Framing a Competitive Future
2021-2022 Annual Report
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The year 2021 started with renewed hope, as vaccination campaigns gained momentum in many countries.

The development of COVID-19 vaccines in record time was itself a fact to celebrate, an amazing display of human ingenuity and the power of collaboration.

However, the uncertainties caused by the pandemic continued throughout the year, with economies and societies struggling to find a way out of the hardship. For many of us, work continued to be essentially online.

Despite the losses and the mourning, the pandemic propelled innovation and digitalization, and has shed light on other risks humanity faces — which are increasingly tangible for populations, businesses, and economies across the planet. The importance of building resilience came into the spotlight and the call to lower our carbon footprint on Earth was never so loud. The GFCC 2021 agenda had those issues at its core.

"This Annual Report is an account of a year of the extraordinary programming carried out by the GFCC and its members over a period of unprecedented global challenge. Putting its platform into action, we launched a series of initiatives that paralleled the trajectory of the unfolding pandemic and tackled the impacts left in its wake."

Deborah L. Wince-Smith
President, GFCC
President & CEO, Council on Competitiveness
Our main activity in 2021 was curating, hosting, and developing research for the Frame the Future Series, which focused on five imperatives shaping future competitiveness strategies — innovation, sustainability, resilience, partnership, and inclusiveness. The Series advanced our online presence worldwide, with more than 1,000 people from more than 60 countries joining our live discussions.

Our agenda included other initiatives, many of them in partnership with members, and resulted in original, groundbreaking content illustrated in two flagship reports, Frame the Future: Guidelines and Recommendations for Future Competitiveness and Future Skills: Lessons and Insights from a Review of Innovative Skills Development Initiatives.

We also published an insightful book, Leading Through the Chasm and Into the Future Economy, compiling thought pieces from more than 30 leaders in 21 countries.

We were delighted to see four organizations joining as new members in 2021. While we welcomed new leaders in our community and activities — such as exclusive Monthly Calls and presentations — we also reinforced the GFCC team and continued to digitalize and improve our operations.

With this report, we invite you to know more about our work and engage with us.
The past year was one of challenge but also many accomplishments for members and staff of the Global Federation of Competitiveness Councils.

More than 11 years ago, the GFCC was founded in the belief that sharing knowledge and best practices on competitiveness policies and strategies among nations would provide benefit to all.

But never did we imagine that we would play a critical role for GFCC members during a global health, humanitarian, and economic crisis. Recognizing the power of collaboration, we worked hard to use the GFCC as a platform to support our members and fellows around the world as they coped with the ongoing disruption brought about by the pandemic, and to plan beyond recovery and strategize on how to build a stronger, more resilient, innovative, inclusive, and prosperous future economy.

However, what we accomplished would not have been possible without the intellectual contributions and time commitments made by GFCC members and fellows. We owe a debt of gratitude to the dozens of speakers, panelists, moderators, and white paper authors who...
made 2021 a hallmark year for the GFCC. Also, we commend the GFCC staff whose efforts were instrumental in making this tremendous year-long learning experience possible under the most challenging circumstances. We are grateful for the leadership and strong support from the GFCC Board Members. Thank you for the trust and faith you placed in us to accomplish the GFCC’s important mission.

We are pleased to report that the GFCC has expanded its global reach to 49 members in 32 countries and 55 Fellows. We welcome new members—the National Competitiveness Commission of Zambia, the UAE’s Technology Innovation Institute, the Africa Development Futures Group, and Texas A&M University in the United States. We are excited about enriching our learning with your different perspectives and insights, and we are confident that the knowledge you gain, and your ability to connect and co-create with other remarkable people will pay rich returns on your investment of time and energy.

The work of our members over the past year set a solid foundation for initiatives in 2022. We will collaborate on challenges and opportunities related to developing human capital, building capacity in science and technology, strengthening innovation ecosystems, building resilience, and enhancing sustainability—issues of interest to all GFCC nations. And, please, make tentative plans for traveling to Athens for the 2022 Global Innovation Summit.

