI into the workforce opens up a world of possibilities, including how we think about work itself. HR leaders are uniquely positioned to guide and advise on the possibilities of the future digital workforce: not just how productive and efficient it can be but also how agile, flexible, and high-performing.

- We will continue to have **fewer people in the workforce** to produce work. The worker boom is **slowing**, so companies and countries will need to be smarter about how they leverage their human capital and accelerate productivity. Employing more people to do more work is not really an option; there is a need to increase per-worker productivity.

- The **half-life of skills is shrinking,** now down to around **5 years.** That means that within five years, half of what an individual has learned may become obsolete or forgotten. Organizations that are not investing in continuous learning and upskilling strategies will find themselves unable to respond to changing industry demands or stay competitive.

- **Jobs are changing.** According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), more than **one billion jobs,** accounting for approximately one-third of all jobs worldwide, are likely to be transformed by technology by 2030. The World Economic Forum projects that **22% of current jobs** will undergo significant transformation, including the creation of new jobs and the obsolescence of others.

- We need **broader, more flexible talent pools.** **Half** of CEOs and CFOs believe their current talent models will not be able to meet the projected demand for their organization's products or services in the future. Many industries face critical labor shortages, and while AI can help us design more flexible work models to open access to global and diverse talent, it also means more competition for that talent.

- We need to **understand and address skills gaps** where they exist. **Mercer's Global Talent Trends** research suggests that less than half of the organizations surveyed understand the skills of their current workforce. What is more, 79% of CEOs predict that skills gaps will significantly slow down their organizations' future growth.

According to Mercer's research, certain skills are becoming increasingly essential for professionals looking to thrive in the evolving landscape. The following Summary explores these crucial skills, the types of jobs likely to emerge due to AI implementation, and the salary expectations for these roles in Poland.

Crucial skills in the era of AI

Technical Skills

are paramount in the AI landscape. Data literacy, which involves the ability to read and interpret data, is essential for making informed decisions. Proficiency in programming languages such as Python, R, and Java is also critical for developing AI applications. Additionally, understanding machine learning algorithms and frameworks will position professionals at the forefront of AI innovation.

Analytical Skills

are equally important. Critical thinking enables professionals to analyze information and make reasoned judgments, which is vital in a data-rich environment. Problem-solving skills will be necessary as AI systems are integrated into various processes, requiring creative and efficient solutions to complex challenges.

Soft Skills

like emotional intelligence and adaptability are becoming increasingly valuable. Emotional intelligence involves understanding and managing emotions, which is crucial as AI takes over more technical tasks.

Interdisciplinary Skills

are also essential. Domain knowledge in specific industries (e.g., healthcare, finance) will help professionals apply AI solutions effectively. Furthermore, knowledge of ethical considerations related to AI use is crucial for responsible implementation.

Types of jobs created due to AI implementation

As AI technologies continue to advance, new job roles will emerge that focus on the development, implementation, and ethical management of AI systems. Here are some key roles likely to be created due to AI implementation, along with salary expectations in Poland:

In the era of AI, the demand for a diverse set of skills is growing, encompassing technical, analytical, and soft skills. Mercer's insights highlight the importance of these skills in navigating the evolving job landscape. As new job roles emerge, professionals must be prepared to adapt and develop their competencies to thrive in an AI-driven economy. In Poland, the job market for AI-related roles is promising, with competitive salaries reflecting the high demand for skilled professionals.

AI and Machine Learning Specialists

These professionals design and implement AI models and algorithms (earning approximately 15-25k PLN per month).

Data Scientists and Analysts

These individuals are responsible for analyzing and interpreting complex data sets (12-20k PLN per month).

AI Ethics Compliance Officers

These individuals ensure AI systems are used ethically (10-18k PLN per month).

AI Trainers and Explainability Experts

Focused on training around AI systems and ensuring their work transparency (10-15k PLN per month).

Human-AI Interaction Designers

These designers create user-friendly interfaces for AI collaboration, (8-14k PLN per month).

Cybersecurity Analysts

Protecting AI systems from cyber threats, (10-18k PLN per month).

Change Management Specialists

Responsible for managing transitions and ensuring smooth integration of AI technologies, (9-15k PLN per month).

Source: 2024 Mercer Global Talent Trends report.

THE TALENT MULTIVERSE

3 key trends for business services companies in Poland in 2025

The future of work is here, and it is a dynamic, interconnected landscape – a multiverse of talent where every decision made today will shape the organization of tomorrow. The forces of technological innovation, economic shifts, and evolving workforce expectations are converging, presenting unprecedented challenges and boundless opportunities for business services companies in Poland.

2025 presents critical opportunities for Polish businesses to adapt and innovate. Randstad nterprise's 2025 Talent Trends research, based on a survey of 1,060 C-suite and talent leaders across 21 markets, reveals that while challenges remain, the future of work holds significant potential.

Despite global issues such as economic uncertainty and talent scarcity affecting organizations worldwide, Poland's outlook is more positive. Only 16% of employers reported that economic uncertainty negatively impacted their business, compared to 33% globally.

As businesses navigate these challenges, key trends in AI, digitalization, and talent scarcity are emerging. Most talent leaders in Poland (82%) have embraced the rise of AI and automation, reflecting the global trend where 82% viewed AI as a driving force for progress. The digitalization of HR continues to shape the world of work, with 71% of leaders in Poland recognizing it as a critical factor for growth.

Talent scarcity and skills shortages remain a global concern, with 32% identifying it as a major challenge. While it is less of an issue in Poland at 16%, it remained a top three concern for employers here, second only to layoffs and economic uncertainty.

Internal mobility and talent retention are top priorities, with 77% of global leaders focusing on these areas. In Poland, this focus is even more pronounced, with 88% of talent leaders prioritizing retention.

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Randstad Polska and Randstad Enterprise

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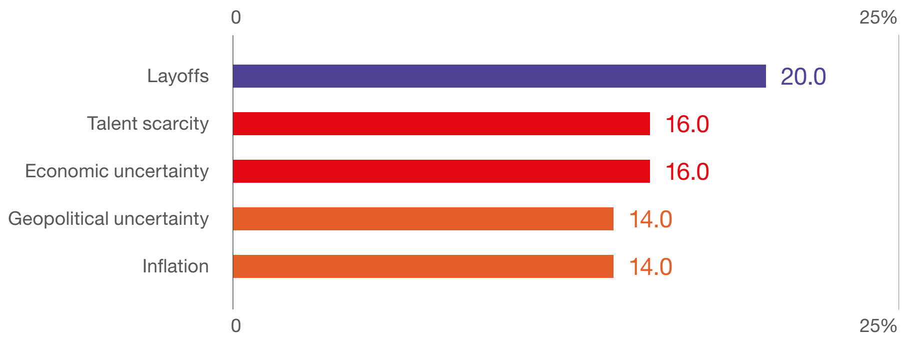
Randstad Enterprise is the leading global talent solutions provider, enabling companies to create sustainable business value and agility by keeping people at the heart of their organizations. As part of Randstad N.V. — the global leader in the HR services industry — we combine unmatched talent data and market insights with smart technologies and deep people expertise.

As part of Randstad Enterprise, we deliver talent acquisition solutions (RPO, MSP, services procurement/SOW and talent BPO) through Randstad Sourceright, and talent development and transition solutions (talent mobility, coaching and outplacement) through Randstad RiseSmart.

FIGURE 2.39 | **Top five reported concerns for employers in Poland** (%)



Source: Randstad Enterprise 2025 Talent Trends research.

These trends – AI's impact on skills development, the shift to a skills-first approach and the rise of flexible work arrangements – offer more than just adaptation; they present opportunities to strategically shape future workforce strategies.

What is clear is that talent leaders must remain agile, balancing the integration of cutting-edge technology with human-centric approaches.

ABSL's Annual Report, together with Randstad Enterprise's 2025 Talent Trends offer solutions that can help business services companies through this transformative period, with the understanding that the decisions made today will determine your organization's ability to not just thrive amid change, but to lead the charge toward a more innovative, purpose-driven future.

Trend 1: AI transforms skills requirements and work processes

In the years since the introduction of tools like ChatGPT and other generative AI platforms, AI has become a cornerstone of business strategy. No longer a distant possibility, AI is reshaping how organizations manage talent, drive productivity and foster innovation. Integrating AI into workforce strategies – whether as an augmentative tool or a driver of innovation – is now essential to staying ahead. **In 2025, AI has already fundamentally transformed the workforce, changing what skills are required and how work is done. This shift is no longer a potential opportunity but an undeniable reality that businesses must embrace to remain competitive.**

The surge in demand for AI-specific skills

As AI evolves, the demand for AI-related skills amplifies the need for new, more specialized AI skills and AI collaboration skills. According to our 2025 Talent Trends research, 82% of employers reported that AI enhances cognitive skills among their talent pools. This trend is even more pronounced in Poland, with 90% of leaders already utilizing AI to strengthen cognitive skills among their teams.

This rapid adoption is making some traditional skill sets obsolete. Employees are now expected to master new technologies, with roles such as data scientists, machine learning engineers, and AI specialists becoming critical in nearly every sector. Yet, the workforce remains unprepared to meet this demand, leading to talent scarcity.

AI's role in automating routine work

One of AI's most compelling advantages is its ability to automate routine and mundane tasks, such as data entry, scheduling, and administrative functions.

This automation liberates employees who can focus and collaborate with technology on tasks requiring emotional intelligence, creative problem-solving, and strategic thinking. AI may not replace jobs but could, in fact, enhance them, allowing employees to engage in work that adds greater value to the organization.

Redefining job roles and career paths

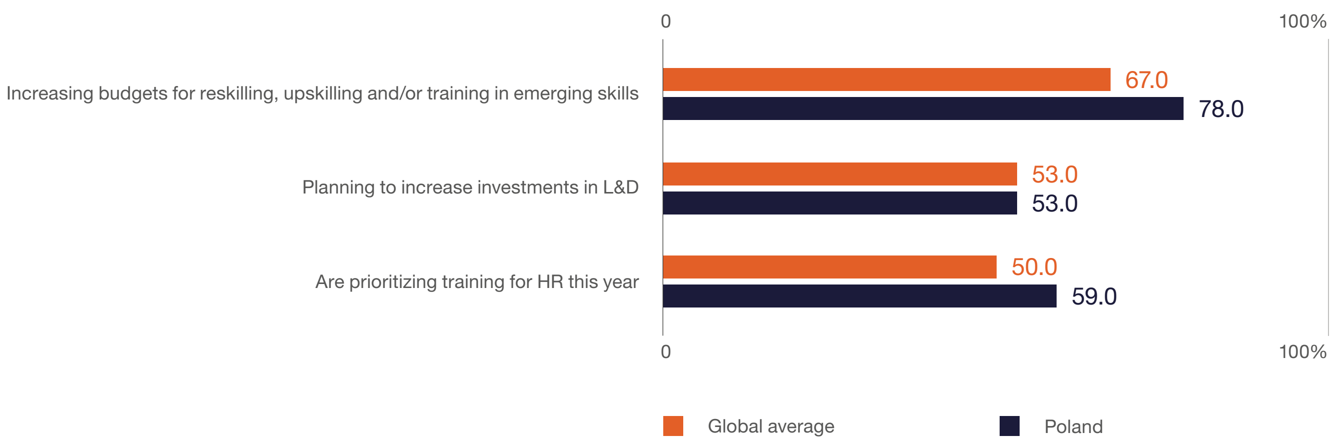
AI is also redefining how businesses approach career development. Traditionally, organizations have relied on external recruitment to fill talent gaps. However, AI now enables companies to look inward, uncovering untapped potential within their existing workforce, tracking performance, identifying skill gaps, and suggesting personalized career paths. In Poland, 34% of companies were already using automation to identify workers with specific skills and potential for internal mobility, further emphasizing AI's role in fostering a more inclusive, agile, and sustainable talent ecosystem.

Bridging the skills gap – a call to action

Despite the clear benefits of AI in identifying skill gaps, there's still significant work to be done. In Poland, 86% of respondents felt AI is forcing them to think about reskilling strategies, and as a result, 78% were increasing budgets for reskilling and upskilling. However, according to Randstad Workmonitor research, only one-third of workers (35%) have received essential AI training this year. This gap is a signal that businesses need to act fast. The need for AI skills will only grow, and you cannot afford to fall behind.

On the other hand, it is encouraging to see that more than half (53%) of Polish employers planned to invest more in L&D this year. But the question remains: Will these efforts be enough? While they are a step in the right direction, the key is to ensure that training programs are not just about technical skills.

FIGURE 2.40 | **Skilling strategies in the age of AI** (%)



Source: Randstad Enterprise 2025 Talent Trends research.

Companies need to focus on technical and soft skills to truly harness AI's potential. Technical expertise is important, but adaptability, emotional intelligence, and creativity will allow employees to work alongside AI effectively. The balance of these skills will ensure long-term success. Businesses that get this right will not only close the skills gap but will also position themselves as leaders in an AI-driven future.

Strategies for maximizing AI's impact

1. **Empower AI training and collaboration:** Rather than fearing AI, organizations should equip their employees with tailored training, promoting collaboration and positioning AI as a strategic partner, not a replacement.

2. **Blend automation with human interaction:** While automation drives efficiency, human touchpoints are essential for maintaining engagement and morale. A balance between AI and authentic human connection ensures that the workplace remains cohesive and motivated.

3. **Amplify employee voices for innovation:** Leverage AI-powered feedback tools to gather employee insights, fostering a culture of innovation and continuous improvement while staying ahead of market and employee needs.

Trend 2: Harnessing flexibility, technology, and empowered talent with the pixelation of work

As AI partners with human talent, organizations are moving away from traditional job-based models to a more agile approach, focusing on tasks and outcomes rather than roles. This "pixelation of work" allows companies to optimize output and drive worker satisfaction. With AI handling more routine tasks, employees can focus on higher-value and creative endeavors that align with organizational goals.

Think tasks and skills, not jobs

In today's rapidly changing environment, organizations must prioritize tasks and skills over fixed job roles to truly embrace agility. This shift towards pixelating work allows businesses to adapt quickly to changing priorities, assigning tasks rather than adhering to traditional job descriptions.

According to Randstad Enterprise's 2025 Talent Trends research, 90% of business leaders in Poland agreed that they were prioritizing workforce agility more than ever before. In fact, 76% of talent leaders in Poland were increasing investments in integrated or total talent acquisition models – compared with 40% who said the same globally – which has allowed them to better tap into broader, flexible talent pools and meet changing workforce demands. At the same time, just 37% in Poland agreed that creating a more fluid workforce was a priority, compared with the global average of 46%. And less than half (46%) were prioritizing access to all talent types. This indicates an opportunity to rethink the way tasks and work get done.

As work becomes more flexible, employees are encouraged to contribute to various projects, boosting satisfaction and fostering career growth. Talent marketplaces, AI-driven resourcing, and continuous learning empower workers to acquire new skills, fueling innovation and productivity.

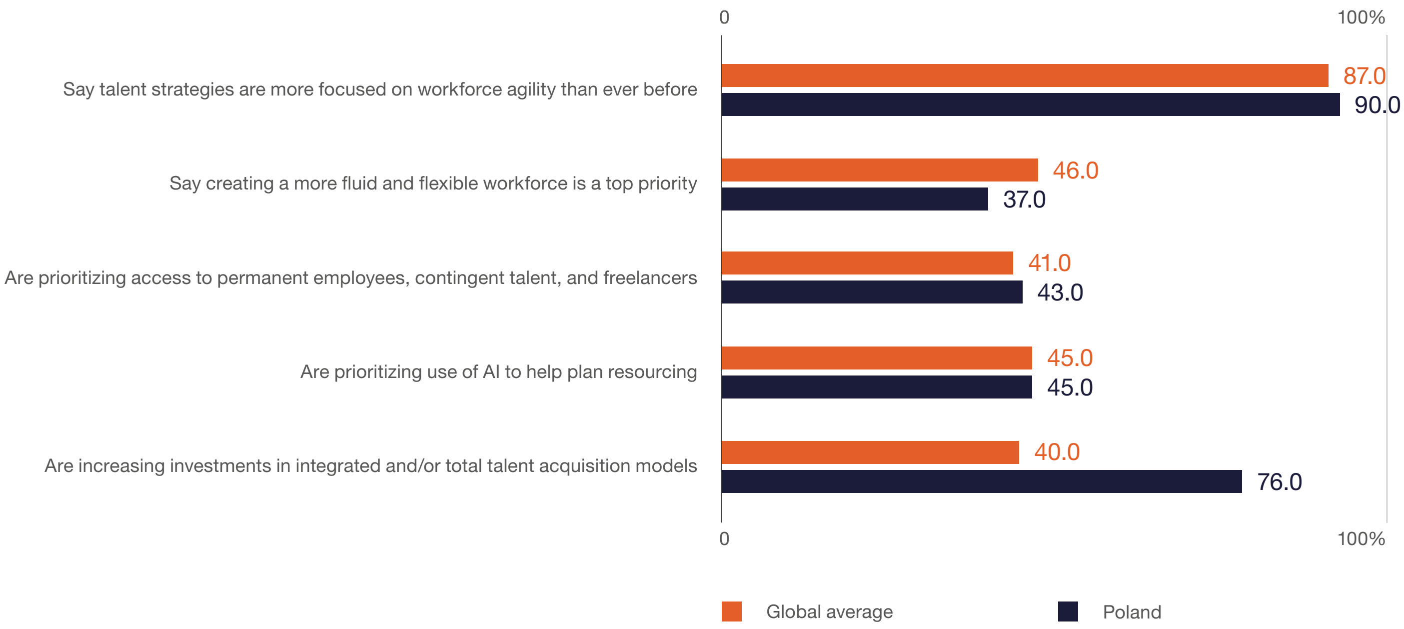
Combating the labor market crisis

The global talent shortage, exacerbated by an aging workforce and growing skills gap, pushes organizations to rethink their approach. Companies adopt flexible structures such as hybrid, remote, and project-based roles to stay competitive while addressing labor market challenges.

Randstad Workmonitor research shows that nearly 45% of talent globally now demand flexible work, and 44% trust that their companies will meet these expectations. Meeting this expectation will be critical, as 88% of Polish employers said that they were placing the same or even greater focus on overall employee retention this year as they sought to keep skilled people on board.

Flexible approaches can also help employers widen talent pools; return-to-office and hybrid working policies both limit available talent to those within commuting distance.

FIGURE 2.41 | **Creating more fluid workforces** (%)



Source: Randstad Enterprise 2025 Talent Trends research.

Reimagine value creation with empowered talent

In today's digital era, AI is more than an automation tool – it is a co-worker that amplifies human potential. By automating routine tasks, AI frees employees to focus on higher-value work, such as problem-solving, creativity, and strategic thinking, which, in turn, drives business goals forward. But it also changes the skills talent needs, and these requirements are evolving daily. AI also enhances value creation by fostering innovation, strengthening customer relationships, and accelerating product development.

This is likely because 71% of employers in Poland expected to provide data training or reskilling to existing employees. They also reported that the potential to learn quickly became one of the most important criteria when hiring early careers (27%) and senior-level talent (43%). Nearly as many (31% for early careers and 31% for senior talent) said relevant personal motivations and aspirations were also critical traits in a candidate. Talent leaders are quickly recognizing how important these criteria are in determining the value people can bring to the organization.

Key tips for embracing the pixelation of work

1. Foster flexibility:
Shift to a task- and outcomes-based approach, allowing employees to adapt to project needs and leverage personal strengths, boosting agility and job satisfaction.

2. Offer flexible work arrangements:
Embrace hybrid, remote, or project-based roles to attract skilled talent, support work-life balance, and improve retention.

3. Leverage AI for empowerment:
Use AI to automate low-value tasks and creatively collaborate with people, enhancing innovation and problem-solving for greater productivity and fulfillment.

4. Invest in learning and development:
Prioritize reskilling and upskilling to ensure employees stay adaptable to new technologies and business demands.

5. Encourage continuous growth:
Foster a culture of ongoing learning, enabling employees to acquire new skills, collaborate across teams, and explore career opportunities.

Trend 3: Stepping into the Skills-First Era

As AI continues transforming the workplace and skill demands, employers are rapidly shifting toward a skills-first approach, making skills the new currency in today's job market. According to Randstad Workmonitor research, 44% of workers were refusing job offers without opportunities for skill development – up from 36% last year. As technology and job landscapes evolve, organizations must focus on nurturing potential and motivation, not just experience.

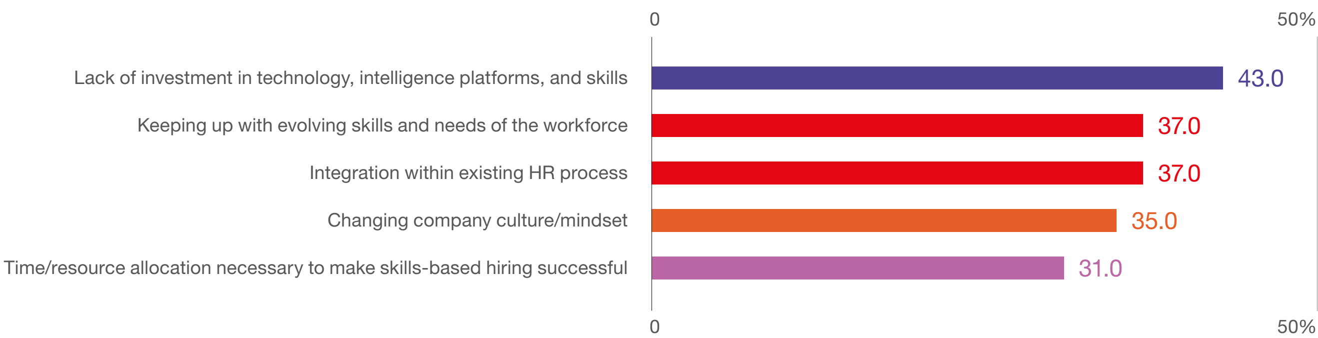
In Poland, 90% of employers said they were moving or had already moved to a skills-based talent model. This broad adoption is buoyed by the many perceived benefits of this approach, including improved equity (27%), organizational preparedness for the future (27%), hiring outcomes (27%), and talent development outcomes (37%).

Skills-based shifts are also taking hold across the talent life cycle with development and internal mobility initiatives, which are critical to employee engagement and retention. In Poland, 75% of talent leaders agreed they would put more emphasis on internal mobility rather than external recruitment this year, and 76% believed talent acquisition leaders would be responsible for preserving the workforce and preventing layoffs.

While 37% of employers in Poland recognized that focusing on skills leads to better outcomes than focusing on education and experience alone when developing (37%) and hiring (27%) talent, they also reported barriers to full adoption, such as necessary cultural shifts, lack of required investments and limited resources. And 27% in Poland agreed that while HR and talent leaders embraced a skills-based mindset, functional managers focused more on specific jobs and roles.

Despite these challenges, very few Polish organizations (8%) felt they were unsuccessful in their attempts to embrace a skills-based model. AI and other technologies can help alleviate some of those barriers. For example, internal talent marketplaces (ITMs) are helping to advance skills-based strategies by scaling personalized and self-directed learning, closing skills gaps, and matching people to projects that will excite them while using their strengths.

FIGURE 2.42 | **Top 5 cited barriers to skills-based adoption for employers in Poland** (%)



Source: Randstad Enterprise 2025 Talent Trends research.

It is clear to HR leaders that adopting a skills-based model is not an option; it is imperative in today's fast-moving, technology-driven labor market, where the shelf-life of skills shortens each day. While making the shift can be complex, starting with one project can help move initiatives forward, serving as a success story that gets the whole organization on board. There is no easy transition, but over time, it will be an investment well worth the time, energy, and resources put into it.

