

# MAPPING: KEY FIGURES

## NATIONAL REPORT: JAPAN

ICA-EU PARTNERSHIP



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## **Japan- 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 Japan.

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

Cooperatives play a major role in Japan's economy and are present all over the country. They form the mainstay of the rural economy through their presence in agriculture, fisheries, and forestry sector. From rural to urban, farmer to consumer, and young to elderly, cooperatives touch all sections of the Japanese society. The roots of the cooperative movement in Japan date back to early 1800s when mutual organisations of the socially vulnerable were formed for the first time. Agriculture, consumer, credit, fishery, and forestry were the main types of cooperatives prevalent during this period.

The cooperative movement came to a halt during the Second World War (1939-1945). The period immediately after the Second World War (1945 onwards) witnessed the growth of cooperatives in diverse sectors due to the severe food shortage and inflation in the economy.

The Japanese Consumers' Cooperative Union (JCCU) was established in 1951 to formalise consumer cooperatives which were important distribution channels for the



supply of essential goods and food products. Agricultural cooperatives were set up by the government as a tool to address black market in food products. In 1954, the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives (JA-Zenchu) was set up as an independent national administrative body for agriculture cooperatives.

The workers' cooperatives in Japan emerged during 1970s as a means to provide jobs to the middle-aged and jobless trade union members. The Japanese Workers' Cooperative Union (JWCU) was established in 1986 with the objective to transform businesses that were formerly established to support the middle-aged and jobless workers into organisations managed by worker members. In 1991, the Japan Institute of Co-operative Research was established as the only research institute on workers' cooperative in Japan.

In 1995, the first older persons' cooperative was established by and for senior citizens. Such cooperatives have spread throughout the country to meet the needs of an increasingly ageing population.

In 2000, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification was introduced for the first time authenticating the forest owners' cooperatives as resource managers of forest land under multiple ownership. In the same year, the Worker Cooperative Legislation Civic Council was founded, and a legal movement began to formulate the law on 'Co-operatives of Associated Work.' In 2002, JWCU adopted the new principle of 'Co-operatives of Associated Work', whereby people work together as individuals in cooperation and solidarity, without being employed by others.

In 2010, Japanese Health and Welfare Cooperative Federation (HeW Co-op) was established to represent cooperatives that are engaged in medical and welfare businesses.

In 2016, agricultural reforms were introduced by the government with the aim to increase farmers' income by reinforcing competitiveness in the agricultural sector. This has been a cause of concern for agricultural cooperatives as it has a direct implication on the functioning of cooperatives involved in farm input supply and dairy products.

In 2018, the Japan Cooperative Alliance (JCA) was formed as the apex organization with the aim to unite cooperatives across the country and to strengthen the movement based on common value and interests.

## ii. Public national statistics

Public national statistics on cooperatives in Japan have been taken from the Cooperative Statistics Table published by JCA for the year 2018.

### NUMBER OF COOPERATIVES



In 2018, there were over 42,000 cooperatives.

#### NUMBER OF MEMBERS

In 2018, there were over 105 million members<sup>1</sup>.

#### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

In 2018, there were 5,70,000 full time employees.

#### PRODUCTION VALUE

In 2018, the business revenue of cooperatives was approximately 2.67 billion Euro (35,300 billion yen), and added value was 40.98 billion Euro (5,400 billion yen)<sup>2</sup>.

### 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.

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1 Multiple numbers are counted in duplicate.

2 This amount was calculated based on the annual average rate (as per 31st March 2018) between the two currencies, using the currency converter InforEuro:

[http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/inforeuro](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro)

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.

The Mapping report for Japan was prepared using information available in the Cooperative Statistics Table 2018 published by JCA, Country Snapshot on Cooperatives in Japan developed by ICA Asia and Pacific in 2019 and information on members through their websites.

## II. Key figures

Japan has seventeen ICA member organisations:

### 1. Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives (JA-ZENCHU)

JA-ZENCHU is the apex body for Japan's agricultural cooperatives. It became a member of the ICA in 1952.

### 2. Japanese Consumers' Cooperative Union (JCCU)

JCCU is the national federation of consumer cooperatives in Japan. It became a member of the ICA in 1952.

### 3. IE-NO-HIKARI Association (Association for Education and Publications on Agriculture Cooperatives)

IE-NO-HIKARI Association is a publishing and cultural organisation of the JA-ZENCHU that aims to improve agricultural and rural culture. It became a member of the ICA in 1977.

### 4. Japan Cooperative Insurance Association Incorporated (JCIA)

JCIA was established through the integration of seven cooperative organisations as a body to promote cooperation and coordination among cooperative insurance societies. It became a member of the ICA in 2014.

### 5. Japanese Workers' Cooperative Union (JWCU)

JWCU represents and unites worker cooperatives throughout Japan. Each worker cooperative is owned and democratically controlled by the worker-members and

dedicated to creating jobs to promote the well-being of communities through associated work of the members and community residents. It became a member of the ICA in 1992.

6. Japanese Health and Welfare Cooperative Federation (HeW Coop)

HeW Coop is a national federation of health and welfare cooperatives in Japan. It became a member of the ICA in 2011.

7. National Association of Labour Banks (NALB)

NALB is a trade association comprising of labour banks across Japan as well as the Federation of Labour Banks, which is the central bank of the Labour Banks. It became a member of the ICA in 2010.

