HR Guide for Navigating
covid-19 challenges

Returning to work after the COVID-19 crisis is a huge transition for your employees and your company. This guide provides practical tips for employers to chalk out a plan for recovery.
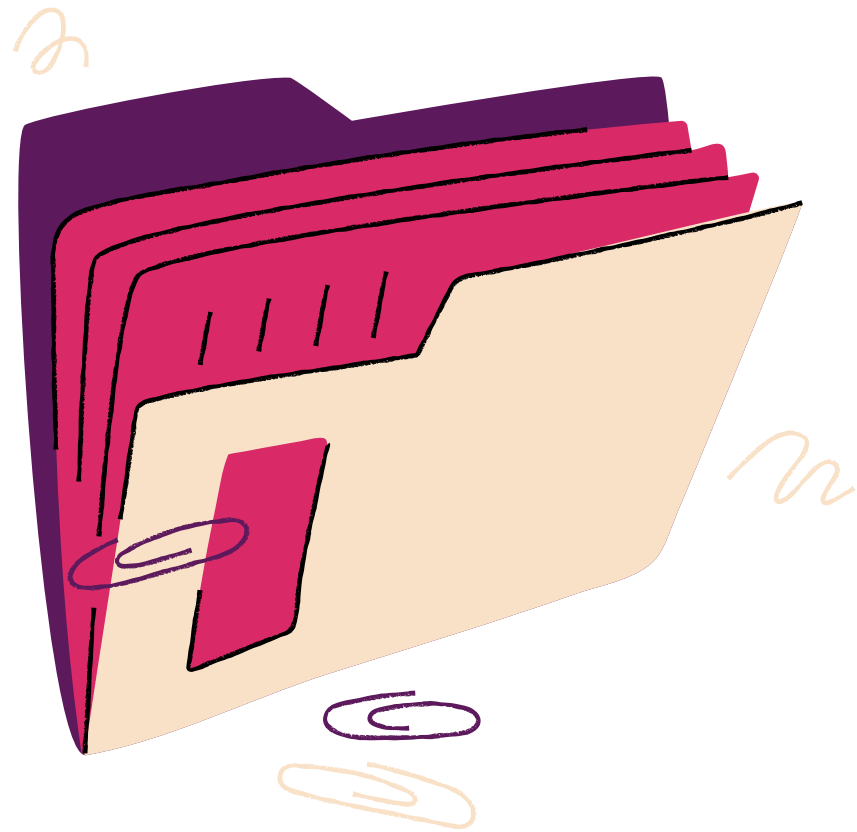
– Saliha Latif, Founder ReformHR

road to recovery

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Reinforce your company's commitment to wellbeing and purpose with a focus on your team's safety and financial concerns.

Prepare your employees with the skills and capabilities needed for the return.

Identify opportunities in the evolving business environment.

Stay Updated

Keep track of the latest COVID-19 related developments from reliable sources, such as World Health Organization and local government sites, in order to make decisions based on facts.

Prioritise Wisely

Make a list of the most pressing business and HR projects and concerns that you have. Assign people and allocate resources to the high-priority items on this list.

Planning: Back-to-Work

questions you need to answer

- What actions do we need to take to restart our operations at 100% capacity?
- How can we break down these actions into small steps taken over a one/three/six month period?
- How will we communicate these plans to our staff?
- Who are the key people in our team who will help make decisions and be responsible for employee engagement?
- Are we keeping track of all authentic sources of information on new developments related to health and safety and regulatory requirements?
- What data do we need to collect in order to assess and make decisions about the reallocation of resources, changing roles of staff members, etc?
- Are employees receiving the information they need to return to and settle in at work?
- Do we need to use any new tools or technology to adapt to the new normal?

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Planning: Back-to-Work
questions you need to answer

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- What adjustments do we need to make to Key Performance Indicators?
- What are some of the key lessons learned regarding our business/industry, in light of this crisis?
- What kind of emergency response protocols should we prepare for the future?

Answering these questions in detail will help you examine how work and the workforce need to be restructured.