Actionable strategies to embrace a skills-first approach:

1. **Establish clear skill frameworks:** Develop a standardized system for mapping and classifying key skills across roles, ensuring alignment with business objectives. This will help identify skill gaps and provide clarity for talent and leadership.

2. **Focus on potential, not just experience:** Shift hiring and promotion practices to prioritize inherent skills, ambition, and learning potential. This will require focusing on individual strengths, motivations, and potential to better support organizational agility.

3. **Implement continuous learning opportunities:** Offer ongoing training and upskilling programs that allow employees to adapt to market demands. Use AI and other technologies to provide personalized learning paths.

4. **Measure skill development impact:** Regularly assess the effectiveness of skill development programs by tracking progress and gathering feedback. Use data to refine your approach and ensure alignment with business needs.

5. **Support internal mobility with technology:** Invest in internal talent marketplaces (ITMs) to match employees with skill-building projects, new roles, and mentorship opportunities. This fosters growth, improves retention, and optimizes internal talent.
improves retention, and optimizes internal talent.

Your choices will define tomorrow

With so many radical shifts taking place in today's business landscape, it is clear that the talent multiverse lies ahead. The choices – big or small – that talent leaders make today can help shape the future of the business services sector in Poland. AI integration, skills-based transformation, and pixelation of work are more than just responses to challenges; they represent a fundamental shift in how organizations innovate, engage talent, and drive success.

AI is no longer a distant trend but a strategic partner in optimizing talent development and transforming business operations. Organizations that embrace AI will be best positioned for long-term success. Likewise, the skills-first revolution stresses the importance of inherent skills, personal motivations, continuous learning, and adaptability in building a future-ready workforce.

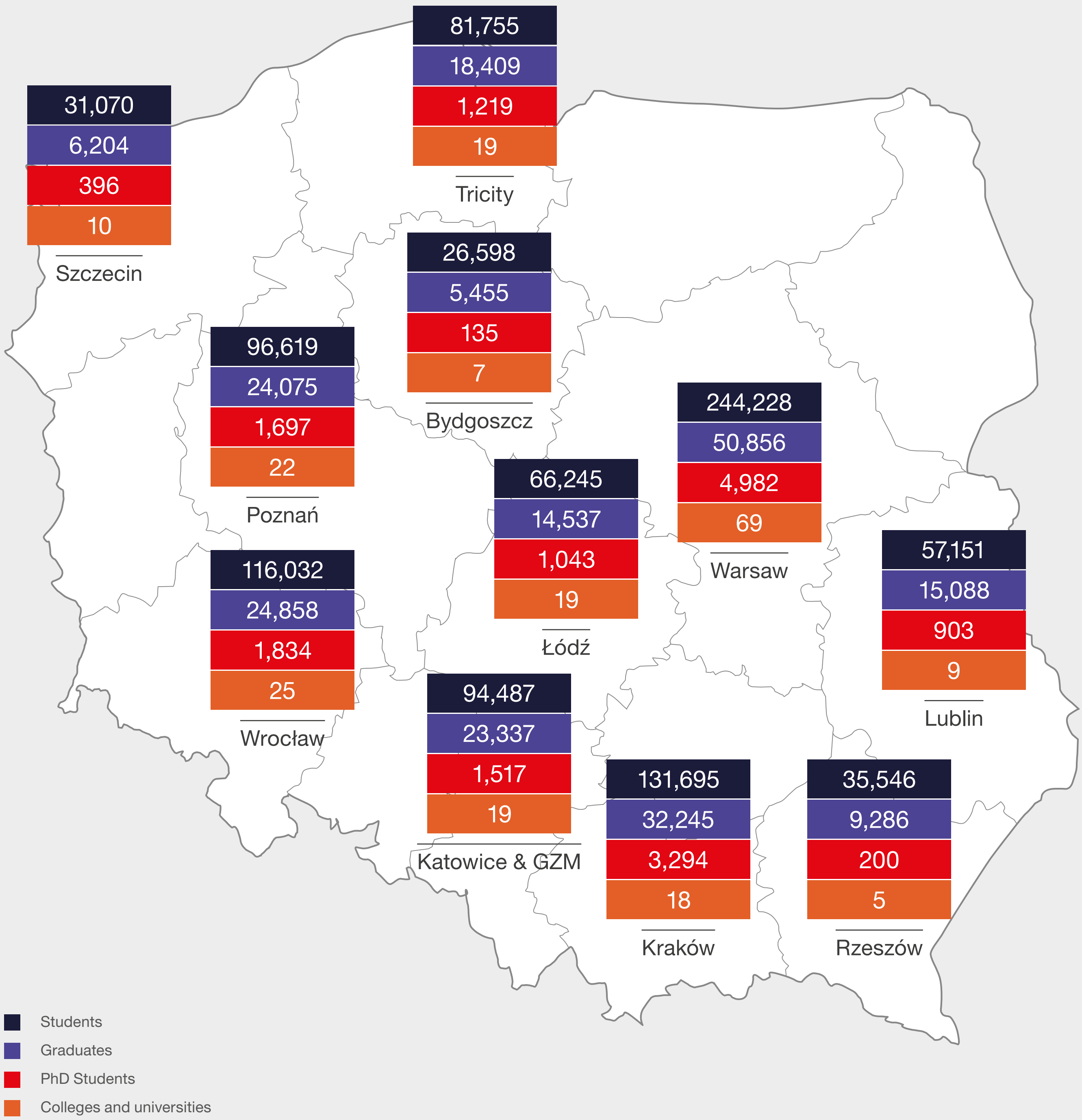
The pixelation of work offers greater agility and productivity in an age where people and AI are collaborators – empowering talent to work in more meaningful and flexible ways. This approach fosters innovation, engagement, and fluidity, helping businesses remain competitive in an ever-evolving landscape.

Ultimately, leaders' decisions today will define their organizations' success tomorrow and beyond. Embracing these trends with intention is key to navigating and leading this change.

For deeper insights into these transformative trends, explore the Randstad Enterprise 2025 Talent Trends Report, where you can access the global findings. To learn more about Randstad Enterprise, visit www.randstadenterprise.com.

Educational potential

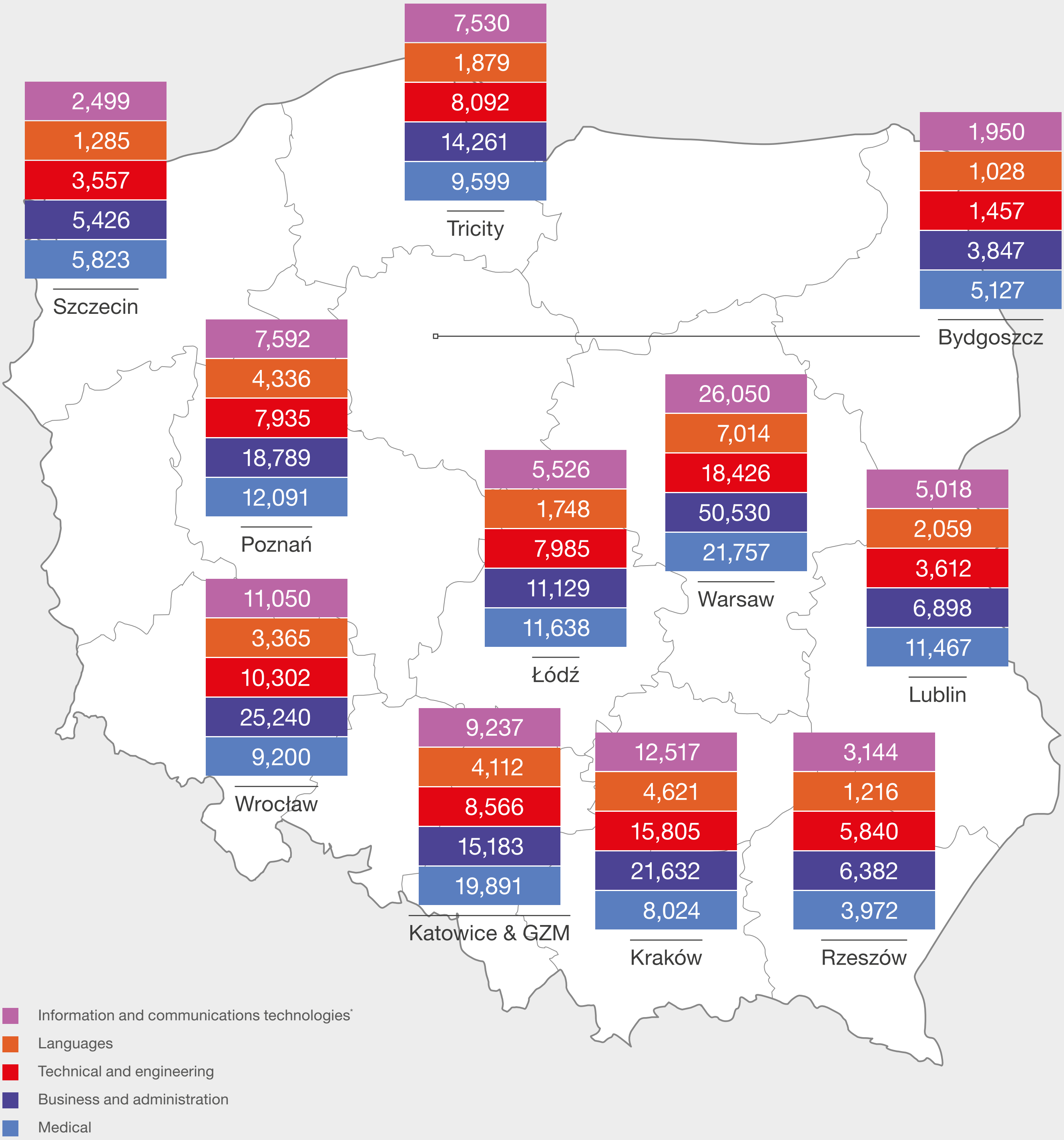
FIGURE 2.43 **Number of students, graduates, and universities in selected locations in Poland**



Note. The student and graduate numbers are based on the actual location of the unit (faculty).
The college and university numbers are based on the address of the home institution in selected cities.

Source: Prepared by ABSL on the basis of data received from the National Information Processing Institute at the National Research Institute.

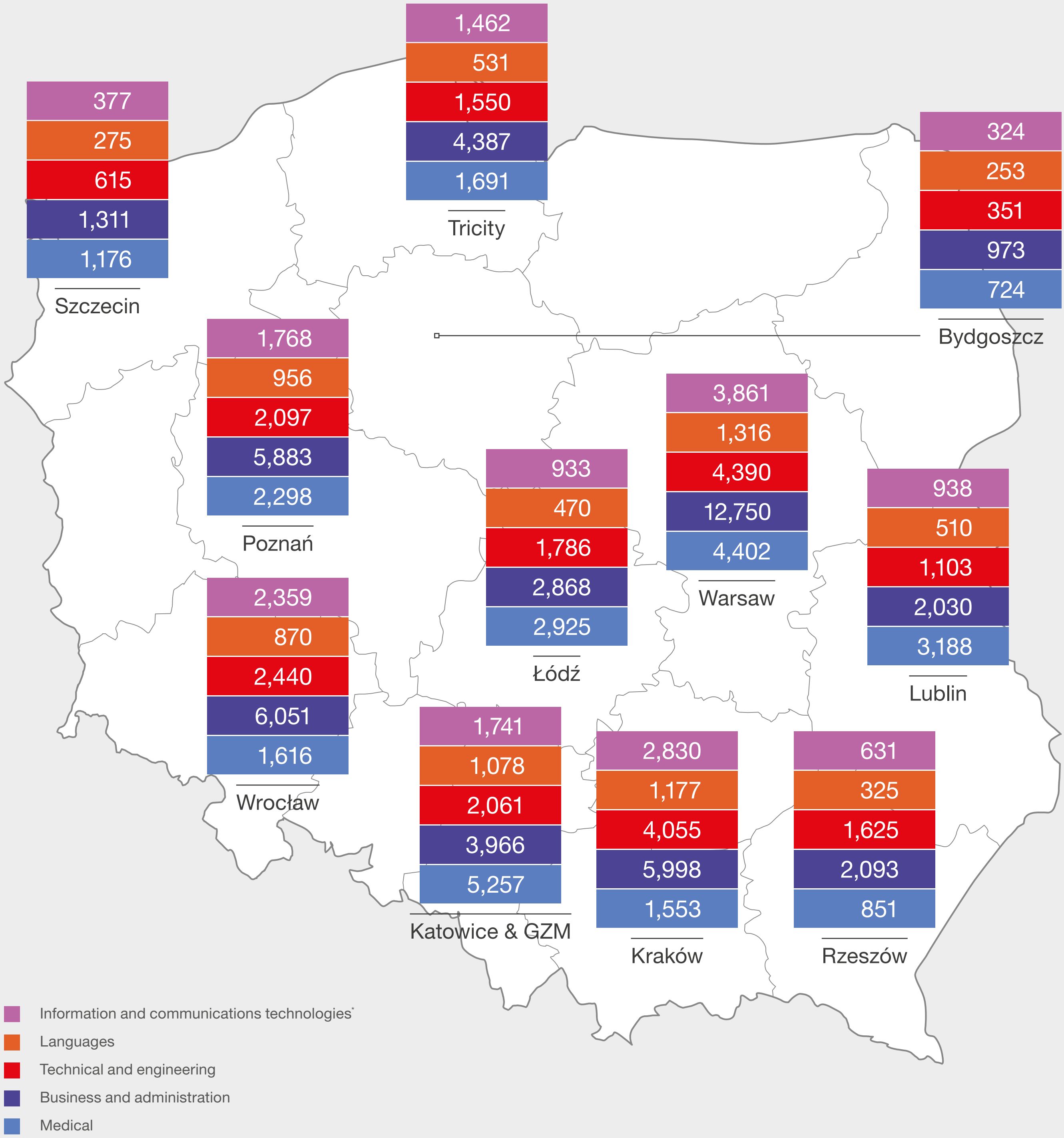
FIGURE 2.44 **Students of selected courses: language, business and administration, ICT, engineering and technical, medical**



Note. The data is based on the actual location of the unit (faculty).
* Together with a subgroup of interdisciplinary programs and qualifications covering information and communications technology.

Source: Prepared by ABSL on the basis of data received from the National Information Processing Institute at the National Research Institute.

FIGURE 2.45 **Graduates of selected courses: language, business and administration, ICT, engineering and technical, medical**



Note. The data is based on the actual location of the unit (faculty).
* Together with a subgroup of interdisciplinary programs and qualifications covering information and communications technology.

Source: Prepared by ABSL on the basis of data received from the National Information Processing Institute at the National Research Institute.

TABLE 2.5 | **Doctoral schools & Doctoral programs**

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Doctoral programs	22,476	15,441	8,651	3,220	558
Doctoral schools	8,205	11,881	15,077	17,147	18,825

Source: Prepared by ABSL on the basis of data received from the National Information Processing Institute at the National Research Institute.

TABLE 2.6 | **Foreign students by country of origin**

	Number of students
Ukraine	50,472
Belarus	11,974
Turkey	4,827
Zimbabwe	3,839
Azerbaijan	3,306
India	3,190
China	2,479
Uzbekistan	1,708
Kazakhstan	1,663
Czech Republic	1,633

TABLE 2.7 | **Foreign graduates by country of origin**

	Number of graduates
Ukraine	6,794
Belarus	2,319
Zimbabwe	1,078
Azerbaijan	731
India	690
China	640
Turkey	616
Nigeria	378
Czech Republic	356
Kazakhstan	343

Source: Prepared by ABSL on the basis of data received from the National Information Processing Institute at the National Research Institute.

Summary – key observations on Talent

Hybrid work as the norm, with a nuanced impact

The hybrid work model has cemented itself as the standard, with 60% of centers adopting a two-to-three-day in-office approach. While this fosters collaboration and innovation, the return to office (RTO) has had mixed effects on productivity and employee satisfaction. RTO tends to support onboarding and cross-functional collaboration but may dampen morale where flexibility is curtailed without clear communication or purpose.

Evolving workforce demographics and employment forms

Poland's business services sector is experiencing a marked demographic shift. Workers aged 35 and above now represent 46% of the workforce – up 17 percentage points since 2019 – indicating growing seniority and specialization. Meanwhile, B2B contracts remained prominent in IT centers (30.7%), whereas non-IT centers primarily relied on employment contracts (95%).

Tenure patterns show that 36% of employees have worked in their current center for three years or less, emphasizing both strong talent inflows and persistent retention challenges. The average center now employs 235 people, with foreign-owned centers (avg. 278) significantly larger than domestic ones (avg. 128).

Internationalization and inclusion drive talent strategy

The sector continues its path toward internationalization and diversity. Foreigners comprised 19.6% of the workforce, with Ukrainians, Indians, and Belarusians being the largest groups. Multicultural talent is especially prevalent in large urban centers, bolstering the sector's language capabilities and global reach. Diversity, inclusion, and belonging (DIB) have become strategic priorities, shifting from isolated HR programs to core organizational values.

Turnover declines, but strategic retention is needed

Voluntary turnover has halved from 18.3% in 2022 to 9.1% in 2024, reflecting cooling labor market dynamics. However, involuntary turnover is rising in IT centers due to restructuring and role redefinition. Organizations now emphasize leadership development, career pathing, and skills-based internal mobility to retain talent amid macroeconomic and technological shifts.

Labor cost advantages and regional differentiation

Mercer's analysis affirms Poland's strong labor cost competitiveness. Gross monthly salaries range from ~€2,360 for specialists to over €12,000 for center heads, with clear regional differences enabling site-specific cost optimization. Warsaw leads in compensation, but cities such as Katowice and Łódź offer attractive alternatives for cost-sensitive operations. Language allowances are widely used (60% of companies) and increasingly structured, especially for Germanic and Nordic languages.

Strategic talent development and pay transparency

Organizations actively invest in upskilling and internal development to counteract skill shortages and prepare for AI-driven transformation. Mercer's findings highlight the growing interest in pay transparency spurred by upcoming EU regulations. While only 37% of employees believed their organizations were transparent about pay, 59% of firms planned to disclose salary ranges internally, while nearly half intended to do so in job ads.

Skills-first, AI-integrated future

AI is driving a shift in both the nature of work and workforce expectations. Randstad reports that 90% of Polish leaders were using AI to enhance cognitive skills, and 78% were increasing upskilling budgets. Job roles are becoming more task- and skill-oriented, requiring emotional intelligence, adaptability, and interdisciplinary thinking. New roles like AI specialists, data scientists, and explainability experts are gaining traction.

Poland's business services sector rapidly adopts a skills-first approach, with 90% of companies moving away from traditional role-based hiring. Internal mobility, continuous learning, and AI-driven workforce planning are becoming the cornerstones of future talent strategies.

Leadership, inclusion, and global reach

Although Poland hosts a growing number of global shared services leadership roles, including project leaders and operational heads, full C-suite inclusion remained limited (only 2.4%). Barriers included limited exposure to global markets and a need for more innovation-driven leadership. Women made up 50.5% of the workforce but were underrepresented in senior roles (39.1%).

The sector must invest in global mindset training, innovation capability, and structured career development for underrepresented groups to strengthen its leadership pipeline.

Conclusions and recommendations

The ABSL 2025 Talent chapter highlights a sector navigating **globalization, digitization,** and **demographic change.** While challenges persist, Poland's business services sector is adapting through **hybrid work, inclusive practices, targeted development,** and **strategic AI adoption.** With a continued focus on **agility, leadership,** and **skills-first strategies,** the sector is well-positioned to remain a leading global destination for advanced services.

Now a key player in a **USD four trillion global industry,** Poland's competitiveness will increasingly depend on how it manages talent. As the workforce grows **older, more international, and mobile,** and work becomes more **flexible and skills-driven, a proactive, holistic approach to talent and a labor market strategy** will be essential.

The main conclusion of this chapter should also be considered through a long-term lens. We must account for **ongoing changes in the number and quality of university graduates entering our sector each year,** as shown by OPI data, and – on an even broader horizon – the demographic and structural transformations that are already shaping, and will continue to shape, the talent pool and broader society in Poland and the region.

3

TECHNOLOGY

Introduction

Technology is at the heart of transformation in the business services sector, redefining how organizations operate, innovate, and compete. From automation and AI to cloud computing and data analytics, technological advancements are enhancing efficiency and shaping long-term strategic decisions. As businesses continue to evolve in an increasingly digital environment, the role of technology extends beyond simple process optimization to becoming a key driver of scalability, agility, and strategic differentiation. This chapter explores the technological forces reshaping the business services sector in Poland, examining how organizations adopt new tools, overcome challenges, and prepare for further automation and AI-augmented decision-making.

The following sections will explore the growing impact of Intelligent Process Automation (IPA), the current state of automation adoption, and projections for future technological advancements. It will also assess the use of AI, including generative AI and large language models (LLMs), and their influence on workforce productivity, cost efficiency, and business operations. Additionally, this chapter will highlight the evolving cloud and data infrastructure landscape, emerging programming trends, and the integration of advanced analytics and visualization tools. By analyzing these trends and developments, we aim to provide a comprehensive view of how technology at the end of Q1 2025 shapes and redefines the future of the business services sector in Poland.

ABSL

Chapter content developed by: **ABSL**

Key technology facts

74.1% of centers used Intelligent Process Automation (IPA) (up from 65.2% in 2024).

IPA deployment is maturing. While 74.1% of centers now use IPA, only 9.2% said they had no plans to implement it – indicating near-saturation in IPA intent.

The mean automation rate reached 22.4%, with a median of 17.5%. Most centers, however, expected automation levels to exceed 50% in five years.

Only 7.7% of organizations said automation exceeded expectations, and 69.2% said it met expectations – suggesting a realistic but moderate ROI from current automation strategies.

84.6% viewed genAI as an opportunity or a significant opportunity.

42.8% saw slight productivity gains from AI, while only 45.7% reported cost efficiency.

Low-code/no-code tools were on the rise – Power Platform (81.3%) and ServiceNow (75%).

AI adoption was expanding horizontally, with 67.8% of organizations planning to scale AI use to more business units and 67.1% planning workforce training.

HR was the top function for GenAI deployment (25.4%), followed by business intelligence (24.6%) and IT development (22.8%). AI also entered Accounts Payable (20.2%) and Customer Support (14.3%).

Primary barriers to AI upskilling included lack of time (51.4%) and uncertainty about AI's role (30.7%), with 25.7% citing high training costs.

AI training remained limited. 44.8% of firms had trained only 1–10% of their workforce on AI, and just 7.8% trained 75% or more – stressing a significant capability gap.

AI upskilling and infrastructure gaps remain key AI adoption barriers.

Data tools like Power BI and Snowflake were gaining ground in analytics.

Companies planned to deepen multi-cloud use, mostly **Azure, AWS, and Google Cloud.**

Agile methodologies (SCRUM, Kanban) were used by 94.1% of IT centers, with AI/ML/Deep Learning adoption surging to 82.4%.

Data architecture was evolving fast: SQL Server was used by 75% of centers, with Hadoop, MongoDB, Oracle DB, and Snowflake each used by nearly 70%, and Databricks usage jumping to 50%.

Edge computing was gaining popularity, especially in manufacturing and logistics, where low-latency decisions are critical. This does require hybrid cloud–edge architectures.

Security was central to AI adoption: 72.7% used secure cloud environments, 59.4% conducted audits, and over half (53.9%) restricted LLM access to sensitive data.

