SKILLS INVESTMENT PLAN

Year One Report

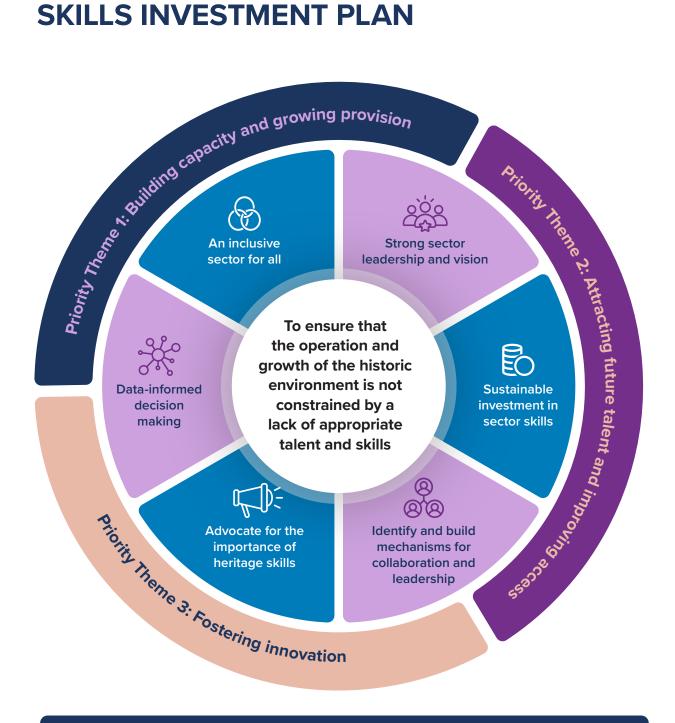








VISUALISING THE SKILLS INVESTMENT PLAN



SIP Footprint: 10 pillars

- Archaeology
- Architecture, engineering, planning, surveying in a heritage context and with a conservation approach
- Archives and libraries
- Conservation of art and artefacts

- Heritage science
- Heritage tourism
- Historic landscapes and gardens
- Industrial heritage
- Museums and galleries
- · Traditional building skills and materials

OUR PAST YEAR

The Skills Investment Plan for Scotland's Historic Environment (SIP) was conceived with the vision of building a sustainable skills ecosystem that would equip individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to safeguard heritage for generations to come. This report showcases some of the activities contributing to this vision, one year on from the SIP's publication.

Over the past year, the Sector Skills and Expertise group that oversees the delivery of the SIP has been reformed to reflect the footprint of the SIP and the delivery partners involved in each of the ten pillar areas. The many partners involved in delivering the priorities of the SIP have made progress in developing action plans for each of the ten pillar areas, providing a route map for delivery. This ensures that every part of this diverse sector has a role to play and that the ambition of the SIP is not lost. Lead partners and delivery mechanisms have been identified for the ten pillars to oversee the delivery of these action plans. This report contains the priorities and actions in each of the ten areas, alongside a short summary of the original consultation findings. The full summary can be found in the pillar skills profiles. Additionally, each section spotlights a sample of the activities being undertaken to achieve the priorities and actions.

A data baseline has been developed to monitor the progress being made against SIP KPIs, and to assess the health of the skills ecosystem. This baseline is important for supporting skills and workforce planning, and advocacy.

The SIP's online presence and reporting structures have been improved, with further enhancements continuing in year two.

Priority One: Growing Provision and Building Capacity

£2,807,175 in grant aid has been invested in 25 skills projects or projects with skills outcomes by Historic Environment Scotland including projects to support qualification and apprenticeship development and deliver continuing professional development (CPD) and employability opportunities.

Priority Two: Attracting Future Talent and Improving Access

More young people have had the chance to experience heritage careers with the development of the first Heritage Careers Week taking place in October 2024, and the first Nat5 Creative Industries for work (stone carving and roofing) being piloted by Edinburgh Schools as part of the Build Your Future Programme run by the Scottish Traditional Buildings Forum. The City of Edinburgh Council worked with industry in the National Federation of Roofing Contractors, Stone Federation GB, Education Scotland and SQA throughout the development of these courses.

More people will be able to enter and progress through the sector with the development of programmes like HES's Craft Your Career and MGS's skills programmes, which will see new pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and craft fellow opportunities developed over the next five years, working closely with host partners. New opportunities have been created, e.g. the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) have appointed their first archaeology trainee.

