

# MAPPING: KEY FIGURES

## NATIONAL REPORT: FIJI

ICA-EU PARTNERSHIP

## Table of Contents

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>I. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT</b> .....          | <b>2</b> |
| <b>I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</b> .....             | <b>2</b> |
| <b>II. PUBLIC NATIONAL STATISTICS</b> .....       | <b>3</b> |
| <b>III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b> .....            | <b>4</b> |
| <b>II. KEY FIGURES</b> .....                      | <b>5</b> |
| <b>I. ICA MEMBER DATA</b> .....                   | <b>5</b> |
| <b>II. GENERAL OVERVIEW</b> .....                 | <b>5</b> |
| <b>III. SECTOR OVERVIEW</b> .....                 | <b>6</b> |
| <b>III. GRAPHS</b> .....                          | <b>7</b> |
| <b>I. NUMBER OF COOPERATIVES PER SECTOR</b> ..... | <b>7</b> |
| <b>IV. ANNEXES</b> .....                          | <b>8</b> |

## **Republic of Fiji- Key Figures National Report**

### **I. Introduction and context**

This report is part of a global mapping exercise launched by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) and its regional offices within a partnership signed with the European Commission for the period 2016-2020, which aims to strengthen the cooperative movement and its capacity to promote international development. Other research projects include a worldwide legal frameworks analysis, and several thematic researches on themes of significance for cooperatives.

Responding to challenges and existing knowledge gaps facing the cooperative movement, this research provides exhaustive information on cooperatives worldwide. This has been achieved by collecting the input of ICA members through an online questionnaire, and completing it with relevant national statistics, in order to obtain an accurate picture of the national situation. Mapping out cooperatives in each country provides a more precise picture of the cooperative context at national and regional levels, enhances the movement's visibility, networking, partnerships opportunities, as well as advocacy, and empowers cooperators by providing them tools for positive change.

Within this framework, the present report showcases information about the cooperative landscape in the Republic of Fiji, hereafter referred as Fiji.

#### **i. Historical background**

The cooperative movement in Fiji goes back to the first British colonial laws that were formulated to encourage cooperatives in 1947. During Fiji's struggle for independence, cooperatives became a symbol of resistance wherein Fijians resisted colonial control over certain goods. Over the years, the focus of the movement has changed from predominantly agricultural cooperatives to an increasing number of consumer cooperatives that are located mostly in rural and maritime areas. Now, the government provides funds to promote the formation and establishment of cooperatives. The National Cooperative Federation (NCF), formed in 2018, is the apex body for cooperatives in Fiji. The Department of Cooperative Business (DCB), within the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism (MITT), is the regulatory and promotional authority on cooperatives. Since 2013, on an average 20 new cooperatives have registered with the DCB each year.

In the early 20th century, many Fijians were members of agricultural and dairy associations where they pooled finances to buy seeds and other agricultural implements. In 1931, the colonial Legislative Council took administrative action to establish a committee to report on agricultural and financial

cooperatives. This eventually led to the first regulations in 1947 and creation of the post of the Registrar. The Naluna Cooperative Society in Tailevu province, a consumer cooperative, was the first one to register in 1948. Of the 25 cooperatives registered in 1948, 23 were primary producers' marketing societies that engaged in the production and marketing of copra and other agricultural products. Some also operated consumer retail stores and transport services. From 1948 to 1958, although the number of cooperatives continued to increase, the lack of training and inefficient management prevented them from developing a successful, self-help, long-term business. Consumer cooperatives, organised mostly by Fijians, also faced competition from private stores.

