

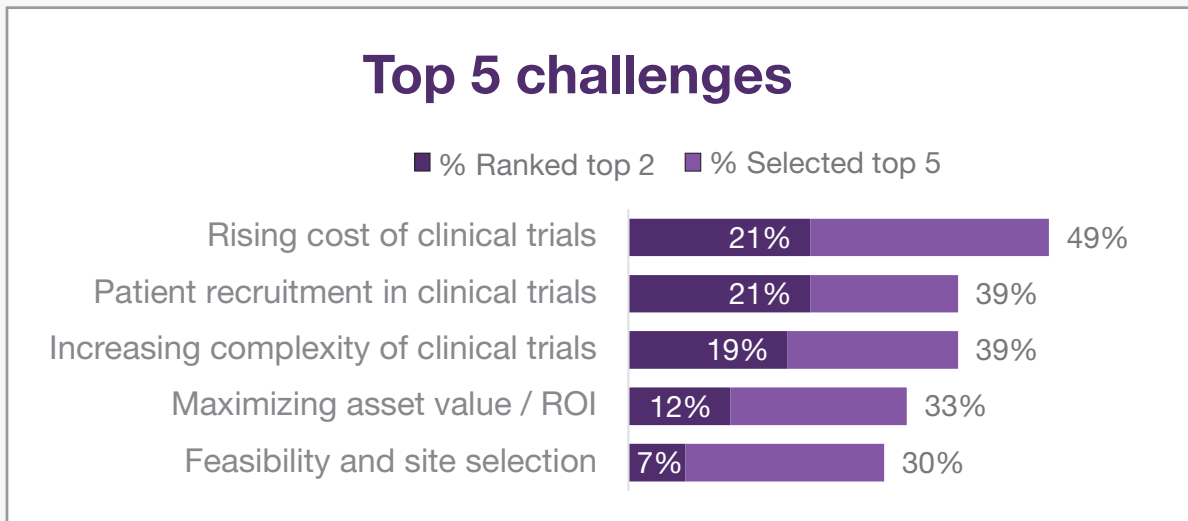
FSP solutions

PPD FSP solutions

Leveraging remote-based regional hubs in FSP partnerships to enhance clinical development

The biopharmaceutical industry faces mounting challenges, from rising drug development costs to high-pressure timelines. Over the past decade, the time required to complete a clinical trial has increased by 20–30%, while the cost of bringing a new drug to market has surged to approximately \$2.6 billion. These pressures require innovative solutions to streamline processes, optimize resources and accelerate clinical development without compromising quality.

In our [2025 FSP Trends Report](#), results of a recent survey of 150 biotech and pharmaceutical leaders indicated that they are leaning more toward incorporating functional service provider (FSP) models into their workflows to address increasing clinical development challenges and complexities.



One solution to address these challenges is the use of remote-based regional hubs in functional service provider (FSP) partnerships, which offers an alternative to traditional centralized staffing. Unlike conventional brick-and-mortar office setups concentrated in select major cities, remote-based regional hubs operate across a geographically distributed workforce. This model enables FSP partnerships to secure top-tier talent from a broader pool, providing sponsors with the most qualified professionals at cost-efficient rates. It also enables sponsors to expand their clinical research into emerging markets or remote areas with untapped patient populations and research sites with lower clinical trial activity to deliver more consistent enrollment and heightened staff engagement.

Further, they are able to meet broad operational requirements by accessing a wide variety of professionals equipped with local expertise. By breaking free from geographical constraints, biopharma and biotech companies can improve flexibility, efficiency and speed to market with a continuous workflow.

Rethinking traditional staffing: The advantage of remote-based regional hubs

Historically, contract research organizations (CROs) have established centralized hubs in major urban centers, where they compete for limited talent pools. While this approach may offer proximity to industry clusters, it also imposes significant constraints. These centralized offices are subject to high overhead costs, limited availability of specialized professionals, and logistical challenges tied to office-based work requirements.

