



**NatureScot**  
**NàdarAlba**

Scotland's Nature Agency  
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

# Chief Executive

Candidate Information Pack, May 2025

**LHH**





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# Welcome from Professor Colin Galbraith, Chair

Thank you for your interest in joining NatureScot as our Chief Executive.

As Scotland's national agency for nature conservation, NatureScot plays a pivotal role in safeguarding and enhancing the country's natural environment. For decades, we have led the way helping to shape policies, delivering innovative solutions and ensuring that Scotland's biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife thrive for generations to come. Our work spans the length and breadth of Scotland, from office-based teams to those working in the wilds, ensuring that we protect nature in all its forms.

This is an exciting and rare opportunity to lead an organisation that is integral to Scotland's future – both environmentally and economically. The successful candidate will have the chance to drive our ambitious strategies as we navigate significant changes while continuing to foster our legacy of environmental stewardship.

We are looking for a leader who has experience at the helm of a similarly sized organisation, ideally with government agency experience. You will need to be an astute problem-solver, with a proven ability to deal with multiple issues simultaneously while remaining focused and pragmatic. The role demands someone who can engage with a diverse range of stakeholders, including landowners and managers, farmers and crofters, foresters and the fishing industry, the renewable sector and small businesses, environmental charities and community groups, local government, national government, academics and tech innovators, ensuring NatureScot's work is understood and supported across all sectors.

This is a high-profile role, which requires the successful candidate to be the public face of NatureScot. We are looking for a leader who has the ability to communicate clearly via all forms of media and to engage with a wide range of audiences. You will need to be articulate, using persuasive arguments to gain support from key stakeholders, including the Board, government ministers and senior officials. Authenticity and a passion for nature are essential, as is the ability to lead with both authority and approachability.

In the first 12 months, we would like to see you succeed by delivering the focus outlined in our 2025/2026 [business plan](#), ensuring a well-managed budget and handling the complex issues that arise as we move forward with our new strategy, effective from April 2026. It is essential you connect with the full team of colleagues across Scotland, foster a culture of collaboration and enthusiasm, and ensure we remain responsive and proactive in our approach to conservation.

We are looking for someone who is not only a leader but a passionate advocate for the environment, who believes in the work we do and the significant contribution it makes to Scotland's natural heritage, our economy and to the people of Scotland. If you are driven to make a real impact and are ready to take on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, we would be delighted to hear from you.

We look forward to receiving your application.

**Professor Colin Galbraith**  
Chair



[Watch Our Video](#)





# Advertisement

## NatureScot, Chief Executive

Location: Scotland

Salary: £115,000 to £125,553 per annum



NatureScot is seeking an exceptional leader to guide Scotland's leading nature conservation agency into its next phase of development and delivery.

As we face the growing challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change, we are looking for a visionary Chief Executive to champion our mission, enhance our impact and lead our work in protecting and restoring Scotland's unique natural heritage.

For decades, NatureScot has been at the heart of Scotland's conservation efforts, working with communities, businesses and government to safeguard our landscapes, wildlife and biodiversity. With a dedicated team across the country, we play a leading role in shaping policies, implementing strategies, advising government ministers and promoting Scotland's natural assets, ensuring they are preserved for generations to come.

### The Role:

As Chief Executive, you will provide strong, visible leadership, ensuring that NatureScot remains at the forefront of Scotland's nature conservation efforts.

You will be responsible for driving the organisation's strategic vision, ensuring we meet our goals of nature conservation, sustainability and societal impact.

Reporting to the Board, you will lead a talented and diverse team across Scotland, ensuring operational excellence, financial sustainability and continued growth.

You will be the public face of NatureScot, advocating for Scotland's natural environment and building relationships with key stakeholders across government, the private sector, and local communities. Your leadership will be pivotal in driving the delivery of our strategy and ensuring the challenges facing nature conservation are met with innovative and effective solutions.

### We are seeking a Chief Executive with the following attributes:

- A visionary leader with the experience and ability to drive change within a similarly sized organisation, ideally within a government agency or conservation-focused sector.
- A skilled problem-solver, able to manage multiple complex issues and develop practical solutions while ensuring alignment with our core mission.
- An outstanding communicator and networker, with the ability to represent NatureScot at the highest levels and build strong, productive relationships with key decision-makers across diverse sectors.

- Public-facing, media-savvy and confident in dealing with stakeholders, ranging from government ministers to local farmers, communities and environmental groups.
- A strong strategic and financial mindset, with a deep understanding of managing budgets and leading complex organisations through change and growth.
- A commitment to building a diverse and inclusive workforce, ensuring NatureScot remains a welcoming, accessible and collaborative organisation for all.
- A passionate advocate for nature, with a clear understanding of the importance of Scotland's environment to both the economy and the future wellbeing of its people.

