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# CanCham Strategy 2022

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*Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Latvia*

*Development / Strategy – **Draft for discussion***

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## DOCUMENT DETAILS

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This Strategy proposal has been developed under the guidance and chairmanship of CanCham Board Member Mark Watson in collaboration with CanCham members Arvīds Plokšta, Astrīda Bola, Ed Kalvins, Ieva Mežule, Normunds Kupcis and Una Brūna who have formed a “CanCham Strategy Group”.

CanCham’s Board, Audit Committee and Group Leaders were invited to participate by CanCham’s President, Una Brūna on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Active CanCham members were invited to participate in this group through personal invitations to do so, or via postings on CanCham’s web site.

The objective was to prepare a proposal for presentation to CanCham members at their Annual General Meeting scheduled for October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 which is to be sent to members no later than September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

## FOREWORD FROM THE EDITOR

### A TWO PAGE STRATEGIC ROUTE MAP

From the following pages it will be possible to develop a one or two page route map that simply, graphically and succinctly describes the strategy for our organisation.

We have not yet completed all the boxes, or at least provided examples in every case, as we feel this strategy requires full consultation with the Board of Directors. In effect and in our opinion, the BoD and Group Leaders should contribute to this process actively and in a few separate sessions so this can be our directive and course for the next couple of years. This will always need to be in context with the usual provisos of being flexible and agile to meet the new and immediate risks and challenges that the last 3 years have taught us not to ignore.

We need all Board Members', Group (industry sector) Leaders' and active members' buy in and participation. Again, it is our experience that all of us should be comfortable with our approach and direction and that it should be our focal point of reference going forward.

### THIS IS A BUSINESS WORKING DOCUMENT

This is not an academic exercise. This document is a work in progress and should be used as an agile and structured method of recording the 'what we are, what we want to be and how we will achieve our stated aims and goals'. It also details the Business and Organisational Plans associated with the Strategy.

This document will be regulated and audited for compliance. To use an anecdote; we must ALL be on the same journey taking a similar route otherwise there is little chance of successfully realising our vision and business goals.

At the highest level this strategy should not change very much in the short term otherwise the cost of any change can be significant both to members and to the organisation as a whole. The overriding business model and strategic objectives should be agreed and applied for our organisation.

There is more detail required. However, it is not necessary to go into so much detail that we lose the essence of our approach and direction. This should mostly be used as a route map which allows some licence for amendment and response to new opportunities and changes in our economic environment. Whilst it is sensible to keep the keynote messages at a strategic level, any events, contacts, activities and projects can be assessed on a continuing basis in support of our strategy.

A great deal of what has already been put in place and has been practiced can be built on. The direction, by necessity, is business centric where active and participating members can realise real value from their membership. However, there are still some areas that might cause conflict and contention and require closer inspection and more detailed definition. The devil is often in the detailed 'what, how, who and when'.

There are also some risks that require further identification and definition. However, we can use this document to agree what those risks are and how they may be mitigated.

## INTRODUCTION

### STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT TO DATE

Every participant should review <https://cancham.lv/about-cancham/strategy-2019> to give some understanding as to what our objectives were in the past and what we had intended to accomplish. This has allowed us to recognise what objectives need modification and what actions need revision.

The current “CanCham Strategy Draft” (proposed for 2022 and submitted Wednesday, October 27, 2021) was presented to the Board at that time. This “CanCham Strategy Draft” is provided as **Appendix I – Current 2021 to 2022 Strategy**. This has been a basis for building and developing our new Strategy Proposal which takes account of our recent CanCham current status, historic and SWOT analysis.

### CURRENT CANCHAM STATUS AND HISTORY

This section provides the organisation’s current status and an indication of the path we are currently on. It also provides the detailed history leading up to our current situation. Along with the SWOT Analysis, below, conclusions can be drawn about our current situation and logically provides the rationale for the future strategic direction.

Details of the Current CanCham Status and History is provided as **Appendix II**. As part of this account, each key section contains Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations which together offer rationale for decisions to be made on any changes that might be required and are reflected in the new Strategy Proposal.

The current “Findings” have also been included in a business and organisational Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis as provided in **Appendix III**. This provides a structured catalogue

that further clarifies existing issues and their impact and forms the rationale and basis for any changes that are required to the Proposed Strategy.

## **Summary of Current CanCham Status Conclusions and Recommendations**

The following key conclusions and recommendations are considered to be the most important and with the highest impact on any CanCham business and operations going forward.

### **Main Conclusions**

CanCham has no Canadian or other companies that financially support CanCham's activities. There is no support and marginal interest from the Canadian Embassy nor any interest from the Canadian military.

CanCham in its current form is not sustainable and has neither financial nor human resources to realise the goals of the members; this is one of the reasons why people became inactive or leave.

It is virtually impossible to develop a brand and reputation based on member expectations which cannot easily be realised. The CanCham name suggests to members that we have special advantages with business in Canada or with Canadians. This is misleading since opportunities have proven to be minimal.

CanCham is not actually a chamber of commerce because we do not have (except for Circle-K) Canadian companies. Our members expect CanCham to help them generate income, so it is more of a business association.

CanCham governing entities (the Board, Audit Committee and Group Leaders) have failed to motivate members to actively participate in CanCham activities and programs. Internal communication has to be improved to be fully inclusive, consistent, clear and frequent throughout the whole organisation.

Current activities, networks, partnerships and programs are somewhat restricted. More opportunities would accrue to the members if operations and networks could be extended internationally without specific geographical limitations.

CanCham members should be offered expanded business development opportunities and services whether through CanCham or NEBA. These opportunities and services must be targeted to and 'fit' with the membership majority and be seen to deliver real value to members' businesses.

### **Main Recommendations**

The CanCham membership should direct the new CanCham Board as to what activities should be taken to support the objectives as stated in CanCham's statutes.

Establish and develop the registered Northern European Business Association as an independent and separate organisation. Provide opportunities for existing CanCham members to be members of the new business association.

Develop and improve internal communication at all levels which is consistent, clear, transparent and frequent; all members should feel a part of the organisation and be encouraged to participate and contribute.

Create a fully inclusive, positive and innovative environment which motivates members to participate and contribute to realise benefits and value from the organisation's business opportunities and service offers.



# PROPOSED STRATEGY

## FOREWORD

### Current Direction

We can see how our current course is responding to our SWOT analysis and findings. Whether we continue purely on this course or whether there are other factors we need to consider can be further investigated and discussed within the main (core) part of the Strategic approach and initiatives outlined in more detail below.

The continuing operation of CanCham (within its limited scope and as defined in its statutes) is a realistic option under direction of a new Board of Directors. Any changes to the CanCham strategy and new strategic initiatives can be defined and implemented by the new board.

Increased opportunities will be available and accessible to CanCham members who wish them through cooperation with NEBA. The precise approach of shared membership with NEBA can be agreed as appropriate with CanCham and its members.

The emphasis in this Strategy Proposal pertains to the establishment of NEBA and the development of its operations as a business association.

### Changes Required

Emphasis must be placed on:

1. Meeting the business development requirements of members
2. Providing the framework for member driven activities; driven by members for members
3. Any organisation structure and framework needs to be relatively flexible and yet must support clear and transparent communication throughout
4. Provide member services, opportunities and networks to transact business not offered by competing organisations.

It is critical that any organisation going forward meets the requirements and expectations of its members. Members should have different ways in which they can be active and contribute based on their own appetite for participation and taking advantage of opportunities and services that are accessible and available to them.

Moving from a Chamber of Commerce to a Business Association model requires that innovation and business development become more central to the strategy and focus of the organisation.

## OUR MISSION

### To Provide a Positive, Motivational Business Environment

The Northern European Business Association (NEBA) will provide a positive and motivational environment for an international networking platform focused on Northern Europe to facilitate the business development objectives of its members locally (by country), regionally (in Northern Europe) and internationally through a variety of instruments and “fit for purpose” member driven initiatives.

It will be a member driven association for the benefit of members.

### A Focused Platform for Innovation and Business Development

Events, communications, organisation structures, resources and international business networks form a focused platform to promote and support business development initiatives and services for its members.

The organisation will be continually tuned and updated to improve the prospective benefits and value to each member’s domestic and international business.

## OUR VISION

### NEBA: A Leading Platform for Innovation and Business Success

Develop NEBA to be recognised as an **independent and leading** business association where participating members will be motivated to **innovate** and **generate successful business initiatives**.

The NEBA platform will **facilitate cooperation** between members to **promote economic activity** across Northern Europe and to attract business to this region by developing excellent strategic and international partnerships.

The emphasis will be on member driven initiatives for members. Members will be encouraged to advance their business goals by using NEBA’s excellent facilities and services.

### Become the ‘Go To’ Business Association

NEBA should become the ‘go to’ business association for individuals and various kinds of organisation and agency alike:

- Prospective members who wish to further develop their business locally and internationally
- State and authority contact and networking with a variety of respected business entrepreneurs (and vice versa)
- External organisations and agencies where mutually beneficial partnerships can be formed for the benefits of the members; these entities can include research institutes and Universities
- Representation of the professional interests of members and to be an information centre for business owners and entrepreneurs alike.

### Aiding Local Communities

The organisation will seek to add value to communities wherever it operates or wherever its networks extend to. Local business communities should benefit from business networks and the ways in which the businesses within those networks operate.

## OUR CORE VALUES

### Professional Standards

NEBA will be a professional association maintaining the highest standards for integrity and professional conduct in all operations, networks and members' activities. All operations and activities will be organised, managed and carried out in a professional and transparent manner, in mutual respect, and with honesty and integrity.

### Members First

The membership will benefit from member driven business developments and services. Members select the Governing Council and the Executive. The focus of NEBA networks, services and business development programs are designed to maximise membership value and benefits.

### Active Participation and Collaboration

Our values include a culture of active participation, collaboration and team work in the delivery of business services and opportunities. The higher level of participation and collaboration the greater the benefits for a large range of members.

