



International
Co-operative
Alliance



Cooperatives
of the Americas
A Region of the International
Cooperative Alliance

MAPPING: KEY FIGURES

NATIONAL REPORT: ARGENTINA

ICA – EU PARTNERSHIP



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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 Argentina.

i. Historical background

The first cooperative experiences in Argentina developed in the last decades of the 19th century and were fundamentally linked to the massive influx of European immigrants required by the economic model imposed in the country from the organization of the Argentine State. They contributed with not only techniques and work procedures, but also traditions and mutual forms of organization that introduced ideas of solidarity and cooperation through institutions in which they were grouped by nationality, community, religion, social class, job or activity.¹

Plotisky (2015) mentions that the first manifestations of the cooperative movement developed in Argentina correspond to the consumption sector. The oldest reference refers to the People's Bakery Association, founded in Paraná (Entre Ríos) in October 1857, which operated until 1860.

Cascardo, M. (n.d.) agrees with Plotisky that these cooperative experiences brought by European immigrants were the basis of the future mutuals, cooperatives, development societies and unions that were created in the country in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The first agricultural cooperatives date from this time, created as a defense mechanism and impulse from small producers. The first experience was Progreso Agrícola de Pigüé, founded in 1898².

Also, in this period some consumer cooperatives appeared as an independent way of accessing food and other goods at better prices, taking advantage of the economy of scale and eliminating the surcharges applied by intermediaries.

In this period, 1905 more precisely, the Hogar Obrero was founded as a construction and credit cooperative, which sought to provide a solution to one of the most pressing problems of that historical moment. In 1920 the Cooperativa Obrera was also created in Bahía Blanca, a consumer cooperative that today has almost 100 branches in various

¹ Plotisky, D. (2015). Orígenes y consolidación del cooperativismo en la Argentina. Instituto de la Cooperación IDELCOOP. Available at:

https://www.idelcoop.org.ar/sites/www.idelcoop.org.ar/files/revista/articulos/pdf/revista-215-con-membretes-origenes_y_consolidacion_del_cooperativismo_en_la_argentina.pdf

² Cascard, M. (n.d.). Historia del Cooperativismo en Argentina. Colsecor news. Available at:

<http://colsecornoticias.com.ar/index.php/38-archivo/5979-el-cooperativismo-en-argentina#:~:text=Las%20corrientes%20migratorias%20trajeron%20consigo,XIX%20y%20comienzos%20del%20XX.>

provinces in the center and south of the country and brings together more than a million associates.

ii. Public national statistics

For a more comprehensive picture of the cooperative sector in Argentina, 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 "National Update of Cooperatives and Mutual Data as of June 2019", carried out by the National Institute of Associativism and Social Economy³.

NUMBER OF COOPERATIVES:

The National Cooperative and Mutual Data Update as of June 2019 reported a total of 8 618 active cooperatives in Argentina.

EMPLOYMENT:

The National Update on Cooperatives and Mutual Data recorded a total of 193 760 direct jobs generated by cooperatives in Argentina as of June 2019.

COOPERATIVE MEMBERSHIP:

Through the National Update of Cooperatives and Mutual Data, it was determined that the number of people associated with Argentine cooperatives was 17 818 197 as of June 2019.

³ Instituto Nacionales de Asociativismo y Economía Social. (2019). Actualización Nacional de Datos de Cooperativas y Mutuales a junio 2019. Ministerio de Salud y Desarrollo Social.

PRODUCTION VALUE:

Argentina does not have exact data on the contribution of cooperatives to the national GDP; However, the National Update on Cooperatives and Mutual Data as of June 2019 indicates that cooperatives invoiced a total of 392 thousand million Argentine Pesos (ARS) for products and services (approximately 8.9 thousand million euros⁴).

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.

⁴ InfoEuro exchange rate as of December 2018, 1EUR = 43.9ARS

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 Argentina, the mapping questionnaire was distributed and completed by 6 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.

