



Promoting the Development of Agricultural Cooperatives

Sara Elder and Florencia Sarmiento

November 2024

The Issue

Agricultural cooperatives (for a definition see Box 1) can play an important role in providing small-scale producers with access to stable and fair market relationships, equitable pricing, and sustainable markets. They can empower smallholders by ensuring fair market access and fostering resilience. As such, governments have prioritized the development of agricultural cooperatives to enhance farmer access to finance, expand market opportunities, increase productivity, and reduce vulnerability to climate change risks. This document is intended for governments in the Global South that aim to promote agricultural cooperatives as a strategy to strengthen smallholder farming.

In promoting effective and well-functioning agricultural cooperatives, governments can start by focusing on two main areas: (i) creating a supportive regulatory, institutional, and infrastructural environment for the establishment and development of agricultural cooperatives and (ii) implementing specific initiatives that encourage the professionalization and sustainable operation of agricultural cooperatives, as outlined below.

Creating a Supportive Environment

Establishing a regulatory, institutional, and infrastructural environment to promote agricultural cooperatives is crucial for maximizing their potential and ensuring their long-term success. Agricultural cooperatives offer significant value in supporting rural communities and sustainable development (Wandayana, 2014). Moreover, they can play a significant role in promoting sustainable agricultural practices (Candemir et al., 2021). Regardless of the type of cooperative being promoted (see Box 1), certain issues need to be addressed to allow these cooperatives to reach their full potential (Tschopp et al., 2020).



Box 1. Types of cooperatives

Agricultural cooperatives are “people-centered enterprises jointly owned and democratically controlled by and for their members to realize their common socio-economic needs and aspirations” (International Cooperative Alliance, n.d.). Some cooperatives focus on obtaining supplies or credit, while others focus on the production of goods, marketing and sales, or a combination of these (Tschopp et al., 2020). A distinction is made between service cooperatives, which provide members with input supply, marketing, credit, or technology services (Deininger, 1995), and agricultural collectives, where production is undertaken jointly.

Service cooperatives: Members carry out their activities independently, and the cooperative provides them with a range of services such as machinery, credit, marketing or technology (Deininger, 1995).

Agricultural collectives: Characterized by joint ownership and operation of the means of production (collective production). Examples include:

- “Land shareholding cooperatives (LSCs) centralize management over fragmented farmland by converting farmers’ plots into shares” (Francesconi & Wouterse, 2022). The members of the cooperative receive dividends resulting from the profit made by the LSC through collective marketing, according to the proportion of the number of shares they hold at the end of the fiscal year (Francesconi & Wouterse, 2022).
- Joint cropland management consists of “any scheme that allows the joint cultivation of land plots by agricultural cooperatives, mainly vertically integrated marketing cooperatives” (Garcia-Alvarez-Coque & Piñeiro, 2022).

Key Considerations for Implementation

Promoting the Establishment of Agricultural Cooperatives as Part of a Comprehensive Policy Strategy on Sustainable Agriculture

What: Agricultural cooperatives should be promoted as part of a comprehensive agricultural strategy aimed at increasing the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, improving farmer’s incomes, and boosting the commercialization of agricultural products. The promotion of cooperatives should not be conducted in isolation from the broader policy context.

How: The government should clearly outline a comprehensive policy strategy that promotes sustainable agriculture and outlines how the establishment of agricultural cooperatives can enhance the environment and climate resilience while improving the livelihoods of farmers. The strategy should also include guidelines for implementation and the role of supporting actors, such as bodies setting voluntary sustainability standards (VSSs), and supporting mechanisms, such as training and information sessions for smallholder farmers.



Box 2. Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems

The *Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems* (“CFS-RAI”), endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security in 2014, provide comprehensive guidance on what constitutes a “responsible investment” in the agribusiness sector. The 10 CFS-RAI principles cover the social, economic, environmental, and governance dimensions of agricultural investment. The CFS-RAI enjoy considerable legitimacy, as they were developed and endorsed by national governments, the private sector, and civil society (Committee on World Food Security, 2014).

Regional entities have adapted these principles to their context. The *ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture and Forestry* (“ASEAN RAI”) are based on the CFS-RAI but adapted to Southeast Asia. They offer concrete guidance on RAI adoption and implementation for national governments, the private sector, and civil society. They were drafted by the International Institute for Sustainable Development and Grow Asia and adopted by the ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry in October 2018. The guidelines encompass 10 critical aspects: food security and nutrition, economic development, women and young people, tenure rights, natural resources, technology, climate change, the rule of law and governance, impact assessment and accountability, and regional approaches (Brewin et al., 2019).