### Diversity and Inclusion

There is **power in unity of diversity**. Membership, International Networks, development programs and service innovation are all strengthened by diversity. All members will be included to participate at different levels depending on their business experience and their appetite for inclusion. The default motivation is one of **inclusion and active participation**.

### Equity and Democracy

At the centre of the organisation are the **principles of equity and democracy**. All matters concerning the organisation and its operations will be fair and impartial. Members vote for members to represent the Governance Council and the Executive Board thereby ensuring the organisation is run and controlled by qualified and experienced members for all members.

### Excellent Communication

Consistent and **clear communication** will be encouraged across the organisation at all levels of the organisation and regardless of member participation. International business and networks cannot function

well without good, internal communication which keeps all members informed of current activities and encourages members to participate in new services and opportunities that can benefit their businesses.

## BEST PRACTICES

All known 'best practices' will be employed as appropriate and practicable.

NEBA has the following key areas of best practice:

- Independence
- Transparency, Integrity and Accountability
- Compliance.

### Independence

The Organisation is **independent** and run by its members for its members.

No one member or group of members will specifically influence the organisation unless elected and empowered to do so by the membership. In a similar manner, members will not supply external resources deployed in running of the organisation without approval of the members and the Governance Council.

### Transparency, Integrity and Accountability

The cornerstone principles of **transparency, integrity and accountability** will be applied in all cases. Key to transparency is the frequent reporting of the current status of the organisation and future plans. The following key instruments will be used as appropriate to maintain these principles:

- Audit; a statutory audit function must be, and is, employed
- Quality Assurance; constant reviews for quality and delivery improvements of services and business development
- Segregation of duties for authorities and for responsibilities
- Measurement; Critical Success Factors (CSFs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are established to frequently monitor the performance of the organisation.

### Compliance

There are several areas of **compliance** which are managed and monitored:

- The Organisation Values
- Strategy and business plans
- Financial reporting and statutory returns
- Documented processes and procedures
- Externally defined regulations and legal requirements.

## KEY DIMENSIONS

These relate to the major drivers, instruments and organisational units employed in NEBA's business model.

It includes the key instruments of business development and service delivery, communication, networks, events, and the organisational structures through which the business goals are to be supported and delivered.

Please refer to **Appendix IV** for more details.

The key dimensions are:

- Membership
- Innovation & Business Development

- Organisational Structure
- Internal Communication
- External Communication
- Social Media Presence
- Events & Presentations.

## Membership

The members are not just customers but also participating members who are as active as they wish to be and can make significant contributions to the success of the organisation.

There is great potential for synergy and goal congruence where active membership on delivery of successful business opportunities and services will benefit their businesses and enhance the value and potential of the organisation.

Membership types and the value assigned to each needs to be reviewed. An attractive pricing structure should be associated with the member's standing and value received from the organisation.

## Innovation & Business Development

It is critical to the organisation's business model that it has an agile and free thinking environment. The international nature of the organisation legislates toward the ability to 'do business' through any network formed locally or overseas.

The DMC System was configured to enable international representation and business agreements with representatives abroad. Going forward, there will not be any limit to networks that can be formed internationally with mutual benefit ascribing to the organisation's members and to overseas network representatives.

The organisation structures are designed with innovation and business development in mind.

The Industry Group Committees will be re-established to be the key internal communication conduits with Group Leaders representing the frequent and continual feedback from members. The Group Leaders also

represent the members on the Governing Council where decisions will be made regarding proposed new networks and business development initiatives.

## Organisational Structure

A new organisation structure will be proposed. This should build on the existing structures in place for CanCham. However, the Industry Group Committees will be reviewed to ensure the roles and responsibilities of participating members can be carried out and met.

Similarly, feedback on the lack of the DMC System utilisation should be obtained to ensure its value can be optimised.

## Internal Communication

A number of issues have been raised over internal communication in the 'Current Status' and SWOT analysis.

It is clear that key lines of communication must be re-instated in order to meet the consistent, clear and transparent nature of communication required for our organisation to be successful.

All internal communication should be coordinated and inclusive reaching all members with the same information, content and messages. Constant contact provides opportunities to understand the mood and appetite of members and their motivation (or not) for active participation and contribution (or not).

The organisation website is an opportunity to professionally, yet simply provide information and convey important news and messages. Any website needs to be simply and logically configured for ease of use and to reinforce the organisation's benefits and value to members.

Please see 'Social Media Presence' also.

## External Communication

It is important to promote NEBA with each opportunity for external communication whether via the NEBA website, social media, recruiting new members or retaining existing members. Every communication and contact is an opportunity to reinforce and enhance the NEBA brand and its core values.

The NEBA website should be a shop window for any prospective member, network or partner.

Use of social media should also consistently convey a professional and transparent approach that reflects NEBA's culture and core values.

Please see 'Social Media Presence' also.

## Social Media Presence

This dimension is quite specialised although it does affect and influence both Internal and External Communication.

The WhatsApp group messaging is a welcome addition and success in terms of contact and immediate notifications and reminders.

The CanCham Facebook Group pages and views, although quite limiting in terms of presentation and editorial needs, appear to be a relatively successful method of informing a number of members and friends about events, activities and other connected information. The format is consistent and provides a central

place for members and external parties to acquire information on the organisation, its members and newsworthy articles on the organisation's operations and progress.

Further investigation and analysis is required to look at all leading forms of social media and their delivery platforms. Critically, a benefits and value versus cost of administration must be assigned to each media type before any decision should be made regarding their deployment.

There is also the case as to the extent of use of each social media platform by members and 'interested' friends and third parties.

Any social media presence requires consistent presentation and an opportunity for Brand Image enhancement.

## Events & Presentations

'Show & Tell' and Forums/Talks have been relatively successful event formats. Further review and feedback is required to ensure the Event's Schedule contains the appropriate mix of business focus and social contact and personal networking.

Events provide a platform to members and businesses to showcase their business and network with other members and businesses.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The following are proposed to be the Strategic Priorities for the immediate future. They focus on the future of CanCham and the proposed establishment and development of NEBA.

Detailed plans supporting these priorities can be found in **Appendix V – Strategic Priority Plans**.

- CanCham's Status and Sustainability
- NEBA Organisation Development
- Develop further business initiatives and programs
- Coordinate consistent, clear and transparent Internal Communication
- Promotion and External Communication
- Agree and develop Social Media Presence
- Develop Events Focus and Schedule.

### CanCham's status and sustainability

- Report to the membership on the existing CanCham status and optional plans for the future
- Seek a decision (from the members) on how the CanCham should proceed.

### NEBA Organisation Development

- Adopt the revised Proposed Strategy
- Revise the organisation and Governance Structure and agree
- Provide existing CanCham members with options to gain access to NEBA
- Utilise and establish the key groups/networks
- Develop the international networks and alliances
- Review and leverage use of the DMC System
- Initiation for a 'knowledge based information and skills based service centre' for business owners and entrepreneurs.

### Develop Further Business Initiatives and Programs

- Use 'Visit Latvia' Program as a template

- Obtain innovations and business objectives from members
- Setup new program(s)
- Create group forums for Business Development with feedback loops

### **Coordinate Consistent, Clear and Transparent Internal Communication**

- Re-establish consistent, clear, and frequent communication through the Group Leaders and their committees
- Coordinate communication and messaging through the newly formed Communications Office
- Promote information and material which conveys the features, facilities, benefits, and real value of membership
- Promote active participation in the networks, industry groups and the development of business opportunities
- Develop the organisation's culture and professional (brand) image
- Provide relevant and pertinent professional, business, market, and economic information.

### **Promotion and External Communication**

- Encourage participation by Group Leaders and their Committees
- Promote benefits and value of becoming a member
- Establish more complementary goal based business initiatives and program groups
- Strengthen International business focus and contact
- Leverage of the DMC approach to help generate new international networks and new business.

### **Agree and Develop Social Media Presence**

- Review use of the various 'other' social media platforms not currently employed
- Evaluate costs versus benefits of each platform
- Consider brand image issues
- Consider administration of each platform along with brand image and content consistency
- Decide on necessary platforms to use.

### **Develop Events Focus and Schedule**

- Plan focused 'Show & Tell' presentations
- Plan forum/talk sessions
- Decide on target audience presentations
- Other meetings and networking events.



## STRATEGIC BUSINESS GOALS

These high-level business goals or objectives are, in fact, also 'Directives'. They wholly support the 'Strategic Priorities' in terms of the business requirements and development.

The key business goals are to:

- Promote business opportunities for its members across the world
- Develop and establish business contacts and cooperation between members and commercial institutions internationally
- Work with embassies and other organisations to identify business opportunities and expand business links internationally
- Promote the Association and its Partners
- Organize and participate in, informative and specific targeted presentations, meetings, seminars, conferences, and other events related to the business goals of the Association.

Detailed business plans to support these objectives can be found as **Appendix V I– Detailed Business Plans**.

## Leading and Lagging Performance Metrics

Leading measures to be defined.

Starter for 10; to be amended and confirmed

### *Networks*

- Number and range of Business Development Opportunities
- Prospective value (financial) by Business Development Program
- Realised value (financial) by Business Development Program
- Contribution/participation (effort/attendance) by Business Development Program
- Number, prospective and real values of business introductions
- Network Progress Surveys and Updates
- More?

### *Business Development*

- Numbers (effort) working on each program
- Prospective value of each program
- Time from inception to implementation of program
- Realised value (financial and other benefits)
- Member Progress Surveys and Updates

### *Group Leaders/Committees*

- Committee members attendance
- New members
- Innovation/ideas Index
- Accepted program initiatives
- Membership Contact Number per month
- Completed short "temperature" surveys (no more than 4 questions; composite rating value out of 10)
- Number of members on Committees and Business Development Programs
- Number of passive members.

### *Events*

- Proportion of members intending to attend events
- Proportion of members attending events
- Member events survey feedback (no more than 4 questions; composite rating value out of 10)
- Member introductions.

