

# Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management

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## Global Perspectives Report 2026

*A Professional Association Overview*

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## Executive Summary

This report provides a comprehensive overview of global perceptions within the public relations and communication profession, drawing on survey data submitted by professional associations representing eight countries across three major regions: Europe, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific. The 2026 survey builds on previous Global Alliance efforts (2019, 2022, and 2024) to benchmark the state of the PR industry worldwide, this time incorporating new questions on artificial intelligence adoption, the implementation of the UN SDG 18 – Responsible Communication initiative, and the Venice Pledge on ethical AI use.

Nine survey responses were received from professional associations collectively representing over 21,000 members. The participating countries Australia, Bangladesh, Czech Republic, Ireland, Nigeria, Philippines, South Africa, and the United Kingdom span diverse economic, cultural, and technological landscapes, offering a meaningful cross-section of global PR practice.

Key findings reveal that the PR profession remains predominantly female across most responding countries, with the 35–44 age bracket emerging as the largest demographic segment. Four-year and honours degrees are the most common qualification, while master's degrees are particularly prevalent in the Czech Republic. In-house roles continue to represent the largest employment context on average, although agency-based practice dominates in the Philippines.

Artificial intelligence has emerged as both the most frequently cited threat and one of the most significant opportunities. ChatGPT dominates tool adoption across nearly all countries surveyed, while South Africa and Australia report the most diverse AI toolkits. Respondents consistently emphasise the need for the profession to move beyond traditional media relations toward a more strategic, C-suite advisory role a theme reinforced by comments from the United Kingdom, Philippines, Czech Republic, and Australia.

Implementation of the Global Alliance's SDG 18 and Venice Pledge initiatives remains uneven. South Africa stands out for its detailed integration of both frameworks into its professional code of ethics and governance structures, while several associations reported that discussions on these initiatives have not yet begun. The report concludes by urging all member associations to accelerate engagement with these global mandates as central pillars of professionalisation and public trust.

## 1. Participating Countries

The following professional associations participated in the 2026 Global Perspectives Survey. Nine completed survey forms were received, representing eight unique countries. Nigeria was represented by two separate chapters of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), providing both local and national perspectives.

Country	Professional Association	Region
Australia	Centre for Strategic Communication Excellence	Asian Pacific
Bangladesh	Bangladesh Public Relations Association	Asian Pacific
Czech Republic	ASCOPA - Association of Strategic Communication and Public Affairs	Europe
Ireland	Not specified (Ireland / Belgium)	Europe
Nigeria	Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (Ondo State Chapter)	Africa
Nigeria	Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) Ondo State Chapter	Africa
Philippines	PRSP	Asian Pacific
South Africa	The Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA)	Africa
United Kingdom	Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR)	Europe

Figure 1: Participating Countries and Their Professional Associations

The participating countries are distributed across three regions: Europe (United Kingdom, Czech Republic, and Ireland), Africa (Nigeria and South Africa), and the Asia-Pacific (Australia, Bangladesh, and the Philippines). This regional distribution provides insight into PR practice across developed and developing economies alike.

## 2. Membership of Practitioners in Relation to Country Population

### 2.1 Membership Numbers and Workforce Estimates

Respondents were asked to report the number of members in their professional association, the estimated total number of PR and communication practitioners in their country, and the country's population. This data enables an assessment of the profession's reach and the penetration of professional association membership relative to the broader practitioner base.

Country	Association Members	Est. PR Practitioners	Country Population
United Kingdom	11,000	80,000	69 million
Ireland	7,500	3,000	6 million
Nigeria	1,000	30,000	250 million
South Africa	624	20,000	65 million
Czech Republic	350	2,000	10.5 million
Bangladesh	238	280,000	170 million
Nigeria	180	60,000	250 million
Australia	100	31,400	27.2 million
Philippines	60	1,000	112 million
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21,052</b>	<b>507,400</b>	—

Figure 2: Membership Numbers, Estimated Practitioners, and Country Population

The United Kingdom's CIPR holds the largest membership at 11,000, followed by Ireland with 7,500 members. Several smaller associations including the Philippines (60 members) and Australia (100 members) indicate that professional association membership may not yet fully capture the scope of PR practice in those countries. Bangladesh reports the largest estimated practitioner workforce at 280,000, while the Philippines estimates only 1,000 a discrepancy that warrants further investigation into how practitioner numbers are defined and tracked at the national level.

