The Effect of the National Immigration System on Implementation of International Projects in Ireland

The dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of M.B.A. in Project Management at Dublin Business School

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Declaration

I, Artem Nedostup, declare that this research is my original work and that it has never been presented to any institution or university for the award of Degree or Diploma. In addition, I have referenced correctly all literature and sources used in this work and this work is fully compliant with the Dublin Business School’s academic honesty policy.

Signed: ________________________________

Date: _____20 August 2015________
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Abstract

Globalization is an interesting trend underlining the importance of Project Management in the international context. There are large numbers of projects implemented around the world that have an international component. Cheaper means of transportation opened opportunities of affordable travel for many people, while advances in communication technology allowed companies to source expertise necessary for their projects from different locations. However, international travel and employment are regulated by national governments and in many cases are subject to immigration restrictions.

The research aims to examine the Irish immigration system from the Project Management perspective. It also draws from other disciplines, such as HR Management, when exploring the international recruitment and relocation processes, and Immigration and Labour Law, when exploring entry and employment of individuals who are subject to immigration restrictions. The wide scope of literature is analysed covering topics: impact of globalization, definition and classification of international projects, international stakeholders and their project roles, international assignment types, international skill shortages, migration policy and trends in Ireland as well as in other OECD countries, European and Irish immigration law.

The primary research explores how immigration system related factors affect project outcomes. It is based on actual experience of main customers of the system: companies established in Ireland that engage non-EEA professionals and non-EEA professionals working in Ireland in various project roles. The findings are summarized and discussed within each of ten Project Management Knowledge areas. Conclusions identify gaps in the system and suggest possible solutions to problems these customers of the system regularly face.
1. **Introduction**

1.1. **Background**

In the modern world businesses and companies become increasingly multinational and deal with numerous projects on a global scale. These projects require collaboration between people from different organizations in multiple locations across national borders. Among the advantages of undertaking an international project are access to expertise, increased flexibility and productivity, larger pool of potential job candidates, better understanding of local customers’ needs, and reduced labour costs (Scott and Lock, 2013, p. 117).

Although same project management tools and techniques apply to both local and international projects, the latter are generally larger in scale, more complicated in organization, involve large capital investments and are always in the public eye. They require meticulous planning in terms of time, cost, and quality as well as effective risk management (Koster, 2009, p. 63). But apart from that, a project team competent to complete project tasks needs to be acquired, managed and developed. Members of the project team must have access to the clients, facilities, and resources necessary to perform their project roles. Engaging project team members from different countries, project managers must ensure that they have such access, which oftentimes requires international travel or relocation to a different country.

Every country has specific immigration rules governing entry, residence and work of foreign nationals on their territory. These rules can be quite restrictive, and their nature rather complex. Together with the measures national governments undertake to influence the immigration flow they constitute a national immigration system (Czaika and De Haas, 2013). The immigration system determines whether engaging foreign specialist labour is permitted and how it can be accomplished within the set regulatory framework. Compliance with the immigration rules may require additional cost and time not related to the project activities and, thus, may influence the project schedule and budget. Also, as immigration matters are particularly prone to political debate, the changes in policies need to be constantly monitored and the related risks managed.

1.2. **Irish Context**

The rapid economic growth in Ireland in the pre-crisis years was directly linked to appearance of international companies and the inflow of skilled labour. Capital investments in technology committed by the transnational corporations brought significant efficiency improvements to the
Irish economy, while migrant workers provided expertise necessary to implement such large-scale projects (Simón, 2005).

In its turn the high pace of economic growth led to major labour market shortages. While a significant number of migrant workers coming from the European Economic Area (hereafter referred to as EEA) countries are not affected by the Irish immigration restrictions, their number is insufficient to satisfy Ireland’s demand for high-skilled workers (EGFSN, 2014a). In addition, the economic downturn following the global financial crisis witnessed significant outflow of skilled labour from Ireland. Irish nationals, as they moved to other English-speaking OECD countries, constituted a substantial percentage of the labour outflow. In the post-crisis years net migration of Irish nationals was negative (Gray, 2013). These trends demonstrate that the post-crisis recovery in Ireland is dependent on supply of skilled labour.

There are two possible ways to satisfy this demand for skilled labour. One of them is utilizing the existing labour pool and meeting skills demand introducing appropriate education and vocational training programs. However, the empirical evidence suggests that skills shortages in the Irish economy persist despite the country consistently ranking among Top 10 countries in the world by quality of its education system (United Nations Development Program, 2013).

One may be tempted to put the blame on inadequate future skills needs forecasts. In the researcher’s opinion the matter is much more complex. Firstly, we should consider the high pace of technological developments – some experts believe that half of today’s jobs will be redundant in 10 years (Awford, 2014) – allowing any long-term future skills needs forecast to be at best an educated guess. Secondly, receiving a college education may take an awfully long time. It may take more than 5 years to obtain a Master’s degree in Ireland. This creates a vicious cycle, and even those graduates, who are lucky to have graduated with a degree in the field that experiences skills shortages may still be tempted (and currently are tempted, given the emigration statistics quoted above) to pursue opportunities abroad. Even if employed in Ireland, they often lack practical experience and need to start from lower-level positions. Therefore, in order to assemble highly skilled project teams in Ireland, companies must recruit skilled workers from other, including non-EEA, countries. These, particularly non-EEA, nationals will be subject to immigration restrictions. This is the juncture at which management of international projects and immigration constraints meet.

1.3. **Objective and Contribution**

From the above, it is clear that: immigration of skilled labour is crucial for Irish economic development; skill shortages cannot be covered by EEA migrants; and that non-EEA workers fall
under the immigration restrictions. It is, however, unclear how these immigration restrictions influence implementation of international projects in Ireland and the country’s international competitiveness.

The objective of the research is to thoroughly examine the Irish immigration system from the project management perspective. The research will focus on the practical implications of immigration restrictions on international projects implemented in Ireland, identify gaps between the intended policy aims and actual impact on businesses, and suggest potential areas for improvement. The research will perform cross-sectional analysis on the industries facing most acute skill shortages and engaging an international workforce to bridge these skill gaps: Information and Communication Technology (hereafter referred to as ICT) and Professional and Financial Services (hereafter referred to as PFS).

The research will be of practical use to the project management professionals managing multinational teams in Ireland with significant presence of non-EEA nationals, HR and immigration compliance professionals in the multinational organizations, immigration consultants and intermediaries. The research will provide insights on common compliance risks faced due to the immigration compliance requirements and procedures. It will provide insights to policy makers and civil servants regarding possible regulatory and process improvements. The researcher is hopeful that the research findings will provide inspiration to key business decision makers to advocate for change that would bring more flexibility to their operations, lower public cost of immigration compliance, and therefore achieve tangible efficiency gains for all parties involved. From the academic perspective, the research will contribute to the project management theory, particularly HR and Stakeholder management knowledge areas, and enrich existing immigration policy knowledge with a fresh perspective on project-based mobility in Ireland.

1.4. Research Question

The research will address the following question:

To what extent the Irish immigration system facilitates successful implementation of international projects in the country?

The subject being researched is the Irish immigration system, which includes all institutions that regulate, administer, and control the inflow of skilled labour to Ireland. The Irish immigration system will be assessed based on the practical experience of business and individual stakeholders, namely companies that engage non-EEA stakeholders to its projects and non-EEA nationals that have gone through immigration compliance procedures. International projects for the purposes of this research
are defined as projects that involve at least one non-Irish stakeholder. Examples of non-Irish stakeholders include legal entities registered or operating abroad and individuals holding any other nationality than that of the Republic of Ireland. The extent the Irish immigration system facilitates successful implementation is a subjective estimate whether the current compliance procedures act in a helpful or inhibitory manner to achieve primary project objectives – such as completion of the project within set specifications, budgets and timelines. While assessing this influence, other (supply driven) immigration systems are taken into account for the sake of comparison and practical feasibility.

The sub-questions put a spotlight on the areas vital for addressing the research objective:

- What immigration system related factors influence project outcomes and how?
- What is the relative importance of these factors against each other?
- How do these factors fit within Project Management Knowledge Areas?
- What can be done to optimize the immigration system to better serve demands of international projects?

1.5. Scope and Limitations

The research is focused on exploring the effectiveness of the Irish immigration system from the project management perspective. This perspective is thoroughly practical and does not cover deep legal analysis. Only a basic legal review is performed to better understand the regulatory process and key decision makers involved, policy objectives and legal foundations for administrative schemes.

The research is concerned about implementation of international commercial projects, and so only deals with inbound movement of people to Ireland to pursue business and project related activities. The research does not cover relocation of individuals solely aimed at receiving residency and citizenship in Ireland, such as relocation of High Net Worth individuals from non-EEA countries through property investment schemes. The research also does not cover asylum seekers, visitors, tourists, and other individuals that come to Ireland with a purpose other than to pursue a business activity in the state. The research also does not explore social protection and opportunities to obtain permanent residence and citizenship for non-EEA workers engaged in an economic activity in Ireland.

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1 Project Management Knowledge Area is one of the areas defined by Project Management knowledge requirements and described in terms of its component processes, practices, inputs, outputs, tools and techniques. According to PMBOK (PMI, 2013, p. 61), there are 10 Project Management knowledge areas: Project Integration Management, Project Scope Management, Project Time Management, Project Cost Management, Project Quality Management, Project Human Resource Management, Project Communications Management, Project Risk Management, Project Procurement Management, and Project Stakeholder Management.
The research, although backed up by data, mainly estimates the perceptual effectiveness of the Irish immigration system. The perceptual effectiveness for the purposes of this research is a subjective assessment provided by the customers of the system as opposed to actual effectiveness that would also include comprehensive analysis of legislature, the immigration bodies’ administrative processes and performance indicators. The customers of immigration services can be corporate (i.e. businesses bringing in non-EEA nationals to Ireland) and individual (people who fall under immigration restrictions and have experience interacting with the Irish immigration authorities in this regard). It is worth noticing that opinions of individual customers who come to Ireland due to reasons other than to pursue an economic activity (i.e. asylum seekers, dependent family members, etc.) are not considered for the purposes of this research. The research also performs high-level analysis of immigration processes and suggests optimizing solutions. However, opinion from the immigration authorities is not facilitated for these purposes. Partly, due to restricted data disclosure policies in the governmental institutions, but mainly to preserve independence of conclusions from the current state of affairs and represent business requirements which will bring a positive change in the system.

1.6. **Dissertation Roadmap**

The dissertation is organized into 6 chapters:

**Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter gives a general background and introduces the main objectives of the research. It introduces and explains the research question and its usefulness, outlines what the reader should expect from each chapter, and provides the motivation of the author.

**Chapter 2: Literature Review**

In this chapter, various concepts related to the implementation of international projects are discussed, such as globalization, types and stakeholders of international projects, policy impact, immigration in the developed countries, and labour migration and immigration policy in Ireland. This chapter also contextualizes the research in the existing literature.

**Chapter 3: Methodology**

This chapter presents the method used to perform the primary data collection, process and analysis of findings, and to answer the research question. The chapter also includes arguments for using this method rather than any alternatives.
Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter outlines the main findings of the primary research. The chapter aims to disclose the findings without changing the structure of the obtained information. General conclusions are not drawn from findings in this chapter, but are presented in the following one.

Chapter 5: Project Management Implications

This chapter summarizes the findings, reorganizes and discusses them within Project Management Knowledge areas. The aim of this chapter is not to re-iterate findings listed in the previous chapters, but to analyse them from the project management perspective. Therefore, it will include a detailed commentary of findings extended with insights drawn from the literature review.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

In this chapter findings are summarized and general conclusions that answer the research question are presented. It also lists recommendations for potential improvement of the Irish immigration system.

1.7. Motivation

“Because of modern technological evolution and our global economy, our world has greatly changed: it has become much smaller. However, our perceptions have not evolved at the same pace; we continue to cling to old national demarcations and the old feelings of ‘us’ and ‘them’. ” – Dalai Lama

What is the main purpose of the immigration system? In politically correct terms, it is to prevent erosion of the national welfare. In more ‘earthy’ language, it is simply to stop undesirable people from entering and staying in the country. What about people for whom clearly there is a demand within the system? Sometimes they are the ones who are bearing the full compliance burden as they go through the system as opposed to those sifted out in the early stages.

Working on a number of global immigration projects, I heard many stories about project team members relocating despite rather than because of the host country’s immigration restrictions. At the same time, there is a multitude of papers about global competitiveness and skills shortages. This paradox always fascinated me, as did pro and anti-immigration sentiment evolving around them and often spurring fierce political debates.

Ireland, being probably the biggest European technological hub, especially fascinated me. The country’s economy is export-dependent and, therefore, is particularly prone to the globalization process. The country’s strategic approach is to welcome foreign investment and international projects. Walking in the streets of Dublin, one can feel how multicultural Irish society is. Even the
results of this year’s referendum demonstrated perceptual shift from Catholic conservatism to acceptance and non-discrimination. What about the Irish immigration system?

As a non-EEA national, I encountered the Irish immigration system while preparing my entrance and residence documents needed for completion of my MBA degree in Project Management. I wondered what challenges Irish companies face while bringing people from other countries here, particularly those who fall under immigration restrictions. When the opportunity came to select my dissertation topic, I did not think twice and continued with my original idea. I sincerely hope this research brings some original insights and inspires positive change in the field of project-based international relocation of people to Ireland.
2. Literature Review

2.1. Literature Introduction

This section analyses macroeconomic developments underpinning growing importance of project management in the international context. It evaluates definitions of international projects given by different authors and investigates main challenges these projects face. The challenges are then linked with human actors. International mobility of persons is described from both economic and migration policy points of view. Migration systems of OECD countries and Ireland in particular are examined as well as different cross-border relocation schemes. The information from this section forms a basis for primary data collection and its further analysis.

While a significant body of research looks into international projects, human resource management, and immigration, none of the studies attempts to bring these areas together. Studies covering international projects either seek causes and effects of their evolvement or analyse particular projects. Few authors cover relocation management in the HR-related literature. Such project management knowledge areas as stakeholder management and HR management are virtually non-existent in the current research, with only a few exceptions. Plenty of academic articles analyse effects of immigration in the EU and OECD countries, but only a few provide the structural analysis of the immigration policy. Even fewer consider the Irish immigration system. Those that do, focus on the economic and social trends rather than cause and effect relationship between the immigration system and labour mobility. Neither do they suggest tangible improvements. None of the studies consider the immigration system from the project management point of view.

2.2. Project Management in the International Context

Project Management gains importance in line with globalization and growing international competition. There are several developments that support this argument. Firstly, emerging markets have surpassed the developed world in terms of goods and services produced. They already contribute more than a half of the world’s GDP and continuously gain economic significance (The Economist, 2013). Secondly, heightened international competition touches upon both resource-based and knowledge-based industries. Businesses that are able to innovate and bring their products to market faster reap greater benefits. Lastly, the nature of modern products and services is much more technical and complex while resource constraints become even more stringent. To cope with these challenges, many organizations leverage their capabilities on a global scale implementing a range of international projects (Knutson, 2001, p. 575).
Modern-day globalization features mass migration of workers and employers. Transnational corporations expand their business operations internationally to reduce costs and create new markets for their products (Barak, 2013, p. 286). Recent trends show that FDI levels rebounded after the economic crisis. While emerging Asian markets secured the highest investment inflows, 45% of executives globally see Europe as the primary destination for investment. The services sector now draws in more than two thirds of FDI projects to Europe with ICT at the forefront of its attractiveness (EY, 2014).

International projects became ubiquitous due to lower cost and higher capacity of transportation and enhanced communication technologies (Nicholas and Steyn, 2008, p. 628). Since the beginning of the millennium the annual number of air passengers almost doubled, while the annual container port traffic almost tripled (see Figure 1). Over a billion people acquired access to the Internet. These advances enabled companies to seek customers and establish divisions overseas, build partnerships with foreign companies or outsource parts of their operations to locations that offered cheaper labour (Fuller et al., 2010, p. 99).

![Figure 1: Passenger Air Transport and Container Port Traffic (The World Bank, 2015)](image)

As Koster (2009, p. 12) simply puts, international projects are projects that extend beyond national boundaries. Other authors elaborate that these projects: aim at optimizing outcomes by combining scarce resources through different means of international organization; require collaboration between people from different functions, cultures, and locations; unite people possessing specialized knowledge around solving a strategic task in the international context. Thus, advantages of international projects include resource and cost optimization, broader access to specialist
expertise, higher flexibility and productivity, and more sophisticated market and customer intelligence (Anantatmula and Thomas, 2010; Scott and Lock, 2013, p. 117; Scott et al., 2011, p. 17).