8. National Federation of Agricultural Cooperative Associations (ZEN-NOH)

ZEN-NOH is a federation responsible for the sales and supply of commodities under the Agricultural Cooperative Association. It became a member of the ICA in 1977.

9. National Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association (JF-ZENGYOREN)

JF All Fisheries Federation is a national organization of JF (Fisheries Cooperative Association) formed by fishermen in each region of Japan. It became a member of the ICA in 1958.

10. National Federation of Forest Owners' Cooperative Associations (ZENMORI-REN)

ZENMORI-REN is the national federation of forest cooperatives and raises the economic and social positions of forest owners to improve people's life by controlling the use of forest to ensure the continuous production of timber, preservation of the national land and the environment, and conservation of water resources. It became a member of the ICA in 1970.

11. National Federation of University Cooperative Associations (NFUCA)

NFUCA is the National Federation of University Cooperatives in Japan. University cooperatives, as organizations in higher educational institutions, have three major fields of business and activities, i.e. support of student life, support of student growth, and the support of university activities. University cooperatives are promoting business and activities that contribute to more attractive universities. It became a member of the ICA in 2002.

12. National Federation of Workers and Consumers Kyosai Cooperatives (Kokumin Kyosai Coop-ZENROSAI)

Kokumin Kyosai cooperative stands for the National Federation of Workers and Consumers Kyosai Cooperatives. Based on the cooperative principle, Kokumin Kyosai cooperative provides insurance and mutual help for its members, under the supervision of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and the Consumers' Livelihood Cooperative Society Law. It became a member of the ICA in 1992.

13. National Mutual Insurance Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives (ZENKYOREN)

ZENKYOREN is a federation that handles the business of life and non-life insurance business of farmers in Japan and to improve members' (farmers') living standard through insurance protection. It became a member of the ICA in 1997.

14. The Japan Agricultural News (Nihon-Nogyo-Shimbun)

The Japan Agricultural News began publishing as a market report in 1928, and in August 2002, it became an all-JA corporation from the agricultural cooperative organisation based on the Agricultural Cooperatives Law. It became a member of the ICA in 1989.

15. The Norinchukin Bank (Central Cooperative Bank for Agriculture and Forestry)

The Norinchukin Bank is the national level bank for agriculture, forestry and fisheries industry. It became a member of the ICA in 1976.

16. Japan Cooperative Alliance (JCA)

JCA is the apex organisation of Japanese cooperatives. It became a member of the ICA in 2018.

17. Japan Co-op Insurance Consumers' Cooperative Federation (JCIF)

JCIF started in the insurance business in 1984 at JCCU. JCIF's role is development of products, contract management, payment of claims, support for member cooperatives. They promote insurance products for women and children who account for the majority of their individual members. It became a member of the ICA in 2017.

**i. ICA member data**





The data on ICA membership in this section was collected from the Cooperative Statistics Table 2018 published by JCA. The numbers presented by JCA are representative of all cooperatives in Japan.

### i. General overview

In 2018, there were over 42,000 cooperatives with over 105 million members.

### ii. 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 Japan are present in diverse sectors including agriculture, forestry, fisheries, consumer, worker, finance, insurance, etc.

Sectors	Percentage of cooperatives (2018)
Agricultural	75%
Consumer	11%
Finance-based	9%
Worker	3%
Other cooperatives (SMEs, insurance, etc.)	1%

Table 1: Cooperatives per sector in Japan (2018)

### III. Graphs

#### i. Percentage of cooperatives per sector

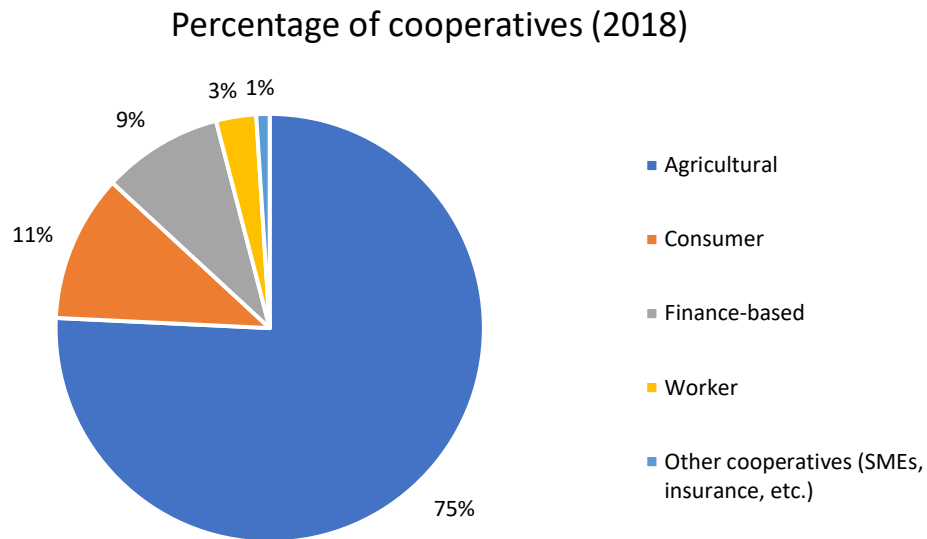


Figure 1: Cooperatives per sector in Japan (2018)

## IV. Annexes

Sources and contacts are listed below.

### Sources

1. ICA-AP (2019). [Japan country snapshot](#).
2. JCA (2018). [Cooperative Statistics Table](#).
3. ICA members' website.

### 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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