

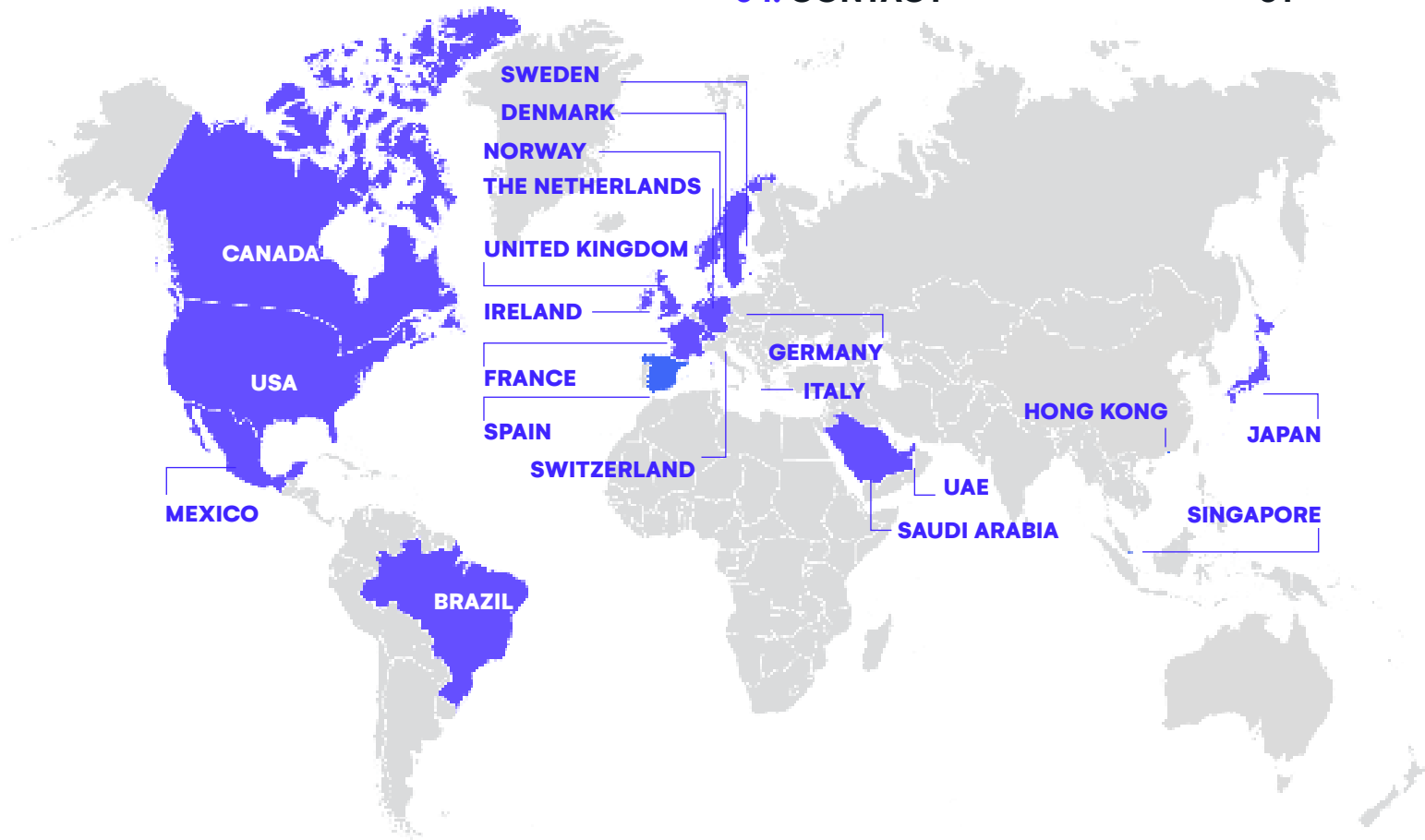
2026 GLOBAL HIRING GUIDE: DATA PRIVACY

Salary data and hiring considerations, country by country



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01.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to **Leonid's Global Hiring Guide for Data Privacy.**

Data privacy has now firmly established itself as a permanent and strategic discipline within organisations, rather than a reactive compliance function. Privacy teams are operating at the intersection of regulation, technology, ethics and commercial decision making, with boards and regulators alike expecting demonstrable accountability.

This guide begins with an overview of the global trends shaping data privacy in 2026, followed by a country by country analysis to support organisations hiring internationally.

It includes salary benchmarks, hiring considerations and local context, recognising that compensation remains heavily influenced by sector, scope of responsibility and regulatory exposure.

For bespoke benchmarking or market advice, we recommend speaking directly with Phil Redhead, Head of Legal & Data Privacy at Leonid Group.

Key data privacy issues shaping 2026

AI governance moves from preparation to enforcement

Artificial intelligence remains the defining pressure point for privacy teams. The focus in 2026 has shifted decisively from preparation to operational compliance.

- **The EU AI Act formally enters force in August 2026**, with enforcement obligations now driving headcount increases across Europe and for international organisations with EU exposure.

- Privacy teams are increasingly responsible for AI risk classification, transparency obligations, training data governance and coordination with product, legal and risk functions.

- Many organisations have embedded AI governance within their privacy teams due to their independence, regulatory experience and enterprise wide visibility.

Regulation enters its implementation phase

Across jurisdictions, 2026 is defined less by new laws and more by enforcement, investigations and supervisory scrutiny.

- In the EU, attention has shifted to GDPR enforcement consistency, the AI Act, and the ongoing application of the DSA and DMA.
- In APAC, countries such as Australia, Singapore, China, Japan and South Korea are actively enforcing recently modernised privacy regimes.
- In the US, the absence of a federal privacy law continues to be offset by a growing and complex state level patchwork, which now materially affects global businesses.

International data transfers remain a high risk area

Geopolitical tension, AI development strategies and national data sovereignty policies continue to complicate cross border data flows.

Privacy teams across the world are under pressure to:

- Re evaluate transfer impact assessments
- Revisit vendor and cloud strategies
- Ensure defensible positions on AI data localisation and onward transfers

Talent, recruitment and operating models in 2026

The privacy market remains candidate led, particularly at senior and specialist levels.

Key hiring trends include:

- Strong demand for AI literate privacy leaders
- Fewer pure “policy” roles; more emphasis on implementation and commercial judgement
- Consolidation of responsibilities, with CPOs often overseeing privacy, AI governance, digital ethics and sometimes product compliance

Organisations are increasingly seeking hybrid profiles: privacy professionals with technical literacy, regulatory depth and the ability to influence at board level.





02.

REGIONAL & COUNTRY GUIDES

2.1 AMERICAS — SUMMARY

State-Level Privacy Legislation: With the absence of a comprehensive federal data privacy law, numerous U.S. states have enacted their own regulations. In 2024, states such as Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Vermont all introduced their own data privacy laws, bringing the total number of states with such legislation to 21. This patchwork of laws presents challenges for businesses operating across state lines, necessitating adaptable compliance strategies.

Children's Online Safety: Utah has become the first state to pass the “App Store Accountability Act,” requiring app store operators to verify users’ ages and obtain parental consent for minors to download apps. While tech companies like Meta, Snap, and X support this legislation as a centralised approach to online safety, critics express concerns about potential impacts on user privacy and free expression.

Strengthening Data Protection Frameworks in LatAm: In 2024, several Latin American countries enhanced their data protection laws, aligning more closely with international standards. Some regulations took effect in early 2025, while others are still under legislative consideration. This regional trend underscores a growing commitment to safeguarding personal data.

USA

With a GDP of more than USD\$23 trillion, the United States is a leader in several key industries, including technology, oil and gas and renewable energy. The country has one of the largest tech markets in the world, with four cities ranking in the top 10 for global fintech, including Silicon Valley (#1) and Boston (#7).

The United States workforce serves as the backbone of its economy. Employment rates have been steadily rising, with the notable exception of the COVID-19 pandemic which led to the phenomenon coined as the “Great Resignation,” prompting workers to contemplate the trajectory of their lives.

We are now seeing a re-stabilisation of the employment market, and the Corporate Governance world is no exception.

The US is an exciting place to work and to do business with, but in terms of hiring, it does bring a degree of complexity due to a number of stringent labour laws.

