



**International
Co-operative
Alliance**



**Cooperatives
of the Americas**
A Region of the International
Cooperative Alliance

MAPPING: KEY FIGURES

NATIONAL REPORT: COLOMBIA

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 Colombia.

i. Historical background

As evidenced by Carlos Uribe in his writing "History of the Cooperative Movement"¹, in the first decades of the twentieth century, a Colombian statesman, General Rafael Uribe, raised cooperative ideas as part of his thinking about democratic socialism of a humanistic nature, in a conference delivered at the Municipal Theater of Bogotá in October 1904 and in the speech published in the first number of the newspaper "El Liberal" in April 1911 and to which the following paragraph belongs:

".. We believe that the intangibility of property is one of the tutelary principles of civilization, since it constitutes the protection of family life and is like the armor of personal freedom, guarantee, independence and source of human energy; But we also believe that if the modern wage indicates an evident progress over ancient slavery, perhaps it is not the last step of evolution, because instead of production of a monarchical and paternalistic type, there will one day come the cooperative type, more efficient and fair because it delivers to the workers themselves, that is to those who carry out the work and create the product, the proportional part that corresponds to them".

Uribe goes on to explain that, in 1916, during the administration of President José Vicente Concha, Benjamín Herrera, Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, presented the first cooperative project that is known to the Congress of the Republic, supporting it with reasons. that are still valid for the promotion of agricultural cooperatives in the country.

Around 1920, the Priest Adán Puerto, after a trip to Europe where he could directly appreciate the advances of the system, dedicated himself to spreading cooperative thinking and to indicating the need to unite union activity with that of cooperatives. The theses of the Boyacá priest were exposed in different ways and on several occasions: from 1921, in the Diocesan Bulletin of the city of Tunja; in the years 1922 and 1923, during the social studies days and from the El Vigía seminar that was also published in Tunja.

¹ Uribe, C. (1993). Historia del movimiento Cooperativo. Coopdesarrollo. Printed version.

The ideas of the forerunners and the interest of other politicians and statesmen had their culmination when the 1931 Congress approved the first cooperative law - number 134 of that year - in the preparation of which jurists who knew the system participated.

Starting in the 1930s, the development of cooperativism was increasing satisfactorily. According to statistical data, in 1933 there were 4 cooperatives whose associates were 1807; By 1962, the number of these entities reached 759 with about 450,000 associates.

Pardo, L. & Huertas, M. (2014)² identify five historical periods in the development of the cooperative sector in Colombia, namely:

- First period (1930-1945): emergence of mutualism and cooperativism
- Second period (1946-1964): promotion and expansion of cooperativism
- Third period (1965-1976): consolidation of cooperativism
- Fourth period (1977-1990): growth as a sector and social movement
- Fifth period (1991-2010): crisis and solidarity economy or solidarity

ii. Public national statistics

For a more comprehensive picture of the cooperative movement in Colombia, 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 Confecoop's 2018 Performance Report³.

NUMBER OF COOPERATIVES:

The Confecoop Performance Report reported a total of 3 205 active cooperatives in Colombia for the year 2018.

² Pardo, L. & Huertas, M. (2014). La historia del cooperativismo en Colombia: hitos y periodos. Cooperativismo y Desarrollo. Bogotá, Colombia.

³ Confecoop. (2019). Informe de Desempeño 2018. Available at: <https://confecoop.coop/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/INFORME-2018.pdf>

EMPLOYMENT:

The 2018 Confecoop Performance Report recorded a total of 139 093 direct jobs generated by cooperatives in Colombia (63.7% men and 36.3% women).

COOPERATIVE MEMBERSHIP:

Through the Performance Report, Confecoop determined that the number of people associated with the Colombian cooperatives was 6 290 927; of which 49.1% were men and 50.9% women.

PRODUCTION VALUE:

Colombia does not have exact data on the contribution of cooperatives to the national GDP; However, the 2018 Performance Report indicates that the cooperatives invoiced a total of 8.67 thousand million Colombian Pesos (COP) for products and services (approximately 7.6 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

⁴ InfoEuro exchange rate as of December 2018, 1EUR = 3 690COP

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 Colombia, 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. DATOS ESTADÍSTICOS

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.

Colombia has 12 ICA member organizations (11 full members and 1 associate member):

- **Asociación Colombiana de Cooperativas (ASCOOP)**. Full member.

Founded in 1960, it is an organization for the integration and representation of cooperatives, characterized by its union leadership and its permanent presence as a sectoral interlocutor before the different public and private entities. Sector: Apex.

