



Foundation

in partnership with Co-op

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Shropshire-based environmental project gets the green light from new Carbon Innovation Fund**

#### **Shropshire Good Food Partnership gets support part-funded through the sale of compostable carrier bags in Co-op stores**

[Shropshire Good Food Partnership CIC](#) is to receive a grant of nearly £100k to tackle climate change.

It is one of a total of 14 projects across the world that has been awarded a combined £1.3m from the new Carbon Innovation Fund by the Co-op Foundation and Co-op which aims to reduce carbon emissions in the food and farming sectors through innovative methods.

Shropshire Good Food Partnership are going to be making an impact locally through working within the local food system. This will support the development of farming practices that regenerate land in Shropshire and build on the experiences of local producers who are leaders in sustainable food production.

Other projects being funded worldwide include [rain and fog harvesting technology](#) in the Galapagos as a greener alternative to freshwater delivery via tanker, and [an oyster hatchery](#) in Cornwall using oysters as a means to take in carbon from the atmosphere.

Funding for the £3m Carbon Innovation Fund has been donated by Co-op from the sale of compostable carrier bags in the UK, with the remainder coming from the Co-op Foundation's own funds donated by Members. It is the largest partnership of its kind between the retailer and its charity.

Co-op Foundation is Co-op's charity. Its flexible funding helps to build fairer and more co-operative communities. This is the Foundation's first fund focused specifically on carbon emission reduction.

#### **Nick Crofts, CEO of the Co-op Foundation, said:**

"We created the Carbon Innovation Fund to encourage innovation and help tackle emissions in the food and farming industries – and what an incredible first 14 projects

we're funding! From Cornwall to Malawi, we're working with our new partners to create sustainable change and develop inventive solutions to complex issues. We cannot wait to see what our partners achieve as they co-operate to make our world a better place to live."

The Carbon Innovation Fund follows Co-op's own commitment to become a [Net Zero business by 2040](#). It is dedicated to improving the sustainability of its products and reducing food waste and decreasing plastic packaging. It works alongside nationwide partners such as [Fare Share](#) to make sure that surplus food doesn't go to waste. This funding is a continuation of its work around lowering its own carbon emissions which is an integral part of its [10-point climate plan](#).

**Verity Warnecke, Head of Climate Change, Co-op, said:**

"We are facing into a climate and environment crisis and we have to recognise that we all need to do more, and quicker. The Carbon Innovation Fund forms part of the action we are taking, it supports doing something different and encourages innovation that can be shared to benefit society in general - and the first round of funding does exactly that. It's this type of co-operation which is needed across the world to help accelerate our response to the climate crisis if we are going to have a natural environment which we are proud to pass on to future generations."

The £3m Carbon Innovation Fund will run over the next three years. Community groups can subscribe to the Co-op Foundation blog to be the first to find out when later rounds of funding open: [www.coopfoundation.org.uk/blog](http://www.coopfoundation.org.uk/blog)

**ENDS**

For more information, please contact Sairah Rehman on [sairah.rehman@coop.co.uk](mailto:sairah.rehman@coop.co.uk) or 0758 101 1201.

**Notes to Editors**

**Carbon Innovation Fund partners:**

- **Coed Talyfan, Wales (£95,000):** Trialling peat-free mushroom cultivation for small to medium-scale farming enterprises, which will help them to diversify what they grow, whilst creating a new income stream. They will also experiment with alternative growing techniques, potentially increasing resistance to pests and disease, drought tolerance, and locking carbon in the soil.
- **Edinburgh Agroecology Co-operative CIC, Edinburgh (£100,000):** Creating a localised market garden to demonstrate how land in and around urban centres can be used for the benefit of people and the environment. The team will also

gather data about the soil health and improvements to biodiversity resulting from their work.