The total combined membership across all nine responding associations stands at 21,052, representing a collective estimated practitioner base of over 484,400 professionals across eight countries.

### 2.2 Estimated Economic Value of the PR Profession

Respondents were invited to provide an estimate of the economic value of the PR profession to their national economy in US dollars. This question is challenging to answer definitively, as standardised measurement methodologies vary across countries. Nevertheless, the responses offer a useful indicative benchmark.

Country	Estimated Value (USD)
Australia	\$400–500 Million
Bangladesh	No data
Czech Republic	\$150 Million
Ireland	Not provided
Nigeria	Not available
Nigeria	\$250 Million
Philippines	Unknown
South Africa	\$650–850 Million

United Kingdom	6.26 Billion
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*Figure 3: Estimated Economic Value of PR by Country (USD)*

The United Kingdom reports the highest estimated value at USD 6.26 billion, reflecting the maturity of its PR industry. South Africa's estimate of USD 650–850 million and Australia's of USD 400–500 million also indicate significant economic contributions. Notably, several associations including Bangladesh and the Philippines were unable to provide estimates, underscoring the need for better industry-wide measurement frameworks.

### 3. Demographics of Members

#### 3.1 Gender Distribution

Respondents were asked to provide an estimated gender breakdown of their association's membership. The PR profession has historically been female-dominated in many countries, and the 2026 data largely confirms this trend, with notable exceptions.

Country	Male %	Female %	Non-binary %	Not Stated %
Australia	20%	80%	0%	0%
Bangladesh	70%	30%	0%	0%
Czech Republic	40%	60%	0%	0%
Ireland	40%	60%	0%	0%
Nigeria	67%	33%	0%	0%
Nigeria	60%	40%	0%	0%
Philippines	10%	35%	15%	0%
South Africa	25%	75%	0%	0%
United Kingdom	28%	52%	1%	1%
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>40.0%</b>	<b>51.7%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>

Figure 4: Gender Distribution of PR Association Members by Country

The profession remains predominantly female across most countries surveyed. Australia reports the highest female representation at 80%, followed by South Africa at 75%. Bangladesh stands out as an exception, with a male-dominated membership of 70%. Nigeria also shows a male majority, with the Ondo State Chapter reporting a 60/40 split. The Philippines notably reported 15% non-binary or third-gender representation among its members the highest figure in the survey reflecting evolving approaches to gender identity in that context.

On average across all nine responses, female members account for approximately 51.7% of association membership, while male members represent 40.0%. Non-binary and third-gender representation averages 1.8%, indicating that while awareness of diverse gender identities is growing, it remains a small proportion of the profession globally.

#### 3.2 Age Distribution

Respondents provided estimated percentage breakdowns of their membership across six age categories. Understanding the age profile of PR practitioners is essential for informing workforce planning, continuing professional development strategies, and succession planning within the profession.

Country	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Australia	10%	25%	35%	15%	10%	5%
Bangladesh	0%	20%	30%	25%	15%	10%
Czech Republic	5%	25%	50%	15%	5%	0%
Ireland	10%	20%	20%	25%	25%	10%
Nigeria	5%	20%	20%	25%	20%	10%
Nigeria	5%	30%	25%	20%	15%	5%
Philippines	20%	15%	18%	7%	0%	0%
South Africa	1%	6%	35%	20%	29%	9%

United Kingdom	2%	21%	27%	21%	8%	2%
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>20.2%</b>	<b>28.9%</b>	<b>19.2%</b>	<b>14.1%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>

Figure 5: Age Distribution of PR Association Members by Country

The 35–44 age bracket is the largest segment across the survey, averaging 28.9% of membership consistent with the 2024 findings. The Czech Republic shows a particularly strong concentration in this band at 50%. The 25–34 age group averages 20.2%, representing the next largest cohort and indicating a healthy pipeline of younger professionals entering the profession.

