



*Des communautés
plus fortes au Canada*

*Strengthening
Canada's Communities*

The Honourable Navdeep Bains, MP, PC
Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development
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19 August 2016

Dear Minister Bains,

The Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet) congratulates you on your proposals for an inclusive and innovative Canada as part of the Innovation Agenda.

CCEDNet is a national association of community organizations, co-operatives, credit unions, foundations, municipalities and citizens working to enhance the social, economic and environmental conditions of Canada's communities. We have members in all regions of Canada, including urban, rural, northern and Aboriginal community settings.

Our members are innovation leaders for building inclusive economies. From the first community loan fund in Canada, to the first community development corporation, the dynamic co-operative and social enterprise sectors and many more, CCEDNet members are at the forefront of creative solutions to equitable growth. The economic opportunities they create extend the benefits of growth and prosperity to groups and regions that face barriers or who are too often excluded.

Recent trends in the social economy, social finance, and community resiliency have expanded the scope of innovative practices tremendously, with examples ranging from new community based crowdfunding strategies to impact investing, from Québec's recent social economy law to the UN Task Force on the Social Solidarity Economy.

We applaud your intention to make Canada "a leader in promoting social enterprise and social innovation." Social enterprise is a powerful tool to give all Canadians a fair chance at success. We have a long history of collaboration with the Social Enterprise Council of Canada, the Chantier de l'économie sociale, Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada, the MaRS Centre for Impact Investing, the Women's Economic Council, the Ontario Non-profit Network and others who have identified priority actions the Government of Canada can take to complement the leadership being shown by several Canadian provinces and learn from the track record of other jurisdictions internationally.

In particular, we wish to highlight the following steps that, as part of a co-created process, can lay the foundation for a long-term strategic plan to strengthen Canada's social innovation ecosystem.

Priority Actions

Enhanced Market Access

- Enhance demand for products and services of social enterprises and co-operatives through social procurement policies and community benefit agreements. Initiatives such as [Buy Social Canada](#), *L'économie sociale, j'achète*, ECPAR and the Toronto Community Benefits Network are leading Canadian examples of this rapidly emerging practice.
- Support market access initiatives such as the Social Enterprise Ecosystem for Canada project that would create a pan-Canadian online directory and e-commerce platform for social enterprises, building on the success of the Québec-based [Commerce solidaire](#).

Tailored Investment Vehicles

- Contribute to the capitalization of tailored investment funds such as the Co-operative Investment Fund proposed by Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada, the non-profit social enterprise investment fund proposed by the Social Enterprise Council of Canada, and the social finance fund of funds proposed by the National Impact Investment Practitioners Table.

Improved Business Development

- Expand the capacity and access to existing small and medium enterprise services through the Canadian Business Network and other federal business development programs to enhance business supports and readiness for investment by social enterprises and co-operatives.
- Support the creation of innovation incubators and labs on priority social issues (such as community renewable energy, population aging, social inclusion) to accelerate social innovation and the creation of social enterprises and co-operatives focused on social impact across Canada.
- Provide a supportive regulatory framework giving charities and non-profits more flexibility to pursue business models that generate both social and financial impacts. This should involve clarifying and updating Canada Revenue Agency guidance, and redesigning the Income Tax regime and other regulatory issues.

An Enabling Ecosystem

- Support innovation networks and communities of practice to connect relevant stakeholders across sectors, such as through the Social Enterprise Ecosystem

Canada initiative being led by the Canadian CED Network, the Chantier de l'économie sociale, the Social Enterprise Institute and Buy Social Canada.

- Adapt Québec's program for OLTIS (*organisations de liaison et de transfert en innovation sociale*) to create pan-Canadian social innovation knowledge transfer centres such as the [TIESS](#).

International Social Innovation Leadership

- Québec's social economy and Canada's cooperative movement are internationally recognized. This fall, Canada is hosting the Global Social Economy Forum, and the International Summit on Co-operatives, two of the largest conferences in the world on the social economy and co-operatives. Canada's rich social economy and co-operative leadership should be celebrated on the world stage by supporting the participation of Canadian organizations and institutions in international networks such as the United Nations Task Force on the Social Solidarity Economy, the OECD Forum on Social Innovations and others.
- Canada's official representatives to these intergovernmental bodies and initiatives should also take a more pro-active role in advancing social innovation in these international fora.

Although social innovation is a file that cuts across numerous departments, Innovation, Science and Economic Development and its agencies are uniquely positioned with key mandates and programs to advance inclusive economic growth. ISED's responsibility for co-operative development, the Community Futures program, and the community economic development programs delivered by the regional development agencies are just a few examples.

We look forward to an opportunity to discuss these recommendations with you further, and to working constructively with Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada towards our shared goals.



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About the Canadian CED Network

The Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet) is a member-driven, not-for-profit, charitable organization made up of community-based organizations, co-operatives, social enterprises, practitioners, active citizens, researchers, and other organizations involved in community economic development (CED). Throughout Canada, CCEDNet members are helping local residents take action to build healthy, inclusive and vibrant places by creating economic opportunities that improve social and environmental conditions.

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Promoting Community Economic Development
 Le promotion du développement économique communautaire

Strengthening Canada's Communities
 Des communautés plus fortes au Canada



The Canadian CED Network
 Le Réseau canadien de D&C



Community economic development (CED) is action by people locally to create economic opportunities and better social conditions, particularly for those who are most disadvantaged.
 Le développement économique communautaire (D&C) est une approche locale visant à créer des débouchés économiques et de meilleures conditions sociales, en particulier pour les personnes et les groupes les plus défavorisés.

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