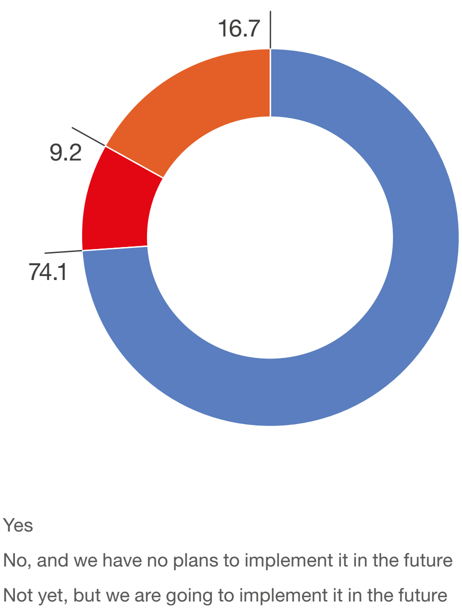
Python (81.3%), JavaScript (93.8%), and PowerShell (56.3%) dominated in AI and DevOps.

Intelligent process automation

The adoption of IPA, including Robotic Process Automation (RPA), increased between Q1 2024 and Q1 2025, reflecting growing confidence and investment in automation technologies. The percentage of organizations already using IPA had risen from 65.2% in Q1 2024 to 74.1% in Q1 2025, indicating a clear trend toward wider implementation of automation tools across our sector's centers in Poland.

At the same time, the share of companies planning to implement automation in the future has decreased from 24.1% to 16.7%, suggesting that many organizations considering automation in 2024 have since moved forward with implementation. In contrast, the proportion of businesses not planning to adopt IPA has remained relatively stable, decreasing slightly from 10.8% in 2024 to 9.2% in 2025, indicating that a small but persistent group remains hesitant or unconvinced about the value of automation.

FIGURE 3.1 **Is intelligent process automation part of your operations?** (%)

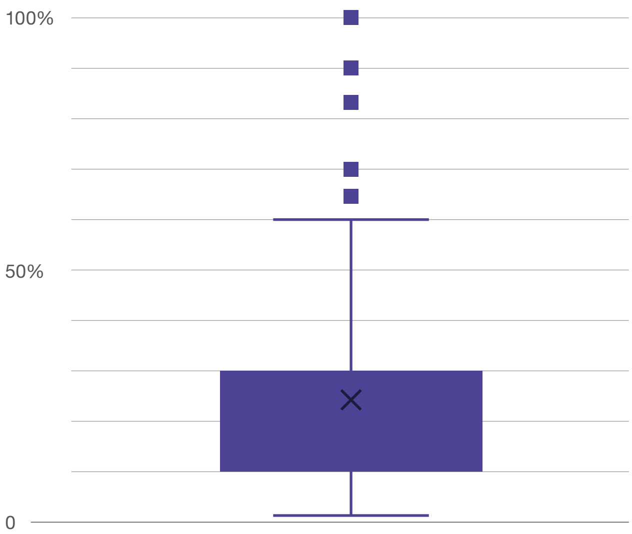


Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=174).

Current automation rate

The automation rate in Poland's business services centers showed modest growth between Q1 2024 and Q1 2025. **The median automation rate increased from 15.0% to 17.5%, while the mean (average) automation rate rose from 19.6% to 22.4%,** indicating a gradual increase in adoption. The first quartile (Q1) and third quartile (Q3) values remained unchanged, suggesting that while some companies progress, the overall distribution of automation levels has not shifted dramatically. The fact that the first quartile remains at 10% automation implies that a significant portion of organizations still operate with minimal automation levels. In comparison, the third quartile at 30% suggests that even higher adopters have not yet moved beyond moderate automation rates. Compared to future expectations – where businesses anticipate automation levels exceeding 50% or more in the next five years – these results suggest that companies need to accelerate their automation efforts.

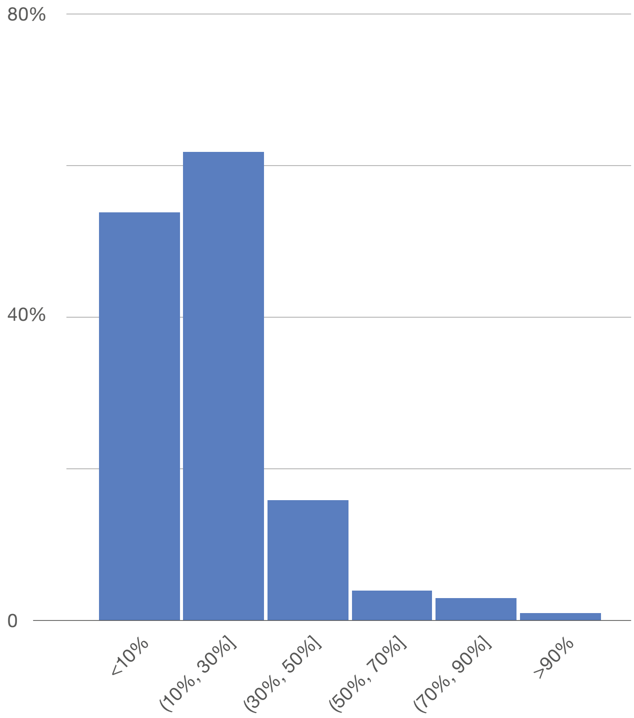
FIGURE 3.2 **Current rate** (in %) **of automation of processes in center(s)**



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=140).

The histogram below confirms the results. The current state of automation in business services centers in Poland remains at an early-to-moderate stage, with the majority of organizations having automated only up to 30% of their processes. The largest groups of respondents fell into the ≤10% automation range (over 50%) and the 10-30% range (over 60%). This shows that most companies have implemented limited automation efforts, either in selected functions or in a phased manner.

FIGURE 3.3 **Current rate** (in %) **of automation of processes in center(s)**

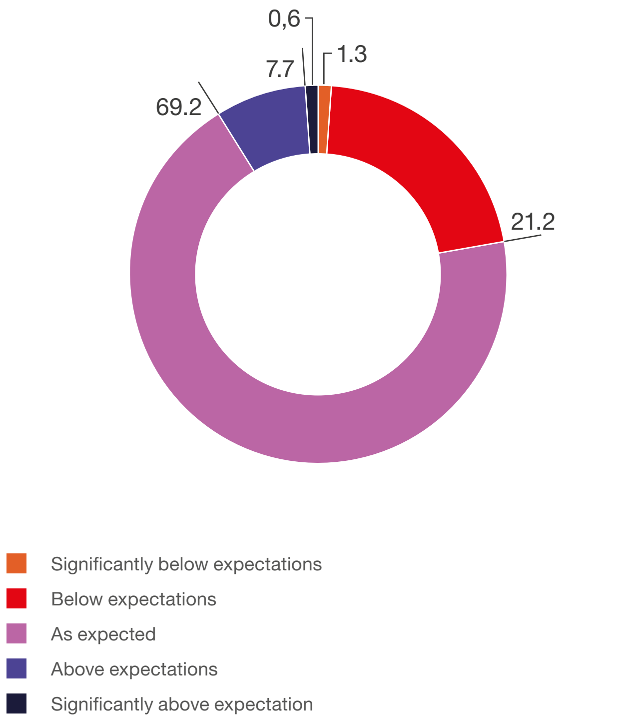


Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=140).

Results of automation

The results of the ABSL 2025 survey indicate that automation in the sector has largely met expectations but with limited instances of exceeding them. **A significant 69.2% of respondents reported that automation delivered results as expected,** suggesting that companies have realistic expectations regarding automation's impact and that implementation efforts are generally successful. However, **only 7.7% stated that automation exceeded expectations,** and an even smaller 1.3% felt it significantly outperformed their expectations. This indicates that while automation delivers its intended benefits, it is not necessarily driving transformational or game-changing results for most organizations. Conversely, 21.2% of respondents felt that automation fell below expectations, and 0.6% reported it performed significantly below expectations. This suggests that some companies struggle with automation initiatives and underperformance.

FIGURE 3.4 **Has the automation implemented so far brought the expected results?** (%)

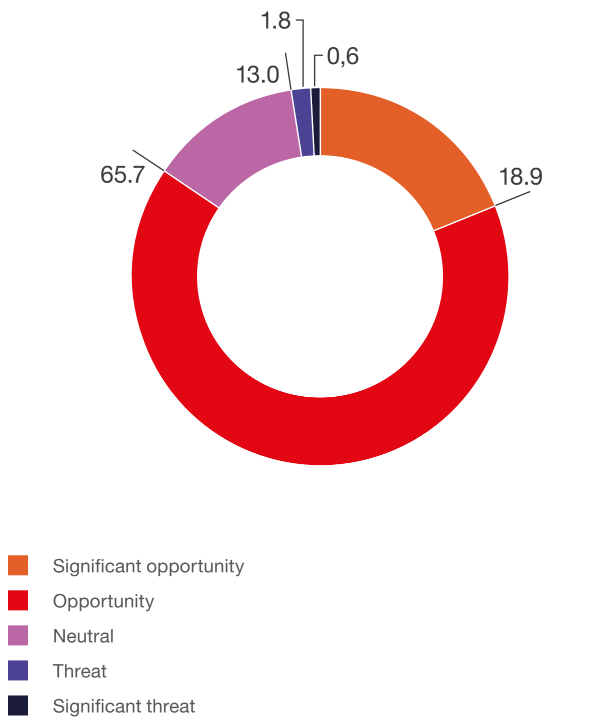


Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=156).

Gen AI – threat or opportunity?

The perception of Generative AI (GenAI) in the sector in Poland is overwhelmingly positive, with the vast majority of respondents viewing it as an opportunity rather than a threat. A combined 84.6% of respondents saw GenAI as either an opportunity (65.7%) or a significant opportunity (18.9%), indicating widespread enthusiasm about its potential to enhance productivity and decision-making. Only 13.0% of respondents held a neutral stance. Meanwhile, concerns about AI remain minimal, with just 1.8% perceiving it as a threat and an even smaller 0.6% viewing it as a significant threat.

FIGURE 3.5 **Do you perceive the development of genAI rather as a threat or an opportunity to your center?** (%)



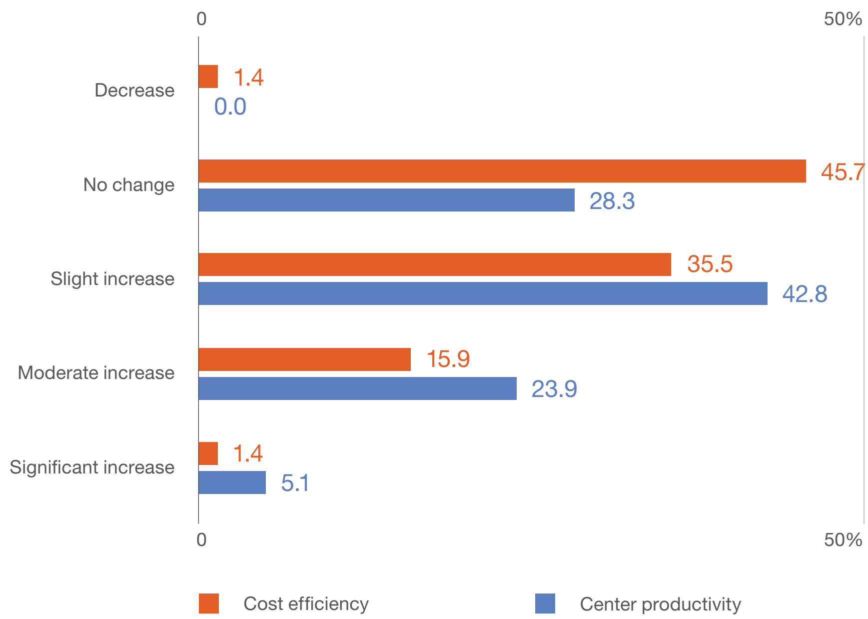
Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=169).

Impact of genAI on productivity and cost efficiency

The impact of GenAI adoption on productivity and cost efficiency in Poland's business services centers presents a mixed but generally positive picture. While 45.7% of respondents reported no change in cost efficiency, 35.5% noted a slight increase, suggesting that early benefits are being realized but, as yet, not on a transformational scale.

> **Is it perfect? No. Is it as good as my executive team? No. Is it so valuable that I talk to ChatGPT every single day? Yes.**
>
> Maggioncalda
> CEO, Coursera

FIGURE 3.6 | **How has adopting genAI affected your center's productivity and cost efficiency?** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=138).

Meanwhile, 15.9% observed a moderate increase, and only 1.4% saw a significant boost, indicating that cost savings are still limited for most organizations.

In contrast, centers' productivity has seen greater improvements, with 42.8% reporting a slight increase and 23.9% experiencing a moderate boost. A small but meaningful 5.1% observed a significant increase in productivity, while 28.3% saw no change. Notably, no respondents reported a decrease in productivity, and only 1.4% saw a decline in cost efficiency, reinforcing that AI adoption is generally beneficial.

These findings suggest that while AI is starting to enhance operations, its full potential in cost efficiency has yet to be unlocked. **Changes, particularly transformative ones, need time.**

> **Generative AI has the potential to change the world in ways that we cannot even imagine. It can create new ideas, products, and services to make our lives easier, more productive, and more creative. It also has the potential to solve some of the world's biggest problems, such as climate change, poverty, and disease.**

Bill Gates

The perception of GenAI as an opportunity in our sector, as we have already learned (where 84.6% saw AI as either an opportunity or a significant opportunity), contrasts with its actual impact on productivity and cost efficiency, which is depicted above. While organizations overwhelmingly view GenAI as a transformative tool, its measurable effects on productivity and cost savings remain moderate or incremental rather than revolutionary.

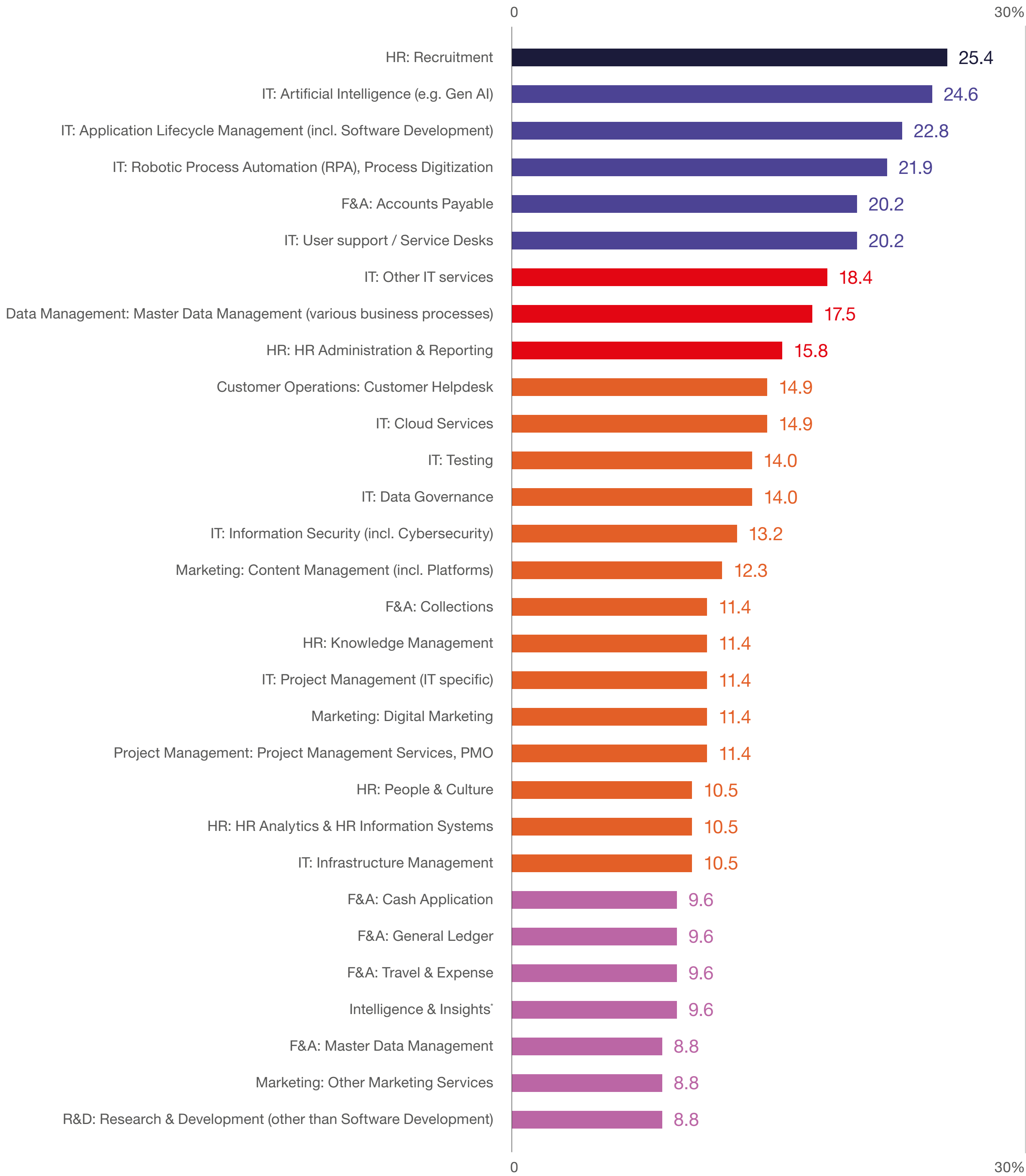
This contrast stresses a maturity gap in AI adoption, where companies recognize AI's long-term potential but have yet to fully integrate and optimize it for substantial cost and efficiency gains. To bridge the gap, organizations may need to focus on scaling AI usage, improve training programs, and refine their AI implementation strategies to realize greater financial and operational benefits over time.

Use of genAI by processes and applications

The adoption of GenAI in the sector is rapidly expanding, with the highest levels of implementation seen in HR, IT, and process automation, where AI-driven efficiencies offer the most immediate and tangible benefits. HR and recruitment processes led the way, with 25.4% of organizations leveraging AI to streamline hiring, candidate screening, and onboarding. This reflects a strong industry-wide recognition of AI's ability to reduce administrative burdens and improve decision-making in talent acquisition. AI-powered analytics and business intelligence were also widely adopted (24.6%), indicating that companies see AI as a critical tool for data-driven decision-making, forecasting, and performance optimization. Technology was also transforming IT operations, with 22.8% of companies integrating AI into software development processes, automating coding, testing, and maintenance tasks. RPA and process optimization (21.9%) have become essential areas for AI-driven efficiencies, further reinforcing the technology's role in reducing manual workloads and enhancing business process automation. Beyond IT and HR, AI was making substantial inroads into financial workflows, particularly in Accounts Payable (20.2%), where automation streamlines invoice processing and reconciliations.

The data suggests that while AI adoption is surging in core business functions, it has yet to reach its full potential in supply chain optimization, compliance, and highly specialized processes. As AI tools evolve and offer more sophisticated functionalities, adoption will likely expand into more complex and regulated business functions.

FIGURE 3.7 | **In which processes do you currently utilize genAI?** (%)

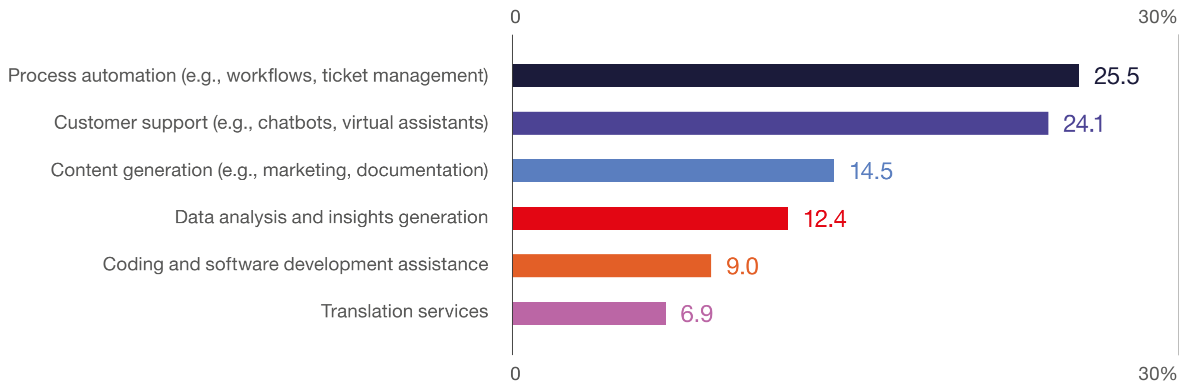


* Business Intelligence, Data Analytics, Complex Performance Reporting

Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=114). Please take into account that processes with at least 9% of AI use within the industry in Poland are shown.

The primary applications of AI in the sector in Poland focus on automation, customer support, and content generation. The most widely adopted example was process automation (25.5%), which included workflow management and ticket handling, demonstrating AI's role in improving operational efficiency. Customer support (24.1%) was close behind, with AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants significantly handling inquiries and reducing human workload. Other notable AI applications included content generation (14.5%), which is used for marketing, documentation, and communication tasks, and data analysis and insights generation (12.4%), reflecting AI's growing role in business intelligence and decision-making. At this development stage, coding, software development assistance (9.0%), and translation services (6.9%) had lower adoption rates, suggesting that these areas are still developing or have not yet been widely prioritized.

FIGURE 3.8 | **What are the primary applications of AI in your operations?** (%)



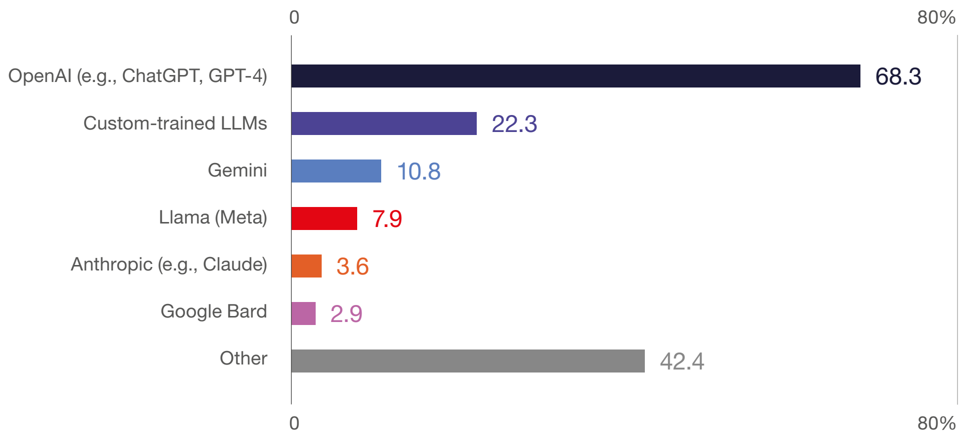
Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=145).

Use of LLMs and AI tools

The dominance of OpenAI's models (ChatGPT, GPT-4) in Poland's business services sector is evident, with 68.3% of organizations utilizing them, making these applications the most widely adopted large language models (LLMs). Interestingly, 42.4% of respondents selected "Other," suggesting a variety of niche or sector-specific generative AI tools were utilized. Custom-trained LLMs (22.3%) also played a significant role, indicating that many companies are developing proprietary AI models tailored to their specific business needs for privacy, compliance, or competitive advantage.

Adoption of alternative models remained relatively low, with Google Gemini (10.8%), Meta's Llama (7.9%), and Anthropic's Claude (3.6%) showing moderate uptake. Google Bard (2.9%) had the lowest reported usage, suggesting that enterprises preferred more established AI ecosystems. The analysis of answers under other points to a diverse AI adoption landscape. Companies leverage, e.g., Microsoft Copilot, Azure AI, and Google AI tools while developing bespoke, internally built AI models for privacy and specialization.