The Philippines stands out for its relatively high proportion of younger members, with 20% in the 18–24 category. At the other end of the spectrum, Bangladesh and Nigeria report notable representation in the 55–64 and 65+ categories, suggesting more experienced, senior-heavy memberships in those associations. The United Kingdom shows a more compressed age profile, with the bulk of members concentrated between 25 and 54.

### 3.3 Education Levels

This question invited respondents to indicate the percentage of practitioners at various education levels in their country. Seven of the nine respondents provided education data; two associations (United Kingdom and Australia) indicated that this data was not available at the time of the survey.

Country	High School	Diploma	Bachelor's	4-yr / Honours	Master's	Doctorate	Other
Australia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bangladesh	5%	3%	0%	70%	20%	2%	0%
Czech Republic	5%	5%	15%	0%	70%	5%	0%
Ireland	0%	15%	40%	15%	25%	5%	0%
Nigeria	5%	15%	15%	40%	20%	5%	0%
Nigeria	5%	20%	25%	30%	15%	5%	0%
Philippines	0%	0%	0%	89%	10%	1%	0%
South Africa	5%	25%	35%	20%	5%	5%	10%
United Kingdom	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>AVERAGE*</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>11.9%</b>	<b>18.6%</b>	<b>37.7%</b>	<b>23.6%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>

Figure 6: Education Levels of PR Practitioners by Country (\*Average calculated from 7 responding countries)

Four-year and honours degree holders represent the largest segment on average at 37.7%, followed by master's degree holders at 23.6%. The Czech Republic is a notable outlier, with 70% of its practitioners holding master's degrees reflecting the strong emphasis on graduate-level education in PR within that country. Bachelor's degrees account for an average of 18.6%, while diploma-level qualifications average 11.9%, with Ireland and South Africa showing the highest proportions at this level.

Doctoral qualification remains rare across the profession, averaging only 4.0%. This is consistent with previous Global Alliance findings and suggests that while advanced research-level training is valued, it is not yet a common entry point or career pathway in PR practice for most countries surveyed.

## 4. Context of Work

### 4.1 Employment Context: In-house, Agency & Self-employed

Respondents were asked to provide the percentage of practitioners working in three primary employment contexts: organisation-based (in-house), agency-based, and self-employed or consultant. This split offers insight into the structural composition of the PR workforce in each country.

Country	In-house %	Agency %	Self-employed %
Australia	49%	40%	11%
Bangladesh	50%	30%	20%
Czech Republic	60%	30%	10%
Ireland	40%	30%	30%
Nigeria	50%	30%	20%
Nigeria	50%	30%	20%
Philippines	30%	65%	5%
South Africa	2%	7%	3%
United Kingdom	60%	20%	9%
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>43.4%</b>	<b>31.3%</b>	<b>14.2%</b>

Figure 7: Employment Context of PR Practitioners by Country

In-house roles are the most common employment context on average, accounting for 43.4% of practitioners across the survey. The United Kingdom and Czech Republic both report 60% in-house representation, while the Philippines is a notable exception with 65% of practitioners working in agencies the highest agency proportion in the survey.

Self-employment and consultancy averages 14.2% globally, with Ireland reporting the highest share at 30%. This may reflect the relatively small scale of the Irish PR market, where independent consultancy is a more common working model. Bangladesh and Nigeria also report meaningful self-employed segments at 20%, suggesting that freelance and consultancy work plays a significant role in the PR economies of developing countries.

It should be noted that the data provided by South Africa appears to represent raw member counts (2, 7, and 3) rather than percentages, which may require clarification in future data collection rounds.

## 5. Artificial Intelligence and Digital Transformation

### 5.1 AI Tools in Use

For the first time in the Global Alliance survey, respondents were asked to identify the AI tools most commonly used by practitioners in their countries. This question reflects the rapidly evolving technological landscape of PR practice and the profession's growing engagement with generative AI and automation tools.

