

# Bridging the HQ- Global Teams Gap:

Governance Models That Actually Work



# Table of Contents

Serial No.	Particulars	Page No.
1	Bridging the HQ–Global Teams Gap: Governance Models That Actually Work	01
2	The Governance Gap – Why Alignment Breaks	02
3	Decision Rights, Ownership & Trust	04
4	Transfer of Ownership	06
5	Governance That Evolves with the GCC	08
6	Early Signals of Governance Breakdown	10
7	Governance is the Bridge Between Capability and Impact	11
8	About ANSR	12



# 01

## Bridging the HQ–Global Teams Gap: Governance Models That Actually Work

Despite access to highly skilled talent and impeccable planning, many organisations struggle to realise the plans and budgets they set out during the early stages of building a Global Capability Center (GCC). This is often referred to as the ‘capability paradox’ – the gap between the capabilities that GCCs aim to build and their ability to execute against the original vision.

This gap is seldom driven by talent constraints or intent, but more often by governance. Governance is frequently misunderstood as a mechanism of control, but in high-performing organisations it serves a very different purpose: it creates clarity. It establishes the decision frameworks, accountability structures, and operating rhythms that enable global teams to move beyond a transactional service role and evolve into true enterprise partners.

Yet in the first year of a GCC, this clarity is often still taking shape, creating a governance gap between the global team and headquarters. This is precisely the challenge explored in our eBook, where leaders from different industries outline how GCC leaders can bridge this gap and build governance models that accelerate alignment, execution, and long-term impact.

# 02

## The Governance Gap – Why Alignment Breaks

In most cases, governance gaps are not driven by talent limitations or lack of intent, but by restricted exposure to business context and insufficient autonomy within global teams.

### **“What” without the “Why”:**

Organisations communicate what needs to be done but fail to explain why. This context-gap is often the biggest bottleneck slowing execution down. Teams must be onboarded not just on processes and technical tasks, but also on brand & business DNA - how the company operates, how decisions are made, and the strategic intent behind requests.

### **Micromanagement by HQ results in decision latency:**

Over-specifying the “how” often stems from a fear that new teams or initiatives might fail, prompting leaders to tightly control execution. However, this level of micromanagement slows decision-making and limits teams’ ability to exercise judgment, ultimately reducing agility and ownership.

**Limited autonomy leads to constant escalations:** Without clear decision rights, teams repeatedly check back with HQ or global markets before moving forward, creating unnecessary bottlenecks. When headquarters defines both the outcome and the method, teams become hesitant to act independently, slowing execution.

**False sense of progress:** In such cases, a perceived sense of progress can often mask misalignment. Work may appear to move forward through status updates and reporting, but the lack of shared context creates hidden gaps that later require significant rework.

As the governance gap continues to grow, momentum is the real casualty. Execution may look on track on paper, but the constant need for validation and alignment gradually erodes operational momentum. The issue is ultimately resolved through two levers—providing deeper business context and clearly defining decision ownership so teams can act with confidence and speed.



*The real gap often isn't capability — it is momentum. And that only shifts when we focus on two things: first, creating far greater clarity around context; and second, clearly defining decision rights."*

**Abhy Thomas Joseph**  
Global Chief Operating Officer  
Pentland Brands



## Leader's Voice

What is the biggest barrier between HQ and global teams?

**53%**

Unclear ownership

**27%**

Speed of decision-making

**13%**

Excessive approval-chain

**7%**

Lack of impact-visibility

### Governance + Controls = Stability at scale

A robust admin foundation

Strategic ecosystem partnerships

Embedding existing governance

Securing operational continuity

Compliance to be built-in, not bolted on



# 03

## Decision Rights, Ownership & Trust

When clarity of roles and ownership is missing, execution inevitably slows down. Even when expectations are clearly defined, limited authority can weaken accountability, making it difficult for teams to take decisive action. In distributed environments, where teams may rarely interact in person, building trust therefore becomes essential to ensuring both autonomy and alignment.

### Transfer of Decision Rights

Here's how leaders at the HQ can ensure a seamless transfer of decision-rights to the global team:

**Embed decision-making leadership within the GCC:** A critical shift comes from placing senior leaders and decision-makers directly within the GCC rather than concentrating authority exclusively at headquarters. This ensures faster, context-aware decisions and strengthens accountability within the global team.

