

Kenya vs India vs Philippines vs South Africa

A four-way outsourcing destination comparison across time-zone overlap, English proficiency, cost and attrition — to support UK destination selection.



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Scale, data frameworks and best-fit guidance

Executive summary

There is no single “best” outsourcing destination — only the best fit for a given function. India offers unrivalled scale and technical depth; the Philippines dominates high-volume voice work; South Africa pairs premium English with a UK-friendly time zone; and Kenya combines the strongest UK working-hours overlap of the group with high English, low attrition and competitive cost.

This report compares the four destinations across the factors UK buyers weigh most heavily — time-zone overlap, English proficiency and accent, cost, attrition, talent scale and legal and data frameworks — and closes with practical guidance on when to choose which, including the hybrid models many firms now run.

About the data: Figures are drawn from EF EPI 2024/25, Ookla, the World Bank and industry sources as understood for 2025/26. Salary figures use the consistent published set used in live comparisons; where sources differ, the report notes it. All figures are planning benchmarks, not quotes.



SECTION ONE

At a glance

The four destinations side by side on the metrics that matter.

At a glance

The table below summarises the four destinations on the criteria UK buyers most often use to shortlist. The sections that follow unpack each dimension in turn.

Four-way comparison (2025/26)

| Metric | Kenya | India | Philippines | South Africa |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Time zone vs UK | GMT+3 | GMT+5:30 | GMT+8 | GMT+2 |
| UK working-hours overlap | 5-6 hrs | 2.5-4 hrs | 1-2 hrs | Highest (+2) |
| English (EF EPI 2024) | High (#19) | Low (#69-74) | High (#22-28) | Very High (#13) |
| Entry support (USD/mo) | \$225-\$252 | \$200-\$300 | \$256-\$376 | \$800-\$1,000 |
| Attrition | 15-20% | 14-35% | 31-45% | 18-25% |
| BPO workforce | ~36,000 | millions | 1.82m | 270,000+ |
| Accent / culture fit | Neutral, UK-friendly | Moderate | US-oriented | Strong, UK-friendly |
| Maturity / scale | Emerging | Largest, most mature | Mature (voice) | Mature, premium |

Reading the table: Kenya and South Africa offer the closest fit for UK working hours and accent; India offers unmatched scale and technical depth; the Philippines leads on mature, high-volume voice operations, typically run on night shifts for UK work.



SECTION TWO

Time zone & working hours

Daily overlap with the UK and what it means operationally.

