



Think Ahead



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# Leading recovery: the evolving role of senior finance leaders in the public sector

Governments and public sector organisations responded rapidly to the Covid-19 pandemic. The initial response saw speeded-up decision-making, as processes were streamlined and finance teams were brought into the development of policy at an early stage. These steps demonstrated how the public sector can adapt to change.

## Learning the Lessons: Recommendations for governments and public sector organisations

ACCA and CA ANZ have identified three themes for governments to focus on as they lead recovery:



### Transforming systems

- **Build organisational resilience:** Governments must continue to invest in technology for staff and back-office systems; this will improve efficiency and ensure greater resilience.
- **Make the most of data:** Governments must urgently develop a framework that allows data sharing across the public sector, enabling the huge amount of data already held to be better used. In the longer-term, governments must develop unified data architecture and governance arrangements across the public sector.

### Rethinking leadership

- **Empower staff:** Public sector organisations should ensure decisions are taken at the appropriate level, to enable senior leaders to focus on strategic issues and increase the responsibility and engagement of junior staff.
- **Provide visible leadership:** An organisational culture where senior finance leaders make themselves accessible to other senior leaders, the finance function and the wider organisation is crucial to enabling a shared vision.

### Adapting to new ways of working

- **Focus on purpose, then place:** Governments must recognise that ways of working have changed and a 'one size fits all' approach will make it difficult to attract and retain staff.
- **Break down barriers:** Governments must adopt a more strategic approach to identifying public spending allocated across the public sector to particular issues or areas, enabling more joined-up decision making and pooling of budgets where appropriate.



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