Building Trust in Agricultural Cooperatives to Encourage Participation From Smallholders

What: For smallholders to join agricultural cooperatives, governments need to build trust in the agricultural cooperative model. Smallholders must be aware and informed of how cooperatives form and operate to facilitate their active engagement in the cooperatives’ activities. Clear communication around the structure and functioning of the cooperatives needs to be developed to foster collaboration. Moreover, government guidelines and raising awareness of agricultural cooperatives can help build trust and encourage smallholders to make informed decisions and join agricultural cooperatives.

How: To raise awareness of agricultural cooperatives, the government should conduct focus groups with farmers to explain to farmers how agricultural cooperatives work and to identify farmers’ needs and challenges and how an agricultural cooperative might address them. The focus groups could be conducted based on the type of commodity produced by the agricultural cooperative to ensure that commodity-specific factors or concerns are considered. The commodity-specific findings could then be compiled and disseminated back to farmers to promote the establishment of agricultural cooperatives where appropriate and build farmer buy-in.



Demonstrating the Feasibility of Establishing Agricultural Cooperatives by Conducting Pilots

What: Before promoting a specific type of agricultural cooperative, the government can conduct pilots to test and demonstrate both the feasibility and the benefits of the agricultural cooperative. The pilot cases could serve as examples, building trust in the specific type of model chosen by the government. They would also help to identify what is needed to adapt the model to be successful in the specific country and commodity context. This, in turn, would inform the scaling of agricultural cooperatives in the country.

How: It is critical for the pilots to ensure the inclusion of smallholder farmers as the intended beneficiaries of agricultural cooperatives. Existing strengths and the context in which the agricultural cooperatives operate should be considered when selecting the pilot agricultural cooperatives so communities do not underestimate the challenges of scaling the model beyond most successful cases.

Mobilizing Investment and Funding to Support Agricultural Cooperatives

What: The success of agricultural cooperatives depends largely on the availability of public support, including financial and managerial capital. In this sense, investment and funding are key to creating an environment where agricultural cooperatives can thrive. Consequently, if the development and promotion of agricultural cooperatives is a priority, governments should mobilize investment and funding to support their establishment and operation.

How: This support can take different forms, either directly or indirectly. For example, to indirectly support cooperatives in general, governments need to lower the transaction costs of their operations, especially in the case of remote rural areas, by establishing adequate infrastructure, in terms of electricity, roads, and storage (Francesconi & Wouterse, 2022). Funding and loans that directly support agricultural cooperatives can promote the transition toward this type of agricultural model. Moreover, funding and resources would be needed and mobilized to implement the guidelines outlined below.

Examples of Implementation

Cambodia

Cambodia introduced the concept and development of modern agricultural cooperatives as a priority policy program in 2023 aimed at increasing the competitiveness of its smallholder-based agricultural sector in both volume and quality, improving farmer livelihoods, and ensuring food security. The modern agricultural cooperative concept requires farmers to engage in joint agricultural production, either renting their land or crops or committing them as shares to the modern agricultural cooperative in return for a proportionate share of profits. To promote modern agricultural cooperatives and help ensure the successful large-scale implementation of this model, the government is developing the legal framework, creating a funding mechanism, and establishing pilots for priority crops (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 2023).



China

China is a key example of a country that has implemented LSCs. According to research, LSCs are best suited for two scenarios in China: (1) lower-income villages with a comparative advantage for agriculture but little industrial or commercial potential and (2) virtually abandoned villages following urban employment (Chen, 2016). Notably, the LSC system has been officially endorsed by the government as part of its agricultural reform strategy, which started in 2017. According to the Minister of Agriculture, the reform promoting LSCs “will help promote agricultural development, increase farmers’ incomes and maintain stability in the rural areas” (The State Council, 2017). Illustrating this, after setting up LSCs in 2017, Houbaligou Village’s collective assets have increased from CNY 3.5 billion to over CNY 8 billion (about USD 1.1 billion) (Xinhua, 2023).

