



Co-operative Network Toolkit

A guide for developing local capacity in Ontario's co-operative movement. Created with support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Why form a Network?

Even though Co-operative Principle 4 is Autonomy and Independence, your participation in a Co-op Network can be very advantageous. For instance, [sector-specific Networks](#) train, guide, connect and advocate for co-ops working in the same industry. Membership in these Networks ensures that your co-op stays ahead of the curve.

There are as many benefits to forming or joining a cross-sector regional Co-op Network. They can provide local support and mentorship for new and emerging co-ops, amplify a common voice for your organization in municipal/provincial/federal politics, consolidate a wider reach of influence, and increase opportunities to share training and development costs. Got an idea for a co-op, but not sure if it'll work? Looking for help on your next membership drive? Looking to start a co-op Lunch N' Learn series? Reach out to your Co-op Network! No one else has more experience starting and running co-ops in your region than existing co-ops in your region. While the nuts and bolts of your enterprises differ, so many aspects are the same. Here's a partial list: Governance models, funding tools, auditing processes, board of directors training needs, member engagement and recruitment methods, legislative restrictions, and more. Not to mention that the 7 International Co-operative Principles are the foundation we all share.

Fundamentally, co-operation is just a better way of doing business, and a network will help raise the profile of the movement in your area. The **International Co-operative Alliance** has created a *Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade* that maps out the path to greater co-operative awareness and success. Focusing on five key areas: **Participation, Sustainability, Identity, Capital, and Legal Framework**, the document identifies greater interconnectivity between co-operatives as a way to capitalize on our strengths and minimize our weaknesses, to become the preferred way of doing business by 2020. If you're interested in joining or forming a regional Co-op Network, read on... We've collected all the tools you'll need to build and sustain a local Network of passionate co-operators!

Cynthia Mitchell, co-Chair of the Ottawa Co-op Network notes:

'Since its inception, the [Ottawa Co-op] Network has grown from a few organizations to many of different mandates and sizes. Our goal is to build upon the momentum and relationships formed during the International Year of Cooperative to strengthen the co-op community in Ottawa and foster an active and engaged membership.'

*The Network continues to hold monthly meetings to share information, plan events for the public and reach out to government officials and media to raise their awareness of co-ops. In June Ottawa-Vanier MP Mauril Bélanger hosted a breakfast on Parliament Hill for Network members. Later this month, the Network will build relations through an Annual Co-op Curling Funspiel. Network members created business alliances, resulting in several solar panel projects, for instance. **We try to cross-promote and attend each other's events as much as possible.***

What is a Co-op Network?

On Co-op is an association - so what is a *Co-op Network*? It is a formal or informal organization of co-operatives operating in the same area - be it a county, city, town, or neighbourhood. Just like a co-op, a Regional Network is built to serve its members in the same region. Put most simply, a Co-op Network is a group of people or organizations working together collectively to achieve not only their own goals, but the collective goals of the group as a whole.

One usage of this model can be to serve as a co-marketing tool for co-ops in the same area. By cross-promoting each other to their co-op members, a more resilient co-op economy can arise: protecting jobs and local co-op enterprises from disappearing.

More established Networks can begin a dialog with their local elected representatives. The vast majority of Ontario co-ops are incorporated under the provincial *Co-operative Corporations Act*. On the provincial level, On Co-op is able to leverage the strength of its membership to work for more favourable regulatory conditions. A Co-op Network can do the same thing regionally.

Finally, Networks can work to build the co-op movement by reaching out into the community. One of the largest issues that co-ops face is lack of awareness - we are simply not that good at marketing ourselves. This is where a Co-op Network can be really valuable. By holding community events like picnics, recreational ice skates and fairs, a Network can expose their communities to the diversity of co-operatives working to build a better world, and demystify our often misunderstood way of doing business.

