

# MAPPING: KEY FIGURES NATIONAL REPORT: THAILAND

ICA-EU PARTNERSHIP



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## **Thailand- 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 Thailand.

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

Cooperatives in Thailand have a rich history and play a prime role in assisting the poor and marginalised. The first cooperative was established in 1916 with the aim to improve the livelihood of small and indebted farmers who were affected by the shift from self-sufficient economy to trade economy. Since then, cooperatives have been playing an important role in agriculture, credit, and services sector. Agriculture-based cooperatives are the largest type and cover almost 10% of the Thai population as members. Agricultural cooperatives experienced high growth and business performance in the Tenth (2007-11) and Eleventh (2012-16) National Economic and Social Development Plan.

The cooperative movement in Thailand, unlike its other Southeast Asian counterparts, had been a state sponsored initiative rather than a continuing policy of the colonial era. The movement began in 1916 with the government setting up small village credit cooperatives for severely indebted farmers who suffered from the brunt of a transitioning economy, natural disasters and moneylenders foreclosing their lands. Cooperatives remained at a nascent stage until the late 1930s with around 700 cooperatives in the country. With the end of World War II, the cooperative movement took an upsurge with almost 10,000 cooperatives running at full scale in the country. These cooperatives cut across different sectors including agriculture, land settlement, fisheries, consumer, service and savings and credit. The first Cooperative

Bank was established in 1947 with the support of government capital to enable village credit cooperatives to become owners of their own financing center.

The period between 1955 and 1968 was characterised by transition in the economy and brought stagnation to the cooperative movement. The government-cum-credit cooperative-owned Bank for Cooperatives got reorganised into the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives. The effort to strengthen the cooperative movement was again initiated by the government in the late 1960s with the establishment of the Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT) in 1968, as the apex organisation of the cooperative movement. This period witnessed establishment of new and model cooperatives. Many small-scale cooperatives were restructured to become large-scale. All cooperatives that came under CLT were registered under the New Cooperative Act 1968. Many credit union cooperatives were also set up in Thailand around this time.

Post 2000, agricultural cooperatives were given a boost with the development of national social and economic development plans. The Eleventh National Social and Economic Development Plan (2012-16) in Thailand emphasised on developing agricultural cooperatives amongst other enterprises as mechanisms to enhance self-reliance and sustainability for farmers, improving operational capacities of financial cooperatives, and enhancing cooperation between cooperatives. The current Twelfth National Social and Economic Development Plan (2017-21) focuses on encouraging individual farmers to collaborate in the form of cooperatives and other partnerships to achieve economies of scale, decrease underemployment, apply appropriate technology, and use market mechanisms to manage risk in the agriculture sector. It also emphasises on strengthening community-based financial cooperatives in order to encourage the availability of financial services at the grassroots level for the people and small farmers.

## ii. Public national statistics

Public national statistics on cooperatives in Thailand have been taken from the report on Annual Statistics on Cooperatives, Agricultural Groups, and Vocational Group 2018 published by the Cooperative Promotion Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and Country Snapshot on Cooperatives in Thailand developed by ICA Asia and Pacific in 2019.

### NUMBER OF COOPERATIVES

In 2018, there were 8,130 cooperatives.

### NUMBER OF MEMBERS

In 2018, there were 11,636,166 members.

### PRODUCTION VALUE

In 2017, the contribution of cooperatives to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was about 13%.

### 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.

The Mapping report for Thailand was prepared using information available in the report on Annual Statistics on Cooperatives, Agricultural Groups, and Vocational Group 2018 published by the Cooperative Promotion Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Country Snapshot on Cooperatives in Thailand developed by ICA Asia and Pacific in 2019 and information on members through their websites and reports.

## II. Key figures

Thailand has two ICA member organisations:

1. Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT)



Established in 1968, CLT is the national apex body representing all cooperatives in Thailand. As an apex organisation, it promotes the affairs of cooperatives, conducts research, compiles statistics, provides technical advice and assistance to cooperatives, facilitates coordination and communication between cooperatives and government agencies and other stakeholders, promotes the relations between national and international cooperatives among others. CLT is a full member of the World Farmers' Organisation and founder member of the Asian Farmers' Group for Cooperation. It became a member of ICA in 1974.

