

PRESS RELEASE

Indigenous participation in economy strengthens Canada's social fabric: Sodexo survey

June is National Indigenous History Month celebrating First Nations, Inuit and Métis culture and heritage, along with the accomplishments of Indigenous entrepreneurs

Burlington, ON -- June 17, 2021 – Eight-in-ten Canadians (79 per cent) recognize Indigenous businesses strengthen the country's social fabric, according to a new national Leger survey.

Sodexo Canada's latest Indigenous Business Survey shows deep public support for Indigenous businesses. Seventy-nine per cent of Canadians recognize the importance of thriving Indigenous enterprises to the creation of sustainable economic opportunities for Indigenous peoples.

Three-quarters of Canadians (76 per cent) also believe supporting strong Indigenous businesses is an important pathway to healing Canada's relationship with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people.

The survey found strong support for action by the private sector to help Indigenous entrepreneurs develop and grow their enterprises.

Key findings

- 77 per cent agree Canadian corporations should include Indigenous owned and operated businesses in their supplier networks whenever possible.
- 71 per cent think Canadian corporations should help Indigenous entrepreneurs take their businesses to the next level.
- Seven-in-ten Canadians (71 per cent) believe that on-going supports for Indigenous companies, such as training and mentoring, should be a long-term strategy for Canadian corporations.
- 65 per cent think companies doing business on or near First Nations, Inuit and Métis lands should obtain services from Indigenous businesses whenever possible.
- 74 per cent agree that Indigenous businesses have much to offer the Canadian economy.
- 59 per cent think robust Indigenous participation in Canada's economy should be a higher priority for government and the private sector.

"The success of Indigenous businesses clearly matters to Canadians," says Tabatha Bull, president and CEO, Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB). "The fact that Canadians expect the private sector to step up with action to help Indigenous entrepreneurs sends a powerful message to decision makers. This broad public support will also fuel the optimism of Indigenous business owners. The role that procurement can play in offering a hand up will incentivize businesses to champion and encourage Indigenous business inclusion at all levels of business interaction and participation."

This year marks Sodexo's 20th year of Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) certification by CCAB. PAR certification commits businesses to develop strong, culturally supportive business relationships with Indigenous people and communities. Sodexo achieved the highest PAR certification (Gold) in 2004. The company, which currently has 84 Indigenous-owned enterprises in its Canadian supply chain, also provides a broad range of skills and management training initiatives to advance Indigenous entrepreneurs. Sodexo Canada works with 25 Indigenous partners located near First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities and 63 per cent of its Energy & Resources business segment employees are Indigenous.

Supports to Indigenous communities are also delivered in the form of scholarships and donations. Sodexo's leadership in building relationships with Indigenous peoples is based on its 4R philosophy: Respect, Recognition, Revenue Sharing and Representation.

"It is highly gratifying to see that a strong majority of Canadians share our belief in supporting a thriving Indigenous economy," says Erwin Joosten, Senior Vice President, Energy & Resources, Sodexo Canada. "When provided with the right resources, the potential of Indigenous businesses is limitless. We believe it's our duty to help these entrepreneurs innovate, grow and prosper. Our experience is that companies that have success engaging with Indigenous communities and businesses have two things in common: they base their relationships on respect for Indigenous culture and values and focus on constantly strengthening economic and business opportunities for their Indigenous partners."

National Indigenous History Month

In June, Canadians celebrate National Indigenous History Month to honour the history, heritage and diversity of Indigenous peoples in Canada. This celebration also creates the opportunity to recognize the strength of present-day Indigenous communities and the accomplishments of Indigenous entrepreneurs. The CCAB proudly showcases the considerable accomplishments of Indigenous entrepreneurs across the country and throughout the year. For more information go to www.ccab.com.

About Sodexo Canada

Sodexo delivers a wide range of customized solutions, designed to optimize work and living environments. Sodexo has been providing food and facilities management services in Canada for over 40 years, with a focus on enhancing safety, work process and well-being. Sodexo is a market leader in Canada. Sodexo has been recognized as a top employer for the past seven consecutive years. Sodexo is proud to have created the Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation, an independent charitable organization that has raised over \$3 million to fight hunger and donated more than one million meals to at-risk youth across Canada since 2007.

Sodexo is included in the CAC 40, FTSE 4 Good and DJSI indices.

Key figures – Sodexo Canada

10,000 employees

Recipient of Canada's Greenest Employer Awards 2021

Recipient of Canada's Diversity & Inclusion Employer Awards 2021

1 million consumers served daily

About CCAB

CCAB is committed to the full participation of Indigenous peoples in Canada's economy. As a national, non-partisan association, its mission is to promote, strengthen and enhance a prosperous Indigenous economy through the fostering of business relationships, opportunities, and awareness. CCAB offers knowledge, resources and programs to its members to cultivate economic opportunities for Indigenous peoples and businesses across Canada. For more information visit ccab.com.

Methodology

A survey of 1,589 Canadians was completed online between May 28th and May 30, 2021 using Leger's online panel, *LegerWeb*. A probability sample of the same size would yield a margin of error of +/-2.5%, 19 times out of 20.

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