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During the International Year of Cooperatives

***Corporate Knights magazine ranks Desjardins Group first
among its “Best 50 Corporate Citizens in Canada”***

Lévis (Qc), June 8, 2012 – The highly regarded magazine *Corporate Knights* (www.corporateknights.com) announced today that it has ranked Desjardins Group first on its list of the Best 50 Corporate Citizens in Canada. The magazine’s annual honour roll of companies is compiled using 11 indicators that measure social and environmental performance and corporate governance.

Desjardins Group, which has had a sustainable development policy in place since 2005, stood out from other contenders by:

- Significantly cutting back on fossil fuel consumption (energy-efficiency measures for its buildings, reduced paper usage, a Lévis–Montréal employee shuttle, program promoting employee use of carpooling and the BIXI bike-sharing system)
- Offering members and clients insurance premium discounts of 15% for hybrid vehicles and 10% for fuel-efficient vehicles, and growing the sale of its socially responsible investment funds 450% between 2008 and 2010
- Attaining LEED gold certification for its Le Windsor building in Montreal
- Establishing incentive pay for a senior management member instrumental in developing microfinance solidarity products for Desjardins members experiencing financial hardships
- Basing its President and CEO’s compensation on one of the lowest CEO-to-average-employee pay ratios
- Marking an increase in the number of women on Desjardins Group’s Board of Directors
- Helping Développement international Desjardins sustain and strengthen financial cooperatives, serving more than 8 million members and clients in some 30 developing countries.

“This new honour will continue to spur our efforts in the realm of sustainable development and social responsibility,” said Monique F. Leroux, Chair of the Board, President and CEO of Desjardins Group. “In this International Year of Cooperatives, we intend to stay the course to ensure the sustainable prosperity of our 5.6 million members and their communities, whether by enhancing our member experience, reducing our ecological footprint or introducing new innovations in democratic governance to our caisse network.”

This marks the third consecutive year that a cooperative organization has captured first place in the ranking by *Corporate Knights*, which awarded top honours to [Mountain Equipment Co-op](#) in 2010 and [The Co-operators](#) in 2011. Ms. Leroux is pleased to see financial cooperatives occupy the top three slots in 2012 with Desjardins Group followed by [Vancity](#) and The Co-operators. “This speaks volumes about our 'cooperative DNA',” she noted. “As organizations, we’re rooted in our communities, dedicated to our people and the environment, and managed with a view to long-term development.”

About Desjardins Group

Desjardins Group www.desjardins.com is the leading cooperative financial group in Canada with assets of \$196.4 billion. Drawing on the strength of its caisse network in Quebec and Ontario and its subsidiaries across Canada, it offers a full range of financial products and services to its 5.6 million members and clients. Desjardins specializes in Wealth Management and Life and Health Insurance, in Property and Casualty Insurance, in Personal Services, in Business and Institutional Services. As one of the country’s largest employers, included among [Canada’s Top 100 Employers for 2012](#)[™], Desjardins is supported by the skills of its 44,645 employees and the commitment of nearly 5,400 elected officers. A new education and cooperation program is now available to Desjardins members and the general public. For more information, visit www.desjardins.com/co-opme.

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