## 2. Association of Asian Confederation of Credit Unions (ACCU)

Established in 1971, ACCU operates as a regional representative organisation of credit unions and similar cooperative financial institutions in Asia. As a regional organisation for credit unions, ACCU performs representation, development, liaison and coordination functions on behalf of the Asian credit union movements. It also provides members and potential members' services in long and short-term technical assistance, training, and information. ACCU is affiliated to the International Raiffeisen Union, United Nations, and World Council of Credit Unions. It became a member of ICA in 1992.

### i. ICA member data

The data on ICA membership in this section was collected from the Country Snapshot on Cooperatives in Thailand, members' website and their annual reports.

### ii. General overview

Number of cooperatives represented by CLT in 2018 were 8,130 with 11,636,166 individual members. Out of total members, 6,483,093 (55.72%) are men and 5,153,073 (44.28%) are women.

As of 2018, there are about 73,600 Board of Directors in all 8,130 cooperatives out which 47,355 (64.34%) are men and 26,245 (35.66%) are women. Female Board of Directors are relatively more in the non-agricultural sector as compared to agricultural sector.

The membership of ACCU constitutes regular, associate, affiliate, and supporter members. In 2018-19, ACCU represented 36.1 million individual members from 31,752 financial cooperatives in 23 countries in Asia. These financial cooperatives raised EUR 163 billion<sup>1</sup> (USD 185 billion) in assets, generated employment for 7,00,000 professionals and involved 3,50,000 volunteers.

### iii. Sector overview

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<sup>1</sup> This amount was calculated based on the annual average rate (as per December 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)

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 Thailand are present in diverse sectors including agriculture, fisheries, thrift and credit, consumer, services and credit unions.

Sectors	Number of cooperatives (2018)
Agriculture cooperatives	4,376
Thrift and credit cooperatives	1,474
Service cooperatives	1,277
Credit union cooperatives	604
Consumer cooperatives	199
Fishery cooperatives	108
Land settlement cooperatives	92
Total	8,130

Table 1: Cooperatives per sector in Thailand (2018)

Overall, 4,577 (56.3%) cooperatives are in the agricultural sector (comprising of agriculture, fishery and land settlement cooperatives) while 3,553 (43.7%) cooperatives are in the non-agricultural sector (comprising of thrift and credit, service, credit union and consumer cooperatives).

### III. Graphs

#### i. Percentage of cooperatives per sector

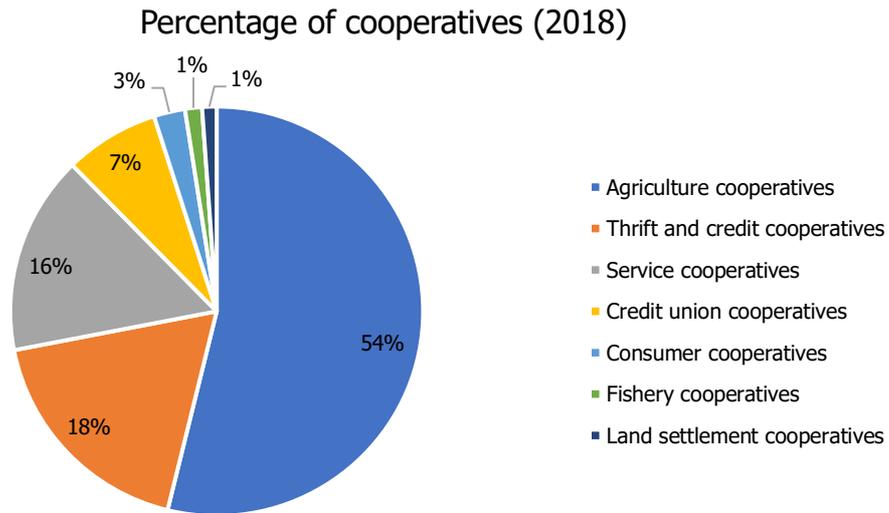


Figure 1: Percentage of cooperatives per sector in Thailand (2018)

## IV. Annexes

Sources and contacts are listed below.

### Sources

1. ICA-AP (2019). [Thailand country snapshot](#).
2. Cooperative Promotion Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (2018). [Annual Statistics on Cooperatives, Agricultural Groups, and Vocational Group](#).
3. ACCU (2018-19). [Annual report](#).
4. 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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