



International  
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Office



# STATISTICS ON COOPERATIVES

## COUNTRY IN FOCUS: JAPAN<sup>1</sup>

This country in focus note is part of the **Statistics on Cooperatives series** produced by the *International Labour Organization (ILO)* and the *Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC)* in support of a larger initiative to increase understanding of the ways in which countries around the world are producing and using statistics on cooperatives. Currently reliable and comparable statistics on cooperatives are missing in most countries of the world. These statistics are essential to measuring the impact of cooperatives on members, workers and the economy as a whole.

### Cooperatives in Japan

Japan has a substantial cooperative economy, in spite of fragmented cooperative legislation regulated by different ministries. There are more than ten industry-specific laws for cooperatives, but no law providing a regulatory framework for workers' cooperatives. The absence of comprehensive statistics on cooperatives in Japan can be directly linked to the lack of a common public policy on cooperatives. Cooperatives also do not have a national apex structure representing them, except for the Japan Joint Committee of Cooperatives (JJC), which coordinates collaboration only at the international level. Plans are underway to establish a new national alliance in place of the Japan National Planning Committee, which was created for the 2012 International Year of Cooperatives.

### How are statistics on cooperatives generated in Japan?

The **Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)**<sup>2</sup> collects data on agricultural, fishery and forest-owners' cooperatives through prefecture governments in order to help formulate public policies. The **Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW)**<sup>3</sup> collects basic data on consumer cooperatives in the same way, but the extent of the variables is smaller. The **Bank of Japan (BOJ)**<sup>4</sup> collects financial data for all financial institutions including cooperative banks. While the data is disaggregated according to governance type, no data on members is available. The **Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)**<sup>5</sup> does not collect disaggregated data on small and medium-sized cooperatives. The national federations of cooperatives or research institutes attached to them also generate statistics and issue annual publications synthesising their data.

Since 2009, the **Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC)**<sup>6</sup> and the METI have been compiling an **Economic Census**<sup>7</sup>, which integrates various industry-based statistics produced by ministries. The Census contains the number of enterprises, employees and turnover according to the industry and prefecture. Enterprises are distinguished as "individuals", "companies" and "corporations other than companies". This last category includes cooperatives, non-profits and public corporations. Further disaggregation of the data to distinguish cooperatives is not available in this Census.

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2 <http://www.maff.go.jp/e/index.html>

3 <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/>

4 <https://www.boj.or.jp/en/index.htm/>

5 <http://www.meti.go.jp/english/>

6 <http://www.soumu.go.jp/english/>

7 <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/e-census.htm>



## What statistics are available?

There are some official statistics on cooperatives published by the sectoral ministries. The MAFF publishes annual statistics on organisational, economic and financial data for multi-purpose agricultural cooperatives, specialised agricultural cooperatives, their prefectural federations, fishery cooperatives and forest-owner's cooperatives. The MHLW publishes annual statistics on organisational, economic and financial data for primary consumer cooperatives and prefectural federations.

The **Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives (JA ZENCHU)**<sup>8</sup> publishes the “JA Fact Book” annually, and the **National Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives (ZEN-NOH)**<sup>9</sup> issues the Basic Statistics of JA Group's Economic Businesses annually. This report covers data on organisations, businesses and management of agricultural cooperatives, including data on product categories. The **Japanese Consumers' Cooperative Union (JCCU)**<sup>10</sup> publishes annual Management Statistics that provide an overview of affiliated cooperatives and organisational and financial information, including rankings. Its website contains “Facts and Figures” that are accessible online and in English. The **Japan Cooperative Insurance Association (JCIA)**<sup>11</sup> publishes a yearly fact book that is available on its website in English. Every year around the International Day of Cooperatives, the JJC publishes annual statistics on cooperatives from various sectors, compiling statistics provided by ministries and national cooperative federations.

## Reflections on Japan's approach to cooperative statistics

Without comprehensive official statistics, the depth and extent of cooperative statistics depend on each ministry's policies and practices on statistics. As variables are not coordinated or harmonised among ministries, it is difficult to make cross-sectoral and international comparisons. The official statistics are supplemented by the data from national cooperative federations, which also need to be coordinated to generate comprehensive statistics for comparing different enterprise types and economic performance.

Measuring cooperatives' contributions to the national economy is a valuable effort. Toward that end a number of globally recognised systems, such as the **System of National Accounts (SNA)**<sup>12</sup>, the **International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC)**<sup>13</sup> and the **Manual for drawing up the satellite accounts of companies in the social economy: Cooperatives and mutual societies**<sup>14</sup>, exist and could be tailored for use in Japan as well. It is worth noting an ongoing debate on whether valued added is well-suited for measuring the economic contribution of cooperatives across different sectors. Hence as efforts continue to develop better measurement of the economic contributions of cooperatives, it will be beneficial to look into approaches more suitable to measuring cooperatives' contributions to the national economy as well.

The 19th Session of the **International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS)**<sup>15</sup> in 2013 included cooperatives in the Conference agenda for the first time in its history. The discussion converged towards the need for accurate, reliable, relevant and comparable statistics on the economic and social impact of cooperatives on the economies. A Resolution was passed with a view to carry out further developmental work on the measurement of cooperatives and carry out pilot studies in a number of countries to test various measurement approaches on collecting data on cooperatives.

The initiative on statistics on cooperatives is a collaboration between the ILO, COPAC, the cooperative movement, UN agencies, national statistics offices, government agencies and academic institutions to improve the quality and accessibility of statistical data on cooperatives. The outcome of this work will be guidelines for discussion at the 20th ICLS in October 2018.

COPAC is a multi-stakeholder partnership of global public and private institutions that promotes and advocates for people-centred, self-sustaining cooperative enterprises, guided by the principles of economic, social and environmental sustainable development. The current members of COPAC are the ILO, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Co-operative Alliance and the World Farmers' Organisation.

To find out more, please visit the **ILO COOP**<sup>16</sup>, **ILO Department of Statistics**<sup>17</sup> or **COPAC**<sup>18</sup> websites.

8 <https://www.zenchu-ja.or.jp/eng>

9 <http://www.zennoh.or.jp/about/english/>

10 <http://jccu.coop/eng/>

11 <http://www.jcia.or.jp/english/index.html>

12 <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/sna.asp>

13 <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/regcst.asp?Cl=27>

14 [http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item\\_id=48](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=48)

15 <http://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/meetings-and-events/international-conference-of-labour-statisticians/19/lang-en/index.htm>

16 [http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/areas-of-work/WCMS\\_550541/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/cooperatives/areas-of-work/WCMS_550541/lang-en/index.htm)

17 <http://www.ilo.org/stat/lang-en/index.htm>

18 [www.copac.coop](http://www.copac.coop)

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