

IFI Bidding Success Factors and Support Needs

- The World Bank is more secretive than the ADB. The ADB is more inclined to answer questions and "let the chips fall where they may". The World Bank is more formal about answering questions during the proposal period. [19]
- Trade commissioners "*will not work for one company in particular, so they are of limited help*". [24]
- CIDA has funds but "doesn't know China, and has conflicting policy agendas – poverty alleviation and trade. It is the wrong agency to handle the trust funds that are essentially trade related." [25]
- The fact that the Canadian consultant trust funds at the IFIs are targeted to companies that have not worked for the Bank before is a barrier to experienced firms. [25]
- "Few companies are truly interested in cooperating with other Canadian firms on a proposal to the IFIs. It is a *machismo* thing." [26]
- The WB and ADB web pages are useful for identifying and tracking work, but are often out of date. Officers travel a great deal and do not update the project listing on the web page. The web site entries cannot be relied upon. One has to check them through personal contacts. [31]
- The people who can do the work must be committed – that is, willing to travel to the country in question and work for extended periods. This firm found, for example, that most of their potential team members were not interested in this sort of commitment to work in central Asia, so they withdrew from this market although they had had some success. [31]
- This is not a business for everyone – many firms are simply not suited to it. [38]
- Many firms are very decentralized and unfocused in their marketing. One person turns up and then another. Their knowledge remains shallow. [38]
- CIDA gives mixed signals. The agency is ambivalent about trade. For example, we were early and well positioned in Vietnam but as commercial activity increased CIDA has withdrawn to other more troubled countries such as Cambodia. The altruism mandate is constantly conflicting with the trade mandate. [39]
- It is difficult to get Canadian suppliers of goods or professional services to bid for foreign contracts, even when the direct client is a Canadian prime contractor who guarantees payment. It is still a lot more effort than North American sales, involving translation, for example, and too exotic for most. [39]