We look forward to working with all of you in 2022 and beyond to advance what each of our members seeks to achieve domestically and enhance the positive contribution our federation can make globally.
New Horizons

Digital platforms allowed the GFCC to truly go global in 2021. Our outreach and online engagement experienced a steep growth.

We are extremely excited with the new horizons and opportunities ahead.

But what else was new in 2021? Here are three things to highlight:

**New Topics**
Innovation drives competitiveness and it is the common thread linking all the discussions and initiatives in the GFCC. In 2021, we introduced a new framework connecting innovation with sustainability, resilience, partnership, and inclusiveness. We also covered new cutting-edge topics in our exclusive Monthly Calls, from AI regulation to the hydrogen economy.

**New Geographies**
New members joined the GFCC in 2021. They brought new perspectives to our global community and novel possibilities for engagement worldwide. Very importantly, now we have a more balanced geographical representation in our constituency, with two new members from Africa.

**New Voices**
Throughout the Frame the Future Series, we engaged with new voices from across the globe. Young entrepreneurs and emerging leaders from Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe took part in a variety of sessions and activities, bringing a fresh perspective to the work of our organization.

I hope you enjoy this account of our 2021 activities and can join us for the journey in 2022.

In total, our online conversations and the Global Innovation Summit gathered participants from more than 80 countries. This was a major achievement for an organization that had people from a dozen countries around the table during its first meeting on December 1, 2010.

Dr. Roberto Alvarez
Executive Director, GFCC
The Global Innovation Summit 2021 featured speakers from 21 countries for two days of virtual dialogues on emergent trends shaping the future of competitiveness. We welcomed an audience that joined from 47 countries.

We hosted more than ten joint online sessions with our members, advancing partnerships to shed light on the most relevant topics in the competitiveness agenda.

We hosted 11 Frame the Future sessions, providing insights on intellectual property rights, open innovation, talent development, and other emergent trends shaping competitiveness. More than 1,000 people from 62 nations joined the sessions.

We welcomed four new members: the National Competitiveness Commission of Zimbabwe; the Technology Innovation Institute, based in the United Arab Emirates; the Africa Development Futures Group in South Africa; and Texas A&M University in the United States.

Our global footprint expanded to 32 countries, amounting to 47 members and 55 fellows.
We welcomed a new fellow, Dr. Spyros Artavanis-Tsakonas, a renowned global scientist in molecular biology and the Principal Investigator of the Artavanis-Tsakonas Laboratory at Harvard Medical School.

We published 15 situation papers and event reports leveraging data and gathering views and insights from experts working in policy, business, and academia to inform our community on emergent trends shaping the future of competitiveness.

We released four new publications, including competitiveness guidelines and reports with groundbreaking content created by the GFCC.

Our blog continues to be a platform for knowledge-sharing and community engagement. In 2021, we published 16 articles and thought pieces featuring or signed by our members.
We published **three discussion papers** authored by leaders from the University of Auckland, Queen Mary University London, and RMIT Australia on the future of universities. In addition, we released three video interviews and conducted three online sessions covering the topic.


We released **11 video teasers** to invite our audience to participate in the Frame the Future Series and **11 video clips** with short recaps of each session.

Our social media channels are gaining traction as a platform for the larger GFCC Community to interact, connect, and share interests. In 2021, the GFCC LinkedIn page gained **72 percent** more followers, we **shared 500 tweets** on our Twitter feed, and we significantly increased the outreach of our Facebook fanpage.
"There is still great uncertainty about the future state. But we have a once-in-a-century chance to re-imagine our economic and societal systems to make them more inclusive, sustainable, agile, and resilient...while boosting economic growth, productivity, prosperity, and competitiveness."

