



International
Co-operative
Alliance



Cooperatives
of the Americas
A Region of the International
Cooperative Alliance

MAPPING: KEY FIGURES

NATIONAL REPORT: BRAZIL

ICA – EU PARTNERSHIP



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Table of contents

I.	INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT	2
<i>i.</i>	<i>Historical background</i>	3
II.	KEY FIGURES	6
<i>iv.</i>	<i>ICA member data</i>	8
<i>v.</i>	<i>General overview</i>	8
<i>vi.</i>	<i>Sector overview</i>	8
III.	GRAPHS	9
<i>vii.</i>	<i>Percentage of total cooperatives by sector</i>	9
<i>viii.</i>	<i>Percentage of memberships by sector</i>	10
<i>ix.</i>	<i>Percentage of employment by sector</i>	10
<i>x.</i>	<i>Percentage of turnover by sector</i>	11
IV.	ANNEXES	12

I. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This report is part of a Mapping exercise launched by the International Cooperative Alliance and its regional offices, within the framework of a partnership signed with the European Commission for the period 2016-2020. The programme aims to strengthen the cooperative movement and its capacity to promote international development. Other research projects led within this partnership 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 seeks to provide exhaustive information on cooperatives worldwide. This is achieved through a process jointly conducted by the ICA and its four regional offices – Cooperatives of the Americas, Cooperatives Europe, ICA Africa, and ICA Asia-Pacific – using a common methodology. Each office collected the input of ICA members present in the countries within its geographic area, by using the same 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 Brazil.

i. Historical background

In Brazil, the culture of cooperation has been observed since the time of Portuguese colonization, stimulated by public officials, the military, liberal professionals, workers and European immigrants¹. Officially, the movement began in 1889, in Minas Gerais, with the founding of the Economic Cooperative of Public Employees of Ouro Preto, whose focus was the consumption of agricultural products. Later, other cooperatives appeared in Minas Gerais and also in the states of Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul².

The OCB website also mentions that in 1902, the Swiss priest Theodor Amstad founded the first credit union in Brazil: Sicredi Pioneira, which is still active today. Based in Nova Petrópolis (RS), the cooperative was the solution found by Amstad to improve the lives of the residents of the municipality, who until then had no bank. Starting in 1906, it was the turn of agricultural cooperatives, idealized by rural producers and immigrants, especially of German and Italian origin.

With the spread of the cooperative doctrine, the cooperatives had their expansion in an autonomous model, oriented to meet the needs of the members. Although there was a movement to spread the word about cooperatives, few people were informed about them. A bit of everything was missing, from the right material to the creation of a representative entity that would unite and defend all the cooperatives².

On December 2, 1969, the cooperativism obtained its own representative entity, that day the Organization of Brazilian Cooperatives (OCB) was created. Formally, the sole representative and defender of the interests of the national cooperatives was created, a non-profit civil society, with political and religious neutrality².

¹ Teixeira, T. & Soler, A. (2002). La conformación del cooperativismo en Brasil: tendencias y desafíos en el Siglo XX. CIRIEC-España, Revista de Economía Pública, Social y Cooperativa. Available at: <https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/174/17404311.pdf>

² Organización de Cooperativas Brasileñas. (n.d.). História do Cooperativismo. Website. Available at: <https://www.ocb.org.br/historia-do-cooperativismo>

ii. Public national statistics

For a more comprehensive picture of the cooperative sector in Brazil, 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 data presented here comes from the Yearbook of Brazilian Cooperativism 2019³, published by OCB.

NUMBER OF COOPERATIVES:

According to the Yearbook of Brazilian Cooperativism for 2019, the country had 6 828 cooperatives, of which 26% were concentrated in São Paulo and Minas Gerais.

EMPLOYMENT:

The Yearbook of Brazilian Cooperativism recorded a total of 425 318 direct jobs generated by cooperatives in Brazil (52% men and 48% women).

COOPERATIVE MEMBERSHIP:

Through the yearbook, OCB determined that the number of people associated with Brazilian cooperatives was 14 618 720; of which 64% were men and 36% women.

PRODUCTION VALUE:

Brazil does not have exact data on the contribution of cooperatives to the national GDP; However, the 2019 yearbook indicates that cooperatives invoiced a total of 259.9 thousand million reais (BRL) for products and services (approximately 59.6 thousand million euros⁴).

