

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

There has been a trend in Mexico towards the use of build-operate-transfer (BOT) contracts for infrastructure projects. Recently, urban transit systems have begun to be organized on a BOT basis. The new Tijuana rapid transit system and the *Tren Elevado* in Mexico City are examples.

Another example is a new, electrified intercity rail line, completely separate from *Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México (FNM)*, the national railway, linking the cities of León, Guanajuato and Celaya north of Mexico City. The system is known as the *Tren Regional Interurbano Guanajuato (TRIG)*, Guanajuato Regional Transit System. A consortium called *Tren Nacional Urbano Guomaya*, which includes Bombardier of Montreal, is about to sign a BOT agreement with the Mexican government. The project will cost C \$800 million and will use between 65 and 70 cars, similar to ones being built by Bombardier for the Deux Montagnes line in Montreal. The cars will be built in Canada.

CONSULTING OPPORTUNITIES

The government of Mexico began an initiative called the *Programa de las 100 Ciudades*, 100 Medium-sized Cities Program, in 1993, with assistance from the World Bank. This five-year program is designed to improve the quality of life in Mexico's medium-sized cities. These cities will be the focus of Mexico's population growth over the next 25 years. At present, few if any of them are structurally prepared for such growth.

The program focusses on infrastructure development in five areas, including urban transportation. The World Bank and the Mexican federal government have each allocated US \$200 million to the project, which will operate for five years. So far, 22 of the largest target cities have completed the planning stages and now are implementing solutions.

Most of the remaining 78 cities represent opportunities for Canadian transportation and city planning experts. Beyond the study phase, all of these cities will have considerable budgets to invest in new transportation systems. A typical purchase will be 15 percent financed by the municipality and 35 percent by state and federal governments. The remaining financial support will come from the World Bank. Participation in these projects will almost certainly require a local partner.