Malaysia - Country Brief
Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) 2025
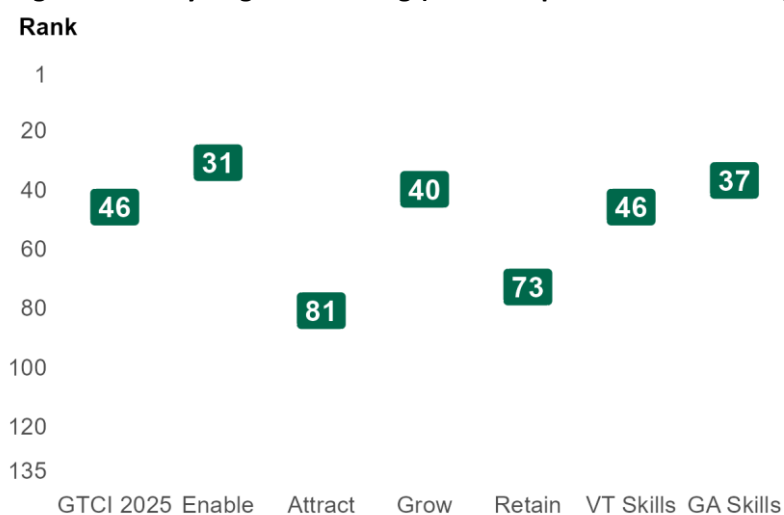
Total population:	35.56 million
GDP:	US$ 419.617 billion
GDP (PPP) per capita:	US$ 41,157
	(46 out of 135 countries)
Country income level:	Upper-middle income
GTCI 2025 ranking:	46 (out of 135)

Global GTCI position

In GTCI 2025, Malaysia is ranked 46th out of a sample of 135 countries (Figure 1). When it comes to sub-pillars, the strongest showings of Malaysia relate to Market Landscape, Lifelong Learning and Access to Growth Opportunities, among others. Still, more could be done to improve the economy's performances in the External Openness, Sustainability and Internal Openness sub-pillars.

Figure 1: Malaysia global ranking (GTCI sample of 135 countries)

Note: VT Skills = Vocational and Technical Skills; GA Skills = Generalist Adaptive Skills.

Comparison with different groups of countries

Malaysia is situated in Eastern, Southeastern Asia and Oceania and is classified as Upper-middle income. Within its region, the country is ranked 7th out of 16 countries (Table 1).

Malaysia is ranked 2nd within the group of Upper-middle income countries (implying that 94 percent of countries rank lower).

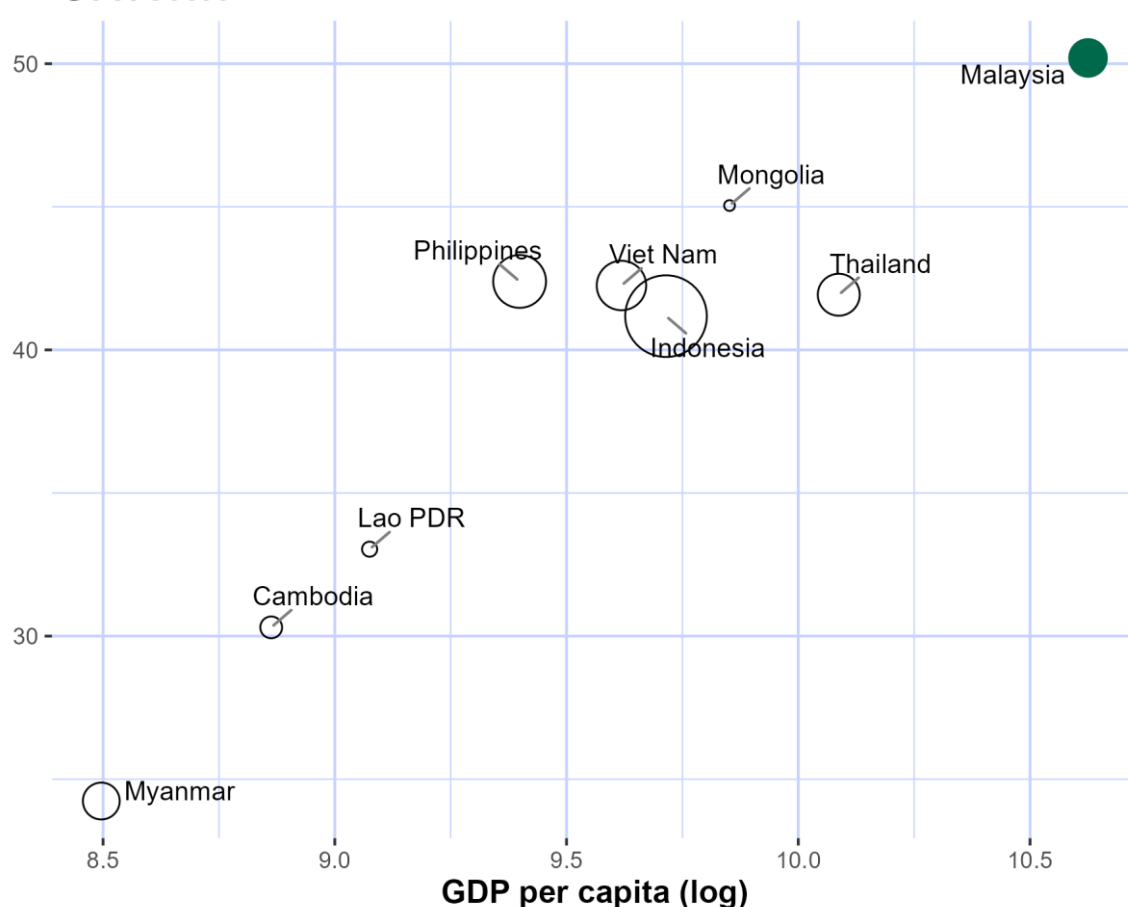**Table 1: Malaysia performance vs. income groups and regions**