Ease of doing business ranking = 6

CAPITAL	Washington
LANGUAGES SPOKEN	English
POPULATION	335 million
PAYROLL	Varies; usually weekly or bi-weekly
CURRENCY	US Dollars (USD)
VAT	Nil



Hiring Considerations

- Most companies in the U.S. operate on an ‘at-will’ basis. This means that employees can leave their jobs at any time, for any reason. Companies can terminate their employees’ service – with a few exceptions – without giving notice or providing redundancy pay.
- Many companies do give notice as a courtesy, but the law does not require it. Some companies also negotiate severance pay, especially for higher-level executives.
- The practice of at-will employment means signing formal employment contracts is not a common practice in the U.S. Some companies use them, especially for key executives or other important members of a firm. However, contracts are not standard.
- The standard workweek in the U.S. consists of 40 hours — eight hours per day, five days per week. However, variations on this schedule are common.
- There is no legal requirement to give paid holidays; however, on average, US workers will take 10 vacation days per year.

Cultural Considerations

- In the US, business culture places a strong emphasis on equality and non-discrimination. This is reinforced by numerous laws including the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on race, colour, religion, sex, or national origin in any aspect of employment.
- The ‘hustle mentality’ is a prominent aspect of the work culture in the United States. It encompasses a mindset that emphasises relentless effort, ambition, and a constant drive for success. It is deeply ingrained in the American work ethic, with many professionals adopting a “work hard, play hard” approach to their careers.

“The US remains one of the most complex privacy markets globally due to the continued absence of a federal law and increasing state level enforcement. Senior privacy hiring is highly competitive, with boards expecting CPOs to lead on AI governance, cybersecurity coordination and global compliance simultaneously. Breadth of expertise has become as important as depth.”

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

SALARY GUIDE USA

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (USD)
Privacy Engineer	\$145,000 – \$230,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	\$150,000 – \$255,000
Privacy Counsel	\$175,000 – \$300,000
Data Protection Officer	\$250,000 – \$385,000
Chief Privacy Officer	\$310,000 – \$650,000+

CANADA

Canada has a robust economic base, low taxes, abundant natural resources, and a stable political climate. These factors create an environment for international businesses to flourish. When it comes to ease of payment for small to medium-sized businesses, Canada has one of the lowest tax burdens among the G7 countries.

Canada's economy is also one of the most resilient in the world, with a GDP of \$1.98 trillion in 2023.

Hiring in Canada has become increasingly popular among foreign companies as the country offers a diverse and highly skilled labour force.

Ease of doing business ranking = 23

CAPITAL	Ottawa
LANGUAGES SPOKEN	English, French
POPULATION	40.1 million
PAYROLL	Bi - weekly
CURRENCY	Canadian Dollars (CAD)
VAT	5%



Hiring Considerations

- Canada is officially a bilingual country, home to both English and French speakers. Fluency in English will be enough to navigate around the vast majority of Canadian cities and provinces.
- Each province in Canada has its own employment standards legislation that outlines minimum requirements for employment relationships. These standards cover areas such as hours of work, overtime pay, vacation entitlement, public holidays and termination notice.

Cultural Considerations

- Canadian workplaces are typically friendly and non-hierarchical compared with other nations, and there is a strong emphasis on harmonious and social environments. Therefore, friendly chatter — or small talk — is very much the norm when meeting Canadian workers.
- Punctuality and good manners are both expected and highly valued.

“Canada’s privacy market has regained momentum through 2026, driven by regulatory modernisation and increased enforcement activity. We’re seeing steady hiring at mid level and above, particularly for candidates with cross border exposure and AI governance capability. Senior salary growth remains measured, but competition for talent has intensified.”

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

SALARY GUIDE CANADA

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (CAD)
Privacy Engineer	\$95,000 – \$130,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	\$98,000 – \$145,000
Privacy Counsel	\$105,000 – \$165,000
Data Protection Officer	\$115,000 – \$175,000
Chief Privacy Officer	\$200,000 – \$415,000

BRAZIL

As the largest and most populous country in South America and the eighth-largest economy in the world, Brazil is an attractive place for companies looking to expand globally. Brazil does however present some challenges for international companies, with strong employment laws in place that favour local employees.

Ease of doing business ranking = 124

CAPITAL	Brasília
LANGUAGES SPOKEN	Portuguese
POPULATION	216.4 million
PAYROLL	Monthly
CURRENCY	Brazilian Real (R\$)
VAT	VAT on Sales and Services are PIS/COFINS — at 9.25%, & Municipal Service Tax (ISS) with rates varying from 2 to 5% depending on the Municipality in which the company is located.



Hiring Considerations

- In addition to regular pay, employees in Brazil are entitled to a 13th-month salary paid in 2 instalments each year; usually split across November and December. The 13th-month payment is a legal benefit and is not part of the base salary.
- Unions and collective bargaining agreements are common in Brazil.
- The working week is 44 hours, which can be divided across the five weekdays or can be eight hours Monday through Friday with a half-day on Saturdays. When employees work overtime, they should receive 1.5 times their usual hourly wages or double their usual pay if it is a holiday or Sunday.
- Brazil is the only Portuguese-speaking country in South America, and Spanish — the prevailing language throughout the rest of the continent — is not a very common second language for Brazilians. It is expected that employees in Brazil will speak a good level of Portuguese.

Cultural Considerations

- Despite the friendly atmosphere among teams, there are strict hierarchies that are routinely followed when it comes to decision-making. Typically, only the most senior leaders will make the important decisions, and often without consulting more junior colleagues.
- Brazilians often prefer working with either people they know, or, with someone who has been recommended — which means it can take time for an unknown outsider to gain trust.
- Brazilians are notoriously ‘time fluid’, so it’s not unusual for meetings to start late or for deadlines to be extended.

“Brazil’s privacy market continues to mature gradually, with sustained demand from multinationals operating across LATAM. Candidates with regional LGPD experience and international exposure remain at a premium, while salary ranges have widened as organisations become more selective about senior hires.”

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

SALARY GUIDE BRAZIL

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (R\$)
Privacy Engineer	R\$ 120,000 – R\$ 300,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	R\$ 160,000 – R\$ 385,000
Privacy Counsel	R\$ 265,000 – R\$ 370,000
Data Protection Officer	R\$ 135,000 – R\$ 325,000
Chief Privacy Officer	R\$ 330,000 – R\$ 545,000

MEXICO

Mexico is an increasingly attractive prospect for international businesses who want to move their operations closer to the U.S market, while retaining a competitive cost-base; a practice known as ‘nearshoring’. This has led to a marked increase in recruitment activity in Mexico.

Mexico has also recently implemented new legislation which makes employers responsible for higher ethical standards, especially with respect to supply chain due diligence

Ease of doing business ranking = 60

CAPITAL	Mexico City
LANGUAGES SPOKEN	Spanish
POPULATION	128.5 million
PAYROLL	Monthly or Bi-Monthly
CURRENCY	Mexican Peso (MXN)
VAT	Standard VAT of 16% / 8% reduced at Southern and Northern borders / 0% exports, medicine, milk, wheat, meat and corn and a few agriculture services



Hiring Considerations

- The standard workweek is 48 hours, with an eight-hour workday
- Overtime: Employees receive 200% of their regular wage for the first nine hours of overtime per week and 300% for any additional hours.
- Bonuses: Employees are entitled to an annual Christmas bonus ('aguinaldo') in mid-December worth 15 days of their salary, though many employers pay four weeks' worth.
- Employers must pay all wages and statutory payments in pesos to a government-designated in-country bank account. If hiring from overseas, it is important to be aware of this as it can cause delays when setting up payroll in Mexico.
- Under Mexican federal labor law, termination and resignation notices are not mandatory. Once your employee has worked for your company for a month, they become an indefinite employee and, except in cases of gross misconduct, are entitled to three months' severance pay.

Cultural Considerations

- The work culture in Mexico places a significant emphasis on hierarchy and respect for authority; addressing superiors with proper titles and using formal language is expected.
- Mexicans tend to value politeness and diplomacy in their communication styles. Direct criticism or disagreement may be perceived as rude or confrontational, leading to strained relationships.
- The concept of "mañana" (tomorrow) is deeply ingrained in Mexican culture and has implications for punctuality. While punctuality is valued in professional settings, it is not uncommon for appointments and meetings to start a little later than scheduled and for deadlines to have a degree of flexibility.

"Privacy growth in Mexico remains measured, but demand has become more consistent as nearshoring drives data processing activity locally. Salary benchmarking remains challenging due to broad sector variance, and organisations increasingly seek candidates who can operate across privacy, compliance and technology teams."