Planning: People Management
questions you need to answer

- Do we need to make temporary or permanent changes to team structures?
- What skills and competencies are critical for the business at this stage?
- Can we outsource any tasks instead of hiring new people or spending time/money training our existing team members and acquiring new tools/technology?
- Which aspects of our business can continue to operate virtually?
- Can some of our team members continue working remotely and for how long?
- How do we improve employee productivity in this uncertain work environment?
- Can we automate some tasks to help enhance performance?
- What impact have organisational changes (such as salary cuts, layoffs, restructuring, etc.) had on employee motivation and wellbeing?
- What kind of events and activities can we organise to help employees adjust to the new normal?

Measures to Strengthen
communication with employees

- Identify an official spokesperson.
- Develop a list of FAQs based on important questions that your staff may have.
- Set up a health and safety committee to have discussions about COVID-19 and its potential impact on your company.
- Communicate immediately with any high-risk groups and discuss the safety measures that are being taken to assist them.
- Regularly communicate with managers or team leads to make them aware of any changes in company policies.
- Develop an official reporting process for highlighting anyone who may be exhibiting symptoms of the virus.
- Provide health and safety advice to employees, and remind them of the safety measures they need to take.

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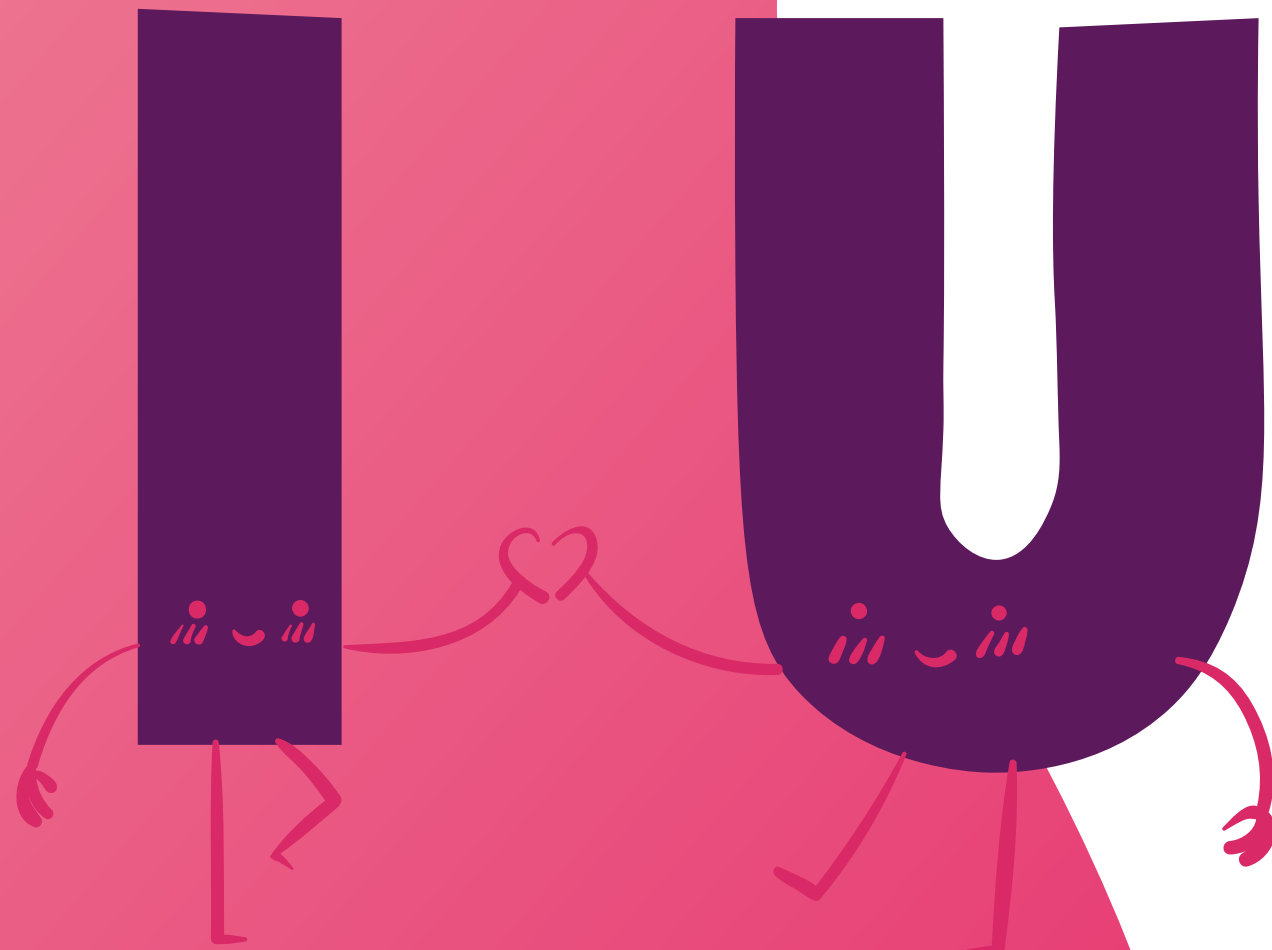
Planning: Regulatory Environment
questions you need to answer

