

# Co-operative Enterprises & the Environmental Industry Sector

# What is a Co-operative?

- An incorporated business
- Primary focus is provision of quality services for its member/owners
- Requires start up capital/equity
- Generates revenue to cover its costs
- Distributes profits back to its owners based on their use of services
- Can be not for profit i.e. retain profits for future development

## A Unique Business Model

- Democratically controlled, each member has one vote
- All members purchase an equal number of shares
- Shares do not appreciate in value and cannot be sold
- Members/owners benefit from access to co-op services
- Profit generation is secondary to service delivery

## Co-ops are Business Oriented

- Legally incorporated under the provincial “Co-operatives Act”.
- Goal is business self sufficiency
- Limited liability for members
- Can borrow money, sign contracts
- Can issue preferred shares
- Pay taxes and hold assets

## Co-op Sector in NL

- Over 80 local co-ops
  - 55 multi-sector co-ops – NLFC
  - 22 housing co-ops - Co-op Housing NL
  - 9 credit unions – Atlantic Central
- Other co-ops operating NL
  - Co-op Atlantic (retail and agricultural)
  - ACA Poultry (Country Ribbon Chicken)
  - Farmers & Scotsburn Dairy Co-ops
  - The Co-operators Group
  - True Serve Building Supplies
  - Mountain Equipment Co-op

## Member/Owners Can Be:

- Individuals (Consumers)
- Workers
- Business Owners
- Industry Associations
- Community Development Agencies
- Academic Institutions
- Multi-stakeholder

## Co-op Benefits - Business Owners

- Resource pooling - expanded opportunities for contracts
- Shared equipment/admin. costs
- Bulk purchasing of supplies
- Shared facilities
- Joint shipping & transportation
- Collective branding/marketing

# Co-ops Provide Community Services

- Municipal services
- Cultural/tourism development
- Health/seniors care
- Capacity building for youth
- Community infrastructure
- Environmental initiatives



## Examples of Co-ops in NL

- North Shore Ambulance Co-op - Conception Bay
- Advocate Youth Services Co-op - Baie Verte
- Nfld. Independent Filmmakers Co-op
- Springdale Community Development Co-op
- Seed to Spoon Worker's Co-op – NE Avalon
- St. John's Farmers Market Co-op
- Petty Harbour Fishermen's Co-op
- Western NL Developer's Co-op

# Environmental Co-ops in Canada

- Co-ops delivering environmental sustainability services:
  - Sustainability Solutions Group
  - Victoria Car Share Co-op
  - Bridge City Bike Co-op
  - TREC Renewable Energy Co-operative
- Co-ops incorporating eco-friendly practices as their business culture
  - Mountain Equipment Co-op
  - Organic Meadow Co-op

# Sustainability Solutions Group (SSG)

- Federally incorporated worker's co-operative
- It is unique in that **environmental sustainability** is not simply an activity it is undertaking in addition to its core business; it **is its core business**
- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) consulting and project management



*Client: Rayside  
Location: Montreal*



*Client: British Columbia Pavilion Corporation  
Location: Vancouver*



# Victoria Car Share Co-op

Demand for alternative transportation solutions like the Victoria Car Share Co-op continue to increase as communities search for more financially, environmentally and socially sustainable transportation options.

Co-op members, staff and Board of Directors are committed to continued long-term growth, and intend to play an important role in sustainable transportation options in the future.





# Bridge City Bike Co-op

- The Bridge City Bicycle Co-op teaches members how to repair their own bicycles
- Members have access to the co-op's collection of bike-specific tools and have the opportunity to increase their knowledge about bicycle maintenance from more experienced members
- The co-op operates in partnership with the Saskatoon Farmers Market



# TREC Renewable Energy Co-operative

## WindShare

- Innovative, for-profit wind power co-operative - the first of its kind in Canada

## Exhibition Place turbine:

- The first URBAN-sited turbine to be constructed in North America
- Is the first COMMUNITY-OWNED wind power project in Ontario
- Community power is locally owned, renewable energy generation scaled to the size and characteristics of the host site



*Exhibition Place Turbine, Toronto, ON*



# Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC)

## **MEC's Commitment to Reducing Energy Consumption:**

MEC's goal is to conduct business in a manner that maximizes energy efficiency and the use of green and renewable energy sources, and minimizes emissions and other impacts harmful to human health and the environment.

