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Thinking Ahead Institute

An innovation network founded by WTW

Grape vine

Bringing you the latest insights, events and opportunities that help you to Think Ahead.



Dear TAI,

As we say hello to 2026, it feels like the year is already well underway. For those of us in the northern hemisphere, the first signs of spring are edging in; for friends in the south, the days are beginning to cool. Wherever you are, we hope the start of the year has brought a moment to reset and refocus.

At the Thinking Ahead Institute, the conversations we've been having with our global network since January point to a year defined by momentum - in technology, the total portfolio approach and wealth market, and in the way

long-term investors are adapting to a more complex world. With that energy in mind, we're pleased to share highlights from the first quarter: the research we've launched, the conversations we've hosted, and the ideas that are already shaping 2026.

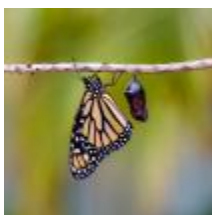
Take a look at the ways you can get involved and engage, from exploring our new [Technology and AI hub](#) to our bespoke virtual event with the [Financial Times](#).

New research that's shaping conversations



Global Asset Manager Study - now underway

Our new Global Asset Manager Peer Study is designed to benchmark how managers are adapting their people, processes, tech and investment philosophy as complexity increases. [Read our short Q&A](#) for more on the study, how to get involved and when to expect the results.



Global DC Peer Study

This month we published our full Global DC Peer Study, covering 20 organisations with US\$20 trillion in AUM.

Alongside it, our latest [investment insight](#) explores where the DC industry is moving next, from digital tools to retirement income design. Explore the [Summary Report](#) and our [DC hub](#).



Global Pension Assets Study

Our [latest edition](#) landed in February, charting US\$68.3 trillion in global pension assets, a near 10% rise, and spotlighting the rapid long term growth of DC markets. Canada is now the world's second largest pension market, reshaping the global landscape.



Global Sustainability Peer Study

We kicked off the year with new evidence from mega global asset owners on how sustainability is being reframed through governance, investment models and organisational design. The study highlights where sustainability strategies are

shifting, and where they need to accelerate. [Explore the study.](#)

Take a look at our full list of [research activities](#) for the year and our [2026 Investor Outlook](#) for more on our top five areas of focus.



Spotlight on Org-Alpha

Organisational Alpha is the “edge” that comes from how well an organisation runs itself.

We first started talking about Org-Alpha in 2019 following

a project
with NZ
Super
and it
has
become
integral
to how
we
assess
an
organisat
on's
overall
effective
ness.

So, why now? An organisation's real performance edge has shifted to how they're designed - their people, culture, governance, decision making and tech. In a world that's more complex, more measurable and increasingly AI enabled, Org-Alpha turns effectiveness into a tangible, quantifiable advantage.

Explore our [Org-Alpha](#) assessment tool, project case study and podcast on the topic.

Zooming in on the wealth market



The Big Wealth Reset | St James's Place

Kick off the new season of our

[Investing for Tomorrow podcast](#)

with a sharp look at how wealth is transforming.

Louisa Minter-Kemp, Communications & Engagement Director at

Thinking
Ahead sits
down with
**Rio
Stedford**
of St.
James's
Place.

They unpack shifting client expectations, the rise of private markets and how technology and hyper personalisation are reshaping advice. Listen in for an insightful take on where wealth is heading next.

[Listen to Rio and Louisa](#) | 36 minutes

Perspectives on AI and TPA



AI: The Next Skills Revolution?

In this bitesize fireside chat series, *Charting AI in the investment industry*, we sit down with **Mona Naqvi** from the CFA Institute and **Roger Urwin** from Thinking Ahead to unpack how AI is reshaping investment decision making, skills and governance.

From the rise of *HI × AI*, to the future of total portfolio approach, to the new capabilities investment



What does being on the Total Portfolio Approach (TPA) spectrum actually mean?

We've worked with organisations across the TPA spectrum, and a growing number of well-governed asset owners are exploring TPA. TPA isn't binary, most organisations are usually "somewhere in between" SAA and TPA.

professionals will need as automation accelerates - this short conversation explores some big questions around skills for investment professionals of the future.

[Listen to Mona and Roger](#) | 8 minutes

Knowing where your organisation sits on that spectrum can offer insight on what you can do next.

We've built a 10-minute quiz to give you that clarity, based on two decades of research and working with organisations navigating this transition.

[Find out more and take part](#)

What's coming up?



Pensions Asset Allocation Summit, Summer Conference

Thursday 21 May, London

Asset allocation remains the single most powerful driver of long-term performance in pension portfolios, but the context for those decisions have changed profoundly. Join **Marisa Hall**, and a number of our Thinking Ahead members, in person at this BlackRock- and MSCI-sponsored Summit, where she'll be taking part in a panel discussion on the Total Portfolio Approach. [Explore the agenda and register.](#)

The \$30trn challenge: How the most influential asset owners shape our world

Wednesday 3 June, virtual

We're teaming up with the **Financial Times** for a 50-minute virtual event exploring how the world's most influential asset owners are reshaping portfolios, risk and technology, and what it means for the future of investing. [Explore the topic and sign up today.](#)

Thinking Ahead member spotlight: IFM Investors

How does long-term decision-making change when technology, geopolitics and capital markets begin behaving like one interconnected system? **Luba Nikulina**, Chief



Strategy
Officer at
IFM
Investors,
explores
how
embracin
g this
reality,
alongside
a culture
of honest
organisati
onal
reflection,
is shifting
IFM's
approach
to the
future.

“I think we are still underestimating how quickly technology, geopolitics and capital markets are converging into a single system. Many institutions continue to treat AI, geopolitical fragmentation, and industrial policy as separate themes. In reality, they are interacting forces that will reshape labour markets, productivity, national priorities, and capital allocation simultaneously.”

[Read the full interview](#)

What have we been posting about?

We've been sharing a steady flow of ideas from across our network, from highlights of our [Annual Briefing](#), attended by over 200 people, to podcasts with [Sustainable Investor](#) and the [CFA Institute](#) on the future of investment institutions and TPA. Fresh trends were highlighted across the [US](#), [UK](#) and [APAC](#), and we promoted our first [SHAPERS conversation](#), all focused on DC. We've shared more research moments, from our Research team [LAB day](#), to new thinking on [Risk 2.0](#) and [systems thinking](#).

Thinking about a project this year?

Browse our [research index](#) to see the topics we cover, and visit our [projects page](#) for how it works plus recent examples.

Follow us on LinkedIn

How can we help you?

We'd like to know what topics you're interested in, what you are being asked about and what you'd like from us. [Fill in this, very, quick form](#) and we'll do the rest.

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About the Thinking Ahead Institute

The Thinking Ahead Institute is a global not-for-profit investment research and innovation network dedicated to helping investors navigate the future. Bringing together leading asset owners, asset managers, wealth providers and strategic partners, the Institute drives innovation through collaborative research and practical solutions. Since its founding in 2015, the Institute has convened more than 150 organizations to collaboratively design fit-for-purpose investment strategies, improve organizational effectiveness, and strengthen stakeholder trust. Learn more about how the Thinking Ahead Institute can support your organization at thinkingaheadinstitute.org.

About WTW

At WTW (NASDAQ: WTW), we provide data-driven, insight-led solutions in the areas of people, risk and capital. Leveraging the global view and local expertise of our colleagues serving 140 countries and markets, we help you sharpen your strategy, enhance organizational resilience, motivate your workforce and maximize performance.

Working shoulder to shoulder with you, we uncover opportunities for sustainable success—and provide perspective that moves you.

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