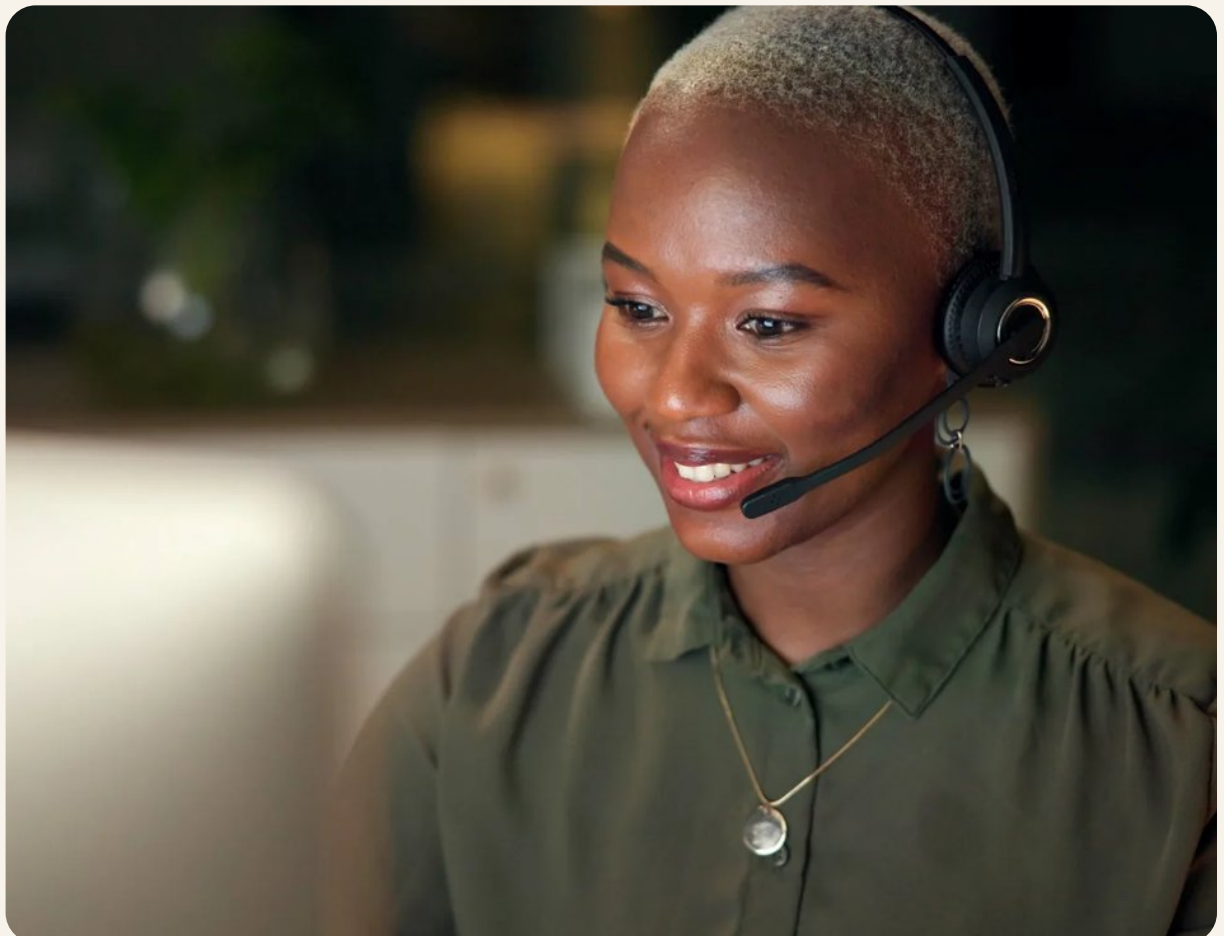
Time zone & working hours

Time-zone fit determines whether an offshore team collaborates with your UK staff in real time or works around them. It is the single dimension on which Kenya and South Africa most clearly outperform the Asian hubs.

| Country | Offset | UK overlap | Night shifts? |
|--------------|----------|-----------------|---------------|
| South Africa | GMT+2 | Most favourable | No |
| Kenya | GMT+3 | 5-6 hrs | No |
| India | GMT+5:30 | 2.5-4 hrs | Often |
| Philippines | GMT+8 | 1-2 hrs | Usually |

For **Kenya**, a UK 9am start is noon in Nairobi and UK 5pm is 8pm — so a full UK afternoon of live collaboration is available with no night working. That matters for any function that needs back-and-forth: finance month-end, software stand-ups, escalation handling and professional services all run more smoothly when both sides are at their desks together.

The **Philippines**, eight hours ahead, overlaps only briefly with the UK morning, so UK-facing teams there usually work night shifts — a major contributor to its high attrition. **India** sits in between, with a workable but compressed afternoon window. Because night-shift models raise both pay premiums and turnover, the real-time overlap Kenya offers is as much a cost-and-quality advantage as a convenience one.



SECTION THREE

English & culture

Proficiency, accent and official-language status.

English & culture

For UK-facing voice and written work, English proficiency and accent fit are decisive. On the EF English Proficiency Index, South Africa and Kenya lead the group for UK alignment.

English proficiency (EF EPI 2024)

| Country | Rank | Band |
|--------------|--------|--------------------|
| South Africa | #13 | Very High |
| Kenya | #19 | High |
| Philippines | #22–28 | High (US affinity) |
| India | #69–74 | Low |

Kenya and **South Africa** offer neutral, UK-aligned accents and a service culture British customers find easy to engage with; English is an official language and the medium of education, government and the courts in both. The **Philippines** is strongest for US-accent affinity, having been shaped by decades of American business and media. **India's** metro talent pool includes excellent English speakers, but the national average is lower and voice roles need more screening.

