

Appendix A.

Rapid Cooperative Assessment Tool

Purpose

The Rapid Cooperative Assessment Tool¹ is used to gauge the current level of cooperative activity in the country. This assessment provides a general background for program developers and managers who are designing or beginning to implement a cooperative development program.

Survey Method

This is an informal assessment. Sources of information may include, but are not limited to, any of the following:

- Your own knowledge of the environment.
- Research in books, government reports, non-governmental organization (NGO) surveys and reports, newspapers, the Internet, etc.
- Interviews with program managers and staffs of business and cooperative programs.
- Brief, informal interviews with knowledgeable persons: cooperative managers, local government officials, lawyers, and members of chambers of commerce, cooperative associations, business associations, NGOs, etc.

Please note that intensive one-on-one interviews are conducted in sections II, III and IV of this survey. Some of the questions in these sections may repeat or further examine the questions in section I. Therefore, if you decide to interview people for the questions in section I, select interviewees who will not mind responding to similar questions later in the survey.

Time Frame

This analysis should take no more than 15 days to complete. The intent is to provide a rapid analysis for the program designer/manager.

Instructions

Provide a short report that answers each of these questions. You may either type the answers directly into this document or write a separate report that answers each question. The report need not follow every question line-by-line — feel free to use this document as a general outline to structure your rapid assessment and report on its findings.

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Definitions

Cooperative: In some contexts, there is considerable ambiguity concerning the definition of a “cooperative.” For the sake of clarification, please define the type of cooperative structure you will be referring to in this survey. _____

Participants: Please define the basic characteristics of your target population.

Household income: _____

Number of dependents: _____

Highest education level: _____

Ethnicity/race/religion (where applicable): _____

Age(s): _____

Gender percentage: ___% female ___% male _____

Other: _____

Target Area

Please list the geographic area(s) where the program will be targeting its cooperative activities, the area population and the estimated number of potential cooperative members.



I. General Cooperative Information

General Status of Cooperatives in the Country

If you can find a reliable source of information about cooperatives in your country, please provide additional relevant information.

- a. Approximately how many cooperatives are there in the country? How many “cooperative organizations”? (Please provide source(s) of information.) _____

- b. Approximately how many cooperatives are there in the areas where you will be targeting activities? _____

- c. Where are cooperatives typically located (urban/rural)? If they exist in certain areas of the country, list those areas. _____

- d. Explain why cooperatives exist in the areas where you will be targeting activities. _____

- e. How many members do the majority of cooperatives have? (Mark the box with an “X.”)

2–20 21–75 76–100 >100 >1,000

If cooperatives differ widely in number of members, describe the differences.

- f. What are the most common industries² in which cooperatives are active? (Give percentages, if possible.)

² Possible industries: Housing (rental, management, repairs); Construction; Textile and Wearing Apparel; Production; Handicrafts; Agriculture [Input Provider, Production, Processing, Distribution and/or Marketing]; Food, Beverage, and Tobacco Processing; Wood Production and Processing; Printing and Publishing; Chemical and Plastics Production; Non-Metallic Mineral Processing (pottery, glass, brick, etc.); Metal Fabrication; Wholesale (non-agricultural) Trade; Retail trade; Hotels, Restaurants, and Bars; Transportation; Services (laundry, cleaning, hair, funeral services, etc.); Financial Services (i.e. credit unions); Business Counseling Services; Information, Technology, and Communications (ITC); Multipurpose; Marketing; Utilities.



- g. On average, what size business do these cooperatives typically represent?
 Number of members/employees: _____
 Roughly what percentage of members/employees are family members? _____
 Average annual revenues: _____
 Average annual profits or losses (revenues minus costs). Please define how profits/losses are calculated (i.e., net or gross profits before/after financial costs): _____
 \$ Value of fixed assets: _____
 \$ Value of capital assets: _____
 Cooperative net worth, if possible: _____
 Equity per member: _____
 Other information: _____

- h. Please complete the following table regarding cooperatives in the target area. If the sectors listed do not reflect your area, adjust the industries accordingly. Leave rows blank if there are no active cooperatives.