Although the same project management tools apply to both domestic and international projects, the latter due to their complexity require more effort from Project Managers. The coexistence of national cultures, physical distance, and divergence in economic, social, and political trends are but a few common challenges that affect success of an international project (Kealey et al., 2006). Many uncertainties that are intrinsic to international projects emphasize the need for adequate risk assessment, which involves analysis of historical information and experience of stakeholders involved (Al-Tabtabai, 2000).

2.3. The Human Dimension of International Projects

Projects are perceived as successful not only when they meet their objectives and performance specifications but also where key stakeholders are satisfied with project outcomes (Baker et al., 1997, p. 902). Projects can encounter a variety of problems due to the fact that their stakeholders have naturally divergent interests. In international projects these issues go one step further as the stakeholders are not confined to one country (Nicholas and Steyn, 2008, p. 628).

Stakeholders of an international project typically include customers, a project sponsor, a project manager, project team members, suppliers and contractors, regulators, and pressure groups. The customers demand that the project delivers high quality products or services at a low cost and within short timeframes and that the project manager pays prompt attention to their needs. The regulators control the project behaviour against the local norms, compliance with which can impose time, cost, and resource constraints on the project. The sponsor is mainly interested in the project’s achievement of its strategic objectives and pressures to reduce indirect costs. The suppliers are interested in beneficial and sustainable relationships with the project organization and often follow their key clients internationally. The project team members seem to consider international experience as a challenge but also enhancing for their professional careers. The civil and political groups influencing international projects are more concerned about international movement of labour and capital. These diverging interests complicated by the international context request maximum operational flexibility and resource optimization from the project manager (Czaika and De Haas, 2013; Kini, 2000; Sparrow et al., 2004, p. 130).

People determine success or failure of international projects and people get projects done, so managing people is right at the heart of Project Management (Nokes, 2008, p. 233). Project HR Management covers the processes that organize, manage, and lead the project team. HR planning
identifies and documents project roles, responsibilities, required skills and reporting relationships and creates a staffing management plan. The staffing plan outlines how the team members will be acquired, developed, managed, and released as well as how compliance with people-related government regulations will be ensured and potential risks addressed (PMI, 2013, p. 255).

Staff selection and acquisition are highly important for winning and delivering the project. The track record of nominated project team members can be more important than that of organization. Naming people in bids and contracts actually locks the project into using them, which increases people-related risk (Welch et al., 2008). Considering specific needs of the project, project teams can be co-located or work remotely forming virtual teams. While the use of virtual teams gained popularity with the development of communication technologies, they cannot completely replace physical co-location (Schwalbe, 2013, p. 64). Co-location increases the potential quality of the team’s work offering better coordination as well as greater networking and learning opportunities. Professional expatriates bring a vast experience to an international project team in a technical, cultural, managerial, and environmental sense (Turner, 2014, p. 391).

It is often challenging to find people with relevant international experience to work on the project team (Fuller et al., 2010, p. 99). Transnational corporations use their internal human resources across the geographies, rotate people to different locations to develop necessary skills, and recruit from external geographies. Main forms of sending people abroad to work on international projects include localizations, assignments, and business trips. Localizations imply relocation to another country permanently and cover family relocation. Assignments have fixed durations from several months to several years. They may or may not cover family relocation. Business trips are short-term and imply international commuting of a team member to the place of the project establishment. Separate legal entities can be set up for strategic projects or to establish presence in a country (Bonifazi, 2008, p. 19; Sparrow et al., 2004, p. 130).

2.4. The Impact of Immigration Policies on Project-Based Labour Mobility

International projects can have many forms based on location of the key stakeholders: project sponsor, project manager, and project customer (Turner, 2014, p. 391). Table 1 summarizes forms of international projects for a simplistic case where there are only 3 countries involved (A, B, and C), and where each stakeholder only operates in one country.
Table 1: Classification of Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Project</th>
<th>Location of Project Operations</th>
<th>Location of Project Sponsor</th>
<th>Location of Customer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Domestic projects (Type 1) can gain international dimension by involving foreign contractors or hiring expatriate project team members (Larson, 2010, p. 532). Other types of international projects may also need to engage foreign suppliers and expertise to better serve its customer or sponsor. Moreover, the project sponsor and customer may need to visit the country of project operations. Because international projects bring together participants from different countries, they are exposed to government laws and policies regulating migration (Javernick-Wil and Scott, 2010).

There is a complex interplay between migration and wider policy areas, such as trade, welfare, labour market and economic development (Iosifides, 2008). From the economic point of view, immigration serves the needs of the economy, specifically the needs of employers, and thus benefits society as a whole. The movement of goods, services, capital, resources, and ideas is essential to the economic modernization of a country. Economists argue that markets work to reallocate resources where they are the most productive, and immigration is an essential element in that market process. Thus, the restrictive immigration policy can create systematic market inefficiencies (Hall et al., 2012).

However, most developed countries have rather more restrictive than open immigration policies. This reflects the perceived negative effect of immigration on the destination country welfare. The reason is that along with positive outcomes migration is also able to generate negative externalities. These externalities may reduce efficiency gains from immigration and alter the distribution of income among individuals and groups in destination areas (McConnell et al., 2009, p. 275). Some evidence suggests that inflow of migrant workers, though increasing the size of the economy, does not reduce income disparities between workers and capital owners (Ortega and Peri, 2009). Still, a growing economy increases employment rates, which seems to be a plausible policy objective. Empirical studies support neither proponents nor antagonists of immigration, as they demonstrate significant cross-country variations. These studies also show that immigration can be an effective cure for reducing the domestic education-occupation mismatch (Kohler, 2014, p. 335; Tani, 2012). In the present-day world, education-occupation mismatches are especially pronounced in the technological sectors putting a premium on skilled workers, such as IT professionals and engineers (Skrentny, 2013).
Scott (2011, p. 84) suggests that institutional differences will continue to be salient and globalization has limited effect on flattening these entry barriers. Anantatmula and Thomas (2010) confirm this suggestion showcasing that legal and political factors have strong influence on project success, even more so for people-intensive industries, such as IT. Project managers should identify and adhere to the constraints imposed by national laws. Qualified assistance is often required, which comes at a cost to the project (Larson, 2010, p. 532). The whole migration industry has been formed by immigration and labour lawyers, consultants, recruiters and other intermediaries. The phenomenon of intermediarization illustrates the overall complexity of the immigration systems (Czaika and De Haas, 2013).

From the Project Management perspective a desirable immigration system calls to mind the one described by Anderson (2012) where highly skilled foreign nationals can be hired and localized with their families, lower skill individuals can be brought to fill temporary shortages, foreign entrepreneurs can easily establish business, and business visitors can come freely – all that in the shortest possible time and the lowest possible cost. While it sounds rather utopic, much can be achieved by developing a clear migration framework, assembling an appropriate policy toolbox, establishing a dynamic approach to migration management, modernizing service infrastructure (OECD, 2014a) and providing remedies regarding the refusal decisions in the immigration area (Boeles, 2005).

### 2.5. Labour Migration Policy in the Developed Countries

Migration holds a huge potential for macroeconomic efficiency gains. Increasing the immigrant share in the developed countries’ labour force from 6.0% to 8.8% by 2025 is estimated to boost real income by 0.64% of the world's GNP (Kohler, 2014, p. 373). Although unemployment remains high in OECD countries, migration still plays an important role in meeting labour market needs and in driving economic growth. Around a third of the world’s 86 million migrant workers reside in Europe. These include nationals of other EU countries or third country nationals (TCNs) coming from outside of the EU (Boswell and Geddes, 2011, p. 76). Even over the period 2007-2012 hit by the recession, more than 1.2 million TCNs came to the EU every year. This number is larger than the equivalent for the US (OECD, 2014a).

Most OECD countries expect growing shortages of highly-skilled labour in the coming two decades, and immigration is viewed as one way of addressing them. Considering that the challenges OECD countries face are quite similar, they are expected to compete more rigorously over the skilled talent. Immigrants are categorized by the education level or annual wage stated in the employment offer. Those who possess tertiary qualifications or exceed a specific salary threshold are considered
highly skilled (Chaloff and Lemaître, 2009). Geographically, the growth of high-skilled migrants is driven by migrants from Asia, Africa and Latin America, who due to their nationality typically lack rights to free movement and fall under the immigration restrictions in most OECD countries (Arslan et al., 2015).

From the migration policy perspective, there are two systems for recruiting skilled workers from abroad: demand-driven and supply-driven. The demand-driven system requires employers to submit their request to the authority granting the employment permit. The protection of the domestic workforce is ensured by means of the employment market test and the occupation shortage list. The worker’s entry and residency rights are later obtained on the basis of the employment permit. Most high-skilled migration in Europe, Japan and Korea is demand-driven. The other, supply-driven, approach involves inviting potential migrants to apply directly without first ensuring employment. The selection is carried out on the basis of certain characteristics (e.g. age, educational attainment, language proficiency and occupation). The points are assigned based on how desirable the applicant is according to each characteristic. Candidates having more than a threshold level of points are then granted the right to establish residence and seek employment. The supply-driven type is used in the UK, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, the US, and Denmark (Chaloff and Lemaître, 2009). To support their policy choices, more countries are turning to expert commissions. These commissions assess migration and labour market data and provide recommendations on the quality and composition of migration flow and the status of migrants (Martin and Stark, 2014).

Immigration policies in the developed countries encourage stay of foreign entrepreneurs and investors in a country. These admission policies are designed to select those entrepreneurs whose human and financial capital and business projects are likely to meet the country’s economic needs and ensure the success of their businesses. However, current data suggests that migrant entrepreneurs accepted through these programs represent only a small fraction of all migrant entrepreneurs in OECD countries. Most of them enter OECD countries through other channels. This suggests that the policies may not fully serve their original purpose being too restrictive or overly complex (OECD, 2012).

The EU law provides citizens of its Member States with the right to move, reside, work as an employee or contractor, or establish business within the EU. These freedoms also apply to nationals of EFTA countries – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. No coherent body of international law governing treatment of third country nationals (TCNs), citizens of countries not mentioned previously in this paragraph, has been developed. This area is governed by national law, and TCNs are subject to national immigration restrictions. However, spouses and dependents of EU
and EFTA citizens enjoy similar derivative rights as their EU and EFTA family members and can accompany them practically unrestricted (Davies, 2013, p. 140).

The EU has become more involved in immigration policy decisions. The Schengen Agreement regulates and coordinates immigration and border policies among most EU and EFTA countries. It aims at harmonization of entry and short-term stays by non-EU citizens. While it provides flexibility to travel within signatory EU and EFTA countries passing a border control only once, it toughened migration requirements for non-EU migrants. The stricter requirements increased costs of immigration and negatively affected immigration flow from outside of the EU. The EU introduced the Blue Card in line with its attempts to harmonize TCNs’ labour migration across the member states. The Blue Card allows high-skilled TCNs with a job offer to work in an EU country for a maximum of four years and relocate to another EU country after 18 months. Ireland and the UK opted out of both the Schengen Agreement and the Blue Card Directive (Cerna, 2013; Ortega and Peri, 2012).

2.6. Migration Trends in Ireland

Some researchers (Simon, 2005) consider the pre-crisis inflow of skilled labour instrumental to Ireland’s rapid development, as it provided necessary expertise and brought significant efficiency improvements. Others (Fanning, 2010; Wickham and Bruff, 2008) point out that Ireland has become too radically open to migration in both directions and become dependent on migrant labour. The economic downturn following the global financial crisis witnessed a significant outflow of skilled labour from Ireland (see Figure 2). The net migration indicators are forecasted to stay negative meaning that natural change will be the sole contributor to the population growth in the nearest future (Euromonitor International, 2013). Irish nationals, as they moved to other OECD countries, constituted a substantial percentage of the labour outflow (Gray, 2013). Large and widening economic gaps within the Eurozone are expected to contribute to further emigration from Ireland (Jauer et al., 2014).
The Irish GDP showed a 4.8% increase in 2014, well ahead of other EU countries. The unemployment rate is expected to fall below 10% in 2015 (European Commission, 2015). There has been growth in Ireland’s export position, with services having a strong share in it (Euromonitor International, 2015). There is a consensus that Ireland’s economic recovery will be export-led, which requires enterprises to embrace innovation, enhance productivity, and improve competitiveness. To achieve this, international expertise will be essential, especially considering the fact that 85% of the total exports come from foreign owned companies (EGFSN, 2012).

Skills shortages currently exist in several sectors of the Irish economy. A number of vacancies became much more difficult to fill, among them professional posts in ICT, engineering, science, health, and business as well as multilingual sales and customer care roles. Employment permits are intended to meet the demand for these skills not currently met from within the EEA (EGFSN, 2014a). The number of new permits has increased significantly in recent years, with a year-on-year increase of 18% since 2012. In 2013 approximately 3,000 new employment permits were issued, over a half of them to the ICT and another 19% to professional and financial services sectors (EGFSN, 2014b).

The ICT sector is of vital strategic importance to Ireland, both in terms of the numbers of high skilled professionals employed and its contribution to export performance. The global demand for ICT talent is expected to rise – the EEA is estimated to be some 864,000 positions short of these professionals in 2015. Ireland is likely to face a 5% annual increase in demand for high-level ICT skills up to 2018 with the total number of openings exceeding 44,000. The immigration policy priorities for the ICT sector includes increasing efficiency in the employment permits process, attracting highly
skilled individuals and introducing new legislation and associated enhancements to the application process (DOE and DJEI, 2014).

Ireland has been rather successful at attracting foreign investment to knowledge-based and high technology sectors (Euromonitor International, 2014). Its labour market has been instrumental to this aim. The Global Competitiveness Report (2014) ranks Ireland #18 in the Labour Market Efficiency Index, but only #40 for its hiring and firing practices. 24% of Irish companies are seeking candidates from abroad. However, this percentage is three times as high for large organizations (Gunnigle et al., 2011, p. 73). Given that immigration compliance is an important part of the international hiring practice, optimization in this area may increase Ireland’s overall competitiveness. This is especially important considering that its largest talent competitors – the US, Canada, the UK, and Australia – are all characterized by proactive skilled migration programs (Chaloff and Lemaitre, 2009).

2.7. **Irish Immigration System**

The National Economic and Social Council (2006) describes the Irish Naturalization and Immigration Service, an executive office within the Department of Justice and Equality, as a central institution in the Irish immigration system. It is responsible for: asylum, visa, immigration and citizenship processing; asylum and immigration policy; immigrant reception, integration and repatriation. The INIS maintains links with the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation responsible for labour migration policy and work permit processing and the Garda National Immigration Bureau responsible for immigration control. The Expert Group on Future Skill Needs is an advisory body that provides the DJEI with the information on current and future skills needs of the economy and on other labour market issues that impact Ireland’s economic growth.

For the purposes of undertaking or participating in international projects TCNs may enter Ireland through several ways described in Table 2.
There is a great deal of law in place governing the position of foreign nationals working in Ireland. Sources of this law are both national and supranational. Supranational law includes laws and regulations, which regulate movement of EU and EEA nationals within EU and EEA member countries. National law is adopted exclusively by Irish lawmakers and regulates entry, residence and employment of non-EEA nationals who are not family members of EEA nationals (Cox et al., 2009, p. 163).

EU law ensures ability of EU nationals to freely enter, settle, and seek employment in Ireland. These rights also extend to nationals of EEA countries not part of the EU. Unrestricted ability to freely enter, settle, and seek employment in Ireland implies that these nationals do not need to obtain entry visas, residence and employment permissions for themselves and their close family members. Close family members typically include a spouse, dependent children and parents. It is worth noticing that EU law prevents countries from imposing income thresholds for European workers above the certain level that would qualify their family members for basic income support (Your Europe, 2015).

Non-EEA nationals are required to hold a valid employment permit to be directly employed in Ireland or to perform duties in Ireland while being employed outside of Ireland. The employment permissions in Ireland are derived from two parent statutes – the Employment Permits Acts 2003 and 2006 (Cox et al., 2009) – and Employment Permits Amendment Act 2014 (DJEI Labour Force Development, 2014). The key decision maker in this field is the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (successor of the former Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment).
Minister is permitted to make regulations considering skills needed for economic and social development, economic sectors involved in such development and skill shortages. The Minister is entitled to make regulations covering procedural requirements and the following conditions for the grant of an employment permit (Cox et al., 2009, p. 165):

- categories of employment that may or may not be subject of the grant of an employment period (currently present in form of Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations List and Ineligible Categories of Employments for Employment Permits – see Annexes);
- maximum number of employment permits that may be granted within a particular period of time (quotas, if present, are not made public; however, there is a requirement that at least 50% of current employees within the employing entity are EEA nationals);
- minimum qualification requirements a foreign national is required to possess to be eligible for employment permit (currently qualifications needed for employment and those advertised during the Labour Market Test, if it is required);
- minimum salary level that shall be payable as a condition for the grant of an employment permit (currently the threshold of EUR 30,000 per annum is established).