³ Sistema OCB. (2019). Anuario del Cooperativismo Brasileño. Available at: <https://somoscooperativismo.coop.br/publicacao/53/anuario-do-cooperativismo-brasileiro-2019>

⁴ InfoEuro exchange rate as of December 2018, 1EUR = 4.39BRL

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 Brazil, the mapping questionnaire was distributed and completed by 3 ICA member organizations. After further follow-up of the surveyed members, the figures provided were compiled to be presented in the next section.

II. KEY FIGURES

This section presents the results of data collection conducted by ICA members, which is the same as the general estimates for the country provided in the introduction, since the coverage represents 100% of the total number of cooperatives in the country.

Brasil has 8 ICA member organizations (7 full members y 1 associated member):

- **Organización de Cooperativas de Brasil (OCB).** Full member.

Founded in 1969, after a consensus during the IV Brazilian Congress of Cooperatives, it was then that OCB became the national representative of cooperativism, bringing together and strengthening the interests of the sector. Sector: Apex.

- **Confederación Nacional de Cooperativas Médicas (UNIMED).** Full member.

Founded in 1975 to be the institutional representative of the Unimed cooperatives. The organization ensures the use of the brand and reputation at a national level and takes complaints and contributions to public authorities, regulatory bodies and entities of the health sector, disseminating best practices in the search for an increasingly transparent and ethical management. Sector: Health.

- **Central Nacional das Cooperativas Odontológicas (UNIODONTO do Brasil).** Full member.

Founded in 1972, in order to eliminate intermediaries in dental care, offering a quality service at affordable prices, working for the constant reduction of dental treatment costs, so that more people have access. Sector: Health.

- **Central de Cooperativas e Empreendimentos Solidários do Brasil (UNISOL do Brasil).** Full member.

It is a civil association with non-economic purposes and national scope, whose foundations are the commitment to defend the real interests of the working class, the improvement of living conditions and people's work, efficiency economic and commitment the transformation process of Brazilian society based on the values of democracy and social justice. Sector: Integration.

- **Central Nacional Unimed – Cooperativa Central (CNU).** Full member.

It is the national operator of Unimed health plans. It markets health care for businesses with national coverage, special benefits and a differentiated service. It was born with the regulation of health plans in 1998. It exclusively serves companies, without losing focus on each human being. Sector: Health.

- **Seguros UNIMED.** Full member.

Founded in 1989, to serve the Unimed System. Today, it is one of the largest companies in the sector in Brazil, taking care of the physical and financial health of people and institutions through medical and life insurance. Sector: Insurance.

- **Cooperativa de Trabalho Médico de Ribeirão Preto (COMERP).** Full member.

It is one of the main cooperative entities in the health segment in Brazil, founded in 1999 by a group of doctors, committed to assessing the position of these professionals before the institutions of the segment and as an alternative to the labor market. Sector: Associated work.

- **Cooperativa de Crédito de Livre Admissao de Associados Pioneira da Serra Gaucha - SICREDI Pioneira RS.** Associated member.

Founded in 1902, it was the first cooperative financial institution in Brazil, in order to offer financial solutions to add income and contribute to improving the quality of life of members and society. Sector: Finance.

ICA member organizations are directly or indirectly active in the following sectors, in order of the largest number of cooperatives:

- Agriculture and food industry
- Transportation
- Professional services
- Banking and insurance
- Health
- Housing
- Education
- Industry

- Commerce
- Construction
- Others

iv. ICA member data

The data collected was provided for 2018, in order to present the most relevant and updated information.

v. General overview

This section provides an overview of the ICA membership data for Brazil. It is displayed in various categories and supported by tables and graphs, for clarity.

Category	Total
Number of cooperatives	6 828
Number of memberships	14 618 720
Number of employees	425 318

Overall, ICA members represent 6 828 cooperatives in the country, with a total number of memberships of 14 618 720 and a total number of 425 318 employees. User cooperatives, producer cooperatives, worker cooperatives, and multi-stakeholder cooperatives are all present in Brazil.

vi. 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.

