



International  
Labour  
Office



# STATISTICS ON COOPERATIVES

## COUNTRY IN FOCUS: BRAZIL<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 Brazil

Historically, Brazil's social landscape has contributed to the advancement of cooperatives. Subsequent governmental initiatives helped improve understanding of cooperatives. The first cooperative in Brazil was established in 1889, and the current law concerning cooperatives was adopted in 1971. Recent debates on the solidarity economy have created greater awareness about the need to quantify and monitor solidarity economy enterprises (SEE), defined as an 'associative character of organisations that carry out economic activities whose participants are employees of urban or rural environments and democratically engaged in the management of activities and the allocation of the results'. This definition includes cooperatives and other entities adhering to principles of cooperation, self-management and solidarity. The **Organization of Brazilian Cooperatives (OCB)** is the main apex body representing cooperatives in the country.

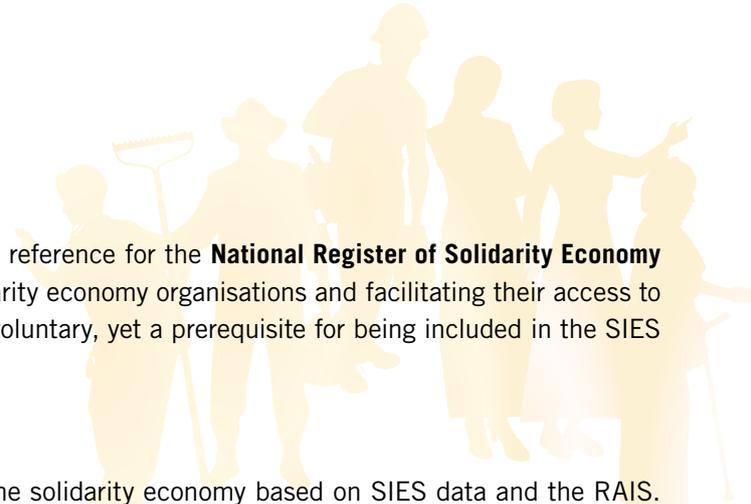
### How are statistics on cooperatives generated in Brazil?

Since 2003, the National Secretariat for Solidarity Economy of the Ministry of Labor (MTb/SENAES) and the **Department of Statistics and Socioeconomic Studies (DIEESE)** have been mapping SEE in Brazil. These two entities created the **National Observatory on the Solidarity Economy and Cooperatives** in 2015 to study and analyse SEE and provide solidarity economy enterprises with visibility and support. Mtb/SENAES and DIEESE use a definition of cooperatives provided by the **National Commission on Classification (CONCLA)**, meaning that data on cooperatives are disaggregated from data for other kinds of SEEs.

In 2006, the government created the **National System of Information on the Solidarity Economy (SIES)** to implement two national surveys covering the state of the solidarity economy. The first survey was undertaken between 2005 and 2007, and the second between 2009 and 2013. Both surveys were based on a questionnaire with 170 questions for entities that were either defined as SEE by the government or self-declared. The questions covered economic activities, size, number of employees and number of members. The second survey additionally incorporates information from the **Annual Reports on Social Information (RAIS)** register, allowing for greater detail on the economic activity of the enterprise. It should be noted that the RAIS register does not distinguish false cooperatives (which incorporate as cooperatives to

<sup>1</sup> The information is extracted from Carini, C., Borzaga, C. & Carpita, M. (2017) *Case studies on Brazil, Canada, Colombia, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom*. Geneva: ILO.





circumvent regulation for enterprises). The SIES was used as reference for the **National Register of Solidarity Economy Organizations (CADSOL)**, a public register for identifying solidarity economy organisations and facilitating their access to relevant national public policies. Applying to the CADSOL is voluntary, yet a prerequisite for being included in the SIES and in the National System of Fair and Ethical Trade.

## What statistics are available?

The MTb/SENAES and DIEESE have released statistics on the solidarity economy based on SIES data and the RAIS. Available statistics on cooperatives through SIES include the geographic location, area of operation (rural and/or urban), year established, number of members, gender composition, economic activity, supporting institution and type of support, frequency of assembly, benefits to members and surplus allocations for the previous year. The statistics from RAIS cover the number of organisations between 2006 and 2010, and employment and average employee wages in 2010. Statistical data from 2015 from CADSOL is still being tested and thus currently unavailable.

Statistics on cooperatives from DIEESE are available online in Portuguese in reports for **2008, 2011 and 2015**. Statistics based on the RAIS register are published one year after the end of the reference year, and statistics on SIES data are published two years after the end of the survey.

## Reflections on Brazil's approach to cooperative statistics

Brazil has had a social climate conducive to cooperativism. The government's response has been for its agencies to collaborate with each other on understanding and promoting the solidarity economy. The work of MtB/SENAES and DIEESE has shown good population coverage, comparability of cooperative statistics both internationally and with other types of SEE and a wide range of data through the SIES surveys and CADSOL. The surveys are, however, unable to differentiate between fake cooperatives and genuine cooperatives. Moreover, neither CADSOL nor SIES place legal obligations on organisations to provide relevant data, meaning that cooperatives that did not voluntarily disclose information may not be represented in the survey.

The 19th Session of the **International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS)** 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**, **ILO Department of Statistics** or **COPAC** websites.

### Contact information

**Cooperatives Unit  
Enterprises Department**  
International Labour Office  
(ILO)  
4, route des Morillons  
1211 Geneva 22  
Switzerland  
tel: +41 22 799 7095  
coop@ilo.org

**Committee for the Promotion  
and Advancement  
of Cooperatives  
(COPAC)**  
c/o International  
Co-operative Alliance  
1775 Eye Street NW, 8th Floor  
Washington, DC 20006, USA  
copac@copac.coop