FIGURE 3.9 | **Which large language models (LLMs) or generative AI tools does your organization currently utilize?** (%)



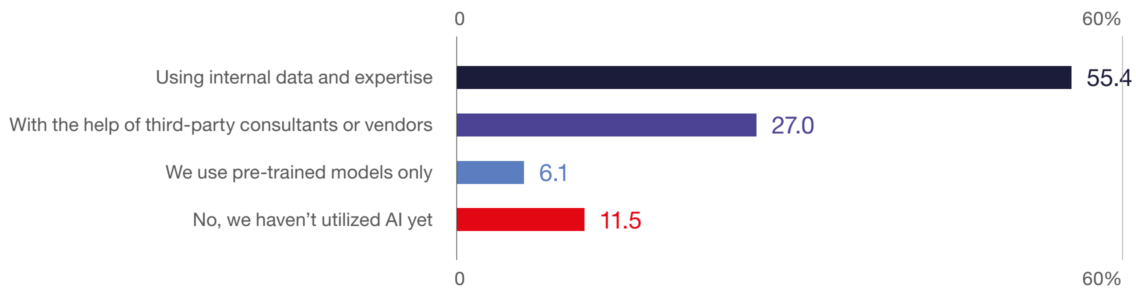
Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=139).

AI customization

The implementation and customization of AI tools within the sector in Poland demonstrate a clear preference for leveraging internal capabilities. Most organizations (55.4%) utilized internal data and expertise to develop and tailor AI solutions, reflecting a strong commitment to in-house innovation and AI-driven transformation. In contrast, 27.0% relied on third-party consultants or vendors. A smaller proportion (6.1%) exclusively employed pre-trained AI models.

Moreover, 11.5% of organizations have not yet adopted AI, underscoring the fact that some companies remain hesitant or unprepared for AI integration. Factors such as costs, skills shortages, or unclear business use cases may be contributing to this reluctance. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that AI adoption is gradually maturing.

FIGURE 3.10 | **How has your organization implemented and customized AI tools for your specific business needs?** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=148).

Challenges to AI adoption

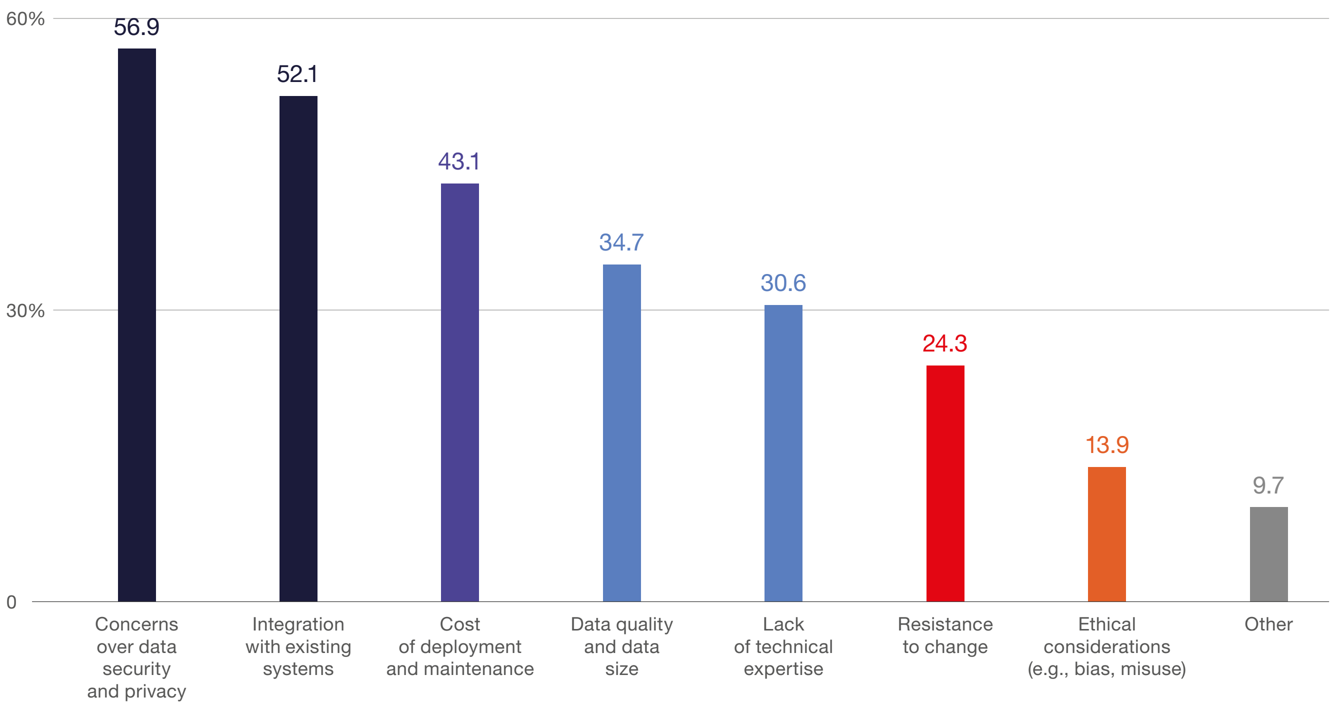
The biggest declared challenges in implementing AI within organizations revolved around security, system integration, and costs. The top concern was data security and privacy (56.9%), reflecting widespread apprehension over AI's handling of sensitive information and compliance risks. Close behind were the risks related to integrating AI with existing systems (52.1%), emphasizing the complexity of embedding AI within legacy infrastructures. The cost of deployment and maintenance (43.1%) was another major barrier, indicating that AI adoption requires significant financial investment. Data quality and size (34.7%) also posed substantial challenges, as AI models critically rely on large, high-quality datasets for optimal performance. Additionally, organizations indicated a lack of technical expertise (30.6%). Resistance to change (24.3%) remained a major cultural obstacle, while ethical concerns, including bias and potential misuse (13.9%), were noted but appeared to be a lower priority than operational challenges.

Data privacy and compliance in AI usage are top priorities for the sector, with organizations adopting a multi-layered security approach. The most common method was the use of secure cloud environments (72.7%), supported by regular audits and compliance checks (59.4%) to ensure ongoing regulatory alignment.

Other widely used practices included limiting LLM access to sensitive data (53.9%) and data anonymization (50.8%), which help mitigate confidentiality risks while enabling AI use. These practices align with best practices in highly regulated sectors such as finance, insurance, and healthcare.

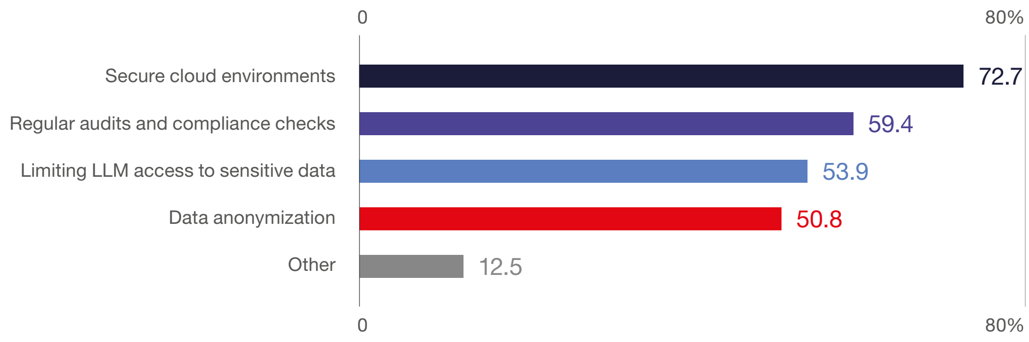
A smaller share (12.5%) reported using alternative strategies, which may include private AI models, federated learning, and advanced encryption techniques.

FIGURE 3.11 | **The biggest challenges in implementing AI** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=144).

FIGURE 3.12 **How does your organization ensure data privacy and compliance using AI?** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=128).

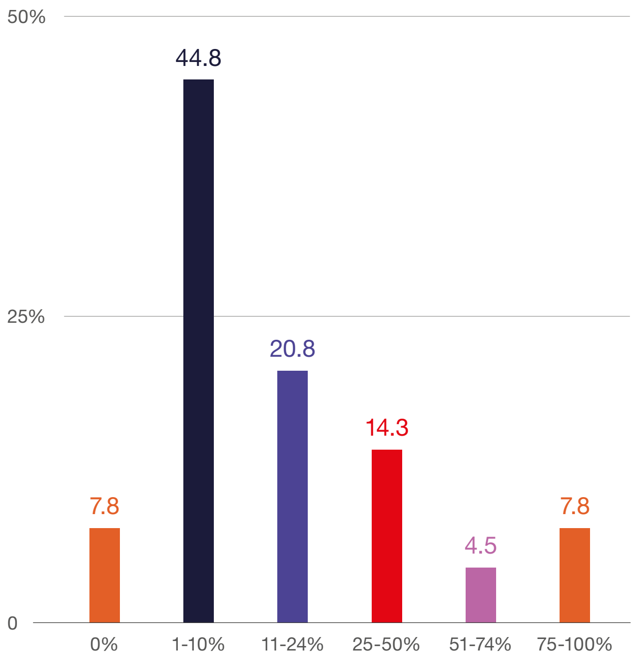
Upskilling in AI technologies end

AI adoption – including using LLMs – in Poland's business services sector is still at an early stage, particularly in AI talent development. Most companies have trained only a small proportion of their workforce: 44.8% had trained just 1–10% of employees, while 20.8% had trained 11–24%. Only 7.8% of firms reported training 75% or more employees, while 7.8% had trained no employees at all, indicating minimal AI integration.

These figures reveal a significant gap between AI ambitions and workforce readiness. To stay competitive, companies must accelerate AI training by leveraging external partnerships, government support, and structured learning programs to build organization-wide AI proficiency.

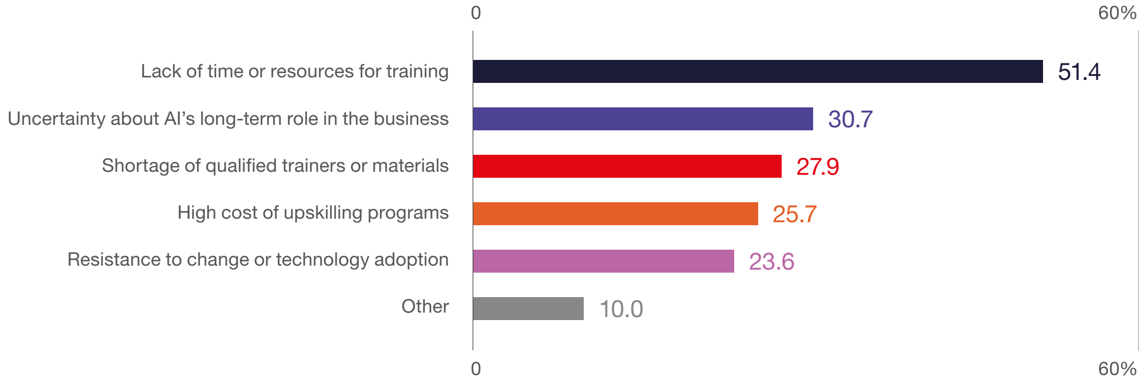
Key barriers to AI/LLM workforce upskilling in Poland's business services sector reveal the challenges of digital transformation. The most cited issue was a lack of time and resources (51.4%), reflecting difficulties in balancing training with day-to-day operations. Uncertainty about AI's long-term role (30.7%) and a shortage of qualified trainers or materials (27.9%) hindered progress. Additionally, high training costs (25.7%) and resistance to change (23.6%) presented both financial and cultural obstacles.

FIGURE 3.13 **What proportion of your workforce has undergone training to utilize AI tools, including LLMs, in their roles?** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=154).

FIGURE 3.14 | **Main barriers to upskilling the workforce for AI/LLMs adoption?** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=140).

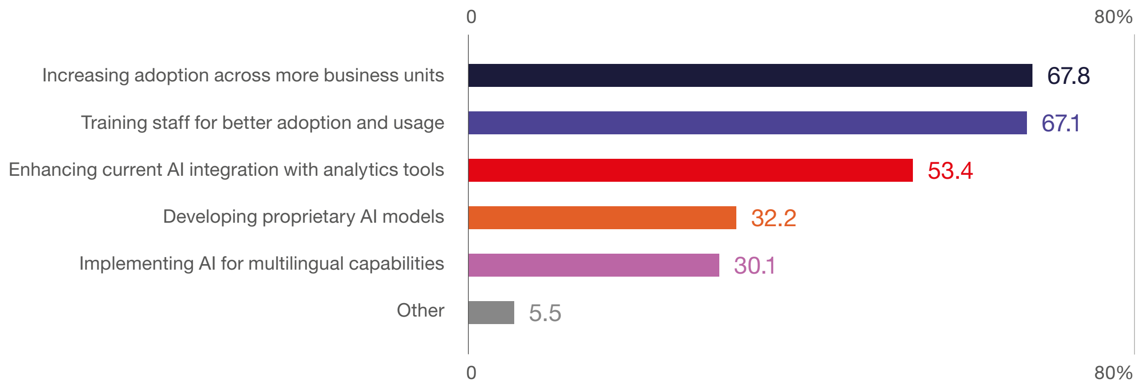
Plans concerning genAI use end

As might have been expected, **the expansion of AI utilization in Poland's business services sector over the next 12 months will focus primarily on scaling adoption and workforce training. The top priority was increasing AI adoption across more business units (67.8%),** reflecting a broad organizational shift toward AI-driven processes. **Training staff for better adoption** and usage (67.1%) was a close second, emphasizing the importance of equipping employees with AI skills to maximize efficiency.

Organizations are also committed to enhancing AI integration with analytics tools (53.4%), suggesting a strong focus on leveraging AI for data-driven decision-making. A smaller but notable percentage (32.2%) was investing in developing proprietary AI models, indicating that at least some companies are investigating custom AI solutions rather than relying solely on third-party models. Meanwhile, 30.1% planned to implement AI for multilingual capabilities, likely in response to the needs of global clients and international operations.

The trends discussed above suggest that AI adoption in Poland's sector is shifting from experimental phases toward widespread operational integration, with a strong emphasis on workforce readiness and AI-driven business transformation.

FIGURE 3.15 | **Plans for expanding AI utilization in the next 12 months** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=146).

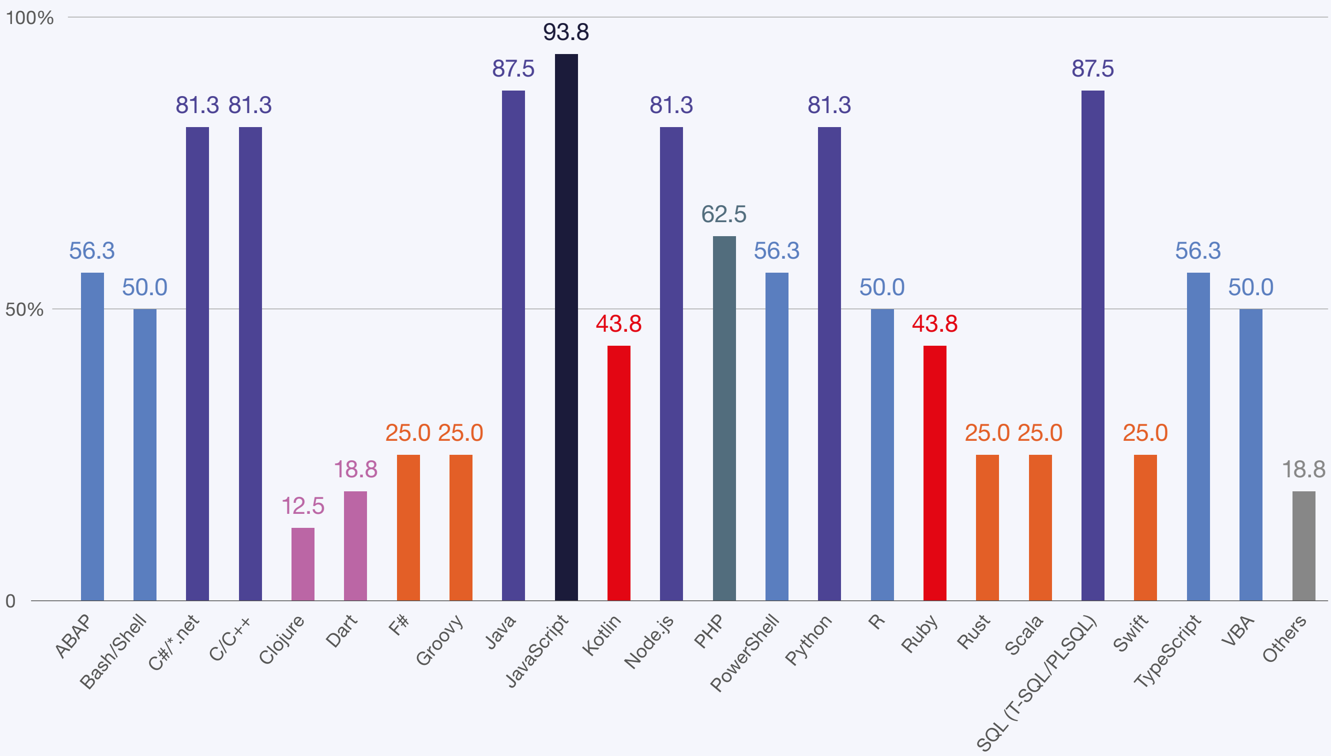
IT centers – the use of tools is at the forefront

In contrast to previous editions of the report, this year, we decided to ask detailed questions on the utilization of specialized language and tools in IT centers to better understand the companies at the forefront of using modern technologies and frequently responsible for introducing solutions in other sector's centers.

Programming languages

The use of specialized programming languages in Poland's IT centers has evolved significantly between Q1 2024 and Q1 2025, reflecting shifts in technology stacks and development priorities. JavaScript remained the most widely used language, increasing from 76% in 2024 to 93.8% in 2025, underlining its continued dominance in web and full-stack development. Similarly, Java rose from 76% to 87.5%, maintaining its relevance in enterprise applications. C#/.NET and Node.js grew significantly to 81.3%, reinforcing their importance in backend and cloud-based solutions. Python adoption expanded from 60% to 81.3%, reflecting its growing role in data science, AI, and automation. PowerShell also saw notable growth, increasing from 28% to 56.3%, due to its automation capabilities in cloud and DevOps environments. Kotlin, R, and VBA retained a steady presence, while

FIGURE 3.16 | **Utilization of programming languages at the end of Q1 2025** (% of responses) – IT/ITO companies only



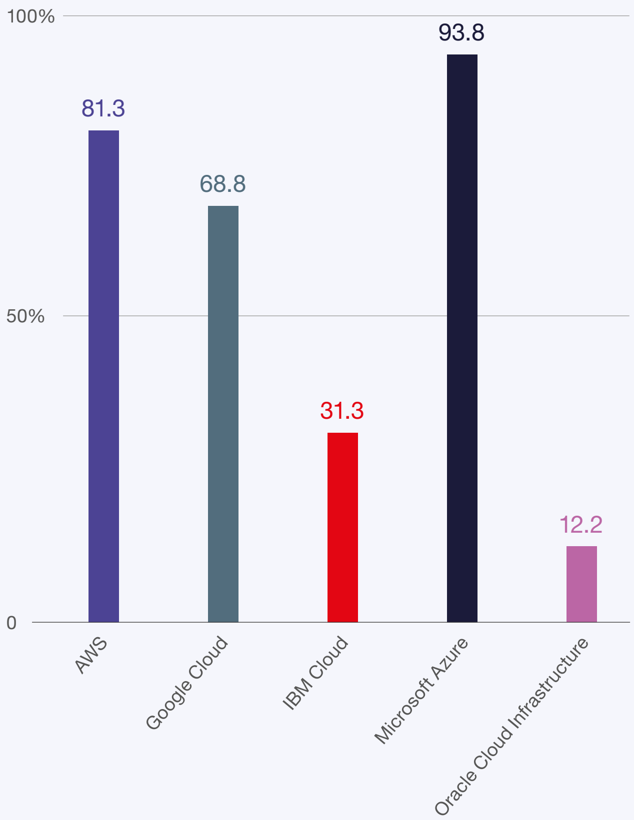
Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=16).

languages such as Scala, Rust, and Swift saw moderate increases, indicating diversification in development needs. These trends suggest Poland's IT centers are doubling down on JavaScript-based frameworks, cloud-native development, and AI-driven solutions while expanding automation and DevOps scripting.

Cloud technologies

The cloud technology landscape in Poland's IT centers has experienced notable growth and shifts between Q1 2024 and Q1 2025. Microsoft Azure has solidified its dominance, increasing from 80% to 93.8%, reinforcing its position as the enterprise's preferred cloud platform. AWS also saw a rise from 72% to 81.3%, maintaining strong market penetration. Google Cloud experienced significant growth, jumping from 56% to 68.8%, reflecting its increasing adoption in multi-cloud strategies and AI-driven workloads. IBM Cloud saw remarkable growth, nearly doubling from 16% to 31.3%, indicating renewed interest in its cloud offerings, possibly in hybrid cloud deployments. However, Oracle Cloud Infrastructure declined from 20% to 12.5%, suggesting a decreasing role in cloud adoption strategies. These trends highlight a strong move toward major cloud providers, with Microsoft Azure and AWS continuing to dominate while IBM Cloud and Google Cloud gain traction.

FIGURE 3.17 **Utilization of cloud technologies at the end of Q1 2025** (% of responses) – IT/ITO companies only

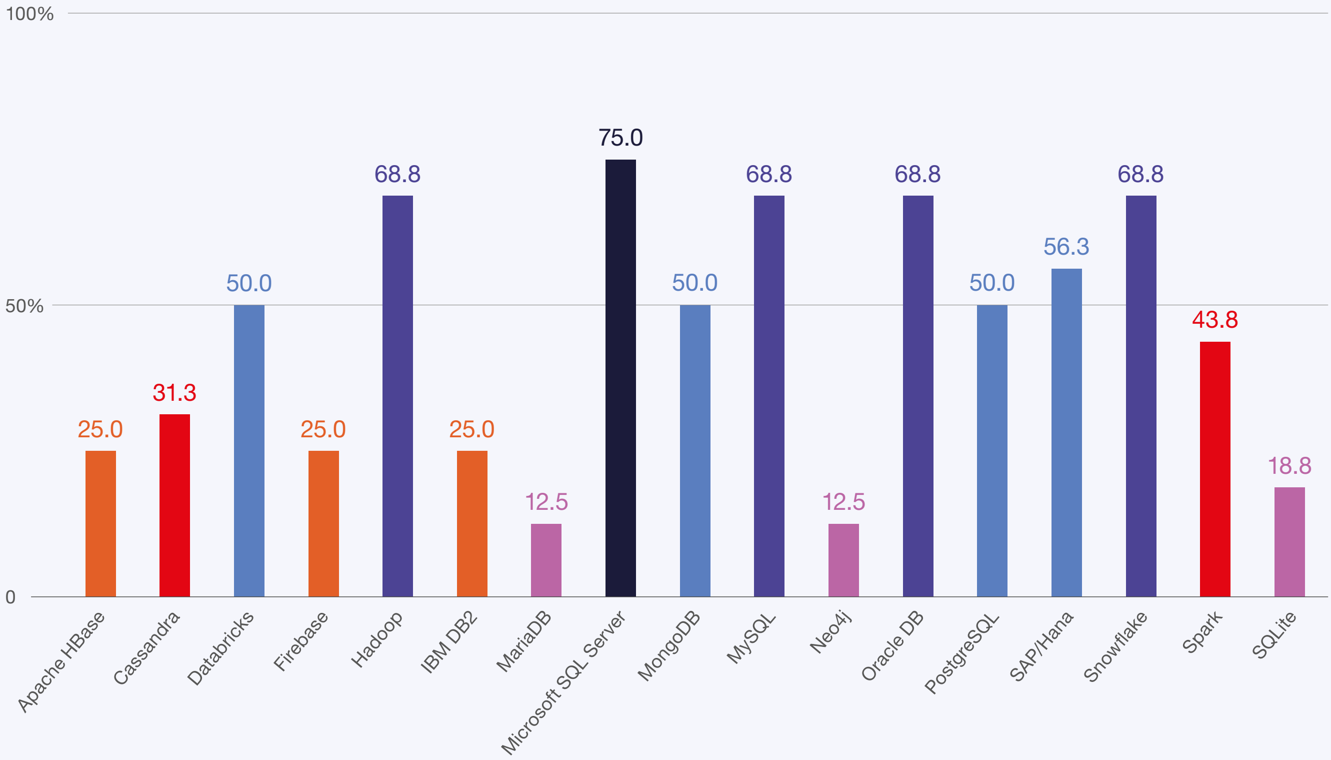


Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=16).

