Why Invest in Serbia

Development Agency of Serbia
Welcome to Serbia!

The business environment is stable, and it offers transparent market conditions, which creates a good starting point for our business growth in a long run.

Marco Aspesi, Former VP Corporate Transformation at SR Technics Group

I have been nothing but impressed by Serbia - a hidden gem to the business world.

Jeff McCroskey, VP Services, Europe, NCR

**Serbia has continued its path toward EU membership:**
EU negotiation process officially started, ready for accession by 2025.

Serbia is ranked No. 1 at the FDI 2018 world list, based on the criteria of Greenfield investments relative to the size of economy*

*Financial Times, fDi Report 2019

Serbia has confirmed its top position holding 1st place as the top investment destination country in the world, measured by the estimated number of jobs relative to the size of the population.*

*According to IBM Global Location Trends 2019 report, IBM Global Business Services

Efforts in attracting new investments in the Republic of Serbia were also recognized by the new "E&Y European Attractiveness Survey 2019". Serbia has attracted a record number of FDI in 2018, and it is listed as one of the top 15 countries in Europe by the number of FDIs.

Serbia is the only country outside of the Commonwealth of Independent States that has a Free Trade Agreement with Russian Federation.

On WB Doing Business List, Serbia moved up by 43 places over the past 3 years, and is now ranked 48th globally.

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Marco Aspesi, Former VP Corporate Transformation at SR Technics Group
Serbia has taken important steps to implement the reforms necessary for attracting foreign and domestic investors. We are pleased to be further strengthening the investment climate and enhancing governance. Given Serbia’s strong potential, such positive changes in what is the largest economy in the Western Balkans will have a wider impact throughout the region.

Sir Suma Chakrabarti, EBRD President (2015)
Why Invest in Serbia?

The attractiveness of the location, logistics advantages, availability of skilled workforce, and a very good support of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the local community are the main reasons why the Bosch Group decided to invest in the municipality of Pecinci and the Republic of Serbia.

Mrs. Jovanka Jovanovic, General Manager of Robert Bosch Serbia

We saw Serbia as a country with good strategic position, adequate infrastructure and great human resource potential. Being at a unique position in the European market, Serbia offers diverse possibilities and, above all, high quality workmanship.

Mrs. Silvia Vernetti - Blina, Director FCA Serbia

1. Availability of High Quality Labor
2. Competitive Operating Cost
3. Customs Free Access to 1.3bn Consumers
4. Political and Economic Stability
5. Financial Benefits and Incentives
6. Optimal Geographic Location
Availabilty of High Quality Labor

This initiative demonstrates our confidence and trust in Serbia, its industry, management competence and the skill of its workers.

Mr. Sergio Marchionne, Former CEO, FCA

10.3% Unemployment Rate

Source: *Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Q2 2019

The Structure of Unemployed by Level of Education

- 63.3% 211,300 High School
- 21.4% 71,600 University and College
- 15.3% 51,100 No Education/Primary School

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Q2 2019

Schneider Electric recognized the knowledge, innovation and experience of young engineers in Serbia and invested resources in the DMS from Novi Sad, which is now a global center of Schneider Electric research, development and production of software for optimal management of electricity distribution.

Mr. Dragoljub Damljanovic, Power Systems & Field Services Cluster VP for South East Europe at Schneider Electric

Unemployment Rate

Our decision (to invest in Serbia) was based on a high confidence to find a very motivated and skilled workforce, to have optimal logistics conditions from and to the other European countries, to develop an intense cooperation with technical high schools and universities and to build a strong partnership with the national and local authorities.

Mr. Laurent Cardon, General Manager Operations Europe, Johnson Electric

Language Proficiency

Source: InfoStud, indication of knowledge of languages, based on 100K+

- 86% ENGLISH
- 12% GERMAN
- 6% RUSSIAN
- 4% FRENCH
- 4% SPANISH
- 4% ITALIAN

University Centers across the Country

- 256,172 Active students
- 98,337 Other
- 38,316 Mathematics, IT and Computing
- 73,562 Social Sciences, Business and Law
- 45,957 Engineering and Manufacturing


510 High Schools across the Country

Gymnasium
- 57,478 Graduates
- 15,245
- 15,565 Other

Mechanics and Electronics
- 10,284

Economics, Law and Administration
- 8,220

Trade and Tourism
- 5,223

Agriculture and Food Production
- 2,941

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2017/18

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Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2017/18
2 Competitive Operating Costs

According to EUROSTAT, Serbia has the lowest costs of electricity, gas, other fuels and landline telephony among 37 European states.