AI Tool	Countries Reporting Use
ChatGPT	8
Gemini	5
Grammarly	2
Canva	2
Claude	2
Perplexity	2
Co-Pilot	1
Descript	1
Writing tools (unspecified)	1
Meltwater	1
Jasper	1
Copy.ai	1
Signal AI	1
Synthesia	1
Midjourney	1

Figure 8: AI Tools Most Commonly Used by PR Practitioners

ChatGPT dominates AI tool adoption, reported by eight of the nine respondents making it by far the most widely used generative AI tool in PR practice globally. Gemini (Google) was the second most commonly reported tool, cited by five countries. Grammarly, Canva, Claude, and Perplexity each appeared in two countries' responses.

South Africa reported the most diverse AI toolkit, with eleven distinct tools mentioned including specialised PR and media intelligence platforms such as Meltwater, Signal AI, and Jasper, alongside creative and visual tools like Canva, Synthesia, and Midjourney. Australia also reported a notably broad range of tools, including Claude, Co-Pilot, Descript, and Perplexity alongside the more commonly reported ChatGPT and Gemini.

The diversity of AI tools in use suggests that the profession is moving beyond simple text generation toward more integrated, multi-function AI workflows. However, the dominance of ChatGPT also indicates that many practitioners may be relying on a single general-purpose tool rather than leveraging specialised platforms suited to specific PR functions such as media monitoring, sentiment analysis, or crisis communication.

## 6. Global Alliance Initiatives

Two questions in the 2026 survey were specifically designed to assess the implementation and uptake of key Global Alliance initiatives: the proposed UN SDG 18 – Responsible Communication and the Venice Pledge on Ethical and Responsible AI. These initiatives represent the Alliance's strategic commitment to shaping the ethical and sustainable future of the profession.

### 6.1 UN SDG 18 – Responsible Communication

Respondents were asked to describe how their associations have implemented the Global Alliance's proposed UN SDG 18 – Responsible Communication initiative. Responses varied significantly across the participating countries, reflecting different stages of engagement with this framework.

### 6.2 Venice Pledge

The Venice Pledge provides guiding principles for ethical and responsible artificial intelligence in PR practice. Respondents described the activities, monitoring mechanisms, or impact their associations have achieved in relation to this pledge.

Country	UN SDG 18 – Responsible Communication	Venice Pledge Implementation
Australia	Yes	Yes
Bangladesh	No. The association focuses on social events, trainings and annual conferences.	Not yet. There has been no discussion on this.
Czech Republic	Well presented to the community - direct and via third parties	Well presented to the community - direct and via third parties
Ireland	Talks	Talks
Nigeria	The GA mantra of Responsible Communication is gaining traction across organisations in Nigeria.	Popularising the Responsible Communication declared principles.
Nigeria	Responsible communication is a higher call for ethical and transparent communication. Organizations have embraced fact-checking and media have been challenged to ensure balance and focus on developmental communication.	NIPR continues to emphasize ethics and responsible use of AI through its training programmes including the diploma, certificate and mandatory professional training.
Philippines	Not applicable	Not applicable
South Africa	PRISA has championed SDG 18 through ethical transparency, enforcement of Professional Code of Ethics, SAQA-accredited designations, and regional workshops on combating misinformation and AI-driven ethics.	PRISA has integrated the Venice Pledge's seven guiding principles into its revised Code of Ethics, established a dedicated Policy Committee, and is developing AI Policy Templates for members.
United Kingdom	N/A	Yes

Figure 9: Implementation of UN SDG 18 and the Venice Pledge by Country

South Africa (PRISA) stands out as the most active implementer of both initiatives. PRISA has integrated SDG 18 principles into its governance and educational frameworks through its Professional Code of Ethics and SAQA-accredited designations, and has rolled out regional workshops on combating misinformation and AI-driven ethics. For the Venice Pledge, PRISA has embedded the seven guiding principles into its revised Code of Ethics and established a dedicated Policy Committee to develop AI Policy Templates for members.