Data & big data

The adoption of specialized programming technologies for data and big data in IT centers has evolved notably from Q1 2024 to Q1 2025, reflecting shifting priorities in database management and big data processing. Microsoft SQL Server remains the most widely used technology, increasing from 58.3% in 2024 to 75.0% in 2025 and reinforcing its role as the dominant database solution. Hadoop, MongoDB, Oracle DB, and Snowflake saw significant growth, reaching 68.8% adoption, emphasizing a strong focus on scalable data storage and analytics. PostgreSQL also increased to 50.0%, maintaining its relevance as an open-source relational database. Meanwhile, Databricks surged from 33.3% to 50.0%, reflecting an increased emphasis on unified analytics platforms. Spark adoption rose from 29.2% to 43.8%, indicating continued investment in distributed computing for big data workloads. In contrast, technologies such as IBM DB2 (25.0%) and MariaDB (12.5%) remain niche products with limited growth. These trends suggest that IT centers prioritize cloud-based and distributed computing solutions to manage as well as analyze growing volumes of data and position themselves for more advanced AI and analytics applications.

FIGURE 3.18 | **Utilization of data & big data technologies at the end of Q1 2025** (% of responses) – IT/ITO companies only

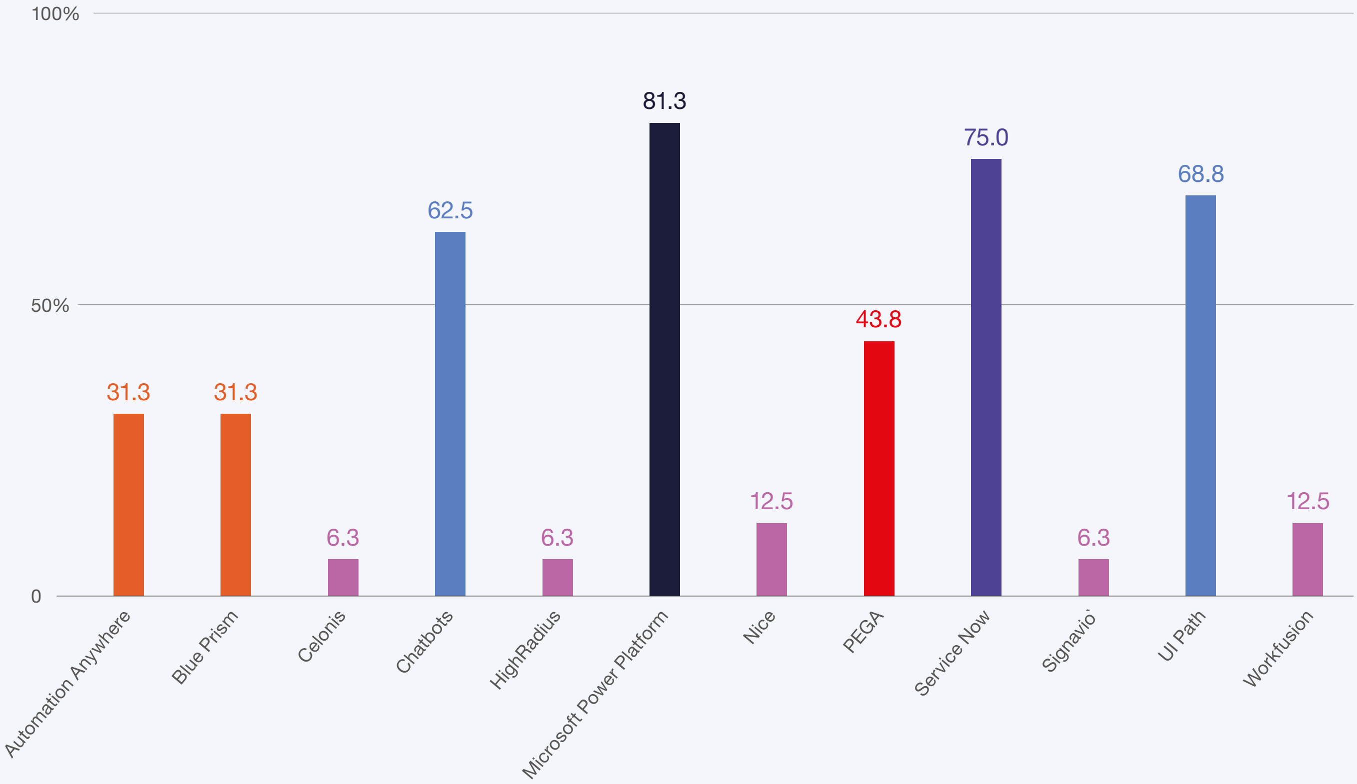


Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=16).

IPA, RPA & process mining

The adoption of specialized programming technologies in IT centers has evolved between Q1 2024 and Q1 2025, showing clear shifts in priorities and technological advancements. The most notable increase is in Microsoft Power Platform, which surged from 41.2% in 2024 to 81.3% in 2025, signaling a strong shift toward low-code/no-code automation solutions. Similarly, Service Now adoption grew from 58.8% to 75.0%, reflecting an increasing focus on workflow automation and IT service management. UI Path and Chatbots also experienced substantial growth, from 41.2% to 68.8% and 35.3% to 62.5%, respectively, underlining the growing importance of RPA and AI-driven communication tools. In contrast, Blue Prism saw only a slight increase (29.4% to 31.3%), suggesting it may be stabilizing in market share. Interestingly, Celonis and Signavio, both process mining tools, remained relatively stagnant or saw minimal adoption increases, indicating a lower priority for deep process analytics. These trends suggest **a significant move toward cloud-based automation, AI-driven customer interactions, and scalable RPA, positioning Poland's IT centers at the forefront of digital transformation.**

FIGURE 3.19 **Utilization of IPA, RPA & process mining technologies at the end of Q1 2025** (% of responses) – IT/ITO companies only

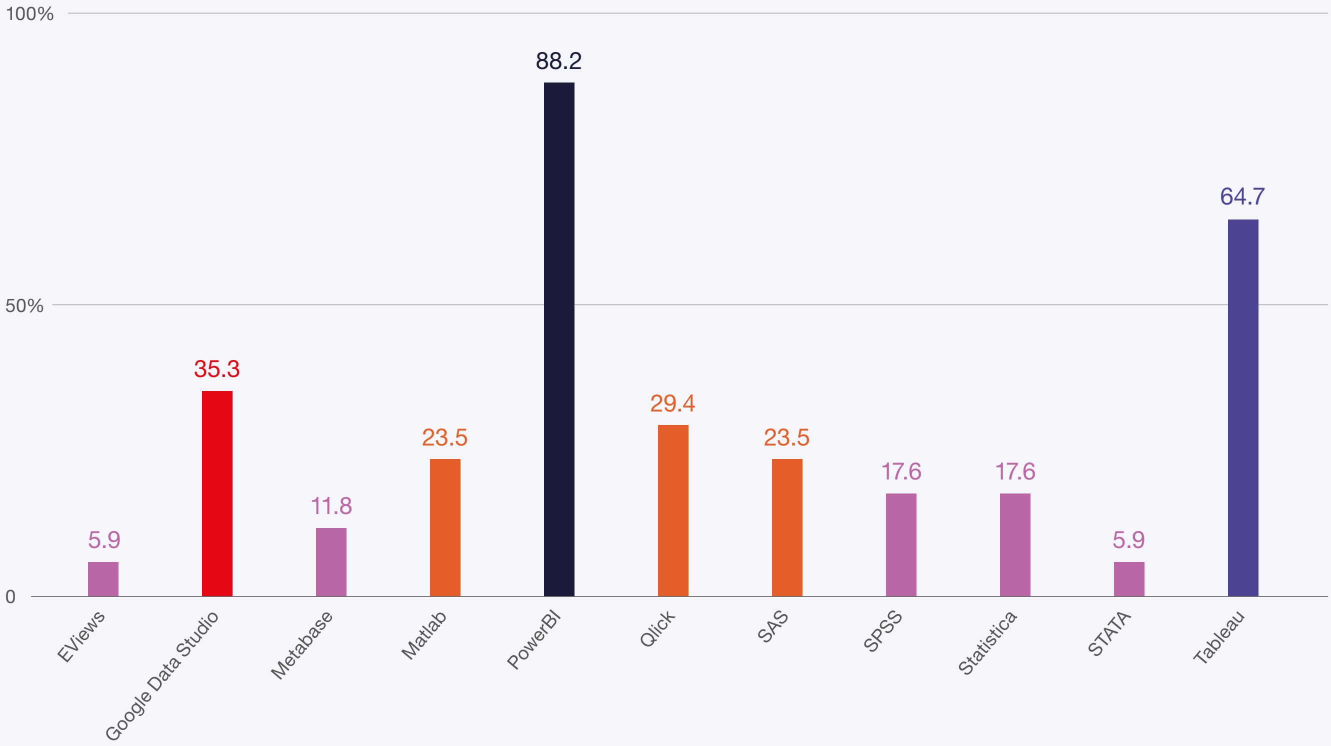


Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=16).

Analytics, advanced analytics & visualization

The analytics and visualization landscape in Poland's business services IT centers has remained consistent in some areas while shifting significantly in others between Q1 2024 and Q1 2025. **Power BI continues to dominate, growing to 88.2%,** reaffirming its position as the preferred business intelligence tool. Tableau also retained its strong presence, remaining stable at 64.7%. However, Google Data Studio adoption increased from 29.4% to 35.3%, indicating a rising preference for Google's ecosystem. Meanwhile, Qlik saw a notable jump from 23.5% to 29.4%, reinforcing its growing data visualization and analytics role. On the other hand, tools such as SAS (23.5%), SPSS (17.6%), and Statistica (17.6%) showed marginal changes, suggesting a stable niche user base. EViews and STATA remained the least adopted solutions, with only 5.9% usage. Overall, the trends indicate a continued reliance on mainstream BI tools such as Power BI and Tableau. Meanwhile, alternative analytics solutions such as Google Data Studio and Qlik are gradually gaining traction, reflecting a diversification in data visualization and business intelligence strategies.

FIGURE 3.20 **Utilization of analytics & visualization technologies at the end of Q1 2025** (% of responses) – IT/ITO companies only



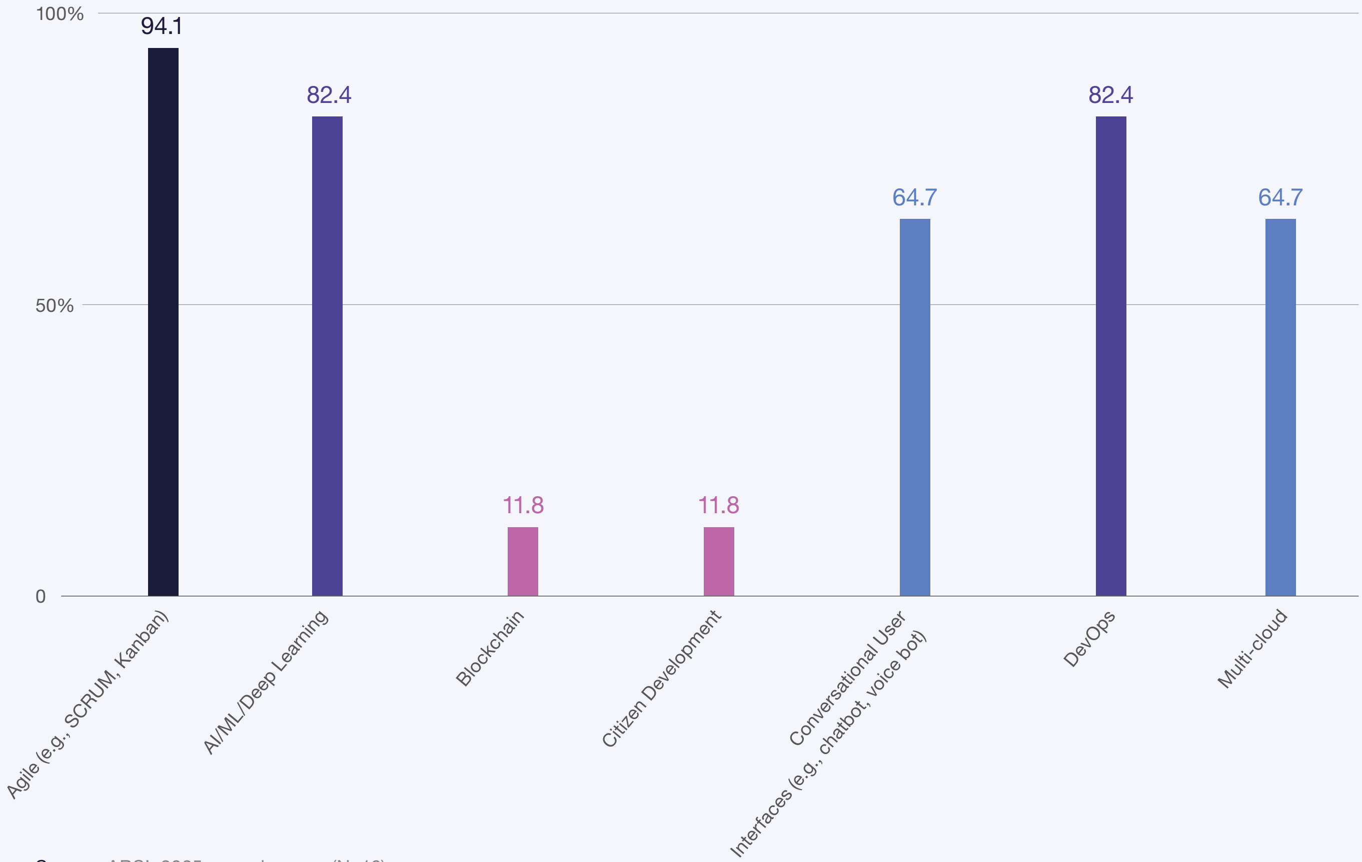
Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=16).

Specialized models, methods, and techniques

The IT centers within the business services sector in Poland have shown a significant evolution between Q1 2024 and Q1 2025, as reflected in the adoption of specialized models, methods, and techniques. Agile methodologies (SCRUM, Kanban) remain the dominant approach, with a reported use by 94.1% of IT centers indicating their continued relevance. AI/ML/Deep Learning has surged from 34.8% in 2024 to 82.4% in 2025, emphasizing a major shift toward automation and advanced data processing. Conversely, blockchain usage has declined slightly from 17.4% to 11.8%, suggesting a reduced focus on decentralized technologies. DevOps has also grown from 78.3% to 82.4%, reinforcing the emphasis on continuous integration and deployment. Multi-cloud adoption has increased from 52.2% to 64.7%, reflecting a broader move toward cloud-based infrastructure. Interestingly, the adoption of conversational user interfaces has risen from 39.1% to 64.7%, indicating a rapidly growing reliance on AI-driven customer interactions.

These trends suggest that IT centers in Poland are rapidly shifting toward AI-driven, agile, and cloud-based solutions while deprioritizing blockchain and traditional citizen development initiatives.

FIGURE 3.21 **Utilization of specialized models, methods, and techniques at the end of Q1 2025** (% of responses) – IT/ITO companies only



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=16).

Summary – key observations on technology

Cloud computing and infrastructure modernization

Technology is emerging as the primary driver of transformation across Poland's business services sector. Cloud computing, AI-driven automation, and advanced analytics reshape how centers operate, scale, and compete. The growing consolidation around major cloud providers signals a shift toward a scalable and flexible infrastructure that supports real-time data processing, machine learning, and digital transformation across functions.

A strategic movement toward cloud-native services is evident, with organizations prioritizing platforms that offer seamless AI integration and automation capabilities. Simultaneously, multi-cloud and hybrid-cloud approaches are gaining traction, helping companies optimize costs, enhance cybersecurity, and build operational resilience in an increasingly AI-driven landscape.

AI and machine learning adoption

The adoption of AI and machine learning is accelerating dramatically. Implementation has surged from 34.8% to 82.4% among IT centers, reflecting a decisive shift from experimentation to operational deployment. AI is now used to automate processes, enhance decision-making, and improve customer interaction quality. Intelligent Process Automation (IPA), including Robotic Process Automation (RPA), is becoming mainstream. Tools like Microsoft Power Platform have seen adoption grow from 41.2% to 81.3%, while

ServiceNow usage now stands at 75.0%. These platforms enable low-code and no-code automation, allowing business teams to drive transformation without relying heavily on IT departments.

Software development and technology trends

AI is also reshaping software development practices. Python has emerged as a core language for machine learning and automation and is now used by over 80% of surveyed centers. JavaScript and PowerShell remain key tools within cloud and DevOps environments. In contrast, blockchain adoption has declined, indicating that organizations prioritize pragmatic, scalable solutions over speculative technologies.

Intelligent Process Automation (IPA) maturity

The broader implementation of IPA has grown, with the percentage of centers actively using it increasing from 65.2% to 74.1% between Q1 2024 and Q1 2025. This growth also corresponds with a drop in the share of companies merely planning adoption – suggesting that many have already taken the leap into automation. However, 9.2% of respondents still reported no intention to implement IPA, underscoring a degree of ongoing skepticism or barriers to adoption.

Current automation levels

Despite growing implementation, automation maturity remains relatively low. The median automation rate was just 17.5% in Q1 2025 – up only slightly from 15.0% a year earlier. Most companies report automation levels below 30%, and few have exceeded the 50% mark. These numbers indicate that while automation has entered the mainstream, most organizations are still in the early or scaling phases of their journey.

Generative AI perceptions vs. impact

Generative AI is widely viewed as a promising opportunity, with 84.6% of center managers perceiving it positively. However, its tangible business impact remains modest for now. Slight productivity increases were reported by 42.8% of respondents, while 45.7% saw no significant change in cost efficiency. These outcomes suggest that while GenAI delivers incremental benefits, it has yet to achieve the transformational performance gains that many expected. Unlocking its full potential will require more strategic implementation, improved training, and a focus on scaling AI solutions beyond isolated use cases.

Cybersecurity and the rise of Post-Quantum Cryptography

As digital transformation accelerates across Poland's business services sector, cybersecurity has become a top strategic priority. The shift to cloud-native, AI-driven operations does increase exposure to evolving threats and, therefore, requires more sophisticated defense mechanisms. Organizations are strengthening their cyber resilience through zero-trust architectures, real-time threat monitoring, and AI-enhanced security frameworks. With the looming risk of quantum computing undermining current encryption standards, forward-looking companies are beginning to explore quantum cryptography as well as PQC to future-proof their data. Adoption remains at an early stage, but awareness is growing that cybersecurity must evolve in parallel with cloud and AI capabilities to safeguard sensitive data and ensure compliance, especially in highly regulated environments.

Strategic Recommendations

Our sector's centers must continue investing in technological foundations, automation tools, and workforce readiness to stay ahead in this rapidly evolving landscape. This forces companies to:

» Embrace multi-cloud strategies to enhance AI scalability and infrastructure flexibility.

» Accelerate AI-driven automation through machine learning, RPA, and low-code/no-code platforms.

» Strengthen data infrastructure using scalable analytics tools.

» Prioritize workforce upskilling to align human capital with evolving AI capabilities.

» Stay agile with emerging technologies, focusing on scalable, high-impact innovations aligned with strategic goals.

» Reinforce cybersecurity frameworks, including adoption of AI-enhanced security tools and exploration of QC and PQC to protect data in an increasingly AI and cloud-driven environment.

4

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

Introduction

Chapter 4 presents how business service centers in Poland are evolving in response to changing business needs and global challenges. Drawing on ABSL 2025 survey data, it analyzes how companies are shifting the scope of the services they offer – whether expanding, reducing, or maintaining their current setup – and which functions are growing the most, such as Finance, IT, HR, and Customer Operations.

The chapter also reviews strategic directions companies take, using tools such as the Ansoff Matrix to show how organizations approach growth – whether through new services, new markets, or improving existing offerings. It underscores a growing focus on product development and capability building rather than geographic expansion.

A key part of the chapter is the Transformation Cube, which tracks how businesses progress in three areas: automation, virtualization (remote/hybrid work), and service personalization. It compares current maturity levels with where companies expect to be in five years, showing clear ambitions for increased AI use, digital operations, and tailored services.

Innovation is central throughout the analysis – introducing new services and improving internal processes. The chapter explores how centers contribute to global innovation through technology adoption, talent development, and collaboration.

The broader context is also addressed. Businesses are responding to external pressures such as geopolitical instability, economic uncertainty, rising labor costs, and rapid advances in AI. The chapter shows how centers are adapting to these conditions – through technology, business continuity planning, and transformation strategies.

Finally, the chapter examines how Poland is positioned in the global business services landscape. It looks at why companies choose Poland, the challenges to its competitiveness, and what may drive future success – especially as the focus shifts from cost to value creation, innovation, and strategic capabilities.

ABSL

Chapter content developed by: **ABSL**

Key transformation facts

56.4% of sector companies expanded services in 2024 (5.8% significantly). Only 7.0% of firms reduced their service scope.

Top expanded functions: **Finance (43.1%), IT (35.9%), HR (25.5%), Customer Ops (24.2%).**

Ansoff Matrix shows a shift toward product development over market expansion.

The Transformation Cube tracks growing maturity in automation, hybrid work, and service personalization.

The largest share of respondents (41.7%) stated that productivity had only increased moderately in relation to cost.

77.4% of firms declared introducing or continuing to introduce a transformation strategy.

The majority of companies anticipated stronger AI/digital integration by 2030.

Poland was seen as shifting from cost arbitrage to value creation.

Geopolitics, labor costs, and AI were top transformation drivers.

74.5% declared they had introduced innovation(s), understood as integrated products/services in the preceding three years.

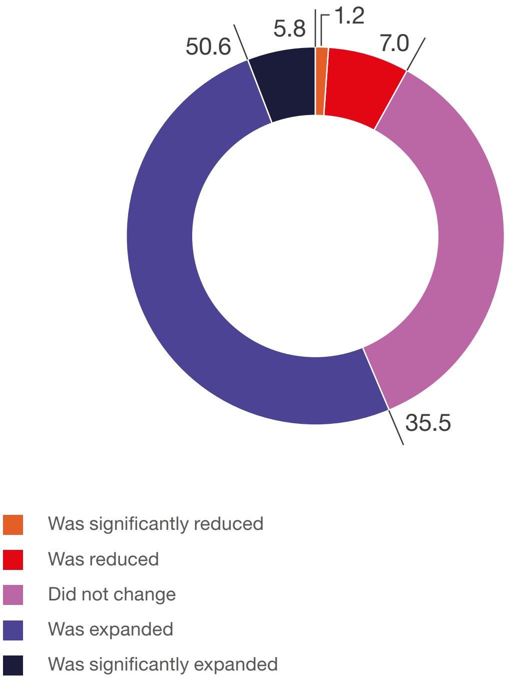
Key innovation areas included internal process redesign and global capability centers.

