

Launch of Co-operative Development Agency

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A new agency - the Co-operative Development Agency for Scotland - has been established to act as a one stop shop to deliver advice and information to new and growing co-operative businesses.

It will help co-operatives reach their full commercial potential and will be backed by up to £3 million from the Executive.

Co-operatives can make a vital contribution to Scotland's continued economic growth, Minister for Justice Cathy Jamieson said today.

Speaking ahead of the Annual Co-operative Congress in Glasgow, Ms Jamieson said:

"We made a commitment in our Partnership Agreement to improve the promotion and provision of advice on co-operative development and to establish a Co-operative Development Agency. I am delighted to announce that we are now delivering on this.

"Co-operative enterprises, with their values of self-help, self responsibility and social responsibility, have a vital contribution to make, both to Scotland's economy and to the social regeneration of our communities.

"The new Agency will have an overarching enterprise focus to help in the promotion, creation and development of dynamic and sustainable co-operatives, and to help maximise the contribution they can make to our economy.

"It will provide a means to promote the co-operative business model as a real alternative to other business structures and - at a practical level - deliver advice and information to new and growing businesses.

"Co-operation has the potential for an exciting and dynamic future, building sustainable businesses that will bring jobs and wealth to all of our communities."

The new Co-operative Development Agency (CDA) will be a subsidiary of Scottish Enterprise and operate with an advisory board, incorporating representatives from the co-operative sector. The £3 million funding for the CDA has come from the existing Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Budget.

Co-operatives are businesses who share common values and principles. Profits will usually be primarily reinvested in the business, but with additional provision for some distribution to members and/or for community and social purposes. The co-operative model is used by many different types of business to engage with one or more stakeholder groups.

The Partnership Agreement (2003) states: "We will improve the promotion and provision on co-operative development and will establish a Co-operative Development Agency following consultation."