A word of caution: Co-op Networks, by their nature, can be hard to manage. It takes energy and persistent communication to get all the right people in the room together, and it takes negotiation and facilitation skills to co-ordinate the efforts of the individual members of the Network. The strongest Networks are ones built on trust, lasting relationships, and mutual understanding - traits that take time and effort to materialize. A perfect Network will not form overnight.

Stages of a Network

Networks don't emerge fully-formed, and as much as we'd like we can't just will them into existence. There is a natural progression from fragile and tenuous to strong and structured, and this takes time. It's easy to want a lot from a new Network from the beginning, but patience definitely pays off. Every person in the room needs time to make up their mind about committing to and trusting the group.

Keep in mind that each group progresses through the various stages at their own pace. The success of the group often relies upon one or more *Network Champions* – people who are willing to “step up” but do not assume a leadership role. Instead, they help members understand the potential and opportunities of a mature Network.

Introductions

People in the Network initially defer to the leaders (usually those who invited them in the first place) to make things happen in the Network. People in the room could more accurately be described as “attendees” in this phase, rather than full-on “members”. While the group may be ready to make some decisions, it's likely that they are not ready to set their own agenda. However, the sooner the group is invited to contribute their own ideas about the direction of the group, the sooner the Network will move out of this phase.

Development

People in the Network are interested in making things happen, but may be hesitant to commit too much of their own time and funds. The group is still dependent on a few Leaders. It's important to keep enthusiasm high! People in this phase begin to understand the potential of the Network, but may prioritize their own needs, and not necessarily the needs of the larger group. So the focus in this phase tends to be on getting more support from the leaders for the things Network members want to do.

Coalescence

People in the Network no longer primarily depend on their leaders, but still may underestimate the capacity of the group. It's important as a leader to continue to identify possibilities to expand members' notions of what is possible. A caution: believing the capacity of the group to be finite, members may compete with peers to satisfy their own projects. In this phase, people in the Network could believe that others' loss is the necessary cost of their gain. Watch out for divisions and factional allegiances within the group.

Maturity

The Network acts as a whole, and people take responsibility for their part in the overall success. Network members believe they can achieve more together than they ever could apart, and negotiate ways of collaborating that helps every member thrive. The Network begins to strategize longer term plans, and may seek formal organizational structures.

Networks can also stagnate if enthusiasm and leadership wanes. It's important to keep members engaged and energized on projects that matter to them. Research and implement open and inclusive decision-making processes to continue to engage group members in Mature Networks.

Key Decisions

When forming a Network, there are key decisions that have to be made that will identify how the organization defines success. These decisions can (and should!) be revisited:

1. **Formality:** Will the Network pursue formalization through incorporation, or remain an informal gathering of interested parties? If the Network wishes to incorporate, please contact On Co-op!
2. **Duration:** Is the Network temporary - perhaps surrounding an election or formed in reaction to a local event? Or do you wish to build a long-term support Network, with no pre-determined termination date?
3. **Scope:** What is the purpose of your organization? Is it narrowly focused on a single issue, or broadly focused on a variety of issues?
4. **Diversity:** Who is allowed to be a member? Is it only a meeting of Chairs of Boards of Directors, for instance, or is the public welcome?
5. **Dynamics:** How will the organization deal with change? How will it handle a change in leadership, funding, membership, or focus? What structures should be put into place to deal with these issues before they arise?

Running an Effective Meeting

Network meetings are necessary for:

- Decision-making
- Reporting
- Review
- Problem solving
- Discussion

In reality, running purposeful and participative meetings can be challenging. Common experiences include:

- Long discussions with no conclusion;
- Decision making on the basis of inadequate information;
- Low attendance;
- Uneven participation;
- Unwillingness to ask questions;
- Uncertainty about “next steps”, outcomes or action items resulting from the meeting, and who is responsible for what.

These issues are not easily addressed, but meetings can become more effective if they are well planned with a clear purpose, effectively chaired and focused on decision-making and outcomes.

