

## Progress made on Smart Border Action Plan

Deputy Prime Minister John Manley and U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge met in Toronto on October 3, 2003, to discuss developments on the implementation of the Smart Border Action Plan. This was the fourth meeting of its kind and highlighted the significant accomplishments made in the modernization of the Canada-U.S. border since the signing of the Smart Border Declaration on December 12, 2001.

Recognizing the importance of the Canada-U.S. bilateral trading relationship, the Declaration and associated

30-point action plan represent the commitment of the two governments to cooperate on enhanced border security while facilitating the legitimate flow of people and goods.

At the conclusion of their meeting in Toronto, Deputy Prime Minister Manley and Secretary Ridge announced a meeting of Canadian and American business representatives which was held on November 13, 2003, as part of ongoing consultations on the implementation of Smart Border initiatives. Members of the Bi-National Consultative Committee, a cross-section of Canadian and American business representatives, discussed issues related to the implementation of customs-led Shared Border Accord initiatives. This follows up on a September 2002 request by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and President Bush who asked that the process be extended to cover new areas of cooperation, including expanded consultation with business on issues that affect them.

Other highlights of the report issued following the October 3 meeting include:

- the expansion of the FAST program—the expedited movement of low-risk goods—to six new locations by December 2003, with an additional five enrollment centres established to facilitate registration in the program;

- the expansion of the NEXUS program—the expedited movement of people—to nine new locations by December 2003, with the addition of two enrollment centres; and
- the completion of negotiations and agreement in principle on a bilateral agreement on science and technology cooperation for protecting shared critical infrastructure and enhancing border security.

Secretary Ridge and Deputy Prime Minister Manley also announced progress in the discussions on the application of US-VISIT, the U.S. entry/exit program at the Canada-U.S. land border. In particular, Deputy Prime Minister Manley received assurances that Canadian and U.S. citizens would not be subject to this program under current U.S. policy. Both governments are committed to working together to implement US-VISIT and minimize its impact on border flows and the need for exit infrastructure at the Canada-U.S. border.

**For more information** on the Smart Border update and border cooperation between Canada and the U.S., go to [www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/can-am](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/can-am). \*

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## New Chief — continued from page 1

its clientele. "I have always derived a great deal of satisfaction from the contact the Trade Commissioner Service has with its clients and I intend to continue building upon our exchanges with the private sector and our federal and provincial partners," said Morin. These relationships are crucial as the Trade Commissioner Service further integrates trade, investment and innovation into its day-to-day operations. \*

## Outgoing African Development Bank Director shares advice

Roger Couture has a message for Canadian businesses: the African Development Bank (AfDB) offers excellent opportunities on a continent in need of Canadian expertise. Couture should know, he's been Canada's Executive Director at the AfDB for the past six years. Having retired from his post in September, Couture spoke to CanadExport about how changing trends and reforms at the bank are making it more attractive for Canadians engaged in a variety of sectors to do business with the AfDB. He also offers some basic dos and don'ts for success.

The AfDB is a regional multilateral bank engaged in promoting the economic development and social progress of its regional member countries. Between 1996 and 1999, the total value of procurement contracts on AfDB-funded projects averaged almost \$1 billion per year.

The Canadian Executive Director represents both Canada's interests at the bank and those of four other countries (China, South Korea, Spain and Kuwait). In terms of procurement-related activities, the role of the Canadian Executive Director's office is to ensure that firms from all five countries are treated fairly by the bank.

### Canada's performance

Over the last decade, Canadian companies have received an average of about 4% of AfDB contracts, with most contracts awarded to firms from Eastern Canada, particularly Quebec. The commonality of the French language is the main reason for this trend, says Couture, as well as the relationship that Quebec firms have developed with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which

has helped them get their foot in the African door.

Couture points out that the reason Canadian firms are not getting a bigger share of the AfDB pie is that they tend to focus on services, whereas the big-value contracts are in civil works. The best opportunities in this area lie in environment, energy, water and wastewater management, forestry, as well as civil engineering and transportation.

### New trends

In many cases, the bank is looking for co-financing for such projects.

"Companies—I'm speaking of the bigger companies, like **SNC Lavalin**—need to gear themselves to seeing the bank not just as a source of financing but as a potential partner for investment," says Couture, adding that the AfDB can now count on a first-rate risk assessment capability.

Couture is candid in speaking about the AfDB's image problems. "Until about a decade ago, the bank was highly politicized and not very well managed. But major reforms since 1993 have led to substantial improvements in all areas."

To get companies to look past the bank's outdated reputation and capitalize on the very real opportunities, Couture points to changing trends, including more emphasis being placed on "soft" sectors where Canadians have strong expertise like health, education, policy reform and governance, as well as sector-crossing concerns such as poverty reduction, environmental management, gender mainstreaming and population activities.

Another compelling enticement is our success rate; about 40% of Canadian companies that bid on projects win them. "The reputation of Canadian firms at the AfDB is very good, and the bank is very satisfied with the service these companies provide," says Couture.

### The dos and don'ts

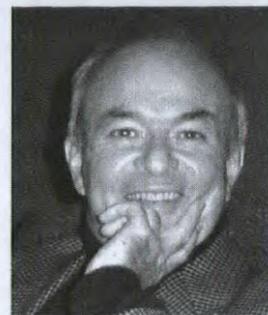
"Companies should remember that it is the individual borrower countries, not the bank, that award the contracts," says Couture. "Therefore, companies must have a sustained presence in the country they're targeting, so they can develop relationships and better adapt to local circumstances."

Finding a good partner is becoming increasingly important for winning contracts. More than 60%

are now awarded to local firms. "Competition is increasing so if you can't beat them, join them. Canadian exporters can consult with DFAIT's trade officers abroad to identify appropriate partners," adds Couture.

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For the unabridged version of this article, go to [www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/canadexport](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/canadexport). \*



Roger Couture, outgoing Executive Director at the AfDB

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