Israel

Israel’s experience highlights the key role agricultural cooperatives can play in fostering sustainable and profitable farming practices. The establishment of cooperatives can allow governments to effectively harness available resources for optimal agricultural productivity. Effective governmental support, such as investments, tax incentives, subsidies, and favourable credit terms, is needed for the establishment and maintenance of successful agricultural cooperatives. However, diligent monitoring is crucial for success and to maximize the use of government support, enabling agricultural cooperatives to adopt sound management and business practices. Furthermore, a coherent, long-term governmental policy on agricultural development is essential (Rosenthal & Eiges, 2014).

Rwanda

Rwanda’s post-genocide governance reforms included land devolution processes that transformed traditional cooperatives into LSCs. This process, known as “Umuganda,” was designed to engage cooperatives and gather Rwanda’s communities around land consolidation and collective marketing (African Development Bank [AfDB], 2017; Francesconi & Wouterse, 2022; Mukarugwiza, 2010). The research highlights that the success of LSCs in Rwanda can be attributed to strong donor support coupled with government efforts, which have strengthened the motivation of the population to collaborate on the creation of common goods and services (Francesconi & Wouterse, 2022).

Senegal

In Senegal, the adoption of the LSC model has relied on the support of governments and donors. There are 365 Water Use Associations (WUAs) that were established to manage irrigated perimeters built by the government with the support of international donors. The irrigation systems were leased to cooperatives to cultivate horticultural crops, both for domestic and international markets. On average, WUAs consist of 100 members, mostly women, who are required to purchase shares corresponding to the size of plots they wish to hold within the irrigated perimeter. Most of the WUAs function as LSCs. The case of Senegal highlights how success is contingent upon the availability of sizable and comprehensive public support, including both financial and managerial capital. Capital tends to be a significant constraining factor when upscaling the LSC model. The analysis of Senegal’s case also reveals



that market-oriented LSCs “do not have to be standalone or exceptional success stories but can emerge as a country-wide movement albeit not uniformly successful” (Francesconi & Wouterse, 2022).

Uganda

In Uganda, 4,700 ha of farmland on Bugala island was regained by the government and leased to a pre-existing association of 1,770 smallholders to establish a palm oil plantation to reduce palm oil imports. Consequently, the association was transformed into an LSC, distributing shares among the members. On average, each member received a shareholding certificate corresponding to a plot of land of about 2.5 ha. Notably, members received loans to support their livelihoods during the initial years of plantation. In addition, the International Fund for Agricultural Development provided a loan for the cooperative to hire a professional manager, build infrastructure, and buy machinery. By 2016, the cooperative repaid almost half of the loans based on the revenues accrued in 5 years of production. In conclusion, this success story underscores the importance of sizable public investments geared toward land devolution and infrastructure, which allowed the cooperative to centralize and professionalize management over fragmented farmland. Notably, this might be hard to replicate in other contexts, and the type of investment needed may vary in other countries (Francesconi & Wouterse, 2022).

Professional Operation and Management of Agricultural Cooperatives

Professionalization refers to the smooth functioning of business operations and activities and well-reasoned management decisions that increase the value of the cooperative enterprise and earn a profit for members. Once agricultural cooperatives are formed, challenges to their professional operation and management often include a lack of working capital, a lack of human resources for professional leadership, low competitive capacity and ability to seize market opportunities, and vulnerability to climate change-related risks. A well-functioning agricultural cooperative typically has systems and processes in place to guide the day-to-day tasks required to deliver services to their members and achieve their business objectives. Its management requires skills and experience to identify, analyze, and make decisions that resolve organizational issues quickly and efficiently. Governments can support the professionalization of agricultural cooperatives through policy, legislation, and institutional mechanisms.

Key Considerations for Implementation

Establishing a Legal Framework to Support Professionally Operated Agricultural Cooperatives

What: The government should establish a robust legal framework to support the professional operation of agricultural cooperatives. This framework would entail including and implementing key provisions in the legislation that promote professionalism among cooperative directors and employees, as well as improving the overall ease of doing business for cooperatives.



How: Laws for the establishment and registration of agricultural cooperatives should support their professional management and promote trust in agricultural cooperative leadership by requiring that directors of cooperatives are qualified and accountable for safeguarding the interests of the cooperative and its members (Reach & Misook, 2016; Theng et al., 2014; United Nations, 2003). Cooperative law must also require adherence to accounting and auditing standards. Additional legislation (such as sub-decrees) for consideration to support the operation of cooperatives as businesses can include tax incentives for cooperatives and eligibility to obtain export licences.