Plan your meetings effectively by:

- Setting dates well in advance to maximize the number of members available to attend (and sending reminder notices);
- Clarifying the purpose or focus of the meeting in advance;
- Agreeing on the meeting agenda in advance and circulating this before the meeting;
- Identifying which agenda items require a decision and which are for information or discussion;
- Ensuring that staff and financial reports are concise and comprehensible;
- Ensuring that minutes and agreed actions from the previous meetings are circulated;
- Ensuring that all meeting documents are circulated well in advance (i.e. one week prior to the meeting gives everyone enough time to review).

Decision making is much more effective if the committee establishes not only what is to be done but also how and when it will be done and by whom. There are two common methods of making decisions:

1. By consensus
2. By taking a vote

Some organizations have a strong commitment to consensual decision making and only take a vote in exceptional circumstances. Others routinely vote on issues.

Regardless of how decisions are taken, all committee members should be clear about exactly what has been decided and decisions should be clearly noted.

Finding a Meeting Space

Moving your Co-op Network from the abstract to the real world requires more than anything, the booking of a space. Setting a date and time for an initial meeting will motivate interested parties, and separate out those without the time or inclination for the time being to contribute. For a small group, a meeting space could be a restaurant or coffee shop table. Larger groups may wish to book a room at the local library branch, or a board room of a local co-op.

For example, the Guelph Co-op Network (a group that fluctuates from 8-20) has its meeting in the board room of a different member organization every quarter. The host is responsible for providing food and beverages. The benefit of this arrangement is a better understanding of the diversity within the community, and a sharing of responsibilities.

Roles

Whatever the size of your Network, the following roles are necessary to ensure the smooth functioning of the group. A caveat: These are not necessary roles to establish in meeting one. However, as the group begins to develop projects and initiatives, the key roles help ensure that meetings are inclusive and that tasks are completed in a timely manner.

Chair

- Provides leadership and makes sure the meetings materialize
- Facilitates group meetings
- Has an overview of all activities
- Delegate tasks to other Network Members
- Ensures proper balance of work and that no one is “overburdened”
- Ensures projects are feasible and within the groups capacity
- Signs cheques and other official documents
- Encourages social interaction – both formal and informal

Treasurer

- Establishes and manages the group credit union account
- Keeps financial records of the Network and acts as the key financial contact
- Provides the “Treasurer’s Report” at meetings
- Assists with Grant Applications
- Ensures that reports are submitted in time for the AGM and funders (if applicable)

Secretary

- Takes minutes and looks after administration arising from meetings (may be shared)
- Keeps membership lists up-to-date
- Convenes meetings and prepare agendas
- Records names of those in attendance and apologies for “regrets” or non-attendance
- Finalizes and distributes minutes ASAP after meetings
- Spearheads production of Annual Report (if necessary)
- Corresponds with the press

Find your Co-op Neighbours

With the On Co-op e-Directory

To form and maintain a Network, co-ops need an easy way to find and contact others around them. However, many co-ops are hard to find and not all of them have websites...this is where our “Find a Co-op” e-directory comes in handy!

Populated with an extensive list of 1,300+ businesses from Ontario (and some from outside the Ontario), the ‘Find a Co-op’ feature is the province’s only searchable e-Directory of co-operatives. To locate this feature, visit the On Co-op website and click on the ‘Find a Coop’ heading at the far right of the page. Once you enter the e-Directory, there are many ways you can conduct a targeted search. You can also browse the listings to experience the wide range of co-ops that Ontario has to offer.

Our e-Directory includes features that allow you to search in any number of ways. Are you:

Looking for a specific co-op?

Use our keyword search if you know the name of the co-op you are looking for. If not, try searching our alphabetical list located under the co-op image banner to browse through an ordered list of names.

Trying to find a particular type of co-op?

Let’s say, for example, you want to locate the agricultural co-ops in your local Network. You can use the category drop down menu to locate the agricultural sector, choose your location, and even filter using more specific categories like ‘dairy and cheese’, ‘farming supplies’, ‘farmer’s markets’, etc.