Priority Three: Fostering Innovation

Plans are underway to host cross-sector digital innovation and leadership events in year two. The use of digital and net zero self-reflection tools based on maturity levels is being explored, which can help organisations identify their level of competency and support progression on their digital and climate literacy journeys.

Reflecting on progress, we are reminded of the importance of continued investment in skills development. The challenges we face are everchanging. The one thing that remains constant is the importance of skills. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have contributed to delivery of the Skills Investment Plan. Your passion, expertise, and commitment have been instrumental in driving this initiative forward. Together, we look forward to another year of progress, innovation, and shared achievements.





The consultation identified the need for collaboration, advocacy, and a model of sustainable skills provision. This model should include cross-sector skills collaboration, succession planning, and addressing identified skills challenges.

Key skills identified include digital skills, public engagement, specialist technical skills, and knowledge and understanding of the construction sector and planning system. Future skills required are the skills to support the interpret to put again.

Careers in archaeology face issues with narrow entry routes and inequitable and unsustainable career pathways.

The predominant entry route is through university, but there is a need for better integration between academia and industry.



Priorities and actions

Priorities	Actions
P1: Address the lack of post-excavation specialists	 Map existing and future specialisms Explore feasibility of interventions including vocational training awards, graduate apprenticeships and sub-sector partnerships
P2: Upskilling in digital methods, including Al	Create an organisational self reflection tool underpinned by training provision
P3: Developing skills and knowledge around net zero	Create an organisational self reflection tool underpinned by training provision
P4: Continue to develop and build infrastructure to support training provision including a system to support specialists	 Continue development of apprenticeships Continue development of vocational qualifications e.g. PDA in fieldwork skills
P5: Develop sustainable and equitable career entry routes and pathways	See P4 actions



Spotlight: Developing a new apprenticeship framework

P4 and P5: In August 2024, a proposal to develop a Modern Apprenticeship in Archaeology led by Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) with support from all corners of Scottish archaeology, was approved by the Apprenticeship Approval Group and Skills Development Scotland.

This initiative was first identified as a sector need by Scotland's Archaeology Strategy.

As a small sector, it has been a challenge to navigate the apprenticeship development process and make a case for archaeology apprenticeships, but while we may lack large numbers of candidates, we score high on social value, on retention rates (based on

the English Trailblazer schemes) and there is a growing client demand for utilising apprenticeships within developer-led projects. Being part of the Skills Investment Plan has enabled the archaeology sector to meet those challenges, by collating evidence of need, good practice from other pillar areas, and developing stakeholder engagement. The apprenticeship is currently scheduled to be ready for delivery in autumn 2026.



Architecture, Structural Engineering, Planning and Surveying in a heritage context with a conservation approach (AEPS)



Summary of key findings from the consultation

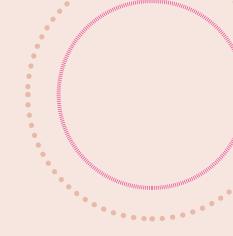
The consultation identified the need for collaboration, advocacy, and data to support government policies like Scotland's Climate Change Plan, the National Planning Framework and the forthcoming Just Transition plan. Advocacy is crucial to highlight the sector's role in these agendas and to develop and upscale skills provision.

Built environment career pathways face challenges in attracting talent and creating a diverse workforce pipeline.

Clearer pathways and effective training are needed, along with engaging young people and expanding geographic reach. Training provision includes CPD from professional bodies, but building conservation training is often missing from undergraduate programmes. Accreditation in building conservation is declining in some areas, impacting the skills pipeline.

Identified skills needs include building pathology, embodied carbon assessment, urban design, surveying, and digital skills.





Priorities and actions

Priorities	Actions
P1: Build conservation awareness in higher education	 Integrating more conservation and maintenance awareness into undergraduate, postgraduate and accredited courses
P2: Foster better collaboration between institutions	 Host a joint trade body/professionals event focusing on collaboration Develop a collaborative CPD programme
P3: Develop a collective approach to address skills, knowledge and training gaps in local authorities	Integrate more conservation and maintenance awareness into local authority audiences
P4: Develop skills outputs from research outcomes	Create a knowledge exchange forum for researchers and training providers to update on latest research
P5: Engaging with schools and young people	Raise the profile of conservation careers and careers education activity



Spotlight: Summary of activity

The AEPS SIP group have been focusing on three areas of activity:

P2: A joint event to foster collaboration will take place in autumn 2025 as part of BE-ST FEST. This event will increase understanding of the differing roles of the professions and trades and the challenges faced, facilitate networking, identify opportunities for collaboration and inform a collaborative CPD programme.

