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Triodos Bank increases lending and support to the environment sector in its mission to fight climate change

Triodos Bank, the UK's leading ethical bank, has doubled its team of environmental lending specialists, to help finance the UK's environmental industries. The financial downturn has seen many banks pull back from key environmental sectors which are crucial to fight climate change. In contrast, 2008 saw Triodos make three times more commitments to renewable energy projects than in any previous year and these will translate into new loans during 2009.

"Such a significant increase in commitments means that 2009 should be our biggest year of lending to the renewable energy sector," says Dr Bevis Watts, Head of Business Banking at Triodos Bank. "Doubling our team ensures that we are ready to meet this increase in business and ready to finance businesses that need to invest smartly. Over 25% of our lending is to the environment sector and we expect that proportion to increase."

Triodos is actively looking to help fund businesses with environmental objectives, developing innovation and technologies that will help to fight climate change and contribute to building a sustainable future.

One example is Trojan Services Limited, an innovative recycling business, manufacturing civil engineering products for the rail industry including their **Trotrof**® cable troughs. Trojan is working to meet the environmental challenges posed to Network Rail by the use of traditional concrete products. 'It is vital that banks keep lending to environmental businesses like us. The money we have borrowed has been used to fund the start of the commercial stage of the business development of **Trotrof**® railway products. We would have been unable to fulfill our growth potential without this funding.' Says Stewart Wellens, Managing Director, Trojan Services Limited, the Network Rail Environmental Innovation Award Winner 2008.

The Triodos Business Banking team forecast the key growth areas for 2009 to be renewable energy – wind, hydro and anaerobic digestion. 2008 has already been the UK's busiest year yet in lending activity sector and this is likely to grow with the Government's commitment to building a green economy and to 30% of energy from green sources by 2020.

"Triodos is concerned about the potential impact on the environmental agenda if mainstream banks do not support the environmental industries. Triodos invests in the future of the sustainable sectors as we see great potential from an environmental and an investment point of view. The environmental industries and innovation are crucial in fighting climate change and must be supported during this economic downturn," continues Watts.

Triodos is the UK's leading lender to small renewable energy projects and currently lends over £56 million to the environmental sector. Unlike other banks, Triodos has liquidity and credit because it has significantly more money on deposit than it lends, so it can offer borrowers up to £30m per customer, with no changes to credit or interest rates.

Watts' team has an impressive track record in supporting environment businesses, with more than 12 years experience supporting renewable energy projects in the UK. Current Triodos activity in the environment sector includes loans to businesses in the environment sectors: Renewable Energy – Wind and Hydro, Recycling, Food Waste Collection, Composting, Recycled Product Manufacture, Solar Equipment Manufacture, Education and Consultancy.

As well as lending, Triodos' investment banking arm has pioneered renewable energy finance making equity investments in environmental businesses. Its fund, Triodos Renewables, has invested in the world's first tidal energy plant in Northern Ireland, the Marine Current Turbines, and there are plans to raise an Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS) fund which will support environmental industries next year.

Ends.

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Notes to editors:

Triodos Bank only finances enterprises which create social, environmental or cultural added value. Key sectors include organic food and farming, renewable energy, social housing, and fair trade. Transparency is a core value: customers are informed about the bank's lending and can target their savings to particular areas of investment. A range of personal savings accounts is offered, and full banking services are available for businesses and charities. Triodos Bank is an independent bank founded in the Netherlands in 1980. Its principles and independence are protected through a special shareholding trust. The UK office opened in 1995 and is based in Bristol.