An application for an Employment Permit can be made either by a person proposing to employ a foreign national or by the individual seeking employment in Ireland. If the application is made by the individual, they must hold an offer of employment. The employing entity is required to go through the Labour Market Test, with the exception of positions listed on the Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations List, before the Employment Permit application is submitted. The Labour Market Test requires the vacancy to be advertised for at least two weeks with the Department of Social Protection Employment Services and European Job Mobility Portal migration network, and for 3 days in a national newspaper and in the local newspaper or job portal.

The work permit application fees are around EUR 1,000 for up to 2 years’ duration. The current processing times vary slightly among the work permit categories and take up to a month. Spouses and dependents of Critical Skills Employment Permit holders can apply for the work permit free of charge and are subject to salary or occupation eligibility conditions. The Business Permission does not require a fee, while processing fees for other business setup permits are lower than those for work permit application. However, they require significant capital investment or are limited to certain areas (DJEI, 2015).

The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation currently operates the issue of employment permits through a number of schemes. The schemes are a practical application of the ministerial discretion and are outlined in Table 2.

In addition to the mentioned schemes, there is also a separate setup for non-EEA graduates to remain in Ireland for up to 1 year upon successful completion of their third-level degree to seek employment and applying for mentioned Employment Permits.
To enter Ireland, TCNs need a visa. The short-term visa has to be obtained for the business trip arrangement and the long-term one on the basis of the business or employment permit for other relocation types (see Table 2). The visas cannot be applied for until 3 months before the planned entry, and the processing time should take no more than 8 weeks. The multiple-entry visa fee is EUR 100. If the planned stay in Ireland exceeds 3 months, TNCs must obtain a valid registration certificate in the form of a GNIB Card. The fee for this card is EUR 300, and it can usually be obtained within a working day, if all documents necessary for the application are available (GNIB, 2015; INIS, 2015).

2.8. Literature Conclusion

The growing number of international projects goes in hand with globalization. They became ubiquitous due to lower cost and higher capacity of air and sea transportation and enhanced communication technologies.

Simply put, international projects are projects that extend beyond national boundaries. They involve stakeholders from different countries who have divergent interests. These people determine success and failure of the project. The project team composition is very important for winning and delivering the project. The team can be co-located or work remotely. Co-location is often the primary choice due to its better flexibility, coordination, learning and networking opportunities. Schemes to deploy people abroad include localizations, assignments, and business trips. People can also be relocated to establish a new business entity. Different types of international projects require different relocation needs for its stakeholders.

There is a wide interplay between immigration and other policy areas. Effects of immigration vary from country to country. Developed countries face skill shortages and encourage inflow of skilled migrants and entrepreneurs. Migration of EU and EFTA nationals is virtually unrestricted within these countries. Most high skilled workers come from third countries and are subject to immigration restrictions.

Ireland has a negative net migration, and this trend is expected to continue. There is a consensus that the Irish economic recovery will be export led and will depend heavily on the ICT sector. Demand for skilled workers in the ICT and PFS sectors are the largest and cannot be satisfied locally. Ireland has an elaborate immigration system with several types of business and employment permissions. Except for the business trip arrangement, entry visas and residence permissions are obtained after the respective permit is granted.
3. Methodology

3.1. Methodology Introduction
The research will be based on the pragmatic philosophy. It will use a deductive research approach. The survey strategy utilizing structured interviews as the data collection technique is selected. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected and analysed. The sample consists of representatives of 2 ICT and 2 PFS companies as well as 3 individuals employed on Employment Permits in these sectors. One interview with each Employment Permit holder and each company’s representative responsible for managing international projects or immigration compliance will be carried out. The variety of generic and approach-specific data analysis tools will be used. The ethical considerations cover strategies that can be used to mitigate negative consequences of ethical issues. Several research limitations are considered, but none of them fundamentally questions the overall validity of the research.

3.2. Research Design

3.2.1. Research Philosophy
There are two main research philosophies that this research can be based on: pragmatism and interpretivism. The pragmatic philosophy suggests that practical consequences are of central importance to the meaning of an idea, while interpretivism advocates the necessity of understanding views of human actors as they have their own set of meanings (Saunders, 2012, p. 130,137). The project management discipline is largely about practical problem solving (Fisher, 2011). As research aims to investigate practical implications of the Irish immigration system on implementation of international projects, the pragmatic philosophy will be adopted. The chosen philosophy also allows for the use of multiple views and methods in answering the research question. The research plans to utilize both objective and subjective points of view employing the mix of quantitative and qualitative methods.

3.2.2. Research Approach
The chosen research approach is deduction, as characteristics mentioned in this paragraph unequivocally point to it. Firstly, the research clearly sets one question and four sub-questions. The question implies that the immigration system affects implementation of international projects. This understanding comes from the existing academic literature. Secondly, a structured methodology is used that seeks to test the theory within the Irish context. The research seeks to explain causal relationships between two sets of variables, namely immigration system related factors and project
outcomes. Important characteristics of deduction are that concepts need to be operationalized in a way that enables them to be measured and results are generalized (Saunders, 2012, p. 146). Using qualitative and quantitative data, the research will differentiate factors that affect project outcomes and measure their influence based on the expert judgment of the interviewees as well as based on the objective data, such as costs and rejections per application to the immigration authorities. Finally, the results will be generalized to ICT and PFS industries and the overall conclusion regarding the Irish immigration system will be drawn from them.

3.2.3. Research Strategy

The selected strategy for carrying out the research is survey. The chosen topic requires exploratory and descriptive research, collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, and use of descriptive statistics. The survey strategy is one of the most common strategies in business and management research and can cater for these requirements (Saunders, 2012, p. 176). The qualitative data will include open-ended questions about immigration system related factors influencing project outcomes and their importance, alignment of the immigration policy objectives and business needs, effectiveness of implementation of immigration rules in practice, problems businesses face and suggestions for improvement. The quantitative data will include company-specific information, such as a number of active international projects, percentage of TCNs in the workforce, number of work permit applications and rejections per annum to support the qualitative data. The quantitative element is also collected to allow for comparison between the ITC and PFS sectors.

3.2.4. Sampling - Selecting Respondents

The research will use non-probability sampling, as the sampling frame cannot be clearly established due to uneven distribution of potential immigration system influences on different organizations undertaking international projects. The most informative cases need to be selected for the research, and purposive sampling suits this aim best. Particularly, critical case sampling is used to pick representatives “on the basis that they can make a point dramatically or because they are important” (Saunders, 2012, p. 288).

Both employers engaging non-EEA specialists and employees working on Employment Permits in Ireland will be interviewed.

The following criteria will be used for selecting sample company representatives:

(A) Companies within industries with the largest need for immigrant labour in Ireland (EGFSN, 2014a): ICT and PFS; and
(B) That acquired the largest number of work permits in 2014 (DJEI, 2014).
Practically, the selection process will include primary selection covering 10 ICT and 10 PFS companies, to whom the invitations to take part in the research will be sent, and secondary selection covering 2 ICT and 2 PFS companies who first respond to invitations. The primary selection will be determined in the following way:

1. The companies will be sorted by the number of work permit obtained in 2014 with largest recipients at the top of the list (criterion B).
2. The top of the list company will be checked on criterion A.
3. If the criterion A is satisfied, the company will be added to the sample; otherwise, it will be removed from the list.
4. The steps 2 and 3 are repeated until 10 ICT and 10 PFS companies are selected.

The report identifying skill gaps in ICT and PFS industries (EGFSN, 2014a) does not provide any specific definitions or listings of companies classified into these categories. To understand whether each company listed correspond to the criterion A, these industries need to be clearly defined for the purposes of this dissertation and any overlap between them eliminated.

According to the Enterprise Europe Network (2013), ICT covers both the production of physical products that process or communicate information and services or applications that enable the function of information processing and communication. The company will be classified as ICT if its primary activities include any of the following, given that they satisfy the purpose of information processing and communication: developing hardware and software, operating or integrating systems, storing and supplying data, producing devices and digital content.

PFS encompasses both Financial and Professional Services organizations. Financial Services include banking, savings, investment, insurance, debt and equity areas (Sutton and Jenkins, 2007). Professional Services provide business support and specialist advice to businesses in all sectors. This includes business and managerial consultancy, tax advice, accounting and due diligence services as well as legal support (PwC, 2015). The company will be classified as PFS if its primary activities include any of those listed in this paragraph. Companies whose sole business is in ICT consultancy and outsourcing services will be excluded from the selection to avoid misinterpretation in the cross-sector comparison.

In addition, 3 non-EEA individuals working on Employment Permits in Ireland that comply with the criterion A will be selected for interviews. To engage participants, the advertisement will be posted in DBS and on social networks, and the first 3 individuals who respond to the invitation will be interviewed.
3.3. Data Collection Instruments

The research will be carried out by means of conducting interviews with people responsible for immigration compliance in organizations. The contact with high-level positions, such as Project Managers and HR Managers, will be sought first, as they can offer the strategic insight to the immigration process. However, if the compliance control is to a large degree delegated to HR Officers or Immigration Compliance Specialists, the interview will be conducted with them.

Seven individual interviews will be conducted – one per each company representative for corporate respondents and one per each Employment Permit holder for individual respondents. Interview as a data collection technique is selected due to necessity to establish rapport with interviewees and obtain their insights to refine research ideas (Saunders, 2012, p. 372). To optimally use scarce interviewing time, interviews will be structured, but interviewees will be encouraged to share their vision and opinions. To better accommodate interviewees, they will be suggested one of the following interview forms: face-to-face interview, phone interview, email interview, and audio recording of responses to interview questions. Open-ended and follow-up questions will be incorporated to carry out in-depth investigation of the topic, where possible (i.e. where respondents prefer face-to-face or phone interviews). Some quantitative data supporting the arguments will also be collected or requested during the interview. All interviewees will be asked similar question to allow for cross-industry comparison. The contacting strategy is outlined in Table 3. The interviews will be audio recorded, except when the responses are provided in writing, provided that the permission is granted by the interviewee. The results will be recorded in writing as interview notes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>C1: email address</th>
<th>C2: phone number</th>
<th>Contacting strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Contact via C1 and follow-up via C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Contact and follow-up via C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Contact via C2 and ask for C1 to follow up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Visit physical premises to see if it is possible to obtain C1 or C2 contacts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4. Data Analysis Procedures

Data reduction techniques will be applied to the collected qualitative data, which will include “summarizing and simplifying the data collected or selectively focusing on some parts of this data” (Saunders, 2012, p. 564). The reduced data then will be rearranged into categories developed from project management knowledge areas and insights contributed by the interviewees. These categories then will be analysed separately and in relation to each other. Some qualitative data may be quantified to provide for better cross-sector comparison. The deductive approach to qualitative
data analysis will be used. Particularly, pattern matching will be used based on the existing research to explain what the data analysis is expected to reveal.

The quantitative data analysis has a rather complementary character for the purposes of this research. It will be used to quantify some qualitative data, provide supporting evidence, and allow for cross-sector analysis. Microsoft Excel tools, such as charts and tables, will be used to perform this type of analysis.

3.5. Research Ethics

Ethics is now an imperative for conducting effective and meaningful research. Ethical concerns can put the research in a negative light. Therefore, it is important to ensure that individual researchers behave ethically (Drew et al., 2007, p. 56). There are several ethical issues the research may come across. Table 4 presents them along with strategies that can be used to mitigate negative consequences of these issues.

Table 4: Ethical Considerations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Considerations</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The company representatives may not respond to researcher’s requests to provide information | • Gently remind via email or phone, but no more than two times and not more frequently than once a week  
• Check if the person is the appropriate contact for the interview and if there are any alternatives  
• If the person does not respond within a week after the last reminder and there are no viable alternatives, extend the sample with an additional company |
| The company representative may be bound by confidentiality agreement or may not want themselves or the company to be mentioned in the research | • Suggest them that their responses will be kept confidential  
• Ensure that the company is not mentioned in the research or supporting materials by accident |
| The interviewee may not want them to be audio-recorded during the interview | • Ask for permission to record interview prior to performing actual recording  
• Suggest them that all copies of the records will be deleted upon the completion of the dissertation  
• Ensure that the deletion is carried out after the dissertation is completed |
| The interviewee may provide incorrect or misleading information due to concerns about their job security | • Formulate the questions in a clear and simple way  
• Clarify the suspicious or vague answers  
• If the information received during the interview arises any concerns, consult with the supervisor whether to use for analysis |

3.6. Limitations of Methodology

This research is limited to the ICT and PFS sectors that are of strategic importance to Ireland and experience the largest talent shortages. Therefore, immigration restrictions may not be applied to
them as strictly as to other sectors. The information from the sample will be generalized to the ICT and PFS sectors, as the same rules and procedures apply to these companies. But the sample consists only of large established companies. Two types of limitations are drawn from this fact: firstly, the entrepreneurial element of migration cannot be assessed; and, secondly, smaller companies may be affected by the immigration system restrictions in a different way. The data can only be collected from companies that agree to provide information. Companies can have a variety of reasons to withhold information, including disclosure concerns and potential conflicts with regulators. Those companies who agree to provide information may evaluate the immigration system in a different light. In addition, the available secondary data and the access to the state statistics are rather limited. To overcome these limitations, the research will carry out in-depth interviews and collect supplementary data from the companies as well as cross-check primary data findings with those available in the secondary sources.
4. Findings

4.1. Respondent Engagement and Data Collection Process

A total of seven interviews have been conducted. Four of these interviews were with representatives of ICT and PFS companies that have a large number of non-EEA individuals in their workforce, two per each sector. In addition, three interviews with individual work permit holders working within ICT and PFS sectors have been carried out. Two of the individual interviewees are holders of a Critical Skills Employment Permit, and one is a holder of a General Employment Permit.

Ten companies with the largest number of Irish Employment Permits obtained in 2014 were identified. For this selection, individuals responsible for immigration compliance or possessing high level knowledge in this field were detected through online research and word of mouth. The word of mouth information was collected through the researcher’s acquaintances in the business circles and through probing calls to companies listed in the selection. These individuals were sent an expertise request on the professional social network LinkedIn which is technically delivered to the email address they used to subscribe for this professional social network. The researcher ensured that expertise requests were sent to the right individuals and that their LinkedIn accounts are active.

Where the contact email address was available, the expertise request was also sent directly to it. Other supplementary channels, such as the following, were used to reach potential respondents where no response was received after original expertise requests via LinkedIn and email:

- General corporate email address and feedback forms on the corporate websites;
- Corporate pages on social media, such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter;
- Individual pages on social media, such as Twitter and Facebook (the latter social network was only used when Privacy Settings of an individual were unrestricted);
- Internal contacts in the companies, acquaintances of the researcher, were asked to reach out to their colleagues with the query to share their expertise;
- Phone calls to general company lines and direct lines, where available.

Where no response was obtained, three follow-ups were made through different channels to each company representative.

Two companies from the original selection, one ICT and one PFS, consented to provide information. Three ICT companies declined the invitation. One company has taken a restrictive approach to sharing any information with external parties, unless obliged by the law. One reasoned that they do not have resources available to satisfy the researcher’s expertise request, and another one stated that they cannot share any information as they handle the compliance process through an intermediary. Due to these parties declining, three additional companies were introduced to the selection and contacted in a similar way.
Due to lack of further responses after following up twice, the researcher decided to introduce ten additional companies to the selection. Two company representatives from the additional selection, one ICT and one PFS, agreed to share their expertise. Two ICT companies from the additional selection declined the invitation quoting the restrictive approach the company has taken to sharing information as the reason. One high-level manager from PFS sector tried to assure the researcher that they do not use any immigration schemes for non-EEA nationals, as they simply do not have non-EEA nationals in their workforce, and they do not possess any relevant expertise. However, the government data listed on the DJEI website suggested otherwise with a significant number of Employment Permits obtained in 2014 listed for this company.

As for the individuals, four people responded to advertisement the researcher placed in the college and on social networks such as LinkedIn and Facebook. Three of them were able to provide information. One person could not provide information due to busy work assignment schedule they experienced.

Figures 3-5 show aggregated response rates for selections of companies and individuals as well as reasons of refusals to share their experience with the Irish immigration system.

Figure 3: Company Selection Response Rate, % of invitations sent

![Company Selection Response Rate](image)

Most (57%) of the corporate respondents in the selection did not respond to invitations and follow ups. More than a quarter refused to provide information about their experience handling immigration compliance for their employees, and only 17% provided such information. It is worth noticing that those companies that shared their expertise, although reached through multiple channels, did not require follow up requests to provide such information.
Four individual respondents, Irish Employment Permit holders, responded to the advertisement placed by the researcher, and three or 75% of them actually shared their experience with the Irish immigration system. One individual who did not provide information was nevertheless willing to share their experience, but work circumstances prevented them to do so. As the planned number of interviews has been reached, the researcher discontinued the advertisement for individual respondents before the planned end of data collection.