Deborah L. Wince-Smith
President, GFCC
President & CEO, Council on Competitiveness
The Frame the Future Series aimed at co-creating and co-designing future competitiveness strategies for a post-pandemic economy.

Throughout 11 highly curated sessions, leaders from across the globe exchanged ideas, experiences and insights on new economic trends in their countries of origin and worldwide. The conversations focused on how to weave and integrate the five competitiveness imperatives — innovation, resilience, partnership, inclusiveness, and sustainability — into ten competitiveness areas: innovation, talent, intellectual property systems, infrastructure, public-private partnerships, regulations, local development, natural assets, trade and global partnerships, and benchmarking.

These discussions revealed the importance of embedding new inclusive, innovative, and sustainable approaches into economic programs to drive growth and inclusive prosperity.

### The Event Series

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Session Partner</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jun 16</td>
<td>Frame the Future Launch</td>
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<td>Jun-Nov</td>
<td>Frame the Future Sessions</td>
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<td>Jul 14</td>
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<td>Public-Private Partnerships</td>
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<td>Regulation</td>
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<td>Sep 22</td>
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<td>Brazilian National Confederation of Industries (CNI)</td>
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<td>Oct 06</td>
<td>Natural Assets</td>
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<td>Oct 20</td>
<td>Trade and Global Partnerships</td>
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<td>Nov 03</td>
<td>Benchmarking</td>
<td>Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)</td>
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"The Frame the Future Series informed a common language around partnerships, inclusiveness, resilience, sustainability, and innovation. And with this set of principles, we can break down barriers and leave space for innovators to innovate."

Mr. Omar Al-Ansari
Secretary General, Qatar Research, Development, and Innovation Council (QRDI Council)

"Successful partnerships depend on creating a network of trustworthy partners and cherishing connections with multiple stakeholders. These networks facilitate the creation and execution of new projects and reduce the hurdles that eventually appear during the process."

Prof. Isabel Capeloa Gil
Rector, Universidade Catolica Portuguesa
We continued to host our exclusive Monthly Calls. This recurring members-only event provides a platform for the leaders in our network to review global developments, connect, share exclusive content and analyses, and exchange information in a highly trustable environment.

Every month, one of our members or fellows presents on a relevant topic for the community. This is an occasion to bring the knowledge and expertise in our network to the forefront, enlightening different realities facing the world today.

In 2021, the GFCC hosted discussions on quantum technologies, the hydrogen economy, the European Union post-Brexit, women entrepreneurship, the energy transition, access to COVID-19 vaccines in developing countries, and innovation policy in the U.S., among other issues.

The Monthly Call happens every second Tuesday of the month in a virtual format offered in two different time slots to allow participants across time zones to join the call at a convenient time.
The Global Innovation Summit 2021 (GIS) on Future Competitiveness gathered C-suite leaders from more than 20 countries working in the corporate sector, government, and innovation agencies for two days of interactive dialogues in a virtual platform. People from 47 nations attended the online sessions.

Throughout the panels, keynotes, and interviews, leaders outlined strategies to weave a new competitiveness tapestry for the 21st century — one comprised of innovation, sustainability, resilience, partnership, and inclusiveness. This new approach to competitiveness will be the basis for business models and policy frameworks over the coming decades, executed through new partnerships and cross-sectoral collaboration.

These strategies include:

• Raising human capital through widespread access to low-cost, high-quality education and skills training;
• Closing the digital divide;
• Building capacity in science, technology, and research and strengthening national and regional innovation ecosystems;
• Building resilience across the economy, businesses, and society to adapt and recover quickly from disruption; and
• Expanding efforts to enhance sustainability and mitigate climate change, environmental degradation, natural resource depletion, and biodiversity loss.
Frame the Future: Guidelines and Recommendations for Future Competitiveness

Frame the Future: Guidelines and Recommendations for Future Competitiveness gathers best practices, trends, and recommendations related to ten strategic competitiveness areas: innovation, talent, intellectual property systems, infrastructure, public-private partnerships, regulations, local development, natural assets, trade and global partnerships, and benchmarking.