P4: Establish a multidisciplinary knowledge exchange programme that will promote interdisciplinary research to address complex challenges, showcase cutting-edge research, foster networking, discuss emerging trends, inform training providers of the latest thinking and showcase innovation. This forum will be launched at the joint event.

P5: Create resources to ensure that AEPS conservation roles are embedded in careers initiatives including Heritage Careers Week, and sharing examples of good practice in careers education activity in the Construction Accord's guide for employers.





The consultation emphasised the importance of advocacy, digital literacy, and collaboration. The sector must work with schools, influencers, and community groups to promote careers in information management, and address workforce diversity. Sustainable pathways into the sector, such as apprenticeships and graduate roles, are needed, along with better collaboration between education providers and employers.

Supporting a healthy work environment and providing informal training opportunities are essential. Digital literacy and innovation are priorities, with a need to upskill staff in advanced digital technologies while maintaining knowledge of analogue practices.

The sector benefits from various competency frameworks, professional registration routes and CPD, but there is a need for more structured informal learning opportunities to support succession planning and knowledge sharing and better alignment around existing training provision.



Priorities and actions

Priorities	Actions
P1: Advocacy	Raise the profile of archives and libraries job families
P2: Increasing opportunities for informal training	Training for managers in developing staff
P3: Increase opportunities for collaboration	Establish a skills group of professional bodies
P4: Upskilling in data science (theory and practice)	Collaborate with other sectors to identify suitable provision
P5: Developing mechanisms for succession planning	Identify skills at risk that need interventionDeveloping mentoring and leadership skills
P6: Developing progressive pathways	Explore the development of a libraries and archives apprenticeship



Spotlight: Summary of activity

A skills group is being set up of archives and libraries professional bodies to focus on:

P1: Bringing clarity to job roles, job families and wage bands.

P3: Identifying how key organisations can work together to align provision and address gaps.

P5: Identify the core skills needed for the modern world.





The consultation identified the need for collaboration, strategic workforce planning, improved data, and addressing resource shortages.

A collaborative approach to succession planning, including skills sharing, mentoring, and peer learning, is needed. Apprenticeship models work well but there is not a framework in Scotland, and organisational capacity issues create barriers to engagement. There is a need for more progressive levels of CPD, more practical skills development, accredited learning opportunities and increased conservation awareness for non-conservators.

Priorities	Actions
P1: Develop a structure for progressive CPD and practical application of training	Map existing provision identifying gaps
P2: Understand the role of accreditation and standards	Increase use of accreditation and standards
P3: Build capacity and skills to train others	 Develop training skills in employers Increase pool of ICON accredited conservators that can act as mentors and assessors
P4: Create a structure for knowledge sharing and succession planning	 Create a 'heritage skills at risk' framework Identify test models for addressing skills at risk, including CPD and work-based learning





Spotlight: Heritage Skills at Risk Framework

P4: The SIP consultation and the Institute for Conservation's 2023 Industrial Heritage action plan highlighted the need for a methodology which can assess and monitor the health of specialist heritage skills.

The conservation profession relies on a relatively small pool of highly skilled conservator-restorers. Challenges within the education sector and a vanishingly small number of professionals in some areas of practice, mean that skills – many of which have taken years to develop – exist on a knife edge. To address these challenges, Icon, HES and other partners are working

together to develop the Heritage Skills at Risk Framework which will identify, classify, assess and highlight the skills most at risk. The framework will allow for prioritisation and feed into sector workforce planning and advocacy. It will allow stakeholders to collaborate, to ensure that strategies are put in place to safeguard the future of important technical skills and our shared heritage. We have recruited a Scottish Graduate School of Arts and Humanities intern to do some initial research into the requirements of the proposed methodology.