- Green buildings
- Greenhouse gas emissions tracking
- Melting mountains initiative

## **MEC's Green Building Program:**

Green building is the way MEC mitigates environmental degradation by designing and operating its structures to use energy, water, and materials efficiently.



## **Support For Sustainable Transportation:**

MEC strives to select store sites that are close to bike routes and transit lines, making it easier for staff and members to use sustainable transportation to reach its stores.



*MEC Barrie Store*

# Organic Meadow Co-op



**ORGANIC  
MEADOW®**

Local. Organic. Farmer-Owned.

## **Mission Statement:**

*"... We are dedicated to encouraging ecologically sound, diverse, self-reliant farm units where production efficiency is achieved in harmony with the surrounding environment."*

## **Promoting Environmental Awareness**

Organic Meadow Co-op believes in promoting environmental awareness. Organic Meadow has found that farmers who embrace the idea of holistic management (i.e. seeing the farm as existing within the larger environment and sustaining the larger environment) are much more successful than those who do not really believe in it.

Organic Meadow is also trying to make its presence known among buying clubs, farmers' markets and community-supported agriculture—the alternative methods of food processing and distribution that are emerging. The co-op sees these as being on the cutting edge of consumer consciousness and recognizes that change has to take place in the minds of individuals before it takes place in the economy.



*Organic Meadow Co-operative Crop Symposium 2010*



## Co-op Sector in Canada

- Co-ops have a longer survival rate than other types of businesses in Canada
- Over 10 million Canadians are co-op & credit union members
  - 9,500 co-ops
  - 175 billion In assets
  - 155 thousand employees
- Co-op Atlantic is the second largest retail co-op wholesaler in Canada

# Incorporation Requirements

- The Dept. of Government Services requires:
  - A minimum of three members
  - Articles outlining objectives & share structure
  - By-laws outlining a governance framework
  - A business plan for start up/operations
  - List of founding board members
  - Fee of \$250

## NLFC/IBRD Partnership

1. Regional Co-op Developer's Network
2. Co-op Development Training Modules
3. Equity Financing – New co-ops
4. Co-op Business Retention/Expansion
5. Co-op Services for Youth
6. Research and Policy Development
7. Public Awareness & Communications
8. Micro-Business Development Program

# Regional Co-op Developer's Network

- IBRD:
  - 8 IBRD staff - regionally based
  - Info. requests, development advice
  - Project development support
- NLFC :
  - Network training, coordination
  - Resource materials, research support
  - Project development support

# Co-op Development Training Modules

- Delivered through IBRD's Community Capacity Building Program
  - Basics of the Co-op Model
  - Co-ops & Community Development
  - Steps in the Co-op Development Process

## NLFC/IBRD Equity Fund

- Matches member Investment (3:1)
- Maximum fund investment \$30,000
- Delivered through IBRD regional offices
- Focus on worker and producer co-ops
- Competitive impact an eligibility factor

# Other Services

- Co-op Youth Services
  - Development of youth co-ops
  - Assistance with regional co-op youth events
- Research/Policy Development
  - Focus on industry sectors with co-op development potential
  - Child care co-op paper submitted
  - Tourism paper being finalized
  - Environment co-ops paper initiated

## Network Members

- NLFC
  - Glen Fitzpatrick
- IBRD
  - Director - Gillian Skinner
  - Network Coordinator - Dax Pinsent
  - Labrador - Max Mullins
  - Western - Sheila Earle
  - Central - Daryl Perry
  - Eastern - Craig Hiscock
  - Avalon Penn. - Jeff Mercer



# More Information?

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