

Establishing a Co-op Development System in BC & Alberta

BALTA C7 project report

November 24, 2009



Key Factors in Success of NS Co-op Development System

- Devolution of co-op development to NSCC
- Well designed financial tools
- Supportive political environment
- Social entrepreneur as ED
- Evaluation & indicators
- Contextual factors – strong co-op history, small geography & population



Main Features of NS System

1. Development Finance
2. Human Resource Development
3. Planning, Advocacy & Research
4. Policy & Governance
5. Community Economic Development
6. Accountability & Evaluation

Research Questions

1. To what extent are the success factors in the 6 main areas of Nova Scotia's cooperative development system either present, easily replicated or desired in BC & Alberta?
2. Where do gaps & opportunities exist for co-op development in each of the two provinces?



Process

- 6-month project
- 9 key respondent interviews in each province
- 3 focus group sessions (15 participants in BC & 14 in AB)
- Key themes developed
- Final report produced

Findings

- Co-op sector is under-funded & unknown
- Key to sector development is building alliances
- Provincial association and credit unions to provide leadership
- Need both a central and a regional focus in BC

Recommendations - AB

- Conduct analysis of size & scope of co-op movement in AB
- Develop case studies of existing AB co-ops
- Develop broad sector-specific strategies for co-ops.
- Develop & deliver a “Co-op Road Show” to build awareness of the co-op movement

Recommendations - AB, cont'd

- Enhance relationships between co-ops & credit unions
- Research feasibility of developing a co-op development fund
- Continue development of strategic relationships between ACCA, co-op developers & Community Futures
- Develop an alumni engagement strategy for the Co-op Youth Program movement
- Revise membership structure to engage small & non-profit co-ops



Recommendations - BC

- Develop a co-op development fund to be seeded by sector
- BCCA to facilitate between provincial and regional strategies
- Develop a promotional campaign to build awareness among key actors in province
- Compile BC co-op sector statistics



Discussion Question – BC Strategic Planning Session

What do you consider to be the best strategic actions, with the most likelihood of success in BC for the following areas?

- funding and capitalization
- research and sector development
- relations with gov't. and stakeholders
- marketing and education



C7 Project Follow Up

- Stakeholders Special Session - Oct.16
- BCCA Board Strategic Planning Session
- BC Co-op Development Strategy
 - Financing
 - Sector development
 - Public policy
 - Public awareness
 - Role of BCCA
- Member engagement and mobilization