Comparison group	Top 3 scorers of the group	Score GAP: Malaysia score minus group highest score	Share of countries in the group ranked below Malaysia
Region			
Central and Southern Asia	Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan	6.8	100%
Eastern, Southeastern Asia and Oceania	Singapore, Australia, New Zealand	-23.1	56%
Europe	Switzerland, Denmark, Finland	-22.9	28%
Latin America and the Caribbean	Chile, Uruguay, Costa Rica	-2.5	83%
Northern Africa and Western Asia	Israel, United Arab Emirates, Cyprus	-10.0	68%
Northern America	United States of America, Canada	-19.2	0%
Sub-Saharan Africa	Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa	0.5	100%
Income group			
High income	Singapore, Switzerland, Denmark	-23.1	15%
Upper-middle income	Georgia, Malaysia, Mauritius	-0.8	94%
Lower-middle income	Uzbekistan, Jordan, Philippines	6.8	100%
Low income	Rwanda, Malawi, Gambia	16.3	100%

Comparison with group of competitors

Malaysia's group of competitors is defined as upper-middle-income and lower-middle-income countries located in Eastern, Southeastern Asia and Oceania. It comprises a group of 9 economies. Figure 2 plots how Malaysia fares against each competitor in terms of GTCI score and GDP per capita.

As can be seen, Malaysia's GTCI score and GDP per capita are both greater than the corresponding medians of its group of competitors. Thus, the country's talent competitiveness is in line with what would be expected given its income level.

Figure 2: GTCI score and GDP per capita (log) of Malaysia and its identified competitors

Note: Bubble size indicates country population.
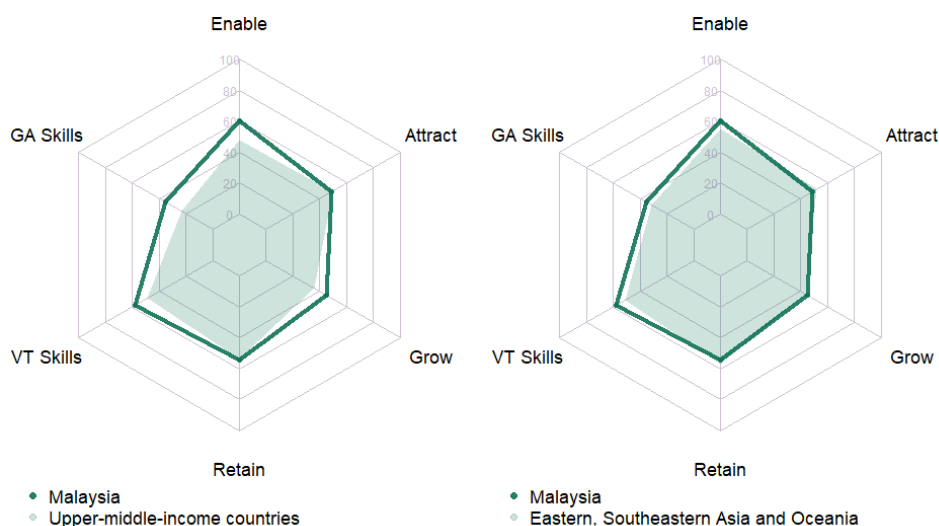

Performance against its income group and region

Upper-middle-income countries
Malaysia is ranked 2nd in the group of upper-middle-income countries (Figure 3, left panel). In terms of pillar performance, it has a higher score than the income group average in five of the six pillars: GTCI, Enable, Grow, Retain, VT and GA. At the sub-pillar level, it outperforms upper-middle-income countries in twelve of the fourteen sub-pillars: Regulatory Landscape, Market Landscape, Business Labour Landscape, External Openness, Formal Education, Lifelong Learning, Access Growth Opportunities, Lifestyle, Midlevel Skills, Employability, Highlevel Skills and Talent Impact.

Eastern, Southeastern Asia and Oceania
Malaysia is ranked 7th within Eastern, Southeastern Asia and Oceania (Figure 3, right panel). It has a score above the regional average in four of the six pillars: GTCI, Enable, Grow, VT and GA. With regard to sub-pillars, it outperforms the average in Eastern, Southeastern Asia and Oceania in ten of the fourteen sub-pillars: Regulatory Landscape, Market Landscape, Business Labour Landscape, External Openness, Lifelong Learning, Access Growth Opportunities, Lifestyle, Midlevel Skills, Highlevel Skills and Talent Impact.

Figure 3: Malaysia pillar scores vs. averages of relevant income group and region

Note: VT Skills = Vocational and Technical Skills; GA Skills = Generalist Adaptive Skills.

Longer-term trends in talent competitiveness

Across all GTCI editions from 2015 to 2025, Malaysia's ranking ranges from 26th to 46th place (see Figure 4). During GTCI 2020-GTCI 2025, Malaysia ranks 39 out of a total 134 countries (on average), which is a decline from the average rank of 29 in GTCI 2015-GTCI 2019.

Figure 4: Evolution of GTCI rank for Malaysia, 2015-2025

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