### *Social Media*

- Member promotions
- Comments
- Likes/dislikes
- Membership Enquiries and Responses
- More?

### *Website*

- Number who access by web page
- Responses to articles, news, etc.
- Membership Enquiries and Responses
- More?

**Lagging measure to be defined.**

## APPENDIX I – CURRENT 2021 TO 2022 STRATEGY DRAFT

This is the current CANCHAM strategy, including some details on the key processes and activities and events timetable.

This Strategy is shown on the CanCham website.

### CANCHAM STRATEGY DRAFT FOR 2022 AS OF WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2021

The following is a strategy proposal to provide members with an idea of the activities the CanCham plans to undertake in 2022. It is subject to review and modification. Member input is welcome.

The CanCham will continue with its objectives as stated in its website in the <http://cancham.lv/about-cancham> section. The emphasis is on “**actively promoting the business interests of its members**”.

The CanCham recognizes that Latvia itself provides limited internal economic activity because of its small population, and accepts that attracting international business opportunities locally will be challenging. However, the CanCham also recognizes that Latvia has a key geographic location in the centre of Northern Europe with excellent logistics facilities in part provided by a regional airline hub in Riga served by Air Baltic and the only ice free ports in the Baltic Sea. 36 foreign embassies, one mission, and one consulate are located in Riga, with access to 86 non-resident embassies.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_diplomatic\\_missions\\_in\\_Latvia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_diplomatic_missions_in_Latvia). The fact countries such as China, India and Taiwan are active in Latvia demonstrates its regional importance and potential as a facilitator for international trade.

The CanCham also recognizes that there is marginal interest for Latvians doing business in Canada and Canadians doing business in Latvia in large part because the lack of awareness of opportunities and the need for education there-of, and an unfamiliarity as to an appropriate approach for market entry, which is, in part, hampered by the lack of resources provided to the development of commercial activities by the embassies and development agencies of both countries. Hence the CanCham must adopt a more global approach in its current activities, while still supporting Canada-Latvia business development initiatives.

The CanCham’s focus will be on creating international opportunities for its members through its international network, and serve as a facilitator for international trade that involves both Latvia and the international community using Latvia’s overall strategic location connecting major population blocks, including the EU, North America, the former Soviet space and even Asia.

An emphasis will be given to the development of strategic partnerships through **DMC’s** (Destination Management Coordinators) in Latvia and in those countries wishing work with Latvia.

The CanCham will continue to work closely with the Canadian Embassy in Latvia and the Latvian Embassy in Canada in order to coordinate programs of mutual interest, and organizations such as the Canada Eurasia Russia Business Association (CERBA) and ventureLab.

### THE FOLLOWING ARE CANCHAM ACTIVITIES:

#### Member promotion in the Web and Social Media

The CanCham will promote its members through:

- its web site at <https://cancham.lv/>
- its Face Book site at <https://www.facebook.com/canchamlatvia>,
- its closed group CanCham Members & Good Friends group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/250007135140429>,
- its LinkedIn site at <https://www.linkedin.com/company/canadian-chamber-of-commerce-in->

[latvia/](#)

- its Instagram account at <https://www.instagram.com/canchamlatvia/>
- its Twitter account at <https://twitter.com/CanChamLV>

Advertising collages are published periodically in the FB sites and LinkedIn. This involves sending a jpg format picture advertisement. For further information, please contact a Board Member or Group Leader. For contact information, see <https://cancham.lv/the-team>.

**Sell Sheets:** Members are encouraged to prepare a “sell sheet” which provides basic information about their services and their company. Sell sheets will be posted in <http://cancham.lv/services>. The CanCham sends links to sell sheets to interested parties.

## Events

The CanCham is committed to returning to in-person events as soon as COVID-19 restrictions allow. The current regulations that may apply to in-person meetings after the lockdown will be restricted to those with covid certificates only. Provisions will be made for video conferencing facilities for those that cannot attend.

Events will be scheduled for Mondays at 18.30, when possible.

The following is a list of potential in-person events:

- January with the new Canadian Senior Trade Commissioner
- February “Show & Tell” - Construction Related Services
- March “Show & Tell” - Trade Facilitation & Export
- April “Show & Tell” - Health, Leisure & Education
- May with H.E. Kevin Rex (Canadian Ambassador to Latvia),
- June with the Canadian Armed Forces in Latvia
- July – Canada Day
- October – AGM & Thanksgiving Dinner
- November “Show & Tell” - Business Support
- December – CanCham Christmas

CanCham Talks ??

Business after hours events will be promoted.

## Special Interest Projects

A new approach to CanCham activities was adopted in the spring of 2021 and refined during the summer. This involves working in small teams on special interest projects with specific objectives. Note: this is in response to member reactions to “general” meetings.

The “tourism” projects (medical, sports tourism, business, and trade) tourism are intended to attract visitors to Latvia for a little bit of rest and relaxation, and an opportunity to discover Latvia, while still doing something important. DMC’s are offered the opportunity to help with these initiatives while also earning income at the same time for services provided. This way we hope to make the CanCham and Latvia interesting.

Other special interest projects include the DMC system expansion and technical projects project development. The DMC system expansion is the objective of CanCham’s Trade Facilitation & Export Group to develop strategic partnerships, help members export goods and services, and attract Canadian companies to Latvia. It is hoped to have the involvement of the Latvian Investment & Development Agency, and both the Canadian Embassy in Latvia and the Latvian Embassy in Canada. The technical projects project is intended to support our members who are involved in renovation and

building projects with a wide range of services from assisting with concept development to concept implementation to providing individual services or equipment related to construction related services.

## **Trade shows**

The CanCham will not participate in trade shows directly, but will support the initiatives of the Canadian and Latvian Embassies by informing members of these initiatives.

## **Business Missions**

The CanCham does not expect to be involved in business missions. However, it will support those missions organized by the Canadian Embassy in Latvia or Latvian Embassy in Canada, the Latvian Investment and Development Agency, CERBA and the Latvian Chamber of Commerce.

## THE CANCHAM ORGANIZATION - SECTIONS WITHIN THE CANCHAM

### Group Organization

The CanCham is organized into groups with a group leader. Each group represents a particular service profile. Group leaders help their members understand what the CanCham has to offer. The following are CanCham's active groups:

- Trade Facilitation & Export <http://cancham.lv/groups/trade-facilitation--export>
- Business Support <http://cancham.lv/groups/business-support-->
- Health, Leisure & Education <https://cancham.lv/groups/health-leisure--education>
- Construction Related Services <https://cancham.lv/groups/construction-related-services>

### DMC System

The Destination Management Coordination (DMC) System (<https://cancham.lv/dmc>) promotes market entry, business opportunity or sales development in geographic regions unfamiliar to a client. This

applies to Latvians looking for international business opportunities, and international businesses looking for entry to the Latvian and surrounding markets.

## Corporate Members

Corporate, Senior Corporate and Corporate Contributing members are particularly important to the CanCham in order to maintain its sustainability. One Board member has been designated to liaise with this group to optimize interaction with these members.

## The Canadian Connection

CanCham's commitment to enhance Canada-Latvia business activity is a key foundation of its existence. One Board member has been designated to liaise with the Canadian Embassy and Canadian Armed Forces to maximize possible collaboration of mutual benefit.

## Business Development

The CanCham recognizes the importance of networking and developing business opportunities for its members. One Board member has been designated to coordinate business development activities for its members.

## Partner Organizations

The CanCham works with several organizations to promote the activities of its members (<https://cancham.lv/groups/partner-organizations>), including:

- Canadian Embassy in Latvia
- Embassy of Latvia in Canada
- Baltic country holidays (Lauku Ceļotājs)
- Canada Eurasia Russia Business Association
- Latvian Resort Association (Latvijas kūrortpilsētu asociācija)
- ventureLab

**Work Groups:** Work groups by business category (eg. trade facilitation & export, Health, leisure & export, business support services, etc) were established in 2017. <http://cancham.lv/groups>.

Most work groups have a leader who will coordinate activities. Work groups are business units whose objective is to promote themselves through the CanCham.

Note that the CanCham has traditionally not been a commercial organization, leaving the work groups and member companies to deal with inquiries and profit from the business generated for themselves. However, consideration will be given to the CanCham undertaking commercial activities in liaison with its DMC's, Group Leaders and members.

How and when work group members meet and/or communicate will be decided by the individual Group Leaders.

**Client search through work groups:** Each work group will identify priority client groups of interest to them and where they are from.

Each work group will establish the marketing approach most appropriate to themselves. This could include direct mailing, social media, working with embassies (local and foreign), using web site(s) (CanCham / member), preparing printed materials, participating in local trade shows, etc.

## RECRUITMENT

The CanCham recognizes the importance of quality membership and members who will support CanCham objectives and programs. In order to spread the word, the CanCham has initiated a rewards program for

individuals recruiting new members for the CanCham. Our objective for 2019 is 100 members. We currently have 96, though some are inactive

The CanCham uses a membership application form in its web site to facilitate new member registrations <http://cancham.lv/about-cancham/application>.