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

SALARY GUIDE MEXICO

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (MXN)
Privacy Engineer	MXN 550,000 – MXN 1,200,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	MXN 700,000 – MXN 1,450,000
Privacy Counsel	MXN 900,000 – MXN 1,850,000
Data Protection Officer	MXN 685,000 – MXN 1,300,000
Chief Privacy Officer	MXN 1,400,000 – MXN 2,550,000



2.2 EMEA – SUMMARY

The European Union has been a driving force for data privacy and cybersecurity legislation and it has set the precedent for other nations.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) continues to set the standard for data protection globally. In 2025, its impact is evident as EU member states refine their data protection frameworks, enhancing consumer rights, such as the right to explanation in algorithmic decision-making and stricter opt-in requirements for data use.

Abandonment of Certain EU Regulations

The European Commission has withdrawn proposed regulations on technology patents, AI liability and online privacy due to anticipated resistance from EU lawmakers and extensive industry lobbying. This decision underscores the complexities involved in regulating rapidly evolving technologies.

Debates Over Encryption and Surveillance

The European Union plans to implement regulations mandating the scanning of messages on all digital platforms to combat child sexual abuse material (CSAM). While aimed at protecting vulnerable individuals, this proposal has sparked debates over potential infringements on user privacy and the undermining of end-to-end encryption.

Meanwhile, the UK government has ordered Apple to create a “back door” to its encrypted

iCloud storage service under the Investigatory Powers Act. This move has raised concerns about global security and privacy protections, with critics fearing it could set a precedent for other countries to demand similar access.

EU Artificial Intelligence Act

In March 2024, the EU passed its Artificial Intelligence Act, which prescribes higher scrutiny for higher-risk uses of AI—such as credit scoring for loans, or law enforcement.

AI applications are now classified under four categories of risk (“unacceptable”, “high”, “limited” and “minimal”), plus one additional category for general-purpose AI (such as ChatGPT). Applications deemed to represent unacceptable risks are banned. High-risk ones must comply to security, transparency and quality obligations and undergo conformity assessments. Limited-risk AI applications only have transparency obligations, and those representing minimal risks are not regulated.

The EU has succeeded in creating much more than a blueprint for AI regulation going forward. Enterprises throughout the world are advised to pay attention, as compliance will be critical and non-compliance will result in hefty penalties. The Act comes into force across Europe in August 2026.

UNITED KINGDOM

According to The Global City, the United Kingdom is a ‘global centre of academic excellence.’ 58.5% of the UK’s workforce are educated to at least a degree level, making it one of the most skilled workforces in the world.

It’s been a turbulent few years for the UK politically and economically, following its departure from the European Union. Many talented workers from neighbouring European countries were forced to move away. However, the employment market remains robust, and wages are relatively competitive versus many of its European counterparts.

The UK workforce has seen a notable shift towards remote and hybrid work arrangements due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with a high emphasis on employee wellbeing. Environmental sustainability is also growing in importance for both employers and employees.

Ease of doing business ranking = 8

CAPITAL	London
LANGUAGES SPOKEN	English
POPULATION	68.35 million
PAYROLL	Monthly
CURRENCY	Pound Sterling (GBP)
VAT	20%



Hiring Considerations

- The average working week is between 37 and 40 hours.
- Flexible working arrangements have become increasingly popular in recent years and many employees prefer to split their time between an office and working from home.
- Employers are required to offer British workers at least 5.6 weeks of paid leave. This may include public and bank holidays, of which there are eight in the UK. For someone who works full-time, this will equate to 28 days of paid holiday.
- British workers between the ages of 22 and state pension age who earn £10,000 or more per year and usually work in the UK are legally entitled to a pension scheme, provided by their employer.

Cultural Considerations

- Handshakes are expected when you meet someone for the first time
- Businesses place high importance on good etiquette when it comes to phone and email communication; blunt messages can be interpreted as rudeness
- Workplaces are friendly and dress codes range from casual to formal, depending on the industry and the company's individual culture.

“Senior privacy hiring in the UK has begun to unlock again in 2026 after a period of stagnation. While salary inflation remains controlled at the top end, organisations are clearly asking more of their privacy leaders, particularly around AI governance and regulatory engagement. Entry and mid level demand continues to rise steadily.”

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

SALARY GUIDE UNITED KINGDOM

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (GBP)
Privacy Engineer	£85,000 – £115,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	£100,000 – £135,000
Privacy Counsel	£90,000 – £140,000
Data Protection Officer	£110,000 – £170,000
Chief Privacy Officer	£150,000 – £220,000

IRELAND

With a population of 4.9 million people, Ireland offers a talented, well educated and diverse workforce, with low unemployment rates. This, combined with its modern and flexible employment law framework, creates an alluring business climate for both local and international companies. The top industries here are technology, financial services and pharmaceuticals. However, these sectors often experience skill shortages, so there is a growing trend towards employing more remote and freelance workers.

Many of the world's leading tech companies have set up a base in Ireland, including Facebook, Google and Apple.

Ease of doing business ranking = 24

CAPITAL	Dublin
LANGUAGES SPOKEN	English, Irish
POPULATION	5.1 million
PAYROLL	Monthly/Weekly
CURRENCY	Euro (N.B — Republic of Ireland only; Northern Ireland is pound sterling)
VAT	23%



Hiring Considerations

- Ireland boasts a comprehensive legal framework governing employment, ensuring fair treatment and protection for both employers and employees. Key legislation includes the Employment Equality Acts, the Unfair Dismissals Acts, and the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts. These laws collectively address issues such as discrimination, termination procedures, and basic employment terms. It is crucial for employers to familiarize themselves with these statutes to ensure compliance and foster a harmonious work environment.
- Employers are responsible for making several mandatory contributions as part of the payroll process. These include Employer PRSI (Pay-Related Social Insurance) contribution. This contribution is a percentage of the employee's gross earnings and funds the country's social insurance program. The rate varies depending on the employment type and the employer's size.
- The probationary period for employees in Ireland can range from six months to two years, depending on the terms of their employment contract. During this period, the employer can assess the employee's suitability for the role and terminate the employment without providing a reason.
- The legal minimum annual leave is four weeks per year, but the majority of employers offer five.

- Ireland has truly embraced the trend for remote work. Since the Covid pandemic, around 60% of employees now work either fully or partly from home and a significant proportion work remotely. The Irish government has introduced legislation with grants employees the right to request reasonable adjustments to their working hours and place of work, after six months of employment.

Cultural Considerations

- Irish workplaces are typically relaxed, friendly and informal.
- Family, the traffic and weather are common conversation-starters! (Much like the UK, the Irish love to talk about the weather).
- The Irish are known for their good sense of humour.
- Business meetings often take place at social venues, such as bars and golf courses.

“Ireland remains heavily influenced by multinational hiring, but domestic privacy demand has also strengthened in 2026. Competition is strongest at mid level, and access to talent often requires international search. Privacy professionals with EU regulatory depth and operational experience are particularly sought after.”

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

SALARY GUIDE IRELAND

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
Privacy Engineer	€82,000 – €120,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	€85,000 – €130,000
Privacy Counsel	€90,000 – €135,000
Data Protection Officer	€110,000 – €140,000
Chief Privacy Officer	€130,000 – €225,000

FRANCE

France is the third-largest economy in Europe, and the sixth largest in the world in terms of GDP. It is an advanced and industrialised country and is home to a sophisticated financial market. This, coupled with France's highly educated workforce, makes it an attractive place for business growth.

Several industries contribute to the French economy, namely energy, transport, manufacturing, technology, tourism and agriculture.

In the face of global economic challenges, France has maintained a relatively stable job market — as of December 2023, the national unemployment rate stands at 7.2%, outperforming the average rate in the European Union.

One of the key contributors to France's employment landscape is its thriving tech industry and a steadily growing financial services sector.

Ease of doing business ranking = 32

CAPITAL	Paris
LANGUAGES SPOKEN	French
POPULATION	68.17 million
PAYROLL	Monthly
CURRENCY	Euro
VAT	20%



Hiring Considerations

- Probation periods are not mandatory in French employment contracts, but they typically last between two to four months.
- Notice periods: this depends on how long the employee has worked for the company. Employees will usually need to provide one month's notice if they've been employed for six months to two years.
- Employees who have been employed for more than two years usually must provide two months' notice, and those in executive positions may need to provide a three-month notice.

Cultural Considerations

- French business etiquette is rather formal, and it's always better to err on the side of formality than to be seen as disrespectful.
- It's customary to address people by their formal title, such as Monsieur or Madame, until invited to use their first name.