This unique content results from discussions during the Frame the Future Series and in-depth conversations held with GFCC members and fellows throughout the year.

More importantly, the publication provides a set of ten goals to guide leaders and policymakers towards designing inclusive, resilient, innovative, and sustainable policies and business strategies, emphasizing the need for collaboration and partnerships.
Global Competitiveness Principles

The GFCC Global Competitiveness Principles provide a framework for countries, cities, and businesses that strive to be competitive and become more prosperous. In 2021, the Principles were updated in the face of the current critical challenges, revealing new opportunities for the future. The 2021 Principles emphasize the importance of innovation, intellectual property, skilled workforce, open and fair trade, natural resources productivity, and transparent and smart regulations for economic growth. A new focus of the 2021 Global Competitiveness Principles is on building the resilience of economies and the agility of companies and institutions in an era of rapid change.
Leading Through the Chasm and Into the Future Economy

In March 2020, the GFCC released a flagship book, Leading Through the Chasm and Into the Future Economy, gathering insights on leadership written by 33 C-suite professionals from 21 countries working in business, policymaking, and academia who participated in the Now. Bridge. Reboot. Conversation Series.

The pieces reflect on the lessons drawn from the first months of the COVID-19 crisis and emergent trends impacting societies and economies on the pathway to build future competitiveness. There are important references to the attributes that leaders should display now and in the future, and the topics on which they should focus attention and action.

The pieces emphasize the importance of adaptability, learning, and information exchange, as societies face the unique opportunity to use recovery packages to build a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable socio-economic system.
Future Skills

Globalization, hyper-global competition, and rapid advancements in multiple revolutionary technologies are transforming economies and societies and driving a rapid transition to the future of work.

Individuals, companies, and communities have less time to adapt and prepare than they had in the past when the life cycles of technologies were longer. Understanding emerging skill needs has become an urgent task. Countries and organizations are working to create and adjust training programs to meet the new social and economic needs in a changing labor market.

The Future Skills report, initially funded by the GFCC member Brazilian National Confederation of Industries (CNI), examines 31 skills development solutions across 15 countries. The report collects relevant data and examples on industry partnerships, training programs, and learning strategies.

From left to right: Academia de Código, Portugal; Ørestad Gymnasium, Denmark; and General Assembly, USA.
The GFCC global footprint spans more than **32 countries**, including members and fellows in the network.
The GFCC partnered with its members, the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) and the Queen Mary University of London, to design and execute two online discussions on social and economic resilience, focusing on critical infrastructure and cybersecurity. The two sessions gathered participants from more than 20 countries and speakers representing eight nations.

Before the event, the GFCC held exclusive workshops that allowed the hosts to brainstorm examples of past crises, identify problems faced by their communities, and list potential resilient mechanisms and solutions. These events served as an engagement platform to foster partnerships and collaboration among our members.

Relevance of Critical Infrastructure for Resilience — October 14, 2021

The Importance of Cybersecurity for Resilience — November 17, 2021

Dr. Kazuyoshi Shimada, Director of Washington D.C. Office, Japan Science and Technology Agency; Prof. Ioannis Kokkoris, Chair in Competition Law & Economics, Dean-International, Queen Mary University of London; Dr. Roberto Alvarez, Executive Director, GFCC; Prof. Yasushi Sekine, School of Advanced Science and Engineering, Waseda University; Dr. Alejandro Silva, Director of Postgraduate Studies, UNSA; and The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith (Host), President, GFCC, and President & CEO, Council on Competitiveness.