Average Gross Monthly Salary (EUR)

- Serbia 580
- Romania 964
- Slovakia 1,013
- Hungary 1,035
- Poland 1,070
- Czech R. 1,243

Corporate Profit Tax

- Serbia 15%
- Romania 16%
- Croatia 18%
- Slovenia 19%
- Poland 19%
- Czech R. 20%

Source: The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies, 2018; KPMG, 2019

Cost Savings vs EU-28 Average

- Net Salary 74% savings
- Electricity 41% savings
- Transport Services 43% savings
- Office Space Rental 55% savings

Source: EUROSTAT, 2018

Average Net Salary by Regions (EUR)

- Belgrade
- South and East Serbia Region
- Vojvodina
- Sumadija and West Serbia Region

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia

Old Build 1-2.5€/m²
New Build 3-5€/m²

Industrial Facility Lease Cost

200-400€/m²

Average Building Cost

Source: RAS

0.067 €/kWh
0.6-1.3 €/m³
0.38-0.42 €/m³

Source: RAS

Competitive Operating Costs
Over the past several years Serbia took steps to further improve political and economic stability. In order to reverse the Serbia’s trend of economic growth driven by import and consumption, and put the country on a dynamic and sustainable growth path, led by investments and exports, it was necessary to carry out economic reforms consisting of macroeconomic stabilization and improving the business climate. Since 2014, the Government of the Republic of Serbia has taken steps towards reducing the government debt, including greater fiscal responsibility, reform of the public administration, reform of the state-owned enterprises and an overall increase of the productivity in the public sector.

**GDP, Real Growth (%)**

Source: Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Serbia, National Bank of Serbia

**Consolidated Deficit/Surplus (%GDP)**

Source: National Bank of Serbia, Ministry of Finance and Fiscal Council of the Republic of Serbia

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**Customs Free Access to 1.3bn Consumers**

The existence of educated and skilled workforce, incentives to investors, and the free trade agreements with the Russian Federation and Turkey, as well as developed infrastructure and favorable geographical position were the key factors for Grundfos investment to Serbia.

Jim Toft Nielsen, General Manager, Grundfos Serbia

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**Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus**

172.2 mn Consumers
5.7% of Total Export

**EU**

513.2 mn Consumers
67% of Total Export

**EFTA**

14.2 mn Consumers
1.0% of Total Export

**CEFTA**

12.4 mn Consumers
17.4% of Total Export

**US**

327.2 mn Consumers
1.4% of Total Export

**Turkey**

82.3 mn Consumers
1.5% of Total Export

**Australia**

25 mn Consumers
0.1% of Total Export

**Japan**

126.5 mn Consumers
0.4% of Total Export

*FTA - Free Trade Agreements
**GSP - Generalized System of Preferences

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2018
World Bank, 2018
Financial Benefits and Incentives

Cash Grants
To offset initial capital investments and ease the start-up of business endeavors, the Government of Serbia offers financial support for Greenfield and Brownfield projects in manufacturing, and the services sector which may be subject to international trade.

Construction Land Transfer Subsidy
Government or the local municipality can sell construction land at a price which is lower than the market price in support of an investment project that is of national importance (if the land is owned by the government) or an investment projects that promotes local economic development (if the land is owned by the local municipality).

Corporate Income Tax Relief
A 10-year Corporate Profit Tax Holiday is available for investors who hire more than 100 employees and invest more than 8.5 million euros (1 billion RSD). Tax holiday begins once the company starts making a profit.

Payroll Tax Incentives
Employment of people who were registered with the National Unemployment Agency for more than 6 months entitles employers to a sizable relief of taxes paid on net salary from the moment of employment until December 31, 2019:
- 1-9 new jobs: 65% reduction
- 10-99 new jobs: 70% reduction
- 100+ new jobs: 75% reduction
(payroll tax incentives can’t be combined with Financial Incentives)

Double Taxation Avoidance
Republic of Serbia has 59 effective double taxation agreements in place that cover income, capital and property. In addition to having double taxation agreements in place with most European countries, Serbia has double taxation treaties in place with many countries in Asia and Africa.