The consultation identified succession planning, attracting future talent, and creating clear pathways into the sector as areas of focus. Collaboration between higher education providers and industry, and Independent Research Organisations (IROs) and non-IROs, is crucial for upskilling the workforce and ensuring the curriculum meets industry needs. Advocacy efforts should focus on promoting heritage science education and aligning with sustainable development goals to secure funding and resources.

Improved data collection is needed to identify skills shortages and gaps. The diverse pathways into heritage science require better visibility and awareness to attract new talent. There is a need for more early career posts and clear progression routes for the existing workforce. Succession planning is vital due to the specialised skills required in the sector.

The consultation identified a range of specialist and transferable skills needed in heritage science, including dendrochronology, lab-based skills, and digital skills. Training provision is primarily through universities and professional bodies, but there is a need for CPD to be better structured.



Priorities and actions

Priorities	Actions
P1: Understanding skills gaps, succession planning and continuity	 Recognised mechanism for resourcing future skills and ensuring employability in sector Tangible evidence base showing skills gaps and training needs
P2: Advocacy, funding and support	 Scope potential funding opportunities that may be able to support delivery of a heritage science skills ecosystem
P3: Developing structured training provision	Provide a structure for skills and knowledge sharing which allows input from other connected sectors
P4: Attracting future talent and career pathways	Showcase exemplar career pathways and increase visibility of professional profiles and role models



Spotlight: Science fellows

P1: In 2024, HES took on its first Heritage Science Fellows, with a focus in archaeological science to address skills gaps identified by the SIP and Scotland's Archaeology Strategy. These roles offer a potential new training model for the development of specialist skills. They involve hands-on training which take the skills and knowledge gained at university and applies these to active projects in the workplace. The fellows have been working with teams throughout HES, and

within the laboratories of other organisations, developing their knowledge, learning new skills from professionals, working with new equipment, analysing scientific results and writing specialist reports. They have also had the opportunity to develop their own projects and support outreach activities. In addition, they have developed important transferable skills such as time management, business skills and communication, which will be vital for future employment.





The consultation identified the need for collaboration, advocacy, and strong leadership to attract future talent and improve access to the workforce. The diversity of roles in heritage tourism is a strength but can be challenging to communicate, therefore employers and influencers need to collaborate to highlight career opportunities.

Key skills identified include visitor management, business, soft skills, community engagement, digital skills, and environmental sustainability. Training provision was needed to support entry into the workforce and CPD, with a focus on accessibility and scalability.

Priorities	Actions
P1: Developing an entrepreneurial mindset	Developing leadership skills within trustees/ senior leaders
P2: Attracting future talent and improving access	Creating an attracting future talent campaignMap clear progression routes supported by training
P3: Developing soft skills	Develop a pre-apprenticeship programme as part of a pathway approach
P4: Fostering digital literacy	 Develop an organisational self-reflection tool using digital maturity levels that is underpinned by training provision Host cross-sector events to support upskilling in digital innovation and leadership





Spotlight:Heritage Careers Week

P2: The first Heritage Careers Week took place in October 2024. The aim of the week was to showcase careers in the historic environment sector, address popular misconceptions of what working in the sector involves and inspire our future workforce. Fifteen partners from the historic environment and education sector were involved in planning the week which included in-person activity, online lessons, a social media campaign, and the creation of resource packs for educators. Heritage Careers Week will be the annual attracting future talent campaign with planning underway for October 2025.





Historic landscapes and gardens



Summary of key findings from the consultation

The consultation identified the need for advocacy, attracting future talent, and skills – including to support climate action such as historic environment preservation and nature-based solutions. Advocacy efforts should promote landscape skills and jobs to the public, local authorities and policy agendas.

Attracting young people through tailored programmes and building accessible pathways like apprenticeships continue to be crucial for this part of the sector.

Skills needed include plant recognition, understanding and management, biosecurity, green space management, and landscape design. Current training provision spans various levels, but there is a need for both more practical training and more conservation-focused education. Concerns include declining further education courses and the need for more accessible work-based learning opportunities.