- **Casa Nacional del Profesor (CANAPRO)**. Full member.

Founded in 1958, its mission is to serve as a business instrument to unite the efforts and resources of the associates, to provide them goods and services that contribute to the

satisfaction of their needs, their personal dignity and the integral community development. Sector: Finance.

- **Confederación de Cooperativas de Colombia (CONFECOOP).** Full member.

It is the highest cooperative integration body, which unifies the representation of the Colombian cooperative sector at the national and international level, defends it at the national level and promotes integration between cooperatives and their sustainability. Sector: Apex.

- **Cooperativa Empresarial Multiactiva Popular (COEMPOPULAR).** Full member.

Founded in 195, it was the inspiration of a group of Banco Popular officials, who came together with the purpose of creating a cooperative that would respond to the credit needs of employees and pensioners of Banco Popular and its subsidiaries. Sector: Multi-active.

- **Cooperativa del Magisterio (CODEMA).** Full member.

Since 1965, it is an entity that works to improve the quality of life of its associates by offering credit services, savings, recreation, health, housing, sports, tourism, education and access to culture. Sector: Multi-active.

- **Cooperativa Médica del Valle y de Profesionales de Colombia (COOMEVA).** Full member.

Founded in 1964 by 27 doctors, it is the largest union of professionals in Colombia and an important reference in the country's solidarity economy sector and the cooperative movement in the American continent. Coomeva is the first cooperative in Colombia and the fourth in Latin America by asset levels. Sector: Multi-active.

- **La Equidad Seguros.** Full member.

La Equidad Seguros was established in Cartagena, at the Ascoop Assembly, and began activities on April 1 with six workers. In 10 years it had 500 affiliates and in 1991 it became the company with the largest number of insured in life policies. Sector: Insurance.

- **Caja Cooperativa CREDICOOP (CREDICOOP).** Full member.

It is the savings and credit cooperative with the longest experience in the Colombian solidarity sector, offering financial solutions to pensioners and employees to improve their quality of life. Sector: Finance.

- **Financiera PROGRESSA.** Full member.

Founded in 1996 as an initiative of the Employees Fund of the SaludCoop EPS group, based on the cooperative philosophy that encourages savings and provides credit solutions to its associates. Sector: Finance.

- **Banco Cooperativo COOPCENTRAL.** Full member.

After operating for almost five decades as a financial cooperative of a higher degree, in 2008 it began its transformation process of strengthening its assets and expanding its social base and operations nationwide, initiating the path of conversion to a cooperative bank. Sector: Finance.

- **Asociación Nacional de Fondos de Empleados (ANALFE).** Full member.

The only body of the Solidarity Economy Sector that in Colombia represents the Employee Funds, for more than 37 years. Its main objective is to represent, defend, train and advise the Employee Funds to enhance their performance. Sector: Integration.

- **Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia (UCC).** Associate member.

It is a private institution of higher education that belongs to the solidarity economy sector created in 1983, as a successor to the Institute of Social Economy and Cooperativism - INDESCO. Sector: Promotion.

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

- Banking
- Administrative services
- Transportation
- Agriculture and food industry
- Commerce
- Health
- Education

- Insurance
- Others

iv. ICA member data

The data collected was provided for the year 2017, 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 Colombia. It is displayed in various categories and supported by tables and graphs, for clarity.

Category	Total
Number of cooperatives	3 488
Number of memberships	6 386 176
Number of employees	165 825

Overall, ICA members represent 3 488 cooperatives in the country, with a total membership of 6 386 176 and a total number of 165 825 employees. User cooperatives, producer cooperatives, work cooperatives, and multiple cooperatives are present in Colombia.

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, según entrega la información Confecoop. Regarding the billing volume, the amount is indicated in Colombian Pesos (COP).

