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Canadian miners take on the world

By: Janice Healing

Published: 24th February 2012

Canadian mining companies are taking their talents across the globe and exploring, building and operating mines all over the world.

MineAfrica president **Bruce Shapiro** tells *Mining Weekly* that 50% of the 9 500 mineral projects held by Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX) and TSX Venture (TSX-V) Exchange companies are outside of Canada.

"These companies have world-leading expertise and experience and are backed by excellent Canadian-based infrastructure and service providers, including financial, engineering and technical support, and leading equipment manufacturers and suppliers," reports Shapiro. "They are also well supported by the Canadian government in operating in foreign, and emerging, markets. Canada is also a world leader in corporate social responsibility."

"To underscore the importance of Canada as a mining financing centre, consider that 80% of all global mining equity financing transactions are done on the TSX and TSX-V. The two exchanges also account for one-third of all of the equity capital raised globally for mining."

Africa is a key target for Canadian mining firms, and Shapiro reports that at present there are 187 TSX-listed mining companies (most of which are headquartered in Canada) with 701 projects in 35 countries in Africa. These companies raised C\$1.8-billion in equity in 2010.

Shapiro says the global demand for resources, combined with the improving investment climate for mining in many African countries, are the main drivers of Canadian mining investment in Africa. He says that the main area of interaction between Canada and Africa is mining, while nonmining investment in Africa is driven, to a large degree, by the opportunities inherent in a large potential customer base, which Africa possesses by virtue of its large population.

But becoming involved in the African minerals sector is not without its challenges.

"The key challenges are an investor friendly environment, for example, security of mineral rights, transparent legislation and tax regimes, accurate and readily available mineral data and concerns over corruption and security issues," says Shapiro. "The big issue from the investor's side is the perception versus the reality of these issues."

He explains that the role of MineAfrica is to provide a platform, through its seminars, for mining companies, service providers and advisers to the mining industry, as well as African governments, to address these issues to the investment and mining communities.

"We also promote their African projects, their countries and their companies and services, respectively, to a targeted Africa-friendly audience of financial and mining executives and media. The specific focus on Africa means that 100% of our audience is interested in mining projects in Africa. In addition, we provide consulting services and organise business development trips and one-on-one meetings for African governments, mining companies and service providers in Toronto."

MineAfrica's largest event is its Investing in African Mining seminar which takes place during the yearly Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) trade show. The seminar is now in its tenth year.

Held in conjunction with the Canada-Southern Africa Chamber of Business' yearly mining breakfast, which is now in its thirteenth year, this seminar is the biggest African mining event in North America, drawing 360 participants in 2011.

This year the seminar, with premier sponsor SGS and corporate sponsor Earthstone, takes place on March 6 and will feature a keynote address by **Inge Zaamwani**, MD of Namdeb, the diamond mining joint venture between the government of Namibia and De Beers.

Another half-day seminar will take place on March 4 and focus on the current situation in South Africa's mining industry, featuring speakers from leading South African law firm Webber Wentzel Attorneys.

MineAfrica will also host a mini- African pavilion at the PDAC trade show comprising four booths and a range of exhibitors, including Earthstone Group, Mining Weekly, Mintek, Roxgold, Spidersat Communications Limited and Webber Wentzel Attorneys.

In addition, the Mastermining course will be presented between March 1 and 3. This comprehensive course is designed to round out participants' knowledge of the global mining and financing industry and how it works, from exploration to closure and beyond. It deals with the technical aspects of the mining industry (including exploration, development, operations and processing), the economics of mining financing and deal-making in a hands-on, interactive setting with international and Canadian case studies.

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Tel: +27(0)11 622 3744 | Fax +27(0)11 622 9350
| newsdesk@miningweekly.com
<http://www.miningweekly.com>