

## *Foreword*

The African Development Bank Group (AfDB), headquartered in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, is an international financial institution that provides technical and financial resources to its developing member countries in Africa to stimulate economic growth and social development. Most of this support is in the form of loans to finance specific development projects and sector investment programs in energy, transport, water/sanitation, agriculture, health, education and environment. The AfDB also participates in the financing of private sector projects in the region.

The projects financed by the African Development Bank generate substantial business opportunities. The AfDB's project loans are used by its borrowing countries to purchase goods and equipment, contract works, and obtain consultant services and technical assistance needed to design and implement these projects. Because Canada is a member of the African Development Bank, Canadians are eligible to participate in the competitive bidding for the hundreds of contracts awarded annually by AfDB borrowing member countries. African Development Bank-financed projects offer Canadian firms some of the best sales opportunities in Africa: the projects are national priorities, financing is in place and payment is virtually always assured.

Despite declines in annual lending volumes of the African Development Bank in recent years and concerns about its effectiveness as a development institution, the African Development Bank will continue to represent a significant source of business opportunities for Canadian companies interested in seeking business on the African continent. Institutional and operational reforms have been introduced at the Bank which are resulting in a restrengthening of the AfDB, improved project management, greater transparency, and better access to information.

Procurement to Canadian suppliers and consultants has seen significant increases in recent years; most of this success can be attributed to technically qualified firms who were well-prepared and competitive. Understanding that procurement is the primary responsibility of the borrower - usually a government or agency designated therein - those Canadian firms who take an integrated, strategic and well-planned marketing approach to African Development Bank projects can win contracts and earn profits.

This publication is intended to inform the Canadian business community, particularly those approaching this market for the first time, about opportunities generated by projects supported by the African Development Bank and to serve as a road map to understanding the Bank, its current priorities, project development, and its procurement policies and procedures. This guide also provides suppliers and consultants with strategic tips and recommendations as to how to more effectively position themselves to pursue and win lucrative contracts arising from AfDB-financed projects.

While this guide is a useful back grounder to the strategic pursuit of AfDB procurement, interested firms are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the numerous other publications, reports, and electronic information sources pertaining to the AfDB, and Canadian government contacts, detailed in the Annexes.