India, Romania, and the Philippines were considered the biggest competitors to Poland.

Changes in the scope of services

The evolution of service scope within the sector in 2024 stresses a prevailing trend of expansion, with over half (50.6%) of companies broadening their offerings and an additional 5.8% reporting significant expansion. This suggests that **many organizations adapt to growing business needs, taking on more complex functions and leveraging automation and technology to scale operations.** At the same time, a substantial 35.5% of respondents indicated that their service scope remained unchanged, reflecting a significant level of stability for a considerable portion of the sector. On the other hand, service reductions were reported by a minority, with 7.0% of organizations experiencing a decline and only 1.2% experiencing a significant decrease. It suggests that **while some centers may be restructuring or optimizing operations, widespread downsizing of services is not a dominant trend.** Instead, the data indicates that most businesses are in a phase of growth or consolidation, positioning themselves for future expansion and transformation.

FIGURE 4.1 | **What happened to the scope of services your company provided (as described in the previous question) in 2024?** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=172).

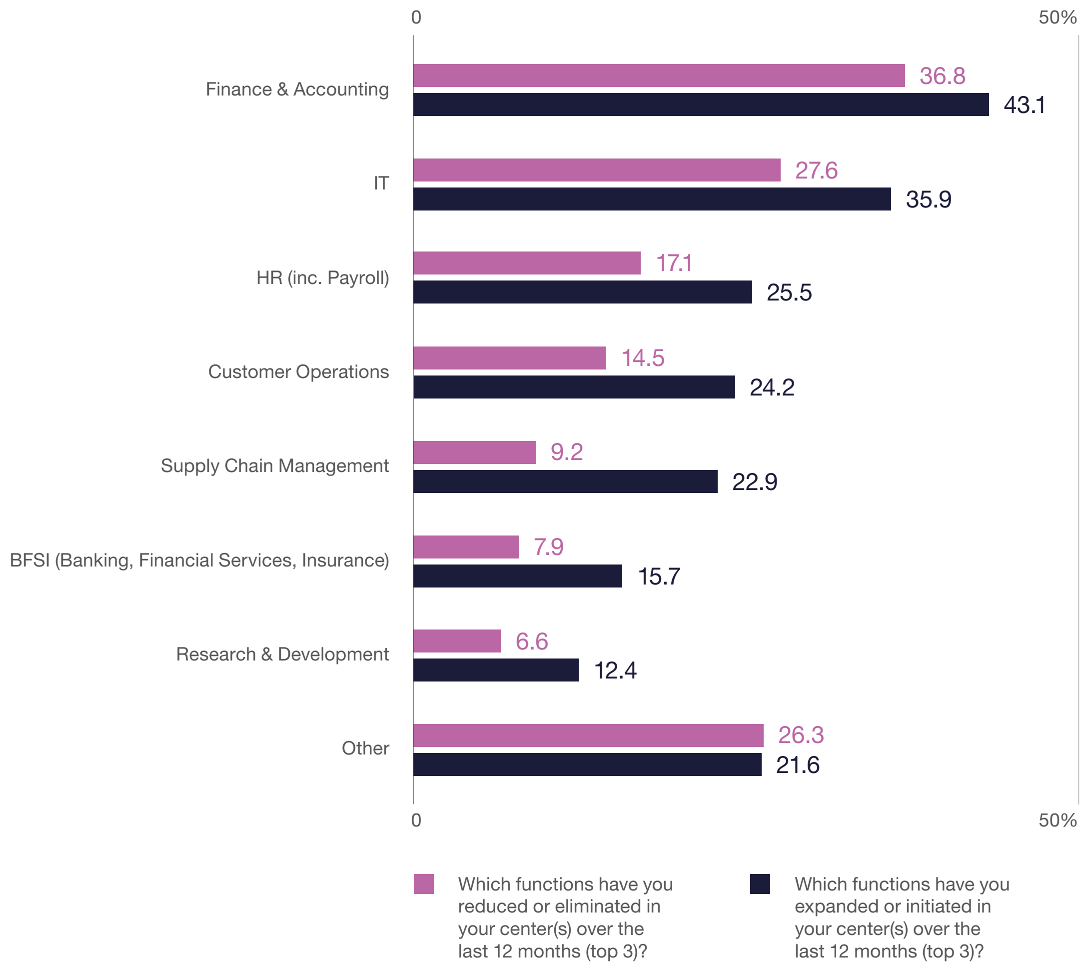
Functions expanded or initiated / functions reduced or eliminated

Over the last year, the expansion and reduction of business functions in service centers have revealed a dynamic shift in operational focus. Finance & Accounting and IT stood out as the most expanded functions, with 43.1% and 35.9% of centers, respectively, increasing their capacity in these areas. HR (25.5%) and Customer Operations (24.2%) also saw notable expansion, stressing the continued demand for process optimization and digital transformation in workforce management and customer service. At the same time, Supply Chain Management (22.9%) and BFSI (15.7%) functions had been expanded in response to evolving global business needs.

However, while expansion dominated, reductions also occurred, particularly in Finance and accounting (36.8%), IT (27.6%), and HR (17.1%). This suggests that while some organizations are scaling up these functions, others are optimizing through automation, outsourcing, or restructuring. Research and development (6.6%) and Supply Chain Management (9.2%) saw lower reductions, indicating that these functions remain relatively stable.

Overall, the findings suggest a targeted approach to business transformation, with companies focusing on strengthening key operational areas while streamlining or eliminating redundancies.

FIGURE 4.2 | **Functions expanded or reduced** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=190).

Ansoff, product-market expansion matrix

The Ansoff matrix, also known as the product-market expansion matrix, is a management strategy tool that companies use to analyze and plan their growth strategies.

The least risky strategy is the market penetration strategy, while the most difficult is the diversification strategy.

Compared to the previous year, a shift away from the most challenging strategy – diversification – can be observed. In 2025, 26.9% of respondents reported plans to pursue product diversification (introducing new products in new markets), a significant decline from 41.0% in 2024. In contrast, 43.3% now intend to focus on product development in existing markets (market penetration), up from 30.6% last year.

Additionally, 25.7% of respondents report no plans to change their geographic or product scope, up from 20.2% in 2023, while only 6.4% plan to enter new markets, a slight decrease from 8.2% the year before.

Overall, the distribution of strategies over the past two years has remained relatively stable, with a consistent focus on service diversification and product development rather than pure market expansion. The data suggests that **companies prioritize capability building and service enhancement over aggressive geographic growth.**

The four strategies that appear in the Ansoff matrix are:

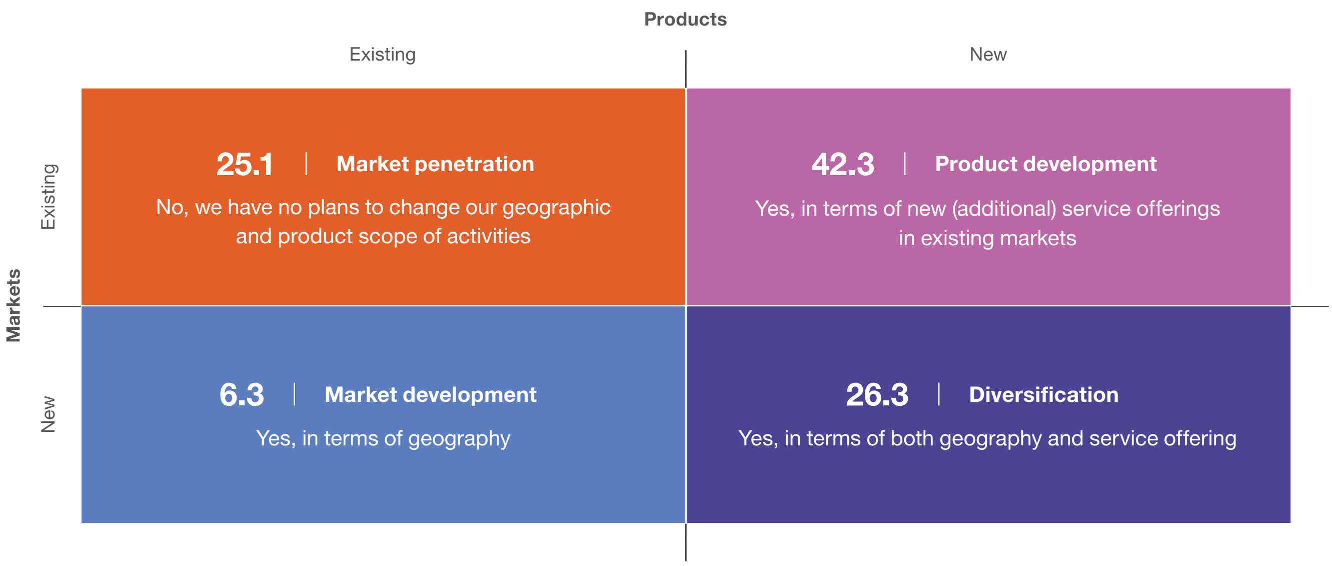
Market penetration: focusing on increasing sales of existing products in the existing market.

Product development: focusing on introducing new products to the existing market.

Market development: focusing on entering a new market using existing products.

Diversification: focusing on entering a new market by introducing new products.

FIGURE 4.3 | **Do you have plans to expand the scope of activities over the next 12 months?** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=172).

ABSL Transformation cube

Referring to the Business Services Transformation Cube – a core framework from ABSL Industry Foresight 2023 – respondents were asked to assess their current (Q1 2025) and projected (Q1 2030) business models across three key dimensions: automation, virtualization, and service personalization.

The 2024 and 2025 results reveal steady evolution in these areas. Managers reported more progress in virtualization and personalization than in AI-driven automation. Nonetheless, they expressed optimism over the next five years for significant advancement across all dimensions, especially in automation and AI integration.

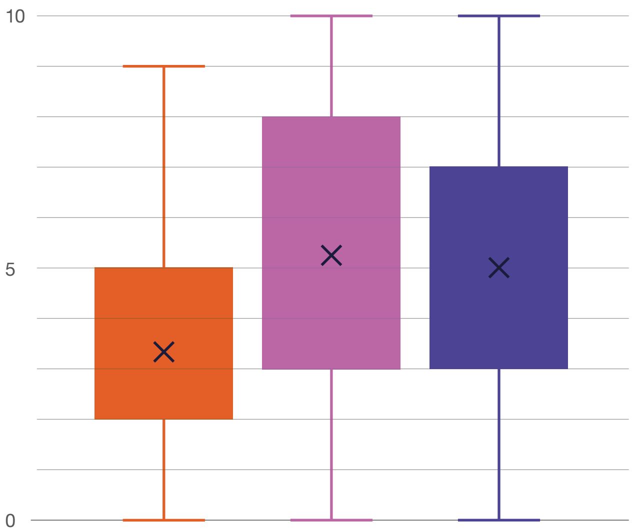
Automation continues to rise, with organizations adopting more AI-enabled, intelligent workflows. Virtualization trends show a gradual shift toward hybrid and remote models, signaling an ongoing movement away from traditional office setups, even amid RTO pressures. Service personalization also remains a priority, as companies aim to deliver customized, client-centric solutions while maintaining operational efficiency.

Looking ahead to 2030, companies anticipate a more automated, virtualized, and personalized service model supported by scalable digital infrastructure and a skills-ready workforce.

This forward-looking transformation reflects a strategic move toward hyper-automation, digital-first operations, and customer-centric innovation, positioning Poland's business services sector to meet dynamic global demands.

FIGURE 4.4

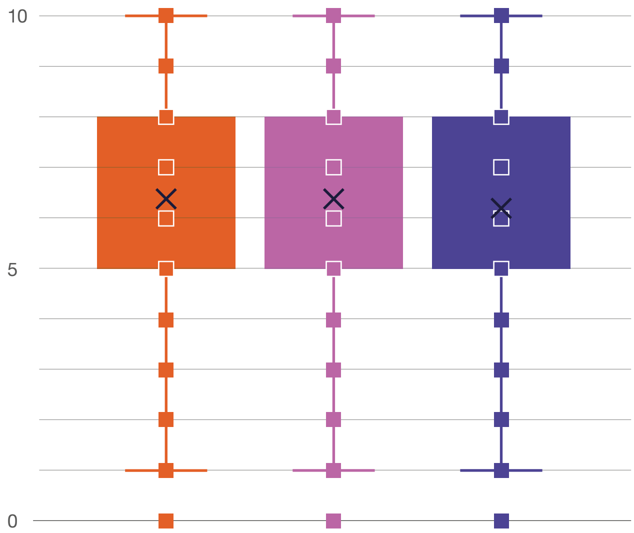
Transformation cube: how do you assess your current business model along



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=136).

FIGURE 4.5

Taking into account your transformation plans, where will your business model be in 2030?



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=131).

- Degree of automation / depth of artificial intelligence **0 – basic to 10 fully automated**
- Degree of visualization of your office / working model **0 – basic to 10 fully virtual**
- Degree of personalization (tailoring) of services on offer (the main product on offer) **0 – basic personalization (standardized product) to 10 – full personalization (hyper-personalized product)**

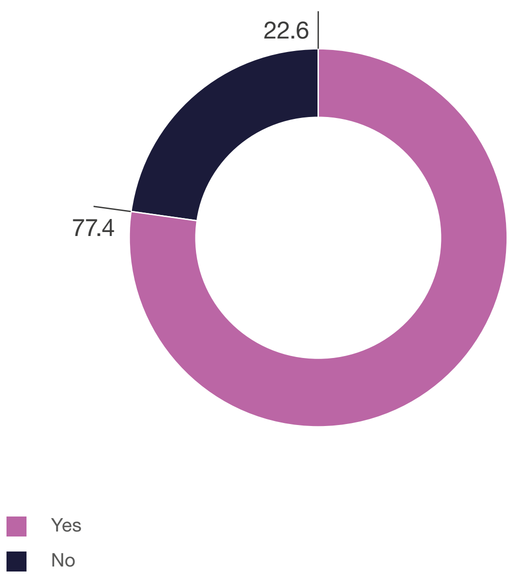
Transformation plans

The commitment to transformation strategies among business service centers remains strong. Most organizations plan to introduce or continue their transformation strategies in the upcoming year, reflecting an industry-wide recognition that sustained innovation and adaptation is necessary to remain competitive. While there has been a slight YoY increase in the number of respondents confirming their transformation plans, a small yet stable percentage remains hesitant

At the end of Q1 2025, 77.4% of firms declared that they would introduce or continue to introduce a transformation strategy.

FIGURE 4.6

Do you plan to introduce / continue a transformation strategy in your center(s) in the forthcoming year (till Q1 2026)? (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=168).

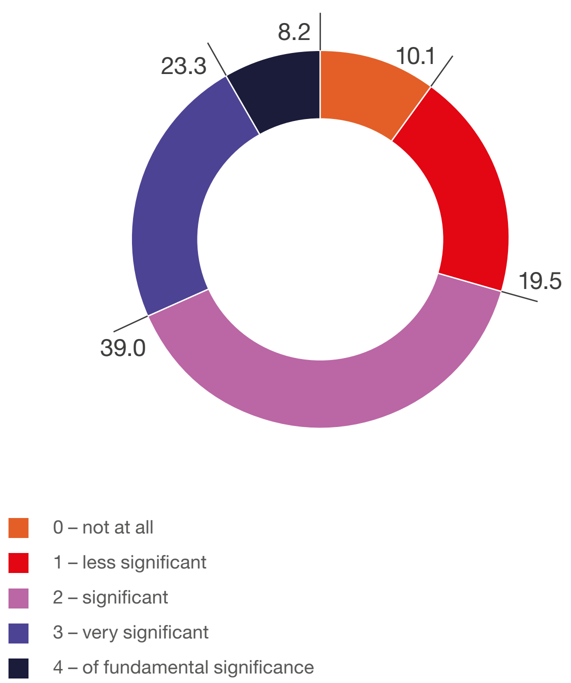
The pressure from headquarters (HQ) to transform business service centers has evolved over the past year, reflecting shifting corporate expectations and strategic priorities.

While HQ-driven transformation remains a significant factor, its perceived intensity has stabilized, with most organizations experiencing moderate rather than extreme pressure.

In Q1 2025, the majority of respondents categorized the pressure as "significant" (39.0%) or "very significant" (23.3%), indicating that transformation remained a clear expectation from HQ. However, the proportion of organizations reporting "fundamental significance" remained relatively low (8.2%), and a growing share (10.1%) perceived little or no pressure, suggesting that some centers are being granted more autonomy in shaping their evolution.

FIGURE 4.7

How significant is the pressure from HQ to transform your center(s) business model? Q1 2025 (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=159).

Transformation in Poland

Anticipated transformation scope from a five-year perspective

The anticipated transformation of business models in Poland's business services sector remains a key priority, with most organizations expecting substantial changes over the next five years. However, the perceived level of fundamental transformation is slightly lower than in previous years, indicating a shift toward a more measured, incremental approach.

Rather than radical disruption, companies foresee an integration of digitalization, automation, and AI to enhance existing operations. This tempered outlook may reflect regulatory challenges, investment constraints, and the complexity of adopting emerging technologies. Success will depend on how well organizations balance innovation with operational stability as they adapt to an evolving landscape.

Innovations rate and scope in the sector

To stay globally competitive, Poland's sector must continue to evolve toward higher-value, knowledge-intensive roles – particularly in front- and mid-office functions – while leveraging its strategic time zone, EU membership, and best value for cost positioning. The sector is already advancing through digitalization, growing productivity, and proven innovation, but rising complexity, talent shortages, as well as global competition demand a shift from reactive to proactive strategies. Embracing continuous innovation in services and business processes will be key to moving from followers to global leaders, marking a fundamental transformation in how value is created and sustained.

Product innovation in services involves:

introducing significant improvements in how services are provided,

adding new functions or features to existing services,

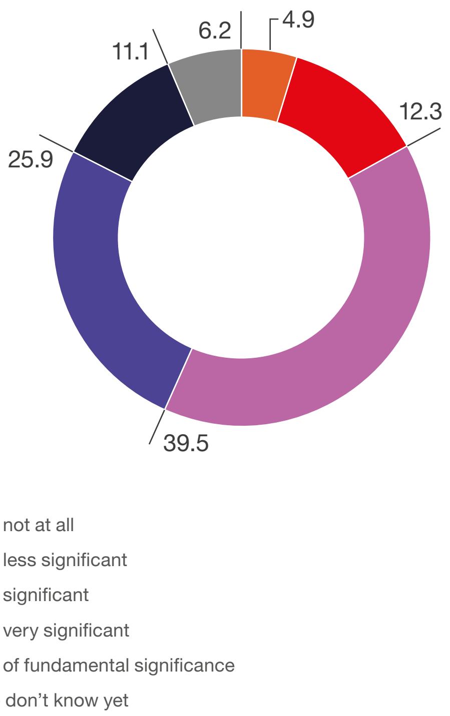
introducing completely new services.

Business process innovation, in turn, can be defined as introducing new or improved business processes in an enterprise within one or more business functions that significantly change previously used processes.

Last year, 74.4% of companies declared that they had introduced innovation(s), understood as integrated products/services in the preceding three years and thus could be considered innovators. This year, the share increased marginally to 74.5% (+1 bps).

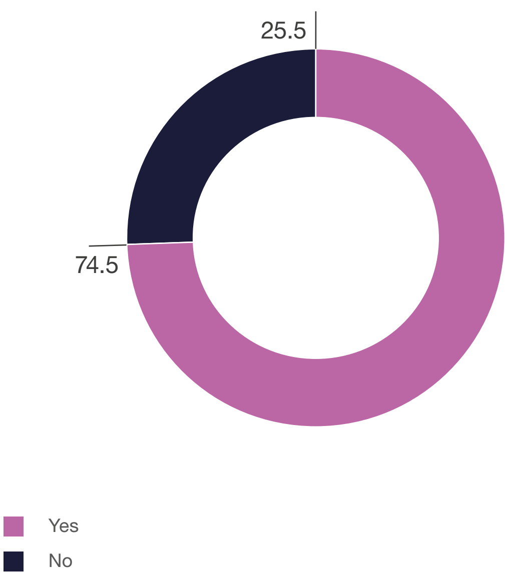
As we continuously, this is significantly higher than the nationwide mean. According to Statistics Poland (GUS 2023 for 2020-2022, the analyses are published every three years), 36.1% of industrial enterprises and 34.2% of service enterprises showed innovative activity. In the cohort of service companies employing 250 or more, the share of firms that had introduced product innovations was 23.8%, and business process innovation was declared by 59.9%.

FIGURE 4.8 | **Compared to the current business model, how significant will transforming your center(s) business model be in five years?** (Q1 2025) (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=162).

FIGURE 4.9 | **Have you introduced innovation(s) (integrated products/services) in the three preceding years?** (2022-2024) (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=153).

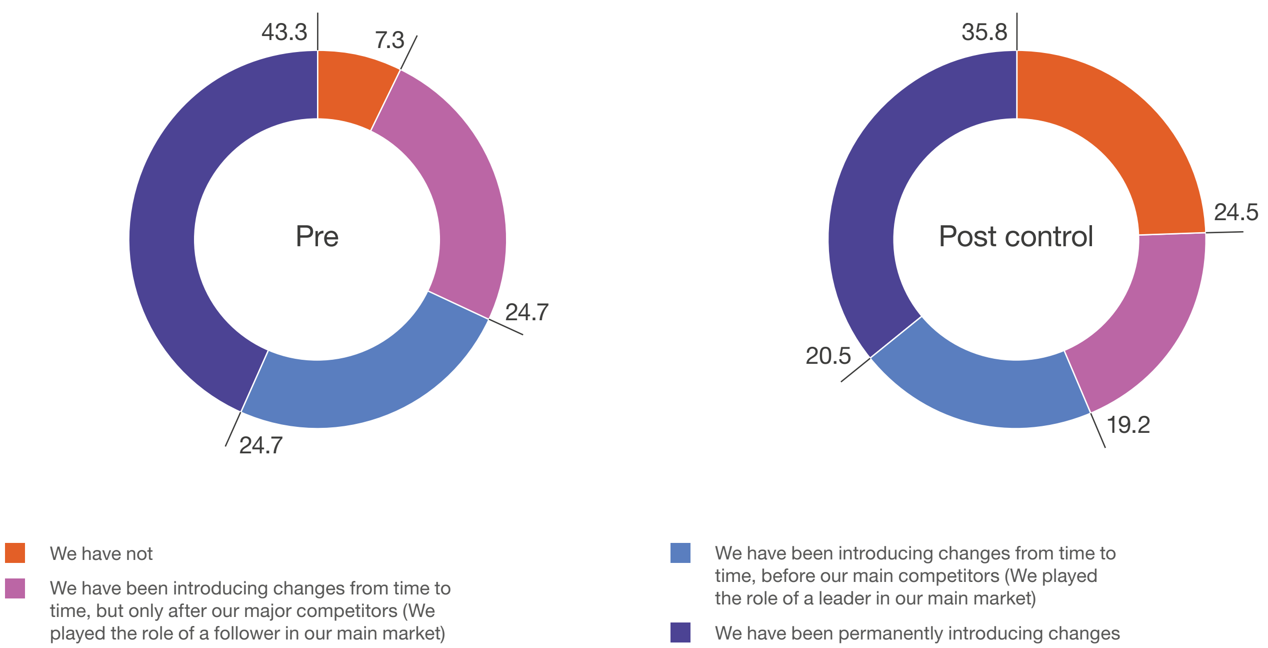
Our sector shows above the mean characteristics, demonstrating a strong commitment to continuous improvement and adaptation.

