

IFI Bidding Success Factors and Support Needs

- We are reluctant to share information with the trade commissioners at posts because we almost always know much more than they do and they cannot be trusted to maintain confidentiality to one company. *"It is hard to see what trade commissioners actually do."* [37]
- The idea that trade commissioners at posts might track IFIs in their countries is appealing but may be impractical. The DFAIT track record for gathering business information proactively and consistently is not good. It may be better for the trade commissioners just to gather intelligence when they receive a specific enquiry from a Canadian company, especially one that is short-listed for an IFI job. [38]
- For IFI-work the CIDA officers at posts are often the logical network not the trade commissioners. CIDA officers are the ones talking frequently with IFI in-country staff. [40]
- "The secret of commercial success is to be able to make something of information – to have intelligence that other firms do not have. Unless the trade commissioners are willing to provide this sort of information to one firm exclusively, their usefulness will always be limited. Good trade officers will respect privileged enquiries – but many do not. They broadcast the information to show how much they know." [40]
- The Director suggests that it is a mistake to discontinue making appointments at the IFIs for Canadians visiting for marketing purposes. He says that if the OLIFIs/trade commissioners are not active in doing this their networks of contacts will wither. [42]
- The company does not use the trade commissioners, and is not familiar with the OLIFI or the Banks. [43]
- General marketing assistance is not much help. In high technology, one is dealing with scientists and one has to *"sell at a high technical level"*. Trade commissioners might be able to help as the company diversifies into other types of equipment and services, in new countries. [43]

4.3 Consultant Trust Funds and CIDA Programs

Although we were not interviewing companies in regard to CIDA INC or the consultant trust funds established by CIDA at the international financial institutions, these subjects were raised by the interviewees fairly frequently.

CIDA bilateral projects, CIDA INC projects, and technical assistance projects funded by the consultant trust funds serve two purposes. First, they produce opportunities to participate in small but frequent projects that can smooth out the cash flow of a company between large projects. Second, they provide a working introduction to a country and contribute to the credibility of future bids by the company in that country.

However, despite the potential for useful input from these instruments, most of what we heard