

## GaWC Data 2012

The data gathering strategy and the calculation model is described in detail in [Taylor and Derudder \(2016\)](#). This document provides information on some of the core elements of this 2012 data gathering strategy in terms of firm and city selection.

In our data, we focus on the leading firms in 5 sectors: 75 financial services firms, 25 management consultancy firms, 25 advertising firms, 25 law firms, and 25 accountancy firms. The information on the location strategies of the 'GaWC 175' used in the present data gathering exercise was gathered between October 2012 and February 2013. Firms were selected based on sectoral rankings for 2012, which tended to be based upon 2011 data. We selected financial services firms from BrandFinance's Top 500 financial services and insurance companies', which is based on a benchmark study of the strength, risk and future potential of financial services firms; accountancy firms were chosen from World Accounting Intelligence's ranking, which is based on an analysis of aggregated company revenues; advertising agencies were selected based on Brandirectory's analysis of the valuable brands in the advertising sector; law firms were selected based on Chambers' ranking of leading corporate law firms; and management consultancy firms were selected from Vault Management & Strategy Consulting's Survey, which ranks firms in terms of their 'prestige' based on a large survey of professionals. For each sector, the top-ranked firms were chosen, and we also identified substitute firms (i.e. ranked just below 75 and 25) to cover for situations where a firm had disappeared (e.g. been taken over) during the actual data collection.

Note that although our starting point is firms, the information we collected defines firm networks with very different levels of corporate integration. Alongside tightly organized global firms operating under a single corporate flag (e.g. PricewaterhouseCoopers), there are also 'firms' that are in fact *groups* of firms (e.g. Leading Edge Alliance Group). In the latter case, the firm is in fact an alliance of medium-sized firms constituted as a network in order to compete globally with the very large firms leading this sector. Furthermore, some – if not most – service firms have developed service portfolios that straddle the sectoral boundaries adopted in our selection of firms. Several firms in the Leading Edge Alliance Group, for instance, also provide financial and business advisory services to their clients. The world's major global services firms have even developed into across-the-board providers of professional services. PricewaterhouseCoopers, for instance, is best known as one of the 'Big Four auditors', but has in practice become a fully-fledged professional services network also providing legal, consulting and financial advisory services. In case of such overlap, firm networks were allocated to what is generally recognised as their 'core business'. Thus in spite of also providing other services, both Leading Edge Alliance Group and PricewaterhouseCoopers are included here as firm networks in the accountancy sector.

A few of the larger firms have branches in many hundreds, even thousands, of cities and towns. The data collection has been restricted to the more important cities for two reasons. The first is analytical: the more cities included, the more sparse the final matrix will become with nearly none of the 'GaWC 175' networks present in the smaller cities and towns. The second is theoretical: the interest is in the more important inter-city connections, ultimately the world city network. Nevertheless, it is also important not to omit any possible significant node in the world city network so that a relatively large

number of cities need to be selected. Similar to our selection of firms, our criterion for inclusion has been revised compared to the initial data collection in 2000. The initial ad hoc selection of 315 cities in the 2000 data gathering was biased towards Northern America, Western Europe and Pacific Asia. To ensure that all continents are reasonably represented, we devised a new and more inclusive roster of cities compared to the 2000 data gathering. In addition to the original 315 cities, we used a series of overlapping criteria such as a population of more than 1.5 million inhabitants; all capital cities of states with a population of more than 1 million, and every city with a headquarter office of one of our selected firms. This led to the selection of 526 cities in the 2012 data gathering.