A remote-based regional hub strategy eliminates these limitations. For example, PPD™ Functional Service Partnership (FSP) solutions draw from talent pools across multiple regions—including Latin America, India, the Philippines, China, and Central and Eastern Europe—to more effectively align program staffing with client needs. This model gives sponsors access to highly skilled professionals without the geographic and financial restrictions associated with traditional hiring. As a result, remote-based regional hubs provide clients with the best-suited and most cost-effective professionals for the job—wherever they are.

PPD FSP solutions remote-based regional hub locations



Geographically distributed and almost entirely remote workforce is clustered around **five regions**

Without traditional geographic constraints, remote-based regional hubs enable faster, more cost-effective access to top-tier talent. For example, instead of limiting recruitment to major cities like Mexico City, teams can locate and hire top tier talent anywhere throughout Latin America. Similarly, recruitment at universities in emerging locations in India helps avoid the intense competition for talent in bigger cities like Mumbai and Bengaluru. Or instead of hiring a doctor with medical writing expertise in Western Europe, remote-based regional hub teams may fill this role in Georgia, Serbia or 12 to 15 other Eastern European countries instead of the more commonly used cities in Bulgaria, Hungary, or Romania.

A distributed workforce also fosters greater diversity in expertise. Instead of concentrating specialists in a single region, FSP partners source the best candidates worldwide, ensuring a broader breadth and depth of knowledge and specialized skills to enhance program execution. Whether a sponsor requires regulatory specialists with a deep understanding of local guidelines or biostatisticians with expertise in rare disease studies, remote-based regional hubs offer greater flexibility to help meet these demands.

Increasing speed, efficiency and scalability in clinical development

Speed is a critical factor in drug development. Delays may cause missed market opportunities, loss of patent protection, regulatory issues and financial strain. For patients, it could mean loss of access to potential life-changing treatments.

Remote-based regional hubs help clients meet their timelines through rapid recruitment and easy onboarding. For example, the PPD FSP solutions team recently hired 90 clinical trial coordinators in India within four weeks simply because we could leverage a vast, pre-qualified talent pool unrestricted by physical office locations.

[Remote-based regional hubs also enable a “follow-the-sun” \(FTS\) model](#) that enhances efficiency by supporting continuous, around-the-clock progress. As one regional team completes its workday, another team in a different time zone takes over. This continuous workflow accelerates development and keeps projects on or ahead of schedule.

FSP partners employing an FTS model using remote-based regional hubs drive greater productivity and efficiency. For example, while one team conducts data validation in Mexico another handles programming in Brazil. Or a pharmacovigilance team in India hands off work to teams in Eastern Europe, then Latin America, ensuring 24-hour coverage. This type of workflow accelerates critical tasks, maintains compliance and keeps projects on or ahead of schedule.

To manage risk and ensure compliance when employing an FTS model using remote-based regional hubs, senior leaders are designated for each team or region and are accountable for the FTS governance structure and oversight of the handoff process. This approach minimizes downtime, mitigates bottlenecks and ensures that critical tasks—such as data cleaning, site monitoring and regulatory submissions—advance without interruption. This constant workflow means that sponsors meet tight development timelines while preserving quality and compliance.

Adaptability is another defining strength of the remote-based regional hub model. Unlike fixed-location teams, remote staffing enables better customization to specific client needs around time zones, language and levels of interaction. Whether a study needs region-specific expertise, multilingual support, or staggered working hours, FSP partnerships utilizing remote-based regional hubs are best equipped to configure resources in the specific structure clients are looking for and deliver those resources in the most cost-effective way.

Remote-based regional hubs also enable work beyond the traditional 9-to-5 schedule to better adapt to client and project needs. For example, remote-based regional hubs in India and the Philippines might support shift work while the FTS model ensures 24-hour coverage by rotating tasks across India, Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe. Additionally, while some clients prefer direct communication with teams in locations like Latin America, Europe, or Asia, others may want an intermediary in a closer time zone. To meet both needs, teams in Latin America can support U.S. clients, while those in Central and Eastern Europe assist European clients.