Six potential respondents from the selection of companies declined the invitation to share their experience with the Irish immigration system. The most widespread reason for the refusals is the company’s policies that restrict information sharing with external parties. Other quoted reasons for refusals were inability to allocate time for an interview due to the vacation season and busy working environments. One company refused to share information reasoning that they engage non-EEA
nationals and handle immigration compliance procedures through an intermediary based in the UK and do not have any information about its experience with the Irish immigration system. One company representative in a high-level HR position refused to provide comments and ensured the researcher that the company does not have any experience with the immigration authorities, although the DJEI statistical data provided different information.

All respondents, from both company and individual Employment Permit holder groups, had voiced data privacy concerns. They preferred to stay anonymous explaining that sharing information about themselves and their company would require additional approval from the company. The common concern voiced by company representatives was that the topic is politically sensitive, and they would not want to risk developed relationships with the immigration bodies.

4.2. International Projects in Ireland

In most cases, the interviewees could not name the exact percentage of projects in their company that can be considered international (i.e. having at least one non-Irish stakeholder). It happened partly due to the fact that companies do not track these statistics and partly because professionals responsible for immigration compliance are in the business support function, which does not have information about stakeholders apart from those the company employs. Still, representatives of ICT companies were convinced that international projects constitute a solid majority. One PFS representatives mentioned that most projects are internal Irish, but the number of international projects is growing year-on-year.

All respondents agree that most stakeholders of international projects implemented in Ireland are from EEA. They also admit that there are a significant number of stakeholders from outside of EEA. Only one respondent mentioned that non-EEA stakeholders are a small number of stakeholders, and none said that their number is too little to be of any concern. While exact numbers or percentage points are not readily available, one ICT representative stated that non-EEA professionals constitute around 40% of non-Irish stakeholders.

Non-EEA nationals play a variety of roles in the international projects implemented in Ireland. Their engagement and roles depend on ownership structure and organizational structure of a company. Non-EEA project sponsors typically come from countries where the non-European head office of the Irish subsidiary is based. Non-EEA project customers are based in non-EEA countries, which are beneficiaries of the project implemented in Ireland or implemented overseas by or with the help of the Irish company. More often non-European project customers are based in other English-speaking OECD countries. However, more projects are being implemented with the emerging markets. As the
nature of business in ICT and PFS sectors entails creation of intangible products and intellectual property, such as software solutions and advisory services, both industries engage contractors from low wage countries to satisfy labour fluctuations and outsource repetitive labour-intensive work. There are examples of using matrix organizational structure, which encourages cross-country collaboration in both ICT and PFS industries. Large companies practice establishing particular functions oversees for the same reason as engaging contractors from low wage countries.

“Companies outsource IT services to us as we can make it cheaper, and we can make it cheaper because we can make it offshore.” – ICT representative

The most numerous group of non-EEA stakeholders are project managers and project team members. It is also of concern to companies as they handle their immigration compliance. Among the reasons they may need to come to Ireland:

- To complete project work for clients based in Ireland;
- To complete project work for clients based in a third country;
- To meet clients based in Ireland and those coming to Ireland from a third country;
- To complete corporate training and workshops;
- To attend corporate events;
- To network with colleagues in Ireland.

These international projects involving non-EEA project team workers can be of indefinite duration, long term projects lasting a year or longer or short term projects lasting several months. As opposed to long-term projects, short-term projects involve delivery of a particular product or process component and not the whole product or process. The need for short term project may arise when local team members are fully engaged in other tasks while the project has strict time constraints. It also happens when in-house experts are overqualified for this work, and so would be better used performing more complex work.

4.3. Immigration Arrangements

Localization is one of the most popular arrangements to bring non-EEA professionals to Ireland. Typically, this arrangement is used for long term projects or those with indefinite duration and for positions listed on the Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations List, and so the Critical Skills Employment Permit is applicable. However, localization is also used for General Employment permits. The representative of a PFS organization mentioned that they bring people in for assignments, but often they result in localizations, as the assignment duration is extended.

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2 The representative chose to stay anonymous.
3 For the purpose of this paragraph, a third country means any country apart from Ireland and the country where the non-EEA project team comes from.
4 The project by definition is a finite endeavor, but post-project support can be of indefinite duration.
5 In-house experts are experts employed by the company in Ireland.
Both ICT representatives interviewed mentioned that their companies have support and development centres in Ireland covering locations all over the world. They provide these locations with additional skills needed, and thus take part in international projects implemented globally. Respondents admit that these centres were created in Ireland primarily due to its favourable tax climate, location in Europe and good business climate. Given such wide coverage, many people who work in these centres are coming from outside of Europe. There has consistently been a large demand for technical professionals with an international experience to work in these centres, and as there were no such professionals in Ireland, they had to recruit them from overseas. These professionals were hired on both Localization and Assignment basis with a complete relocation package.

“There has been a huge number of assignments from overseas because there were not many professionals of needed qualification in Ireland” – ICT representative

The Assignment setup is also used for international exchange programs. These envisage up to two years’ employment in Ireland while the overseas employer saves the workplace for an individual upon their return. Although the duration is de facto temporary, these individuals are often employed on a permanent basis rather than on a temporary contract.

The Business Trip arrangement is widely used for purposes that may not be directly classified as project work. These reasons include:

- Meeting with potential clients and presenting the company’s products;
- Completing short-term corporate training;
- Networking with international project teams.

However, this arrangement can be used to perform a project work, when there is an immediate need, and because obtaining an Employment Permit takes a long time. There was an example when the whole project team travelled on business trips in and outside of Ireland for five months tracking days carefully, so that they do not exceed the permitted maximum.

Companies hardly ever use the Business Setup arrangement for immigration purposes. However, one ICT respondent mentioned that their company pursues an active acquisition strategy and consistently enlarges its business by means of buying start-ups that fit into its portfolio. These start-ups often employ international team members, including those from outside of EEA.

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6 The representative chose to stay anonymous.
4.4. Co-location and Remote Work

Whether project team members need to work directly depends on the scope and set duration of each particular project. Both co-location and remote work is practiced in ICT and PFS companies. However, it is clear that in PFS industry much less work is performed remotely. Although there is a possibility of working on client sites, they are located mainly in Ireland. The use of external talent pools is also less common.

ICT company representatives mention that remote work is customarily taking place. Still, locating the project team in the same physical space is required during one or several stages of a project. It is common practice in companies with the matrix organizational structure for project managers and project team members to handle multiple customers and multiple projects at the same time. The need to co-locate the project team may be higher or lower on different stages of the project. For example, the initiation of the project may include many client meetings to formalize requirements and start the project. During the start, there might be a need for the project team to be present on client premises, while during the project execution some things can be done remotely. Another ICT respondent mentioned that given the nature of their projects, the team must be co-located and often work on client sites.

According to another ICT respondent, it is always better to co-locate the team, but it is not always feasible. The reason for this is not only higher labour costs in Ireland, but also relocation and living expenses. Where one or several of the following circumstances is present, it might be better to co-locate the team:

- The project is something that has not been done before;
- The scope of the project is still evolving;
- The procedures are subject to change;
- Team members do not have much experience on similar projects or with this particular client;
- The influence of external stakeholders is particularly strong.

The companies do not consider the immigration cost when making a decision to co-locate the team. What they consider is the business need, contractual obligations before client⁷, and total cost of such arrangement.

4.5. Skill Shortages

Skill shortages in ICT and PFS sectors are significant and mentioned by all respondents. All companies in the selection are large companies with the headcount exceeding a thousand people. PFS

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⁷ It can be fixed in the contract when and how often project team members must be available on client sites.
companies have up to 25% of non-EEA nationals in permanent and temporary roles, while for ICT companies their number can approach a half of the workforce. One ICT representative pointed out that their company has people on staff from sixty nine different countries. Another one mentioned that their entire project team was brought in from non-EEA country.

Positions that are difficult to fill with EEA professionals for ICT and PFS companies also differ. ICT representatives mention that IT positions on the Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations List are difficult to fill. Particularly, there is a large need for qualified software developers, software architects and IT solutions architects as well as other IT positions connected with new technology, such as cloud computing technology. One ICT respondent emphasized that these are global skill shortages, and while it is difficult to find these professionals in Ireland, it is almost as difficult to find them oversees. However, they often hire from oversees, because it is a larger area to recruit from. Another ICT respondent said that retention of skilled ICT professionals is an even greater problem. That is why non-EEA employees can even be desirable, as “at least for a couple of years they will be working at the company and not look elsewhere”.

As for PFS companies, they experience difficulties with filling their accountancy, tax, and IT advisory roles. While the problems with IT consultants is similar to those experienced by ICT companies, these professionals, apart from their technical ability, are required to have soft skills to be able to work successfully with clients. As for accountants and tax professionals, it is hard to fill these positions with non-EEA professionals, as they need to know the Irish specifics.

Companies hire non-EEA nationals already located in Ireland as well as those living abroad at the moment of application. While hiring in Ireland is preferable, it is also less frequent. One possible reason for it is that the Employment Permit is a property of a company, and if another company wants to hire a non-EEA national already working in Ireland, they would need to go through the same process their current Irish employer went through. Non-EEA students completing or having completed a third level degree in Ireland can be hired in Ireland. Most non-EEA professional candidates are moving to Ireland for the first time and are offered a relocation package including immigration compliance, relocation assistance, and induction.

Skill shortages are also evident from responses of individual Employment Permit holders. One ICT professional said the company had been seeking to fill the role for more than half a year. Another one mentioned that the whole non-EEA project team was engaged and had to travel on business trips before Employment Permits were granted.
Most respondents said that the number of Employment Permits has been growing year-on-year, and expressed certainty that this trend will proceed in the future with the Irish economy recovering and the labour market becoming highly competitive again.

4.6. Employment and Relocation Process

Company representatives mentioned several employment permissions they normally apply for: Critical Skills Employment Permit, General Employment Permit, Inter Company Transfer Employment Permit, and Atypical Working Scheme\(^8\). The Critical Skills Employment Permit is used most frequently, especially with regards to technical roles in IT as well as qualified Accountancy and Tax professionals, which are on the Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations List. The General Employment Permit arrangement is also used, but less frequently, followed by the Inter Company Transfer Permit. The Atypical Working Scheme is used for projects, duration of which does not exceed three months and where the project start is immediate.

Individual respondents said that their Employment Permit was handled by the company, while they provided documents necessary for the application. There was a common agreement among the individual Employment Permit holders and company representatives that work permit requirements are appropriate. All interviewed individual Employment Permit holders had completed a third-level program before applying for the employment permit and had had more than five years of proven professional experience in their field. However, some company representatives voiced concern over the recognition of foreign educational qualifications. One individual Employment Permit holder also confirmed that his Postgraduate Degree was not recognized, but his Bachelor’s Degree was nevertheless sufficient to meet application requirements.

In a similar way, all respondents deem positions on the Highly Skilled Eligible occupations list appropriate. All companies in the selection apply for Critical Skills Employment Permits and did not experience any cases where their professionals were wrongly qualified as not on the Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations list. As for the Ineligible Occupations List, while some respondents accepted the possibility that the position on their application can be wrongly qualified as ineligible, it does not happen in practice. Firstly, because they ensure it cannot possibly be misinterpreted by the immigration officials, and in case of any suspicion, they return to business to re-formulate position description, so that it meets the requirements. Secondly, they obtain Critical Skills Employment Permits for similar roles, typically for no more than five positions time after time, and thus classify

\(^8\) Atypical Working Scheme is a short-term employment permissions arrangement administered by the Irish Naturalization and Immigration Service (INIS, 2015).
that the risk of the immigration authorities changing their approach is low. Respondents still admit that the issue of the Employment Permit is at the discretion of the immigration official, and for jobs not as clearly defined there can be a larger risk. One respondent mentioned that DJEI extended these lists in 2014 making them more clear and specific, which they consider a positive change. Some respondents also would like these lists to be reviewed on a six-month basis to reflect the dynamism of the business environment, while others say that despite the changes in technology core positions stay the same, although their responsibilities change drastically.

All company representatives have vast experience obtaining employment permissions and collaborating with the immigration authorities. They said that they seldom face any problems with their applications, as they act in a pre-emptive way excluding any potential discrepancies. At the same time, all respondents, both individual Employment Permit holders and company representatives expressed concerns over timelines for receiving the employment permit. Namely, that the application process takes too long. Some respondents said that it can take up to six months before the candidate can actually start working, and during this time the business requirements may change. This exposes the company to a significant risk.

“Typically, the timeline from the initial phone screening till the start day can take as long as six months, which is a long time, because the business can change within those six months quite easily.” – ICT representative

The key reasons for such significant application time were considered as follows:

- A long and complicated process;
- Absence of an online application system;
- Different visa times and process in different issuing countries;
- The stated Employment Permit processing time is extendable;
- The issuing time depends on different Employment Permit type;
- The current tracking system is not helpful.

One of individual Employment Permit holders considers the compliance process a major drawback that is making the Irish immigration system less competitive for skilled workers. In support to this argument, a company representative engaged in the recruitment process said it is an issue, as many candidates drop before the application process is complete as they receive more lucrative offers or opportunity to start work sooner. Figures 6 and 7 depict simplified process flowcharts.

9 The representative chose to stay anonymous.
10 The researcher considers these flowcharts a simplified version of an actual process, as they only highlight high-level stages. Also, for each particular case, for example for non-visa required nationals, this process may look different.
There are different requirements and processing times in Irish visa offices in different countries. Some of the visa offices may require physical presence to issue a visa. As seen from the diagrams, the candidate may obtain an entry visa to have a job interview and induction meeting with the project team, and then they may need to return to the home country again to obtain another visa, this time a long-term visa for the employment purposes. One company representative pointed out that this approach is extremely inefficient. If a company representative worked with a visa office abroad, they may wrongly assume that in other country the process, times and requirements will be the same, which is not so. It exposes the company to additional risk. This risk is even greater if a country falls under a political embargo of any kind. The respondents suggest that the visa process
needs to be globally aligned and allow candidates to apply for a long-term visa within Ireland. Moreover, the long-term visa can only be obtained after the Employment Permit is granted, and the applications are separate, which significantly increases the total compliance time\textsuperscript{11}. The process that would allow Employment Permit and entry visa applications to happen concurrently and with a single application was suggested as a solution.

Another gap in the process the respondents pointed out to was the Labour Market Test. Typically the company would have gone through the job advertisement in Ireland and other EEA countries before making a decision to also look among non-EEA nationals, and when the position cannot be filled with Irish or EEA nationals. Still, the Labour Market Test requires the company to go through the job advertisement again, which significantly delays the Employment Permit issuing times\textsuperscript{12}.

The current process implies physical filing of forms and documents. From the process chart (see Figure 7), it is clearly seen that there could be up to four regular mailing transactions, three of which are typically international. Apart from that, there could be the need to provide additional documents and respond to requests from the immigration authorities by regular mail. According to respondents, the online application system would be beneficial, as it would eliminate a few days from the mailing standpoint. One company representative has experience working with other immigration systems that use online applications, and in their opinion such system is quicker and more efficient.

Individual candidates were also dissatisfied with the GNIB process. They pointed out that a long-term visa already confirms the purpose of the entrant to come for long term. Thus, they did not understand why there is a need for additional residence registration other than it is a source of state revenue. One respondent said that it must be really profitable to “make plastic cards and sell them for EUR 300”.\textsuperscript{13} In addition to that, they stated that the GNIB process is extremely inefficient, and the registrant can spend as much as four days trying to receive this registration, when the GNIB office is busy. Individual candidates also pointed that it can easily be solved with the help of an online scheduling system. Some company respondents also expressed concern with the GNIB process. Although they have not directly dealt with it, they typically provide guidance to the employees going through it and have received negative feedback from individuals.

\textsuperscript{11} This remark was regarding visa-required non-EEA nationals. The list of visa-required countries can be found on the website of the Irish Naturalization and Immigration Service (INIS, 2014).
\textsuperscript{12} This does not apply to Critical Skills Employment Permits, as they are exempt from the Labor Market Test.
\textsuperscript{13} About GNIB cards.
“The GNIB process is, frankly, so antiquated that it is embarrassing for Ireland.” – PFS Representative

Most respondents expressed their concerns with Employment Permit processing times. They said it depends on the workload of the DJEI. Despite the stated by the DJEI benchmark time is several weeks, it can take as long as two months. The processing time is influenced by the number of applications submitted, types of Employment Permits applied for, and any holidays and days off between the submission and the date the permit is issued.