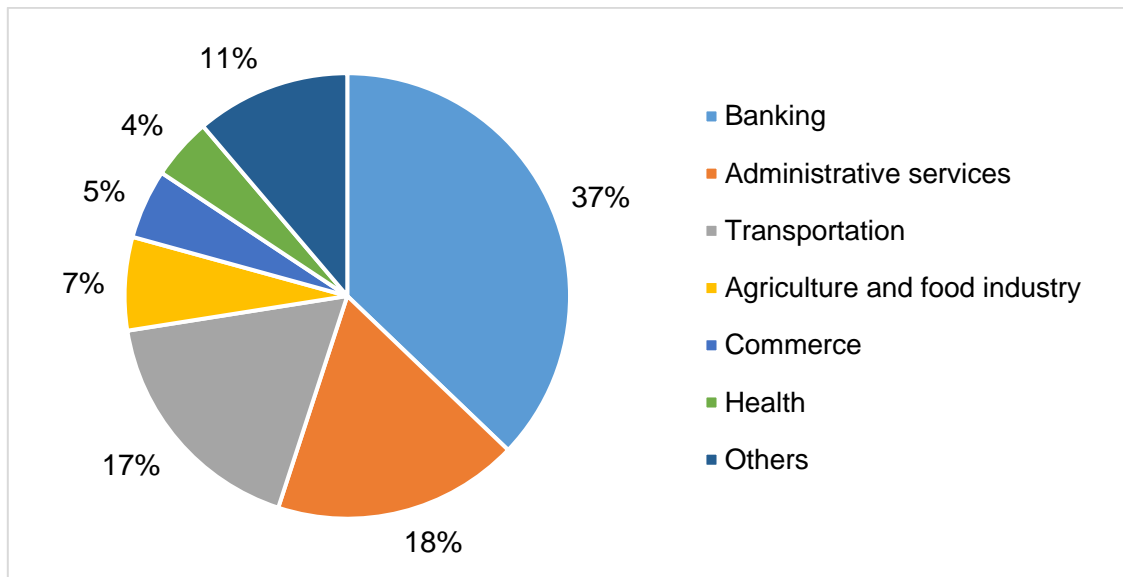
The following table provides an overview:

Sector	Cooperatives	Employment	Membership	Turnover ⁵
Banking	1 296	41 141	5 430 585	4 445 103
Administrative services	623	38 713	234 988	861 442
Transportation	610	20 526	86 402	1 447 836
Agriculture and food industry	236	16 528	112 175	9 598 686
Commerce	176	16 778	418 391	5 441 034
Health	156	15 598	55 973	2 680 359
Education	63	7 696	23 936	403 220
Insurance	3	1 573	1 607	2 017 662
Others	325	7 272	22 119	913 858
Total	3 488	165 825	6 386 176	27 809 200

III. GRAPHS

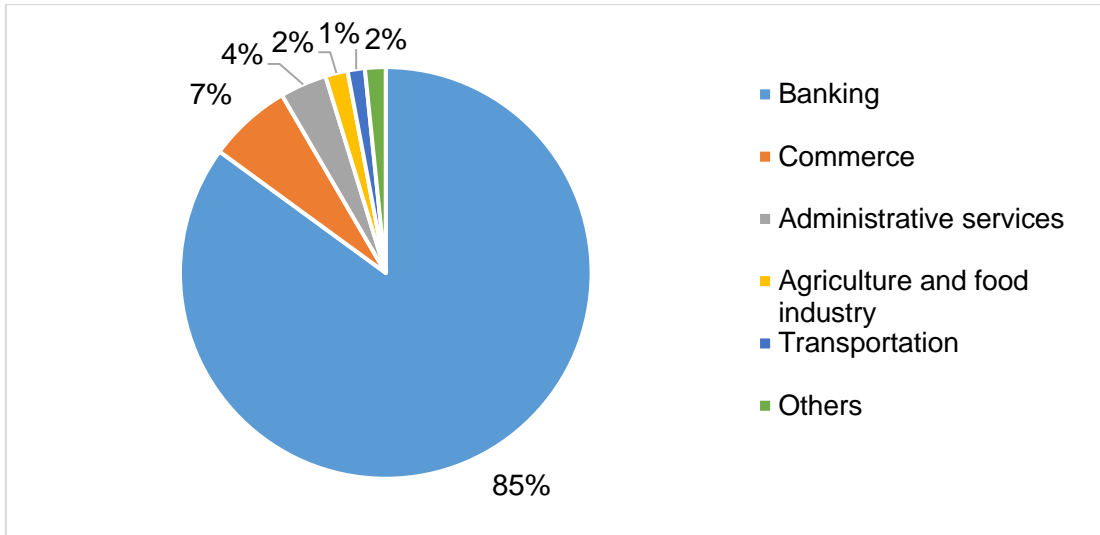
Specific variables are also detailed in the graphs below when sectorial data was available.