**Shift from task execution to value chain ownership:** Instead of moving fragmented pieces of work to the global team, the HQ should transition entire segments of the value chain. This reduces excessive handoffs and enables global teams to take end-to-end ownership of outcomes.

**GCC leaders shape the why, what, and how:** Effective GCC leaders are not just executors of defined tasks. They participate in shaping the approach to delivery—and in some cases even the strategic direction—ensuring deeper alignment with enterprise goals.

**Reduce latency by minimising approvals and handoffs:** Empowering GCC leaders shortens decision cycles, eliminates unnecessary approvals, and removes “waiting days” that slow execution.

**Empowerment drives both speed and engagement:** When teams are trusted with meaningful decision rights, organisations not only accelerate execution but also see a noticeable increase in employee engagement and ownership.

## Empower GCCs across three critical decision areas:

**Delivery decisions:** Local leaders decide how to solve problems and deliver solutions day-to-day.

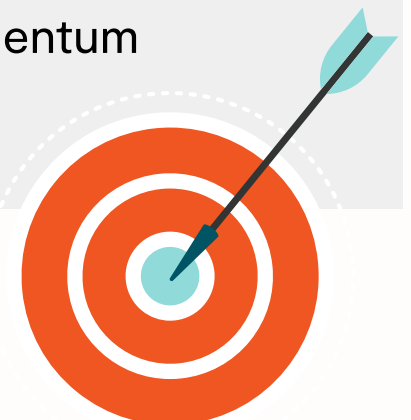
**Resourcing decisions:** Within defined guardrails, GCC leadership determines how teams are structured and deployed.

**Process improvements:** Teams are given autonomy to rethink and improve processes, unlocking innovations that may not emerge from HQ-centric models.



### **Business impact:**

Reduced decision latency → Faster execution →  
Higher engagement → Stronger momentum



# 04

## Transfer of Ownership

Transferring workload without the corresponding decision-making rights and ownership is akin to handing over a key without indicating the door it unlocks—one cannot function effectively without the other. Here's what our GCC leaders recommend:

**Balance centralisation with capability building:** A centralised knowledge base allows expertise to be leveraged across business units and GCCs, while still giving GCC teams the space to develop their own specialised capabilities.

**Use decision reversibility to define governance:** A practical way to determine what should be centralised is by distinguishing between irreversible and reversible decisions. Decisions with significant brand, reputational, regulatory, or commercial impact remain centralised, while reversible operational decisions can be delegated to GCC teams.

**Autonomy should be structured through clear guardrails:** The principle of freedom within a framework enables organisations to define strategic boundaries while allowing GCC teams flexibility in execution.

**Delegate operational ownership to the GCC:** Decisions related to operational delivery, such as how teams are structured or how work is executed, should sit within the GCC to improve responsiveness and execution speed.

**Empowerment strengthens capability development:** When GCCs are given autonomy within defined boundaries, they move beyond execution roles and begin to build deeper functional expertise and leadership capabilities.

**Governance evolves with organisational maturity:** As enterprises gain experience operating distributed teams, governance models naturally shift from centralised control toward structured autonomy.

“

*Governance is often misunderstood as a mechanism of control, but in high performing organizations, governance is about clarity.*

”

### Vikram Ahuja

Co-Founder,  
ANSR | CEO, 1Wrk



## Leader's Voice

What is the role of global teams in enterprise decision-making today?

Provide input, but HQ makes final calls

**(33%)**

Execute decisions made at HQ

**(25%)**

Own defined areas of decision-making

**(8%)**

# 05

## Governance That Evolves with the GCC

Governance and regulation are frequently misunderstood as constraints. In practice, high-performing organizations recognize that well-defined governance frameworks capable of evolving with the enterprise, serve as powerful enablers of agility and growth.

**A 'central group mindset':** A shared operating language accelerates decision-making. When business units interpret processes and terminology differently, collaboration slows down. Establishing a common framework and vocabulary enables faster alignment and clearer execution.

**Common operating model helps build new GCC offerings:** A shared process model allows teams across business units and GCCs to collaborate more effectively without repeatedly redefining how work gets done.