Industry Type	Number of cooperatives	Number of members	Assets	Liabilities
Housing (rental, management, repairs)				
Construction				
Textile and wearing apparel production				
Handicrafts				
Agriculture (specify input provider, production, processing, distribution or marketing)				
Food, beverage and tobacco processing				
Wood production and processing				
Paper, printing and publishing				
Chemical and plastics production				
Nonmetallic mineral processing (pottery, glass, brick, etc.)				
Metal fabrication				
Wholesale (nonagricultural) trade				
Retail trade				
Hotels, restaurants and bars				
Transportation				
Services (laundry, cleaning, hair, funeral services, etc.)				
Financial services (e.g., credit unions)				
Information, communications and technology (ICT)				
Business consulting services				
Other (please list)				

II. History of Cooperative Activity

Provide a short summary (no more than three or four paragraphs) of the history of cooperative activity in the country, including answers to the following questions.

Are there past examples of cooperative activity in the country? What was the context? _____

What sector of cooperatives has a long or successful history in that region/country?

What was the legal and regulatory environment when successful cooperatives were formed? Is the environment basically the same now or different? Briefly describe. _____

What other sociological, economic or political influences have changed since then?

Are there experiences from other similar/surrounding countries that could shed light on the potential for cooperative development in your country? Please describe. _____

III. Recent Trends in Cooperative Development

In general, has the number of cooperatives declined, increased or stayed the same in recent years? Why? What factors (e.g., historical, sociological, economic, political) influenced this change? _____

In which sectors has the number of cooperatives increased recently? _____

In which sectors has the number of cooperatives decreased? _____

What are the theories about the reasons for these changes? Please cite academic/political/empirical sources for these theories. _____



IV. Snapshot of Enabling Environment

Law on Cooperatives

- a. Please summarize the law on cooperatives in the country. (If you can obtain the law document or a relevant reference please cite the title and source.) _____

- b. Are you aware of an effort to change the cooperative law or its provisions?
- c. Based on your observations, is the law on cooperatives known and understood at the district and local levels? _____

- d. To your knowledge, what are the basic legal/regulatory issues that need to be addressed to facilitate further cooperative development? Please provide a short summary. _____

Practical Application of Legal/Regulatory Framework

- a. In general, are these laws applied at the local level? Please explain. _____

- b. In general, do local officials know about these laws? Do they abide by them? _____

- c. In general, do cooperatives know about these laws? Do they abide by them? Please explain. _____

- d. Are any federal or state government agencies designed specifically to promote cooperatives in the country? If so, briefly describe their activities. _____

- e. If the answer to the previous question is “No,” which legal/regulatory agency or body oversees the activities of cooperatives (e.g., Ministry of Economics, Department of Business Affairs)? Briefly describe the relevant activities of these agencies or bodies. _____



Registration

- a. In general, are cooperatives informally or formally organized/registered? Please explain.
- _____
- _____
- b. If cooperatives are usually not formally registered in the country, why not? _____
- _____
- _____
- c. How are cooperatives registered (e.g., as a business entity, nonprofit organization)?
- _____
- _____
- d. What is the registration process like for cooperatives? Overall, is it easy or difficult to register? What are the requirements for a group to register as a cooperative? How many days/months does it take to register a cooperative? What are the registration fees? How many different offices must be visited and how many signatures obtained to complete the registration process?
- _____
- _____
- e. If possible, provide a resource reference or attach a document that describes the current laws on registration of cooperatives. Please cite the source(s) for this information (including name, title, date, etc.) _____
- _____
- _____

Taxation

Provide a brief summary of the tax situation for cooperatives and businesses. For example:

- What is the corporate tax rate for cooperatives? Is it the same for individually owned businesses? _____
- How are taxes divided (e.g., federal, state, pension, employee benefits)? _____
- What other taxes do businesses face (e.g., transportation, customs)? _____
- Are any tax breaks or subsidies offered to new/emerging businesses? If so, please describe.
- Are cooperatives and businesses taxed on revenues or net income? How does this policy affect local businesses? _____
- How often are taxes collected (e.g., annually, quarterly)? _____
- Do businesses and/or cooperatives face considerable pressure from tax authorities? Please explain. _____



- For a business to operate, are other kinds of “fees” required by tax or other government authorities? _____

- Are other kinds of “fees” required by other groups not affiliated with the government? Please explain. _____

- Are there any other issues concerning taxes that negatively affect businesses? _____

Financial Sector

- a. Describe access to capital and loan types (e.g., for assets or working capital), sizes of loans available, loan terms, payment period, number of different financial institutions providing capital.
- b. What are the requirements for collateral?
- c. Describe the loan application process and approval requirements.
- d. How many, or what percentage of cooperatives typically apply for loans? What are the terms of these loans?
- e. Do banks recognize cooperatives as businesses eligible for a loan?
- f. Is leasing of equipment an option?

