

MAPPING: KEY FIGURES

NATIONAL REPORT: SINGAPORE

ICA-EU PARTNERSHIP

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Republic of Singapore- 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 co-operative 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 co-operatives.

Responding to challenges and existing knowledge gaps facing the co-operative movement, this research provides exhaustive information on co-operatives 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 co-operatives in each country provides a more precise picture of the co-operative context at national and regional levels, enhances the movement's visibility, networking, partnerships, opportunities, as well as advocacy, and empowers co-operators by providing them tools for positive change.

Within this framework, the present report showcases information about the co-operative landscape in the Republic of Singapore, hereafter referred to as Singapore.

i. Historical background

The co-operative movement in Singapore began in the 1920s as a response to the social and financial needs of the times. Today, co-operatives in Singapore are involved in many sectors, including supermarkets, childcare, eldercare, healthcare, education and training, insurance, financial services, security, food, and hospitality, making a positive social and economic impact.

The concept of co-operatives was introduced in Singapore with the passing of the Straits Settlement Co-operative Societies Ordinance in 1924 by the British colonial authorities. Credit co-operatives were the first co-operatives to be registered in 1925. They were established as an alternative source of funds for workers to meet their basic financial needs. The Second World War forced all co-operatives to cease operations. Post War, the co-operative movement extended its activities into housing, banking, co-operative stores, shoemaking, production and marketing of agricultural (including fish) products.

1969 was turning point in the co-operative movement when the late Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Goh Keng Swee, then Finance Minister (1967-1970), formulated key plans on founding the co-operative

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movement to assist common workers. Within a span of nine years (1970 to 1979), thirteen co-operatives were established by the National Trade Union Congress (NTUC) and its affiliated unions. The significant contributions made by NTUC co-operatives continue to this day with some becoming Singapore's largest and well-known co-operatives such as NTUC FairPrice, NTUC INCOME, NTUC Health and NTUC First Campus. In 1980, SNCF was formed as the apex body of the co-operative movement. After 1980, several co-operatives were formed to promote employment, such as the Premier Security (1984), POLWEL (1992), Industrial and Services Co-operative (1989) and Seacare Co-operative (1994). In 2000, Singapore Human Resource Institute established the Singapore Professionals' and Executives' Co-operative (SPEC) as a response to the Asian Financial crisis in 1997 to support professionals, managers, executives, businessmen and self-employed people and help them access gainful employment through career re-building services and protection benefits (medical and health insurance).

In 2012, NTUC Enterprise Co-operative was set up to align and unite all the NTUC co-operatives and social enterprises to give greater coherence, scale and impact. As Singapore faces an ageing population, new co-operatives are being formed to meet the demands of a silver generation such as the Silver Caregivers (2013). In 2014, SNCF received an honourable mention in the Mobilisation and Involvement category in the TOP.COOP Contest held in conjunction with the International Summit of Co-operatives in Quebec City, Canada. Singapore's 2018 UN Voluntary National Review Report to the High-Level Political Forum recognises the role of SNCF and its members in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

ii. Public national statistics

For a more comprehensive picture of the co-operative movement in Singapore, 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.

Secondary data on national co-operative statistics is collected and maintained by the Registry of Co-operative Societies, under the Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth (MCCY). In order to strengthen the public database on co-operatives, there exists a need to collect and publish sex-disaggregated membership and employment data for co-operatives across sectors, and to compute the contribution of co-operatives to the national GDP.

The following statistics are from the Annual Report on the Co-operative Societies in Singapore by MCCY for the financial year (FY) 2019-2020.

NUMBER OF CO-OPERATIVES:

In the FY 2019-2020, there were 85 co-operatives in Singapore.

CO-OPERATIVE MEMBERSHIP:

In the FY 2019-2020, there were 1,493,000 members in 85 co-operatives.

PRODUCTION VALUE:

In the FY 2019-2020, 85 co-operatives in Singapore held total assets worth EUR 13,077,023,669¹ (Singapore\$ 20 billion).

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 co-operative 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 co-operatives must be recognised, the present Mapping exercise targets co-operative 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 co-operative 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 co-operative members.

¹ This amount was calculated based on the annual average rate (as per March 2020) between the two currencies, using the currency converter InforEuro: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro

In Singapore, the Mapping report was prepared with the support of the ICA member Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF) and using secondary data on national co-operative statistics that is publicly available in the Annual Report on the Co-operative Societies in Singapore for the FY 2019-2020 prepared by MCCY². Secondary data on the background of co-operative movement in Singapore was taken from the Country Snapshot on Singapore prepared by ICA Asia and Pacific in 2019.