**Shared templates reduce friction and simplify execution:** Templates and playbooks accelerate new service creation. When organisations have established frameworks for delivery, launching new services becomes significantly faster and less complex.

**Post-acquisition shift - from integration to value-building:** As global teams move beyond integration phases and begin expanding services and offerings, the overall focus should also move to innovation, growth and overall value creation.

### Decision rights expand as GCCs reach operational scale:

As team scale and the volume and complexity of work increases, organizations gain confidence in shifting decision-making authority to the GCC. Global teams gradually move beyond execution roles and take ownership of operational and tactical decisions.

### Context is the foundation of effective decision-making:

Deep understanding of the business—its strategy, operating model, and brand DNA—enables GCC teams to make informed decisions aligned with enterprise priorities. When global teams are equipped with this context, organizations are far more comfortable granting them greater autonomy and strategic influence.



*When you try to collaborate, it gets harder because you're slightly talking different languages. But if you've got a common way of working and a template, you reduce a lot of the friction to get out of the gate.*

**Ben Young**

Programme Leader  
Arch Insurance Group



# 06

## Early Signals of Governance Breakdown

As organizations mature and scale, it becomes increasingly important to identify early warning signs that may indicate governance bottlenecks, operational breakdowns, or decision-making delays.

**“Waiting syndrome” as a clear breakdown signal:** When teams frequently wait for approvals, decisions, or clarity from other locations, it indicates that decision rights and accountability are not clearly defined within the governance model.

**Decision-ownership ambiguity signals structural gaps:** Uncertainty around who owns a decision or where approvals should come from creates bottlenecks that stall momentum and reduce operational agility.

**Delays as diagnostic tool** Transition-phases expose governance weaknesses more than steady-state operations. Decision rights are often clear in mature, business-as-usual environments, but ambiguity tends to surface when new services are introduced or existing ones are redesigned.

**KPI-heavy performance measurement signals low trust:** Governance maturity requires shifting from KPI tracking to outcome measurement. While activity metrics and KPIs are useful, over-reliance on them often reflects a transactional governance model rather than one focused on strategic business outcomes.

**SLAs as early warning signals:** Monitoring SLAs across services can help identify emerging decision-making bottlenecks, especially when most services run smoothly but a few show persistent delays.

As operations stabilise, governance clarity improves. Once new services transition into steady-state operations, decision rights, escalation paths, and execution rhythms typically become more defined, reducing uncertainty and delays.

# 07

## Governance is the Bridge Between Capability and Impact

The capability paradox is rarely driven by a lack of talent or intent; more often, it stems from gaps in governance. While governance is frequently perceived as a mechanism of control, in high-performing organizations it serves a far more strategic role: it creates clarity.

By establishing clear decision frameworks, accountability structures, and operating rhythms, governance enables global teams to move beyond transactional delivery and operate as true enterprise partners.

When this clarity is absent, the impact is felt most acutely in lost momentum—execution may appear on track on paper, but the continuous need for validation and alignment gradually slows progress. In distributed environments, unclear ownership and limited authority further dilute accountability, making it harder for teams to act decisively and sustain trust across geographies.

The most successful organizations therefore recognize governance not as a constraint, but as an enabler—designing adaptive governance frameworks that evolve with the enterprise and provide the foundation for sustained agility, trust, and growth.

# 08 About ANSR

ANSR is the definitive global leader in establishing and operating Global Capability Centers. With over 200 GCCs established for more than 100 Fortune 500 companies across key innovation hubs in India, Eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia, ANSR combines unparalleled strategic insight, proven execution capabilities, and proprietary technology solutions to help enterprises build and grow their global teams.

As pioneers of the GCC as a Service (GaaS) model and creators of the revolutionary 1Wrk platform, ANSR continues to redefine how enterprises achieve operational excellence and accelerate their digital transformation journeys. With over two decades of experience and a team of seasoned GCC experts, ANSR delivers predictable outcomes that enable enterprises to gain competitive advantage through their global capability centers.

**200+**

GCCs set up

**200K+**

professionals  
hired

**12M+**

sqft of workspace  
managed

**20+**

Years of  
Experience

**\$2B+**

capital investment  
created



**ANSR**  
BETTER OUTCOMES