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- What preparations do we need to make, as per the latest regulations, in order for people to return to work?
- How do we communicate the legal/regulatory requirements to employees?
- How can we establish and maintain ongoing communication with public health authorities?
- What are the legal requirements we need to keep in mind when making changes to employment contracts, laying off staff and making any other changes in the organisation which are governed by labour law?
- Do we need to explore and tap into any government support programmes in order to recover?

Understanding legal obligations is critical for post-COVID business recovery.

Planning: Reputation Management
questions you need to answer

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- Have we made any mistakes in our response to COVID-19 which need to be addressed?
- Has our reputation as a company and an employer changed as a result of the crisis?
- How have our competitors responded to the crisis and its impact on our industry?
- Do we need to make changes in how we engage with our employees?
- How can we measure employee and customer sentiment at this time?
- What can we do to strengthen our employment brand so that we can attract the right talent in the future?

Plans & Policies
to review and update

- Health and Safety Guidelines, related to social distancing at work, handwashing, use of sanitizers, etc.
- Procedures to prevent the spread of the virus at the workplace
- Business continuity plans, accounting for possible employee absences due to coronavirus
- Sick leave policies and procedures
- Contracts of employment, with regard to work timings, locations, salaries, etc.
- Emergency procedures, in case of infection at the workplace
- Contact details of all employees
- Risk analysis of high-risk groups of employees, such as those with existing health conditions, and a list of possible measures to reduce risks

Prepare Your Work Spaces
for social distancing

- Make changes to workplace layouts to improve social distancing. Where possible, rearrange furniture and keep employees' desks six feet apart.
- Change access to common areas such as meeting rooms, elevators and cafeterias.
- Put up physical signs, such as posters, in different areas to remind employees of hygiene best practices.
- Invest in electronic equivalents of high-touch surfaces such as door knobs.
- Install temporary plexiglass shields if the workplace has a large number of in-person interactions, which cannot be completed virtually.
- Check your country's industry-specific regulations and guidelines for reopening.
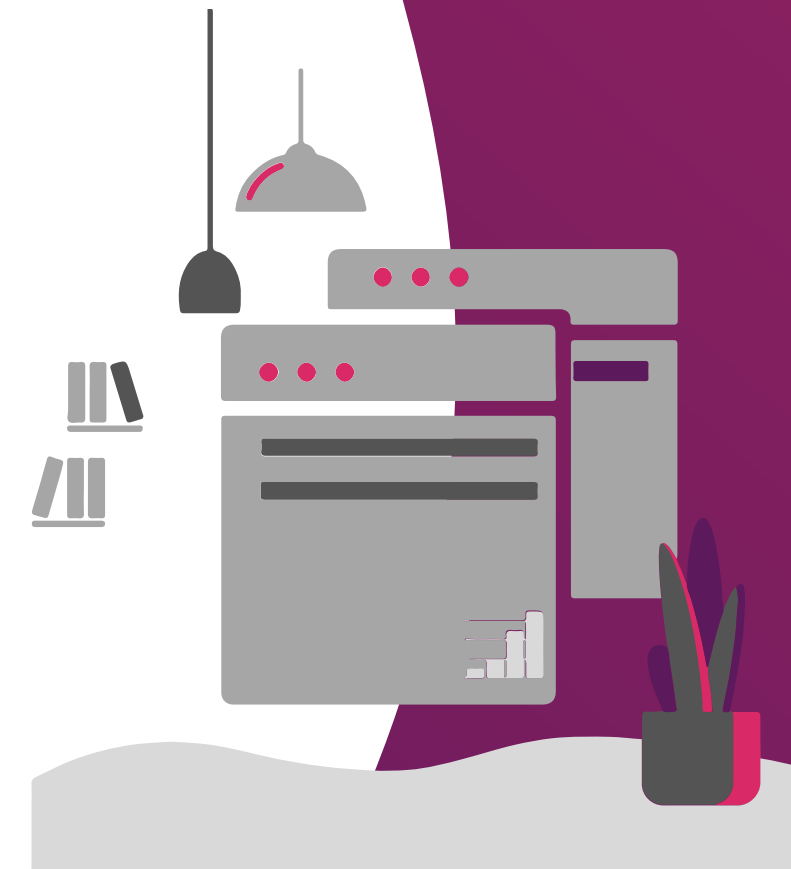
Reboarding People