Providing Templates and Guidance to Agricultural Cooperative Management for Clear Management Systems and Strong Business Plans

What: Agricultural cooperatives must demonstrate legal registration and compliance with regulations, develop strong business plans, establish quality and internal control systems, and keep accurate financial accounts, records, and reports. Critically, the government must support these systems with tools and guidance to develop agricultural cooperative management capacity in these areas.

How: Governments should prepare standard operating procedure guidelines for various aspects of agricultural cooperative business operations, including business plan development guidelines, model agricultural cooperative business plan templates, model agricultural cooperative by-laws, governance structures and roles, procedures for transparent board elections, and internal control systems. Extension officers could circulate these templates and advise cooperative management on their adaptation and adoption.

Integrating Sustainability as a Core Component of Agricultural Cooperative Businesses and Operations to Strengthen Climate Resilience and Attract Investment

What: Placing sustainability at the core of agricultural cooperatives' business and operations can promote market positioning through added value and distinction for both the cooperative and its products. Focusing on sustainable agricultural practices and climate resilience can help agricultural cooperatives access markets for sustainable products and attract impact financing.

How: Governments can promote sustainability as integral to agricultural cooperatives through guidelines and training for cooperative management on the integration of sustainability considerations in cooperative business plans and operations. For example, the development and adoption of environmentally friendly processes such as composting agricultural residue, promoting eco-tourism for value-addition, or compliance with VSSs. These processes can be implemented through partnerships with development actors.



Box 3. Integrating sustainability at the core of business and operations: Insights from a Kenyan small enterprise

Private sector actors—including agribusiness, farmers, and agricultural cooperatives—are key players in achieving the goals of the CFS-RAI. Their investments in the agricultural and food sectors can play a transformative role, such as enabling the adoption and dissemination of new technologies, building markets and supply chain linkages, and potentially contributing to local economies and communities (e.g., through employment and income generation).

The case of Kenyan company LIMBUA Group Limited demonstrates how integrating sustainability at the core of their business model has led to a high level of compliance with responsible business conduct (Mirza & Pringle, 2024). In particular, the following five lessons learned from this case apply to cooperatives:

- The founding members set very clear goals and expectations for what they aimed to achieve, including with regard to sustainability, such as respect for the environment and human dignity.
- They recognized that the sustainability of the business model lies in nurturing farmers' trust and requires a deep understanding of the challenges and drivers impacting farmers that supply the business. Specifically, the company had to focus on the systems, processes, and relationships within which farmers operate.
- Stress was placed on selecting, recruiting, and developing staff able to embrace and implement the business model; and, as the business grew and evolved, these staff were enjoined to create a network of (and work with) institutions who fully understand the business philosophy and who place the smallholder farmer at the heart of the operations.
- Emphasis was placed on creating a vibrant and strong team that can independently make decisions without much guidance. This goal can be achieved if there is a readily available pool of trained youth from farming communities and female farmers who can be employed in the business.
- The company takes care to identify and work with agencies, businesses, and customers that share its values. In so doing, it has been able to develop a full “ecosystem” of actors that provide different business elements, including working capital, all geared toward common business goals. The company, for instance, works closely with many bodies and agencies related to organic certification. Another example is its close collaboration with a bank to train farmers in financial literacy.

By adopting and implementing a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable business model, the company has had the opportunity to be a centre of inspiration and an example for others to follow.

Source: adapted from Mirza & Pringle, 2024, with permission.



Establishing Training and Support to Develop Highly Qualified and Professional Human Resources

What: Any strategy to develop highly qualified and professional agricultural cooperative leadership must involve training for agricultural cooperative board directors and management, including executive directors, accountants, production operations managers, and farm advisors.

How: Governments should coordinate with development organizations to promote the design of training materials to build capacity and deliver specialized training and technical assistance to agricultural cooperative leaders. With a view to promoting more sustainable and productive agricultural practices, this could include technical guidance on the implementation of climate-smart agriculture, as well as on sustainable markets, their requirements, and how to access them. In some countries, such as Japan, the national apex body of agricultural cooperatives also has an agricultural cooperative college for agricultural cooperative leaders and management to strengthen production and management. Internship programs with local colleges could place trained youth in cooperatives to help in management and leadership while promoting youth interest in cooperatives.