### Applications

To apply, please submit a tailored CV and a covering letter (no longer than two pages), outlining your relevant skills and experience to [ScotlandExecutive@LHH.com](mailto:ScotlandExecutive@LHH.com), by midnight on **Sunday 25th May**.

For a confidential, informal discussion about the role please contact LHH directly at **+44 (0)141 220 6460** or email [ScotlandExecutive@LHH.com](mailto:ScotlandExecutive@LHH.com)



# About Us

**NatureScot is Scotland's national agency for nature conservation, working to protect, restore and value Scotland's remarkable natural heritage.**

NatureScot plays a vital role in shaping policies, strategies and actions that safeguard the country's biodiversity, landscapes and ecosystems for current and future generations.

Our mission is to ensure Scotland's nature thrives. We do this by supporting and delivering initiatives that conserve our natural resources, from iconic wildlife to unique habitats and ecosystems. Scotland's nature is not just an essential part of its identity - it is integral to its economy, culture and the well-being of its people. From the rugged Highlands to the remote islands and lowlands, NatureScot's work spans the full diversity of Scotland's landscapes, coastline and marine environment, promoting the needs of nature and tackling conservation challenges in all parts of the country.

We work closely with local communities, businesses and key stakeholders to implement Scotland's nature conservation policies. Our responsibilities include advising Scottish Government on nature conservation issues, guiding environmental policy, supporting sustainable land and marine use, and helping to implement national strategies that address climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental sustainability. Our role extends to managing Scotland's network of National Nature Reserves, as well as providing funding and resources to help local communities, landowners and users of the sea care for nature.

NatureScot is the driving force behind Scotland's role in global environmental frameworks, including its commitment to meeting the targets set out in international agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We are committed to ensuring that Scotland meets its climate and environmental commitments, working with partners across the public and private sectors to deliver lasting change.

Our team is diverse and distributed across Scotland, from office-based teams to staff working in the wilds of Scotland's most remote areas. Together, we foster a collaborative and inclusive culture, bringing innovative ideas to the table and adapting to the evolving challenges facing our natural environment.

Through our work, we aim to inspire others to value and protect Scotland's nature, understanding that the health of the planet is intrinsically tied to the health and wealth of our people and communities.

NatureScot's work is critical to preserving Scotland's rich natural heritage, ensuring that our landscapes, seascapes and wildlife remain vibrant, resilient and nature-rich for generations to come.



[Watch Our Video](#)



# The Role

**The post holder will lead, and be supported by, a Senior Leadership Team and a Board of Non-Executive Directors, reporting directly to the Chair of the Board.**

## Job Purpose Summary

The Chief Executive of NatureScot has the pivotal role in achieving nature recovery across Scotland, steering the organisation's long-term success and the delivery of key outcomes in the service of Scottish Government and the people of Scotland. The postholder will provide strategic leadership, drive a positive, inclusive organisational culture, and build strong, positive relationships with partners and stakeholders. They will ensure the organisation optimises the value of its assets, translating policy and ambition into meaningful, impactful action that delivers a range of public benefits.

The post holder will be a strategic leader, able to engage internally and externally to drive long-term progress and identify opportunities to realise the full contribution NatureScot can make to Scotland's nature, people and economy.

They will lead NatureScot's work to enhance our natural environment and inspire the people of Scotland to care more about it. Working closely with Scottish Government and a wide range of partners and stakeholders, they will build consensus and deliver on the vital role that nature-based solutions can contribute to tackling the twinned nature and climate emergencies.

They will play a proactive and positive role in influencing others to help NatureScot realise the full potential of Scotland's natural capital and growing nature finance opportunities.

Closing the finance gap for nature in Scotland for the next decade and leveraging responsible private investment through innovative new partnerships will be vital to meeting climate targets and restoring our natural environment.

The post holder will lead, and be supported by, a Senior Leadership Team, reporting to a Board of Non-Executive Directors in respect of overall strategy. Delivery will be guided by an Audit and Risk Committee for governance and audit purposes, and by a Scientific Advisory Committee on science and evidence matters.

The post holder will be the Accountable Officer responsible for a significant and diverse budget of £89.2m (for 2025/26), incorporating major programmes, including the significant Nature Restoration Fund and PeatlandAction funding.

The post holder will have responsibility for the productivity and wellbeing of around eight hundred people in the organisation, based across the length and breadth of Scotland.