Argentina has 10 ICA member organizations (all as full members):

- **Agricultores Federados Argentinos Sociedad Cooperativa Limitada (AFA S.C.L.).** Full member.

It is the main agricultural cooperative in Argentina and one of the largest and most powerful in Latin America. The 36 000 associated producers have a structure made up of more than 1 600 permanent employees in 26 Primary Cooperative Centers. Sector: Agriculture.

- **Confederación Cooperativa de la República Argentina (COOPERAR).** Full member.

Founded in 1962, it is currently integrated by more than 70 entities and focuses on the representation of its associates, defending the interests of the companies that make up the Argentine cooperative movement and outlining its guiding strategy. Sector: Apex.

- **Instituto Movilizador de Fondos Cooperativos (IMFC).** Full member.

It is a federative entity, founded in 1958. The objectives of the IMFC are to spread the Principles and Values of Cooperation, represent its associated cooperatives before the public powers and promote the creation of cooperatives. Sector: Integration.

- **La Segunda Cooperativa Limitada de Seguros Generales.** Full member.

Founded in 1933 under the name La Segunda Sociedad de Seguros contra Accidentes del Trabajo S.A. and then becoming a cooperative entity in 1961 with the current name. Its objective is to satisfy the needs of coverage of insurable risks of its associates. Sector: Insurance.

- **Sancor Cooperativa de Seguros Ltda.** Full member.

Founded in Sunchales, in 1945. This cooperative gave rise to the Sancor Seguros Insurance Group and together with Central House in Sunchales it has managed to expand throughout the country, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil and Colombia, providing personal and patrimonial protection to its associates. Sector: Insurance.

- **Banco Credicoop Cooperativo Limitado (BCCL).** Full member.

It was created in 1979, by the merger of 44 Cooperative Credit Banks, some with more than 60 years of experience. It is a non-profit institution that, based on the solidarity principle of mutual aid, aims to provide financial services to all its associates. Sector: Finance.

- **Confederación Nacional de Cooperativas de Trabajo (C.N.C.T.).** Full member.

It is a third-level organization that brings together more than 40 federations of work cooperatives and 80 000 workers. It arose from the organizational growth of the cooperative movement and the irruption into the workplace of the self-managed worker. Sector: Associated work.

- **Cooperativa de Provisión y Comercialización de Servicios Comunitarios de Radiodifusión COLSECOR Limitada (COLSECOR).** Full member.

It is a cooperative integrated by cooperatives and SMEs from all over the country, which provide subscription television and telecommunications services. From the cooperative principles and values, they manage the demands of the associates regarding the contracting of TV signals, telecommunications and media. Sector: ICT's.

- **Cooperativa de Trabajos Portuarios Limitada de San Martín (Coop Portuaria).** Full member.

Founded in 1961, the cooperative offers port stowage services, cleaning and repair of ship, bagging, loading and unloading of bulk carriers, unloading of barges, ships in roads, movements of bulk in silos. Sector: Associated work.

- **Federación Argentina de Cooperativas de Consumo Ltda. (FACC).** Full member.

Founded in 1932 by 26 consumer cooperatives by the initiative of "El Hogar Obrero", the Argentine Federation of Consumer Cooperatives is the first second-level entity of urban cooperatives in Argentina. Since its inception, the FACC has carried out an important task of disseminating the cooperative doctrine. Sector: Consumption.

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

- Associated work
- Utilities
- Housing
- Consumption
- Agriculture and food industry
- Commerce
- Banking
- Insurance
- Others

iv. ICA member data

The data collected was provided for 2019, in order to present the most relevant and updated information broken down by sector.

v. General overview

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

Category	Total
Number of cooperatives	8 618
Number of memberships	17 818 197
Number of employees	193 760

Overall, ICA members represent 8 618 cooperatives in the country, with a total number of memberships of 17 818 197 and a total of 193 760 employees. User cooperatives, producer cooperatives, worker cooperatives, and multi-stakeholder cooperatives are all present in Argentina.

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, according to the information provided by INAES.