Looking for a co-op in your area?

Searching by location will make finding co-ops in your area a breeze. Simply use one of our features to search by:

- General location - Central Southwestern, Eastern, North Eastern, North Western, Other and the smaller regions within
- City/Town
- Postal Code
- Kilometer Radius – eg. 5km – 100km in distance from you

Most of our entries are detailed and include the City, Address, Postal Code, Map, Phone, Website and a short description about the co-operative and their operations. Networks can even use our broad filters to find dues-paying members and other featured co-ops that may be of interest to them. Once you have found the co-ops that interest you, don’t hesitate to contact them and let them know about your Network and its opportunities to network and collaborate. Give it a try and see what you can find!

Cold Calling and Reaching Out

In the beginning, creating excitement about a Network is a bit like making a sales pitch - so it's important to have a few tricks. Cold calls – or the modern equivalents, cold emails and cold LinkedIn-messages – are a bit of an art. Most people don't respond well to unexpected outreach, so it has to be done right.

The first step is to identify your own contacts – friends, co-workers, clients, etc. This personal network is the key to broader outreach, because each of these contacts has their own network. It's worth the effort to talk to these friends to see if they know anyone who could benefit from membership in a co-operative Network. Then, ask your friends to make the introduction between you and the new contact. New contacts made through a mutual acquaintance are much more likely to be open to your ideas, because you're not a stranger – you're a friend of a friend.

After being introduced by a mutual acquaintance, it's important that you're able to explain clearly and concisely what it is you're trying to do: What is the goal of the first Network meeting? What's the goal of the Network, in general? Who do you expect will be there? Most importantly, help the contact answer the question of "What's In It For Me?"

In the beginning, focus efforts on those already connected to the co-op movement in your community – especially co-op board members, who already are thinking about co-op governance and may have more interest in the model than the day-to-day staff.

Network building takes tenacity. It takes a lot of guts for potential members to attend a meeting with a room full of strangers (or near-strangers), so help make the decision to attend an easy one!

Finally – never underestimate the power of a small group of people. With a small group of truly committed co-operators, you'll still be able to profoundly raise the profile of co-ops in your region. Co-op people attend to be risk averse, so if through your actions you can provide them with proof that membership in a regional Network is a good idea, your Network will grow in no time.

Sample Calendar of Events

The most common question we receive about Co-op Networks is “So what does a Network *do*?” The answer is usually “as much or as little as they want”. Some Networks partner on Renewable Energy Projects, start a scholarship program for high school graduates, design a logo for themselves, and beyond. However, the most common initiatives that Networks take on are events.

A co-op Network can be ambitious and have monthly meetings, subcommittees, and frequent events, or it can be more relaxed by choosing quarterly or twice-yearly meetings, and one or two events. It’s really up to the Network itself to decide how much it wants to do over the year.

Below is a sample calendar, with a different event chosen for each month of the year. Keep in mind that for a group to do all these events in a single year would be impressive - but by no means impossible!

| | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| January | Co-op Network Members Charity Skate |
| February | Meet Your MPP |
| March | Co-op Network Meeting |
| April | Co-op Network Wine and Cheese |
| May | -Break- |
| June | Co-op Network Meeting |
| July | Co-op walking tour of the town! |
| August | Co-op Drinks |
| September | Co-op Network Meeting |
| October | Co-op Day Expo |
| November | Shop Co-op Holiday Drive |
| December | Co-op Network Meeting |

Other events may include a co-op pub night, co-op picnic, golf tournament, raffle – or other fundraiser – for a cause, supporting a local youth sports team (and going to cheer!), co-op classes, member swap (where members of one co-op visit another co-op from a different sector), or whatever else your Network can dream up! On the next page, you will find some helpful tools to develop an agenda, the key to a successful meeting! Not only should you clearly state the date and location of the meeting, but include time allocations for each segment of the meeting to help keep discussions on track, as well as identify the key “speaker” for each topic.