Expanding FSP models into non-footprint countries using remote-based regional hubs is another application of this model and helps biopharma and biotech companies access new regions, new patient populations and less competitive research sites without the complexity of setting up local operations. Through this approach, FSP partners provide access to well-established networks and drive better regulatory compliance and operational consistency.

For example, a sponsor could successfully expand into Eastern Europe by employing local FSP teams through remote-based regional hubs. This strategy helps them avoid delays tied to in-house hiring and infrastructure development. Another sponsor could use this model to streamline governance, reduce redundant processes and ensure data integration across multiple locations. This approach accelerates development while maintaining quality and oversight, even in countries where sponsors lack a direct presence.

Enhancing retention, stability and internal capabilities

Employee retention is a significant challenge in the biopharmaceutical sector. High turnover rates disrupt continuity and increase costs related to recruitment and training. A remote-based regional hub mitigates these concerns by providing professionals with enhanced career development, flexibility and work-life balance, resulting in better-than-average attrition rates across all hubs. In some Central and Eastern European countries, attrition rates average as low as 2%, compared to an industry average of 15%.

This stability translates to improved project continuity for sponsors. Teams remain intact for extended periods, allowing for deeper institutional knowledge, stronger client relationships and more consistent execution. Additionally, remote-based regional hubs that implement comprehensive training and cross-training programs ensure highly skilled and adaptable personnel. Employees gain exposure to multiple functions, expand their expertise and create a workforce that easily transitions between roles as project needs evolve. Cross-training also helps teams see the bigger picture, improving their skills and engagement. For example, programmers learn to support centralized monitoring alongside standard methodologies, expanding their capabilities and making them more valuable to projects.

Beyond external staffing benefits, the remote-based regional hub model strengthens a sponsor's internal capabilities. By offloading specific functions to highly trained FSP teams, sponsors redirect in-house resources toward core competencies like strategic planning, regulatory navigation and pipeline expansion. The result is a more focused and agile clinical development operation.

Specialized leadership roles

A crucial aspect of the remote-based regional hub model is the leadership structure. Implementation leads (ILs), operations delivery leads (ODLs), and hub leads are essential to ensure programs launch on time and stay on track.

Each role plays a distinct part in FSP projects. The IL handles early-stage tasks, such as finding resources, assigning roles and streamlining onboarding, which sets the project up for success. Once the project is running, the ODL takes over, keeping things on schedule and ensuring the project is aligned with and meets client goals. This role focuses on deliverables, planning and problem-solving, and also serves as the client's point of contact.

Hub leads add another layer of coordination. They ensure that different functions don't operate in isolation. Instead of teams like pharmacovigilance, data management and statistics working in silos, the hub lead drives collaboration and ensures lessons from one area informs others.

This intelligence-sharing approach streamlines recruitment, resource allocation and project oversight. Hub leads focus on the big picture, reviewing deliverables at a country or regional level to maintain consistency. They keep communication moving and ensure clients receive integrated, well-managed support.

Through this approach, multiple leadership roles keep projects moving forward so sponsors meet their timelines. As the IL oversees onboarding to avoid delays and reduce administrative headaches, the ODL keeps workflows smooth and ensures

steady progress while the hub leads gather intelligence and review all deliverables. A strong FSP partner relies on this successful, structured approach for remote-based regional hubs to ensure that global teams remain coordinated and aligned.

Key considerations when evaluating FSP partners with remote-based regional hubs

While the remote-based regional hubs model offers clear advantages, not all FSP partners are equally equipped to execute this approach. Sponsors should evaluate potential partners based on several critical factors.