The company representatives also mentioned that it would be helpful to have a proper tracking system that would indicate real time left till the application is processed. Such system would help them perform more accurate planning, manage project risks, and more effectively communicate with their colleagues who authorized hiring a non-EEA national. Currently there is a tracking system in place. However, it only shows the stage the Employment Permit application is currently on with no indication how much time is left, and as described by respondents, not particularly helpful.

“Once you submit the application, you have to patiently wait for the immigration to come back to you with the outcome of that application. You don’t really have updates on that application. It can be a little bit frustrating.” – ICT Representative

At the same time company representatives emphasized that they have well-established relationships with the immigration officials, and the officials are usually helpful and facilitate their requests very well. All companies in the selection are large businesses, and the respondents emphasized that given the connections they have and the company being a large tax payer and on a good count with the government, they do not have problems obtaining Employment Permits.

Most respondents feel that Employment Permits’ term of validity and costs are reasonable. Although, one respondent said that a regular fee of EUR 1,000 is too much for the processing effort and seems like an attempt to extract some state revenue from the immigration process. Neither did respondents have any issues with extending their Employment Permits. The Critical Skills employment permit does not require the extension as such. Only Stamp 4 residence permission is required that allows an individual to take full time employment with any company in Ireland. The companies usually provide guidance and reminders to employees, whose Critical Skills Employment permits are about to expire, and the individuals handle this process themselves. In most cases the full immigration compliance cost is covered by companies. The company usually settles the Employment Permit fee without any involvement from the individual, while visa and GNIB fees are

14 The representative chose to stay anonymous.
15 The representative chose to stay anonymous.
paid by the individuals and later reimbursed by the company. One individual respondent mentioned that they covered their visa and GNIB costs out of their own pocket.

All respondents agree that the immigration system acts in the inhibitory manner and somewhat put them off hiring good candidates from non-EEA countries. Having mentioned that, most of them agree that it is the purpose of the system to encourage employment of EEA nationals. However, when professionals from EEA are not available, the immigration system is a serious impediment for business, as they want somebody to start working soon, and because of the immigration system it is simply not possible. Companies find their ways around it by looking up non-visa required candidates first to shorten the process and requesting the DJEI to facilitate their application, when it is urgent and the company is on a good account with immigration officials. Some respondents mentioned that the DJEI launched the Trusted Partner Initiative in May 2015 that would allow fast-tracking of applications. While this initiative is certainly welcome by business representative, there are also some doubts about its overall efficiency, as the initiative only increases the speed of processing without changing the process and issues inherent to it. Respondents said that it is difficult to think of improvements within the frames of the current process, unless the DJEI will hire more people to mend this process, as the Employment Permit application volume is expected to grow in the future.

4.7. Business Trips

All company respondents agreed that there are a huge number of individuals coming to Ireland on business trips each year, and this number is expected to grow in the nearest future. One representative mentioned that it was “well in thousands” last year. The reason for such a large number of business trips is partly due to globalization and post-crisis economic recovery and partly political, as relocation from Northern Ireland to Ireland is technically considered an international business trip. The companies do not track inbound business trips, unless there is a need to obtain a visa for an employee going on such business trip. While the number of non-EEA nationals coming on business trip to Ireland is much smaller, it is still significant, and although most respondents could not disclose numbers, one respondent mentioned that they have several hundreds of them each year.

In most cases, the purpose of business trips is not performing actual project work but attending networking and educational events. However, there are a few exceptions. One individual respondent told a story of his whole project team travelling on business trips to Ireland to perform project work, as the time to obtain Employment Permissions was too long for the project customer to wait. While the Employment Documents were being prepared, the team had to travel back and forth not to exceed the allowed limit of ninety days within half a year.
The Irish companies prepare invitation letters, while the visa is typically being obtained by the individual or their employer in the home country. The visa fee is typically covered by the sending company by means of direct payment of the fee or reimbursement of visa expenses. Both company representatives and individual Employment Permit holders feel that business visa requirements are appropriate and have not experienced any rejections.

Visa issuing times are said to depend on the country and can stretch up to two weeks. The respondents feel that these times also depend on the workload in visa processing offices, which can be seasonal. Usually, the start of the academic year is a busy processing time, so business visas obtained during this period take longer to process. Also, in countries where there is a political embargo, this process can take a longer time.

All respondents agree that Ireland’s position outside of the Schengen zone creates additional difficulties, particularly for these non-EEA individuals, for whom travel to other European countries is customarily required. The company representatives say, though, that it is not a major issue, but another administrative difficulty they have to overcome. Non-EEA nationals are generally knowledgeable about visa procedures and requirements, and do not require much additional effort from the companies’ administrative staff. However, the company has to deal with another immigration system, which may require certain legal expertise to be present in this field. The biggest concern is timeframes, as the visa requirements may delay entry to other European country by a couple of weeks – ICT representatives were particularly conscious about that. Also, while travelling through the UK, non-EU nationals may require another visa, as the UK is also outside of the Schengen zone. One company representatives said some of their professionals had to alter their travel routes and fly through Dubai instead because of this, which brought a degree of discontent.

On the other hand, one representative shared his opinion that it can bring positive side effects. They reasoned that had Ireland been in Schengen, non-EU nationals would have to be concerned about not spending more than ninety days each half a year they go abroad to work at a particular client facility, while they can spend more than ninety days in half a year now obtaining several Schengen visas.

Among the ideas for improving the business trip process respondents mentioned:

- Opening the Schengen arrangement for Ireland;
- Streamlining and standardizing the visa arrangement for different geographies;
- Implementing the online filing system;
- Launching the online appointment system at the visa offices;
- Exploring self-processing opportunities.
4.8. Immigration Compliance Management

Most respondents mentioned that their company manages immigration compliance in-house. While ICT companies occasionally use services of external legal & immigration consultants, PFS engage their internal experts in case of need. ICT companies are also more actively using services of recruitment agencies specializing in the overseas recruitment.

Companies typically have administrative personnel that handle immigration compliance. Depending on the volume of applications, it can be from a part time responsibility to a full time role. One company representative mentioned that they have three full time employees in their immigration team.

Immigration processes require a collaborative effort from both a non-EEA individual being employed and the company immigration compliance team. Depending how quickly the documents for an Employment permit can be collected and mailed, it may take from several days up to a month for the application to be lodged, while the completion of forms takes no longer than half of a working day for an experienced administrative worker to complete. Physical mailing delays this process substantially. As for the visa, the company only prepares the invitation letter, for which they have developed templates, so it takes no more than half an hour.

However, these times do not include phone discussions and email correspondence with the individual, for whom the employment permit is being obtained as well as the hiring business and project manager to manage their expectations\textsuperscript{16}. Managing these expectations based on fluctuating time estimates that the immigration authorities provide can be quite difficult for the immigration compliance professionals. As companies deal with the immigration system for a long time, they developed necessary expertise. For somebody not familiar with the system, processes do not appear simple and straightforward. The companies usually provide individuals with necessary instructions and advice. Respondents pointed out that the information, while present, is not integrated in the single source, and often needs to be collected across the government websites. The wording on these websites is not always straightforward for non-native English speakers, who most of non-EU nationals are.

“It’s not an easy and straightforward process, and it can be very frustrating for the individual” – PFS representative\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{16} In the researcher’s opinion, the time of such business and project managers should also be taken into account, although this information cannot be retrieved from the current selection and requires an additional research.

\textsuperscript{17} The representative chose to stay anonymous.
Most companies in Ireland fully cover immigration costs for their employees. This includes Employment Permit fees, visa and GNIB fees and relocation allowances. This cost is written down as recruitment or administrative expenses and rarely forms a part of the project budget. Respectively, the cost is not being recharged on the client, but being borne ultimately by the business entity itself.

All respondents agree that the immigration authorities in Ireland have wide discretion. However, the opinions divided on whether such discretion is reasonable. Such division can be seen among respondents of either ICT or PFS sectors. Some argue that there is no alternative to such discretion and that its exercise is generally to the benefit of the user of the system. These respondents also point out that such discretion is comparable to that exercised in other OECD countries. Other group of respondents reason that the reputation of the company comes into play which may put different businesses in the unequal position. One of the effective techniques respondents mention to go around potential flaws in such discretion is putting up technical specifications of the role, which immigration authorities simply cannot understand. The wide discretion also shows up during the rejection process, although the rejections appear quite rare. Particularly, rejection reasons are not always given, and, if given, may not be clear to effectively appeal them.

“It should not be as much at the immigration authorities’ discretion, but we have to work with them on a day to day basis, and one has to be very picky and choosy on what to challenge them on.” – PFS representative

All respondents agree that it would be good to see supply-driven elements, where the state screens potential applicants and lets them enter its territory, introduced in Ireland. Respondents said that hiring candidates in Ireland is preferable, as it is quicker and eliminates problems to arrange a job interview. Moreover, in respondents’ opinion it would somewhat ease the difficulty of attracting skilled professionals to Ireland. While it was mentioned that the critical skills aspect in Ireland is somewhat better than in other countries, it is still considered less competitive than other countries that introduced such supply-driven elements to their immigration systems. However, there were also doubts whether such measures will be ever introduced in Ireland, given the country’s smaller population and understanding that such system might be costly to administer. It was suggested that the supply driven arrangement is adopted for sectors with the largest skill shortages, such as IT and Healthcare.

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18 The representative chose to stay anonymous.
19 Examples given included such countries as Canada, Australia, and the UK.
While immigration restrictions do not directly influence decision to hire a non-EEA national\textsuperscript{20}, they are certainly an important factor of indirect influence. What it means is that candidates are selected for their competencies to perform the job, not their nationality, but ones nationality can be a defining factor when making a recruitment decision. Company respondents also mentioned that they consider and estimate immigration related risks, as their industry strongly depends on the intellectual capital. While the company is making an employment offer, two stakeholders have to accept it – the individual and the Irish state.

\textsuperscript{20} Although in some cases, such as frequent travel or when the company’s balance of non-EEA employees approaches 50%, immigration restrictions can be a factor of direct influence.
5. Project Management Implications

5.1. Project Scope Management

As discussed in the Literature Review chapter, the complexity of modern products and services is increasing while resources are becoming scarcer. To address these challenges organizations leverage their physical and intellectual capital on a global scale. It is clear that for ICT and PFS industries intellectual capital is a core resource, and the respondents confirmed that they leverage their talent internationally:

- Using talent pools located overseas to draw in needed expertise or outsource routine project tasks;
- Establishing expertise hubs in Ireland that support other geographies;
- Hiring or contracting foreign nationals to perform project work.

A project team must be competent to create and deliver a product with desired features to a customer. This competence can be developed within a company or acquired from the outside. Even if a needed expertise is present in the company, it may not be readily available, as those who possess it may be fully engaged on other projects. Usually, it takes a long time to pass such expertise from one individual to another. The scoping process entirely depends on project team’s ‘know-how’ and experience, as they transform client’s requirements to operational specifications.

The Findings chapter established that both ICT and PFS industries experience skill shortages, which means that expertise needed for their current projects cannot be satisfied from within the organizations. Neither can they be entirely satisfied with EEA nationals. These companies recruit non-EEA nationals in a number of roles, from administrative to technical. Given this, the ability to manage project scope may be constrained by the ability to bring in non-EEA project managers, team members, or subject matter experts.

It is a responsibility of a project manager to create and implement a project scope, which may not be feasible while being located outside of Ireland, as this process requires frequent communications and physical meetings with numerous stakeholders such as customers, team members, suppliers, contractors, subject matter experts, pressure groups, etc.

Despite technological developments allowing project team members to collaborate in the virtual space, businesses practice shows that co-location is still necessary, especially when the scope is subject to frequent changes. To bring a non-EEA project manager and team members to Ireland a company has to comply with the immigration regulations. As the analysis in the Findings chapter suggests, the immigration processes are rather complex. They may significantly extend the overall project scope with compliance-related activities. Both business and individual representatives
believe that the immigration compliance process should be streamlined. From the scope management perspective, Table 5 suggests areas for improvement in the immigration system.

Table 5: Areas for Improvement from the Scope Management Perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas for Improvement</th>
<th>Suggested solution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A long-term entry visa already shows intention of its holder to reside in Ireland for long term while a GNIB residence card only confirms this intention;</td>
<td>Integrate entry and residence schemes into one multiple-entry and long-term residence permission for economic migrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Applications for an entry visa and GNIB residence card are separate, while largely similar documents are required for each application;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A separate re-entry visa needs to be obtained if a non-EEA individual working in Ireland needs to travel abroad.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For some non-EEA individuals who obtain an entry visa for a job interview later resulting in a job offer, it is still necessary to obtain another entry visa and re-enter the state;</td>
<td>Special arrangement allowing non-EEA professionals to start working in Ireland from the day an Employment Permit application is submitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is not possible for a non-EEA individual to start working until Employment Permit and long-term visa are obtained.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Currently, a long-term visa can only be obtained after an Employment Permit has been granted;</td>
<td>Single Employment Permit and long-term visa application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Employment Permit and long-term visa applications are separate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There might be a need for project team members to perform project work on client sites located in different countries. Ireland’s position outside of the Schengen area makes it necessary to obtain additional visas for non-EEA team members, if they need to travel to other European countries. Visas may also be required for non-EEA project team members or contractors who come to Ireland to complete training, meet clients or other team members.

5.2. Project Time Management

The overall complexity of the immigration system is well illustrated by significant time it takes to bring in qualified professionals. It can practically take up to six months until a non-EEA national have permission to start working in Ireland. All respondents pointed out that, given the dynamic business environment they compete in, they may lost business or experience change in client requirements during this time. Often companies need a professional to start working as soon as possible. As the immigration system does not help them to address this necessity, they are forced to set up alternative arrangements. These arrangements may be unproductive or excessively risky. There were few well-illustrated examples:
After unsuccessfully looking for European candidates, the company decided to hire a non-EEA professional. The nature of work required him to be co-located with other team members and travel to different client sites in Ireland and abroad. However, due to the immigration restrictions, the company had to engage this professional to work remotely until an Employment Permit and visa were issued. As a result, the company incurred an additional cost due to performance inefficiencies and additional administrative time to conclude a contract for services with the individual.

An Irish subsidiary engaged a whole project team and a project manager from their non-EEA parent company. While Employment Permits were being processed, the team had to travel on business trips for 5 months to perform project work conscious about a 90-day maximum they could stay in Ireland. Except for inconvenience of such arrangement, the company incurred travel risks, as each time crossing the border team members could have been denied entry to Ireland.

The respondents pointed out that an online Employment Permit application system would help them eliminate physical mailing transactions, shorten application times and optimize communication process with the immigration authorities. It would also be helpful for businesses to have a real-time tracking system, which would indicate how many days are left until the final decision on the application is made. This would be used for planning and managing expectations of stakeholders involved in the process (e.g. project sponsor authorizing the project, responsible project manager, individuals for whom Employment Permits are being obtained, clients who expect initiation of the project, etc.).

The respondents also mentioned that visa processing times vary across the geographies and depend on the workload of the immigration offices. Thus, experience obtained while collaborating with a visa office in one country may not be applied globally. Unified procedures across the visa offices would help companies more effectively manage visa arrangements for their employees. Individuals mentioned that such simple improvement as an online appointment scheduling system would help manage workload in visa and GNIB offices and save individuals plenty of time otherwise spent queuing to submit their applications and collect documents. In one case, an individual spent four days trying to receive a GNIB registration as the office in Dublin was overcrowded.

The visa issuing system can be optimized through introduction of a peer-review process, which would take away a significant administrative burden from visa office staff and drastically shorten processing times. Here is a brief outline how such process may function:

- After an individual submits their visa application and scanned copies of supporting documents, they are offered to review a certain number of other applications receiving a fee discount in return;
- If the individual agrees, they sign an agreement obliging them to perform such review according to clearly specified rules and check randomly allocated applications from geographies different to theirs;
If an application passes such peer review, the applicant receives a notification that their application is now pre-approved and several time slots to book his appointment with a visa office;

The applicant then arrives to the visa office with his pre-approval notification, originals of submitted documents, and confirmation that the fee has been paid;

Visa office personnel review the original documents and grant a visa on spot.  

Table 6 suggests areas for improvement in the immigration system from the time management perspective.