- **Fal Fishery, Cornwall (£99,983):** Increasing production of oyster larvae at its hatchery. It will also collect data to create an evidence base, which they hope will result in increasing the minimum landing size of native oysters. This would allow them to mature properly, take in more carbon, and reproduce. They are also reducing oysters going to waste in the food industry by preserving and canning them to extend shelf life.
- **Forum for the Future, UK-wide (£100,000):** Developing a cross-sector network to demonstrate how farmers in mainstream food retail supply chains can move to regenerative agriculture methods.
- **The Fairtrade Foundation, Mbarara and Masaka in Central and Western Uganda (£99,220):** Scaling up the production of briquettes (used as fuel for cookstoves) made from coffee farm waste. The use of farm waste reduces methane emissions and the need to burn wild wood as fuel.
- The **Galapagos Conservation Trust Santa Cruz Island (£77,220):** Running trials of rain and fog harvesting technology to reduce the need for tankers delivering freshwater to farmers and residents on the island daily. This project will also provide local farmers with a community educational programme focused on best practice.
- **Linking Environment and Farming, UK-wide (£99,397):** Developing five net-zero farms across the four nations and overseas to demonstrate practical knowledge and help farmers achieve the National Farmers' Union target to be net-zero carbon by 2040.
- **Malawi Fruits, Northern Malawi (£85,500):** Scaling up a pilot of polytunnel farming in Northern Malawi, which significantly improves yield and predictability of crop growth. The polytunnels will focus on supporting women to enter the agri-economy, and help young graduates to gain jobs and become agricultural entrepreneurs.
- **Partneriaeth Eco Dyffryn Dyfi Eco Valley Partnership, Wales (£89,996):** Conducting farm trials of experimental perennial green manures (PGMs). These have been shown to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from soil compared to fertilising crops with traditional fertilisers.
- **Regather Ltd, Sheffield (£100,000):** Create a demonstrator site at the Regather Farm, which will provide a learning environment for others in the farming industry to view the benefits of agroforestry. It will also support the planting and maintaining of fruit trees across Sheffield.

- **[Shropshire Good Food Partnership CIC](#) , Shropshire (£96,500):** Are going to be making an impact locally through working within the local food system. This will support the development of farming practices that regenerate land in Shropshire and build on the experiences of local producers who are leaders in sustainable food production.
- **[South West Mull and Iona Development](#), (£82,990):** Will double their harvest of kelp at their community-owned seaweed farm. Its carbon-absorbing kelp can be used to reduce methane emissions in livestock feed, help to develop bio-degradable plastics and reduce the need for mineral synthesis in fertilizer applications.
- **[Size of Wales](#), Wales (£96,990):** Build on the success of the Deforestation-Free Nation campaign: a campaign to empower Welsh communities to tackle overseas deforestation through collective action, collaboration and changing behaviour.
- **[The Wildlife Trust BCN](#), Cambridgeshire (£96,567):** Will collect and analyse data from a two-year project, which established local wet farming plots on peatlands in the Cambridgeshire Fens. This will restore the land back into a carbon sink, protect biodiversity and help with flood management, demonstrating alternative and sustainable farming methods.

### **About the Co-op Foundation**

- Co-op Foundation is the Co-op's charity, helping people challenge inequality and co-operate for change so they can share a fairer future.
- We want to make long-lasting change but for now we're focusing on three areas:
  - Our Belong projects have already helped thousands of young people beat loneliness. We're now sharing what we've learned so others can do more to make a difference that lasts.
  - Strong communities work together to make things better. We fund in partnership with others to help people do even more.
  - We want voices to be heard from communities that feel the effects of inequality, and we invest in organisations that truly represent those who are often ignored.
- [www.coopfoundation.org.uk](http://www.coopfoundation.org.uk)

### **About Co-op**

The Co-op is one of the world's largest consumer co-operatives with interests across food, funerals, insurance and legal services. Owned by over 4 million UK consumers, the Co-op operates 2,600 food stores, over 800 funeral homes and provides products to over 5,100 other stores, including those run by independent co-operative societies and through its wholesale business, Nisa Retail Limited.

Employing over 60,000 people, the Co-op has an annual turnover of £10 billion. As well as having clear financial and operational objectives, the Co-op is a recognised leader for its social goals and community-led programmes. The Co-op exists to meet members' needs and stand up for the things they believe in.

When Co-op Members buy selected Co-op branded products and services, 2p for every pound spent is shared equally between the Local Community Fund for local causes and the Community Partnerships Fund, to support communities through like-minded national charities and organisations.

The Co-op [Community Wellbeing Index](#) gives an insight into what's important to people in a local community. From the quality of education, housing affordability, and public transport - to the amount of green space and the number of community centres in an area. We have gathered data for over 28,000 communities across the UK, to understand how they score across these and many other wellbeing measures.

To learn more about Co-op Membership and select a cause to support, visit: [www.coop.co.uk/membership](http://www.coop.co.uk/membership)