



Strategy
Leadership
Governance

GGI

High performance board 2030

GGI's 2025 thought leadership programme: boards that are ready for the future

Creating lasting value for society

April 2025



The challenge

The world is unstable and rapidly changing. Public-purpose organisations account for almost 50% of the UK's economy, so how they are governed is crucial to the nation's future. But most of the ways in which boards are encouraged to conduct themselves and develop is, at best, in the 'here and now' and guided by various codes that emphasise compliance with structures and processes, or team building that focuses on getting the best from the current board team.

GGI has always been interested in impact and governance that delivers meaningful outcomes. We have drawn heavily on the King IV report to inform our thinking. During 2025 we will be taking this further and undertaking a major piece of thought leadership around impactful boards that are high performing and effectively steer the organisations they are accountable for in a very rapidly changing and unstable world.

To deliver this we are launching a research and engagement programme centred on answering the critical question: what will shape and define the high performing board/leadership team of 2030?

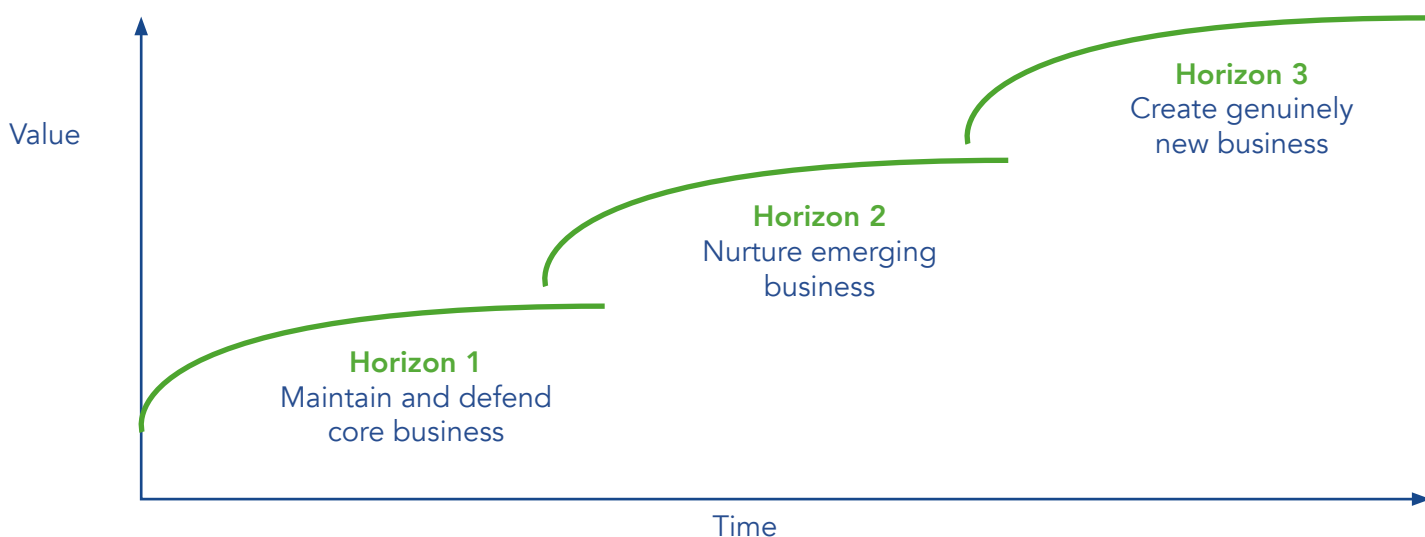
Through interviews, roundtables, comparative analysis, and cross-sector collaboration this inquiry will convene leaders from across public services, civil society, and government. From health to housing, education to the environment, we will surface the insights, innovations and ambitions that boards need to embrace to thrive in complexity and lead with legitimacy.

Framing the conversation: the 'Three Horizons model'

The Three Horizons model is a framework and method developed by McKinsey in 2006 that plots, against axes that depict time and value, the strategic future. It presents a picture of change in a system as an interplay between:

- **Horizon 1** – the current dominant where the focus is ongoing **improvement**, but by necessity time-limited and thereby declining as it loses fit with a changing environment

- **Horizon 3** – the desired future that is aligned to the changed future and will be reached through **transformation**
- **Horizon 2** – the turbulent intermediary where **innovation** is necessary for survival and success



The approach recognises that there are always pockets of the future in the present, and as time goes forward the tactics that achieve success in H1 and H2 remain useful as the world changes and we arrive at H3. The point is not that leaders focus on H1 and later progress to H2 and H3 but put conscious effort into all three horizons right now to yield immediate results while thoughtfully building for success in the future.

Applying this framework to board governance gives us a sound way of developing our boards, leadership teams and governance systems, giving real hope of ongoing relevance and leadership that has at its core sustainability and strength.

Our starting hypothesis is that boards of public-purpose organisations need to understand all three horizons and should be working on developing themselves to deliver H1, H2 and H3 right now. To kick off this programme GGI has an initial list of important questions to consider, and ideas about what the right answers might look like. Our 2025 thought leadership programme will focus on collaborating with board leaders of public purpose organisations to test and challenge our thinking and move it on, starting with and developing these questions towards a common, sector-agnostic and peer-co-developed view of the board/ leadership team for 2030.

