

Finland: Your partner in the Russian market

Has your company considered Finland as a launching pad for entering the burgeoning Russian market? Because partnering with a Finnish company can substantially increase your chance of success in Russia. A Finnish partner can offer knowledge of the market, existing contacts, experience and reliability.

Finland has been trading with Russia for decades and has built a wealth of expertise. In 2003, Russia was Finland's fifth-largest export market, and in the first half of 2004 Russia moved up to third. Bilateral trade is expected to grow by 20% in 2004, and economic experts predict that Russia will be Finland's number one trading partner in a few years.

A reliable partner

For several years now, Finland has been ranked as the most competitive country by the World Economic Forum and as the least corrupt country in the world in 2004 by Transparency International. What Finland can do for Canadian companies is provide reliable services and decrease the risks associated with Russian political instability, bureaucracy and uncertainty about laws and rules.

The Finns are particularly strong in logistics services. For example, it is the only western European country that has the same rail gauge as Russia, making it possible to ship goods without time consuming off-loading.

Construction, oil and energy, wood processing, packaging, telecommunications, food, technology transfers and environmental industries are important to the Russian economy, and Canadians and Finns can combine their expertise to capitalize on these opportunities.

The European Union is Russia's biggest trading partner and recognizes that the Finnish-Russian trading

relationship runs deep and that cross-border cooperation is well established. Of course, as a member country, Finland can provide a link for Russia to EU projects and funding.

Finns also play an active role in the EU's Northern Dimension cross-border policy, which covers the Baltic and Arctic Seas and northwest Russia. Areas for cooperation include the environment, nuclear safety, energy, infrastructure, justice and social development. An example of a Finnish partnership is the water purification plant in St. Petersburg, a project that involved Finnish and Swedish contractors and several international credit institutions.

Finnish support

The Finnish export organization Finpro has a specialized program for enhancing cooperation with Russia and the Baltic states called the New Northern Europe Program (NNE). It focuses on

northwest Russia with St. Petersburg, Novgorod, Murmansk, Archangelsk, Tver and all the way to Moscow. Within the NNE, the "Business Boulevard" was established to create a platform for networking and cooperation between Finnish and other western and Russian companies. This program is yet another example of how Finns have demonstrated that they have the know-how to do business in Russia.

For more information on the Russian market, contact Hector Cowan, Consul General, Canadian Consulate General in St. Petersburg, e-mail: spurg@international.gc.ca, or John Kur, Senior Trade Commissioner, Canadian Embassy in Moscow, e-mail: mosco-td@international.gc.ca.

For more information on the Finnish market, contact Andrée Cooligan, Senior Trade Commissioner, Canadian Embassy in Helsinki, e-mail: andree.cooligan@international.gc.ca.

To receive information automatically on the Finnish and Russian markets, register for your own Virtual Trade Commissioner at www.infoexport.gc.ca. ❖

Canadian companies help — from page 1

Air Canada, Apotex, DuPont, Canus Goat's Milk, Please Mum, Rhoxal Pharma and Swiss Medica have also provided goods and services worth several million dollars to World Vision. Air Canada has provided a number of flights to ship relief aid (medicine, water purification equipment, non-perishable goods, clothing and housing material) to devastated regions in Indonesia. Zenon Environmental Inc., which earns over 10% of its profits in Asia, has sent water treatment systems to tsunami victims in India and Sri Lanka through the assistance of Eureka Forbes and World Vision to support relief efforts in Asia.

Canadian companies have responded quickly and generously in the immediate aftermath of this crisis. Canadian companies are encouraged to continue to make financial contributions to experienced international organizations and NGOs.

For more information, including a list of NGOs and international organizations, go to the CIDA Web site at www.acdi-cida.gc.ca, or call 1-800-230-6349 or (613) 997-5456.

Canadian equipment and service providers interested in supplying the reconstruction effort should contact Leigh Wolfrom, International Financing Division, International Trade Canada, tel.: (613) 992-0747, e-mail: leigh.wolfrom@international.gc.ca. ❖

Canadian Aboriginal businesses welcomed in Washington

The World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank recently invited 12 Canadian Aboriginal businesspeople from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario to Washington for a two-day seminar series entitled "Indigenous Peoples and Sustainable Development." The staff at these two international financial institutions (IFIs) learned a lot about Canadian Aboriginal expertise in the natural resource, high-technology and cultural tourism sectors—knowledge these IFIs can apply to Aboriginal business projects in the Americas.

When the delegation arrived in Washington, the Office of Liaison with International Financial Institutions (www.international.gc.ca/ifiwashington) at the Canadian Embassy in Washington and the Canadian Executive Directors' offices at the banks provided an overview of their key responsibilities and advised how Canadian firms can pursue market opportunities supported by the IFIs. In addition to the invited delegation, other Canadian companies with experience building relations between Canadian and Latin American indigenous groups through IFI projects participated in the mission as well.

In return for sharing their experiences and success stories, the banks provided participants with an overview of their indigenous policies, programs and contracting processes. A third session, organized by Georgetown University, provided delegates with an overview of the social, economic, political and cultural realities of indigenous people in Latin America.

During the seminar panel presentations, Quebec-based **Turtle Technologies Inc.** (www.turtletech.ca) emphasized the role of high-technology in the economic, social, political and



Charles Bassett (left), Canadian Executive Director for the Inter-American Development Bank, and Joe Norton, Chairman of Mohawk Internet Technologies, in conversation at the "Indigenous Peoples and Sustainable Development" seminar.

cultural development of Aboriginal communities. The company displayed its three-dimensional Web technology which it is developing in partnership with Ottawa-based **iSite Technologies** (www.isitecorp.com).

The Alberta Chamber of Resources (www.acr-alberta.com) along with **EnCana** (www.encana.com) and **Doug Golosky** (www.goloskygroup.com) shared their story on how the Chamber and its members have worked with Aboriginal communities and entrepreneurs in the natural resource sectors.

Saskatoon's **Cameco Corporation** (www.cameco.com), a nuclear energy company, and Chief Harry Cook of **Kitsaki Management Ltd.** (www.kitsaki.co) of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band in Saskatchewan, shared details of their long-standing corporate and community relations. Cameco has a special relationship with Aboriginal people that it has developed over the 30 years it has been in operation.

Alberta's **Keyano Pimee Exploration Company Ltd.** told the story of its project with the indigenous people of Ecuador, and Beverly O'Neil from **Designing**

Nations (www.designingnations.com) presented an overview of Aboriginal tourism development in B.C. and how this experience might be relevant to the development of similar tourism projects in indigenous communities in the Americas.

Looking to the future

The Canadian participants expressed interest in setting up a mentoring program for other interested indigenous companies and organizations from other countries. They also agreed to participate in video conferences by the Global Development Learning Network, a partnership of distance learning centres for sustainable development and poverty reduction.

The delegation will also explore the possibility of individually developing and implementing projects with IFIs and in partnership with Canadian companies that have experience in delivering World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank contracts.

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