Nigeria's NIPR chapters also report meaningful engagement, noting that responsible communication principles are gaining traction across organisations and that ethics and responsible AI use are being emphasised through training programmes. The Czech Republic reports that both initiatives have been presented to the community through direct and third-party channels.

However, several associations including the Philippines and Bangladesh reported that engagement with these initiatives has not yet begun, citing a focus on social events, training, and conferences as current priorities. Australia and the United Kingdom confirmed implementation without providing detailed descriptions. This uneven uptake underscores the need for the Global Alliance to provide more accessible onboarding resources and regional support for associations at earlier stages of engagement.

## 7. Issues Affecting the PR Profession

Respondents were invited to list up to three key threats and up to three key opportunities facing the PR profession in their respective countries, ranked in order of priority. These open-ended responses were thematically analysed to identify the most prevalent and significant issues shaping the profession globally. The themes below are presented in order of frequency and strategic significance.

### 7.1 Key Threats

AI and technological disruption emerged as the dominant threat across the survey, cited in various forms by the majority of respondents. The concern centres not on AI itself but on its destabilising effects: the potential for anyone to produce communication content without professional expertise, the rise of unethical AI use, and the resulting erosion of trust in professional PR practice. Closely related is the threat of disinformation and misinformation, compounded by AI-generated content and eroding public trust in institutions.

Undervaluation of the PR profession and associated budget constraints were reported by multiple countries, with respondents noting that PR budgets are often the first to be cut during economic downturns and that demonstrating return on investment remains a persistent challenge. Professionalisation gaps including the hiring of non-professionals and inconsistent adherence to industry standards were particularly highlighted by the Nigerian respondents, while identity confusion between PR and marketing or digital agencies was flagged by the Philippines.

### 7.2 Key Opportunities

The strategic elevation of PR positioning the profession as a C-suite advisory function rather than a tactical communications tool was the most frequently identified opportunity. This theme was reinforced by respondents from the United Kingdom, Philippines, Czech Republic, and Australia, all of whom called for PR professionals to be integrated into senior organisational decision-making.

AI was also identified as a significant opportunity, with respondents highlighting the potential for new professional roles, enhanced narrative authority, and improved productivity. Responsible communication and ethics including leadership in responsible AI and alignment with the UN SDGs emerged as a strategic differentiator, particularly for associations in Nigeria and Australia. ESG and sustainability, reputation and trust-building, and the development of data and analytical skills were also identified as key growth areas.

KEY THREATS	Description	Reported By
<b>AI &amp; Technological Disruption</b>	AI and automation, rogue use of AI, unethical AI adoption, loss of jobs due to automation	UK, Philippines, Bangladesh, Australia, Ireland, South Africa
<b>Disinformation &amp; Misinformation</b>	Rise of disinformation, AI misuse, lower trust in institutions, spin	UK, South Africa, Ireland
<b>Undervaluation &amp; Budget Constraints</b>	Insufficient budgets, PR budgets cut during downturns, proof of ROI, loss of perceived value	Czech Republic, Bangladesh, South Africa, Australia
<b>Professionalisation Gaps</b>	Hiring non-professionals, not following industry standards, non-intellectualisation of PR practice	Nigeria (×2), Czech Republic
<b>Identity &amp; Role Confusion</b>	Blurring lines with marketing and digital agencies, juxtaposing media relations with PR	Philippines, Nigeria (×2)
<b>Talent &amp; Skills Shortage</b>	Talent drain, lack of data analytical skills, insufficient research methodology	Philippines, Nigeria (×2)
<b>Inadequate Remuneration</b>	Practitioner salaries not competitive, unregulated competition	Bangladesh, South Africa
KEY OPPORTUNITIES	Description	Reported By

