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# news release

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**THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA**  
**AND THE SOCIÉTÉ DE DÉVELOPPEMENT**  
**DESJARDINS COLLABORATE ON A PROJECT IN RUSSIA**

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today announced a contribution of \$2.5 million to the Société de développement international Desjardins (SDID) for the development of a legal and regulatory framework and a network of 20 agricultural credit unions throughout rural Russia. The project will be implemented by the SDID in collaboration with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Russian Committee for Credit Union Development.

"I am delighted that the SDID is involved in this project. The SDID is the ideal Canadian partner, given their expertise in establishing agricultural credit unions in Canada," said Mr. Ouellet.

The Minister underlined the leading role that Canada wants to play in supporting political and economic reform in Russia. The project is part of a five-year, \$150 million technical-assistance program for Russia. Program objectives are to promote the transition to a market-based economy, to support democratic development and to increase Canadian trade and investment. The program focusses on training, institution building and policy advice in sectors deemed critical to political and economic reform.

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