In 2024, 43.3% of firms reported permanent changes to products, processes, or organizations, reflecting a strong innovation drive. 24.7% identified as proactive market leaders, while another 24.7% acted as reactive followers. Only 7.3% reported no changes. However, **when we looked further into earlier responses to the question regarding the introduction of innovations within the last three years,** non-innovators rose to 24.5%, indicating likely overreporting. **The true share of permanent innovators dropped to 35.8%.**

The responses to the question **"How do you utilize your center's expertise to contribute to global business innovations?"** can be categorized into several themes, namely talent development and expertise utilization, technology and digital transformation, operational and process optimization, collaboration, and strategic partnerships, and last but not least, aligning innovation efforts with corporate R&D programs.

The responses highlight multiple approaches to global business innovation, where expertise is leveraged through talent development, technology-driven transformation, process optimization, collaboration, and business impact initiatives. The centers are crucial in enhancing operational efficiency, fostering digital innovation, and maintaining a competitive edge by integrating new technologies, partnering strategically, and continuously improving global processes.

FIGURE 4.10 **During the last three years (2022 to 2024), have you introduced smaller or major changes in your product, product range, processes, or organization of business? Pre and post control** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=151).

Drivers of change in the sector

As to the perception of drivers of change in our sector in the next twelve months, we have chosen a longer set of drivers from a PESTLE perspective to cover political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental factors.

The bar chart below provides an overview of how various factors are expected to impact business activities in Poland through Q1 2026. A clear pattern emerges, showing the **geopolitical and economic risks that are perceived as the most adverse.** The ongoing Russian military aggression against Ukraine, the potential for military escalation beyond Ukraine, rising tensions in the Taiwan Strait, and conflicts in the Middle East affecting energy markets are among the most negatively viewed factors. Additionally, **macroeconomic destabilization reinforces business concerns, including inflation, stagflation, exchange rate volatility, and a potential global economic slowdown. Rising costs of doing business in Poland, particularly labor costs, appear as significant challenges, aligning with prior insights into talent shortages, retention difficulties, and thus rising operational expenses.** At the same time, there is a more divided perspective on technological advancements, particularly regarding the acceleration of AI, including the GenAI revolution. While some businesses see AI as a transformative opportunity, others view it as a disruptive factor requiring significant adaptation. Similarly, shifts in U.S. foreign policy – particularly linked to the new administration and its initial actions, regulatory changes within Poland and the EU, and legislation variability have received mixed responses, indicating uncertainty to a greater degree than outright concern.

Climate change and sustainability factors are largely perceived as neutral, suggesting that while businesses recognize the issue, they do not yet consider it as a primary operational disruptor in the short-run perspective.

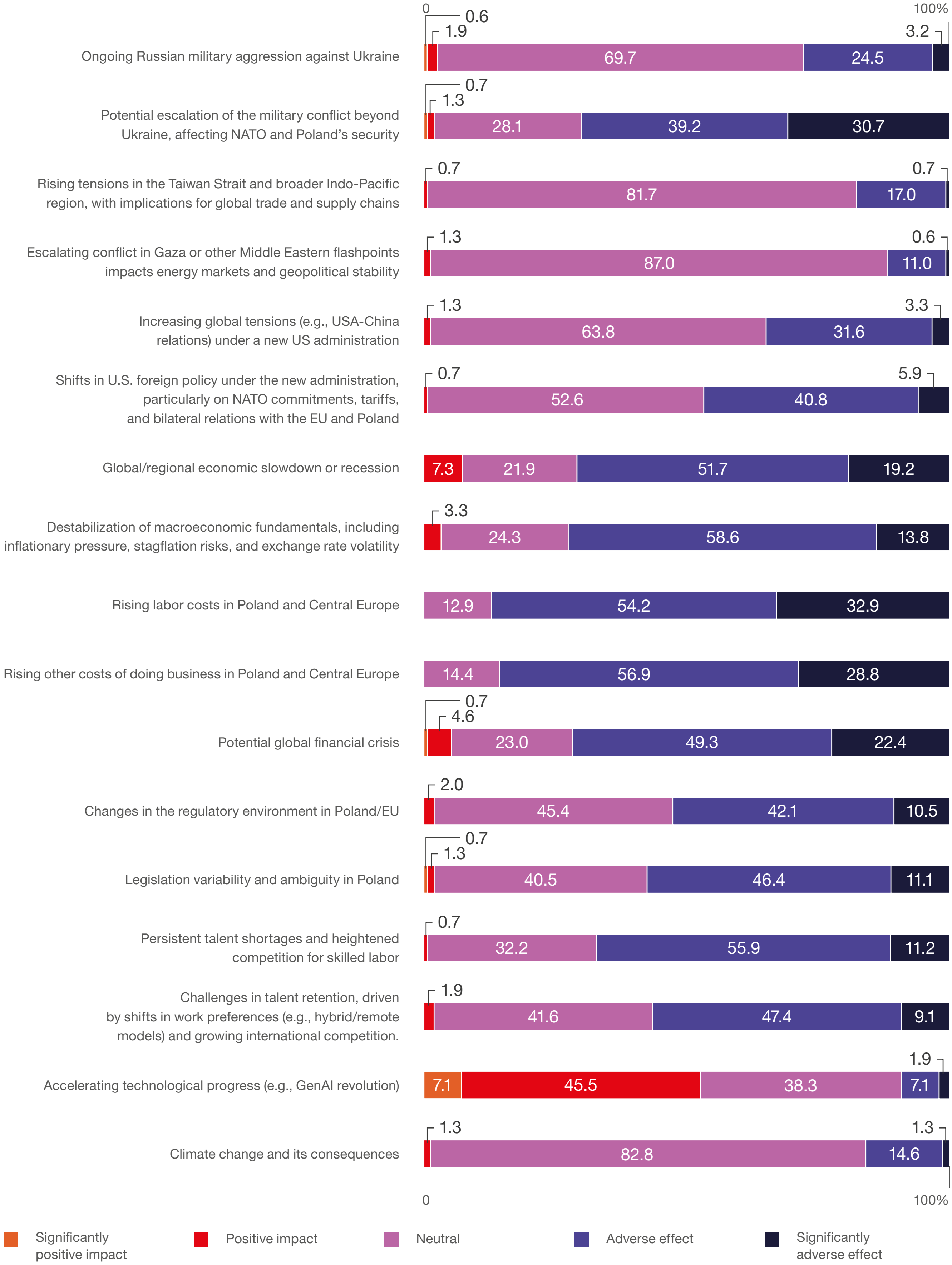
Moving forward, companies must develop resilience strategies to mitigate geopolitical risks, manage rising labor and business costs through automation and process efficiency, and capitalize on AI-driven innovation to maintain competitiveness.

Similarly to our prior reports, the second chart presents the average impact ratings of various business activities in Poland with a strategic perspective of the end of Q1 2026, measured on a Likert scale from -2 to +2.

The results confirm that geopolitical risks and macroeconomic instability are perceived as having the most detrimental influences. The potential escalation of military conflict beyond Ukraine, rising labor costs, and increasing business expenses in Poland and Central Europe are among the most negatively rated factors, emphasizing growing concerns about economic sustainability and regional security. Macroeconomic uncertainty, including the risk of global recession, financial crises, and inflationary pressures, also register strong negative scores, suggesting that businesses anticipate significant disruptions. Regulatory uncertainty in Poland and the EU further contributes to a challenging business environment. Workforce-related issues, such as talent shortages and shifting work preferences, are rated as moderate negatives, reinforcing the ongoing struggle to attract and retain skilled labor.

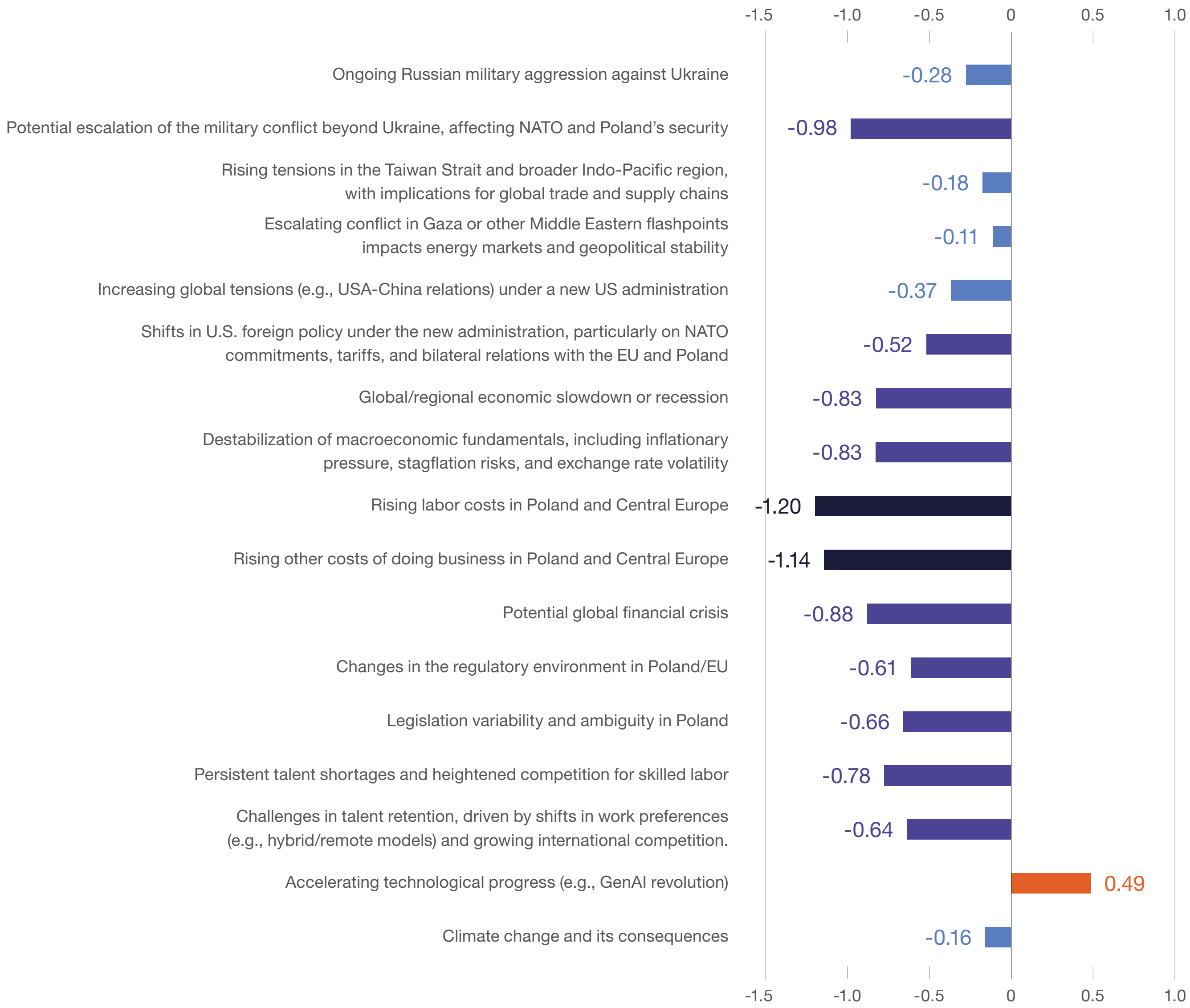
Interestingly, accelerating technological progress, particularly the AI revolution, was the only factor with a notably positive rating.

FIGURE 4.11 | **How will the following factors affect your activity in Poland till the end of Q1 2026?** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=155).

FIGURE 4.12 **How will the following factors affect your activity in Poland till the end of Q1 2026?**



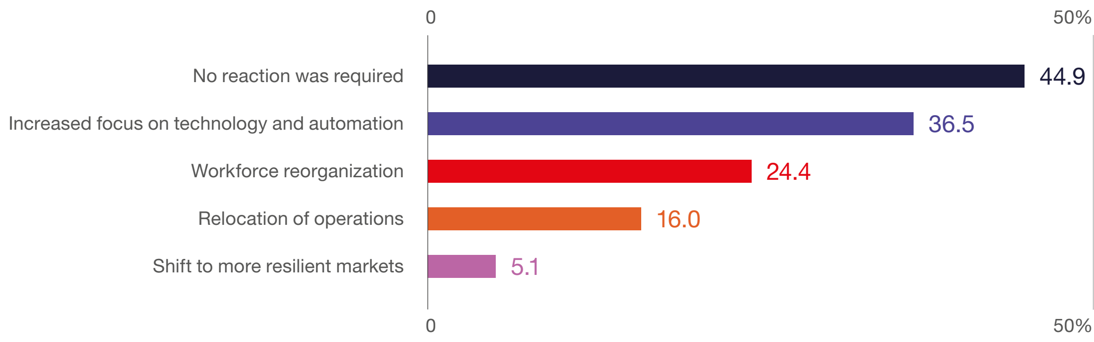
Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=155).

Adaptation to recent geopolitical or macroeconomic challenges

The market and geopolitical conditions in which the sector operates reflect the VUCA/BANI environment. Continuous improvements and adaptations are crucial for maintaining competitiveness and providing growth capacity. Organizations have to adapt to geopolitical or macroeconomic challenges. **We observe a rise in overall policy uncertainty and rising geopolitical tensions in an increasingly fragmented world.**

According to the survey's results, 44.9% of respondents declared that no reaction was required, indicating either strong resilience or limited exposure to the challenges. 36.5% declared the increased focus on technology and automation. One-fourth declared workforce reorganization, reflecting adaptive strategies in talent deployment, while 16.0% stated relocation of operations. Only one in twenty declared a shift to more resilient markets, implying high barriers or inertia in entering new geographies. Overall, the data shows that while many firms felt insulated from immediate impacts, a significant portion embraced proactive adaptation.

FIGURE 4.13 **Adaptations to recent geopolitical and macroeconomic challenges** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=156).

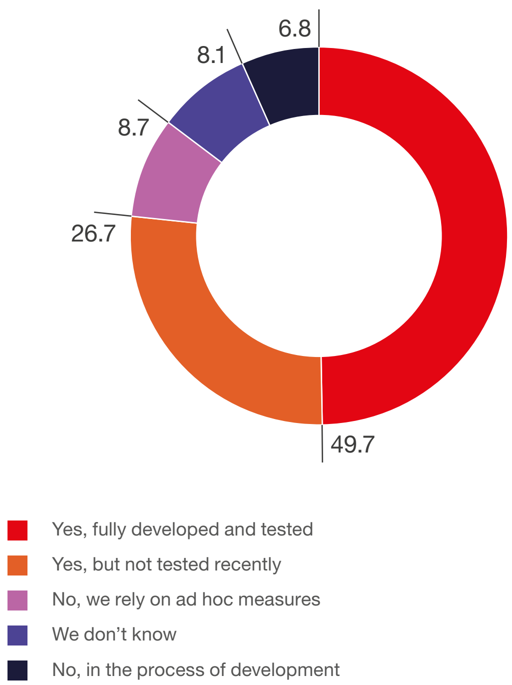
Business continuity plans

A majority (76.4%) of organizations reported having some form of a business continuity plan to address geopolitical or macroeconomic disruptions, though only half (49.7%) had fully developed and tested frameworks. A significant 26.7% had plans in place but had not tested them recently, which could undermine their practical resilience. 17% either had no plans or relied on ad hoc responses, revealing potential exposure to unmanaged risks.

The primary reason for selecting Poland

As in previous editions, we asked global companies about the main reason for establishing a center in Poland. Once again, **"good value at a reasonable cost" dominates,** cited by 64.6% of respondents. While only 3.1% selected "low cost," confirming Poland's position as a cost-effective, not low-cost, destination.

FIGURE 4.14 **Does your organization have formalized business continuity plans to address geopolitical or macroeconomic disruptions?** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=161).

Other drivers included business strategy alignment (13.0%) and subject matter expertise (9.3%), reflecting the importance of specialized talent. In contrast, innovation capabilities and global leadership potential received minimal recognition (both at 1.2%), suggesting Poland is not yet viewed as a hub for innovation or strategic transformation.

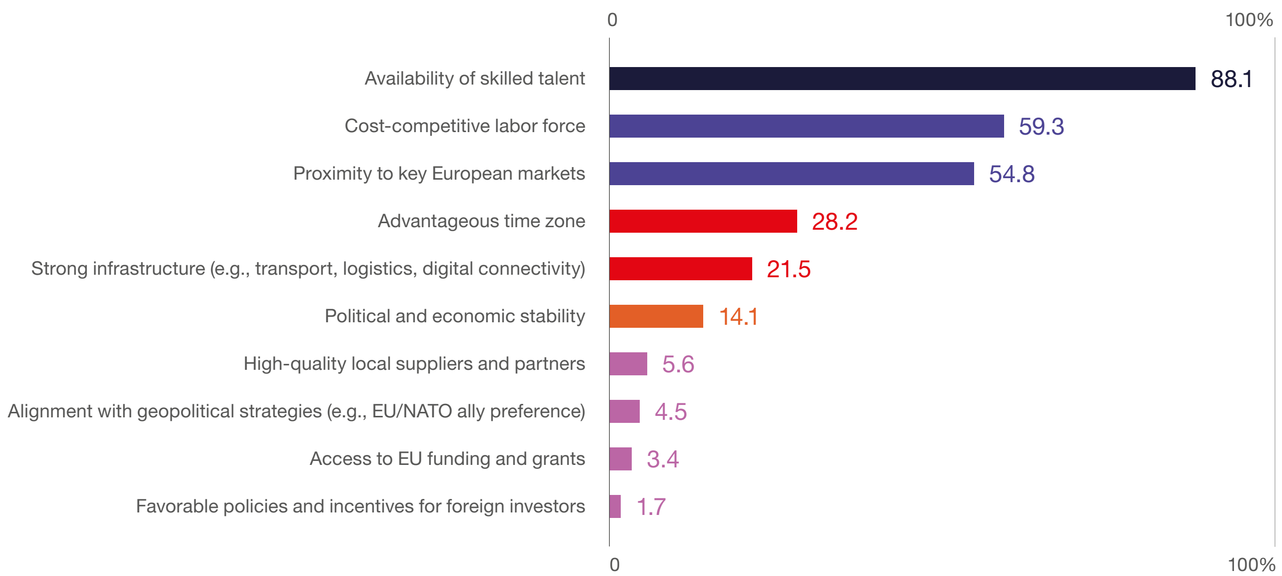
The relatively low score for strategic business skills (4.3%) further indicates that Poland is valued more for operational execution than for high-level strategic roles. To strengthen its position, Poland should build on its value proposition by advancing innovation, leadership development, and value-added services while retaining its cost-effectiveness.

Poland remains a leading location for business services globally and in the EMEA/CEE region.

> **While its low-cost advantage has diminished, Poland continues to attract investment, particularly from neighboring countries. In the face of geopolitical and economic shifts, reshoring and onshoring are gaining momentum, emphasizing security and resilience – a potential opportunity for Poland.**

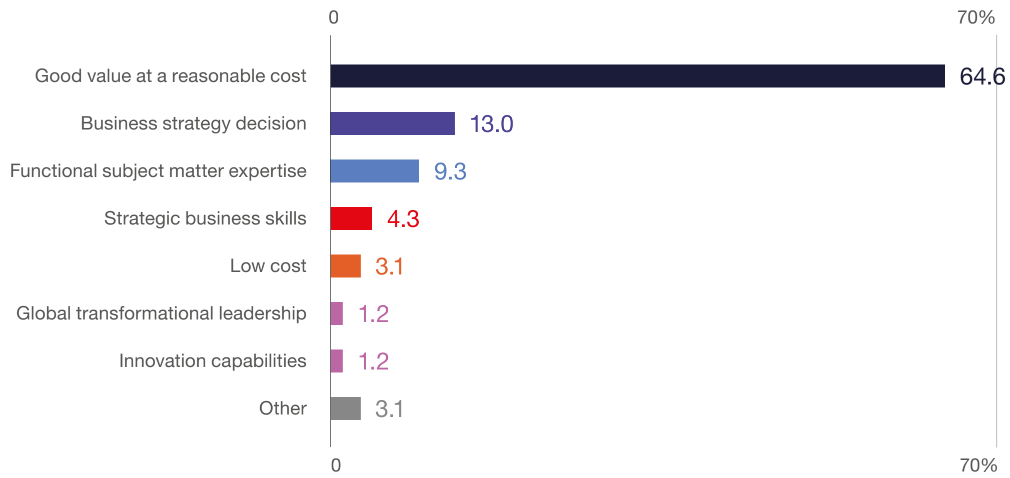
According to ABSL respondents, Poland's top draw attractions were its **skilled talent pool (88.1%),** cost-competitive labor (59.3%), and **proximity to key European markets (54.8%).**

FIGURE 4.15 | **The main factors that make Poland an attractive destination for shoring of activities** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=177).

FIGURE 4.16 | **What is the primary reason your global company is using Poland as a business services center?** (%)



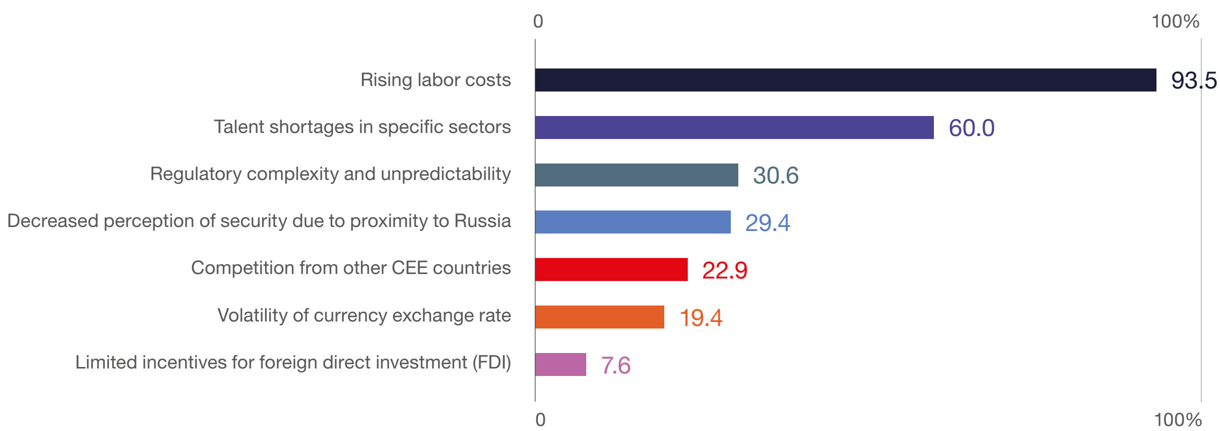
Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=161).

Challenges to Poland's competitive position

In "Strategic Foresight 2023," we addressed the issue of the sustainability of Poland's competitive advantages. One of our conclusions was that many centers in Poland operate in a kind of comfort zone, a risky position given the ease with which some functions can be relocated to lower-cost countries. This year's survey confirms these concerns. **Rising labor costs (93.5% of respondents) and talent shortages in specific sectors (60.0%)** were the two main challenges threatening Poland's attractiveness for shoring activities.

> **We must move beyond cost-based advantages to remain competitive and address structural constraints in talent supply and value creation.**

FIGURE 4.17 | **Challenges that could limit Poland's attractiveness for shoring of activities** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=170).