Priorities	Actions
P1: Raising awareness of landscape as part of the historic environment	 Greater familiarisation of job roles, supply chains and skills required Identify opportunities for learning with natural and designed landscapes
P2: Attracting future talent	 Ensuring landscape careers are visible within careers week events Create a pathway of engagement with resources from primary up to career changes
P3: Applying nature-based solutions	Identify opportunities for learning
P4: Increasing conservation awareness	Address the gap of conservation awareness in key stakeholders including local authorities
P5: Defining progressive pathways into career roles	 Explore opportunities to develop pre-apprenticeship programmes Explore opportunities to develop alternative routes for key roles including landscape architects, arborists and rural skills



Spotlight:

Understanding the value of the historic environment and designed landscapes and addressing the gap in conservation awareness

The focus on SIP delivery for year one has been on priorities one and four. The Landscape Institute, Lantra, HES and NTS have been working together on an event aimed at local authority and Scottish Government decision makers, managers of historic landscapes and designed gardens, renewable developers, land managers, woodland managers and environmental NGOs. The event is planned for autumn 2025 and will initiate discussions about relevant metrics in this area, provide networking and cross-sector collaboration opportunities, showcase the value of historic and designed landscapes in natural capital,

offer CPD to support the understanding of nature-based solutions, and explore strategies for implementation and to address challenges on the ground. It will also focus on skills that were identified as being a gap during the SIP consultation linked to plant skills and biodiversity.

In addition, the University of Dundee, in partnership with NTS, HES and the V&A Dundee is working with Lantra on the creation of a certified nine-day CPD programme focusing on Scottish Garden History-informing conservation and management. It will be developed, led and delivered by landscape historian Christopher Dingwall. The CPD programme will cover learning in areas not generally accessible in Scotland, focusing on understanding and analysing designed landscape and gardens, charters, listings, legislation and planning and management plans in practice. The programme will be launched in autumn 2025.







The consultation identified collaboration and cross-sector working as being required to foster partnerships and align and upscale activity. Scotland's sector could become a skills hub, supporting networks for skills and knowledge sharing. This requires resources and a framework for structured training and succession planning. There is a gap in provision of practical application and standards for key skills, and a need to build conservation awareness amongst mainstream providers.

Data and research are needed to map existing skills, knowledge and provision and learn from other countries' approaches.

Key skills identified as either a need or gap include mechanical, material (metals, alloys, wood, concrete, stone), archive record keeping, health and safety, and management.

Priorities	Actions
P1: Pilot scheme which uses employability to address skills at risk	 Explore the opportunities afforded by existing programmes to develop industrial heritage skills Pilot accreditation/certification to support vocational programmes
P2: Learning from other countries	 Deliver a session at Big Stuff 2025 Ghent: Skills and Machines – A Living Partnership
P3: Build capacity for delivery	 Pool existing resources by combining projects and shared learning Seek additional resources to deliver results Build the pool of experts to act as mentors
P4: Create a framework to support succession planning	Build on the impacts of powering up including consideration for the volunteer workforce
P5: Develop a framework for CPD/skills-sharing of materials/ mechanical skills	 Work with providers to mainstream conservation principles Foster expertise in industrial history, industrial archaeology, curation of industrial objects, etc.
P6: Forge links with working industries	Explore opportunities with working industries





Spotlight: Learning from other countries

Building a sustainable ecosystem for industrial heritage skills.

The industrial heritage SIP delivery group is developing a project which ties all the priorities together. It is exploring mechanisms for delivery and potential funding options which will provide additional capacity to deliver the six priority workstreams.

The group has identified opportunities to align with existing programmes to deliver impacts for priority one, and is organising a joint online Ghent/Perth, Australia session as part of Big Stuff Ghent 2025 to introduce the SIP, showcase activity happening in Scotland and to use this to compare initiatives happening elsewhere around the world to safeguard industrial heritage skills. It is hoped that this will provide a platform for knowledge-sharing and useful learning from other countries.



Museums and galleries



Summary of key findings from the consultation

The consultation identified the need for collaboration to support skills development and address diversity and accessibility challenges. A lack of capacity and resources to undertake training or support skills and knowledge sharing was identified as the main barriers to skills development, alongside a lack of geographically accessible provision, particularly for volunteers. There is a lack of structured, consistent, and quality-assured industry-standard training. The development of Modern Apprenticeships has helped increase diversity and accessibility,

but there is still a need for anti-racism, decolonisation, and neurodivergent-friendly content in training provision. Three main skills areas were identified as either a need or a deficit: digital skills, skills to support environmental sustainability, and business skills. The sector must develop a collaborative strategic vision and a coordinated approach to ensure workforce resilience and investigate opportunities to collaborate with other sectors.