Building Mutual Trust, Learning, and Links to Partners and Buyers

What: It is important to increase the level of trust and confidence in agricultural cooperative members and relevant partners to make agricultural cooperatives attractive to farmers and build their support for the cooperative model.

How: The government should establish an annual forum for networking and as a learning platform for cooperatives, partners, the private sector, and policy-makers. The forum would be a way for cooperative leadership to meet, share experiences, and learn from each other; a venue for business matching between cooperatives and buyers; and a place for cooperatives and funders/investors to interact. Governments can also promote consumer demand for cooperative-produced goods using various measures ranging from awareness raising through subsidized advertising to public procurement programs for state institutions such as schools and hospitals (Centre for Development and Environment, 2024).

Leveraging VSSs to Professionalize Agricultural Cooperative Management and Operations

What: VSSs specify requirements that producers and traders must meet to demonstrate the sustainability of production. VSSs can support agricultural cooperative professionalization by

- increasing member access to training on sustainable practices and quality improvements (Elder et al., 2021) and offering market distinction resulting in 10%–50% higher prices depending on the commodity (Bermudez & Millet, 2023);
- improving operational improvements and professional business and management practices through their requirements and guidance related to compliance with relevant laws and regulations, record-keeping, regular audits and evaluations, sustainability planning and management, training, technology transfer, and access to finance (Voora et al., 2022);



- providing opportunities for agricultural cooperatives to connect with buyers and have market assurance, resulting from stronger supply chain relationships, quality requirements, and contract farming agreements (Elder et al., 2021); and
- supporting improved access to finance through reduced financial risks for investors resulting from improved business and managerial capacity, operational improvements, improved profitability and liquidity, reduced material environmental and social risks, and an ecosystem of actors and support services (Voorra et al., 2022).

How: To support the adoption of VSS-compliant agriculture by cooperative members, governments can raise awareness of VSSs, provide extension services aligned with VSS requirements, and offer incentives to transition to VSS-compliant production, such as payment for ecosystem services (i.e., flood retention, water treatment, carbon sequestration and storage), subsidizing part of the compliance costs and incentivizing sustainable consumption.

Examples of Implementation

Cambodia

By obtaining organic certification for its rice production, the Preah Vihear Meanchey Union of Agricultural Cooperatives has successfully generated better prices for its cooperative members. In 2022, the ACU of 33 cooperatives sold over 20,000 tonnes of organic rice to four companies. As a result, more than 5,000 families have benefited from the price premium of 25%–30% organic rice typically earns over regular rice in international markets (DGRV, 2024). Similarly, after becoming certified organic with the support of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ), four agricultural cooperatives signed farm contracts with the Cambodian Agriculture Cooperative Cooperation and Signature Asia to sell their organic cassava, sesame, and peanuts (World Bank, 2020).

Costa Rica

Costa Rica has successfully integrated sustainability as a core component of its cooperative sector. For example, it was the first country to introduce a Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action plan to help coffee cooperative members reduce their emissions (Hares, 2018). The Costa Rican cooperative Coopedota was the first coffee company in the world to be certified for carbon neutrality by the internationally recognized standard Publicly Available Specification 2060 (Birkenberg & Birner, 2018). To support the training and professionalization of cooperatives, Costa Rica has established the CENECOOP alliance between schools and the cooperative movement to teach the fundamentals of cooperative principles and organization at school. The government sets minimum thresholds for cooperative investments in capacity building and contributions to institutions such as CENECOOP. The state also gives preference to cooperatives in the allocation of public procurement contracts (International Cooperative Alliance, 2024).

Kenya

The government has developed institutional and regulatory mechanisms to promote professionalism and good governance in cooperatives, including the establishment of the



Ethics Commission for Cooperatives. Some of its objectives include promoting cooperative management as a profession, registering people who meet the required professional and ethical standards, and issuing certificates. It also establishes, publishes, and monitors standards of professional competence and practice among members.

Laos

The Bolaven Plateau Coffee Producers Cooperative in Laos illustrates how a focus on quality and sustainability has helped cooperative members to differentiate their products, access new markets, and obtain higher prices. The key to their success in getting better prices has been obtaining Fairtrade and Organic certifications recognized in Europe, Asia, and North America, as well as investing in processing facilities, resulting in higher-quality coffee and higher price premiums. The Government of Laos helped the cooperative to further distinguish its coffee by applying for an official Geographical Indication market for Bolaven coffee (Tschopp et al., 2020).