In addition, and importantly, they will be responsible for maintaining an overview of the significant assets held by the organisation, including up to 35,000 hectares of land in 39 locations owned and managed by NatureScot. They range from the largest site, Rum, which is just over 10,000 hectares, to small reserves such as the eight hectares at Rhynie Chert.



# The Role

The role requires the vision, creativity, adaptability and strategic leadership to steer the organisation in a complex and ever-changing operating environment.



## 1. Overview:

- Ensuring successful, long-term delivery of NatureScot's outcomes, to bring about the recovery of nature across Scotland.
- The role provides the vision, creativity, adaptability and strategic leadership to steer the organisation in a complex and ever-changing operating environment, anticipating challenges and managing risks to deliver success and build resilience.
- To inspire and engage locally, nationally and internationally with a broad range of partners and stakeholders to tackle barriers, identify opportunities and influence a step change in action to tackle the nature of the climate crisis.

## 2. To act as NatureScot's Accountable Officer:

- Answerable to Scottish Government on the use and governance of public funds by NatureScot, ensuring that key targets are met each year in a cost-effective way.
- Accountable for the duty of care to those working for and visiting NatureScot, and its assets.
- Operating within NatureScot's Framework document and fulfilling governance requirements.
- Ensuring an effective risk appetite for the organisation is robustly maintained, with effective operational risks identified and mitigated on a cyclical basis. This includes the management and mitigation of risk across a range of dimensions including reputational, political, operational, digital and financial.

## 3. Strategic leadership:

- To lead and develop the Senior Leadership Team to enable operational effectiveness and innovation, ensuring that NatureScot delivers high-quality outputs and outcomes.
- Leading and inspiring NatureScot's workforce to ensure a highly performing, inclusive and diverse organisation that maximises the potential of its employees and delivers the organisation's priorities, values and vision.
- Inspirational and visible leadership of NatureScot's transformation ambitions for the organisation's operating model, culture and digital service delivery.
- Driving innovation in NatureScot and supporting public service reform through strong collaboration focusing on efficiency, effectiveness and continuous service improvement.
- Identifying opportunities for growing nature finance, developing income generation and diversifying funding, to underpin nature recovery.
- Leading and shaping the operations of NatureScot, ensuring they are delivered in line with good and emerging practice, current and future needs, and strong organisational performance measures of success.

## 4. Stakeholder Relations:

- To build collaborative partnerships and relationships with the public, private and third sectors.
- Engaging directly with strategic leaders across a variety of sectors. Connecting and influencing a wider range of public, private and not-for-profit interests, to deliver NatureScot's outcomes, aligned to Scottish Government's ambitions for nature.
- Representing NatureScot positively by establishing and developing relationships across Scottish Government and with a wide, cross-sectoral range of stakeholders.
- Growing the corporate presence and brand of NatureScot and playing a leading role with other public sector leaders as part of the wider 'Team Scotland' approach.
- Engaging locally, nationally and internationally with a broad range of partners and stakeholders to identify opportunities and influence a step change in action to tackle the nature and climate crises.
- Convening stakeholders to find common ground in areas of often contested and diverse perspectives, facilitating collaboration and tackling areas of disagreement.
- Actively promoting the work of NatureScot and the wider environment sector, with individuals, communities and stakeholders across Scotland, to better connect people with nature, and to inspire them to act.
- Building and maintaining a positive brand and profile for NatureScot, continuing to develop trust, respect and confidence in our work.



# Person Specification

**Operate with a high degree of autonomy within a complex, fast-moving and changing environment.**

## To deliver the role, you will:

- Provide robust and innovative leadership to an organisation of circa eight hundred people, by translating Ministers' ambitions into a clear vision, setting direction for that vision and ensuring the organisation is organised, resourced and motivated to deliver its priorities.
- Provide confident, inclusive and engaging leadership, with the ability to lead and motivate a large multi-disciplinary and distributed team, while fostering partnerships at senior levels and working collaboratively across boundaries to achieve impactful results, delivering outcomes for nature.
- Demonstrate passion for, and commitment to, protecting, restoring and valuing Scotland's nature.
- Take a whole system approach to complex and constantly evolving environmental issues, actively developing and influencing wide networks internally and externally.
- Have a proven history of working successfully with a Board, ensuring effective governance, engagement and strategic oversight.
- Possess demonstrable experience as an organisational change agent, driving business transformation and enhanced performance, with a clear focus on outcomes.
- Be a strong communicator, able to set clear strategic direction and make high-quality decisions which balance risk and stakeholder interests to deliver outcomes and bring about transformation.
- Operate with a high degree of autonomy within a complex, fast-moving and changing environment, with a high level of personal resilience, determination and adaptability.
- Create a sense of collective purpose through open and inclusive dialogue, debate and engagement.