<b>Strategic Elevation of PR</b>	Becoming a key C-suite strategic role, PR as strategic advisor, organisational change	UK, Philippines, Czech Republic, Australia
<b>AI as an Enabler</b>	New roles in an AI world, AI & narrative authority, leveraging AI tools for productivity	Bangladesh, Australia, South Africa
<b>Responsible Communication &amp; Ethics</b>	Leading in responsible AI, responsible communication spheres, UN SDG alignment	Australia, Nigeria (×2)
<b>ESG &amp; Sustainability</b>	Greater emphasis on going green, ESG & sustainability as growth areas	Bangladesh, South Africa
<b>Reputation &amp; Trust Building</b>	Online reputation management, trust, relationship-building in unstable climates	Philippines, Ireland
<b>Skills &amp; Capability Development</b>	Developing data and analytical skills, research capabilities, reskilling	Nigeria (×2)
<b>Emerging &amp; SME Markets</b>	SME & emerging markets, governance and economy challenges as opportunities	South Africa, Nigeria (×2)

Figure 10: Summary of Key Threats and Opportunities by Theme

## 8. Conclusion

The 2026 Global Perspectives Survey provides a valuable snapshot of the PR profession across eight countries and three global regions. Building on the foundation established by the 2019, 2022, and 2024 reports, this edition introduces important new dimensions particularly around artificial intelligence adoption, the UN SDG 18 initiative, and the Venice Pledge that reflect the profession's evolving challenges and priorities.

Several overarching themes emerge from the data. First, the profession continues to grapple with its identity and strategic positioning. Across nearly all responding countries, there is a clear and urgent call for PR to be elevated from a tactical, media-focused function to a strategic advisory role at the C-suite level. This requires not only a shift in how organisations perceive and resource PR, but also a corresponding shift in how practitioners position and market the value of their work.

Second, artificial intelligence presents a duality that the profession must navigate with care. On one hand, AI tools particularly ChatGPT are already deeply embedded in day-to-day PR practice. On the other hand, the same technologies are enabling non-professionals to produce communication content, undermining the perceived value of professional expertise, and creating new risks around disinformation and ethical misuse. The profession's response must therefore be both to embrace AI as a productivity and capability tool, and to champion the ethical frameworks such as the Venice Pledge that preserve the integrity of professional practice.

Third, the implementation of Global Alliance initiatives remains inconsistent. While South Africa demonstrates that deep, structured integration of SDG 18 and Venice Pledge principles is achievable, several other associations have not yet begun meaningful engagement. The Global Alliance should consider developing tiered implementation guides, regional peer-learning programmes, and shared measurement tools to support associations at all stages of readiness.

Finally, professionalisation remains a critical priority. The hiring of non-professionals, insufficient adherence to industry standards, and inadequate remuneration were cited as persistent threats particularly in developing markets. Addressing these issues will require coordinated action between professional associations, educational institutions, and governments to establish and enforce recognised standards of practice.

The 2026 report offers a timely and data-driven foundation for all Global Alliance members to inform their strategic planning, benchmark their local practices against global peers, and accelerate the profession's transition toward a more strategic, ethical, and technologically fluent future.

## Appendix: Additional Comments from Respondents

The following comments were provided by respondents in response to the open-ended question: 'Any additional comments or recommendations for strengthening PR globally?'

### **United Kingdom (Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR))**

*Reference to Chief Communications Officer, strategic reputation management rather than 'PR'*

### **Philippines (PRSP)**

*PR leaders should be part of the C-suite and boardroom discussions. It must move beyond being perceived as a communications or publicity tool*

### **Czech Republic (ASCOPA - Association of Strategic Communication and Public Affairs)**

*We need to have a common set of rules, evaluation and proof of value added as a key C-level strategic role*

### **Australia (Centre for Strategic Communication Excellence)**

*PR and Communication Professionals need to seize the current opportunities to re-align its role for an AI world*

### **Nigeria (Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (Ondo State Chapter))**

*Embracing accountability, transparency and truthfulness at all times and in all circumstances*

### **South Africa (The Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA))**

*Professionalisation — global associations should push for statutory or officially recognised professional accreditation.*

### **Nigeria (Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) Ondo State Chapter)**

*Public relations require research and analytical skills that are not commonplace but distinguishes the high flyers. Success in PR requires the ability to think critically, plan strategically and capacity to manage crises effectively.*