Vietnam

The Vietnamese Ministry of Planning and Investment initiated a program to advance environmental and social sustainability among small and growing businesses. As part of the initiative, the program promotes an inclusive and sustainable cooperative model across the country. For instance, Ben Tre Green Pomelo Cooperative was able to integrate sustainability at the core of its business with access to financial support and capacity training for its staff in market development, sustainable agricultural production, and environmental management. The cooperative has worked to obtain VietGAP and GlobalGAP certifications and now supplies pomelos to the United States.

Conclusion

This document highlights key considerations for governments to create an enabling environment and support the establishment and operation of sustainable agricultural cooperatives. The objective is to create the conditions needed for agricultural cooperatives to form and boost productivity, build climate resilience, access finance and market opportunities, and improve smallholder farmer livelihoods. Any of these options should be integrated into broader strategies for sustainable rural development and agricultural transformation.

While this document focuses on actions that can be taken by governments to support the development of sustainable agricultural cooperatives, we strongly recommend the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders in the process. As governments develop action plans, it is essential to identify all stakeholders and clarify the specific roles they can play in the implementation process.



References

- African Development Bank (AfDB). (2017). *Land tenure regularization in Rwanda: Good practices in land reform*. <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/document/land-tenure-regularization-in-rwanda-good-practices-in-land-reform-93890>
- Bermudez, S., & Millet, S. (2023, December 4). *How can sustainability standards do more to ratchet up smallholder farmers' incomes?* State of Sustainability Initiatives. <https://www.iisd.org/ssi/blog/how-can-sustainability-standards-ratchet-up-smallholder-farmers-incomes/>
- Birkenberg, A., & Birner, R. (2018). The world's first carbon neutral coffee: Lessons on certification and innovation from a pioneer case in Costa Rica. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 189, 485–501. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2018.03.226>
- Brewin, S., Smaller, C., & Mirza, H. (2019). *ASEAN guidelines for responsible investment in food, agriculture and forestry*. International Institute for Sustainable Development & Grow Asia. <https://www.iisd.org/publications/guide/asean-guidelines-responsible-investment-food-agriculture-and-forestry>
- Candemir, A., Duvaleix, S., & Latruffe, L. (2021). Agricultural cooperatives and farm sustainability: A literature review. *Journal of Economic Surveys*, 35(4), 1118–1144. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12417>
- Centre for Development and Environment. (2024). *Agricultural cooperatives: Finding strength in numbers*. https://www.cde.unibe.ch/insights_media/policy_briefs/agricultural_cooperatives_finding_strength_in_numbers/index_eng.html
- Chen, A. (2016). The politics of the shareholding collective economy in China's rural villages. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 43(4), 828–849. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2015.1078318>
- Committee on World Food Security. (2014). *Principles for responsible investment in agriculture and food systems*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Food Programme, & International Fund for Agricultural Development. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/f05f6d3d-d434-43da-99e9-a68c04c41342/content>
- Deininger, K. (1995). Collective agricultural production: A solution for transition economies? *World Development*, 23(8), 1317–1334. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X\(95\)00044-D](https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X(95)00044-D)
- DGRV. (2024). *The potential of cooperatives in agricultural supply chains in Cambodia*. <https://www.dgrv.coop/publications/the-potential-of-cooperatives-in-agricultural-supply-chains-in-cambodia/>
- Elder, S., Wilkings, A., Larrea, C., Elamin, N., & Fernandez de Cordoba, S. (2021). *State of Sustainability Initiatives review: Standards and poverty reduction*. International Institute for Sustainable Development. <https://www.iisd.org/ssi/publications/standards-and-poverty-reduction/>
- Francesconi, G. N., & Wouterse, F. (2022). The potential of land shareholding cooperatives for inclusive agribusiness development in Africa. *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics*, 93(1), 161–176. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apce.12314>