## Essential criteria:

- A clear understanding of the responsibilities of the role of Accountable Officer and the statutory responsibilities of a public body.
- Sufficient breadth and depth of experience to lead and represent a large multi-disciplinary and distributed team, with a successful track record of working collaboratively across organisational boundaries to lead and deliver significant organisational change. Ensuring an innovative approach develops and engages a team culture which is focused on high performance.
- Experience of managing large-scale and complex budgets, performance delivery and corporate governance.
- Strong commercial awareness and experience of using a range of funding sources.
- Astute political awareness, with experience of responsibility for delivery within a public sector environment.
- A history of delivering impactful outcomes, with significant and successful experience of working with Government and managing senior stakeholder relationships, including dealing with private sector partnerships.
- Actively manage talent across a leadership community, supporting others to identify and develop their potential.
- Experience of championing diversity and inclusion within a team setting, and in the delivery of policy and services; creating an environment where diversity of thinking and perspective is both valued and nurtured.
- Demonstrable knowledge and understanding of current and future environmental issues, and experience of operating in a science-led, delivery-focused organisational culture.
- Excellent ambassadorial, leadership, communication and motivational skills.
- Proven ability to remain resilient and manage sensitive issues and relationships, with the ability to communicate difficult messages whilst under scrutiny.
- The resilience to work under sustained pressure and scrutiny.
- Exceptional strategic capability and judgement, combined with experience of how to translate strategy into successful delivery.
- Demonstrate a strong understanding of self as a leader, as well as a passion for - and commitment to - your own continuous personal and professional development. This includes acting as a role model for inclusive and engaging leadership by clearly articulating, with courage, humility and emotional intelligence, how your life experiences and background impact on your thinking and behaviour.

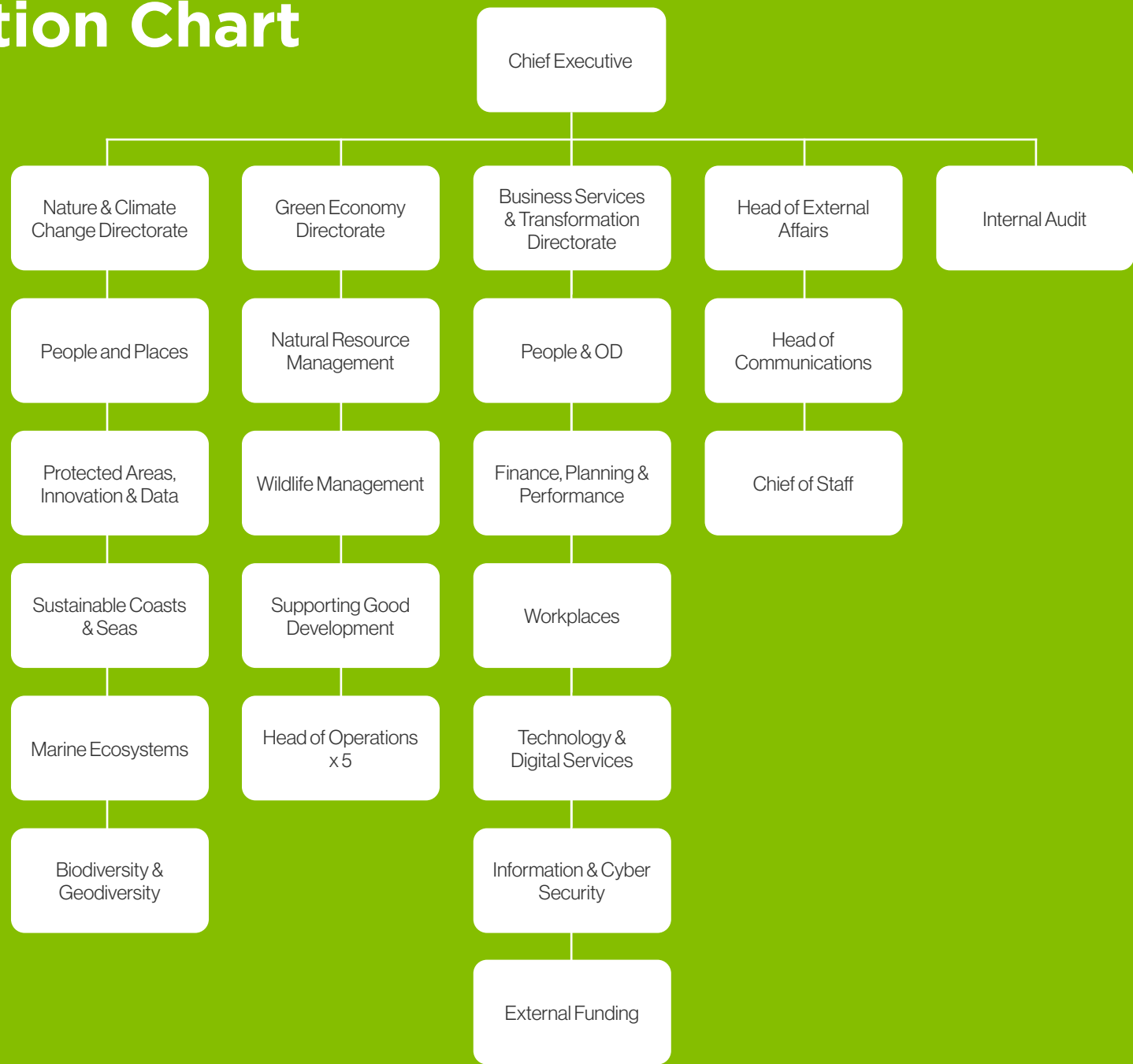
## NatureScot's net zero commitment:

Whether working at home or in an office, or travelling to meetings and site visits, as a member of NatureScot you will contribute to our Net Zero plan. For example, through positive carbon travel choices. We aim to minimise travel in accordance with NatureScot's low carbon operating procedures. In some circumstances you will be expected to work with colleagues and stakeholders from across Scotland, which will involve significant travel and may involve overnight stays.





# Organisation Chart



# Conditions & Remuneration

## Public sector benefits which support a healthy work life balance.

### Reports to:

The Chair of the Board of NatureScot

### Salary:

Pay range £115,000 to £125,553 per annum

### Hours:

35 hours per week

### Location:

Can be located anywhere in Scotland within proximity to a [NatureScot office](#). Regular travel required across NatureScot locations & Scotland to meet key stakeholders, including government.

### Flexible Working:

NatureScot operates three options in terms of flexible working. These are home, office/field-based or hybrid (a combination of both).

### Pension:

Civil service [pension scheme](#) with an employer contribution of 28.97% (7.35% employee contribution).

### Annual Leave:

41.5 days per year, with five of these fixed on the public holidays on St Andrews Day, 25th and 26th December and 1st and 2nd January.

### Notice Period:

3 months.

### Probationary Period:

First 6 months.

### Sick Pay:

6 months full, 6 months half pay (from day one)

### Other Benefits:

Equivalent of 2 days' paid volunteering leave per year.

A focus on wellbeing with access to an employee assistance programme for employees, their partners and dependants.

Death in service benefits.

Cycle to work and electrical vehicle salary sacrifice schemes.

Access to an employee discounts programme.

### Additional Information:

Right to work in the UK.

Disclosure Scotland check.

Although Gaelic language is not a prerequisite, it is a desirable skill in support of our commitment to our Gaelic Language Plan.

### Timescales

#### Closing date for applications

Sunday Midnight on 25th May

#### Interviews with NatureScot

Tuesday June 24th in Edinburgh





# How to Apply

**We are constantly reviewing our approach to ensuring equality and diversity in our applications.**

To apply for the post, please send a tailored CV and covering letter to [ScotlandExecutive@LHH.com](mailto:ScotlandExecutive@LHH.com)

Please note that the covering letter should be no more than two pages of A4 and should summarise your relevant skills and experience and motivations for applying for this role.

If you would like a confidential, informal discussion about the role then please contact LHH Recruitment Solutions directly on +44 (0)141 220 6460 or email the above address.

NatureScot is committed to equality of opportunity and to no discrimination on the grounds of race, religion or belief, age, sex, marital or civil partnership status, disability, sexual orientation, transgender status, pregnancy or maternity. We are constantly reviewing our approach to ensuring equality and diversity in our applications and would be pleased if you could complete an Equalities Monitoring Form.

[Equalities Monitoring Form](#) - Chief Executive, NatureScot

Should you require any modifications or wish to speak with a member of our team to discuss any particular circumstances, please email the above address.







**LHH Recruitment is Scotland's leading Executive Search team.  
We connect Scotland's top businesses with exceptional candidates –  
and we do it really well.**

We count innovators, creatives and leaders among the professionals we work with, and our clients and candidates span a diverse range of sectors and functions. From procurement and supply chain, medical, engineering, project management, accountancy, legal, transport and business transformation, to banking, the arts, government, technology, marketing and communications, not-for-profit and HR, our expertise is wide-reaching and our reach unparalleled.

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