Strategy 2019, <http://cancham.lv/about-cancham/strategy-2019>



## APPENDIX II – THE CURRENT STATUS AND DETAILED HISTORY

### 1. CANADIAN EMBASSY

The following needs to be considered in terms of how the Canadian Embassy works and its main objectives:

- The embassy has two main functions: political and commercial. We would fall into the commercial category. Commercial activities come under the Canadian Trade Commissioner Services section, which in a way is not a part of the embassy. Their equivalent for Latvia would be the Latvian Investment and Development Agency.
- The embassy is interested only in serving those Canadian companies and individuals who pay their taxes in Canada. This is why the CanCham really isn't of interest to them.
- The Canadian Trade Commissioner Service handles commercial relations. The following should be understood:
  - Their mandate is to sell Canadian products and services to the Baltic region, and to attract investment from this region to Canada. They do not promote Latvian sales to Canada.
  - The Canadian Trade Commissioner Services consider Canadian companies who want to do business in the Baltics as their clients. They offer "free" services to these clients (i.e. paid for by the Canadian tax payer). As a result, they are in direct competition to the services that we offer under our DMC services system.
  - Irena Cīrule is the only full-time employee in the Baltics and holds the title of Commercial Officer, and works only in Latvia. The Senior Trade Commissioner located in Tallinn (Tyler Wordsworth) serves both a political and commercial role; hence he is only part time on trade. There are no representatives in Lithuania.
  - They consider themselves to be undermanned. This is why there is an opportunity for cooperation between the CanCham and the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service in that we can provide additional resources to service Canadian companies. However, they tend not to share their clients with us giving a preference to their friends. Perhaps there are benefits for them doing so.
  - They do not appear to actively promote doing business in the Baltics to Canadian companies.
  - They do not promote the CanCham to Canadians or Canadian companies, and make no effort to introduce Canadian companies who, for example, participate in Riga Food, to the CanCham.
  - The CanCham could benefit for cooperation with the embassy if:
    - They provide Canadian company contacts that our members could work with,
    - There is an image of teamwork.
 Unfortunately, neither of these are happening.
- The relationship with the embassy has been good over the last few years. Two commercial visits (Iecava and Cēsis) we were jointly organized and well received by those who participated, though the participation rate from CanCham's side was disappointing. Irena has generally participated in most CanCham events, and positive meetings were held between board members and the Senior Trade Commissioner. However, there seems little enthusiasm for cooperation despite lip service to it.
- We are participating in the Canada EU Trade and Investment Association centred in Brussels which involved other Canadian chambers and business associations in Europe. The overwhelming opinion is that the Canadian government's representatives' arms-length relationship approach to its chambers and business associations is detrimental to economic activity and development. It was noted that they would rather spend money on consultants than provide funding to these organizations to support commercial endeavours.

#### Conclusions

There is no real benefit for the CanCham to specifically expend sparse resources in maintaining close relations or to help develop initiatives and projects with the Canadian Trade Commission. There are

unlikely to be any Canadian contacts or business opportunities coming from the Embassy or its Trade Commission.

In some ways and in some situations the Canadian Embassy is in competition with the CanCham. It is a stated principle that the Canadian Embassies around the world will not work through or sponsor any local Canadian Chambers of Commerce.

### **Recommendations**

When it comes to CanCham's strategic approach to the Canadian Embassy, there are benefits in maintaining contact and cordial relations.

We should look to support the Embassy initiatives from time to time when appropriate and of benefit to the CanCham.

We should not plan for any collaboration from the Embassy for CanCham initiatives.

## **2. THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES (CAF)**

The CAF arrived in Latvia five years ago. We reached out to them for the following reasons:

- Provide entertainment to Canadians and similar support during their stay in Latvia, ie provide tours, events of interest, etc.
- We wanted to get to know Canadians with the hope that they would spread the word about Latvia and CanCham when they went home,

Recognizing that there would be Canadian government expenditures locally, we wanted our members to be a part of it and benefit accordingly.

Some characteristics of the deployments:

- The CAF are divided into two sections
  - The troops in Ādaži who are on constant alert,
  - The CAF European Central Command staff that is located in Riga with their families.
- The Ādaži troops are normally not available for events such as ours since they are not allowed from base for short durations. They also rotate back to Canada every few months.
- The Riga support personnel are usually deployed for three years after which they are rotated back to Canada.

When the original contingent arrived, we had established good relations with a contact person who was active in organizing a couple of seminars on the subject of procurement, and their Riga staff attended several CanCham events (Thanksgiving, CanCham Christmas) in the early years. However, after the first rotation, regular contact was lost and covid did its thing. The CanCham Board assigned one Board member

to liaise with both the embassy and the CAF. However, we don't seem to have developed any meaningful rapport.

Several CanCham members had reached out to the CAF in both Ādaži and Riga in the early stages in order to provide some activities such as visiting the Brālis brewery, but all were turned down.

### *Conclusions*

When it comes to procurement, the CAF will not help CanCham to prepare tenders or even provide advance warnings of invitations to tender. There will be no help, support or 'favouritism' in regard to ITTs.

The CAF has no interest in dealing directly with the CanCham at any level and hence should not be a part of any CanCham strategy or plans.

We should only contact them in respect of events that they may be interested in. Developing some form of contact would be 'a nice to have', but not a priority for the CanCham.

### *Recommendations*

We should continue to keep in contact and invite them to events/activities. Other than this, we should not perform any specific role or encourage any specific activities for the CAF.

We should not especially embark on any events, projects or initiatives which requires collaboration with the CAF.

## **3. THE CANCHAM - HISTORY**

The CanCham was founded in 2000 under the name "Canada-Latvia Business Association".

- Ed Kalvins was the founding chairman.
- The CLBA had 35 founding members, mostly expats and small business members.
- The Senior Trade Commissioner at the time was against designating the organization as a chamber because of the lack of Canadian company representation. He left Latvia a year later and there was no Senior Trade Commissioner until Michael Eyestone in October, 2019, but was gone by June, 2020 because of COVID-19. Tyler Wordsworth started in October, 2021. Interestingly, both, despite coming to the region in October, only engaged with the CanCham in January of the following year. This indicates CanCham's importance to them.
- In 2009, the CLBA was renamed the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Latvia, this despite the fact that there had been no change in Canadian content.
- Dāvis Makšiņš was elected chairman in 2002 with the membership still at 35, but within a year and a half it was reduced to 5. Dāvis resigned as chairman and handed the organization back to Ed Kalvins in 2004.
- The membership rose to 45 when in 2009, Namejs Batraks was elected Chairman. At that AGM, the CLBA name was changed to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Latvia.
- In 2010, Harijs Ozols was elected chairman. This was also the period of the global financial crisis which hit Latvia particularly hard. Valters Kronbergs was elected chairman in 2011 (or 2012) and served until 2015. At the time of the 2015 AGM, there were 11 members, 5 of which attended the AGM. Ed Kalvins was elected chairman. In subsequent years, membership went to 55 in 2016, 85 in 2017, 93 in 2018, 72 in 2019, 72 in 2020 and 62 in 2021.
- There are not many Canadians in Latvia and similarly very few companies.

### *Conclusions*

Unfulfilled expectations for doing business with Canadian businesses, the CAF, the Canadian Embassy and Canada in general may have contributed to members leaving over the last 3 or 4 years from a peak in 2017 and 2018.

Canadian authorities have stated officially there is a policy of non-intervention and only low levels of contact between Canadian Embassies and local Canadian Chambers of Commerce. They have stated that any

connections or relationships will only be 'arms-length' and there will not be any active contact and support for local Canadian chambers. This continuing policy and theme undermines any brand development under the title of 'CanCham'. This theme is set to continue for the foreseeable future.

There has been less CanCham communication and direct networking activity since the high levels during 2017 and 2018. This effort could not easily be maintained year on year without more active participation from other members in the CanCham and/or more money to fund full time focus on certain activities.

Covid-19 has been a significant factor during 2020 through to mid-2022 especially as many smaller and independent businesses have suffered from massive reductions in travel to and tourism in Latvia; many businesses are still focused on recovery and survival. It could also be said, there is a post Covid malaise where it will take time for many to return to more active social and networking events and activities.

The longer term, post pandemic impacts are also significant for many businesses dependent on tourism from Western Europe and North America. Some businesses are paying back loans, grants and VAT liabilities. Tourism may take 2 to 3 years (at least) to recover to pre-pandemic levels.

### **Recommendations**

CanCham/NEBA should try to consider providing new or different services that could help support the small and independent businesses to survive over the next two years (discussion required).

In view of CanCham's financial status and its position in terms of trying to establish a reputable Canada linked brand when receiving very little in support or partnership with Canadian based organisations, it appears that the time could be right for a new start and a business association focused on business development.

Any strategy and plans should include the establishment of NEBA that could go some way to developing new contact networks and business opportunities to existing CanCham members. We should consider that there are no borders to doing business through Europe and, indeed, parts of Asia.

The establishment of NEBA should not be distorted or corrupted by the existing CanCham issues and not easily resolved problems. It would be sensible and reasonable to ask existing CanCham members to become members of the new association, NEBA.

A decision is required by the members as to whether it would be strategically advantageous (and could actually be disadvantageous) to continue with the CanCham.

## **4. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

In the 2016 AGM annual report, the following was the section on finance and administration:

The CanCham has traditionally not paid for services associated with its operations. These costs have either been absorbed by the President, or the services have simply not been provided. This is in contrast to all other Chambers whose administrative services range from those who pay for bookkeeping and basic administration, to those who have four, full time salaried employees.

Remuneration is known to range from €600 for part time or contract service providers to a salary of €1,400 per month for full time staff. Furthermore, bookkeeping rates are fairly well defined in the industry. We are in the 100 transaction range, meaning that bookkeeping services themselves are €182 per month – paid to a company. Indra Sproģe-Kalviņa of "TP Riga" SIA has been both providing administrative services and has undertaken bookkeeping responsibilities for the CanCham. Of the membership at the start of the period, Indra was the

only one qualified and willing to undertake this responsibility, particularly with one of the conditions being that if the CanCham had no funds, payment would not be made. In reviewing the “Associations and Foundations Law”, it was determined that it is more advantageous and simpler for an Association to enter into contractual agreements with a third party as apart from hiring employees. Hence a contract for €300, not including PVN was signed between the CanCham and “TP Riga” SIA to provide bookkeeping and administrative services since “TP Riga” SIA is also registered with VID for providing accounting services. It is recognized that the remuneration amount is not competitive to other chambers for the work being done and will be the subject of future discussion.

The CanCham is currently not supported by significant Canadian based companies (except for Statoil/Circle-K), nor is it subsidized by embassies or government as is the case for many other chambers. In fact, larger companies from home countries are the financial back-bone of other chambers. However, the CanCham’s current policy reflects the importance making membership affordable with the emphasis on activity – hence the relatively low membership fees. There are no plans to change the fee structure. Charges to CanCham functions are kept to a minimum and include the venue cost plus €3.00, with the €3.00 covering miscellaneous costs. CanCham intends to increase revenue by increasing membership in order to enhance networking opportunities for all concerned.