**Table 6: Areas for Improvement from the Time Management Perspective**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas for Improvement</th>
<th>Suggested solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently, there is a physical filing system in place, and it may require several</td>
<td>Online application system with a time-tracking tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mailing transactions to submit an Employment Permit application, which is time</td>
<td>showing how many days are left till an Employment Permit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consuming;</td>
<td>is issued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional requests from the immigration authorities extend this process even more;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current time tracking system only shows a current stage of the application with no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indication of time left till the final decision;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing times are not fixed and depend on the immigration office’s workload.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It can take a long time for an individual to apply for an entry visa, as it depends</td>
<td>Online scheduling system for GNIB and visa appointments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on a number of people in a queue;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It can take a long time for an individual to apply for a GNIB card, as it depends on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a number of people in a queue.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa issuing times vary significantly across the geographies and during different</td>
<td>Fixed maximum number of days for a visa decision to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>times of year.</td>
<td>made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa process is complicated;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It takes too long to obtain a visa in some locations;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa processing time needs to be decreased.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The companies welcomed the Trusted Partner Initiative introduced by the DJEI in May 2015, which allows for fast-tracking of Employment Permit applications for companies eligible under certain criteria that applied for participation with the DJOI. However, there were also some doubts expressed about this scheme, as it did not make any process changes. Whether this initiative will bring an actual positive change remains to be seen.

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21 The visa is granted if there are no issues with individual’s application and supporting documents.
5.3. Project Cost Management

Most respondents deem immigration compliance costs appropriate. However, one individual Employment Permit holder pointed out that processing fees are excessive and are simply a source of state revenue. To establish whether this remark has a reasonable ground, the research examines immigration costs in more detail.

Firstly, it is worth noticing that there are two types of immigration costs: direct and indirect. Direct costs include Employment Permit, visa and GNIB fees as well as remuneration paid to employees who handle immigration compliance. Indirect costs may include opportunity cost of individual’s time spent on preparing immigration documents, potential losses and administrative expenses due to suboptimal working arrangements while an Employment Permit application is being issued, fees paid to external lawyers and immigration consultants, time spent by a project manager and project sponsor dedicated to immigration compliance issues, etc. In most cases, the entire immigration cost is covered by the company engaging a non-EEA individual. In rare cases individuals cover their visa and GNIB costs out of their own pocket.

Given the information available, this research can only estimate direct annual immigration costs for a typical company from the selection. The elements of this cost include:

- Gross annual salary paid to administrative personnel who handle immigration compliance;
- Total Employment Permit fees paid to the DJEI;
- Total visa and GNIB cost reimbursed to individuals.

To calculate annual remuneration paid to administrative personnel responsible for immigration compliance, the research establishes the annual full time equivalent headcount (hereafter referred to as FTE) and an appropriate annual gross remuneration for a full-time professional working in such occupation.

To estimate the FTE, information collected during the interviews was used, such as a number of immigration compliance professionals within the company and their workload. These numbers were (1) multiplied for each company; (2) added up; (3) divided by the number of companies that provided such information; (4) rounded up to a closest half. The result of this calculation showed that an average company from the selection uses 1.5 FTEs for immigration compliance purposes.

To find out appropriate annual gross remuneration for a full-time professional working in the immigration compliance occupation, salary surveys for 2014 from two Irish recruitment agencies were used (Abrivia Recruitment, 2015; Brightwater Recruitment Specialists, 2015). As neither salary survey included a position of Immigration Compliance Specialist, main duties of this position were analysed. Each of these duties was given an equal weight. Then positions that typically perform such
duties were found in the salary surveys and their averaged annual salaries taken for Dublin, where offices of interviewed company representatives are based. The calculation is presented in Table 7.

**Table 7: Immigration Compliance Specialist Average Annual Salary Calculation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duty</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Gross Annual Salary, EUR 000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring that individual employees and the company complies with</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Compliance Officer</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the immigration regulations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing legal assistance in the immigration matters</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Legal Officer</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling Employment Permit and visa applications</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>HR Administrator</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with individual applicants and internal business</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>HR Administrator</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clients</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All above</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance Specialist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given the average annual salary and the FTEs calculated above, it is reasonable to say that an average company from the selection spends about EUR 76.5k annually to pay administrative personnel that handles immigration compliance.

To estimate how much an average company from the selection pays in Employment Permit fees, visa and GNIB reimbursements it is necessary to establish the number of non-EEA nationals engaged annually to work under the Employment Permit arrangement. Quantity of employment permits each company from the selection obtained in 2014 was taken. Their average annual number constituted 65 Employment Permits with ICT representatives holding more than two times as many Employment permits as PFS representatives. The following step is to define the list of documents and calculate total fees paid to the DJEI and reimbursed to individuals. For the purposes of this calculation, the Critical Skills Employment permit fee is taken, as it is the most commonly used arrangement. It is also assumed that an average applicant enters Ireland on a single-entry visa and needs to obtain a multiple entry visa to re-enter the country within a year.

**Table 8: Fees Paid to the Immigration Authorities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fee paid for</th>
<th>One application, EUR</th>
<th>65 applications, EUR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment Permit, Critical</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>65000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-entry visa</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-entry multiple entry visa</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>6500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNIB registration</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>19500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,460</td>
<td>94,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The estimated total direct cost including remuneration paid to administrative personnel and application fees constitute EUR 171.4k annually. It is worth noticing that this cost does not include visa fees for inbound business trips, as their number was not provided by company representative. Even not considering visa fees for inbound business trips and indirect immigration costs, the calculated amount is sufficient to cover salary for three qualified software developers or consultants for a year.\textsuperscript{22} Such investment may be sufficient to deliver a small size project within a year and generate return for a company.

As demonstrated, the immigration costs scale up to some very tangible numbers. Therefore, it is to surprise of the researcher that companies were generally not concerned about the immigration cost. Moreover, most interviewees noted that such costs are ultimately borne by the company and not recharged onto clients for whom the project is being delivered. This may somewhat erode project profitability. It is possible that raising general business awareness about such cost-saving potential will trigger advocacy of changes in the system.

5.4. Project Quality Management

In ICT or PFS projects quality assurance and control is usually performed by a project manager. However, for large projects separate quality assurance teams may be created or external consultants may be engaged to perform quality audits. These quality assurance professionals and consultants, if coming from non-EEA country, may fall under the immigration restrictions.

However, a more illustrative case would be the one about project team members and a project manager themselves. Their competence directly affects quality of the final product to be delivered to the client. The ability to attract and hire competent project team members may be inhibited by the immigration system. Few respondents mentioned that they were tempted to hire suboptimal candidates that did not fall under the immigration restrictions due to the project’s immediate start. This undermines the purpose of the immigration system to screen out undesirable categories of entrants. Streamlining processes and decreasing permit issuing times, as discussed previously in this chapter, would also help to eliminate incentives to give up candidates best suited for the role due to time constraints or process complications.

Quality issues may also arise when a project team member performs project duties remotely or travels on business trips while their Employment Permit is being processed. Firstly, remote work arrangements may be harder to manage, as it may not be possible to perform regular quality

\textsuperscript{22} According to Abrivia Recruitment and Blackwater Recruitment Specialists Salary Surveys for 2014
assurance and control. Secondly, work requirements may be misunderstood or misinterpreted. Finally, not everybody is comfortable working remotely and on frequent business trips, which may create a degree of stress for project team members that may negatively affect quality of their performance.

5.5. Project Human Resource Management

People are at the very core of ICT and PFS projects. Both industries are labour intensive, as creation of intangible products (i.e. software solutions or advisory services) cannot currently be automated. Project HR Management includes activities related to planning project human resources, acquiring, developing and managing the team. The immigration system mainly affects the human resource planning and acquiring of team members. Contracted professionals engaged to perform project duties are considered in this section as project team members.

Large organizations typically have a centralized HR function that, among other things, handles recruitment and immigration compliance. As a few respondents noticed, their companies also use services of recruitment companies to source talent globally. According to the process depicted in the Findings chapter (see Figures 6 and 7), companies look for Irish and EEA workers first before making a decision to hire a non-EEA national. However, after an appropriate non-EEA national has been found, they may need to advertise the vacancy in Ireland and EEA countries again. This and other process complications discussed earlier in this chapter significantly increase the application time. According to some respondents, it may take as long as six months from the initial screening till the individual can start working in Ireland. During this time either business requirements may change or the candidate may decide to drop the application, as they are offered employment elsewhere with comparable conditions and a closer start date. This is a big concern for companies, as recruitment and compliance costs have already been incurred at this point.

Usually, non-EEA applicants reside outside of Ireland at the time of the application. While some companies interview prospects over phone and video calls, others prefer to interview them in person before making a hiring decision. Non-EEA nationals need a valid visa to enter Ireland for the purposes of attending a job interview. In case of a favourable decision, they may need to return to their home country to obtain another, long-term, entry visa. This visa can only be obtained after their Employment Permit is issued, which makes this process lengthy and inefficient. This also creates more favourable conditions for non-EEA nationals coming from non-visa required countries.

23 The Labor Market Needs Test obliges companies to advertise the vacancy through particular channels before filing an Employment Permit application. Critical Skills Employment Permit application does not require a Labor Market Needs Test.
such as Brazil and the US. Companies suggest that allowing an Employment Permit and long-term entry visa to go concurrently would make the immigration system more business friendly and appealing for potential applicants.

Some respondents mentioned that non-EEA individuals may also need to come to Ireland for networking and development purposes. Typically, a business trip arrangement is used for these purposes. The hosting Irish company only prepares invitation letters for them. The companies have invitation letter templates developed for these purposes, so the amount of time spent preparing such invitations is small.

On the other hand, there were remarks that employees on Employment Permits are less likely to leave the company, at least for the duration of their permit. There is a fierce competition over shortage workers on the Irish labour market, and European workers often get headhunted to other companies for a larger salary or other perks. The company representatives say that the competition for highly skilled professionals, especially those on the Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations List, is in fact global, and the country’s immigration system is something non-EEA applicants consider when receiving a job offer. This underlines how important the immigration system is for the overall country image.

### 5.6. Project Communication Management

The immigration system extends the scope of project communications in several ways. Firstly, it touches upon communication between stakeholders within the company. A project sponsor or a hiring manager needs to communicate to the HR team that the decision to hire a non-EEA individual have been made. The HR team delegates the immigration compliance support to a responsible specialist. The immigration compliance specialist keeps the core business team updated with milestones of the application process, time estimates until an Employment Permit is granted and potential risks that could arise in the process. The company representatives mentioned that a real-time tracking system would help them manage business expectations better, as the current system only shows the current stage of the application but not the number of days until the final decision.

Secondly, the immigration compliance specialist communicates with an individual to request necessary documents for the application, get them to sign application forms and provide them support during the application process. After the Employment Permit is obtained, the immigration compliance officer also provides the individual with visa support and documents necessary for a
long-term visa application. Communications with an individual are done (a) electronically to exchange information, provide guidance, and quickly obtain scanned copies of necessary documents and (b) via regular mail to collect original documents and an application signed by an individual as well as to provide the individual with documents necessary to obtain a long-term visa.

There are also communications between the immigration compliance specialist and the immigration authorities. It happens when the application is filed with the DJEI and when settling any further requests regarding the application. These communications are regularly done via post, which extends the communication process significantly. According to the respondents, should there be an online application system, the application times could have been shortened by at least several days.

A separate type of communication between the immigration bodies and customers of the system takes place when company representatives or individual applicants learn about immigration rules and administrative schemes from the information published on the Internet. Details regarding Employment Permit application, visa and GNIB residence applications are available on websites of the DJEI, INIS and GNIB. Although such information is readily available, it is scattered across different websites (i.e. the DJEI’s Employment Permits page, INIS’s Visas page, GNIB’s Immigration page). Individuals also noted that the use of language on these websites may be rather complicated for non-native English speakers. Considering these arguments, it would be helpful to create a single website that handles the entire application package online, including Employment Permit, visa application, and GNIB scheduling, and contains all necessary information in a user-friendly way.

5.7. Project Risk Management

Inability to quickly bring in competent professionals to fill project roles may result in delay or, worse, cancellation of a project. Therefore, management of immigration-related risks is a very important area for international projects. Most company representatives had a very small number of rejections or no rejections at all. However, they admit that there is still a chance that an Employment Permit application will be rejected, which may lead to disastrous consequences. The immigration compliance specialists are managing these risks and use various mitigation techniques. They act in a pre-emptive way, which implies resolving any potential issues before an Employment Permit application is filed. They also offer their expertise and leverage their experience with the system to estimate and communicate these risks to a hiring manager.

24 For visa-required non-EEA nationals.
As the researcher found out while reviewing the Employment Permits Acts (see the Literature review chapter for more information), the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation has the authority to establish Employment Permit quotas. These quotas are not made public. While they do not appear to cause any issues, it could be a potential problem for the future. The respondents mentioned that as the Irish economy recovers, the labour market becomes more competitive and the skill shortages more pronounced. There is also a 50% restriction in place prohibiting companies to hire non-EEA individuals unless more than 50% of current employees are EEA nationals. While this restriction can hardly be found problematic for large companies, as they can leverage their workforce from different corporate organizational units, it may create difficulties for technological start-ups. For example, if an Irish national and an Indian national started up a technology company in Ireland, they may not be allowed to hire additional non-EEA nationals to their team. As this paragraph suggests, the quotas should be considered as risk factors, but they will have different impact on companies of different size.

The company representatives are convinced that the probability of wrongfully classifying a position on their Employment Permit application as not compatible with the Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations List or as not eligible according to the Ineligible Occupations List is very low. They mentioned that in 2014 these lists were extended and now include most relevant positions. Still, they noticed that it would be helpful to review these lists on a six-month basis, so that they accurately reflect current needs of the economy. Some companies said that they include technical specifications of the position, which none of the immigration officials can make sense of, when applying for Employment Permits for technical positions.

Few company representatives and individual Employment Permit holders said that there could be an issue with recognition of non-EEA qualifications. This is a tangible risk, as it may lead to a delay or refusal of the application. To mitigate this risk, the translation process might need to be closely supervised to see that the wording is appropriate and will not be misinterpreted by the immigration officials. It would be helpful if the immigration bodies issued the list of requirements for a tertiary qualification to be recognized in Ireland.

As some respondents remarked, many technical professionals are self-taught, particularly when they deal with the newest technologies. It could be a tangible risk, if an appropriate candidate does not possess a required tertiary qualification. Given this, such qualification requirement might be questionable from the practical point of view. Replacing them with an increased salary threshold or proof of professional experience would allow businesses to bring in professionals not possessing college degrees.
The company representatives admit that discretion given to the immigration officials is too wide, which should not ideally be like that. This creates additional rejection and risks due to improper exercise of such discretion. At the same time, company representatives said that such discretion is comparable to that exercised in other countries, and that there is no clear alternative to such discretion. They pointed out that, due to such discretion, the reputation of a company and personal relations with the immigration officials become a valuable asset. Where the company has a significant leverage in form of large sums paid in taxes or significant numbers of people employed in Ireland, it helps them negotiate with the immigration authorities more effectively and speed up the employment permit process. This shows again asymmetry of risks with respect to small and large organizations, with small companies bearing larger risks.

One respondent pointed out that rejection reasons are not always given and, if given, may not be clear. This complicates the appeal process, as it is difficult to challenge reasons that are not provided or can have multiple interpretations. While the rejection does not entirely eliminate the possibility to appeal this decision and to reach a favourable outcome, the need to involve legal experts in the process would significantly increase immigration compliance cost. In practice, though, the immigration officials are willing to cooperate with businesses and settle any potential issues during the application process, so that it does not lead to a rejection.

From an entry visa prospective, one company respondent mentioned that there could be visa issues when it comes to countries, on which a European political embargo (either official or unofficial) has been placed. A curious consequence of such restrictions is that they may be passed on to countries administratively linked with those, on which restrictions are actually imposed. Such is the case with Russia and Ukraine. While the sanctions are imposed on Russian nationals, visas for Ukrainian nationals are being processed through the embassy located in Russia, and they also experience difficulties with the visa process.

From the individual point of view, there are also several risks. One respondent mentioned that the entire project team performed project work on business trips for five months before their Employment Permits have been obtained. This could trigger international taxation consequences with both Ireland and their home country claiming income earned for the work performed in Ireland and paid for in their home country as taxable in their jurisdiction. According to the international taxation principles outlined in the OECD Model Tax Convention (OECD, 2014b), income earned on the territory of the state may be taxed in that state. Thus, Ireland seems to have sufficient legal

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25 If the remuneration has been paid through the home country payroll, the home country may withhold taxes at source, while Ireland may claim that it is subject to tax in Ireland.
ground to claim such income. However, an individual may not be aware of this. This exposes them to a risk of legal proceedings initiated against them by the Irish tax control authorities. On the other hand, even if an individual is aware of such tax compliance issues, it may not be practically feasible to obtain a tax refund in the home country, and thus this income will be subject to double taxation.

Another point is, although non-EEA individuals are paying social security contributions, they may not have access to the social protection benefits when terminated. This reminds the researcher the situation of paying car insurance without any chance of receiving compensation in case of accident. While this might be an unintentional policy gap, the consequences of it are real.