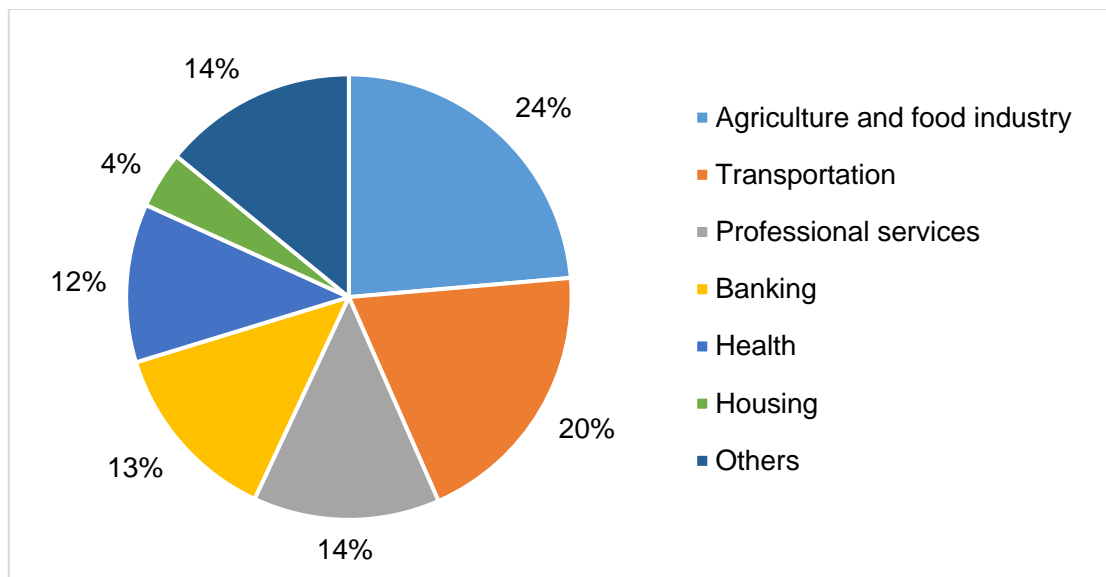
A general overview is provided in the chart below:

Sector	Cooperatives	Employment	Membership	Turnover ⁵
Agriculture and food industry	1 613	209 778	1 021 019	167 200
Transportation	1 351	9 792	98 190	4 000
Professional services	925	5 105	198 466	1 100
Banking	909	67 267	9 840 977	16 764
Health	786	107 794	206 185	67 400
Housing	282	742	103 745	11
Education	265	3 412	60 760	163
Industry	230	1 132	5 564	4
Commerce	205	14 272	1 991 152	1 600
Construction	135	5 824	1 031 260	1 500
Others	127	200	61 402	157
Total	6 828	425 318	14 618 720	259 900

III. GRAPHS

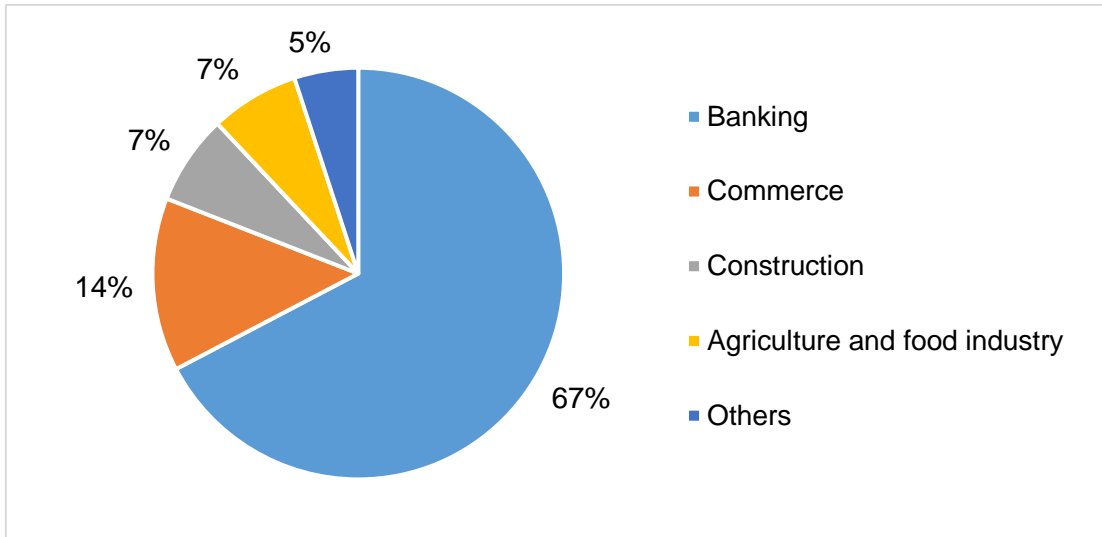
Specific variables are also detailed in the graphs below when sectorial data was available.