Helpful Agenda Templates

Agenda for Initial Network Meeting

Date:

Location:

Objectives:

- Meet fellow co-operators in your community
- Strengthen local co-operative Networks
- Develop Principle #6 – Co-operation Among Co-operatives
- Determine training needs for a Regional Conference
- Promote the Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade
- Increase the contribution of Co-ops to the Ontario Economy

Material Requested Prior to Meeting:

One to two paragraph description of your co-operative/credit union and your webpage link

Proposed Agenda:

1. Brief Introduction to Network Idea (3 minutes)
2. The Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade - what is it? (5 minutes)
3. Show video if available
4. Co-operatives tell their stories, describe products/services etc.
5. Refreshment break (15 minutes)
6. Discuss regional Network goals and brainstorm projects (20 minutes)
7. Next steps - assign roles, plan next meeting date (15 minutes)
8. Adjourn

Post- Meeting:

1. Meeting minutes completed
2. Forward Co-operative summaries/links and meeting outcomes to those present and other interested co-operatives.
3. Create an ongoing Co-op Network

Agenda for Healthy Network Meeting

Courtesy of the Ottawa Co-op Network

MEETING AGENDA

Date and Time

Location, Room, Directions

| | | |
|------|---|------|
| 4:30 | Call to order | |
| 4:35 | Co-op Check-Ins | |
| 4:40 | Approval of the Agenda | |
| 4:45 | Recent Event Debrief | Name |
| 5:00 | Draft strategic work plan | Name |
| 5:20 | International Co-op Day Picnic | Name |
| 5:50 | Local Organic Food Co-op Network roving conference (fall) | Name |
| 6:00 | Adjournment | |

Keeping in Touch

Keeping in touch is critical for keeping a Network vibrant. Often, the easiest way to do so is with Google Groups, Yahoo Groups, or Facebook.

Here's an example of a GTA Co-op Network Facebook Group:

GTA Co-op Network | Members | Events | Photos | Files | Search this group

Write Post | Add Photo/Video | Ask Question | Add File

Write something...

RECENT ACTIVITY

Yesterday at 09:17 · Edited

End of federal housing co-op operating agreements: leaders press for continued funding [http://www.ilercampbell.com/.../end-of-co-op-operating-agre.../...](http://www.ilercampbell.com/.../end-of-co-op-operating-agre.../)

Like · Comment · Share

2 people like this. Seen by 10

Write a comment...

shared Harvest Noon's event. 13 December at 14:53

Jobs for January at Harvest Noon Cafe+Co-op!

Love local organic vegan and vegetarian food? Interested in food justice and supporting a community co-op with a social justice culture? (You don't need to be a University of Toronto student or student at all in order to apply).

APPLY BY: Wednesday December 17th at noon.

we're HIRING

ABOUT 133 members

Public Group

A network of co-op champions who want to promote, network and share local GTA Co-operatives. Feel free to promote your co-op's events, jobs, and news.

133 members · Invite by Email

+ Add people to group

CREATE NEW GROUPS

Groups make it easier than ever to share with friends, family and teammates.

+ Create group

SUGGESTED GROUPS See All

Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) and 4 other friends joined + Join

TCAF: The Toronto Comic Arts Festival and 3 other friends joined + Join

Toronto Vegetarian Association 3,605 members + Join

HARVEST FESTIVAL - Arts & Music Fall Celebration and 3 other friends

www.facebook.com/groups/gtacoopNetwork/

On Co-op is Here to Help

On Co-op is the hub of information for, and about, Ontario's English-speaking co-operatives and credit unions. It is the trade association and capacity-building organization for Ontario's 1,300 co-operatives. On Co-op is a co-operative with a membership base of over 60 co-ops, federations and sector stakeholders. When the members of our own members are included, On Co-op represents about 85% of the co-operatives in Ontario.