- Handshakes are the norm in business situations, and it's considered polite to greet everyone individually when entering a room.
- The French place a high value on work-life balance. You may find that work hours are shorter than in some other countries, with 35 hours per week on average.
- French people tend to be direct in their communication

“France continues to benefit from strong regulatory alignment with EU digital laws, driving sustained demand for privacy professionals with AI and technology exposure. In 2026, we’re seeing renewed movement at senior levels, which is gradually translating into upward salary pressure.”

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

SALARY GUIDE FRANCE

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
Privacy Engineer	€65,000 – €100,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	€80,000 – €125,000
Privacy Counsel	€85,000 – €130,000
Data Protection Officer	€90,000 – €135,000
Chief Privacy Officer	€120,000 – €185,000

GERMANY

Germany has a diverse population of over 84 million people, with a highly skilled talent pool. The country places a high emphasis on education, with a literacy rate of 99% and an extensive system of universities and vocational schools.

The business climate is favourable, with a strong focus on innovation and a range of government incentives for business growth.

Germany's top industries include automotive manufacturing, chemical production, engineering, and healthcare. The country is the world's leading exporter of cars, with major companies such as Volkswagen, BMW, and Mercedes-Benz headquartered in Germany.

German employees value a positive work environment that fosters collaboration, creativity, and innovation. Studies have found that they prioritise work-life balance, job security and professional development opportunities.

Ease of doing business ranking = 22

CAPITAL	Berlin
LANGUAGES SPOKEN	German, plus some regional dialects
POPULATION	84.5 million
PAYROLL	Monthly
CURRENCY	Euro
VAT	19%



Hiring Considerations

- The standard working week in Germany is 40 hours, with an average of 8 hours per day.
- Employers are obligated to provide health insurance, pension insurance, accident insurance and unemployment insurance to all employees.
- Bundesurlaubsgesetz — the Federal Holiday Act — dictates that employees get 20 days of leave or 24 days if they work six days a week instead of five. However, most employers offer more this statutory minimum.
- Notice periods are typically stipulated in the employment contract and vary based on the length of service. For example, a standard notice period is four weeks but can be longer for employees with several years of service.

Cultural Considerations

- Germans value punctuality, professionalism, and a thorough approach to business. Be prepared for structured and detail-oriented interactions with German professionals.
- While many Germans are proficient in English, especially in business settings, a basic understanding of the German language can be highly beneficial.

“Germany remains one of Europe’s most demanding privacy markets. Domestic expertise is often non negotiable, particularly for regulated and industrial sectors. The AI Act enforcement has further intensified competition, with experienced candidates commanding consistently high salaries.”

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

SALARY GUIDE GERMANY

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
Privacy Engineer	€90,000 – €125,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	€95,000 – €130,000
Privacy Counsel	€110,000 – €145,000
Data Protection Officer	€140,000 – €220,000
Chief Privacy Officer	€150,000 – €250,000

SWITZERLAND

Switzerland is widely recognised as a ‘safe haven’ within Europe and a land of opportunity for both individuals and businesses to live and work. Given its relatively small size and a highly liberal economic structure, it can quickly adapt to internal and external challenges. Switzerland is renowned for its stable and reliable business environment, which is supported by its well-developed legal system and robust regulations.

Around two thirds of Switzerland’s working population originate from EU countries, predominantly Italy, Germany, Portugal, France and Kosovo.

Ease of doing business ranking = 36

CAPITAL	Bern
LANGUAGES SPOKEN	German, French
POPULATION	8.85 million
PAYROLL	Monthly
CURRENCY	Swiss Franc (CHF)
VAT	8.1%



Hiring Considerations

- The working week in Switzerland is 40 to 42 hours. Workers are generally entitled to 4 weeks' holiday.
- Notice periods are variable, typically ranging from one to six months.

Cultural Considerations

- Swiss work culture is rooted in formality. Formal business attire is generally expected and it is usual to address someone by their last name and title (e.g. Mr, Mrs, Dr) until they indicate otherwise.
- There are three main languages spoken in Swiss workplaces: German, French, English — it is widely expected that job candidates would have fluency in at least two of these three.
- The Swiss value punctuality and direct communication, so when interviewing Swiss candidates, it is important that the interview is well-structured.

“Switzerland continues to attract strategically important senior privacy roles, although growth remains selective. In 2026, junior and mid level hiring has proven more resilient, while senior salaries remain firm rather than inflationary. Multilingual capability remains a key differentiator.”

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

SALARY GUIDE SWITZERLAND

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (CHF)
Privacy Engineer	CHF 145,000 – CHF 195,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	CHF 140,000 – CHF 198,000
Privacy Counsel	CHF 162,000 – CHF 200,000
Data Privacy Officer	CHF 160,000 – CHF 255,000
Chief Privacy Officer	CHF 250,000 – CHF 380,000

THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands is a forward-thinking nation, well connected to the other major economies of Europe and with a favourable fiscal climate, making it a prime country for sourcing multilingual and highly-skilled workers. The Dutch typically have excellent English language skills and many also speak German.

It is a small but mighty country, having the fifth-largest economy in the EU in 2023. The key industries here are aerospace, chemicals, energy, financial services, life sciences, IT and logistics.

The country has a strong focus on work-life balance, and family-friendly benefits are commonplace.

Dutch employment law is extensive, and regulations must be followed by any company that employs workers in the Netherlands, even if the organisation is registered in a different country.

Ease of doing business ranking = 42

CAPITAL	Amsterdam
LANGUAGES SPOKEN	Dutch, English
POPULATION	17.9 million
PAYROLL	Monthly
CURRENCY	Euro (EUR)
VAT	21%



Hiring Considerations

- The Netherlands has an extensive social security system which covers employees for health, death, old age, long-term disability, certain medical expenses and childcare and unemployment.
- National insurance is compulsory for anyone permanently working in the Netherlands. Social security premiums (also referred to as employee insurance) must be paid entirely by the employer.
- Many people work part-time in the Netherlands and requests for part-time work can only be turned down if there is a strong, objective reason not to permit it.
- Probation periods can last for a maximum of two months for permanent employees. Fixed-term contracts permit a maximum of one month's probation.

Cultural Considerations

- The Dutch are known for their direct manner and honesty. It's not a case of being harsh; they simply value pragmatism and clear communication.
- Decision-making is very much done by consensus, with multiple stakeholders involved.
- Efficiency and punctuality are highly valued.
- Workplace hierarchies tend to be flat, with everyone encouraged to voice their views and senior management are typically open to challenge, so long as it is done respectfully.

“The Dutch privacy market has continued to expand steadily, driven by fintech, life sciences and international HQ activity. In 2026, mid level salary growth has been most pronounced, with organisations increasingly seeking specialists rather than generalist legal hires.”

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

SALARY GUIDE NETHERLANDS

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
Privacy Engineer	€78,000 – €115,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	€80,000 – €125,000
Privacy Counsel	€80,000 – €130,000
Data Privacy Officer	€85,000 – €140,000
Chief Privacy Officer	€110,000 – €220,000

SPAIN

Spain is one of the largest countries in Europe and home to a highly educated, diverse and international workforce.

Spain's economy is the fifth-largest in the European Union by GDP. The country's major industries include technology, tourism, textiles, automotive manufacturing and construction.

Compared with other EU countries, labour costs in Spain are relatively high, owing in part to high social security contributions and taxes. Nonetheless, the country remains a desirable destination for foreign workers, since the cost of living is generally lower — and there are the additional draws of a vibrant culture, great cuisine and a balmy climate.

Ease of doing business ranking = 30

CAPITAL	Madrid
LANGUAGES SPOKEN	Spanish
POPULATION	48.4 million
PAYROLL	Monthly
CURRENCY	Euro (EUR)
VAT	21%



Hiring Considerations

- The standard working week is 40 hours. Some consumer-facing businesses do stop between 14:00 and 16:00 for ‘siesta’ and continue working until 8pm, but this is no longer usual practice in corporate environments.
- It is mandatory for employees to receive a thirteenth and fourteenth month’s salary payment. The annual salary is usually split into 14 instalments, which includes the double salary payment made by the employer in July and December.
- Internationals who want to work in Spain must meet stringent requirements for work permits. EU citizens are exempt, but do need a certificate of residence if they plan to stay for over three months, while non-EU citizens need both a work and residency permit along with a firm job offer. Highly skilled foreign workers can apply for a Blue Card or a Highly Qualified Visa — options which allow them to work and live locally for up to four years if they meet specific requirements.

