

## Methodological Note

The present research project is composed of four stages which will be carried out mainly from March to November, 2018. Although this methodology note explains all the process of research project, the current version focuses more on Stage 1. Methods for Stage 2-4 will be completed alongside the project through discussions with partners.

### Stage 1 – Agreement on types of co-operatives to be studied (May, 2018)

The main target of the present research project is **co-operatives in industrial and service sectors of which principal objective is to serve members' employment or business activities**. They are generally known with different names of types, such as worker co-operative, social co-operative, labour (contract) co-operative, artisans' co-operative, self-employed producers' co-operative, enterprise co-operative etc.<sup>1</sup> They are also included in broader typologies defined with economic activities, such as transport co-operative, mining co-operative, health co-operative, education co-operative, industrial co-operative, service co-operative, and so forth. It is also possible that research targets would not have legal status of co-operatives according to national contexts.<sup>2</sup>

However, the purpose of research is not to translate different realities immediately into these existing concepts but to understand diversity of their realities in the Asia-Pacific region and to construct a common conceptual framework which would allow to translate them into more general concept without losing regional and national specificities.

Therefore, it is crucial that from the outset, research coordinators and partners would have common understanding about what are their research targets and how they are categorized in each country.

- Given that co-operatives in industrial and service sectors are defined and classified in different ways in different national contexts, the objective of the first stage will be to reach an agreement on which types of co-operatives would be research targets.
- In order to identify relevant research targets in each country, we propose partners to follow one of options below.
  - 1) When there would be official (legally or administratively) types of co-operative which can cover sufficiently research targets, namely, co-operatives in industrial and services sectors of which principal objective is to serve members' employment and business activities, please use them.
    - For example, in South Korea, the typology of co-operatives under the Framework act on co-operative 2012 which is used for administrative purposes might be used: worker co-operative, social co-operative, entrepreneurs' co-

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<sup>1</sup> In other words, they are not producer co-operatives in the primary sectors, such as agricultural co-operative, fishery co-operative. They are neither co-operatives serving members' individual consumption, such as financial co-operatives and consumer co-operatives.

<sup>2</sup> For example, worker co-operatives and workers' collectives in Japan, participatory enterprises in India, self-sufficiency enterprises in South Korea.

- operative and multi-stakeholder co-operative. SME co-operatives registered under the law on SME co-operatives might be also included as a research target.
- Types officially defined by other legislations or public policies such as, self-help enterprises in South Korea which do not have legal status of co-operatives but share similar characteristics with worker co-operative model might be included as a research target.
  - Some types of co-operatives are defined according to their economic activities and it is difficult to know, at least from external observers' viewpoint, whether their main objective is to serve members' employment or business activities. If, according to partners' knowledge, these types of co-operatives significantly represent co-operatives serving members' employment or business activities, they need to be included into the research targets. For example, in the case of the Philippines, among types used by CDA, service co-operative, multipurpose co-operative, education co-operative, health service co-operative, transport co-operative and worker co-operative might be research targets.
  - If there would be difference between the official types at the state or province level and those at the federal level, please use those at the federal level. We want to focus more on the national level at this stage. However, if some partners would want to work at their state level, it is not problem at all.
- 2) Given that there would be no official typology covering research targets, if there would be types of co-operative defined by co-operative movement, please use them.
- For example, worker co-operatives and workers' collectives in Japan might be the case that research targets are defined according to co-operative movements' self-declaration. It might be the same case for worker co-operatives in Australia.
  - It is also possible that a co-operative movement might represent different types of co-operative which are not clearly defined. It might be the cases of ACFHIC and of ICCIC in China. In these cases, it would be enough to identify research targets as 'co-operatives represented by the co-operative movement' at this stage. Different types among them will be analysed in the next stage.
- 3) If there would be neither appropriate official typology nor organized co-operative movement representing research targets, typologies used by researchers or experts might be used. In this case, it would be ideal to provide original sources which propose the typology.
- 4) If there would be no publicly used concept (official typology, organized co-operative movement, typologies used by researchers or experts), it is possible to describe certain models based on specific cases.
- 5) To explain a national situation, partners can combine several options above mentioned. For example, in the case of South Korea, three different options, such as official co-operative typology, a specific legal status for self-sufficiency enterprises and experts' definition on freelancer co-operative might be used.
- At this stage, we would like to ask partners to provide a broader picture beyond their own areas. Partners will be asked to describe all relevant types which might cover research targets in their own country. The descriptions might be very brief, if partners do not have enough information on some types which do not directly concern them. However, it is preferable to provide sufficient information including reference documents or websites.