Infrastructure

- a. How reliable are public utilities (water, gas, electric) for local businesses? Please explain.

- b. Describe the reliability of telecommunications — land lines, mobile phones electronic communications, etc. — for local businesses. _____

- c. Domestic transport. Describe the physical state of domestic roads and other transportation networks (rail, shipping, air.) How reliable, costly and safe is it for businesses to move products and services around the country? _____

- d. International transport. What opportunities exist for transporting goods and services outside the country? _____

- e. International transport. What limitations exist on transporting goods and services outside the country? _____

- f. Other municipal services. Describe any other service delivery challenges (e.g., trash collection) that may affect local businesses. _____



Other Enabling Environment Issues

Please discuss any other major issues concerning the enabling environment (e.g., corruption.)

V. Cooperative Networks and Advocacy

Snapshot of Networks or Support Organizations

- a. Are cooperatives organized into higher level apex organizations that provide services or advocacy? _____

- b. Please list any support organizations that might serve cooperative businesses, such as chambers of commerce, business associations and industry associations. Are they independent agencies or affiliated with the government? Are they operational? What is the quality of services? _____

- c. What is the structure of these support organizations? _____

- d. Please list organizations that might provide support for cooperatives.

Cooperative apex organizations: _____

Business associations/Chambers of Commerce: _____

Business consulting services: _____

International humanitarian organizations: _____

Universities with business, democratic mobilization, legal or technical expertise: _____

Non-governmental organizations with business, democratic mobilization, legal or technical expertise: _____



Larger cooperatives that can provide technical assistance: _____

Other: _____

- e. Summarize any notable advocacy efforts that cooperative/support organizations have initiated in the past one or two years. _____

VI. Other General Cooperative Information

1. In general, how do people perceive cooperatives? When asked about cooperatives, what statements do people make about them? Are attitudes toward cooperatives negative, positive or neutral? _____

2. What are the perceived weaknesses of cooperatives? _____

3. Which international or domestic organizations currently provide support or assistance to cooperatives? What kinds of support are they providing and to whom? _____

4. Which international or domestic organizations currently provide support or assistance to other kinds of businesses? What kinds of support are they providing and to whom? _____



5. What kinds of opportunities do you see for cooperative development in the country?

6. What threats to cooperatives do you see in the country? _____

7. Any other comments regarding cooperatives, cooperative development or this program?

VII. General Business and Economic Environment

Income Opportunities for Marginalized Groups

a. Besides cooperatives, what other mechanisms exist for economic opportunity among low-income earners? How do people typically earn money? _____

b. Besides cooperatives, what other long-term opportunities might there be for generating income? _____

c. What are the short-term opportunities for income? _____

d. What are the perceived benefits and constraints of these other opportunities? _____

e. How would cooperatives serve as an alternative solution? _____

f. What do cooperatives offer that other opportunities do not? _____

g. What do other business opportunities offer that cooperatives do not? _____



Small and Micro Enterprises (SMEs)

- a. What are the key industries in the country/target areas?
- b. How prevalent are SMEs?
- c. What types of industries are these SMEs engaged in? (Refer to the table below.)

Mark "X"	Industry Type	Approximate number of cooperatives in this industry	% of cooperatives in this industry compared to total number of cooperatives
	Housing (rental, management, repairs)		
	Construction		
	Textile and wearing apparel production		
	Handicrafts		
	Agriculture (specify input provider, production, processing, distribution or marketing):		
	Food, beverage and tobacco processing		
	Wood production and processing		
	Paper, printing and publishing		
	Chemical and plastics production		
	Nonmetallic mineral processing (pottery, glass, brick, etc.)		
	Metal fabrication		
	Wholesale (nonagricultural) trade		
	Retail trade		
	Hotels, restaurants and bars		
	Transportation		
	Services (laundry, cleaning, hair, funeral services, etc.)		
	Financial services (e.g., credit unions)		
	Information, communications, and technology (ICT)		
	Business consulting services		
	Other		