Cultural Considerations

- Just like in social settings, Spaniards are relaxed and friendly at work. You’ll be surrounded by approachable, humorous people who love to smile.

- Relationship-building is important here, and business talks or negotiations rarely take place without getting to know the other person first. So don’t be alarmed at the slow pace of business meetings – or the personal questions.
- Overall, as Spaniards get more comfortable, they tend to be quite tactile, with hugs or a pat on the back or arm fairly common practice. You’ll also notice that when they are comfortable, they may become quite animated and even interrupt someone. This is to be taken as a sign that someone is interested in what the other person is saying, rather than being rude.
- Working late into the evening is not uncommon; Spaniards typically eat their dinner late, at around 9pm.

“Spain has seen modest but consistent growth in privacy demand, particularly in technology led sectors. In 2026, talent availability remains the main constraint, with employers increasingly willing to pay premiums for candidates who can combine privacy, security and product insight.”

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

SALARY GUIDE SPAIN

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
Privacy Engineer	€65,000 – €90,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	€65,000 – €120,000
Privacy Counsel	€80,000 – €125,000
Data Privacy Officer	€70,000 – €130,000
Chief Privacy Officer	€90,000 – €170,000

ITALY

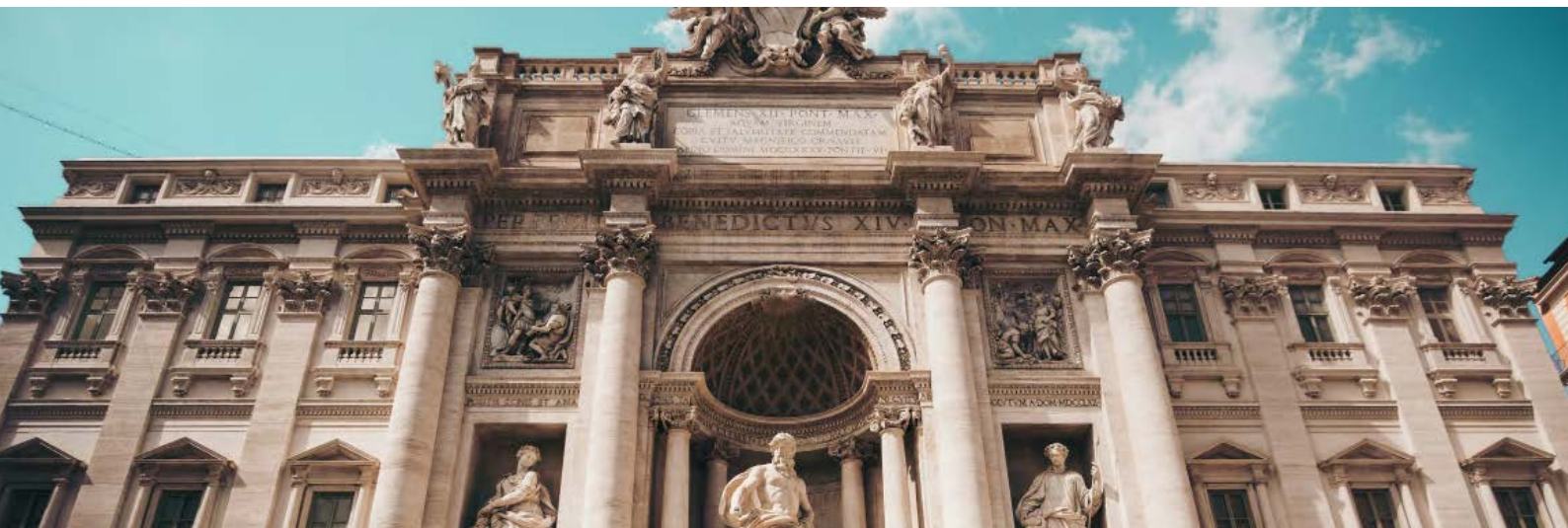
Italy is the third-largest economy in the European Union and the eighth-largest in the world. Its geographical position is beneficial for trade with Northern Europe, Southern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, making Italy a great place for businesses to expand internationally. Tourism is the top income generator, followed by manufacturing.

Around 10% of Italy's workforce is made up of international employees and foreign-owned business accounts for approximately 19% of the country's turnover.

Italy's science, technology and engineering sector is growing rapidly and projected demand for employees in these sectors is expected to rise dramatically in the coming years, which presents excellent opportunities for well qualified individuals in this space.

Ease of doing business ranking = 58

CAPITAL	Rome
LANGUAGES SPOKEN	Italian
POPULATION	58.8million
PAYROLL	Monthly
CURRENCY	Euro (EUR)
VAT	22%



Hiring Considerations

- Individual income taxes in Italy fall into different bands (23%, 35%, 43%) depending on the employee's income.
- Both employers and employees are obliged to make social security contributions. The total rate is around 40% of the employee's gross compensation, of which 30% is paid by the employer.
- Italy has unique parental leave legislation. Pregnant Italian employees don't work from two months before the birth date and for three months afterwards, during which they receive at least 80% of their pay. There are also five days of compulsory paternity leave, after the birth.
- Standard working hours are between 9:30 and 18:30, Monday to Friday. Lunch breaks can be up to two hours long.
- Employees are entitled to a minimum of 22 days' annual leave, along with 12 public holiday days.
- Freedom to express opinions is very much the 'modus operandi' of Italian businesses.
- Interpersonal relationships are highly valued in the workplace, so for international workers, learning a few words of Italian can really help when getting to know colleagues.
- First meetings will rarely result in an immediate agreement between the participating parties. They are viewed as the opportunity to develop a sense of mutual trust and respect.

Cultural Considerations

- Flexibility is generally more valued than punctuality in Italian business culture. It's not uncommon for people to turn up late for meetings or for these to overrun — especially if it's a lunch meeting! However, it is always expected that candidates will be on time for a job interview.

“Demand for privacy talent in Italy has broadened beyond traditionally data heavy sectors. In 2026, we're seeing more standalone privacy leadership roles emerge, as organisations move away from expecting general counsel to absorb responsibility entirely.”

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

SALARY GUIDE ITALY

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (EUR)
Privacy Engineer	€60,000 – €110,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	€68,000 – €120,000
Privacy Counsel	€83,000 – €130,000
Data Privacy Officer	€70,000 – €110,000
Chief Privacy Officer	€90,000 – €175,000

SWEDEN

Sweden is renowned for its high quality of life, social welfare system and progressive attitudes.

The country is highly educated, with a literacy rate of 100% and a high percentage of the population holding advanced degrees. Employment laws in Sweden prioritise workers' rights, with significant protections for job security, parental leave and workplace safety. The business world here has a keen focus on innovation, sustainability and equal opportunities.

Sweden is an excellent country to set up or expand a business in, owing to its political stability, strong public finances, well-performing economy and reliable banking system. It also provides some of the EU's lowest corporate tax rates.

The key industries here are manufacturing, forestry and technology.

Ease of doing business ranking = 10

CAPITAL	Stockholm
LANGUAGES SPOKEN	Swedish
POPULATION	10.5 million
PAYROLL	Monthly
CURRENCY	Swedish Krona (SEK)
VAT	25%



Hiring Considerations

- While the Swedish personal income tax is among the highest in the world, their social security benefits greatly offset the amount of taxes paid.
- Employers are required to pay Swedish employment social security contributions on compensation for employees covered by the system. These cover a range of events, including retirement pension, health insurance, labour fees and parental benefits.
- Work-life balance and wellbeing are vitally important in Sweden and many employers are now offering flexible working, additional annual leave and even unlimited annual leave.
- Gender equality is actively supported as well and it is expected that both mothers and fathers will share the 480 days leave which they are entitled to. Parents can take it at the same time or separately, all in one go or spread over time.
- Decision-making is driven by consensus from all stakeholders, so the process can take a little longer than in other cultures.
- Work-life balance is an absolute priority and there's a strong emphasis on putting family first. This attitude has no doubt contributed to the country's very low staff turnover rate.
- "Fika" is a Swedish tradition of taking a break to enjoy a hot drink and sweet treat with colleagues. It is viewed as an opportunity to bond, and discuss non-work topics, helping to cultivate an amiable atmosphere.

Cultural Considerations

- Swedish people are very straightforward and humble. They value substance over showiness.
- Hierarchies in the workplace are typically flat, with everyone encouraged to contribute to ideas and discussions, regardless of seniority.

