



## INTERVIEW

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CANADIAN-SERBIAN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

# PEOPLE, AND PLANET

*The Canadian-Serbian Business Association (CANSEE) has operated in a socially responsible manner from the start and strongly supports Canada's new Responsible Business Conduct Abroad Strategy for The Future*



The actions of companies have a significant impact on the lives of citizens around the world, not just in terms of the products and services that they offer or the jobs and opportunities they create, but also in terms of working conditions, human rights, health, the environment, innovation, education, and training. A responsible business is essentially one that benefits society and addresses any possible negative impacts it might have on society, people, and planet. This way of looking at a business can help decision makers make more responsible decisions, ensuring that considerations of social and environmental impact are balanced against those of financial gain.

Responsible business conduct is central to Canada's trade diversification strategy, inclusive trade and sustainable and inclusive economic growth. It complements Canada's approach to taking action on climate change, sustainable development, multilateralism and a rules-based trading system. This five-year strategy is led by Global Affairs

Canada and its Trade Commissioner Service.

CANSEE, the Canadian-Serbian Business Association, has been operating in a socially responsible manner from the start and is today providing strong support to Canada's five-year Responsible Business Conduct Abroad Strategy for The Future (2022-2027) by responsibly promoting trade and development between Canada and Serbia. Our association brings together local and international corporations and SMEs with the goal of facilitating bilateral trade and investments through active participation between governmental bodies and our members, and by helping our member companies achieve and exceed world leading responsible business practices.

Amongst our members and founders are Canadian businesses that are widely recognized as leaders in responsible business practices. These businesses know that integrating best practices throughout every facet of their operations is not only good for our collective society and the environment, but also improves their

bottom line, makes them more competitive, and drives innovation.

Canada's extractive companies in the mining, oil and natural gas industries provide a major contribution to Canadian prosperity and are making substantial contributions to economic development in the countries where they operate, including Serbia.

CANSEE member Dundee Precious Metals is an international mining company based in Canada with proven experience in responsible mining. As part of its successful business, the company bases its operations on the principles of mutual respect of people in DPM and in the communities in which it operates. One of the company's key priorities is to ensure that business complies with local regulations, as well as the same global values, ethics and business principles that meet the highest standards in Canada, a country with standards for responsible and sustainable mining that are among the highest in the world.

Also, one of our Canadian companies, Mundoro Capital, is working with local communities and partners to create positive engagements and new opportunities by donating medical equipment, renovating a local medical clinic, renovating a children's playground and supporting folklore festivals in Bor, Kučevo and Boljevac.

As part of the global Molson Coors Beverage Company group, one of our founders, Apatinska Pivara [Apatin Brewery] operates in accordance with globally-established guidelines and goals, with the concept of social responsibility woven into its entire operation. Apatin Brewery is among the first companies in Serbia to build a wastewater treatment plant, representing an investment worth 13 million euros, and it has also been initiating and implementing projects to reduce packaging waste.

Throughout different projects, this company has raised awareness of the need to improve the packaging waste collection system, which is one of its company priorities.

In 2009 and 2014, the federal government of Canada released RBC strategies focused on supporting Canadian companies in the extractive sector abroad. The RBC Strategy is a continuation of these strategies that builds on existing UN Guiding Principles and the OECD Guidelines, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Principles and the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights. Among our members, Schneider Electric was awarded in 2021 as the "Most Gender Sensitive Company" within the project "Equality in the Chain of Value", which is jointly implemented by the Association of Business Women of Serbia, the Coordination Body for Gender Equality and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Serbia. Recognition is given to large companies that apply Principle 5 of the United Nations for the Empowerment of Women and that have provided the best model for the inclusion of women in supply chains. Delta Holding and Rudnik i flotacija Rudnik, both CANSEE members, were also awarded as the "Most Gender Sensitive Company" in 2018 and 2019 respectively.

RBC can lead to investment attraction, increased brand value, and customer attraction and retention, as more consumers look to buy ethically-produced goods and partners (including financial partners) seek to meet Environment Social Governance (ESG) requirements. This can lead to the realizing of greater potential for increased access to capital.

CANSEE member companies implement responsible business practices, meeting and exceeding widely recognized international standards, guidelines and frameworks. Among the tools to integrate responsible business conduct considerations into bilateral and multilateral engagements, lifelong education plays the key role.

On that note, CANSEE promotes and organizes the LEADER Project, an economic development program founded in 1991 by MBA students from the Ivey Business School that not only educates, but also promotes RBC via real case studies. These cases simulate a real-life situation confronted by business leaders and forces participants to learn by doing and making confident decisions in the face of uncertainty and how to commit to doing business in responsible ways, contributing to more sustainable growth



**CANSEE is committed to working with relevant stakeholders to identify emerging best practices in this area and provide training to our members on Responsible Business Conduct policies and practices. We strongly support initiatives that strengthen local ecosystems, for instance by facilitating introductions between local suppliers and Canadian companies**

and the building of a better future for all by respecting human rights, including advancing the rights of under-represented groups, protecting the environment, advocating for gender equality, combating discrimination and furthering diversity and inclusion.

Delta Holding, as one of our valued members, is committed to the principles of growth, equity, sustainability and resiliency, and is widely recognized as a leader in meeting the SDGs. Delta House, like most of Delta's companies, has solar panels that ensure affordable and clean

energy and help attain Goal 7. As of 2021, all of this company's vehicles run on electric power, rendering them much more energy efficient. The attaining of goals 1, 2 and 4 was achieved by Delta's project Mokrin House, which enables farmers to use digital platforms and information technologies in their work. This pilot project in Serbia will be transferred to other villages throughout the country. Delta Holding's Our Village [Naše Selo] project achieved Goal 17 by developing agricultural production, and thus improving social life.