A framework for discussion

As a starting point, GGI has been thinking about what is now available to help boards focus on, in the first instance, defining the three horizons as they pertain to board governance and what is guiding boards to develop how they are working. This table captures some of our initial thinking to test.



	H1	H2	H3
Characteristics	Improving what we do now – being on top of the here and now	Innovating for the anticipatable future – having a strategic focus	Transforming in a complex, uncertain and rapidly changing world – thinking through resilience
What guides board and governance development	Governance codes Regulatory compliance Clarity Strategic alignment Team building Board member personality typing What else?	High performing board literature King IV and King V – meaningful outcomes of good governance Developmental well-led/ governance reviews What else?	Transformative board leaderships Value creation Collaboration and compromise - systems working What else?
Key questions for boards	Are we most effectively and efficiently delivering regulatory compliance? Do we understand the governance expectations for our organisation and what good looks like? Do we know our own organisation and the market we operate in? Would we do well in a regulatory inspection and how do we know this? Are our organisation's culture, processes, people etc aligned to our strategies? What else?	Have we thought about what board we need for this strategic cycle? Are we forward-thinking and anticipating the future known knows? Are we aware of our strategic risks, our risk horizon and how this is reflected in our assurance? Have we sustainability and succession plans in place? Have we addressed strategic alignment? What else?	Have we imagined the big ahead and thought through building resilience for an uncertain future What else?
Board and governance development approaches	Governance reviews Board effectiveness reviews Governance improvement programmes Board discussions What else?	Developmental governance reviews Outcome-orientated board development programmes What else?	Scenario exercises What else?



2025 development programme and how you can be part of this work

GGI works with public-purpose organisations across all the major sectors, from health to housing, academia to the arts. This gives us a distinctive vantage point of public-purpose governance and a platform from which to create a thinking space for the leaderships of public-purpose organisations to work through how they can be putting in place the right strategies for working as governing bodies and being effective stewards, be this for university councils, the boards of NHS foundation trusts, the top teams of local authorities or charity trustees.

We are known for our thought leadership work, and we always share our thinking through our publications, events and networks which are all open access and free to all.

Between April and September 2025, we will be opening a 'big conversation' with leaders from the different public-purpose sectors as we prepare for a major event in September where we will bring together colleagues for a well-prepared, rapid-development event at which we will test the emerging thinking. At the September event participants will be working through H1, H2 and H3 specifics, firstly within sectors but then as partners and collaborators between sectors.

The aim is to have the thinking ready to share in the late autumn 2025 for launch in 2026 in a way that has gathered the best thinking and experience from public-purpose sectors in an involved and collaborative way. We need your help with this.

GGI are looking for:

- chairs/leaders/mayors
- chief executives
- thinkers and practitioners

who will commit to:



- an interview or attending a round table/ focus group to explore the issues and get your cues for this work
- participate in the September rapid-development event
- be part of the consultation to help refine the final output for the 2026 launch











We will also be forming a steering group to help with this work and have some supporting strands looking at some of the often ‘wicked issues’ that affect the governance and board working of particular sectors within the broader church of public-purpose organisations.

Already underway are round table events for:

- **membership organisations**, looking at some of the governance issues unique to organisations where memberships hold key elements of the organisation’s stewardship
- **community interest companies**, where there are particular responsibilities towards a defined community in the organisation’s aims for value creation
- **hospices**, which are smaller organisations under significant pressure at the moment that carry out both publicly and charitably funded work and are often engaged in commercial work as well as service delivery.

The main sectors we intend to develop themes for are:

-  arm’s length bodies and governmental agencies
-  arts and creative industries

-  fire and rescue
-  higher education
-  housing
-  local authorities
-  membership organisations
-  NHS
-  non-NHS health and social care
-  police
-  secondary and further education – colleges and MATs
-  sports

GGI’s wider knowledge management programme, including our webinars, discussion events and our regular development of publications and tools over the next ten months, will also inform this thinking.



If you would like to contribute to our High performance board 2030 thought leadership programme, or just find out more about it, please email Andrew Corbett-Nolan at andrew.corbett-nolan@good-governance.org.uk

GGI exists to help create a fairer, better world. Our part in this is to support those who run the organisations that will affect how humanity uses resources, cares for the sick, educates future generations, develops our professionals, creates wealth, nurtures sporting excellence, inspires through the arts, communicates the news, ensures all have decent homes, transports people and goods, administers justice and the law, designs and introduces new technologies, produces and sells the food we eat - in short, all aspects of being human.

We work to make sure that organisations are run by the most talented, skilled and ethical leaders possible and work to build fair systems that consider all, use evidence, are guided by ethics and thereby take the best decisions. Good governance of all organisations, from the smallest charity to the greatest public institution, benefits society as a whole. It enables organisations to play their part in building a sustainable, better future for all.



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