"Senior level hiring in Sweden remains selective, but the overall privacy market continues to grow. In 2026, candidates with multi jurisdictional experience remain in short supply and continue to command a premium despite some short term salary stabilisation."

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

SALARY GUIDE SWEDEN

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (SEK)
Privacy Engineer	SEK 700,000 – SEK 1,200,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	SEK 850,000 – SEK 1,300,000
Privacy Counsel	SEK 890,000 – SEK 1,550,000
Data Privacy Officer	SEK 950,000 – SEK 1,930,000
Chief Privacy Officer	SEK 1,450,000 – SEK 2,500,000

NORWAY

Norway is the best country to live in according to the United Nations, thanks to its impressive healthcare system and work-life balance.

Norway is home to one of the strongest economies in the world, and the country places a high priority on technology, knowledge development and sustainable business.

Norway is a world leader in energy, oil and gas and maritime sectors and is seeing huge developments in other areas, such as fintech, medtech and edtech. It is also rich in natural resources and is a leading European producer of renewable energy: 98% of the country's electricity production is based on renewables.

Ease of doing business ranking = 9

CAPITAL	Oslo
LANGUAGES SPOKEN	Norwegian
POPULATION	5.4 million
PAYROLL	Monthly
CURRENCY	Norwegian Krone (NOK)
VAT	25%



Hiring Considerations

- Working hours in Norway are typically nine hours per day within a 24-hour period, or 40 hours per week within a seven-day work week.
- Employees (even those who are not residents) receiving remuneration for work performed in Norway are eligible for social security and pension contributions.
- Norway offers a generous maternity and paternity leave package. This is either 80% compensation rate of the average salary for 59 weeks or 100% of the average salary for 49 weeks. Parents also have the option to take a leave of absence for an additional year without compensation.
- Probation periods can be up to six months long.

Cultural Considerations

- Continuous development is important – Norway has the second highest participation rate in job-related continued education and training, in all of Europe.
- Norwegians are focused on high quality output and efficiency. They are honest and direct in their communication, but typically warm and friendly, too.
- Workplaces are generally quite informal in terms of business dress.
- Work-life balance and ‘family time’ are highly valued.

“Norway’s privacy market has remained relatively stable, but multinationals operating locally continue to expand their functions. In 2026, growth is incremental rather than explosive, with most hiring focused on supporting global compliance programmes.”

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

SALARY GUIDE NORWAY

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (NOK)
Privacy Engineer	NOK 700,000 – NOK 1,300,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	NOK 1,050,000 – NOK 1,650,000
Privacy Counsel	NOK 1,150,000 – NOK 1,700,000
Data Privacy Officer	NOK 1,100,000 – NOK 1,900,000
Chief Privacy Officer	NOK 1,350,000 – NOK 2,500,000

DENMARK

This small but perfectly formed Nordic country is renowned for its high standard of living, advanced welfare state and innovative business climate.

The country has a highly educated talent pool, with over 80% of the population having completed some form of post-secondary education. Denmark has strong employment laws which protect workers, such as a minimum wage, a maximum workweek of 37 hours and generous parental leave.

The Danish business culture is also attractive, with a low corporate tax rate, easy access to capital and a high degree of government support for entrepreneurship. The top industries in Denmark include information technology, life sciences, renewable energy, and food and agriculture.

Ease of doing business ranking = 4

CAPITAL	Copenhagen
LANGUAGES SPOKEN	Danish
POPULATION	5.8 million
PAYROLL	Monthly
CURRENCY	Danish Krone (DKK)
VAT	0-25%



Hiring Considerations

- Employers must contribute to social security and other government initiatives on behalf of their employees. These contributions are typically calculated as a percentage of salary and are paid monthly.
- Income tax rates range from 0% to 55.8% depending on the employee's income level.
- Probationary periods can be up to three months long and no notice of termination is required by either party, during this time.
- English is very widely spoken by Danes, and with high levels of proficiency.

Cultural Considerations

- Danish workplaces are typically informal, with a flat hierarchy. People are trusted to manage their own workloads and time, with minimal supervision.

- It's usual for groups of co-workers to take their lunch together, but socialising with colleagues outside of work hours is rare.
- Work-life balance is highly prioritised. Denmark ranks 3rd on OECD's scale of countries with the best balance. This is partly down to flexible working hours and outstanding social and welfare support.

“Denmark salaries are difficult to benchmark accurately due to limited market data. In 2026, demand remains steady relative to market size, but salary bandings are broad and heavily influenced by role scope rather than title alone.”

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

SALARY GUIDE DENMARK

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (DKK)
Privacy Engineer	DKK 715,000 – DKK 1,200,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	DKK 775,000 – DKK 1,500,000
Privacy Counsel	DKK 815,000 – DKK 1,600,000
Data Privacy Officer	DKK 850,000 – DKK 1,550,000
Chief Privacy Officer	DKK 900,000 – DKK 2,000,000

SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Arabia's economy is a rapidly-developing major player on the global stage and the world's biggest exporter and producer of oil.

In spite of what may appear to be a low 'ease of doing business' ranking, the country rose 30 places since the previous report and has implemented some significant reforms in recent years, including enforcing contracts by publishing court performance measurement reports, tripling the VAT rate from 5% to 15%, implementing Transfer Pricing guidelines and Real Estate Transaction Tax, abolishing the sponsorship system and introducing E-Invoicing regulations.

In terms of non-oil exports, more than 90% comprises electrical appliances, petrochemicals, construction materials, plastics and metal goods.

Saudi Arabia's unique location – central to Asia, Europe and Africa – makes it a natural

channel for worldwide trade routes, as well as a popular location for international business expansion. It's a major member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and enables easy access to other Gulf markets.

Ease of doing business ranking = 62

“Saudi Arabia continues to emerge as a strategically important market for data privacy leadership as regulatory frameworks mature and more multinational organisations establish or expand regional operations. In 2026, privacy hiring remains selective rather than high volume, with strongest demand for senior professionals who can navigate local regulation while aligning with global data governance and AI standards.”

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

CAPITAL	Riyadh
LANGUAGES SPOKEN	Arabic
POPULATION	35.34 million
PAYROLL	Monthly/Weekly
CURRENCY	Saudi Riyal
VAT	15%



Hiring Considerations

- The work week in Saudi Arabia is usually six days, with Friday as a rest day. Working days are typically eight actual hours, but during Ramadan, this is reduced to six hours.
- As per the labour law, at least 75% of the workforce in any organisation must consist of Saudi nationals. However, the Government has the authority to temporarily reduce this percentage in certain cases, such as when there is a lack of technically or academically qualified workers, or when a vacancy cannot be filled by a Saudi national.
- In reality, Saudi nationals only comprise approximately one-fifth of the private sector workforce. To increase this proportion, the Government follows a policy called “Saudization,” which includes the Nitaqat scheme. The Nitaqat scheme applies to private sector companies with six or more employees and sets quotas for the employment of Saudi nationals based on the company’s size and sector.
- Certain designated jobs can only be filled by Saudi nationals, including various clerical and supervisory roles, as well as positions in hospitality, tourism, retail, private security, healthcare, and HR.
- Foreign nationals working in Saudi Arabia must have sponsorship from an employer, typically a domestic or multinational company in the country.
- Employers of foreign nationals are responsible for all recruitment costs,

including work visas, residence permits, their renewal, and return tickets to the employee’s home country upon employment termination. Employers face higher “expat fees” if they employ more foreign nationals than Saudi citizens.

Cultural Considerations

- It is not uncommon for key employees to be family members.
- Some Saudis may view things as being willed by God. This is reflected in the common saying “Inshallah” (If God wills it).
- Although it remains a conservative business environment, cultural change is happening. Saudi Arabia is adapting in line with Saudi Vision 2030; of which one aim is to establish a “vibrant” society. One aspect which is particularly noticeable is the growing prominence of women in senior management and business founder roles.
- A divisive culture can prevail between locals and expats in some companies, and discrimination does, sadly, exist. The government’s Saudization policy – where citizens are fast-tracked into jobs, training, and promotion at the expense of expats – can create tension.
- Most Saudi businesspeople speak very good English, but a few words of Arabic are always very well received.
- In terms of clothing, offices and meetings demand formal attire. This means suits for expats, and national dress (white thobe, red/ white checked ghutra) for locals.