Challenges to Poland's competitive position – productivity versus costs

The ABSL 2025 survey's results indicate a significant challenge to our centers' competitiveness, as the declared productivity and efficiency gains are not consistently outpacing cost increases. **While 34.4% of respondents reported that efficiency had increased at the same rate as costs, a substantial portion (17.9%) indicated that productivity had lagged behind rising expenses.** This suggests that nearly one-fifth of businesses are experiencing declining cost-effectiveness, which could erode profit margins and make operations less sustainable over the long run.

At the same time, **the largest share of respondents (41.7%) stated that productivity had only increased moderately in relation to costs.** This implies that while some efficiency improvements have been made, they are insufficient to offset the pressures of rising operational expenses significantly. Only 6.0% of respondents reported significant productivity gains, underlying the fact that very few organizations had successfully enhanced efficiency at a level that outpaces cost inflation.

Among different service center models, IT service centers showed a mixed picture, with 55.6% reporting moderate productivity growth and only 5.6% stating that efficiency lagged behind costs. In SSC and GBS centers, a substantial portion of respondents (28.6% and 14.8%, respectively) reported that efficiency gains were lower than cost increases, raising concerns about maintaining competitiveness. Hybrid and BPO centers faced the greatest challenges, with 44.0% and 60.0% of respondents, respectively, stating that productivity gains were only moderate. Moreover, 10.0% of BPO centers and 20.0% of hybrid models experienced productivity growth below cost increases, indicating potential risks to cost-effectiveness.

The disparity between cost growth and efficiency improvements risks long-term competitiveness. What if service centers struggle to maintain productivity levels that match or exceed cost increases? In this case, they may face pressure to either reduce costs through downsizing, invest more heavily in automation, or seek alternative strategies, including location-related issues, to sustain profitability. This reinforces the need for companies to accelerate digital transformation, optimize process efficiency, and upskill their workforce to enhance productivity while controlling costs.

FIGURE 4.18 | **In relation to the cost increase in the services provided by your center, the productivity/efficiency** (%)

Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=151).

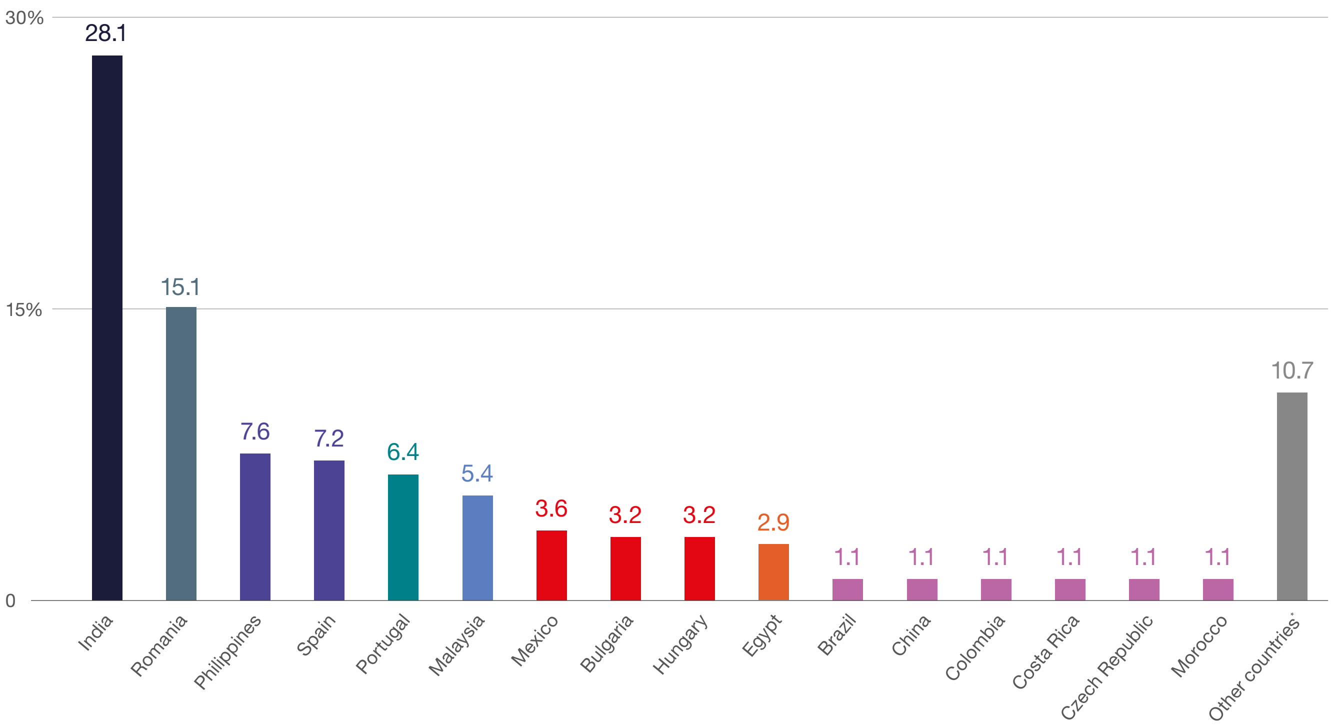
Poland's biggest competitors in attracting business services

The global economy has become increasingly dynamic, with black swan events reshaping business models, work modes, and the factors that determine location attractiveness and rankings. On the one hand, organic employment growth in existing centers – reflecting reinvested earnings – demonstrates Poland's ongoing appeal to investors. On the other hand, several factors may undermine Poland's competitiveness, including rising labor costs, talent shortages, increased uncertainty, and concerns related to the war in Ukraine.

Poland is also facing growing competition from other CEE countries and Eastern markets. Moreover, the decline in interest in lower-end job roles – driven by expanding social benefits and rising career aspirations – adds further pressure.

> **When asked to identify Poland's biggest competitors for attracting business services, respondents listed the top five: India, Romania, the Philippines, Spain, and Portugal.**

FIGURE 4.19 | **Poland's biggest competitors in attracting business services** (%)



* Turkey, Ukraine, Finland, Latvia, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, United States, Cambodia, Croatia, Estonia, France, Greece, Guatemala, Italy, Lithuania, Mauritius, Pakistan, Saint Lucia, Sweden, United Kingdom, Uruguay

Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=120).

ESG imperative

In response to environmental and societal challenges, ESG has become an integral part of business conduct. ESG and sustainability principles are now embedded in day-to-day operations, moving beyond compliance to become a core component of corporate culture. Regulatory pressure overall is intensifying, particularly in reporting obligations. Nonetheless, some delays by approx. two years in the implementation of regulations are expected. The EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), in force since January 2023, harmonizes and strengthens ESG reporting standards. It supports the goals of the European Green Deal, aiming to transform the EU into a modern, resource-efficient, competitive economy with net-zero emissions by 2050, economic growth decoupled from resource use, and social protections for citizens and small businesses.

In service firms, long-term value creation is increasingly tied to ESG performance. Key issues shaping operational realities include climate change, net-zero commitments, circular economic practices, gender pay equity, talent shortages, diversity and inclusion, human rights in global value chains (GVCs), data security, and employee wellbeing. The sector's global nature – primarily driven by foreign, transnational firms – accelerates the adoption of ESG standards.

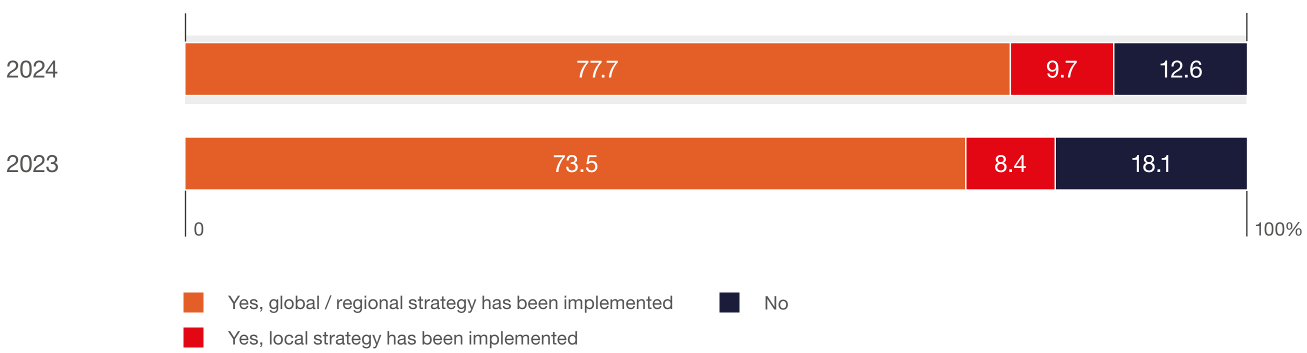
According to the ABSL 2025 survey, **77.7% of respondents implemented a global or regional ESG strategy, while 9.74% developed a local strategy.** These figures confirm the sector's global orientation in Poland. Compared to the previous ABSL report, the share of firms without an ESG strategy decreased by 5.5percentage points.

In terms of ESG reporting, 69.8% of companies stated they measured and reported performance through global or regional frameworks, while 18.6% did not report ESG metrics at all. Only 49.1% of centers had dedicated ESG reporting resources (down from 57.3% in the previous report), and in 34.9% of cases, reporting duties were handled by staff supporting global ESG needs.

To understand how ESG priorities influence transformation, we asked centers to assess the significance of ESG in their three-year strategic outlook.

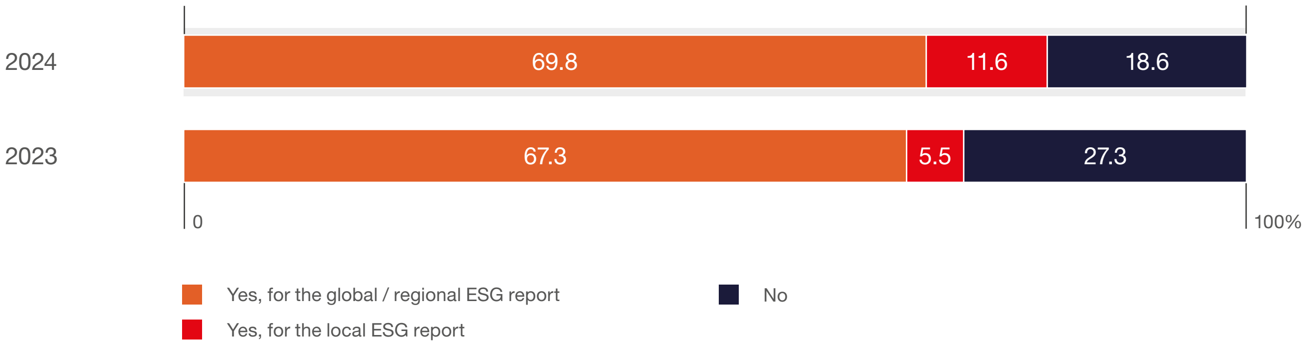
> **ESG is now an essential element of both short- and long-term strategic planning and has become a key dimension of business transformation.**

FIGURE 4.20 | **Has your company introduced an ESG strategy?** (%)



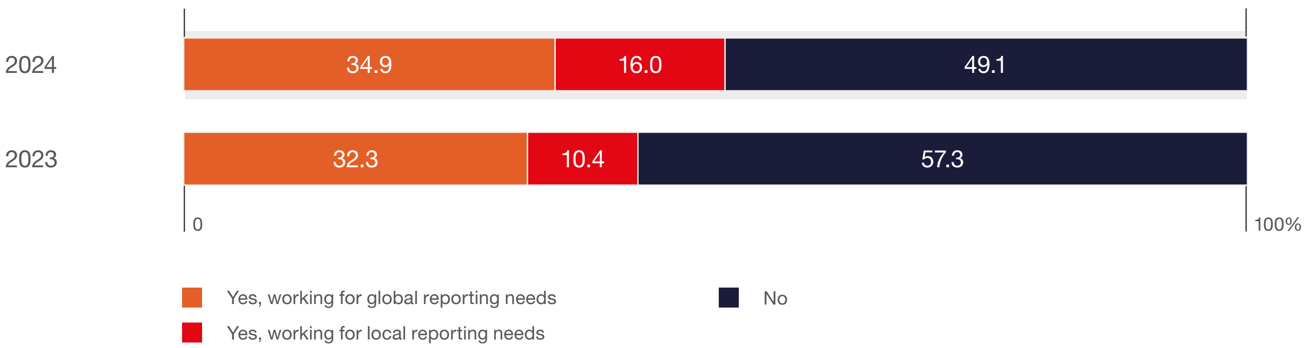
Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=170).

FIGURE 4.21 **Are you measuring and reporting your ESG performance?** (%)



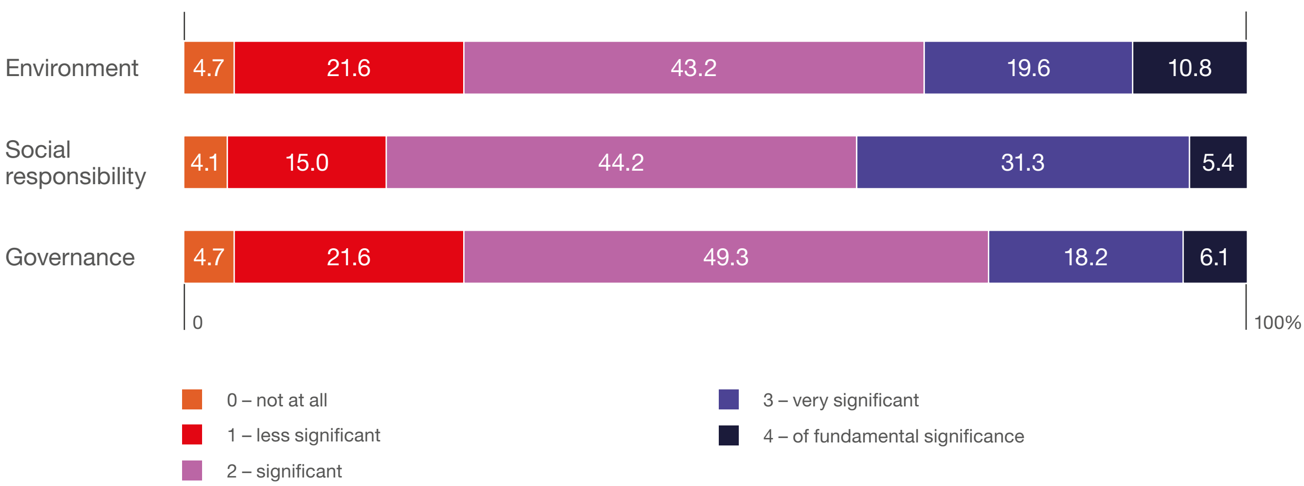
Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=168).

FIGURE 4.22 **Do you have ESG reporting resources within your center?** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=165).

FIGURE 4.23 **ESG elements' significance for centers' transformation plans from a mid-term perspective (three years)** (%)



Source: ABSL 2025 annual survey (N=148).

Summary – key observations on transformation

Chapter 4 of the ABSL 2025 report offers a detailed examination of how Poland's business services sector is evolving amid global uncertainty, shifting strategic priorities, and internal transformation demands. The data shows that most service centers in Poland are either expanding or maintaining their service scope, with only a minority reducing operations.

Functional development trends

Finance accounting and IT continue to be the most actively developed functions, though signs of selective downsizing are also appearing—likely due to automation and efficiency gains. HR and Customer Operations are growing steadily, indicating a shift toward more integrated, digitally enabled service delivery models.

Strategic growth orientation

Growth strategies are becoming more inward-looking. Rather than pursuing geographic expansion, companies are focused on consolidating market position and building new capabilities. Ansoff Matrix analysis reflects this shift: 43.3% of centers favored product/service development in existing markets, while fewer than 7% planned entry into new ones. This signals a more cautious, capability-driven approach to expansion.

The transformation cube framework

A central framework in this chapter, the Transformation Cube, tracks transformation progress across three axes: automation, virtualization, and personalization. Progress is most advanced in virtualization and personalization, with automation expected to catch up rapidly through AI by 2030. This trend supports the sector's move toward digital maturity, hybrid work models, and customer-centric workflows.

Transformation momentum and autonomy

Transformation remains a top priority, with over 77% of centers planning to launch or continue transformation initiatives in 2025. While headquarters still play a significant role, a growing number of Polish centers reported having greater autonomy in steering their evolution. The outlook favors incremental innovation over disruptive reinvention, suggesting a shift toward steady transformation pathways.

Innovation as a competitive lever

Innovation is a central theme of this chapter. Nearly three-quarters (74.5%) of companies described themselves as innovators. Yet, after validating these claims through follow-up questions, the number of organizations with true, continuous innovation behaviors appeared more limited. This underscores the need for better alignment between perception and practice. Still, a larger share of companies was adopting proactive leadership roles in market evolution.

Productivity, costs, and sustainability pressure

Poland remains a leading destination due to its cost-value ratio, skilled workforce, and proximity to the EU. However, its traditional advantages are under strain. Rising labor costs and talent shortages, paired with moderate productivity gains, threaten the sector's long-term sustainability – especially in BPO and hybrid models, where cost inflation often outpaces efficiency gains. This imbalance highlights the urgency of automation, digitalization, and workforce upskilling.

Geopolitical and Economic Risk Landscape

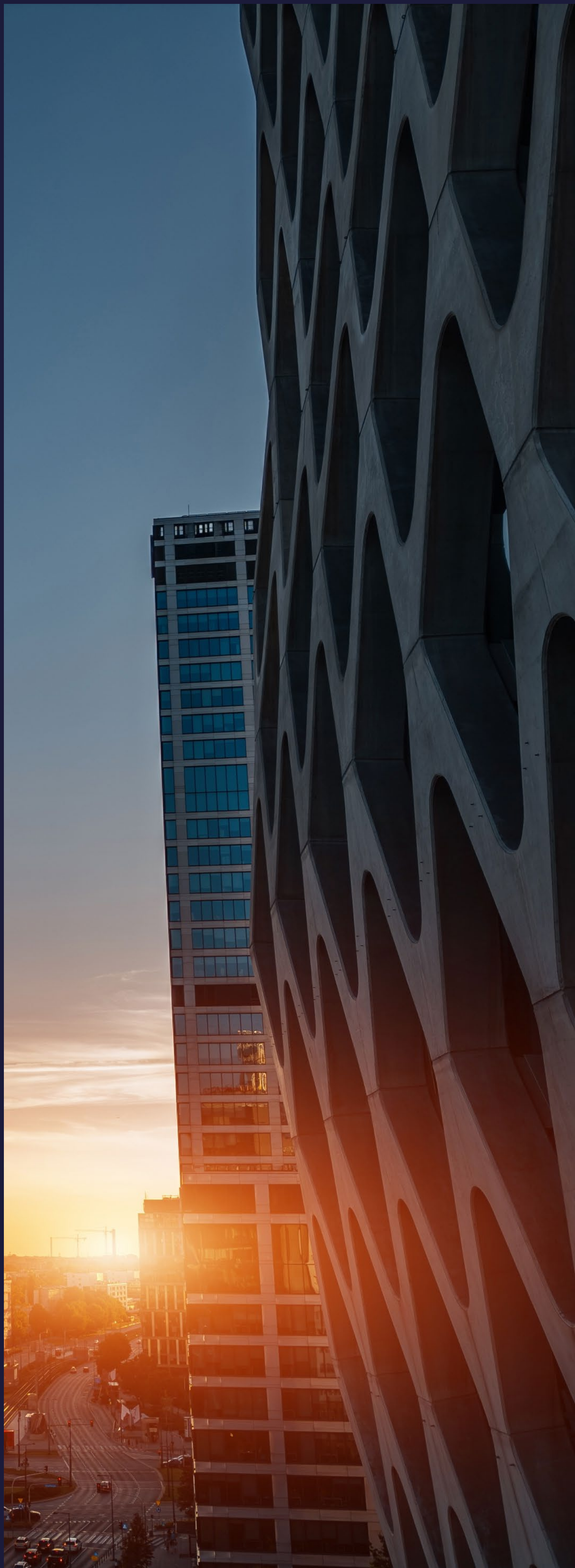
A complex risk environment is testing the sector's resilience. Geopolitical instability – notably in Ukraine and the Middle East – combined with inflation, EU regulatory shifts, and domestic uncertainty continue to weigh heavily on business confidence. Nevertheless, technology – particularly AI – is viewed positively as a tool for navigating volatility and maintaining competitive momentum.

From global compliance to local implementation of ESG

The ESG agenda has gained momentum, primarily driven by global reporting mandates and stakeholder expectations. Around 78% of firms have adopted global or regional ESG strategies, and many have started reporting performance and embedding ESG into transformation plans. However, local ESG maturity remains low, with underdeveloped internal reporting and limited regional strategies, pointing to a need for deeper integration and resource allocation at the local level.

Conclusion: the sector is in a strategic transition

Poland's business services sector is in a phase of measured transformation, marked by adaptability and forward-looking strategies but also constrained by structural challenges. The shift from cost arbitrage to value creation is underway but far from complete. To safeguard long-term competitiveness, the sector must scale innovation, boost productivity, and align transformation agendas with global business models that demand flexibility, digital maturity, and sustainable growth.



Poland is the best partner for the business services sector

Andrzej Dycha
Chairman of the Polish Investment and Trade Agency

Companies investing in the business services sector, particularly in business shared services, have consistently been leaders among the active projects supported by the Polish Investment and Trade Agency (PAIH). These investments stand out not only in terms of quantity but also due to their significant impact on the labor market by creating a substantial number of new, well-paid jobs. Poland continues to attract strong investor interest thanks to its highly skilled workforce, well-developed infrastructure, and resources that enable the execution of even the most advanced projects in areas such as software engineering, cloud technologies, advanced supply chain management, data science, and cybersecurity. But in the face of today's market changes and sector transformation, is this still enough?

At PAIH, we are fully aware that the business services sector in Poland is undergoing profound changes. Some of the processes that were offshored to Poland in previous years are now being relocated to more cost-effective regions, such as Southeast Asia. However, this does not mean that SSC/GBS/IT centers in Poland are losing relevance. In fact, it's quite the opposite — the trend known as "site maturity" only confirms the strategic role of Polish locations within global corporate structures.

Moreover, as we cooperate with market leaders to attract new investment projects and develop new forms of investment support, we can see how many representatives from local government and the business services sector are actively taking on the role of ambassadors for their locations, independently working to bring increasingly advanced processes to Poland. We also observe a clear trend where companies within the same capital group, recognizing the potential of Polish talent, are launching new and separate investments. A great example is Alphabet, whose subsidiary Waymo has established a new engineering hub in Poland that is focused on autonomous mobility development.

Over the past two years, the Agency has supported more than 60 projects in the BSS/R&D area. In 2024 alone, 24 investment projects were supported, resulting in nearly 3,800 new jobs. Recent months have also shown increased interest from service sector companies in applying to PAIH under the Programme for Supporting Investments of Significant Importance to the Polish Economy for 2011–2030, commonly referred to as the grant program. Through this program, investors who meet certain quantitative and qualitative criteria may apply for financial support from the state budget to create jobs.

The current version of the program is, however, coming to an end, but PAIH, in cooperation with the Ministry of Development and Technology, and in close consultation with businesses and ABSL, is working on designing a new grant path to be launched in 2026. It's also worth noting that the tools offered to date have been available not only to foreign companies launching new projects in Poland but also to Polish enterprises that have been planning to expand their operations within the country.

The Polish Investment and Trade Agency, apart from the grant programme, through the Investment Support Department, carries out a number of activities related to the location of investments, and actively advances Poland as an attractive place for investments. PAIH promotes the country by attending the most important business events in the world, creating reports, organizing business forums as well as administrative missions. These activities have had a very positive impact on the Polish market in recent years.

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