Dr. Hideyuki Tokuda, President, National Institute of Information and Communication Technology; Dr. Ron Indeck, CEO, Q-NET Security; Prof. Colin Grant, Vice Principal International, Queen Mary University of London; Dr. Roberto Alvarez, Executive Director, GFCC; The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President, GFCC, and President & CEO, Council on Competitiveness; Prof. Ian Walden, Professor of Information and Communications Law and Director of the Centre for Commercial Law Studies, Queen Mary University of London; Dr. Kazuyoshi Shimada, Director of Washington D.C. Office, Japan Science and Technology Agency.
Accelerating Competitiveness Through Collaboration
Delphi Economic Forum

The GFCC co-organized three sessions at the 2021 Delphi Economic Forum (DEF), which engaged political, economic, business, and academic leaders in discussions on the emerging challenges impacting the sustainability of growth policies in Greece and Europe.

The GFCC curated the panels, the “State of Competitiveness,” “Frontiers of Technological Innovation Reshaping our World,” and “Drivers of Economic Growth and Inclusive Prosperity,” gathering important insights from the world stage about the impacts of technological development in business models and innovation.

DEF 2021 was a hybrid event focused on geopolitics and international security, the global economy, the future of Europe, people, organizations, society, technology and future growth, and structural reforms and sustainable growth in Greece.

The State of Competitiveness — May 14, 2021

Mr. Charles O. Holliday Jr., Chairman, GFCC; The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President, GFCC, and President & CEO, Council on Competitiveness; Mr. Symeon Tsomokos, Founder, Delphi Economic Forum, and Board Member, Hellenic American University in Athens; and Mr. Simos Anastasopoulos, President, The Council of Competitiveness of Greece, and Chairman & CEO, Petsavas S.A.

Drivers of Economic Growth and Inclusive Prosperity — May 12, 2021

Dr. Roberto Alvarez, Executive Director, GFCC; Mr. Hiro Nishiguchi, Co-Founder and CEO, Japan Innovation Network; Prof. Isabel Gil, President, Catholic University of Portugal; and Dr. Zakri Hamid, Science Advisor, Campaign for Nature Scientific Advisor to the President, Islamic Development Bank.
Accelerating Competitiveness Through Collaboration ROOTS Program

GFCC member Athens Stock Exchange Group (ATHEX) has been running the Roots Acceleration Program since 2019 to help innovative SMEs accelerate their growth and access financing in Greece. The GFCC participated in the program design, providing technical support, training, and facilitating knowledge transfer, including arranging a partnership with GFCC member Arizona State University to provide online training.

In 2021, the GFCC and the ATHEX Group held an online session to shed light on some of the key learnings from the Roots' implementation that have already impacted nine Greek companies, and to debate emergent issues driving business growth, such as ESG investments and the importance of participating in global networks.
Accelerating Competitiveness Through Collaboration
Decoding the Now

The COVID-19 pandemic has fast-forwarded changes in the higher education sector, advancing at least ten years of digital transformation in a few months. Lockdown and underlying safety measures required universities to adapt and rethink the resilience of their operations.

Education moved online at an unprecedented scale bringing new challenges and opportunities for teachers, learners, and university leaders worldwide. Academic research was deeply impacted, and universities had to employ strategies to operate under new circumstances. Furthermore, the pandemic accelerated emerging trends in the university space such as transdisciplinarity, community engagement, and sustainability.

The GFCC partnered with the University of Southampton to unpack the pandemic learnings and long-term implications in the higher education sector. The discussions provided important views on future research portfolios, best practices in online learning, and university strategies for the future.

Mr. David Janes, Senior Advisor to the President, Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology; Prof. Rachel Mills, Dean of the Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences, University of Southampton; Ms. Maria Norton, Deputy Director of International Relations, University of Southampton; Dr. Paul Roben, Associate Vice-Chancellor Office of Innovation and Commercialization, University of California San Diego; and Dr. Roberto Alvarez, Executive Director, GFCC.
Future Innovation Trends Influencing the Higher Education Business Model

Societies and economies have been through an accelerated transformation in the past decade, with this changing landscape particularly affecting the higher education sector.

