

IFI Bidding Success Factors and Support Needs

"The company tends to focus on domestic Canadian clients when demand is strong, as it is presently in regard to railway ties. Only when it has overstock does it concentrate on selling internationally." [105]

The small scale of most Canadian goods/equipment manufacturers and suppliers is a constraint, as well.

"Small Canadian size makes systematic marketing difficult. The firm has tended in the past to rely upon the efforts and network of contacts of its entrepreneurial founder. The company's marketing is "hit and miss", "opportunistic", relying most on word of mouth." [101]

Professional Services Strategies:

Canada continues to do well in providing professional services to the IFI markets. Price is an advantage at present because the Canadian dollar has a low exchange value. This makes Canadian professional fees a bargain internationally. However this is even truer of some of Canada's Competitors – for example, the Australian dollar, which has historically been on par with the Canadian dollar, is now at a much lower level.

In the long run the quality of services provided by Canadian firms will be the most important factor in success. Specific experience in a particular country is part of quality. The Canadian Trust Funds at the IFIs can play a role in helping Canadian consultants get such IFI experience.

Comments by Interviewees

General comments on strategy:

- There is no Canadian "game plan" – no strategy for international business like the strategies of European countries that have several components supporting one another in a logical way. [39]
- Canada's federal government trade efforts are too dispersed. There is no geographic focus. [39]
- CIDA is not as open and transparent as the IFIs – the Banks are active in sharing information. [16]
- CIDA favours NGOs as executing agencies even when they do not have much expertise in the area, and is suspicious of private firms. This is unfair competition because the NGOs often have their overheads covered elsewhere [as educational institutions, for example]. *"CIDA has become private-sector unfriendly. At the last CIDA days event, we felt unwelcome."* [18]
- Deciding whether to submit an *Expression of Interest* is often quite difficult to judge in the absence of full terms of reference for the project. [19]