

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, CIDA, Industry Canada and most other Canadian government departments have useful World Web Sites describing the nature of their programs and activities and providing access to information and electronic documentation on a wide variety of subject matter.

Timely and topical information pertaining to development issues and activities in Africa can also be found by accessing the web sites of the United Nations Development Program (and other UN agencies). Finally, perhaps the most comprehensive network of World Wide Web sites pertaining to Africa and leading to dozens of internet links across the African continent can be found by accessing the University of Pennsylvania's *African Studies on the Web* system. The electronic "URL" addresses of the above web sites and others are listed in Annex 2.

VII. How to Win Contracts - The Strategic Approach

The development business is highly competitive and the pursuit of IFI-financed contracts can be costly and time-consuming with success sometimes requiring years for companies approaching the market for the first time. Nevertheless, technically qualified Canadian firms who have taken a strategic country-focussed market approach, dedicated sufficient financial and human resources to the effort, and remained committed and persistent have increasingly been demonstrating that success is not only achievable but sustainable.

Critical strategic success factors often cited by firms who have won AfDB-funded contracts include the following:

- Being prepared (knowledge of the Bank, its culture, and its policies, priorities and procedures);
- Knowledge of the country and its social, political and business culture);
- Professional experience and capabilities of the firm and quality of proposals submitted;
- Establishing a market presence in the host country and strong relationships with local partners or representatives and with key players in government and private sector;
- Price (more so for suppliers of goods and equipment and civil works contractors)

Language is also an important consideration in much of Africa. If your firm does not have French language capability in the Francophone countries of West and Central Africa, or Portuguese for the Lusophone countries (Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe), you may need to focus at first on Anglophone countries.

Before initiating an approach to AfDB project opportunities, companies should design an appropriate marketing strategy and specific plan of action. This includes: selecting those products, services and expertise which offer the most distinct competitive advantages; identifying specific geographic markets which offer the most compatible opportunities;