In February 2021, the GFCC released an Executive Summary with relevant research on key trends influencing the university business model conducted by GFCC Fellow Prof. Ted Zoller and his assistants, Mr. Jacob Stiglitz and Mr. Fletcher Curran, from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill.

The Summary outlines four trends impacting the higher education business model — massification, changing student experience, the rise of micro-credentialing, and improving faculty pedagogy — and identifies challenges and opportunities. Finally, the Summary includes relevant, actionable steps for university leaders to manage a transition to future roles.
Advancing New Models for Intellectual Property

The Catholic University of Portugal (UCP) is expanding its research portfolio and has been establishing novel partnerships in several domains. One of the key focus areas is biotechnology. Main initiatives include joint research agreements and joint ventures with industry, which have resulted in new IP and innovative applications in areas such as food biotech, environment, biocosmetics, and health.

As the University expands its IP portfolio and partnerships, it felt the need to reflect on its IP strategy and organizational setup. The GFCC identified reference cases around the globe and arranged meetings for the UCP leadership team with university and industry players that manage advanced IP portfolios. Through this process, UCP gained insights on IP strategies, toolkits, and university organizational setups, informing the review of its practices and processes.
“Competitiveness is not about beating up others. It is about working together across the globe, and this is extremely important at this moment when we are facing new challenges and navigating an unchartered world.”

Hiro Nishiguchi
CEO, Japan Innovation Network

"The entrepreneurial sector, government, and society must work together to foster innovation, build partnerships, promote inclusiveness, and stay resilient in times of crisis to create a sustainable future for the next generations."

Gianna Sagazio
Innovation Director, Brazilian National Confederation of Industries (CNI)
University 4.0

Technology growth, changing demographics, and interrelated social and global challenges have pushed societies to transform and adapt. Under these new circumstances, the higher education sector has been undergoing rapid change.

To unpack these trends and design a new future for the sector, the GFCC University and Research Leadership Forum has been focusing on the model of the technology-enabled and impact-oriented university, or the University 4.0, since 2019.

Three GFCC university members, Queen Mary University of London, RMIT University, and the University of Auckland, took the lead in developing discussion papers that map roles, strategies, performance criteria, and organizational solutions for the future of higher education.

The GFCC created three special sessions within the Frame the Future Series to review the papers in a cross-sectoral collaborative environment and gather collective insights on critical issues addressed. Additionally, the GFCC conducted interviews with the authors, which are available online.
The year 2022 is off to an exciting start. We have been working to disseminate the recommendations presented in the *Frame the Future* report, and have already identified new opportunities to deepen our work and make an impact.

Our unique network has served as a cross-sector dialogue platform to share best practices and develop new ideas and concepts for competitiveness strategies. We are developing initiatives to translate the expertise of our network into actionable steps, working with members and fellows in more than 30 nations.

Innovation, sustainability, resilience, partnership, and inclusiveness will gain importance and determine the success of future competitiveness strategies. But the real world coalitions needed to advance this complex agenda can only be shaped and thrive in open, transparent, diverse environments conducive to building trust.

**We can't emphasize enough the importance of working together across sectors and building trust in societies to advance innovation and competitiveness.** The upcoming 2022 Global Innovation Summit — from November 14 to 17 in Athens, Greece — will serve as a platform to discuss these ideas and build new relationships.

A fundamental part of the work of the GFCC has been centered around connecting members and catalyzing the exchange of experiences and information. We will reinforce our activities in 2022, further expanding the use of digital tools and channels while also exploring the possibilities to resume in-person discussions and meetings.

We hope you can join us for the journey and invite you to get in contact and become part of our community. Advancing prosperity for all was never so critical as it is now.
The GFCC is a multistakeholder membership organization with universities, corporations, government agencies, and an extended network of fellows in more than 30 countries. For more information about GFCC initiatives, visit our website.

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Delphi Economic Forum

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Japan Innovation Network
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