



For immediate release

Federal government renews and enhances Co-operative Development Initiative: \$19.1 million over four years for co-op development

Ottawa, May 21 2009 – The Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) is very pleased with the federal government’s decision to renew and enhance the Co-operative Development Initiative (CDI), a program aimed at providing support to new and emerging co-operatives across Canada.

The Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture) announced today that the government will invest \$19.1 million over the next four years to support the establishment of new co-operatives and test innovative methods of using the co-operative model. The previous CDI program, which began in 2003, expired on March 31 of this year.

“This is wonderful news for the co-operative sector, for Canadians who use the services co-operatives provide and for the communities in which co-operatives are located,” said CCA Executive Director Carol Hunter. “By renewing and enhancing CDI, the government has recognized that co-operatives create jobs and bring enormous value to Canada’s economy.”

The new program will have two major components:

- **Advisory Services**, which will improve access to co-operative development information and services that will assist in the formation of new co-operatives. This component of the program is an expanded version of the Advisory Services component of the previous CDI; it will continue to be managed by CCA and its francophone sister organization, the Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité (CCCM) through provincial and sectoral co-operative associations across Canada and will also provide new national services.
- **Innovative Co-operative Projects**, which will provide project support for new and emerging co-operatives. This will include value-added agriculture projects, which had been supported by a separate Ag-CDI component within the previous program. This component will now be fully managed by CCA and CCCM.

In addition, there will be a Research and Knowledge Development component, which will support new and applied research to support co-operative development. This component will be managed by the federal Co-operatives Secretariat, which is part of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Ms. Hunter said she was pleased that the two national co-operative associations have been given the opportunity to fully manage the two major components of the program; under the previous program, the associations only managed Advisory Services and Ag-CDI. “We are happy that the government has confidence in the co-operative sector to administer these funds on its behalf, for the benefit of co-operatives, communities and all Canadians,” she said.

CCA and CCCM have actively lobbied for the renewal of the CDI program for the past two years, with the help of individuals and organizations across Canada, from both within and outside the co-operative sector.

“We would like to thank all the people and organizations who participated in our CDI renewal campaign, and who let their elected representatives know how important this program was to their co-operatives and communities,” Ms. Hunter said. We would like to particularly thank the superb efforts of our member co-operatives and credit unions which helped this campaign succeed.”

The previous CDI program supported more than 1,500 co-operatives through Advisory Services and project funding, and helped create some 200 new co-operatives.

Information on how to apply for the Innovative Co-operative Projects component of the new program, including criteria and deadlines, will be available on CCA’s website, www.coopscanada.coop, within the next few weeks.

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The Canadian Co-operative Association is a national association for co-operatives in Canada, representing more than nine million co-operative and credit union members from over 2,000 organizations. CCA members come from many sectors of the economy, including finance, insurance, agri-food and supply, wholesale and retail, housing, health and the service sector. CCA provides leadership to promote, develop, and unite co-operatives and credit unions for the benefit of people in Canada and around the world.