During the 1960s, the Bula Tale people formed retail cooperatives in southwestern Viti Levu. These were lauded for their efforts to improve their community's standard of living. The Cooperative Training Centre (renamed Cooperative College in 2018) was established by the government in 1960 to provide for training and development of cooperatives. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) reported that there were 716 cooperatives with 14,442 members in 1969, just before Fiji gained independence. The Fiji Cooperative Union Ltd (FCUL) was established in 1973 as the apex of all cooperatives. Increasing polarisation in the multi-ethnic society deterred the growth of cooperatives for most of the 1970s and 1980s. According to an ICA survey in 1996, there were 532 cooperatives, with the majority in agriculture (202), followed by consumer (130), savings and credit (122) and others. A 1998 Act established the Coconut Industry Development Authority to promote copra cooperatives.

Since 2006, change in laws led to families vacating their farms and a decrease in membership in thrift and credit cooperatives. In 2008, there were 91 registered thrift and credit cooperatives. The Cabinet restructured the Cooperative Department in 2010 wherein the Department of Cooperative and Small Businesses was placed under the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MITT). The government started working on reviving the cooperative sector in 2011 by drafting a National Cooperative Policy to amend the Cooperative Act and form new capital instruments. They promoted newer cooperatives in agriculture, fisheries, forestry and dealing in exports. The forward looking 'Fijian Trade Policy Framework (2015-2025)' recognised the role played by cooperatives in the economic, social, cultural and human capacity spheres. It promoted education cooperatives and also encouraged the reestablishment of the NCF. The '5-Year and 20-Year National Development Plan' that came out in 2017 promoted policies to strengthen the institutional capacity of cooperatives and make them sustainable in fields such as agriculture, renewable energy and women's empowerment. The 'Target 100' initiative was started by the Fijian government in January 2018 to assist and guide 100 cooperatives across Fiji to be fully compliant with the Cooperatives Act. It also marked the platinum celebration of the cooperative movement in Fiji.

## ii. Public national statistics

For a more comprehensive picture of the cooperative movement in Fiji, the present section provides key data from the country's public registers as a useful background context to the ICA members' data showcased in Section II of the report.

The following data has been received from DCB, the regulatory and promotional authority on cooperatives.

**NUMBER OF COOPERATIVES:**

As of 2020, there are 379 operating cooperatives.

**PRODUCTION VALUE:**

As of 2020, the revenue generated by cooperatives is EUR 88,747,968 (FJ\$ 22.04 million).

### **iii. Research methodology**

The aim of the mapping research is to collect and make publicly available reliable and up-to-date data to understand what the cooperative movement represents in the targeted country. With this view, the data detailed in the present report has been collected using the methodology detailed below.

The methodological tools include a questionnaire used to collect the data, which was distributed online to the members, as well as a methodological note provided for further guidance. They were built jointly with all ICA regional offices with the support of external experts from the European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises (Euricse) and are applied in a harmonised way in all the target countries.

The classifications used in the research are consistent with the internal system used within the ICA movement (e.g. on membership status and types of cooperative organisations) and with standards increasingly adopted in recent studies and by international organisations like the ILO – e.g. using international classifications of economic activities such as the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) rev. 4, which ensures the comparability of statistics both nationally and internationally, as well as with statistics on other forms of enterprises.

Regarding the target organisations, considering that a worldwide survey has very challenging goals, and while the value of directly collecting data from non-member cooperatives must be recognised, the present Mapping exercise targets cooperative organisations members of the ICA.

Furthermore, in order to complete the ICA members' data, the decision was taken to also look at external sources, to provide additional and more exhaustive cooperative statistics for the country. As a result, the data is collected following two strategies contemporaneously: 1) collecting statistics already available in the country; 2) carrying out a survey targeting ICA cooperative members.

In Fiji, the Mapping questionnaire, was distributed to, and completed by one ICA member organisation in the country. After some additional follow-up and clarifications from the member, the figures provided were compiled to be presented in the next section.

## II. Key figures

This section presents the results of the data collection directed by the ICA members.

Fiji has one ICA member organisation:

Department of Cooperative Business (DCB)

DCB: It is a government entity under the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, and is responsible for formulating and implementing policies and strategies to facilitate the promotion, establishment and monitoring of cooperative businesses in Fiji. It provides training to cooperative members and officials; and creates awareness about cooperatives. It became a member of ICA in 2019.