SALARY GUIDE SAUDI ARABIA

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (SAR)
Privacy Engineer	SAR 250,000 — SAR 425,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	SAR 385,000 — SAR 625,000
Privacy Counsel	SAR 450,000 — SAR 635,000
Data Privacy Officer	SAR 500,000 — SAR 875,000
Chief Privacy Officer	SAR 655,000 — SAR 1,100,000+

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The United Arab Emirates (or UAE) is an economic powerhouse of the Middle East and is widely known as a business-friendly country in the region that welcomes foreign workers and investments. And since around 89% of the population originates from outside the UAE, it's also a great place to look for remote talent as it's one of a growing number of countries now offering digital nomad visas.

The UAE's economy is the 5th largest in the Middle East, with a gross domestic product of US\$501 billion (AED 1.84 trillion) in 2022.

The economy in the UAE relies on revenue from the natural gas and petroleum industries. One of its bigger non-oil revenue sources is tourism, and the UAE's thriving services sector is contributing to the diversification of the economy. Across the nation, there is currently \$350 billion worth of active construction in process.

Ease of doing business ranking = 16

CAPITAL	Abu Dhabi
LANGUAGES SPOKEN	Arabic, English
POPULATION	9.89 million
PAYROLL	Monthly or Bi-Weekly
CURRENCY	United Arab Emirates Dirham (AED)
VAT	5%

“The UAE has become an increasingly important regional centre for privacy leadership roles. In 2026, hiring remains robust in Dubai and Abu Dhabi as multinationals centralise governance functions, with AI regulation and cross border data strategy driving demand.”

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

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Hiring Considerations

- The UAE does not have any enforced federal income tax legislation for general business. Each Emirate has enacted an income tax decree, but enforcement is restricted to oil companies and foreign banks.
- According to the terms of the UAE Labour Law, introduced in February 2022, companies operating in the private sector are required to employ individuals on fixed-term contracts. However, the fixed-term aspect of the agreement is, in practice, insignificant. For instance, even if a five-year term is agreed upon, it essentially functions as a permanent employment contract and can be terminated with notice by either party.
- The working week used to be Sunday to Thursday, but it has recently changed to Monday to Friday.
- Usual business hours are from 8am to 1pm, resuming at 4pm (once temperatures have reduced) and continuing until 7pm.
- It is compulsory to register employees with the national government pension programme and contribute to it regularly.
- Compensation packages are structured differently; instead of the usual base salary + bonus, firms typically offer base salary + housing allowance + transportation allowance (and schooling allowance, if the employee has children).

Cultural Considerations

- Islam is the cornerstone of UAE culture and profoundly influences its business practices. Most Emiratis are Muslim, so expats would do well to familiarise themselves with the principles of Islam to help cultivate relationships, and avoid inadvertently offending anyone.
- Islamic principles, such as honesty, integrity, and fairness, underscore all aspects of business dealings. Upholding one's word and delivering on promises are highly valued traits that contribute to building trust and lasting partnerships in the UAE.
- Religious holidays have a significant impact on business operations in the UAE. For instance, during Ramadan — a month of fasting from dawn to sunset — working hours are reduced, and the pace of business may slow down. Many companies operate with shorter business hours to allow employees to break their fasts and engage in prayers.
- Traditional hierarchical structures are prevalent in organisations, with clear lines of authority. Decision-making processes often involve higher-level management, and their input carries significant weight in final outcomes.

SALARY GUIDE UAE

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (AED)
Privacy Engineer	AED 400,000 – AED 610,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	AED 395,000 – AED 600,000
Privacy Counsel	AED 450,000 – AED 780,000
Data Privacy Officer	AED 420,000 – AED 600,000
Chief Privacy Officer	AED 720,000 – AED 1,400,000



2.3 ASIA–PACIFIC – SUMMARY

As the region with arguably the greatest diversity in approaches to data privacy and cybersecurity regulation, APAC continues to undergo significant transformation — and face unique challenges. Managing data flows across borders, for example, remains a complex issue. The APAC region exhibits fragmented attitudes and regulatory frameworks concerning data privacy and protection, reflecting the diverse cultures and histories of the countries in the region. This fragmentation poses challenges for businesses operating across multiple jurisdictions.

Maturation of Privacy Laws

Many APAC countries have recently introduced or updated comprehensive privacy laws to align with global standards:

China: Authorities have intensified efforts to combat illegal data handling, focusing on industries that unlawfully obtain, sell, or provide data. This initiative aims to enhance data security governance and maintain national security and social stability.

Australia: Significant privacy reforms have been enacted, including the introduction of a

“privacy tort” allowing individuals to sue for serious invasions of privacy. The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner has been granted stronger enforcement capabilities, signalling a likely increase in litigation related to data breaches and privacy violations.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Governance

The rapid adoption of AI technologies has heightened concerns regarding data privacy. With the region’s investments projected to reach US\$110 billion by 2025—data privacy has emerged as a critical requirement of responsible AI innovation, which is helping to drive demand in this region for skilled data privacy professionals.

With so many issues to tackle, one of the greatest challenges for Asian organisations is understanding which areas of data privacy legislation to prioritise in their compliance efforts.

To do this, an essential early step is a risk assessment; looking at which countries have the highest customer numbers, where suppliers are based, which jurisdictions impose the heaviest penalties....and then weigh all of this against business objectives.

SINGAPORE

Singapore has a successful free-market economy and consistently ranks among the least corrupt nations in the world. Unemployment is low, and its port is one of the busiest in the world.

Singapore's workforce is highly multicultural, comprising Chinese, Malay, and Indian workers, as well as expatriates from around the globe. While the government has taken steps to reduce the country's reliance on foreign labour, particularly in unskilled roles, Singapore remains an open and diverse society.

Ease of doing business ranking = 2

CAPITAL	Singapore
LANGUAGES SPOKEN	English, Bahasa Malaysia, Mandarin & Tamil
POPULATION	5.91 million
PAYROLL	Monthly
CURRENCY	Singapore Dollar (SGD)
VAT	9%



Hiring Considerations

- The Employment Act specifies that all employees are entitled to one rest day out of the week. Typically, this is Sunday, but employers can choose a different rest day as long as they inform their employees.
- Employers typically provide a 13th-month bonus to their employees. 13th-month bonus is also known as Annual Wage Supplement (AWS). It is a single annual payment on top of an employee's total annual wage. AWS is not compulsory. Employers are encouraged to give their employees AWS to reward them for contributing to the company's performance.

Cultural Considerations

- Singapore places importance on proper business etiquette and protocol. Handshakes are common as a form of greeting, and it is polite to address individuals using their titles and surnames, especially in formal settings.

- It is also customary to exchange business cards during introductions, with proper attention given to receiving and presenting them with both hands.
- Teamwork and collaboration are highly valued in Singapore's work culture. Employees are expected to work well in teams and contribute to collective goals. Communication tends to be polite, indirect and harmonious, with an emphasis on maintaining positive relationships.

“Singapore has strengthened its position as the leading APAC hub for privacy governance. In 2026, senior hiring is noticeably more active, particularly for candidates overseeing regional AI and data transfer compliance, with salaries beginning to reflect this demand.”

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

SALARY GUIDE SINGAPORE

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (SGD)
Privacy Engineer	S\$ 120,000 – S\$ 180,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	S\$ 130,000 – S\$ 200,000
Privacy Counsel	S\$ 195,000 – S\$ 290,000
Data Protection Officer	S\$ 180,000 – S\$ 275,000
Chief Privacy Officer	S\$ 265,000 – S\$ 395,000

JAPAN

Japan is smaller than the U.S. state of California, and yet it boasts the world's third-largest economy, after the United States and China. It is home to 62 of the Fortune 500 companies and excels in the IT, automotive and healthcare sectors.

Japan is a stable place to do business and a sensible stepping stone into other Asian territories.

It is, however, one of the more challenging environments in which to attract job candidates. An aging population and declining birth rates has led to a serious labour shortage in the country. This means employees are used to excellent job security and, when they are looking for a job, receiving job offers from multiple companies.

Ease of doing business ranking = 29

CAPITAL	Tokyo
LANGUAGES SPOKEN	Japanese
POPULATION	124.5 million
PAYROLL	Monthly
CURRENCY	Japanese Yen (JPY)
VAT	10%

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“Japan remains a relationship driven market where trust and referrals are critical. In 2026, privacy hiring is strong and highly competitive, but success continues to depend on specialist networks rather than traditional recruitment channels.”