i. Percentage of total cooperatives by sector

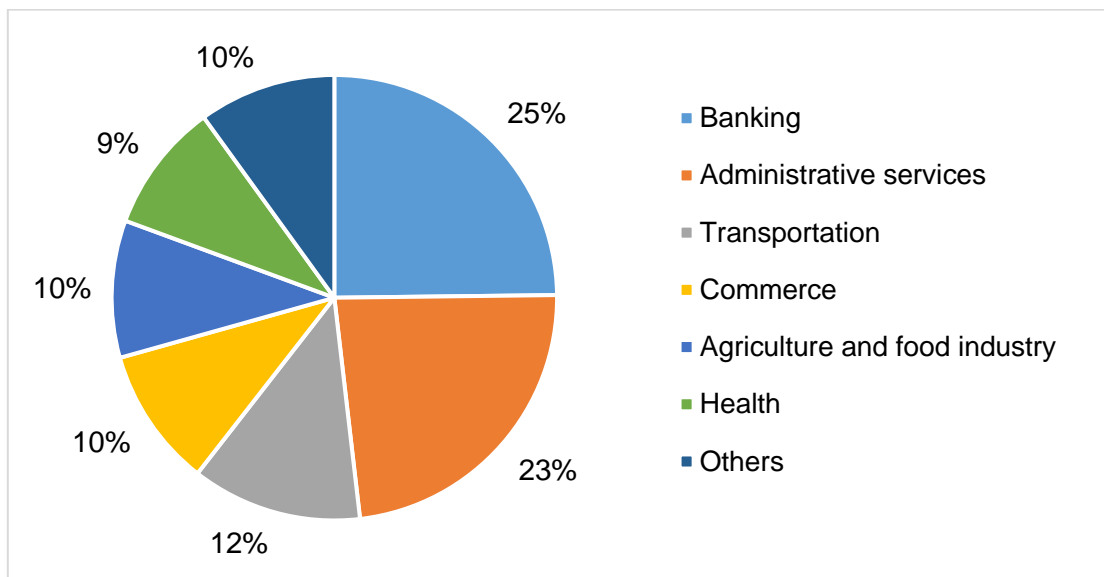


⁵ Data in millions of Colombian pesos (COP).
InfoEuro exchange rate as of December 2017, 1EUR = 3,520COP

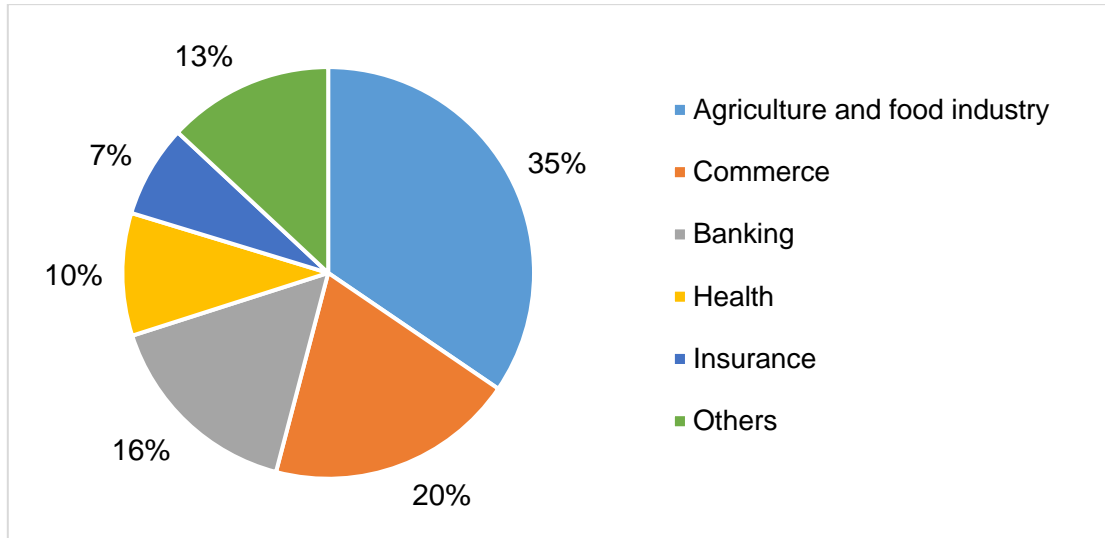
ii. Percentage of total memberships by sector



iii. Percentage of total employees by sector



iv. Percentage of total turnover by sector



IV. ANNEXES

Sources:

Uribe, C. (1993). Historia del movimiento Cooperativo. Coopdesarrollo. Printed version.

Pardo, L. & Huertas, M. (2014). La historia del cooperativismo en Colombia: hitos y periodos. Cooperativismo y Desarrollo. Bogotá, Colombia.

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

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Updated: September 2020

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