Priorities	Actions
P1: Identify a system for skills and knowledge sharing to address workforce issues	 Provide opportunities for the museum sector workforce to share knowledge and practice Develop innovative, collaborative and positive leadership
P2: Develop a more inclusive culture and address barriers that exclude	 Develop training initiatives focusing on diversity issues Embed a range of entry and career progression routes to create opportunities for all
P3: Create the environment for more cross-industry collaboration	 Build communities of practice with relevant sectors Increase partnership working between skills and education sector
P4: Create a strategic framework for training provision	 Create resources for senior managers in workforce planning and skills development Supporting networks and partnerships to make training more accessible
P5: Fostering digital literacy and innovation	Create an organisational self-reflection tool underpinned with training provision





Spotlight: Vocational pathways programme

P2: The Crannog Centre in Perthshire received grant funding from Museums Galleries
Scotland to become an SQA approved centre.
This grant helped them develop the necessary infrastructure to offer accredited qualifications to staff, including apprentices and trainees.
The project enabled the Crannog Centre to deliver vocational learning through its own assessors and verifiers, creating its own self-sufficient and independent vocational skills system. This initiative has improved staff professional development and career progression, enhanced organisational capacity and sustainability and future proofed workforce development.

Traditional building skills and materials



Summary of key findings from the consultation

There is an urgent need to develop a more effective model to address challenges and advocate for the importance of traditional building skills. There are significant skills deficits in areas such as retrofit skills, stone masonry, lead work, lime plastering, roofing, sash window repairs, and traditional joinery. Building interdisciplinary awareness and conservation knowledge among stakeholders is crucial to develop the critical mass needed.

Current training provision is focused on new build construction and there are challenges such as a lack of conservation knowledge, inadequate skills infrastructure, declining training provision, and insufficient advocacy for traditional skills. Issues such as a lack of a skills pipeline, funding, specialist trainers, and outdated assessment criteria persist. There are training cold spots throughout Scotland particular in rural and island areas. Attracting future talent strategies to increase career visibility, engage young people and showcase clear pathways continue to be required.

r nonties and actions	
Priorities	Actions
P1: Reverse erosion of training provision and build a positive future	 Explore the use of procurement as a driver for skills as part of a community wealth building approach Develop a skills matrix for the repair, maintenance and retrofit of the historic environment
P2: Funding training delivery and infrastructure	 Explore different funding models for training delivery Lobby for sustainable funding for skills provision in Scotland
P3: Development of national hubs/mobile provision	Create a hub and spoke model of training provision
P4: Flexible delivery with alternative routes	 Work with SDS to review apprenticeship frameworks Develop capacity to deliver alternative vocational learning
P5: Delivering net zero	 Build capacity of the sector to deliver relevant skills provision, including level 3 energy efficiency measures for older and traditional buildings Build capacity of the sector to upskill contractors in retrofit measures
P6: Attracting future talent	Growing 'Build Your Future'





Spotlight: Craft Your Career

P4: HES have secured £5.2 million from the Vinehill Trust to develop Craft Your Career, a progressive three-tiered approach to traditional skills training. The project focuses on improving training pathways in Scotland, increasing the number of skilled individuals, building employer capacity for work-based learning, and strengthening a network of training providers supported by the Engine Shed: The National Centre for Building Conservation. This will leave a legacy of new qualifications, programmes and qualified assessors.

A new pre-apprenticeship programme has been developed to provide young people and those facing barriers to employment with experience and basic core skills to prepare them for a career in the sector. To date, HES has delivered four rounds of pre-apprenticeships training in partnership

with Fife Council, Fife College, and The Ridge Foundations CIC, at SCQF level 4. Feedback from participants highlights increased confidence, self-belief, and interest in pursuing careers in traditional skills. Most participants successfully completed the qualification (89%) and moved on to positive destinations within six months of completion (75%).

Craft Your Career will be rolled out over the next five years and will be used to address heritage skills at risk and build progressive pathways into traditional trades. It will provide a framework for partners who want to work in this area. In total, opportunities will be provided for 60 pre-apprentices, 15 modern apprentices and 14 craft fellows.

Pillar partners



























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