vii. Percentage of total cooperatives by sector

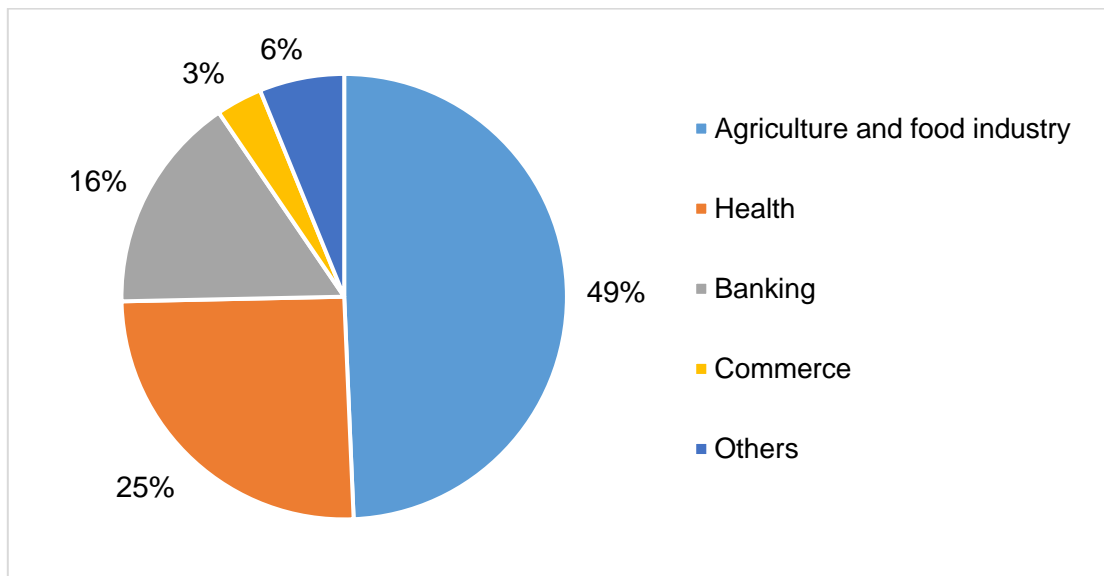


⁵ Data in millions of reais (BRL).
InfoEuro exchange rate as of December 2018, 1EUR = 4.39BRL

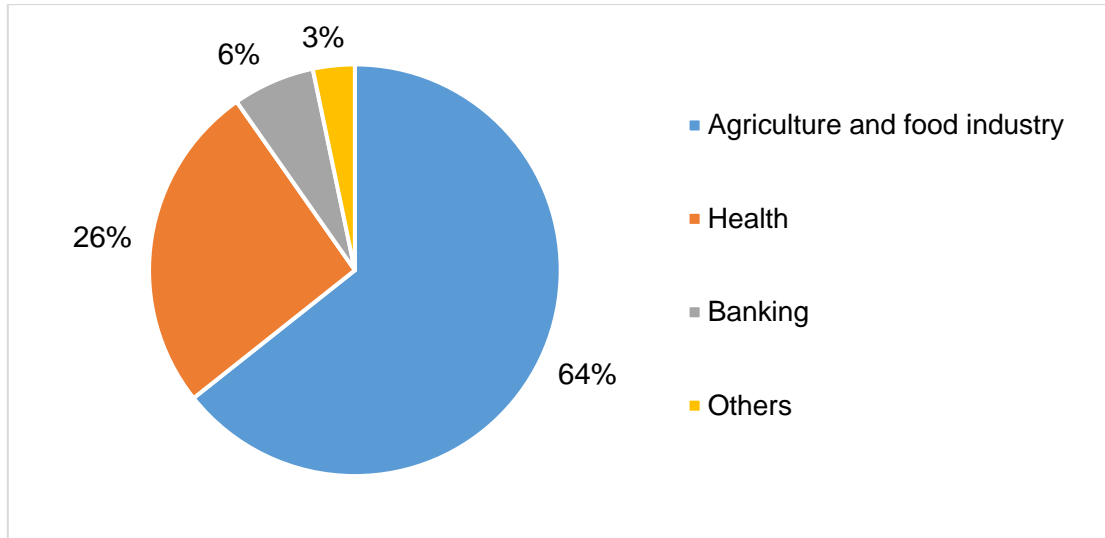
viii. Percentage of memberships by sector



ix. Percentage of employment by sector



x. Percentage of turnover by sector



IV. ANNEXES

Sources

Teixeira, T. & Soler, A. (2002). La conformación del cooperativismo en Brasil: tendencias y desafíos en el Siglo XX. CIRIEC-España, Revista de Economía Pública, Social y Cooperativa. Available at: <https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/174/17404311.pdf>

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Sistema OCB. (2019). Anuario del Cooperativismo Brasileño. Available at: <https://somoscooperativismo.coop.br/publicacao/53/anuario-do-cooperativismo-brasileiro-2019>

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Further details on the Mapping research and other country reports are available on www.coops4dev.coop

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