### i. ICA member data

The data collected was provided by DCB for the year 2020. While a significant portion of the questionnaire was completed, data could not be provided for the following variables:

- Number of membership and employment in cooperatives
- Sector-wise data of membership and employment in cooperatives
- Gender-disaggregated data for membership and employment in cooperatives
- Proportion of youth membership and employment in cooperatives represented

### ii. General overview

The present section provides an overview of the ICA membership data for DCB. It is displayed in several categories and with the support of graphs, for clarity purposes.

| Category                           | Total (as of 2020) |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Number of cooperatives represented | 379                |

Table 1: Cooperative statistics in Fiji (DCB, 2020)

### iii. Sector overview

The sectors used below correspond to the categories used in the ISIC rev. 4. to classify the economic activities carried out by the organisations concerned.

Cooperatives in Fiji are present in the following sectors: agriculture and food; finance; wholesale and retail trade; and others.

DCB represents cooperatives in the following sectors:

| Sector                 | Agriculture and food<br>(Sugar, agriculture, livestock and land) | Finance<br>(Thrift) | Wholesale and retail trade<br>(Consumer, service and multipurpose) | Others<br>(Eco-tourism and others) |
|------------------------|--|---------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Number of cooperatives | 141  | 49                  | 167  | 22                                 |

Table 2: Cooperative statistics in Fiji (DCB, 2020)

### III. Graphs

#### i. Number of cooperatives per sector

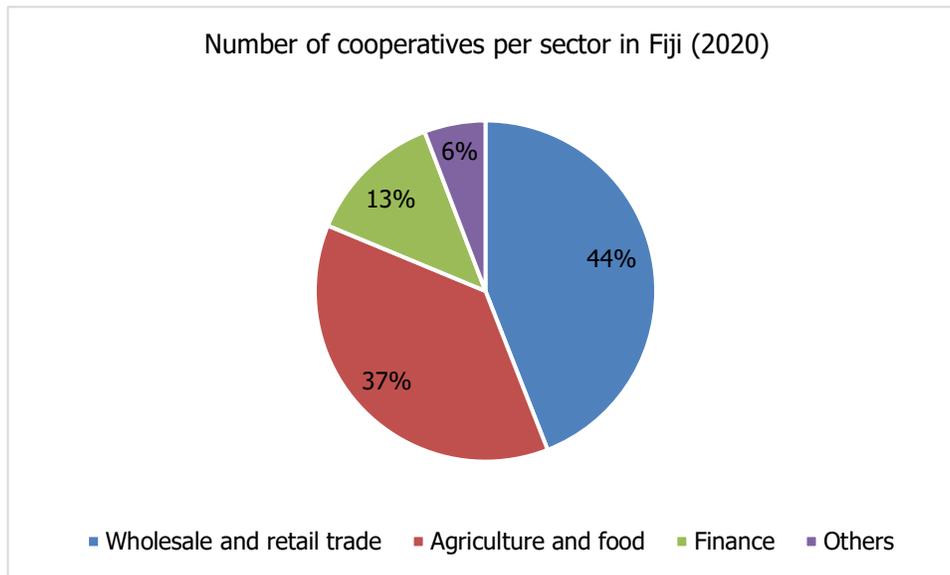


Figure 1: Number of cooperatives per sector in Fiji (2020)

## IV. Annexes

Sources and contacts are listed below.

### Sources

1. The public national statistics for Fiji were provided by the Department of Cooperative Business.
2. ICA-AP (2020). [Fiji country snapshot](#)

### Contacts

Further details on the Mapping research and other country reports are available on [www.coops4dev.coop](http://www.coops4dev.coop)

The production of this report was overseen by staff from ICA-AP Office. For any further information or clarification, please contact [mappingresearch@ica.coop](mailto:mappingresearch@ica.coop)

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