



# A Global Capability Framework for the Public Relations and Communication Management Profession

## Background

Professor Anne Gregory, in conjunction with the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management (GA), has led on an ambitious research project designed to identify the capabilities of Public Relations (PR) professionals worldwide. The purpose was to develop a new framework that would replace previous, mainly competency-based approaches, to offer a more usable, adaptable and updatable framework that would support the changing nature and context of the profession.

The research took place over two years, involving twelve researchers, in eight countries, over six continents. Utilising a 3-stage mixed methods research approach, Anne and her team developed a framework for each of the countries involved, and then used them as the foundation for producing the complete Global Capabilities Framework (GCF).

## Findings

Anne's research identified common capabilities among PR professionals worldwide, as well as differences resulting from variations in cultures and contexts in which different practitioners operate. The purpose of the framework was to develop a common basis for understanding and developing capabilities, especially as the profession itself becomes more global and professionals work across national and cultural boundaries. The Framework provides space and flexibility for Global Alliance members, which include national professional bodies, and educational institutions around the world to apply it to their own context and practice. This flexibility makes the Framework truly global in focus and application, and provides a means through which practitioners can recognise diversity as well as building common ground with one another across the world.

The research and the resulting Framework represents a seismic shift in the approach to understanding and developing the work of PR professionals around the world, and will shape the profession in years to come. Alongside the framework itself, Anne oversaw the development of a software tool that can be used to assess professionals and implement the principles of the framework in a range of settings.

## Impact

The Global Capabilities Framework is making an enormous impact across the world, and making significant changes to the way PR as a profession is understood. Chair of the Global Alliance, Jose Manuel Velasco said "The Global Capabilities Framework is one of the most significant projects that we have ever initiated. It is literally a game-changer for the profession". This is reflected in the extent to which the GCF has been embraced around the world. Some adopters of the GCF include:

- The Public Relations Institute of New Zealand, who have adopted the Framework wholesale. It will be central to their ongoing work with the 1400 professionals they represent in New Zealand.
- The Chartered Institute of Public Relations Society in the UK, who have embedded it in their Continuing Professional Development offer.
- The Public Relations Society of America who represents 30,000 members in 100 chapter across the country who are rolling out the framework across their membership
- The Framework has been launched by the Argentinian Association and is available to all its members
- Anne has also been involved in introducing the Framework to large corporations operating in Spain.
- Other countries such as Ecuador, Indonesia and the UAE are now developing their own country studies based on the GCF methodology so that they too can introduce their own national Frameworks.

When professional bodies adopt the Framework, its reach extends beyond their immediate membership. These members then go on to apply it within their own teams, which will in turn affects the practical 'on the ground' work of their organisations. Ultimately, the GCF constitutes such a major transformation in the approach to understanding the work of PR professionals, its impact will be felt not only across the profession but it will enlarge the understanding of public relations with employers and senior managers and help to shape educational curricula.