- If there would be several partners in a country, who represent different models or geographical regions, it is possible to collaborate for producing one output at this stage.
  - For example, researchers, individual co-operatives and federations might work together to produce one output for this stage. And in the next stages, they might work separately for explaining their own areas (individual co-operatives, federations) or more general situations (researchers).
  - However, it is possible for each partner to produce the general description from their own viewpoints. This kind of diverse approaches might feed the research as well.
- A target type should represent certain common aspects among co-operatives in the type. However, if an official type of co-operatives represents co-operatives with different characteristics, at this stage, partners could use the official type as one target type. In the next stage, the type might be divided into several sub-types after a critical analysis on organizational models.

In order to join this research project and to become a partner, all partners should produce a general description about potential target types in their countries and submit it with the signed ToR for research partnership.

Partners would have freedom in formulating the description. However, following points should be included.

- Used typology (among proposed options, which one was used?)
- Potential target types and their descriptions
- Specific considerations (any issues to be mentioned at this stage)
- Main references

It would be appreciated if partners would provide concerning documents and articles.

**The first deadline of call for partners will be 10<sup>th</sup> May 2018.** Basically, main research activities will be carried out with founding partners who submitted the description and signed ToR by 10<sup>th</sup> May 2018. However, any partners who would join after 10<sup>th</sup> May, it is always possible if they would apply with the same documents.

Provisional synthesis of the identification of research target types will be presented during a meeting with partners who will attend the International conference on co-operatives in the changing world of work, April 29-May 1, 2018, Kozhikode, India.

A synthesis report on the identification of research target types will be produced in mid-May.

## **Stage 2 – Context analysis and critical analysis on organizational models (May – August, 2018)**

When the research targets would be agreed upon between research coordinators and national partners, some or all of agreed upon target types will be analysed with two analytical frameworks: context and organizational model.

The context analysis will focus on the national context in which co-operatives in target types are situated. It will be conducted with a questionnaire which would include following points:

- Basic information on target type(s)
  - Basic statistical information
  - Economic activities
- Institutional settings
  - General legal framework on co-operatives
  - Specific legal framework on target types
  - Specific public policies on target types
  - Legal and institutional issues
  - Concerned public authorities
- Co-operative movement
  - (If these coops have a shared identity) History - How has the coop movement been organized?
  - Current situation
  - Relation with stakeholders (public authorities, trade union, employers' organization, other co-operative movements, civil society actors...)
  - Issues
- Specific support measures
  - Financing
  - Horizontal or vertical integration (consortium, group, second/third level structure)
  - Support organization
  - Education and training
  - Skill development
  - Specific development projects
  - Youth and gender
- Problems and difficulties

Analysis on organizational models will focus mainly on two aspects: work and employment, and ownership/governance structure. This analysis aims at understanding common characteristics of co-operatives in given target types. However, it is possible to identify several different models in a target type. Therefore, during the analysis, research coordinators and partners will try to elaborate more detailed sub-types. The analysis will be structured with following points.

- Work and employment
  - Definition of different worker status (worker-member, independent producer-member, non-member employee, member in management and governance function, non-member volunteer, etc.)
  - Application of labour laws, social security and collective agreements
  - Remuneration
  - Representation of employees in governance structures
- Ownership/governance structure
  - Membership structure
  - Organizational structure
  - Decision-making procedure
  - Financial aspects
  - Representation of external stakeholders in capital and governance structures

This stage of work will be mainly carried out with questionnaires from May to June 2018.

An intermediary report on national contexts and organizational models will be produced as the result of the second stage of project in August.

### **Stage 3 – Case studies (July – September, 2018)**

Based on the results from stage 1 and 2, research coordinators and partners will make an agreement on cases to be studied. The cases might be varied such as an individual co-operative, an individual federation, specific legislation, specific public policy, specific business practices etc. The number of cases will be also varied according to national contexts. The selection of cases and the method for writing case studies will be discussed and decided before June 2018.

Case studies will be conducted from July to September by partners with research coordinators' technical supports.

The result of case studies will be included in the final report which will be presented in November, 2018 during the regional assembly of ICA-AP, Teheran, Iran.

### **Stage 4 – Production of a final report (September – December, 2018)**

The results of all stages of work will be synthesized in a form of final report. The draft written by research coordinators will be consulted with partners.

The final report will be composed of 1) proposition of a common conceptual framework, 2) context analysis and 3) case studies. This report will be presented and discussed in November, in the occasion of the Regional assembly of the ICA-AP. The final report will be officially published in reflecting discussions at the beginning of 2019.