- **Training and cross-training programs:** Comprehensive training should help employees develop soft skills, master technology, and access real-time peer support and drop-in group training sessions. A skilled FSP partner will also offer cross-training across functions and studies to prepare teams for local and global projects.
- **Governance, oversight and management:** Dedicated hub leads are essential to make each remote-based regional hub function. They should ensure operational efficiency and regulatory adherence, coordinate resources, monitor performance metrics and align with sponsor goals.
- **Infrastructure and technological support:** Robust IT systems, communication platforms and remote collaboration tools are essential for crucial coordination between teams across different time zones and regions.
- **Recruitment speed and talent sourcing:** The ability to rapidly identify, vet and onboard specialized professionals is a key differentiator. A strong FSP partner should have access to extensive talent networks, a streamlined hiring process and a [bespoke talent delivery strategy to cater to client needs](#).
- **Better engagement and retention:** A distributed model spreads workloads across teams in different locations, preventing burnout and boosting engagement and retention.
- **Low attrition rates:** A skilled FSP team should combine flexibility to adapt to specific client requirements while maintaining operational stability. In addition, their hiring practices should provide teams that demonstrate low attrition rates.
- **Proactive risk management:** Distributed teams mitigate risk by providing continuity in the face of disruptions, whether due to regional economic shifts, political instability or public health crises.
- **Transparent communication and governance:** Clearly defined engagement rules, structured oversight and consistent reporting mechanisms should ensure transparency and alignment between sponsors and FSP teams.

A strategic imperative for modern clinical development

Biopharmaceutical industry leaders must continue to navigate rising costs and increasing timelines. Remote-based regional hubs offer a compelling solution to manage costs and accelerate time-to-market. By embracing this model within FSP partnerships, sponsors unlock greater efficiency, scalability and cost-effectiveness while maintaining the highest quality and compliance standards.

When working with an FSP partner offering remote-based regional hubs, sponsors gain access to exceptional talent outside of traditional brick-and-mortar operations. Recruitment isn't limited to highly competitive markets in major cities. Instead, remote-based FSP models leverage vast, previously untapped talent pools across entire regions. This approach connects sponsors with highly qualified professionals throughout Latin America, India, China, Central and Eastern Europe, and the Philippines—not just in metropolitan centers.

Remote-based regional hubs also deliver flexibility with cross-trained teams that work across functions, protocols and portfolios. This multidisciplinary approach creates outstanding continuity and resilience—while keeping attrition rates well below industry averages. Cross-training also enhances team members' understanding of the broader clinical research landscape. This results in a more agile team that can pivot quickly as project needs evolve.

FSP partners that employ remote-based regional hubs spanning multiple geographies are also better equipped to optimize strengths and minimize costs. Sponsors get the best-suited and most cost-effective professionals for the job—wherever they are.

Remote-based regional hubs also expand clinical research possibilities by providing experts with local knowledge across emerging markets. These professionals understand regional regulations, cultural nuances and clinical processes. They also have established relationships with sites and vendors. Their presence enables sponsors to access previously untapped patient populations and research sites.

Meet your timelines with PPD FSP solutions

PPD FSP solutions help biotech and biopharmaceutical companies meet their timelines by delivering the best of the best: hard-to-find, top-tier staff with a proven track record of reliably delivering clinical development and post-marketing services.

Because you can't always predict—or find and retain—the staff and services you need, our experts provide outstanding therapeutic and functional expertise, uniquely positioning us to deliver the right experience and knowledge to fill immediate resource and capability gaps.

To ensure projects launch on time and stay on budget, we employ dedicated transition and implementation roles and processes for swift deployment of staff and services, transparent communications, and proactive problem-solving.

With more than 30 years of support for clinical and marketed products, we know what it takes to solve your specific challenges. Whether you need to fill small service gaps or outsource multiple functions across a portfolio, we deliver customized solutions tailored to your needs, providing resource flexibility, reliability and continuity.



Discover ways to drive on time, on-budget performance for your trials with remote-based regional hubs.

Visit ppd.com/fsp to learn more