

A Policy of Engagement

Canadian companies tend to bring a policy of engagement in general, and are seen to be prepared and willing to act as facilitators, not as 'dictators', of a project or operations' development. This willingness to create the space to develop trust and relationships, for innovation and local input, demonstrates respect for the authority and the autonomy at both senior and local levels of the host government, and for the local citizens. Many companies believe Canada's role as a second tier power actually plays to advantage with respect to experience in seeking consensus. Canadian companies are also perceived to focus on helping to provide resources and opportunities for local citizens to govern, as opposed to acting as a replacement for local government. Adherence to this democratic mindset is believed to come from the fact that Canadians operate from a background and culture of law, justice, and ethics, and a willingness to not just speak to the major players but also to the poor and disenfranchised.

Quality of Stakeholder Engagement

Canadian companies believe they are perceived to be more willing to trust the broader stakeholder groups to help in decision-making and implementing versus many European and American firms intent on higher levels of centralized control. Stakeholders prefer Canada's supportive approach, and willingness to be involved in a constructive, non-judgmental way. Canadian firms are seen as straightforward and honest in dealing with their communities with a demonstrated support for developing an educated workforce as a means to increase citizen participation over the long-term. Canadian representatives' willingness to share ownership, and/or hand over the lead over the course of project development is also seen as advantageous.

Willingness to Transfer Standards

Canadian firms are bringing Canadian and international standards, as well as a uniquely Canadian way of doing business, to the communities and countries in which they operate. There is a high willingness to transfer good practices, to promote higher standards and education on social and environmental issues. Canadian companies bring knowledge and respect for the environment, as well as an understanding of the key issues and regulations that can be shared with host governments and local stakeholders. In addition, Canada's stringent regulations make Canadian operations abroad that utilize similar technology and management systems (as in Canada) look very positive, and not as if Canadian companies are just going out to placate local stakeholders for the short term.