



# Leveraging Global Capability through Arup People

## Background Challenge:

Arup, a global design firm with over 18,000 professionals, faced growing challenges in managing and utilizing its vast expertise. Specifically, Arup's decentralized systems created numerous obstacles for bid teams trying to access and utilize employee expertise effectively.

With CVs scattered across regional file shares and no consistent updating process, bid preparers spent considerable time manually curating CVs, often without comprehensive visibility into colleagues' expertise. This inefficiency was particularly costly in the context of Arup's 10,000+ annual bids, which required millions in labor costs due to manual effort and repeated tasks. Without a single, searchable system, Arup struggled to optimize its resources, impacting both client response times and bid quality.

Recognizing the strategic importance of unlocking and sharing its knowledge base, Arup aimed to develop a unified, centralized platform to streamline access to expertise, improve productivity, and ultimately drive greater client service.

Alister Harwood, Director and UKIMEA Transport Work Winning Leader at Arup, and Dominique Poole-Avery, Global Knowledge Manager for Arup led the project.

Dominique underscored the mission: "At Arup, our commitment to solving some of the world's toughest challenges relies not only on the talent of our people but on our ability to harness that talent collectively. We needed a solution that would allow us to operate as a fully connected organization, where knowledge flows seamlessly across regions and teams. By empowering every professional to contribute to and access a unified expertise platform, we could ensure that the best skills and knowledge are readily available for every project."

Alister added: "This initiative was about breaking down silos and creating a platform that genuinely reflects Arup's commitment to collaboration, innovation, and delivering excellence to our clients worldwide."

## The Solution: Arup People Powered by ikaun:

In response, Arup's leadership launched the Arup People project, aiming to create a dynamic, centralized platform for employee profiles, project experiences, and areas of expertise. Starting in autumn 2020, the project began with discovery and analysis to evaluate potential solutions.

After a competitive review, ikaun was selected in February 2022 based on its ability to meet Arup's complex needs. The development process included a proof of concept from January to March 2022, followed by planning for a firm-wide rollout. Arup's vision was for Arup People to become a single source of truth for internal expertise, supporting semi-automated CV generation, expert searches, and comprehensive profile access for bid teams.

## About Arup

Arup is a global collective of designers, engineering and sustainability consultants, advisors and experts with over 18,000 professionals worldwide in over 95 offices across 35 countries in the North America, Europe and Australasia.

## Top 3 challenges

- ✓ **Decentralized Expertise Management:** Employee CVs were scattered across regional file shares, leading to inefficiencies and high labor costs due to manual, repetitive processes.
- ✓ **Limited Global Collaboration:** Siloed knowledge and the absence of multilingual support restricted cross-regional teamwork and hindered the ability to form diverse, high-performing teams.
- ✓ **Low Data Accuracy and Engagement:** Outdated profiles and inconsistent employee participation made it difficult to maintain accurate and comprehensive expertise data.

## What ikaun did

- ✓ **Centralized Expertise Access:** Unified 7,000 CVs into a centralized platform, introduced semi-automated CV generation, and deployed an expert-finder tool to streamline bid preparation.
- ✓ **Enhanced Global Collaboration:** Supported 13 languages and implemented data-driven team selection, enabling skill-based team formation and fostering inclusivity.
- ✓ **Increased Engagement and Accuracy:** Encouraged participation with training programs, onboarding resources, and leadership integration, leading to 12,000+ professionals regularly updating profiles.



## Implementation + Rollout:

The implementation of ikaun required close collaboration between Arup and ikaun to adapt the platform to Arup's specific requirements. Approximately 7,000 CVs were imported, consolidating data from multiple legacy systems into a single, accessible hub. Key features developed included multilingual support in 13 languages to enable global collaboration, automated CV generation, and an expert-finder function that enabled bid teams to quickly identify colleagues with the necessary skills and experience for projects. By retiring two legacy systems, Arup streamlined operations, reduced redundancy, and provided bid teams with up-to-date information, all while meeting the company's strategic objective of knowledge sharing and efficiency.

The successful global rollout of Arup People was supported by a comprehensive education and adoption strategy, which engaged stakeholders at all levels. Arup's leadership played a pivotal role in ensuring the platform was embedded into critical workflows, such as appraisals, onboarding, and performance reviews.

Training initiatives included e-learning modules, detailed onboarding materials, adoption drives, and platform champions who helped end-users maximize Arup People's features. Regular drop-in sessions provided ongoing support, reinforcing the platform's role in enhancing collaboration and knowledge sharing across the firm. This structured approach to rollout drove consistent understanding and widespread adoption of the platform within Arup.

## Results:

Since the February 2023 launch, Arup People powered by ikaun has delivered substantial measurable results, making a significant impact on Arup's operational efficiency, client satisfaction, and employee engagement:

- **Enhanced Efficiency and Bid Quality:** By centralizing expertise data and enabling semi-automated CV generation, Arup People has doubled the time bid teams can dedicate to tailoring CVs for client needs, leading to an improvement in bid quality and win rates. The expert-finder functionality has also significantly reduced the time spent on sourcing expertise, cutting down hours on repetitive tasks.
- **Increased User Engagement:** Over 12,000 Arup professionals have actively engaged with Arup People, regularly updating their profiles. This high participation rate has enhanced data accuracy across the platform and fostered a culture of continuous development within the firm.
- **Global Collaboration and Inclusivity:** With support for 13 languages, Arup People has strengthened cross-regional collaboration, allowing teams from various regions to easily access expertise. The platform's data-driven team selection capabilities promote inclusivity by forming high-performing teams based on skillsets and project needs rather than geographic limitations, creating diverse, effective project teams.

- **Improved Client Response Times and Outcomes:** By using the expert-finder feature, Arup can deploy the best talent for client projects more efficiently, resulting in faster response times and increased client satisfaction. The platform's ability to rapidly connect bid teams to the right expertise has also led to more tailored and effective client proposals, positively impacting Arup's client-facing initiatives.
- **Return on Investment and Long-Term Strategic Value:** The platform has delivered significant ROI, as leadership recognizes the impact of Arup People in enhancing bid quality, reducing response times, and streamlining processes.

Alister summarizes the success of the initiative:

“Arup People has transformed how we operate, making it possible for our teams to connect and collaborate on a truly global scale.

By centralizing our expertise and enabling fast, precise access to the right skills, we've not only enhanced the quality and speed of our bids but strengthened our ability to deliver the best outcomes for our clients.

**Alister Harwood**

*Director and UKIMEA Transport Work Winning Leader, Arup*

Dominique concludes:

“The platform has unlocked new efficiencies, driven greater engagement, and supported our goal of building inclusive, high-performing teams.

The measurable improvements in bid quality, client satisfaction, and operational efficiency prove that Arup People powered by ikaun is a cornerstone of our long-term success and commitment to excellence.

**Dominique Poole-Avery**

*Global Knowledge Manager, Arup*

## About ikaun

ikaun is a world-class experience management platform for the professional services industry. Built based on the needs of business development, marketing, and knowledge management, ikaun offers a unique solution for streamlining how experience is discovered, shared, and reused by business development and fee earners.