Culture fit extends beyond accent to working norms — written communication style, escalation etiquette, and familiarity with UK business conventions. Kenya's common-law heritage and English-medium professional training mean contracts, policies and customer interactions need no translation, and concepts such as reasonable notice or constructive dismissal carry the same meaning UK managers expect.



SECTION FOUR

Cost & attrition

What you pay for talent, and how long teams stay.

Cost & attrition

Cost of talent

Monthly gross, USD (consistent published set)

| Country | Entry-level | Supervisor / mid |
|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| Kenya | \$225-\$252 | ~\$325 |
| India | \$200-\$300 | \$300-\$600 |
| Philippines | \$256-\$376 | \$376-\$598 |
| South Africa | \$800-\$1,000 | \$1,100-\$1,300 |

Kenya is typically modelled at **50–65% below UK fully-loaded cost**, with labour costs 60–70% lower than North America and Europe and **17–59% below South Africa**. South Africa is the premium “tier-two” option — the smallest saving, positioned for high-complexity, high-empathy work where its English edge justifies the price. India and Kenya sit at the value end, with India marginally cheaper on some high-volume categories but Kenya cheaper than South Africa across the board.

Attrition — the hidden cost

| Country | Attrition | Note |
|--------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| Kenya | 15–20% | Most stable in the group |
| South Africa | 18–25% | EMEA average |
| India | 14–35% | Higher in call-centre segments |
| Philippines | 31–45% | Up to 60% in high-stress centres |

Attrition is where headline salary can mislead. A cheaper agent who leaves within a year carries re-hiring, re-training and quality costs that erode the saving. Kenya’s sector-low turnover — a product of its education surplus and daytime working — means teams stay long enough to build the account knowledge that drives quality.

Salary caveat: one source set lists materially higher figures for India, the Philippines and South Africa (employer-cost rather than salary-only). This report uses the consistent salary-only set above; confirm live rates with providers before budgeting.

SECTION FIVE

Talent, law & when to choose

Scale, data frameworks, and best-fit guidance by function.

Talent, legal framework & when to choose which

Talent scale

India is unrivalled — roughly 6.5 million new entrants a year and a 5.4-million-strong tech workforce. The **Philippines** produces about 700,000 graduates a year for a 1.82-million BPO workforce. **South Africa** has grown to over 270,000 jobs and **Kenya** to about 36,000, the latter backed by 123,928 graduates in 2024 and a 642,000-strong B2 English pool. For very large or highly technical teams, India's depth is hard to match; for focused, quality-led teams, Kenya's pool is more than sufficient and growing fast.

Legal & data framework

| Country | Legal system | Data law |
|--------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Kenya | Common law (unitary) | Data Protection Act 2019 |
| India | Common law (federal) | DPDP Act 2023 |
| Philippines | Mixed civil/common | Data Privacy Act 2012 |
| South Africa | Mixed civil/common | POPIA |


None of the four holds a UK adequacy decision, so UK transfers require an IDTA and a Transfer Risk Assessment in every case. Kenya's unitary common-law system aligns most closely with UK commercial law.

★ When to choose which

Kenya · Real-time UK collaboration, neutral English, professional services (finance, legal, data), workforce stability 

India · Large technical teams, enterprise software and AI/ML, 24/7 coverage, mature high-volume BPO 

Philippines · Mature, high-volume voice CX with US-customer affinity and night-shift operations 

South Africa · Premium UK/European voice and high-empathy CX, strongest English, best UK time-zone fit 

Many UK firms run hybrids — Kenya for UK-hours professional services and CX alongside India for scaled technical delivery — capturing each destination's strengths rather than forcing a single choice.

Choosing your outsourcing destination

Kenya outsourcing market intelligence — data, guides and comparisons for UK businesses building offshore teams.