Compensation was raised to €400 in 2020. So far in 2022, 7 required payments have not been made because of lack of funds so that even minimum commitments are not being made.

All funding has to be generated by the CanCham. All funds come from membership fees. There are no subsidies or sponsorships to supplement the funds.

In order to retain the existing membership and/or to increase it the membership, fees cannot be increased.

### *Conclusions*

Existing incomes generated from the current CanCham business model cannot sustainably support the services which need to be provided. It is a circular argument in that there is not enough cashflow to support

CanCham activities and administration and without more time, effort and funding, extensive activities and services cannot be provided to attract the members needed to fund the CanCham.

The existing CanCham financial status effectively means the CanCham is unsustainable.

Current members expectations cannot very easily be met when there is not much Canadian in the CanCham or active support from Canadian organisations including the Embassy, Trade Commission and the CAF.

A disproportionate level of effort is asked of a few participating members. Most members do not actively participate in developing opportunities within CanCham or of using the contacts and networks provided to generate new business.

Simply attending a few events and meetings of limited interest cannot really unlock many opportunities and benefits to them so that their expectations (when joining and renewing) are unlikely to be satisfied.

There needs to be strong propositions and undeniable reasons for more members to recognise the value and opportunities provided by CanCham and/or any more independent and specifically constructed business association.

A few of the business members nominate representatives that are not decision makers although they could still be active members.

As mentioned already, above, many businesses are still in survival mode (from the aftermath effects of Covid-19) and are paying back government loans, grants and government delayed VAT liabilities; they may not see the benefits of investing the time or focus on CanCham activities.

### *Recommendations*

The new Strategy should be formed which realises the benefits of creating a Northern European business association. Effort should go into establishing a Northern European Business Association which would offer more opportunities from a more extensive and independent network. In order to provide an opportunity to establish and develop such an association the brand name 'NEBA' has been officially registered as a subscriber based membership organisation. There are presently no operations associated with this entity.

NEBA will not suffer the 'restrictions' or misplaced expectations placed on 'CanCham' and will not be affected by having special links (or not) to any specific Embassy, Trade Commission or external organisation.

NEBA would help to provide:

- Extended reach to more regions, members and businesses; opportunity for significantly more international contacts not restricted to one or two countries
- No restrictions on constructive networks and collaboration with external partners
- More opportunities to develop member benefits and to encourage active membership
- Improved communication to promote services and the prospective benefits of membership
- More opportunity to fully utilise the organisation structures already in installed within CanCham
- A unique and independent (active) brand recognised for business development.

There is no practical physical restriction to any area, region, culture or country (except where business activity is restricted by law and/or sanctions).

There will not be any confusion over the Business Association's name, brand, strategic goals and objectives and modus operandi.

The organisation should try to ensure there is something for everyone without trying to be 'all things to all people'. Those who attend that are not decision makers can still be motivated to participate. It is possible

that some materials can be provided for these 'representatives' to take back to their companies and managers.

There is not much that can be done to help the businesses who are still suffering the after effects of covid. However, we should be able to provide specific reasons for attendance at functions and participation that helps them and their businesses to generate more opportunities and benefits for their businesses.

## 5. CANCHAM ORGANISATION

### **Statutes**

- According to the statutes, we have Board members and 3 Audit Committee members.
- There had been questions about increasing the Board's size to accommodate more members, but this was not acted on because of perceived legal issues.
- A decision was therefore made to include the Audit Committee in the decision-making process in order to get more input.

### **The group leader system was established five years ago to:**

- Expand on the management team of the CanCham,
- Promote communication between members offering similar services
- To help generate new, collaborative initiatives and projects with active and like-minded members.

### **The DMC system and network was setup some time ago:**

- It was setup with help from CanCham members and for the members
- Promotes market entry, business opportunity or sales development in geographic regions unfamiliar to a client
- The local DMCs have local knowledge and expertise to help with exports and distribution.

### **Development Programs**

- The 'Visit Latvia Program' has successfully been developed; there are many opportunities for medical and sports tourism
- Other development programs can be developed with increasing scope, value and cover.

### **'Show & Tell' and 'Forum Debates/Talks'**

- These have proved to be very successful to date
- Can be extended to include presentations by topical 'content experts'
- Follow ups can deduce the success, impact and value of presentations
- Can create interest in membership and in new development programs.

### **There are many types of Competition:**

- Other Chambers & Business Associations (although some partnerships could be possible from time to time)
- Rotary Clubs
- Breakfast Clubs
- Canadian Trade Commission
- Latvian Investment and Development Agency.

## *Conclusions*

The audit committee is passive and almost appears to be disinterested in CanCham's ongoing operations. There is not a clear understanding of their role given their absence from nearly all the relevant meetings. It

appears that there is only one concrete role and that of the final year-end audit where the report appears in a similar format every year.

We have not seen any audit or verification of membership numbers nor of the financial integrity of the CanCham. There has not been any review or feedback on Board Meeting minutes or any other information received by the audit committee.

The group committee structure is not working. Group Leaders are passive and rely almost wholly on direction and instruction from the board members. There appears to be very little independent action and very little communication between the board and the Group leaders and very little communication or leadership coming from each group leader.

The Group Leaders and their committees are not successfully keeping in contact with less active members and is not successfully acting as an internal communication conduit or network for members.

After a strong beginning after the inception of the Group (industry sector focused) Structure, more recently there has been declining activity and interest in generating business support ideas and projects. Some of this has been influenced by the pandemic although there has always been the opportunity to meet remotely using Zoom or similar online meeting applications.

Communication as a whole between the board, the Group Leaders their committees and the membership is not adequate to generate enough interest or activity from the committees and membership.

It is problematic for the Board Chairwoman to perform her Board duties as well as provide CanCham leadership whilst also trying to perform the Group Leader role of the Health, Leisure and Education group.

There has not been much advantage taken of the DMC system.

The competitors are many and varied. It is a competitive and quite closed market environment.

### ***Recommendations***

The audit committee should act on their mandate to participate in Board of Director meetings. A decision needs to be made on whether or not 3 auditors are required and whether their roles are officially provide ongoing feedback on CanCham's operations and finances.

Clearly there is a need to re-establish or reset their roles and responsibilities. This relates to the decision on what their roles and responsibilities are going forward.

One of the major roles of the Group Committee ought to be to create an environment that inspires creativity and prioritises initiatives for their industry sector. From current knowledge and experience there



is an immediate and urgent need to improve communication and to increase activity in order to achieve this objective.

There is a good basis for the Group Structure to work and be successful. It appears that these groups simply require more direction and motivation.

To improve communication and leadership the Board should consider the appointment of a Communications Director who can help and support the Board and especially the Development Director with internal and external communications. This communications Director can help enable:

- To maintain a continual flow of communication and information between the Board of Directors, Group Leaders, the Group Committees and members
- Training and education to advise members as to their role in the organisation and their responsibility to actively participate in their own interests as well as the interest of members as a whole
- To help communicate new initiatives and projects, their value and their priorities
- To help establish the new NEBA, its lines of communication and its business model(s).

Re-establish a feedback session for Board Executives to review and prioritise initiatives presented by and in progress with the Group Leaders.

There should be a review of the DMC system/network to find out why it has not been used very much. If this methodology and networking system is to be used in NEBA then there has to be an investigation and analysis of any issues or barriers preventing members from extending their reach and business opportunities.

There can be opportunities for collaboration and partnerships with other competitors; especially other Chambers of Commerce and Business Associations. There would have to be mutual benefits associated with short term and temporary allegiances.

We could analyse competitor activities and their propositions. NEBA should offer opportunities and services not easily found in other charitable and business association types of organisations.

## 6. ORGANISING EVENTS

Organising CanCham events has always been a struggle and extremely resource-consuming. The main issue is communication which will be discussed separately.

It should be noted that each event takes over 80 hours of administrative/organizing time. This includes preparing artwork for invitations, the invitations themselves, sending out 3 sets of invitations via e-mail, posting invitations in the web site and FB, discussing the event with those who have questions, tracking registered attendance, phoning individuals to "remind" them of the event (which by itself takes 3 days), sending invoices, reminding people to pay, following up on those that don't, arranging the venues and

menus, paying expenses, preparing and posting reports, etc. The AGM requires considerably more time to prepare for.

Volunteer's time in organising events accounts for 90% of resources.

### *Conclusions*

When discussing strategy, decisions will have to be made as to finding a balance between organising events and promoting business opportunities for members through other means. This will be especially important when developing the NEBA Strategy and Plans.

A critical part of establishing this 'balance' will be trying to specifically find out and articulate 'what the members want' and what time or even what motivation (or not) they have for various possibilities.

We lack the resources to organise, prepare and administer events. Currently there is a very real risk associated with CanCham's reliance on just two people who currently (voluntarily) focus on events and promotions.

We should try to remove some of the 'will they/won't they attend' anxiety and the additional processing work associated with issuing invoices and receiving money.

The CanCham has a formalised and organised approach to providing various events and presentations. There may be some value in documenting the processes and procedures for organising, preparing, administering and promoting events and initiatives. There appears to be a risk of depending on one or two people who currently understand the approach to events preparation and organisation.

### *Recommendations*

Establish what, precisely, should be the balance between organising events and social activities vs the promotion and development of business opportunities. This will be especially important in relation to the establishment of NEBA.

Remove some of the guess work, anxiety and administration associated with scheduled events:

- Look at ways of how to incentivise members to register for events on a timely basis
- Increase membership fees to cover up to 'X' number of events.
- Discounts offered if they introduce new members (who pay, of course)
- Any other ideas that encourage (or force) members to attend for fear of losing their value of membership.

The administration of events and activities is resource intensive. We need to discuss how these events and activities can be administered.