Free Trade Zones

- 14 Free Trade Zones
- No VAT
  - Construction material, energy, transport and fuels cost free of VAT
- No custom duties
  - (raw materials, equipment, construction materials)
- Investments
  - 3 billion euros (since 2008)
- 13.66% of total Serbian goods export
- 35,279 employed
- €5 billion turnover in 2018
- Multinational companies

Source: Free Zones Administration, 2019
6 Optimal Geographic Location

Getting to Serbia is easier than ever!

- New York: <9h
- Moscow, Dublin: <3h
- Berlin, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Kiev, London, Paris, Amsterdam: <2.5h
- Bucharest, Istanbul, Prague, Rome, Vienna, Zurich, Munich, Belgrade, Nikola Tesla Airport: <1.5h

2018
- 59,036 Take offs/Landing
- 5,641,105 Nº. of Passengers
- 20,065 Cargo and mail carried (t)

Source: Belgrade Airport

Stay close to your customers

Average Road Transportation Costs (€ per km)

- Copenhagen €1,700
- Moscow €2,250
- Madrid €2,570
- Warsaw €1,098
- Stuttgart €1,176
- Prague €900
- Munich €944
- Milan €1,050
- Berlin €1,200
- Paris €1,700
- London €2,050
- Vienna €620
- Istanbul €962

Optimal Geographic Location

- Connection to Rhine-Main-Danube Canal Access to Port of Hamburg
- Connection to Adriatic Sea Access to Port of Rijeka and Port of Kopar
- Connection to Adriatic Sea Access to Port of Bar
- Connection to Black Sea Access to Port of Constanza
- Connection to Mediterranean Sea Access to Port of Thessaloniki
- Connection to Mediterranean Sea Access to Port of Thessaloniki
- Connection to Adriatic Sea Access to Port of Bar
- Connection to Adriatic Sea Access to Port of Bar

CORRIDOR 10
- Splits into two near the city of Nis, with one route going towards Thessaloniki and the other one towards Sofia and Istanbul.

CORRIDOR 7
- Danube, a waterway connecting Western and Central European countries with the countries of Southeastern and Eastern Europe.
The Serbian government has also moved ahead with an ambitious economic and structural reform agenda which will contribute to a more attractive business environment: restoring growth, improving competitiveness and creating new jobs.

Mr. Johannes Hahn, European Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations

Serbia offers an ideal base for business activities throughout eastern Europe. A strong argument for investing in Serbia is also the access to highly qualified employees, and thus the ability to produce and develop products of the highest quality economically.

Dr. Ronald Seeliger, CEO, STada/Hemofarm

The existing infrastructure, speed of issuance of building permits, administrative procedures and existing transport corridors and logistics, provide solid and stable business environment, similar to the business environment in the EU.

Mr. Zivko Topalovic, CEO, ContiTech Fluid Serbia (Continental AG)

The IMF Delegation was satisfied with the progress Serbia had made in macroeconomic stability and fiscal consolidation. The economic recovery continues to take hold, supported by strong policies and improved confidence.

Mr. James Roaf, Head of the IMF Mission to Serbia (2015)

Wide availability of highly qualified staff in Serbia is the core of our success. Only through their commitment it is possible to survive in a market environment despite increasing difficulties, to develop new markets, to increase efficiency and take position for future challenges.

Hubert Forster, Muhlbauer Technologies

BPE Belgrade employs local workforce in all segments of operation, not only in the production process. We have created one of the world’s best teams in the industry; our employees now take on central functions, provide support to the head office, as well as to other factories in the group worldwide.

Mr. David Banjai, Former Ball Packaging Europe Belgrade General Manager
Development Agency of Serbia (RAS) is a government organization offering a wide range of services including support to direct investments, competitiveness and export promotion, leading the implementation of projects aiming to improve Serbia’s attractiveness and reputation and increase economic and regional development.

With a unique set of support programs tailored for micro, small and medium enterprises and entrepreneurs, as well as domestic and foreign investors seeking to set up or expand their business in Serbia, RAS strives to raise Serbia’s position in the region and globally.

Created as a one-stop-shop, RAS acts as a reliable partner for both domestic and international companies with a single goal of building a strong and sustainable economy, and increasing the quality of life for the people in Serbia.

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September, 2019