- Garcia-Alvarez-Coque, J., & Piñeiro, V. (2022). Using collective farming to improve farm structures and drive generational renewal in Spain. *EuroChoices*, 21(2), 35–42. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1746-692X.12361>
- Hares, S. (2018, May 22). *Costa Rica coffee farmers brew up a carbon neutral future*. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKCN1IN04F/>
- International Cooperative Alliance. (n.d.). *What is a cooperative?* <https://ica.coop/en/cooperatives/what-is-a-cooperative>
- International Cooperative Alliance. (2024). *Costa Rica*. #coops4dev. <https://coops4dev.coop/en/4devamericas/costa-rica>
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. (2023). *The Royal Government of Cambodia's Fifth and Sixth Priority Policy Programs of the Seventh Legislature of the National Assembly*. Royal Government of Cambodia.
- Mirza, H., & Pringle, D. (2024, January). *LIMBUA Group Limited: A Kenyan processing and marketing enterprise in the fruit and nut sector*. International Institute for Sustainable Development. <https://www.iisd.org/system/files/2024-08/responsible-agricultural-investment-kenya-limbua-group.pdf>
- Mukarugwiza, E. (2010). *The hope for rural transformation: A rejuvenating cooperative movement in Rwanda*. International Labour Organization. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---coop/documents/publication/wcms_547537.pdf
- Reach, S., & Misook, L. (2016). Development of agricultural cooperative in Cambodia: Lessons from South Korea. *Journal of Agricultural Extension & Community Development*, 23(2), 195–210. <https://doi.org/10.12653/JECD.2016.23.2.0195>
- Rosenthal, G., & Eiges, H. (2014). Agricultural cooperatives in Israel. *Journal of Rural Cooperation*, 42(1). <https://doi.org/10.22004/AG.ECON.249704>
- The State Council. (2017). *Shareholding reform to boost China's rural development*. The People's Republic of China. http://english.www.gov.cn/state_council/ministries/2017/01/03/content_281475532080356.htm
- Theng, V., Keo, S., Nou, K., Sum, S., & Khiev, P. (2014). *Impact of farmer organisations on food security: The case of rural Cambodia* (Working paper series 95). CDRI. https://lib.ncdd.gov.kh/storage/app/public/test_library/CAT_4235_1/2014-wp95-FarmerOrganization-en.pdf
- Tschopp, M., Jaquet, S., Jacobi, J., Douangphachanh, M., Bieri, S., & Lannen, A. (2020). *Agricultural cooperatives: Finding strength in numbers* (CDE Policy Brief 16). CDE. <https://cgspace.cgiar.org/items/5afb8f36-4c41-4f79-96c0-049709b5beb8>
- United Nations. (2003). *Supportive environment for cooperatives: A stakeholder dialogue on definitions, prerequisites and process of creation*. United Nations. https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/social/documents/coop_egm_report.pdf



- Voorra, V., Larrea, C., Huppe, G., & Nugnes, F. (2022). *IISD's State of Sustainability Initiatives review: Standards and investments in sustainable agriculture review*. International Institute for Sustainable Development. <https://www.iisd.org/publications/report/ssi-review-standards-investments-sustainable-agriculture>
- Wandayana, F. (2014). *Cooperatives and the Sustainable Development Goals: A contribution to the post-2015 Development Debate*. International Labour Organization. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_240640.pdf
- World Bank. (2020). *Poor communities in Cambodia are earning more through agricultural cooperatives and organic farming*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2020/03/23/poor-communities-in-cambodia-are-earning-more-through-agricultural-cooperatives-and-organic-farming>
- Xinhua. (2023, December 22). *Reform propels China's rural areas on path to modernization*. News.cn. <https://english.news.cn/20231222/16995a34dc794cd0903d32e1ad6448e3/c.html>

© 2024 International Institute for Sustainable Development
Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development.

This publication is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) is an award-winning independent think tank working to accelerate solutions for a stable climate, sustainable resource management, and fair economies. Our work inspires better decisions and sparks meaningful action to help people and the planet thrive. We shine a light on what can be achieved when governments, businesses, non-profits, and communities come together. IISD's staff of more than 200 experts come from across the globe and from many disciplines. With offices in Winnipeg, Geneva, Ottawa, and Toronto, our work affects lives in nearly 100 countries.

IISD is a registered charitable organization in Canada and has 501(c)(3) status in the United States. IISD receives core operating support from the Province of Manitoba and project funding from governments inside and outside Canada, United Nations agencies, foundations, the private sector, and individuals.

IISD's State of Sustainability Initiatives advances sustainable and inclusive value chains by providing credible and solutions-oriented research, dialogue, and strategic advice for decision-makers about voluntary sustainability standards and other supportive initiatives.

Head Office

111 Lombard Avenue, Suite 325
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3B 0T4

Tel: +1 (204) 958-7700
Website: www.iisd.org
X: @IISD_news



With the support of the Swedish government