One company representative mentioned lengthy application times as another significant risk factor, as many good candidates drop during the application stage. This can happen as they are offered employment elsewhere under comparable conditions with a closer employment start date. As individual and company representatives noticed, some other immigration systems that have supply driven elements may be more attractive for applicants. Due to heightened international competition for skilled workers, this factor may put companies based in Ireland at a disadvantage comparing to other English-speaking OECD countries.

Table 9 outlines probability and impact of different risks mentioned in this section. The impact is marked as high where the negative outcome of the risky event cannot be changed after it has happened.
### Table 9: Assessment of Immigration-Related Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Possibility of happening</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Requirement to hire at least 50% of European nationals prevents a company from hiring a non-EEA national</td>
<td>Medium/High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates not possessing needed educational qualifications for the role</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidates dropping during the application process as they are offered to start working sooner under comparable conditions elsewhere</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-EEA qualifications are not recognized in Ireland</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa delays or rejections in some locations due to political reasons</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The immigration authorities exercise discretion in the discriminatory way favouring some businesses</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment permit quotas prevent a company from hiring a non-EEA national</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The immigration authorities wrongly classify the position as not on the Highly Skilled Eligible occupations list</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The immigration authorities wrongly classify the position as ineligible according to the Ineligible Occupations list</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations List and Ineligible Occupations List are not reflecting the real demand for skills</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The immigration authorities reject the application with no clear reason provided</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax compliance issues for individuals working on business trips until Employment Permits are granted</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social security does not provide protection when the employment with a non-EEA individual is terminated</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 5.8. Project Procurement Management

The immigration system may affect the Project Procurement Management in several ways. Firstly, when external professionals are engaged to performed project duties. One ICT company representative mentioned that they sometimes engage external teams to deliver a sub-component or perform short-term work when in-house experts are better used on other projects. If external experts are non-EEA nationals, they may require a Contract for Services Employment Permit, entry visas and GNIB registration to perform their project duties. Another way companies engage external expertise is from their foreign subsidiaries. One PFS respondent referred to the Atypical Working Scheme administered by the INIS as something the company would regularly use. Another administrative scheme to bring in non-EEA professionals from company’s foreign offices is the Inter Company Transfer Employment Permit.
Secondly, there might be a need to meet non-EEA suppliers in Ireland. They would require a business visa to enter the country for such purposes. One company that could not share their expertise with the researcher explained that they outsource the immigration compliance to an external agency. Few other respondents said they are using help of immigration consultants and legal professionals. This showcases the complexity of the system, as companies are willing to pay for immigration-related services in order to mitigate immigration-related risks.

5.9. Project Stakeholder Management

Immigration requirements extend the list of project stakeholders. Firstly, there are the immigration authorities, on whose discretion Employment Permits, entry and residence documents depend (the DJEI, INIS and GNIB, accordingly). Secondly, there are immigration compliance professionals within a company who handle the process. While they do not take the immigration decision, it is up to them to risk-proof applications. Most company representatives mentioned that these in-house professionals act in a pre-emptive way communicating with the business and individuals and obtaining additional information to prevent potential issues. The hiring manager within the company and the individual are also actively involved in the process. Some companies involve immigration lawyers and consultants as well as external agencies to handle the immigration compliance. There may also be political groups involved supporting or opposing immigration of non-EEA workers, although none of the respondents mentioned that these groups influenced their ability to bring in professionals from non-EEA countries. The power/interest grid (see Figure 8) groups the stakeholders by their level of authority and their involvement in the process and suggests project management strategies in regards to each group of these stakeholders (see Figure 8).
As seen from Figure 8, stakeholders with the largest power are the hiring manager and the immigration bodies. While the former makes a decision whether to hire a non-EEA national, the latter has the authority to permit or prohibit this non-EEA national to work in Ireland. Other stakeholders who have significant interest in the process are in-house professionals who handle immigration compliance, the individual applicant and external agencies. While it appears that the immigration compliance specialists do not have actual power to approve the application, they may have developed connections with the immigration officials, as many respondents mention. These professionals oftentimes have significant experience working with the immigration system, and the success of the application might be up to their ability to anticipate risks and prevent potential issues. That is why they are at the top of the Keep Informed sector and close to the Manage Closely sector where the immigration bodies are. It is also assumed that the hiring manager has no interest in the process but in its outcome (i.e. whether the non-EEA national will be permitted to work in Ireland),
while the immigration compliance specialists communicate their assessment of such outcomes and actual outcomes to the hiring managers.

5.10. Project Integration Management

Project Integration Management unites processes from other knowledge areas. Therefore, the immigration system’s influence on this knowledge area includes everything covered in this chapter. These implications should be duly documented in the Project Plan, and any experience with the immigration system should be reviewed upon the closure of the project, included to the Lessons Learned Log and utilized to increase efficiency of immigration compliance activities performed by an organization in the course of other international projects.
6. **Conclusions**

Ireland's economic growth is particularly dependent on export of services. ICT and PFS sectors are locomotives of such growth, as they accommodate a variety of international projects. These projects gain an international dimension not only because they serve clients from different geographies, but because they are implemented by people that come from across the world.

6.1. **High Skills or Not High Skills**

Indeed, one representative of a transnational corporation that implements international projects in Ireland mentioned that they employ people from nine different countries. Considering that there are 32 EEA countries, it is not so hard to figure out that a bigger part of this variety of countries would fall under the immigration restrictions. Of course, it is only a single example, but it illustrates well that skills needs in the Irish economy cannot be met with EEA nationals alone.

In fact, there is a global competition for skilled professionals, and many OECD countries liberalize their immigration policies directed at high skills economic migrants. What about Ireland’s performance to attract top talent? Total net migration in every post-recession year remained negative. Current economic prospects seem bright with Ireland’s economy growing ahead of all other EU countries. But to sustain the current growth rates the immigration system will need to assist businesses in filling problematic positions.

6.2. **Big Picture**

Most business representatives consider the Irish immigration system helpful. The immigration authorities seem to be open to collaboration with business representatives. There are plenty of administrative schemes to handle different types of immigration arrangement. Rejections are scarce. The Critical Skills aspect is well developed and even considered an advantage comparing to some other OECD countries. Individual applicants are not required to pass a language test. This is, of course, a good part.

Not everything is sunshine and rainbow, though. At times it may take up to half a year to bring in needed professionals. Companies see professionals opting out and taking other offers with a closer start date. The process is complicated and could be streamlined and aligned. Requirements do not always justify the purpose, and customer experience is far from great.

6.3. **Discretion or Discrimination**

It looks like the immigration system is a bit ‘more friendly’ to some businesses, particularly those paying handsome amounts of taxes and employing many people in Ireland. Personal connections
also help cooperation with the immigration bodies. Immigration officials have wide discretion they may use for good reasons to facilitate applications in case of an urgent need. The problem with this is that such facilitation cannot be applied to all applications, while defining which ones of them are more urgent may bring up an ethical conflict.

6.4. Quantitative Restrictions

Immigration risks are somewhat asymmetric for companies of different size. While large companies may benefit from current immigration arrangements, start-ups – greenhouses of innovation – incur larger risks. One example of such asymmetry is a 50% rule, which does not permit a company to hire a non-EEA national unless 50% of its current employees are nationals of EEA countries. This rule is unlikely to create any hurdles for large organizations, as they can leverage their human resources across the departments. For a small company, though, it can create an insurmountable obstacle.

The legislature allows establishing quotas for non-EEA workers. These quotas are not disclosed in public and do not currently show up in practice, but with the labour market becoming more competitive and a growing need for professionals from outside of EEA, these quotas may create tangible risks for companies hiring workers from overseas.

6.5. Qualitative Restrictions

Recognition of foreign qualifications is currently an issue. It is understandable that reaching international agreements in the education area is a long-term matter. What can be done today is establishing clear and reasonable criteria for tertiary qualifications obtained abroad to be recognized in Ireland. Having this information closer attention can be given to the translation process, so that it cannot be misinterpreted by the immigration officials.

Another issue with qualifications is that many technical professionals dealing with the latest technologies are in fact self-taught. Many Silicon Valley geniuses were college dropouts. It is currently impossible to employ a non-EEA professional without any tertiary qualifications, irrespective how competent they may be for the job. Possible solutions to this issue could include waivers to the qualification requirement conditioned with an increased salary threshold or proven practical experience.

In the dynamic business environment new positions are constantly introduced unheard only few years ago. Therefore, it would be a good practice to review where there are shortages and excessive supply. Companies currently do not experience problems in this area but with the accelerating rate of technological development, such practice would be forward-looking.
6.6. It Is All about Time

It takes a long time from the initial screening of a non-EEA candidate till they can actually start working in Ireland. It is so far the biggest issue for businesses: their customers do not like to wait; individual applicants do not like to wait; and the business itself does not stand still. The most obvious time to shorten the Employment Permit application time is through introduction of an online filing system. Currently, a physical filing system is in place, and each mailing transaction extends the application time.

It was also noted that the current application tracking system does not serve its purpose well, as it only shows the stage an Employment Permit application is currently on. What businesses need to see to handle hiring manager’s, individual’s and clients’ expectation is how many days are left till the grant of an Employment Permit.

GNIB and visa offices could greatly benefit from an introduction of an online appointment booking system. Entry visa processing times can be shortened with the help of a peer review process. Such process could also take some administrative workload off visa office personnel’s shoulders. However, main time saving potential is in potential process improvements.

6.7. Potential Process Improvements

Companies usually look for Irish and EEA applicants first to fill in project roles. When they are not available, they explore the pool of oversees candidates. The current process requires that the company passes the Labour Market Skills Test implying that the vacancy is advertised in Ireland and EEA countries again. Fortunately, this is not required for shortage occupations.

Companies would greatly appreciate an arrangement when an individual could be eligible to start working in Ireland from the day their Employment Permit application is filed with the DJEI. As rejections are quite rare, the company may underwrite such application. To ensure that regulatory requirements are not breached penalties and cancellations of an Employment Permission may be installed for non-compliance.

The process improvement that would significantly shorten application times is introduction of a joined Employment Permit and entry visa application for visa required non-EEA nationals. Currently an entry visa can only be applied for after an Employment Permit has been granted. When non-EEA nationals enter Ireland for a job interview that results in a job offer, they may need to return to their home country to apply for a long-term visa for employment purposes. This flaw should also be eliminated allowing applications from within Ireland.
The Effect of the National Immigration System on Implementation of International Projects in Ireland

When individuals obtain a long-term visa they show their intent to stay in Ireland for long term and simply do not understand why they have to obtain separate residence permission for the same purpose. Entry visas and immigration control are responsibilities of different governmental bodies: INIS and GNIB. Still, this does not justify such arrangements in the eye of a customer of the Irish immigration system. Individuals see it as a bureaucratic process and a source of state revenue.

Finally, Employment Permit, visa and GNIB applications are handled separately, and the information about them are scattered across the DJEI, INIS and GNIB websites. The language on these websites abounds with technical terms and is difficult for a non-native English speaker. Customers would like to see one-stop-shop where all necessary information is clearly explained and structured and where they can submit their application, preferably a single one.

6.8. Political Factors

Companies mention that Ireland’s position outside of the Schengen area negatively influences travel arrangements for non-EEA professionals. While having an Irish visa, non-EEA national currently need to obtain separate visas to enter the UK and other Schengen countries in Europe. While it is unlikely that Ireland will change its position to enter the Schengen without the UK’s approval, reaching a common travel area with the UK is much more realistic. This would eliminate at least one visa to be obtained by non-EEA individuals working in Ireland.

One may wrongly assume that experience obtained with one Irish visa office is transferrable to other locations. Different countries have different requirements and visa processing times, while the latter also depends on their workload and times of year. This hardly makes planning task for the companies easy. There is a need to standardize processes across geographies and introduce maximum visa issuing time.

6.9. Money Do Not Matter

It has been estimated that direct immigration compliance costs an average company from the selection more than EUR 170k per annum. This amount may be sufficient to hire 3 qualified professionals and deliver a small-scale project generating returns for the company. It is worth noticing that indirect costs, which can potentially be quite large, are not considered. Still, companies deem immigration costs appropriate. Raising awareness about cost-saving potential in this area may change their mind and activate the advocacy effort.
6.10. Putting It All Together

The Irish immigration system currently serves its purpose, and the companies seem to have adapted to it rather than the other way around. However, as competition for talent becomes more intense on the global scale, it might be just the right time for changes.
7. Reflection

“By three methods we may learn wisdom: first, by reflection, which is noblest; second, by imitation, which is easiest; and, third, by experience, which is the bitterest.” – Confucius

7.1. Background

I was born in the Soviet Union in a family of a teacher. Hardly ever one can imagine a less favourable business environment with the entire economy largely based on state planning rather than forces of supply and demand. Fortunately, my native Ukraine broke free in 1991 when I was only 2 years old, and I was not brought up in a country where commerce was considered simply dishonourable. In my early childhood I discovered that trading toys I did not like for other kids’ pocket money would allow me buy my favourite bubble gum without having to ask my mom. Back in the day, this exciting revelation freed me from the burden of ‘being a good boy’ for too long to get what I want. Jokes aside, it probably was my first business experience I can recall.

I was good with numbers at school and decided to study Finance in college. After receiving a degree in Finance, I had a conversation with my college mates, during which I said half-jokingly that I will pursue business education abroad when I will be able to afford it. I only recalled that conversation recently when my MBA dissertation was on its final stage. It is fascinating how often we achieve goals set in the past not even realizing it. This chapter is a good chance to document my experience and aspirations for a seminal review upon reaching important milestones in my career.

7.2. Vision of the Future

When thinking about the future, I typically break it down into three time horizons. The immediate one covers the clearly foreseeable future. It may last from several months to several years from the current point in time. The long-term future extends to not clearly foreseeable but desirable outcomes. It may be within a decade from now or even further. Finally, the ultimate future for me is the state of being rather than a particular outcome, and it provides guiding light to all my choices to achieve an ultimate balance with myself and external world. My approach can be illustrated with an example of driving a car to some particular location. The immediate future is the road ahead clearly seen. The long-term future is the location where you drive, and the ultimate future is the reason why you drive the car to that location. While the immediate and long-term future change with time, the ultimate future changes with personal values and meaning put into them.

The key milestones in my immediate future are: completion of my MBA degree with First Class Honours; employment with an organization that would allow me to contribute my knowledge gained during the program to tackling business problems and making a positive impact on the world; intermediate level of Polish language; and many exciting places explored and connections with
interesting people made. The key milestones in my long-term future are: achieved expertise and recognition in the professional area of specialization; personal business successfully started up; happy family life; many successfully implemented social projects. My ultimate future is living by my values: excellence – doing my best at whatever initiative I take on; continuous learning – using other people’s experience to enrich mine; personal development – reflecting on my personal experiences and self-correcting; courage – focusing on pleasurable outcomes rather than pleasurable actions; and well-being – physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

7.3. Why MBA in Project Management

The word project may sound fancy, but in fact projects are very common in our everyday lives. According to the Project Management Institute (2013, p. 553), a respected international professional body, a project is a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result. Thus, even a morning exercise routine can be classified as a project.

In my experience, most projects are managed on an ad-hoc basis meaning that different approaches are used to initiate, plan, execute, control, and close projects. We do not think about these processes when taking on and delivering routine projects in our personal lives. The earlier morning exercise example can be broken down into these process groups. You initiate your morning exercise by getting out of bed having a clear intention in mind. You plan what kind of exercises you will be doing today. You make yourself to actually do the exercise and control yourself that you do it right. Finally, you finish the exercise and analyse the experience you had. I wanted to learn more about Project Management tools & techniques to make the best use of my time at home and at work and become a better problem-solver.

I have long been aware of the phenomenon of globalization, and I wanted to expose myself to the environment businesses find most favourable for their international operations. Ireland appeared as a great example of such environment. Many tech giants, such as Google, Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, PayPal, have their European headquarters in Ireland. Irish population is also quite diverse. Although I worked in an international company, meeting foreigners after hours in Ukraine was quite rare. When I first arrived in Ireland, I felt a little bit uncomfortable. Back home I had everything under control, and here I did not know what awaits me ‘around the corner’. I realized that I knew very little about the world, and that I need to broaden my horizons, which my course mates helped me to achieve.
7.4. My Experience with the Course

My experience with the course was largely positive. I particularly enjoyed the core Project Management modules. My professional experience helped me understand practical implications of the Project Management theory. I visualized how I could use one or another method at work and how it would let me improve the working process. My experience in class also reflected on my personal life, as I became more organized and confident. In class, we had an opportunity to discuss any questions that we have with experienced project managers, practice newly acquired skills solving project management problems from case studies, working in international teams and delivering presentations in front of a large audience. I have no doubt that this would help me tackle real business issues at work.