Review and document the process and procedures for organising and delivering events and for developing business opportunities so that there is a clear understanding of the lines of communication and resources that are required.

## **7. COMMUNICATION**

Communication with members to this day is the MAIN CHALLENGE facing CanCham. Nothing except one-on-one telephone or e-mail communication seems to work.

1. The CanCham web site <https://cancham.lv/>
  - The web site is intended to be a source of information for members and those interested in the CanCham.
  - The opening page provides the events schedule, while other sections provide information about

the membership, including contact information and a description of services/products offered.

- There is reason to think this web site is not being used by members.

## 2. Mass Mailings

- The mailing list from the CanCham web site includes over 1000 addresses for events in Latvia.
- Statistical data shows that between 22 and 44% of mailing information is opened, which means that the rest are not read (diverted to spam, ignored, etc.)

## 3. Social Media

- The main CanCham FB page <https://www.facebook.com/canchamlatvia> has 861 followers
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/250007135140429> CanCham Members & Good Friends group page has 221 members. It was designed to allow members and our friends to share information with each other in a closed group environment. Members need to be approved to be in this group.
- <https://twitter.com/CanChamLV> used occasionally. 45 followers.
- <https://www.linkedin.com/company/canadian-chamber-of-commerce-in-latvia/> 124 followers
- <https://www.instagram.com/canchamlatvia/> 79 followers
- Four years ago we tried not to use FB as a communication platform, trying Workplace and Slack, but these had their problems and were too complicated to use. The decision was to use FB as the main communication platform. However, some of our members don't use it at all, and some have an allergy to it.
- Two years ago, with the help of Tim Bazin and some of the students from the International School of Riga we tried to develop a strategy for the use of social media, but concluded that FB was still the best platform to use since many people use it for the private affairs. It was also noted that getting outside help for the administration of our social media accounts was not feasible since users of the accounts needed to know what happens in the CanCham and be able to post information in English.

### **From a strategic point of view, the following could be concluded:**

- Information for posting should be provided in jpg or similar format, with text provided separately so it can be copied in the medium,
- Information could be posted in FB, LinkedIn, Instagram and Twitter when possible;
- This should be a major point of discussion in the strategy group:
  - There should be a decision on which social media platforms are used, and why?
  - What is the real 'net value' of using each medium?
  - How much resource would it require to maintain each media platform and to keep the 'brand' aligned?
  - Is general and extensive use of the media platforms a contradiction in terms of a Business Association when there is a perceived need to maintain one to one contact to encourage active member participation?

## 4. WhatsApp

- It appears (since about 2020) that WhatsApp is the best way to get people's attention.
- We have been using this for the Board and some of the Group committees for the last two years.
- As of May, 2022, the whole membership was divided into groups and notices sent out using this facility. However, these lists were set up so that only information can be sent by the administrator without the facility for feedback. This was done to prevent being inundated by "chat messages".
- There are some members, however, who refuse to use WhatsApp, which means that they do not get these notices.

## 5. ZOOM

- With the advent of COVID-19, we started to use ZOOM for group committee and board meetings.

These seemed to work relatively well.

- The main advantage was that we could now include people from outside Riga to participate. However the time difference between Canada and Latvia made it somewhat problematic for those from Canada to participate.
  - The best meetings were those with less than 10 participants.
  - ZOOM fatigue also became a factor.
6. The “1 x 5” concept.
- We recognized that person to person communication needed to be promoted. 3 years ago, we tried to introduce the idea that each person should have to communicate with no more than five others for the effective transmission of information. That means that the President would communicate with board members and group leaders, group leaders would communicate with the members of the committees, and the members of committees would communicate with the general membership.
  - Except of two cases, this failed as it appears people don’t want to talk to each other.
7. Tour of web and social media sites
- It was clear some time ago that members were not aware of the information in our web sites or social media accounts. With that in mind, a tour of the web sites was offered to all members, but no interest was shown.

### Conclusions

Communication with members to this day is the **MAIN CHALLENGE** facing CanCham. Nothing except one-on-one telephone or e-mail communication seems to work.

In addition, **internal communication** between the board, Group Leaders, their committees and other less active members is not adequate or conducive to a functionally smooth running Organisation or to encourage active participation (please see Section 6 – CanCham Organisation) .

Similarly, **opportunities to internally publicise** and advertise high value propositions, good news and successes in the CanCham can be lost if not celebrated or communicated well. This might also be a method by which we attract members to be more active rather than passive.

Very few members and friends appear to use or review information on the **CanCham website**.

**Mass mailings** are a fairly unsuccessful type of communication with only a 22% to 44% success rate in email receivers opening their mail.

The most popular (and possibly the easiest to manage) **social media** platform used to date is **Facebook**. The main CanCham FB page <https://www.facebook.com/canchamlatvia> has 861 followers <https://www.facebook.com/groups/250007135140429> CanCham Members & Good Friends group page has 221 members.

To manage and maintain all forms of communication across CanCham would be highly problematic and resource intensive. The same is true if managing and maintaining all the major **social media** platforms which now include ‘**snapchat**’ and ‘**tik tok**’ along with **Twitter**, **Instagram**, **LinkedIn** and **Facebook**, also.

**WhatsApp Group** accounts are a good method for current, short messaging. It does appear to get attention from members included in the WhatsApp Group. Links to more detailed and informative shared documents are easily included as are one or two page summary documents included as pictures or pdf’s and similar.

Careful and cautious use is required in using **WhatsApp Groups** and should be used for specific initiatives and/or events. WhatsApp Groups should be defined in terms of their objective where some can allow responses and comments where as others will be for information only from the ‘active’ administrators of the

Group.

**Zoom** (and applications like it) has its place in a post pandemic world. It has reach and saves some people a great deal of time and inconvenience in travel and transport to various meeting sites. It is important to recognise (and maybe plan) which kinds of meetings are appropriate for remote or face to face events and activities.

Use is not being made of processes and protocols already established sometime before the pandemic. The **DMC** network can be used as a good form of communication and an Industry **Group '1 x 5' contact** approach was suggested for CanCham Industry Groups. These networks and methods of communication are not currently being used.

### *Recommendations*

It was clear some time ago that members were not aware of the information in our **web sites** or **social media accounts**. With that in mind, a tour of the web sites should be offered to all members via a Zoom meeting. It could be useful to provide a standardised document to all new members showing the value of CanCham's services, and a 'map' with links to the various websites and/or documents of interest. This document can also be issued to all existing members.

To improve **internal communication** and leadership the Board should consider the appointment of a Communications Director who can help and support the Board and especially the Development Director with internal and external communications. This communications Director can help enable:

- To maintain a continual flow of communication and information between the Board of Directors, Group Leaders, the Group Committees and members
- To help communicate new initiatives and projects and their priorities
- To help establish the new NEBA, its lines of communication and its business model(s).

(Please also refer to Section 6 – CanCham Organisation).

**Mass mailings** are fairly ineffective. We should investigate if there is any situation in which we would use this process for communication in future.

A formal decision is required to focus on a limited **social media** presence which maximises impact and reach but minimises resource and effort. One of the favourites and most effective and efficient to manage is the Group Facebook (Members and Friends) page. Instagram and LinkedIn have also been mentioned although a decision is still pending on these.

Communications networks already established and used in the recent past should be re-established and emphasised. Examples of this are the **DMC** network and the Industry **Group '1 x 5' contact** approach.

There is an urgent requirement to re-establish a formal protocol for communications for various activities and topics from the Board to the Group Committee members and through to the more passive members. A central theme (already mentioned in the 'Organisation' section) is the Group Leaders and Committees role in all kinds of activity and communication.

More use of **WhatsApp Groups** can be (and probably should be) made. However, the specific objective of each Group should be defined by whether active responses are required or whether it is primary intended to be informative only. It should be borne in mind that there has been an explosion of WhatsApp Groups being created everywhere especially relating to club and hobby pursuits, sports clubs, all types of associations and memberships, etc.

We should continue to use **Zoom** for the 'right' types of meetings. We can set criteria as to the best form of

meeting – remote or face to face – to hold depending on the advantages vs disadvantages.

## 8. STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

We clearly state that “the CanCham actively promotes the business interests of its members”.

Instruments that are used for this include:

- Networking events
- Social media
- Clear communication processes that allow focus on the Sales, Marketing and Publication of the Organisation’s offer, opportunities, membership value and benefits
- Clear evidence of ‘success’ in the Organisation and real measures that quantify the value and benefit of being a member
- The DMC system that was developed in consultation with members involved in export.
- The Visit Latvia program developed to promote particular member activities with the intention of including more members in the process
- Motivation and encouragement of an active membership which sees value in and seeks value in partnerships, collaboration, relationships and in developing opportunities for all within our Organisation.

### *Conclusions*

As detailed in the above sections, 1 to 8, the strategy should prioritise which instruments should receive the most attention and how they should be used.

The balance of events vs business development, use of social media, methods of communication, roles and responsibilities of key members such as Board Members, Group Leaders and DMCs, major initiatives and the processes and protocols associated with key activities all require review and, where appropriate, require re-instatement and re-establishment.

Currently there is a misalignment between the ‘perceived’ CanCham offer and how it might collaborate with other businesses and organisations as opposed to what actually is the real position. It is extremely difficult to manage and deliver to members’ expectations when it is highly problematic to collaborate with or have little support from Canadian Authorities, Canadian Businesses, The Canadian Embassy (and Trade Commission) and The Canadian Military Forces.

It is potentially a very high risk approach and possibly a suicidal mistake to continue build a strategy and apply resources to the ‘brand’ ‘Canadian Chamber of Commerce’. Within this document there are a number of significant conclusions to make it clear that CanCham cannot continue to exist in its current form or that the name, at least, should change.

In reality the strategic goals and initiatives cannot easily support what has become a misleading brand name. It is also clear, that, in any case, the current CanCham relies on Latvian members where events and activities are designed for that Latvian community with little or no interaction with Canadian Organisations or members.