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- Keep everyone updated on new developments in an effective and engaging way, such as through video messages and virtual events.
- Coach managers with timely, data-driven resources.
- Listen to people's preferences and if possible, allow them to select a return date.
- Test employees' understanding of Health & Safety guidelines and other new policies.
- Enhance collaboration between different departments in order to ensure a smooth return to work.
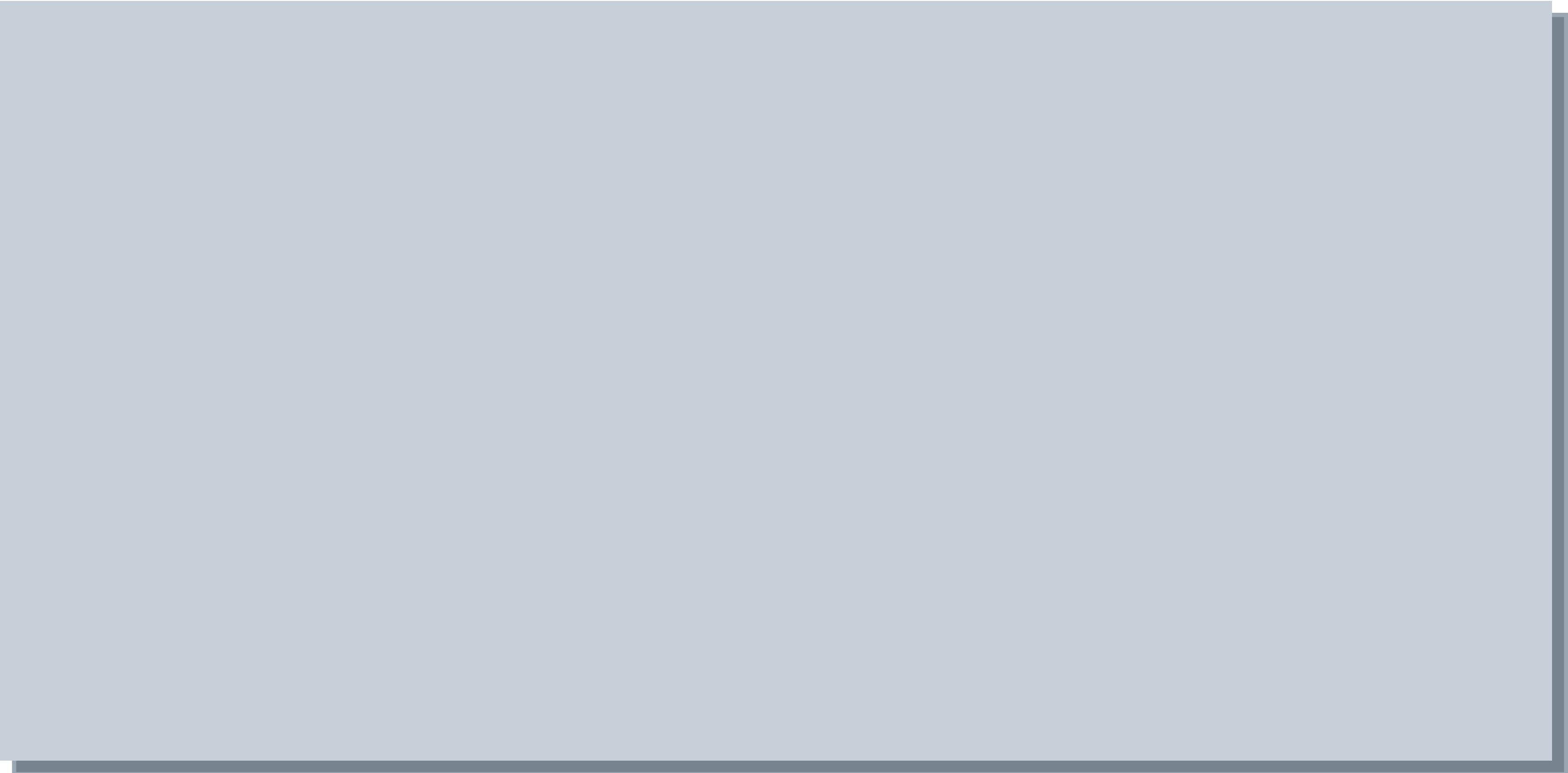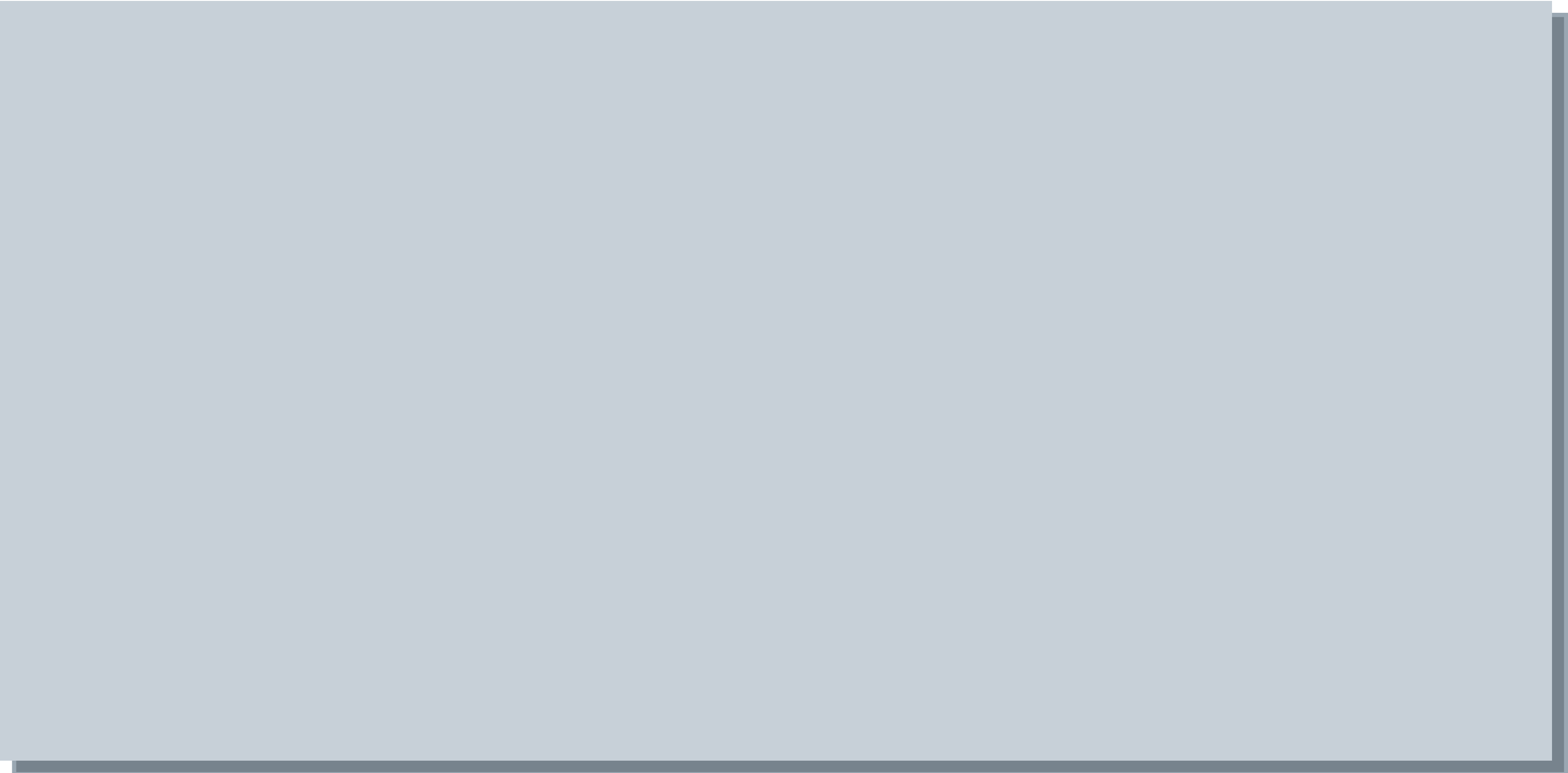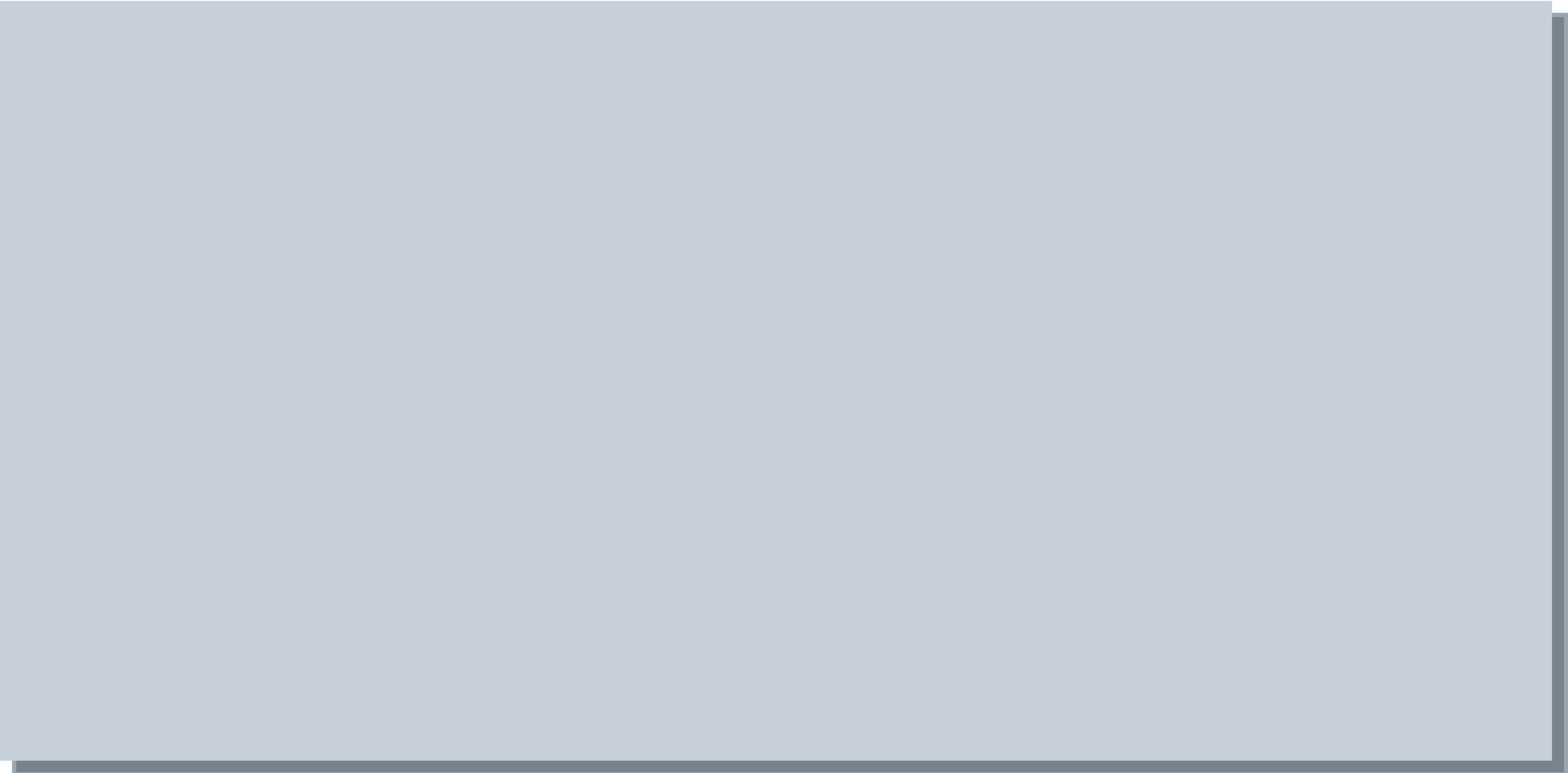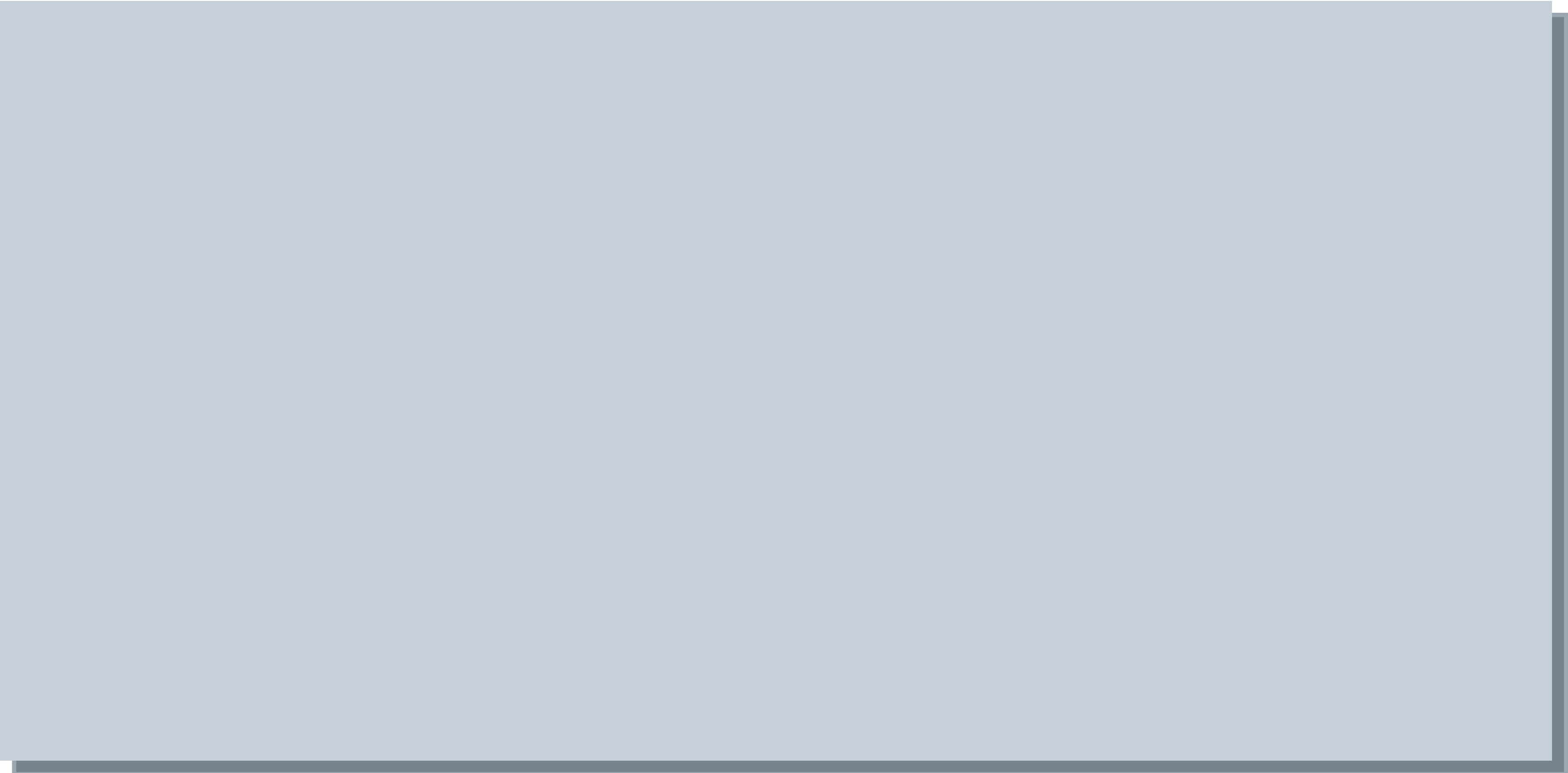
Planning: Notes
