

Cultural Heritage Businesses Take Part in Exploratory Mission to IFIs in Washington

Last month the Mayor of Montreal, Pierre Bourque, chaired an exploratory mission to Washington D.C. on construction and urban renewal and development, which for the first time included representatives from the cultural heritage sector.

Half of the almost 20 participants from Quebec, Ontario and Nova Scotia were businesses in cultural heritage.

This mission was initiated by the Montreal regional office of the Department of Canadian Heritage and Montreal's International Trade Centre, which had identified the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank as having underdeveloped trade potential in the cultural sector.

Organized by Montreal's World Trade Centre, the mission was designed to help participants become familiar with the mechanisms of these two international financial institutions (IFIs).

This was also the first time officials of the two banks hosted a mission involving the cultural heritage sector. The World Bank especially welcomed Canadian interest and expertise in helping to maintain and promote cultural heritage in developing countries.

A renewed commitment

Since last year, the World Bank has increased its efforts to encourage developing countries to include heritage and sustainable development in projects for which they seek financial assistance.

In May 1998, the World Bank's

Working Group on Social Development concluded that culture is an essential component of sustainable development, directly contributing to development by offering the potential to

Continued on page 13 — Cultural

Washington IFIs Made Easy: New Internet Site for Exporters

Looking for a one-stop shop on the Internet for news, information and advice on doing business with the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank?

Visit www.canadianembassy.org/olifi, the new home on the Internet for the Office of Liaison with International Financial Institutions (OLIFI) at the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Whether you are exploring the Washington IFIs for the first time or have a solid track record in development business, OLIFI's site brings everything you need right to your desktop with simple menus, easy-to-read pages, and thoughtful links to all your favourite Canadian and IFI Internet sites.

The new site, which goes "live" on December 15, combines essential information with news, current events, OLIFI's expert advice, and just the right hotlinks. In addition to the links to various IFI- and related home pages, the new site eliminates the tedium of plowing through the tremendous amount of existing information on the Internet to find what you need, by linking you to relevant pages within the World Bank and International Development Bank Internet sites themselves.

"OLIFI depends on the Internet for our day-to-day business," said Marie Stamp, Director of OLIFI, "and we were all managing a cumbersome amount of 'bookmarks'. We were sure that if we could create a convenient Internet site bringing all our working tools into one place, our clients would enjoy working with it too."

OLIFI looks forward to suggestions and input from Canadian companies, and has incorporated a feedback feature on the site.

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