II. Key figures

Singapore has one ICA member organisation:

1. Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF)

Established in 1980, SNCF is the apex body of Singapore's co-operative movement, and the Secretariat of the Central Co-operative Fund (CCF) Committee³. It offers a range of comprehensive programmes to co-operatives such as support in the formation of co-operatives; collaboration among co-operatives; grants and financial assistance; marketing and publicity; education and capacity building services; promotion of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), advocacy with policy makers on legislative support to co-operatives; and development of youth and future leadership. It became a member of ICA in 1985 and has also been a member of the Association of Asian Confederation of Credit Unions (ACCU) and the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU) since 2009 and 2010, respectively.

i. ICA member data

The data collected by SNCF was for the financial year 2019. SNCF represents co-operatives in the campus and youth, credit, service and NTUC sectors. Campus and youth sector offers students first-hand experience of running a social enterprise based on co-operative principles and values in secondary schools, and junior colleges through its Coop Club programme. It also actively collaborates with Institutes of Higher Learning like polytechnics and universities to create meaningful learning experiences for students by bringing the co-operative message right to their classrooms. Credit co-operatives encourage thrift by accepting deposits from members and assisting members with loans on reasonable terms. Service co-operatives provide a wide range of services including security, travel, medical and aged care. The NTUC sector formed by the labour movement delivers an integrated suite of services to meet specific needs of people in

² Co-operatives in Singapore are regulated by the Registry of Co-operative Societies under the Co-operative Societies Act and Cooperative Societies Rules. The Registry falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY).

³ CCF aims to further education, training, research, audit and development of co-operatives in Singapore.

Singapore at every stage of their lifecycle- preschoolers; school-going children; working adults; and senior citizens, as well as the more general needs of residents in Singapore.

The Registry of Co-operative Societies in Singapore groups service, campus and NTUC sectors under the consumer and service sector, and its campus sector excludes coop clubs.

ii. General overview

The present section provides an overview of data on co-operatives, membership and employees represented by SNCF for the FY 2019-2020.

Category	Total (for the FY 2019-2020)
Number of co-operatives represented (SNCF affiliates)	64 co-operatives
Number of memberships in the co-operatives represented (SNCF affiliates)	1.44 million members in 64 affiliated co-operatives
Number of youth members in the co-operatives represented (SNCF affiliates)	-
Number of female members in the co-operatives represented (SNCF affiliates)	-
Number of employees in the co-operatives represented (SNCF affiliates)	Over 16,000 employees in 64 affiliated co-operatives
Number of youth employees in the co-operatives represented (SNCF affiliates)	-
Number of female employees in the co-operatives represented (SNCF affiliates)	-

Figure 1: Cooperative statistics represented by ICA membership in Singapore (2019-2020)

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. With regards to total assets and turnover, the amount is provided both in Singapore\$ (S\$) and the equivalent amount in EUR⁴.

Below is the sectoral information on co-operatives in Singapore for the FY 2019-2020 as provided by MCCY.

⁴ This amount was calculated based on the annual average rate (as per March 2020) between the two currencies, using the currency converter InforEuro: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro

Sector	Number of co-operatives	Memberships	Employees	Total assets	Turnover
Service, NTUC and campus co-operatives	62	1,355,000	-	S\$19 billion Eur 12,423,172,485	-
Credit co-operatives	23	137,000	-	S\$1 billion Eur 653,851,183	-

Figure 2: Cooperative statistics in Singapore (2019-2020)

III. Graphs

i. Membership in cooperatives per sector

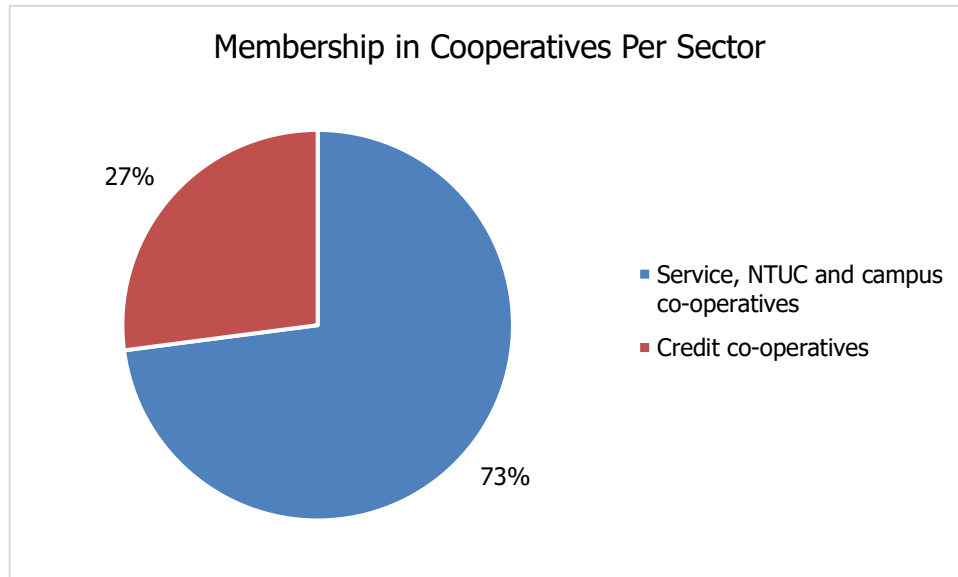


Figure 3: Membership in cooperatives per sector in Singapore (2019-2020)

IV. Annexes

Sources and contacts are listed below.

Sources

1. MCCY (2020). [Annual Report on the Co-operative Societies in Singapore.](#)
2. ICA-AP (2019). [Singapore country snapshot.](#)
3. SNCF (2020). Presentation during ICEI's webinar on November 5, 2020, Impact of COVID-19 on Education and Co-operatives in Educational Institutions in Asia and Pacific.

Contacts

Further details on the Mapping research and other country reports are available on 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

Updated: February 2021