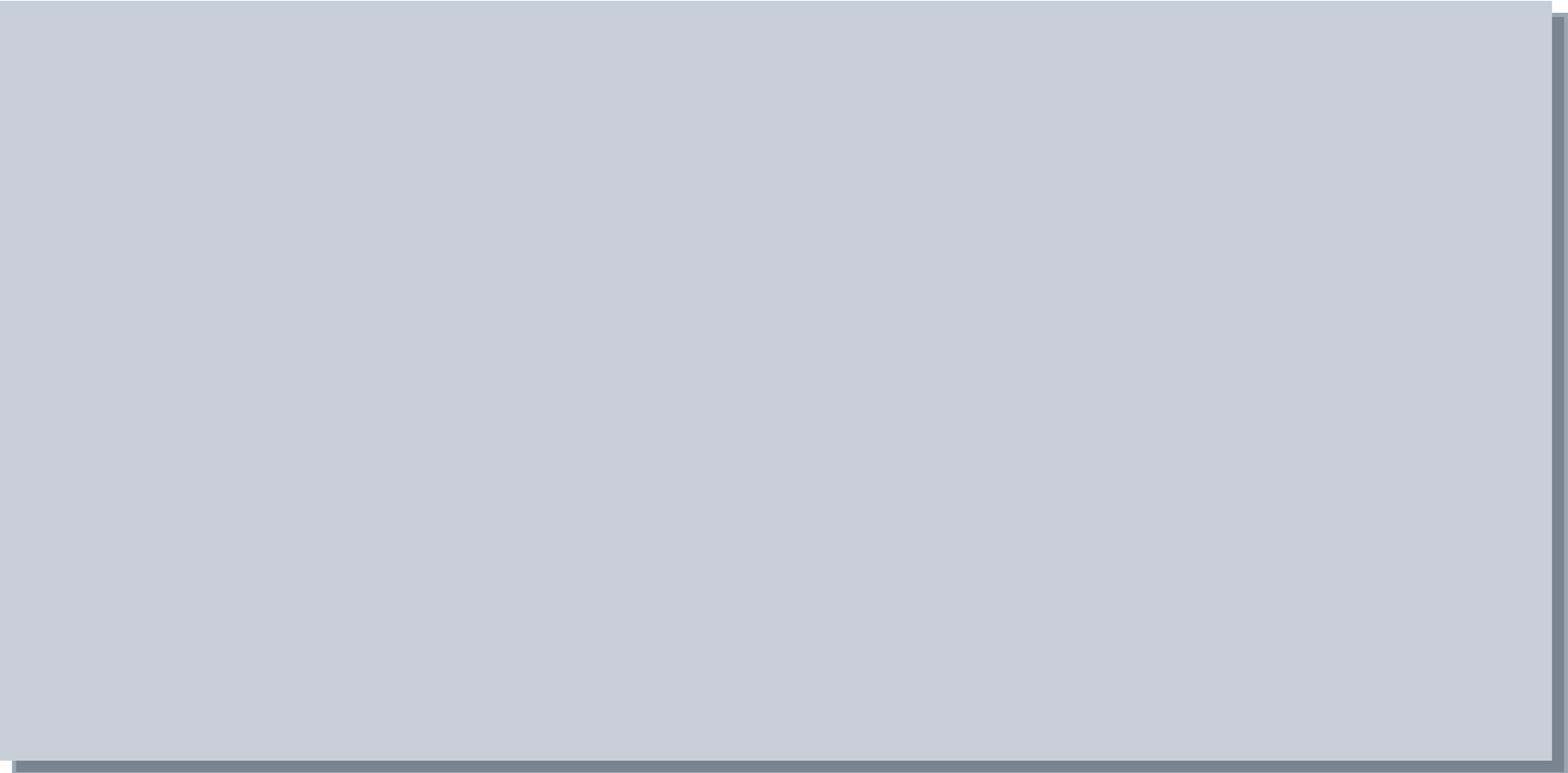
Planning: Notes

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Are you confident about your COVID-19 policies and procedures? Is your HR strategy aligned *with your business recovery goals?*

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If you need help developing solutions specially tailored to meet your business challenges, contact us:
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