The Ontario Co-operative Association (On Co-op™) is the only organization to bring together ALL of Ontario's English-speaking co-operatives and credit unions for education, support, development, information-sharing and celebration. By fostering cross-sector Networking, On Co-op promotes co-operation amongst co-operatives. And, by working and acting together as a co-ordinated group, Ontario's co-ops have a higher profile with the public, government and each other. The Association encourages diversity in its membership—everyone adds something, and everyone learns something!

Co-operatives, credit unions, caisses populaires, co-op associations/federations, co-op champions and sector stakeholders and partners may join the Association. Individuals may also join. On Co-op is itself a co-operative, created in 2002.

Sponsorship and Involvement in Conferences

Connecting your messaging with large public groups of co-operatives

On Co-op hosts events throughout the year that require sponsorship, attendance, and participation to succeed. On Co-op organizes events like the Directors' Forum, Conferences and Roundtables, Queens Park Receptions, Co-op Week celebrations, and more – so there are many chances for you to get involved.

HOST A CONFERENCE as a Network:

Co-ops from your Network can get province-wide recognition by sponsoring events. As attendees, take advantage of opportunities to network with other co-ops in person. We provide opportunities for co-ops to set up display booths or to provide literature, and other times we merely ask for representatives to attend and participate in the fun!

If your Co-op Network is long established, still in formation, or brand new, there are many opportunities for On Co-op to help you. Through our website, e-Newsletters, social media, and sponsorship opportunities, we can create stronger momentum for your own co-op movement.

Working with On Co-op

It can be expensive and time consuming to reach out beyond your usual support base, but On Co-op can help. We have many ways for your Network to promote events, meet-ups, success stories or campaigns. Amplifying your Network's messaging through On Co-op is mostly free, and is an excellent opportunity to reach a receptive audience. We communicate with businesses, customers, associations, and supporters from the co-op sector, so you know that your message is reaching the right people.

On Co-op Website -

On Co-op's communications launch pad

Network Directory – We keep an up-to-date directory of active Co-op Networks. Contact us to list your website, social media handles, and contact info.

Find a Co-op e-Directory – We make it easy to find the co-ops in your area. Check out (s.coop/findacoop) to ensure that your co-op is displayed correctly. The Find a Co-op e-Directory is a great way for co-ops inside and outside your Network to find and contact each other.

Job Postings Board - If co-ops in your Network are looking to hire, consider sending your listing to us to promote on our job postings board. On Co-op can reach a targeted audience of applicants who are interested in working in the co-op sector.

On Co-op Newsletters -

Helping On Co-op keep its membership informed, and inform Ontario about its membership

The e-Newsletter contains news and information for and about Ontario's co-operatives and credit unions, sector stakeholders and champions. It is sent out via email approximately every four weeks. We have an active readership of 2,700 e-mail addresses that receive the newsletter each month. Networks and their co-operatives are invited to send their news releases to our Communications Manager to be considered in the next newsletter. Our newsletter is another easy way that we can help co-ops expand their voices, and it's all free!

Social Media -

Connecting you to our online community

We invite Regional Networks to connect with On Co-op to access our wide social media following. Our Facebook and Twitter channels are active and we post often about co-op events and services, sector news, national and international developments, and of course, happenings from within local co-ops like yours!

Facebook: ** Active since 2009, 974 likes

To promote your Network using Facebook, just send us relevant information in an email. We'll post the news after reviewing to confirm that it meets our guidelines.

Twitter: ** Active since 2009, 695 followers, ~ 2900 tweets, daily postings

Don't hesitate to connect with us on Twitter. It is the easiest and fastest way for us to promote your co-op through social media and we tend to give more local exposure through Twitter. Follow us, and we can retweet posts about information and events related to your Network.