A general overview is provided in the chart below:

Sector	Cooperatives	Employment	Membership	Turnover ⁵
Associated work	4 365	-	-	-
Utilities	790	-	-	-
Housing	708	-	-	-
Consumption	568	-	-	-
Agriculture and food industry	546	-	-	-
Commerce	415	-	-	-
Banking	396	-	-	-
Insurance	12	-	-	-
Others	2 265	-	-	-
Total	10 065⁶	193 760	17 818 197	392 000

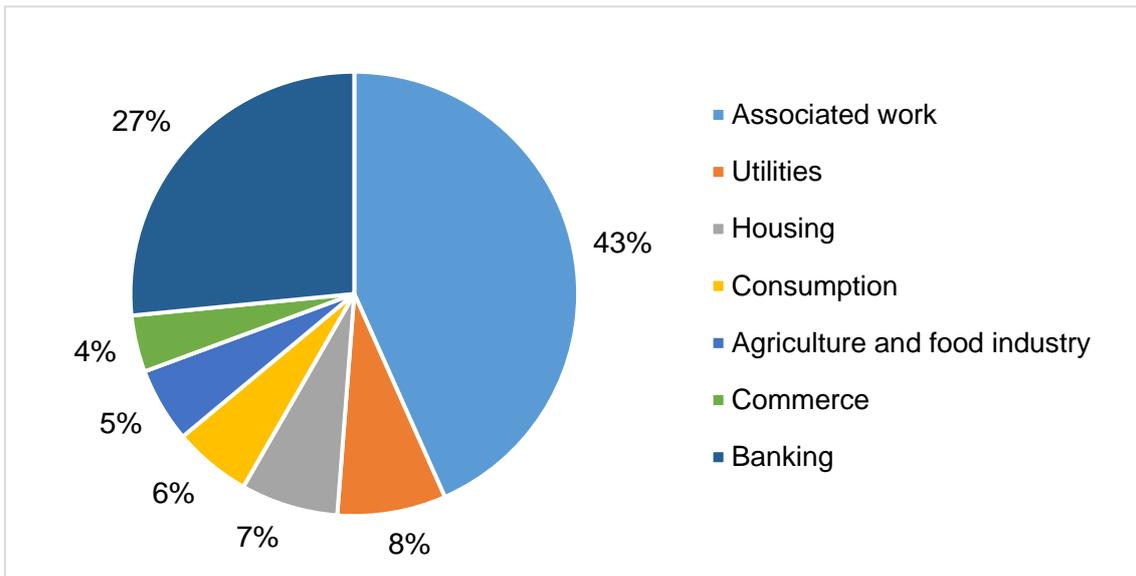
⁵ Data in millions of Pesos Argentinos (ARS). InfoEuro exchange rate as of December 2018, 1EUR = 43.9ARS

⁶ The number exceeds by 1 447 cooperatives than the total reported at the national level, this because there are cooperatives that categorize themselves under two types.

III. GRAPHS

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

vii. Percentage of total cooperatives by sector



IV. ANNEXES

Sources:

Plotinsky, D. (2015). Orígenes y consolidación del cooperativismo en la Argentina. Instituto de la Cooperación IDELCOOP. Available at: https://www.idelcoop.org.ar/sites/www.idelcoop.org.ar/files/revista/articulos/pdf/revista-215-con-membretes-origenes_y_consolidacion_del_cooperativismo_en_la_argentina.pdf

Cascard, M. (s.f.). Historia del Cooperativismo en Argentina. Archivo: Colsecor noticias. Available at: <http://colsecornoticias.com.ar/index.php/38-archivo/5979-el-cooperativismo-en-argentina#:~:text=Las%20corrientes%20migratorias%20traieron%20consigo,XIX%20y%20comienzos%20del%20XX.>

Instituto Nacionales de Asociativismo y Economía Social. (2019). Actualización Nacional de Datos de Cooperativas y Mutuales a junio 2019. Ministerio de Salud y Desarrollo Social.

Contacts

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

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