The course helped me to achieve a higher level of self-awareness. I got interested about emotional intelligence and tools for personal improvement. I identified my core strengths and weaknesses, set long-term goals and organized sources of information I need for more effective learning and development. I started a reflective journal, where I put entries weekly analysing my past experiences. I became more confident and better prepared for a career in a managerial position. I believe it changed the way I think and behave.

One of my favourite modules was Business Strategy. Apart from providing students with theoretical models, Clare, who lectured the module, also established communication with every person in the classroom. Most of us had previous business experience, and it was exciting to learn about business practices in different countries and interpretation of strategic issues through cultural lenses. It also provided us with the ample source for after-class discussions, which were at times more useful than the lectures themselves. From Business Strategy, Financial Analysis and International Management modules I learned what real life implications managerial decisions may bring. Oftentimes, these examples were drawn from business sections of the freshest newspapers. They set me up to reading news in order to draw useful conclusions rather than to pass the time.

Of course, not all experiences were as positive. Maybe, because of my background or project management mind set, not only I wanted to learn about best performing models and practices but also how to implement them in different settings. The Performance Driven Marketing module appeared too conceptual to me and lacking dialogue. The fact that the lecturer still has not provided me with any feedback on one of my assignments, despite my requests in person and via email, also frustrated me somewhat. However, I consider it as a good experience, since it pushed me to seek advice outside of college, and encouraged me to lead a team of course mates to develop a marketing plan for a potential business one of the team members intended to start up in Ireland.
7.5. My Experience with the Dissertation

As Project Management theory suggests, the amount of uncertainty is the lowest while the cost of changes is the largest in the end of the project. Indeed, my dissertation was completed a few days before the final deadline, which let me write the Reflection chapter with little uncertainty around my ability to submit the work on time or stress of last-minute changes. I undertook my dissertation as a project. I believe that, regardless of the final mark, this project can be considered as the one successfully delivered.

Among the Project Management tools & techniques I used to complete my dissertation are:

- project scoping, planning and risk management (see the Methodology chapter);
- scheduling of project activities (see Appendix E);
- performing quality assurance (proofreading of the dissertation);
- managing stakeholders and communications (communication log was consciously excluded from the Appendices section to preserve confidentiality of respondents).

Many ideas for my research I drew from the Research Methods module. I learned about and could choose from many research philosophies, strategies, sampling methods, data collection techniques to achieve my research aims. I also drew from other disciplines while working on my research. The Project Management Implications chapter is structured using Project Management Knowledge Areas. The immigration cost analysis was done with the help of knowledge obtained during the Financial Analysis module. Strategies to explore the literature, collect primary data, combine insights were created with the help of critical thinking developed during the Business Strategy module. The legal overview was performed thanks to the suggestion and inspiration from my supervisor.

One of the most difficult parts was to reach out to company representatives in my selection. Most of them simply did not respond to my emails, invitations on social networks and phone calls. It was also challenging to convince those who engaged in a conversation to provide information, as they did not have any incentives to do so. I believe that difficulties with information collection could have different nature. Most often, student requests are not accommodated due to low priority of such requests for businesses, especially those not actively hiring graduates, and the unproportional distribution of such requests with some companies receiving much more requests than others. However, it is also possible that my particular topic is dealing with sensitive information, as it assesses effectiveness of the governmental bodies. This argument is also supported by the fact that all of the respondents chose to stay anonymous.

7.6. Takeaways

From the MBA program and dissertation I learned many valuable lessons. Some of them that probably had the largest impact on me are further explained.
A plan is not a trap. Although nothing goes 100% according to the plan, it is always a good idea to have one. There is no need to get myself stuck implementing a plan that is not working, though. The plan needs to be reviewed and changed, as the situation demands, but the purpose of such changes and their impact on the final objective must be clearly understood.

Communication is the key. There is no chance I would have been able to complete this work entirely on my own. My supervisor, friends and connections were great sources of information and inspiration. I noticed that even the quality and quantity of information provided on the data collection stage depended on whether rapport had been established with the interviewee.

Rejection is not personal. Getting myself to ask other people for help can be difficult for me, and so can be handling rejection, especially when nobody is willing to provide information. At some point in time, I realized that I expected a rejection when making follow-up calls. This was not a good approach. Reaching out with positive attitude and confidence brought much better results. Ultimately, it was about accepting or rejecting my offer, not me as a human being, and should not have been taken personally.

Ideas come unexpected. I found out that plenty of ideas for my dissertation came not during the period of focused work, but during the leisure time. I had many ideas popping into my head while on a bus, running or taking a shower. It is a good practice to mix periods of focused learning with periods of active relaxation.

Learning fills in missing pieces. There were few times when I had an idea but could not elaborate on it, as I lacked knowledge in one or another related area. I found out that learning basics of something can take you a long way. It is important to put newly acquired knowledge into practice, or it gets forgotten very quickly. Learning allows us to perform complex work and extract useful information from this experience. The fact that I do not know how to do something should not prevent me from learning and trying.

The state of ‘flow’ needs to be switched on. I found myself unwilling to start working on some parts of my dissertation. This opened way to procrastination, which is rarely a good thing. However, once I started working on these pieces, I went in the ‘flow’ state and completed them quite quickly. I need to force myself into this working mode. When it becomes a habit, it will hardly be noticeable.

Content goes first. It works best for me if I get my thoughts on the paper and then edit them to an appropriate form. Trying to perfect a single sentence or a paragraph at a time makes changes extremely time consuming. It is also hard to get rid of something you worked on for a long time, and
there might be a temptation to leave these perfected sentences, even if they do not bring any value, which is not right.
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## Appendix A. List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DJEI</td>
<td>Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>EEA</td>
<td>European Economic Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFTA</td>
<td>European Free Trade Agreement</td>
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<td>EGFSN</td>
<td>Expert Group on Future Skills Needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTE</td>
<td>Full Time Equivalent headcount</td>
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<tr>
<td>GNIB</td>
<td>Garda National Immigration Bureau</td>
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<tr>
<td>INIS</td>
<td>Irish Naturalization and Immigration Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFS</td>
<td>Professional and Financial Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>TNC</td>
<td>Third Country National</td>
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## Appendix B. Irish Companies That Experience the Largest Skills Shortages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Companies That Hired More than 10 Non-EEA Nationals in 2014</th>
<th>Number of Employment Permits in 2014</th>
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<td>Health Services Executive</td>
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<td>Google Ireland Limited</td>
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<td>Irish Rugby Football Union</td>
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### Appendix B, continued

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<td>Microsoft Ireland Operations Limited</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sogeti Ireland Ltd</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C. Interview Questionnaire for Business Representatives

1. Stakeholders of international projects

Stakeholders of international projects typically include a project customer, a project sponsor\(^{26}\), a project manager, project team members, suppliers and contractors, government regulators, and pressure groups\(^{27}\).

- What percentage of your projects include at least one non-Irish stakeholder?
- What percentage of your projects include at least one Third Country National (TCN)\(^{28}\)?
- What roles do third country nationals play in the projects?

There are four main immigration schemes: localization (permanent employment); assignment (temporary employment); business trip; business setup.

- Which of these arrangements do you specifically use with regard to third country nationals?
- Are there any other ways you arrange it?
- How do these schemes relate to different project roles?

Considering specific needs of every project, project stakeholders can work in the same physical space or remotely using communication technologies.

- How often do stakeholders of international projects you implement need to work in the same physical space?
- Does your decision to co-locate the team or work remotely depend on the immigration restrictions?
- Please describe situations when the stakeholders need to be collocated and when they can successfully collaborate in the virtual space.

2. Localizations and assignments

- What are the top three positions most difficult to fill? Do you feel you can freely hire a Third Country National in these positions? What challenges do you face when you decide to do so?
- How many people do you employ in Ireland? How many of them are Third Country Nationals?
- Do you recruit Third Country Nationals from abroad or in Ireland? Which way is more challenging and why?
- What Employment Permit Types do you apply for?
- What are main problems you face applying for Employment Permits?
- Do you feel that Employment Permit requirements are appropriate? How does the compliance with these requirements affect your projects?
- Do you think that Highly Skilled Eligible Occupations List and Ineligible Categories of Employments for Employment Permits are appropriate? Please elaborate in your response.
- What time does it usually take from the initiation of employment till the moment the permit is issued? How do you feel it reflects on the project?

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\(^{26}\) Project sponsor is a person who provides resources and support for the project and is accountable for its success.

\(^{27}\) Pressure groups are organizations that use various forms of advocacy to influence public opinion or policy.

\(^{28}\) Third Country Nationals are citizens of states other than European Economic Area members and Switzerland.
Appendix C, continued

- Do you feel the permit’s term of validity is appropriate? Do you feel that the permit’s cost is justifiable? If not, what would be appropriate term of validity and cost and why?
- In what percentage of cases do you need to extend your work permit application? Do you face any problems with extensions? What are they?
- Does the immigration compliance as a prerequisite for a relevant proposed employee act in inhibitory manner?
- Do you have any thoughts on how this arrangement can be optimized?

3. Business trips

- How many people come and go on business trips each year? What percentage of them are TNCs?
- What are main problems you have with business trips?
- Did you have any entry visa rejections? Why? How this affected the project?
- Do you feel that business trips documents requirements are appropriate? Do they impede project progress? How?
- How much time does it take from applying for an entry visa till it is granted? How do you feel it reflects on the project?
- How do you feel Ireland’s position outside of the Schengen Area affects business trip arrangements? Does this increase costs/time? How significantly?
- Do you have any thoughts on how this arrangement can be optimized?

4. Business setup

- Do you use this arrangement to implement international projects? What programs have you applied in so far? What was this outcome?
- If yes, please describe what kind of projects. How many Third Country Nationals did you bring in under this arrangement?
- How much time does it take for this permission to be granted? How do you feel it reflects on the project?
- What kind of problems do you have with this arrangement?
- How do you think this arrangement can be optimized from the migration prospective?
- If you do not use this arrangement, why? Do you think you would use it if capital requirements were lower?

5. Compliance process

- Do you use services of immigration intermediaries (lawyers, consultants, oversees recruitment agencies) to handle compliance? What kind of intermediaries and for what purposes?
- If processed in-house, how much time do you spend handling each type of arrangements per position?
- Do your employees handle it by themselves? If so, can there be any productivity loss?
- What is the compliance cost and who covers it? Do you feel it impacts the overall project cost? Who ultimately bears it – company or client?
- Are immigration procedures clear and transparent? Are the procedures easy to follow? Are there tutorials and helpline?

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29 Schengen Area comprises of 26 European countries that eliminated passport and immigration controls at their joint borders. Ireland and the UK opted out from this arrangement. This question feeds into the issue of TNCs who operate in more than one EU/EEA jurisdiction both within and outside Schengen.
Appendix C, continued

- Do immigration clerks have too much discretion? Did you have rejections for any of the arrangements? Are rejection reasons provided reasonable? Have you appealed rejections? How did it turn out?
- Many developed countries, such as Canada and Australia, have a supply-driven approach\(^\text{30}\) to immigration. Do you think it would suit Ireland? Why?
- What are the most pronounced compliance issues you encounter? What immigration-related risks do you encounter?

6. Concluding questions

- What are the dynamics? More business trips, localizations, assignments, business setups than previous year?
- Did you have any other immigration-related problems? What stories you can share?
- To sum up, what are the most important factors that influence your ability to bring in third country nationals?
- What can be done to optimize the immigration system to better serve your needs?

\(^\text{30}\) **Supply-driven approach** involves inviting potential migrants to apply directly to the immigration authorities without first ensuring employment. The selection is carried out on the basis of certain characteristics (e.g. age, educational attainment, language proficiency and occupation). The points are assigned based on how desirable the applicant is according to each characteristic. Candidates having more than a threshold level of points are then granted the right to establish residence and seek employment.
Appendix D. Interview Questionnaire for Individual Employment Permit Holders

1. What was your level of education when you came to work in Ireland?
2. How many years of professional experience in your field did you have when you came to work in Ireland?
3. Were you recruited while you were in Ireland or outside of Ireland? Please describe the recruitment process from your perspective.
4. Do you need a visa to enter Ireland? In your opinion, are visa requirements appropriate?
5. How much time did it take for your visa to be issued?
6. Did you have any visa-related problems? If yes, please elaborate what kind of problems you encountered.
7. How do you feel Ireland’s position outside of the Schengen Area\(^\text{31}\) affects business trip arrangements for non-European nationals? Please explain your position.
8. Who handled your entry visa and Employment Permit applications? What challenges did you face with these applications?
9. Did your company pay or reimburse you, Employment Permit, and GNIB registration fees?
10. Which Employment Permit type do you hold?
11. Do you feel that Employment Permit requirements are appropriate? How does the compliance with these requirements affect your company and you personally?
12. How much time did it take from initiation of employment till the moment the permit was issued? How much of this time was consumed by the immigration authorities to process your application?
13. Do you feel the permit’s term of validity is appropriate? Do you feel that the permit’s cost is justifiable? If not, what would be appropriate term of validity and cost and why?
14. Did you have experience extending the duration of your Employment Permit? What issues did you face while applying for extension?
15. What was your experience with the GNIB residence card? Did your company help you with it? Were the immigration officials friendly and helpful?
16. Did you or your company use services of immigration intermediaries (lawyers, consultants, oversees recruitment agencies) to handle compliance? What kind of intermediaries and for what purposes?
17. In your experience, did you feel that immigration procedures clear and transparent and why? Are the procedures easy to follow? Are tutorials and helpline available and accessible?
18. Do immigration clerks, in your opinion, have too much discretion? Did you have rejections for any of the arrangements? Are rejection reasons provided reasonable? Have you appealed rejections? How did it turn out?
19. Does your company regularly hire non-European nationals? If yes, in what positions?
20. Do you feel that the immigration restrictions act in the inhibitory manner when it comes to hiring non-European nationals? Please give examples from your personal experience or experience of people you know.
21. Do you have any thoughts on how visa/Employment Permit/GNIB registration system can be optimized from both business and individual applicant perspective?
22. Many developed countries, such as Canada and Australia, have a supply-driven approach\(^\text{32}\) to immigration. Do you think it would suit Ireland? Why?

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\(^31\) Schengen Area comprises of 26 European countries that eliminated passport and immigration controls at their joint borders. Ireland and the UK opted out from this arrangement. This question feeds into the issue of TNCs who operate in more than one EU/EEA jurisdiction both within and outside Schengen.

\(^32\) Supply-driven approach refers to a system where the government determines the number of immigrants based on the demand for labor or expertise, rather than allowing individuals to move freely.
Appendix D, continued

23. To sum up, do you think that the Irish immigration system facilitates or impedes implementation of international projects? Does it appear more strict/favourable comparing to other countries? What are most significant factors contributing to this?

24. Is there anything you believe needs to be changed immediately? What exactly?

32 Supply-driven approach involves inviting potential migrants to apply directly to the immigration authorities without first ensuring employment. The selection is carried out on the basis of certain characteristics (e.g. age, educational attainment, language proficiency and occupation). The points are assigned based on how desirable the applicant is according to each characteristic. Candidates having more than a threshold level of points are then granted the right to establish residence and seek employment.
## Appendix E. Schedule of Dissertation Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Name</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Finish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Update the proposal according to the received feedback</td>
<td>Mon 01/06/15</td>
<td>Tue 02/06/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Draft interview questions</td>
<td>Wed 03/06/15</td>
<td>Fri 05/06/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Arrange a meeting with the supervisor and discuss the dissertation proposal and interview questions</td>
<td>Mon 08/06/15</td>
<td>Fri 12/06/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Update the materials according to the supervisor’s recommendations</td>
<td>Mon 15/06/15</td>
<td>Fri 19/06/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Contact sample representatives, schedule and conduct interviews</td>
<td>Mon 22/06/15</td>
<td>Fri 03/07/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Follow-up contacts with sample representatives and the remaining interviews</td>
<td>Mon 06/07/15</td>
<td>Fri 17/07/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Analyze data, summarize and interpret findings</td>
<td>Mon 20/07/15</td>
<td>Fri 31/07/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Arrange a meeting with the supervisor and consult about the work completed up to date</td>
<td>Mon 03/08/15</td>
<td>Fri 07/08/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Update the materials according to supervisor’s recommendations</td>
<td>Mon 10/08/15</td>
<td>Fri 14/08/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Write Introduction, Abstract, and Conclusion and submit for the final review</td>
<td>Mon 17/08/15</td>
<td>Fri 21/08/15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The schedule is represented in a Gantt chart format with dates from 24 May '15 to 16 Aug '15.