













## The investment environment in Canada: survey of business leaders

- Between July 26 and August 18, 2017, the Business Council of Canada conducted an online survey of its members to gauge their perspectives on the Canadian investment environment. A total of 61 business leaders took part in the survey.
- Asked whether “the business investment environment in Canada over the past five years has worsened, improved or neither worsened nor improved”, almost two-thirds of respondents (64 per cent) said it had worsened. Twenty per cent said the investment environment had improved and 16 per cent said it had neither worsened nor improved.
- Among those who said the investment environment had deteriorated, the most frequently cited reasons were: an uncompetitive tax system; unwieldy and uncertain regulatory processes; and increasing costs of doing business (such as the costs of labour, utilities, and transportation).
- Sixty-one per cent of those surveyed disagreed that “the regulatory environment in Canada is efficient and does not impose substantial additional costs on my company”. Thirty-six per cent disagreed that “tax rates are attractive” in Canada, and an equal number took issue with the suggestion that the costs of doing business in Canada “are globally competitive”.
- A clear majority of those surveyed (57 per cent) said that investment conditions in Canada are less attractive than in the other countries in which their company invests. When they were asked where their companies tend to invest most, other than in Canada, the top response was the United States.
- Survey participants represented a range of sectors including finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing, oil and gas, information, communications technologies, culture and recreation, and manufacturing.
- The business leaders identified a number of steps that governments could take to improve the investment climate. They included: reducing the regulatory burden; introducing more certainty into regulatory approval processes; improving Canada’s global tax competitiveness; and investing in infrastructure.

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# Priority issues for Canadian business leaders

| Factor   | Survey Question  | Disagree / Agree <sup>1</sup> |     | Relative Importance <sup>2</sup> |
|--|--|-------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|
| <br>Opportunities           | My company has many attractive commercial investment opportunities   | 5%                            | 49% | 7.2                              |
| <br>Costs                   | Major costs my company faces (e.g. labour, utilities, transportation) are globally competitive                     | 36%                           | 21% | 5.9                              |
| <br>Competition             | High levels of competition in my industry incentivize my company to invest in order to maintain a competitive edge | 8%                            | 57% | 5.6                              |
| <br>Regulations             | The regulatory environment is efficient and does not impose substantial additional costs on my company             | 61%                           | 13% | 5.3                              |
| <br>Access to markets       | My company has access to sufficiently large markets to justify new investments                                     | 10%                           | 54% | 4.9                              |
| <br>Taxes                 | Tax rates are attractive   | 36%                           | 13% | 4.8                              |
| <br>Stability             | The level of political stability and legal certainty promotes a healthy investment environment                     | 15%                           | 43% | 4.4                              |
| <br>Access to talent      | My company has sufficient access to talent   | 3%                            | 59% | 4.2                              |
| <br>Modern infrastructure | Infrastructure is sufficiently modern and enables my company to operate efficiently                                | 11%                           | 41% | 3.6                              |
| <br>Government programs   | There are strong government programs that encourage my company to invest (e.g. R&D tax credits, government grants) | 39%                           | 11% | 2.1                              |

<sup>1</sup> Other possible responses were “somewhat agree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, and “somewhat disagree”

<sup>2</sup> The relative importance of each factor for investment decisions. Respondents ranked each factor out of ten; average scores are shown

