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PRESS INFORMATION

Global recognition for The Phone Co-op

The Phone Co-op was recognised as one of the outstanding co-operatives from around the world at the International Co-operative Alliance General Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, last week.

The Oxfordshire-based telecoms co-operative, the only one of its kind in the UK, received an Honourable Mention in the medium sized category of the dotCoop Global Awards for Co-operative Excellence and was the only UK co-operative amongst the nine award winners.

Accepting the award on behalf of The Phone Co-op, chief executive Vivian Woodell said: "It is a great honour for The Phone Co-op to be recognised at a global level, especially as the key criteria used by the judges were all about how well each organisation put into practice a distinctively co-operative business approach, which is what we aim to do. I should like to pay tribute to our board, and to my colleagues, as well as to our customers and members for having made this achievement possible."

The dotCoop Global Awards are given to those co-operatives who demonstrate a strong commitment to the co-operative business model. DotCoop also looked for co-ops whose missions and practices clearly demonstrate co-operative values, especially in their websites.

The three overall winners in the large, medium and small categories respectively were Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative, a fertilizer production and distribution cooperative with some 55 million members; National Cooperative Grocers Association, a co-operatively owned trade association for US food co-ops; and Pachamama Coffee Cooperative, a co-operative owned by 150,000 coffee farmers worldwide.

In addition to The Phone Co-op, DotCoop awarded honorable mentions to Cabot Creamery Cooperative of the United States and Crédit Coopératif of France in the large business category; the Wedge Community Co-op of the United States in the medium-sized business category; and CAC Santa Maria Magdalena of Peru and FESAN (Federacion Nacional de Cooperativas de Servicios Sanitarios, Ltda) of Chile in the small business category.

In addition, the judges gave a special recognition award to the Co-operative Press Limited, in acknowledgement of its overall contribution to the co-operative movement in the UK and the world as the oldest co-operatively-owned newspaper.

The awards were presented by the dotCoop board chair, Louie Doering, at the International Co-operative Alliance General Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland. The winning co-operatives received funds to travel to the meeting as part of their award.

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Notes to editors:

DotCooperation LLC (dotCoop) is the sponsor of the .coop domain and responsible for management of the .coop registry and verification of registrants. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of the National Cooperative Business Association, a US-based national, cross-industry membership association.

International Co-operative Alliance is an independent, non-governmental association which unites, represents and serves co-operatives worldwide. Founded in 1895, ICA has 233 member organisations from 89 countries active in all sectors of the economy. Together these co-operatives represent more than 800 million individuals worldwide.

The Phone Co-op is the UK's only telecommunications co-operative, procuring telecommunications services on behalf of its customers, many of whom are co-operatives, charities and other not-for-profit organisations. The Phone Co-op's service has been taken up by over 15,000 customers, including Midcounties, Channel Islands, Southern, East of England, and Radstock Co-operative Societies, Suma Wholefoods, Christian Aid, Amnesty International, Triodos Bank, the Centre for Alternative Technology, Manchester City Council and Unison. As a co-operative owned by its customer members, The Phone Co-op distributes any profits which are not re-invested back to members via a dividend based on each member's spend and through a loan fund which supports other co-operatives. For more information, visit www.thephone.coop

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