Clear communication processes should be followed that provides a focus on the Sales, Marketing and Publication of the Organisation’s offer, opportunities, membership value and benefits. This approach should both manage member’s expectations through the events, activities and opportunities that align

within our Organisation but also show clearly (in real terms) what the Organisation does and can deliver to members.

As part of information transfer and communication conundrum, we need to review and revise the way in which members are reminded of the value added services and opportunities that are made available by CanCham and especially our new incarnation NEBA.

To this end, there is currently no easy way of conveying the values and benefits of being a member (active or otherwise) in real terms. This includes the softer and less tangible benefits as well as the real economic and financial benefits.

Success, as well as failure, must be measured by leading indicators so that we have an early warning of any dissatisfaction amongst some members. In this way, any dissatisfaction can be addressed before it is realised in members becoming disillusioned or leaving.

### *Recommendations*

Many of these recommendations are already included in the sections 1 to 8, above.

We should review the ways we engage with members at the start of their membership and discuss how we can maintain continuity and promote our value added propositions and services we try to deliver. The way in which we try to do this is also up for discussion and will be critical in terms of the quality of feedback we can obtain from members.

At the highest level, we should also try to extract more relevant information in a continuous cycle from passive and active members alike as to what their expectations are and what value they see in the various services we offer them. This becomes more critical with the recently constituted NEBA which will become central to our strategy, goals and plans.

The major conclusion has come through from most sections of the rationale already documented; that all of the good processes, approaches and systems already in place should be transferred to any new or reformed entity. This will allow a business association and its brand to be developed without the anomalies



or confusion caused by the existing organisation in its ability to deliver on perceived service and value through factors outside of its control.

To improve internal communication and leadership the Board should consider the appointment of a Communications Director who can help and support the Board and especially the Development Director with internal and external communications.

This communications Director can help enable:

- To maintain a continual flow of communication and information between the Board of Directors, Group Leaders, the Group Committees and members
- To help communicate new initiatives and projects and their priorities
- To help establish the new NEBA, its lines of communication and its business model(s).

(Please also refer to Section 6 – CanCham Organisation).

This role could be extended to be similar to a ‘Sales and Marketing’ or ‘Account Management’ role to ensure the organisation’s values, benefits, propositions, services and current activities are well documented and presented to existing members and prospective new members.

As part of the strategy we will be developing what we consider to be the Critical Success Factors (CSFs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These are considered to be LEADING INDICATORS not LAGGING INDICATORS. These will be focused on predictive information and on internal and external operations.

It will be critical to establish the data and information required to form these measures. However, consideration must always be given to membership feedback especially when it comes to providing factual evidence of the value and benefits of being or becoming a member.

These CSFs and KPIs should be used to critically predict and resolve problems before they have any major impacts on the Organisation.

## **10. OPPORTUNITY - THE NORTHERN EUROPEAN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION (NEBA)**

The CanCham Board has recognised that many former and current members do not see business opportunities with Canada or Canadians, and thereby decided to establish NEBA to emphasise business development in Northern Europe which is closer to the hearts of our (mostly) Latvian members.

Given that there is a great deal of concern about the future of CanCham in its current form, it would be logical to seek the opinion of existing members as to the continuance of CanCham as an organisation.

Depending on the member’s response, the approach would be to present NEBA as a reformed and collaborative organisation across various regions across the world. It will in fact promote attracting

international contact, networks and businesses with no specific restrictions. The strategy should include priorities associated with a new and reformed organisation, such as NEBA.

It is critical that the good things which are either working well or could be working well are retained in a reformed organisation. Other processes or functions which do not presently work well should be 'fixed' or 'changed' before starting operations.

## APPENDIX III - SWOT ANALYSIS

### (CATALOGUE OF STRENGTHS WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS)

This section catalogues the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of our current situation. This is based on recent history and what we believe to be the current situation and immediate future.

The business risks and in particular our resource capacity need to be clearly expressed so that mitigating and positive responses can be formed to overcome or avoid their impact.

#### Strengths

##### *1. Focus on the Cancham Facebook Group (Members and Friends)*

This has the potential to provide a good reach and has already established around 250 users who access the group page. However, it may be possible to get over 1,000 or so members and friends to access the group site. Some promotion and contact effort may be required to increase the reach and use of this highly accessible group resource.

A good factor in using the Facebook Group pages is the relatively small amount of administration and maintenance the site requires.

##### *2. The DMC Network and Processes*

This is a good contact channel for various purposes whether through a central electronic social network site or direct F2F between Group Leaders, Board Members (in Latvia) and the DMC representatives abroad.

Perhaps there is more opportunity to leverage this network to increase CanCham's reach and to give more access to members looking for help and support in doing business abroad and in gaining new clients.

Note: See 'Opportunities'.

##### *3. WhatsApp groups and messaging*

There has already been a big change in using WhatsApp for communication. This can continue and be extended as required. There may be just one warning though in that selectivity and specificity will be key in attracting the audience to communication when we consider that there has been an explosion of WhatsApp 'informing and/or information' groups over the last year or two.

An example was when a 'close' friend of mine stated that he had not seen various friends' messages for a while. His comments "WhatsApp gets so cluttered with Tennis Clubs, Cycling Groups, local Professional groups and various other interest groups, it is difficult to sometimes see all the up to date messages from everyone".

Now, obviously I am not as busy as some so I am able to set some groups to mute, some to a specific message and call notification/ring tune and high priority ring tone for family.

But I am almost sure that when a WhatsApp group is set up that you cannot set specific notification or ring tones for others. It is just another medium of contact and we should be at least aware that some people have a great many of these WhatsApp groups accounts they belong to or administer.

##### *4. The establishment of the Northern European Business Association*

The potential for expanding the reach of CanCham through a parallel but associated organisation across northern Europe has very large possibilities. To leverage the potential of such an affiliated organisation we

will need to plot a course that maximises returns, has a transitional element and complements the CanCham as it stands.

This is a major initiative that could change the whole focus and course of our existing membership and how the existing CanCham board delivers value to existing and new members. This will need to be a major direction and factor considered in the strategic priorities.

### *5. The establishment of local business development initiatives*

One could state that the existing process is working well. One initiative has spawned several business opportunities for CanCham's members. The 'Visit Latvia Program' provides a mutually beneficial approach to medical and sports tourism. The process can be applied to eye correction treatments and surgeries as well as organised sporting events and similar activities.

The proof of the concept, process and service delivery will be seen when marketing to customers and actual delivery of the services are realised. However, the process by which the initiative was arrived at and then developed can be applied to any initiative prioritised by Group Leaders and the CanCham BoD.

It seems certain that along with the establishment of the associated NEBA that these have high potention to realise the strategic priorities and goals of CanCham over the next 3 to 5 years.

Note: Please see 'Opportunities' for a refinement on these development initiatives.

## **Weaknesses**

### *1. Communication*

Communication with:

- Members and their specific requirements and needs
- Interested parties on specific offers and services (see 'Opportunities')
- Motivating members to to access and use shared network media.

The items above require more detail and how these weaknesses and risks might be mitigated, if at all.

Communication, especially on a more focused and F2F or 121 bases can be very time consuming. There are many mediums for contact and communication although priority should be given to the most effective.

A key issue, here, is trying to understand specifically the issues with communication, which methods are failing and why?

Please see the 'Current Situation and History which comprehensively catalogues the problems CanCham as had in communicating with members in the past. Many of these communication problems come from (it

would appear) a lack of interest of members or a very passive form of membership that does not seem to respond to almost any form of communication.

More discussion and ideas are required on this topic.

## *2. Not enough resources to implement ideas and initiatives*

Cash is limited. There is no external funding. Membership fees are relatively small compared with other Chambers. Most Board and Group Members have limited time to spend on CanCham outside of other commitments.

**Statement:** There is an accepted requirement for at least one, full time, Executive Administrator. Ideas on how this resource can be funded or member resources might be used, needs to be investigated and documented with a plan of action. **Please debate further.**

One of the key issues on this is the need for someone (or some people) who can work on activities and tasks relatively unsupervised – unless, of course, a Board or Group member can check and follow up on planned activities and tasks arising from the Strategy. **Please debate further.**

## *3. CanCham is a strong brand name but how can this be realised?*

The name (CanCham) is strong yet the reality in terms of its activities is can be considered a weakness in terms of members' expectations being realised.

Here is a list of these types of weakness already mentioned:

- There are very few Canadian companies in Latvia
- There are many more Latvian members than Canadian members or member corporations
- Most of the value of membership is realised by Latvian traders and companies (not Canadians or Canadian Companies)
- CanCham members are looking for access to Canadian contacts and businesses either here in Latvia or abroad in Canada
- The Canadian Embassy has an arm's length and hands off approach to local chambers; in fact it has a stated intention not to support or accept representation from any chamber abroad and does not wish to appear biased in its approach or selection of partners in business; there is no funding or facilities afforded from the Embassy
- The Canadian Embassy has its own Trading Commissioner and Commercial Officer who are (effectively) in competition with CanCham (see Opportunities and Threats)
- The Canadian Embassy Trading Commission covers the 3 northern Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; this tends to dilute their resources also and there is less opportunity of joint and supporting ventures
- It would seem that soon the Embassies for each of the northern most Baltic countries will have their own specific Trade and Commercial departments; it is not clear how this may affect the relationship between the Trade Commission and CanCham?

## *4. Chamber of Commerce or Business Association?*

Both are different. We probably need to be clear as to what the business model we have and what business we are in. Otherwise we risk confusion in strategic priorities and goals. As part of the Strategy it is important that such issues are discussed and resolved.

