Country watch:
Brunei Darussalam goes beyond oil and gas

Brunei Darussalam, an oil-rich sultanate with a population of 370,000, is the third-largest oil producer in Southeast Asia and the fourth-largest liquified natural gas producer in the world. The oil and gas industry has been Brunei's main source of revenue since the discovery of these natural resources in 1929, and they account for more than 40% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). However, Brunei has been looking to diversify beyond the oil and gas industry into making the country a viable investment destination.

Market overview

In addition to its political and economic stability, the literacy rate is about 92% and the standard of living is among the highest in the region.

Brunei's strategic location in the South China Sea, combined with its favourable investment and taxation environment, offers ideal conditions for businesses who want to invest there.

To attract investment, the Brunei International Financial Offshore Centre was established in 2000 and the Royal Bank of Canada was the first offshore bank to set up there, with six other offshore banks following suit soon thereafter. Other industries that contribute toward the nation's revenues after oil and gas include textile manufacturing and seafood processing.

The Brunei Economic Development Board (BEDB), a state-owned statutory body, was reestablished in 2001. Its main objectives include stimulating economic growth and attracting foreign direct investment into the country by capitalizing on Brunei's energy resources.

The BEDB kick-started the process by unveiling a two-pronged strategy that is expected to attract $5.3 billion in new investments and create some 6,000 permanent jobs by 2008. The first strategy is to develop the Sungai Liang area into a world-class industrial site for petrochemicals and manufacturing industries; the second strategy is to develop the Pulau Muara Besar into a globally competitive deep-sea port for container handling to address the increasingly sophisticated demands of the shipping industry.

An ammonia/urea plant will be set up to produce 2,000 tonnes of ammonia and 3,500 tonnes of urea per day. Also, there are plans for the construction of a methanol plant which would produce some 850,000 tonnes of methanol per year.

For the Pulau Muara Besar global deep sea port project, the BEDB has launched a marketing campaign to secure the right partners to develop a world-class container trans-shipment hub port. Other projects in the pipeline include an aluminum smelter plant, a fertilizer manufacturing plant and the development of an SME Innovation Centre. The SME Innovation Centre is scheduled for completion by July 2006 and it will have facilities and mentoring programs for 21 local and joint-venture IT companies.

Opportunities

There will be potential spinoff opportunities following the development of the ammonia, urea and methanol plants, the aluminum smelter plant as well as the deep sea port.

Some sectors which may be of particular interest to Canadian companies include power and energy (1,000-megawatt power station construction), environment (water treatment plant and land reclamation), building and construction, human resource development, transportation and ICT.

For more information, contact the Canadian High Commission in Brunei Darussalam, tel.: (011-673) 222-0043, fax: (011-673) 222-5422, email: bsbgn@international.gc.ca, website: www.brunei.gc.ca.

Cityscape 2006 is one hot property for developers

Dubai, United Arab Emirates, December 4-6, 2006 > Over the past two years, Cityscape—the international property investment and development event—has featured Canadian engineering and architectural capabilities.


Dubai's Burj Al Arab hotel

For Canadian firms in this sector that want to expand or develop a new market in the Middle East, this is *the* event. With the construction sector in the Middle East valued at over $270 billion, many opportunities exist. Canadian companies like Cansult, Crang & Boake, HOK, NORR and Zas Architects have all had success in the region.

According to Phil Jones, Vice President of HOK Canada, "There is no exhibition like it in the world that brings developers, investors and consultants together in one forum. If you are going to participate in this market, you need to be here."

More than 23,000 participants and 280 international exhibitors from 85 countries convened at last year's event. These numbers represent the impressive growth of the show; participation increased by 220% and the exhibition space grew by 150% over 2004. Over $30 billion of business was conducted throughout the three-day event and much more is underway, making Cityscape a leading platform for the construction industry.

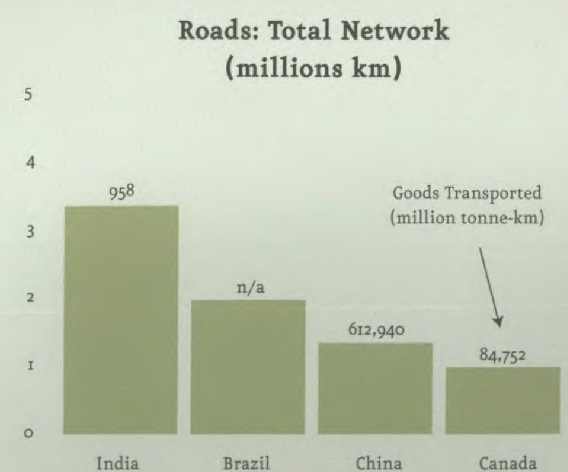
Again this year, Ontario Exports is hosting the Canadian pavilion, which is open to firms in the engineering and architectural services sector.

For more information, contact Venky Rao, Overseas Representative for the Show Organizer, email: venkyrao@rogers.com, or Al Hinton, Ontario Exports, email: al.hinton@edt.gov.on.ca, website: www.cityscape-online.com. Booth space is reserved on a first-come, first-served basis.

FACTS & FIGURES

India's infrastructure may slow growth

As India develops, it needs to move goods and people both inside and outside the country. It has the world's third-largest rail network, as of 2000, but it is plagued by poor safety, low productivity and investment, and under-pricing. India also transports far fewer goods and people via air than other emerging markets. And similarly, while India has over 3 million kilometres of roads—much more than Brazil, China, or Canada—they are ill-maintained, with only 46% paved. Very few goods are transported on these roads, despite their abundance. The state of India's infrastructure might impede its growth, as companies planning to expand there find that the infrastructure required is not adequate.



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