



In order to foster the competitiveness of the food supply chain, the European Commission is committed to promote and facilitate the restructuring and consolidation of the agricultural sector by encouraging the creation of voluntary agricultural producer organisations. To support the policy making process DG Agriculture and Rural Development has launched a large study, "Support of Cooperatives", that will provide insights on successful cooperatives and producer organisations as well as on effective support measures for these organisations. These insights can be used by farmers themselves, in setting up and strengthening their collective organisation, and by the European Commission in its effort to encourage the creation of agricultural producer organisations in the EU.

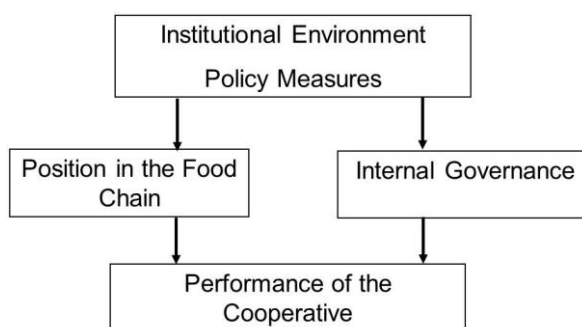
Content of the study

The central objective of the study is to investigate the effectiveness of support measures for cooperatives (and other producer organisations). This requires analysis of the performance of cooperatives and the factors that affect performance. These factors can be grouped in three categories, or "building blocks" of cooperatives' performance: the internal governance of the cooperatives, the institutional environment, and the position of the cooperative in the food chain. The figure to the right provides the overview of these building blocks, for which data in all 27 member states will be collected.

A typology of cooperatives will be developed, to classify different types of producer organisations.

The data gathering in the member states, accompanied by a report from a national expert, provides the basis for an analysis at EU level, including analysis per sector (dairy, wine, sugar etc.). In addition experiences in other OECD countries will be explored.

Based on this first phase, the project will target and examine a large number of cases in detail in the second phase. These cases will also include a number of transnational cooperatives.



As a whole, the research approach is mapped into the following eight components of the study:

1. Typology
2. Experiences in OECD countries outside EU
3. Fact finding in the 27 member states
4. Analysis at EU level
5. Sector level overview
6. Clustering
7. Case studies
8. Transnational cooperatives

The project concludes with a synthesis on the *effectiveness of support measures*.

The project Support of Farmers' Cooperatives started in the last days of 2010 and will take 23 months. Two stakeholder meetings will be organised, the first one in November 2011, the second one in July 2012.

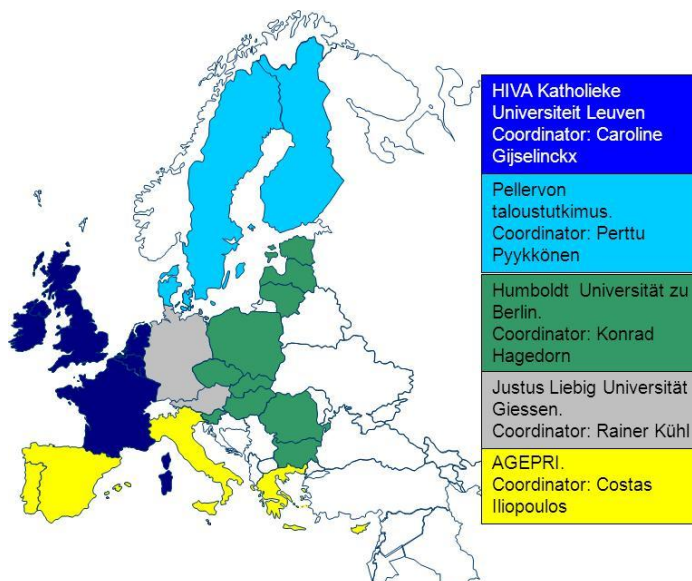
Consortium

The project is carried out by a large consortium, managed by Wageningen UR's Agricultural Economics Research Institute LEI and Wageningen University. Krijn J. Poppe and Jos Bijman act as project managers. Other members of the consortium are:

- Pellervon taloustutkimus, Finland: Perttu Pyykkönen and Petri Ollila (Helsinki University)
- AGEPRI, part of NAGREF, Greece: Costas Iliopoulos
- Justus Liebig Universität Giessen, Germany: Rainer Kühl
- Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Germany: Konrad Hagedorn and Markus Hanisch
- HIVA Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium: Caroline Gijssels
- Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, The Netherlands: George Hendrikse and Tony Hak

The first five of this list act as regional coordinators for the data gathering in the member states (figure to the right). All consortium members contribute as experts to the methodology or provide know-how on specific sectors.

In addition to the consortium members special expertise has been secured from a group of legal experts: Ger van der Sangen, Birgit Buth, and Vessa Pekka Silaskivi. Michael Cook will help to make the North American experiences available.



The European Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives, Copa-Cogeca, has welcomed this study and provides full support by making its data, expertise and national networks available.

National Experts

The regional coordinators are supported in gathering data by national experts on cooperatives in each of the member states. They will provide data and a national report. The list of national experts is given below.

1	Austria	Rainer KÜHL
2	Belgium	Caroline GIJSELINCKX
3	Bulgaria	Ivan BOEVSKY
4	Cyprus	Andreas THEOPHANOUS
5	Czech Republic	Tomas RATINGER
6	Denmark	Kostas KARANTININIS
7	Estonia	Andro ROOS
8	Finland	Petri OLLILA
9	France	Maryline FILIPPI
10	Germany	Rainer KÜHL
11	Greece	Costas IIIIOPOULOS
12	Hungary	Gabor SZABO
13	Ireland	Mary O'SHAUGHNESSY
14	Italy	Paolo BONO
15	Latvia	Aija ZOBENA
16	Lithuania	Dalia VIDICKIENE
17	Luxemburg	David HIEZ
18	Malta	Gaetano BUTTIGIEG
19	Poland	Piotr MATZCAK
20	Portugal	João Fernandes REBELO
21	Romania	Daniela CALINESCU
22	Slovakia	Anna BANDLEROVA
23	Slovenia	Andrej UDOVČ
24	Spain	Cynthia Lynn GIAGNOCAVO
25	Sweden	Jerker NILSSON
26	The Netherlands	Jos BIJMAN
27	United Kingdom	Roger SPEAR

More Information

The study is overseen by DG Agriculture and Rural Development with the help of an interservice Steering Group. The European Union invests € 1.45 million in this project. Results of the study will not be made available before the project is finished. Opinions expressed in this leaflet are those of the contractor, and do not represent the Commission's official position. The project management can be contacted by mail: Krijn.Poppe@wur.nl or Jos.Bijman@wur.nl