**Statement:** It would appear CanCham has been transitioning from a Chamber of Commerce to more of a Business Association model. The CanCham only has limited appeal and cannot really survive as a representative Canadian Chamber of Commerce (see Weakness number 6, above). **Please debate further.**

**Statement:** The NEBA initiative and association with CanCham would suggest that there is a mood and a real effort to transition to a purely Business Development type of organisation model set up to improve

international trade between businesses in different Northern European countries. The establishment of a Strategy for CanCham is wholly interdependent on a Strategy for NEBA and/or vice versa. **Please debate further.**

A chamber tends to offer facilities and events to enjoy, socialise and network. Contacts with appropriate authorities and government departments can be established to help a business operate and trade in the local environment. They also provide potential interested parties and clients in their business (or at least places and people to visit) and companies already operating who can offer practical advice. It is not usually the Chamber's role to provide local companies and businesses with ready-to-buy clients from abroad or to help develop the local company's business model through developments and initiatives.

### *5. Lack of will to do things*

The perceived 'lack of will to DO things' can be due to many factors:

- Chamber members are not always decision makers and do not have the position at work to curry any influence; their main function is to simply attend functions and events and report back on any information that may be seen to be pertinent to their business
- The member cannot connect attendance at an event or function with personal business development opportunities or prospective clients
- It has been mentioned that a number of members simply expect clients to be delivered to their business as part of an event or function; this is, of course, highly irregular and unusual for a chamber to execute; it is more usual that the member understands their own business model and can make contact with various people who can help them to acquire clients; of course, CanCham's and NEBA's strategy must address this and decide on the strategic priorities and goals
- The members are mostly Latvians wishing to do business with or gain access to potential Canadian clients (see weakness number 3, above)
- Company strategy for posting to media groups/pages could prevent members from posting content onto CanCham representative sites whether Instagram, Facebook or LinkedIn
- Personal profile in posting comments, etc.

## **Opportunities**

### *1. Potential to Focus on LinkedIn information, comments and news*

This network is not currently used frequently or consistently. A decision needs to be made whether to utilise this resource or not, as it is an accepted professional and respected source of information and contact. Any comments on news or articles are recorded against the commentator's profile and notified with his/her contact network. This could help to grow CanCham's contact network up to a point.

However, more frequent and consistent articles, comments and latest information associated with CanCham and/or related to economic and geopolitical events and news would require more effort and resource.

In the final analysis, utilising the resources of any network will tend to require a degree of administration time and resource. We should be very clear on our objectives and benefits in using different networks, promotional materials and media versus the amount of effort and resource they require to maintain. It may

be enough to simply replicate news and promotions from the Facebook Group site although the content probably does not translate well between these two network sites.

## ***2. Use of promotion material on Instagram***

Please refer to some of the arguments in 1, above. The 3 networking media sites, Facebook Groups, Instagram and LinkedIn are somewhat different and require different types of presentation and content.

Many more businesses are now using Instagram for corporate promotion and to supplement their websites with current and more fashionable news and (sometimes) more informal types of 'storylines' and presentations.

Once again, objectives and benefits must be clearly understood against the prospective resources consumed to present and keep 'fresh' stories and news on such a site.

## ***3. More use of WhatsApp groups***

This is both a 'strength' and an opportunity. Why not build on the strength of using a few WhatsApp groups in order to quickly and clearly communicate on key topics?

However, as mentioned already, there should be a cautious approach that does not have too many WhatsApp groups given that many people already deal with too many from several different sources. Then there are still the emails and other forms of contact that risk taking up many peoples' time.

## ***4. More leverage from the DMC System***

CanCham developed the DMC system based on discussions with our exporters and their use of "conventional" trade development systems (e.g. attending trade shows, participating in missions) and consultants who are in a position to help exporters access to new markets.

Further feedback is required in order to understand why this system appears to be underutilised.

In the event of misunderstanding the system the merits of this system can also be promoted and members educated as to how it works.

## ***5. The Canadian Embassy is splitting to be unique for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.***

This is a threat and an opportunity. The increased focus on separate independent countries and Latvia in particular, could offer a better alliance and more goal congruence with the embassy.

## ***6. Latvian Investment Development Agency and Canadian Embassy***

This is both an Opportunity and Threat.

CanCham could use both LIDA and the Canadian Embassy resources and programs when they apply to CanCham members, as it can deal equitably with both entities. This is an opportunity to create some real value for companies wishing to come to Latvia and vice versa.

A 'pathway' route map would need to be formed along with a process (and set of procedures) for dealing with both enterprises.

## ***7. Matching event audiences with initiatives and propositions***

This opportunity could be likened to a sales promotion event where the target audience could be potential investors and/or clients of the 'show and tell' business or businesses.

This would narrow down the prospective sales funnel for the businesses concerned. Before the 'show and tell' events a process of 'understanding their business' can be undertaken and the kinds of people or businesses that should be invited.

This will have the impact of improving communication with members as well as understanding their business model and the kind of market they are in. Group leaders may also use these sessions as a way of developing new initiatives like the Visit Latvia Program or by integrating them with existing initiatives.

### ***8. Develop 'Visit Latvia' program marketing and sales; paying customers.***

Every initiative needs its successes (and, sometimes, its failures) to develop and become the 'finished article'.

The test will be in the execution of this program and responses from paying customers. Doubtless there might be changes in process and unforeseen risks or logistics. However, if this is the way forward and we are to base a good part of CanCham's strategy and business model on this type of initiative, then the program requires 'live' sales.

The opportunities for the Visit Latvia Program are quite far and wide. In addition, the process has been established where other initiatives can be identified. There is an opportunity to use a similar process for all prospective initiatives except that the Industry Groups can be the incubators and cradles for new ideas and inspirations and a first pass for prioritisation based on potential for success and forecast returns.

### ***9. Develop reach and scope of Northern European Business Association (NEBA)***

NEBA potentially offers significant opportunities too numerous for this 'introduction' as it stands. Ideally, the NEBA Strategy requires development to ensure its chosen direction and strategic goals. It may well be as important (or even more so) than the CanCham's strategy. It really depends on which horse is being predominantly ridden in the near future?

A suggestion might well be to develop the NEBA strategy in concert with the CanCham strategy.

## **Threats**

### ***1. Charitable Networking Clubs and Organisations***

There are a large number of Rotary Clubs and other types of Charitable networking organisations in Latvia. Our chosen Strategic direction, priorities and goals will dictate our competitive relationship or otherwise with these clubs and organisations.

### ***2. Canadian Embassy's change in focus***

The Canadian Embassy is splitting to be unique for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. It is already an uneasy alliance with the embassy through their Trading Commission. Whilst there is a stated intention to encourage joint ventures (a sort of 'piggy back' approach), this new focus might further dilute their resources and make them far more focused on realising their own returns on their goals and objectives.

As already mentioned in the 'Weaknesses' section, there is potentially a significant overlap between the Embassy's Trade Commission and CanCham's goals and directives. This makes for an uneasy if not unholy alliance (see number 3, below).

### ***3. Competition with the Latvian Investment Development Agency and the Canadian Embassy***

The competition from these organisations does pose a threat from the perspective of their activities having significant overlap with our own. For example, the LIDA does try to help develop Latvian businesses and assess them for grants and other investment. However, the agency has a limit of time, resources and expertise to really help develop a business for its target market. They are also protective of their space and not enthusiastic about cooperating with the CanCham.

This aspect of its work is perhaps its weakest and does not really constitute a threat. There is no reason why CanCham cannot utilise its skills and expertise to 'pre-advise' prospective businesses looking for



development grants, markets and clients. Similarly, there are some possibilities for working with the Embassy to gain contacts and introductions for CanCham members.

These types of services and the way they are processed and packaged (providing CanCham can obtain the due diligence tests and qualifications for help from the LIDA) can be provided at a discount for CanCham members. The threats from both the LIDA and Embassy can be mitigated by CanCham operating as a 'broker'.

#### *4. Struggling to attract new members and to retain existing members (after pandemic controls and lockdowns)*

This is simply a lagging performance indicator rather than a threat in its own right. Yes, if CanCham continues to lose members then much needed revenue and cash flow will also be lost. However, if we do address the most important weaknesses and threats to CanCham's operations and provide the appropriate services, then the paid up membership should once again start to grow.

It is virtually impossible to plan for pandemics or extreme weather or the government's responses to unusual and extreme conditions. However, we do have remote meeting facilities and the ability to communicate during such times. A great number of very successful meetings were held and work carried out during lockdowns and restrictions on movement and physical meetings.

There does seem to have been a 'post pandemic malaise' affecting some members although if we do communicate clearly and appropriately and have an interesting and interactive set of meetings and events we may be able to get over this post pandemic malaise.

## APPENDIX IV – KEY DIMENSIONS; DETAIL

### KEY DIMENSIONS TEMPLATE

The following template provides the key characteristics of each of the organisation's Key Dimensions:

- **Members**
  - The key focus
  - Some Members participate for the benefit of all members
  - Selected Members form the key organisational units
  - A cross section of Members skills and business backgrounds enables the support and the delivery of business opportunities and services
  - Membership types to reflect participation, access to facilities, opportunities and expected value to the member.
- **Innovation & Business Development**
  - Business development initiatives and programs
  - The DMC System and International Networks
  - Political and Economic factors
  - International and localisation considerations.
- **Organisational Structure**
  - The Governance Council and Executive Committee
  - Industry Group Committees managed by Group Leaders
  - Business Development Program Groups
  - Network Groups
  - Finance and Resources
  - QA and Compliance
  - Environmental factors.
- **Internal Communication**
  - Types of Internal Communication
  - Approach to Internal Communication
  - Internal Promotion and brand development
  - The Group Leaders' and Committees' Communications.
- **External Communications**
  - The main Website presentation
  - Use of External Press Kits
  - External promotion, contact and brand development.
- **Social Media Presence**
  - Which social media platforms?
  - Social Media Content and update frequency
  - Administration requirements
  - Value for resources and effort?.
- **Events & Presentations**
  - 'Show & Tell'
  - NEBA Talks & Forums
  - Targeted audiences
  - Other events & presentations.

# **APPENDIX V – PRIORITY PLANS**

These are plans associated with the Strategic Priorities.

# **APPENDIX VI – DETAILED BUSINESS PLANS**