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

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Hiring Considerations

- Employees in managerial positions are generally expected to work unpaid overtime.
- Termination of employment can be difficult in Japan and employers will generally seek to obtain the employee's resignation before handing out a termination notice. In some cases, financial incentives can be offered to encourage employees to resign.
- The notice period for resigning employees can range from two weeks to a month. In the case of dismissals, the employer must provide 30 days' notice or payment in lieu of the notice period.
- There is no payment for sick leave in Japan. For short-term cases, employees use their paid vacation to take leaves of absence.
- Employers are required to grant annual paid leave of at least 10 days upon completion of 6 months' employment. The entitlement increases by 1 day per year for the following 2 years and by 2 days per year thereafter, up to a maximum of 20 days per year.

Cultural Considerations

- Japanese employers expect unwavering dedication from their teams. And while there have been notable improvements in Japanese work conditions in recent years, Japan still carries its reputation of being a hard working country.
- Japanese 'nomikai' are company after-work drinking parties, which are often compulsory to attend. It is seen as disrespectful to refuse such an invitation from a senior employee.
- Career progression rewards behaviour which demonstrates team effort, for example by singing the company song, not taking all of one's vacation days, and sharing credit for accomplishments with the team.
- Non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions and body language, is heavily relied upon in Japanese workplaces.

SALARY GUIDE JAPAN

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (JPY)
Privacy Engineer	¥6,000,000 – ¥12,000,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	¥10,000,000 – ¥16,500,000
Privacy Counsel	¥14,000,000 – ¥22,000,000
Data Privacy Officer	¥13,000,000 – ¥27,000,000
Chief Privacy Officer	¥25,000,000 – ¥36,000,000

HONG KONG

Hong Kong is a special administrative region of China, located just off the Southeastern coast.

For a territory of less than eight million, Hong Kong boasts a vibrant economy with strengths in financial services, tourism and professional services. It acts as an excellent gateway to the Asia-Pacific market.

Combined with its 4th place ranking on the human development index and a GDP that is several times the size of comparative nations, Hong Kong offers an attractive option for companies looking to build a presence in Asia with strong global connections.

Hong Kong is uniquely positioned as a bilingual and multicultural society, with English and Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin) being widely spoken. This linguistic diversity is a valuable asset for businesses looking to engage with both local and international stakeholders.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN	Chinese, English
POPULATION	7.5 million
PAYROLL	Monthly
CURRENCY	Hong Kong Dollar (HKD)
VAT	n/a

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“Hong Kong’s privacy market has stabilised following recent macro uncertainty. In 2026, hiring activity is closely tied to regional HQ decisions, with privacy roles increasingly aligned to broader governance and risk mandates rather than standalone teams.”

Phil Redhead
Leonid Group

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Hiring Considerations

- Hong Kong operates on a territorial tax system, meaning that only income generated within the city is subject to taxation. Income earned abroad, even if remitted to Hong Kong, is generally exempt from taxation.
- Income tax rates are progressive, and capped at 17%.
- Hong Kong does not have a comprehensive social security system. Instead, social welfare is largely provided through a mix of means-tested assistance programs, non-contributory benefits and voluntary savings schemes.
- The standard working week is 44 hours, across 5 days.
- Employees are entitled to 7 annual leave days; this can rise to 14 days depending on an individual's tenure with their employer.
- Bonus culture is deeply ingrained, particularly within the finance and professional services sectors, where year-end bonuses can significantly boost overall compensation packages.
- Many companies in Hong Kong provide employee stock options as part of their compensation packages, which prove successful in retaining talent.

Cultural Considerations

- Hong Kong's business culture is influenced by a mix of Eastern and Western practices. Hierarchy and respect for authority are very much adhered to.
- It is not uncommon for employees to work long hours, especially in the run up to a project deadline.
- Workplaces are typically quite formal and focused on efficiency and punctuality.
- Formal business attire is expected in most offices, although there is a growing trend towards a slightly more relaxed approach in smaller firms and start-ups.
- Being consistently late or missing deadlines is considered disrespectful.
- English is the main business language, although knowing some Mandarin, Cantonese or Japanese is very helpful.

SALARY GUIDE HONG KONG

TITLE	SALARY RANGE (HKD)
Privacy Engineer	HK\$ 600,000 – HK\$ 1,000,000
Senior Data Protection Manager	HK\$ 950,000 – HK\$ 1,300,000
Privacy Counsel	HK\$ 980,000 – HK\$ 1,400,000
Data Privacy Officer	HK\$ 1,100,000 – HK\$ 1,550,000
Chief Privacy Officer	HK\$ 1,400,000 – HK\$ 2,350,000



03.

CONCLUSION

Data privacy has firmly established itself as a core pillar of corporate governance and with major regulatory frameworks now moving from introduction to enforcement — particularly around AI governance, cross border data transfers and digital accountability — organisations are being judged not on intent, but on execution. Privacy leaders are expected to demonstrate operational maturity, commercial judgement and the ability to navigate increasingly complex regulatory intersections.

At the same time, the talent market remains constrained. Demand continues to outpace supply for experienced privacy professionals, particularly those with AI literacy, multi jurisdictional exposure and the confidence to operate at board level. Employers are therefore becoming more selective, often consolidating responsibilities and expecting greater breadth from senior hires, while still competing fiercely for proven capability.

For organisations building or strengthening their data privacy functions in 2026, proactive talent strategy is critical. Partnering with a specialist search firm offers access to the passive market — where much of the most impactful privacy talent sits — and provides the insight needed to benchmark roles realistically in a fast moving landscape.

At [Leonid](#), we work exclusively within corporate governance and limit mandates to ensure depth, focus and pace. Through our global network, [Magic Month](#) methodology and [LeonidLive](#) shortlist platform, we help organisations secure high impact data privacy talent efficiently — positioning them for resilience in the regulatory environment ahead.

To find out more about our methodology or for bespoke salary benchmarking, please get in touch with [Phil Redhead](#) for a friendly and informal discussion.

In an environment where data privacy regulation is evolving faster than most organisations can restructure their teams, hiring decisions made in isolation increasingly carry long term risk. The most successful privacy functions are built not only through individual senior appointments, but through a clear, forward looking understanding of talent availability, emerging skills and market movement.

Leonid's Talent Intelligence service enables organisations to move beyond reactive hiring and develop evidence based talent strategies tailored to the data privacy landscape.

Turning privacy hiring into workforce strategy

Leonid's Talent Intelligence combines real time hiring data, global candidate intelligence and sector specific insight across data privacy, AI governance, technology law and digital compliance.

For data privacy leaders, this provides clarity on:

- Where experienced privacy and AI governance talent is concentrated globally
- Which jurisdictions are producing sustainable pipelines – and which are becoming increasingly constrained
- How competitors are structuring CPO, DPO and privacy engineering functions
- What “good” looks like at different maturity stages, from lean teams to fully global operating models

This insight is particularly valuable for organisations operating across multiple regulatory regimes, where a single operating model rarely fits all markets.

Anticipating AI driven and regulatory skills gaps

The enforcement of the EU AI Act, increasing state level regulation in the US, and continued divergence between regional privacy regimes are reshaping privacy roles at speed. Many organisations only discover capability gaps once regulatory deadlines are imminent.

Talent Intelligence allows organisations to:

- Identify emerging privacy and AI governance skill requirements early
- Assess whether these capabilities are realistically recruitable in specific markets
- Decide where upskilling or redeployment is more viable than external hiring

This proactive approach reduces execution risk and prevents over reliance on a narrow pool of senior hires.

Informing location, structure and investment decisions

For multinational organisations, Talent Intelligence supports strategic questions such as:

- Where to base regional or global privacy leadership
- Which functions should remain centralised versus locally embedded
- How to balance cost, regulatory exposure and talent availability
- Whether to build in house capability or supplement with external advisory support

These decisions are increasingly scrutinised at board level, particularly where privacy, AI and data governance carry enterprise wide risk.

A strategic complement to specialist search

While our search capability focuses on securing high impact individuals, often from the passive market, Talent Intelligence ensures those hires are made within a coherent, future proof talent framework.

The result is not simply faster hiring, but more **resilient, scalable privacy functions designed for the regulatory environment of 2026 and beyond.**





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CONTACT

Leonid is a leading, international recruiter in in-house legal and data privacy – and all areas of corporate governance.

If you are looking to bolster your team, we can proactively seek out the best candidates and have them ready to join you within 30 days of instruction.

To find out more about Leonid's service, please visit our website:

www.leonid-group.com

Or, to request a meeting with our Head of Data Privacy & Legal Recruitment, Phil Redhead, please email him directly:

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