Collaboration Examples from other Networks

Niagara Co-op Network 2014 Municipal Candidate Election Survey

Prior to the 2014 Municipal Election, the Niagara Co-op Network met to formulate a short 6-question survey to help determine the co-op literacy of every candidate running for office in the Niagara region. Candidates responses were collated into a report released co-op week that can be found on the On Co-op website with search terms "Niagara Election." Responses were varied and illuminating, and report gained traction in regional newspapers - creating visibility for the co-op movement during election time.

Here are the questions:

Question One: Are you a member of a co-operative and or credit union(s)? If so, name it (them).

Question Two: How would you define a co-operative?

Question Three: Are you familiar with other co-operatives/credit unions in Niagara? Please list.

Question Four: Describe one benefit co-operatives offer our community.

Question Five: How do you see co-operatives contributing to a more sustainable region?

Question Six: If elected, how you will help co-operative businesses grow in Niagara?

Follow their template, or formulate your own survey. Contact On Co-op for other ideas!

Ottawa Co-op Network

The Ottawa Co-op Network has undertaken a number of projects, including an annual celebration on Co-op day, a MP meet-and-greet, and even a Co-op Bonspiel. One of the most effective projects undertaken by the Network was simply a map of all the co-ops working in the Ottawa Region. Find it here: http://www.ysowlmaclure.ca/?page_id=3526

Check in with the Ottawa Co-op Network Facebook Group to see what they've been up to recently: <https://www.facebook.com/OttawaCoOpNetwork>

Ontario Buy Co-op

On Co-op has built a list of co-op products and services available in the province. Use our template to showcase your own local or regional diversity:

www.ontario.coop/cms/documents/997/Buy_Co-op.pdf

Other Networks and Associations

Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade

The ambitious plan in this Blueprint - the “2020 vision” - is for the co-operative form of business by 2020 to become:

- The acknowledged leader in economic, social and environmental sustainability
- The model preferred by people
- The fastest growing form of enterprise

Read more at ica.coop/en/publications/blueprint-co-operative-decade

CCO

CCO is On Co-op’s Francophone counterpart in Ontario. Read more about their activities here:

www.cco.coop/fr/

Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada

CMC is a national, bilingual association that represents more than 18 million co-operative members from 9,000 co-operatives. They are our National Apex organization.

CMC activities are targeted at helping co-operatives form, develop and thrive. Through advocacy with the federal government, CMC provides a knowledgeable voice to encourage national policies that strengthen the co-operative economy. CMC also supports wide-ranging research in partnership with leading research institutions and government to inform policy.

Read more at canada.coop

ICA Co-op Monitor Call for Data

The World Co-operative Monitor project aims to depict a multi-dimension representation of the global panorama of co-operatives and mutual organizations worldwide based not only on turnover but also on social values. In this way your contribution is essential, every single co-op represents in our vision a little tessera of the mosaic of the global cooperative movement. Your submission will contribute to better define the outlines in the bigger picture. www.monitor.coop

On Co-op Spirit Awards

The Co-operative Spirit Recognition Awards program was established in 1999 to recognize the enormous contributions made by Ontario co-operatives to the economic and social well-being of our province. Read more, including how to nominate someone in your community, here:

ontario.coop/programs_services/engagement_and_awareness/spirit_awards

Ontario Nonprofit Network

Organized in 2007, the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN) is the convening network for the approximately 55,000 nonprofit organizations across Ontario. As a 7,000-strong provincial network, with a volunteer base of 300 sector leaders, ONN brings the diverse voices of the sector to government, funders and the business sector to create and influence systemic change. theonnc.ca/

References

Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade

The ambitious plan in this Blueprint - the “2020 vision” - is for the co-operative form of business by 2020 to become:

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- The model preferred by people
- The fastest growing form of enterprise

Read more at <http://ica.coop/en/publications/blueprint-co-operative-decade>

“Running Effective Meetings”, www.diycommitteeguide.org/

L. Mollenhauer, V. Johnston, J. Gates (2011). “Building a Nonprofit Network”, prepared for the Ontario Volunteer Centre Network.

Liberating Structures, <http://www.liberatingstructures.com/>