

Call for Proposals

Doing Co-operative Business Report – Phase I

I. Objective

The International Co-operative Alliance seeks an expert consultant to develop the fundamental indicators upon which the Alliance will build the Doing Co-operative Business Report. The objectives of the Report are to develop an advocacy tool and supporting database that analyses countries according to the conduciveness of their legal and policy framework in supporting co-operative development and growth. This document should serve as an effective advocacy tool for co-operatives across regions and sectors.

The Report would explore national practices that impede and/or facilitate co-operatives and would be used to shape policy agendas at the national and regional levels. The factors would be those unique to or of particular importance to co-operatives.

In order to implement the Report, the Alliance has identified the need for an expert Consultant to develop the indicators that will be the foundation of the Doing Co-operative Business Report and its ranking. This is Phase I of the Report. Phase II will comprise the actual research (data collection and analysis) and shall be built upon the recommendations made in Phase I.

II. Background

The International Co-operative Alliance

The International Co-operative Alliance is an independent, non-governmental organisation established in 1895 to unite, represent, and serve co-operatives worldwide. It provides a global voice and forum for knowledge, expertise, and coordinated action for and about co-operatives.

To accomplish its purposes, the Alliance is organised with a Global Office, four Regional Offices (Africa, the Americas, Asia & the Pacific, and Europe), and eight Sectoral Organisations (Agriculture, Banking, Retail, Fisheries, Health, Housing, Insurance, and Industry and Services).

The 2012 United Nations International Year of Co-operatives

In December 2009, the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed that 2012 would be the International Year of Co-operatives (IYC) (UN Resolution A/RES/64/136). The UN produced a logo for the IYC and a slogan: 'Co-operative enterprises build a better world.' These were widely adopted by the Alliance members.

To ensure that the potential and synergy galvanized during the IYC did not expire at the end of 2012 – and recognizing the interest in co-operatives that was reignited by the worldwide financial crisis in 2007 – the Alliance prepared a post-2012 strategy. This process, shaped by input and feedback from Alliance members across the globe, resulted in the drafting of the Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade.

Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade

In 2012, at the close of the IYC, the Alliance members unanimously adopted the Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade as a global strategy for the movement. The ambitious '2020 Vision' in the Blueprint is for the co-operative form of business by 2020 to become:

- The acknowledged leader in economic, social and environmental sustainability

- The model preferred by people
- The fastest growing form of enterprise

To achieve the vision, the Blueprint strategy concentrates on five critical interlinked pillars, and establishes an individual strategy in relation to each of them:

1. Elevate participation within membership and governance to a new level
2. Position co-operatives as builders of sustainability
3. Build the co-operative message and secure the co-operative identity
4. Ensure supportive legal frameworks for co-operative growth
5. Secure reliable co-operative capital while guaranteeing member control

III. Duties & Responsibilities

General Description: The Consultant will propose indicators to serve as the foundation for the Doing Co-operative Business Report. The Consultant will complete this task under a more broad and full understanding of the long-term DCB project and with this in mind (an the Alliance foresees the need for a modulated approach regarding the development and implementation of the Report).

The Consultant will be responsible for leading and engaging international experts on co-operative advocacy, as well as researchers and research practitioners, in order to determine and refine:

- the priority indicators,
- the ideal methodological approach, and
- the potential sources of data for the indicators for the Report.

Indicators: The Consultant will be responsible for the delivery of indicators to serve as the foundation for the Doing Co-operative Business Report. The Report will assess the friendliness – or lack thereof – of national legal frameworks with regards to inhibiting or facilitating co-operative economy. For the purposes of such an assessment, 'legal frameworks' is understood to comprise aspects of the legal environment beyond legislation (i.e. not solely the co-operative law / act / legislation). The Alliance foresees four main categories of indicators depicting a more complete image of the legal environment in which co-operatives behave. The Consultant is welcome to reflect on these, provide insight, and propose alternatives if these categories do not serve the needs and scope of the project.

- Legislative Indicators
- Economic Indicators
- Fiscal / Regulatory Indicators
- Socio-Cultural Indicators

Nature of indicators and data: It is paramount that the indicators represent data that is pre-existing, readily available data that does not require new or unprecedented collection (i.e. data that is available in national statistical agencies, chambers of commerce, government ministries and departments, United Nations agencies, global statistical research databases, etc.).

For the first implementation of the Report, the Alliance believes that roughly 10 indicators per category can provide a solid foundation for a broad depiction of the legal environment (for a total of roughly 40 indicators). An illustration of the kinds of indicators for each category follows:

- Legislative:
 - Quality of existing co-operative legislature, sectors of activity legal for co-operative activity, co-operatives recognised as enterprises, etc.
- Economic:
 - Labour laws, land rights, sectors of activity available for / open to co-operative enterprises, regulations penalising demutualisation, allowance of indivisible reserves, presence and type of special economic zones, etc.
- Fiscal / Regulatory:

- Fiscal regulation of co-operatives, complexity and pace of bureaucracy (for registration of co-operative business), policies regarding FDIs, protectionism
- Socio-Cultural:
 - Presence, prevalence, and quality of like-minded actors such as trade unions, fair trade organisations and networks, social and solidarity economy actors, micro-finance institutions, etc.; history of co-operative movement and government support / control; history of co-operative movement and public stigma; public procurement processes; general levels of transparency, corruption in bureaucracy; presence, prevalence, and quality of soft infrastructure (i.e. cell phone coverage, credit management associations, etc.); presence, prevalence, and quality of hard infrastructure (i.e. roads and transportation, storage facilities, etc.); presence, prevalence, and quality of existing co-operative movement (i.e. % of GDP from co-operative activity, presence and quality of co-operative federation(s), etc.); etc.

Weight System: Once initial indicators have been identified and proposed, the Consultant will be asked to propose a weight system for the indicators, so that the data analysis can reflect the complexity of the legal environment in the final ranking.

Database: With this Report, the Alliance intends to build the foundation for comparative research over the long-term. To this end, the Consultant will be asked to build the skeletal framework for a database, which can allow for the accrual of relevant data (as per the indicators identified), as well as the increase in complexity of the database in the event more indicators (or more robust indicators) would be phased into the Report in the future. Given the pace at which legal frameworks change, the Alliance anticipates repeating the Report every 5-10 years.

Advise & Expertise: The Consultant is welcome and expected to provide his / her perspective and recommendations to the Alliance regarding the entire process of the Report. While this Call targets expertise in developing indicators more singularly, implication on the part of the Consultant in the complete project is welcome. The Consultant, therefore, is encouraged to provide guidance and guidelines for the methodologies to respect when collecting and analysing data. At this initial stage, the Alliance requires dedicated intelligence into the development of the indicators, but this should not be divorced from the ensuing research process in the thinking and consideration.

Collaboration with Alliance Partners: The Consultant is required to work closely with the partners of the Alliance in the development of indicators. The following persons or bodies will prove fundamental to the process, in particular:

- Steering Committee members of the OCDC CLARITY Project (namely Ed Potter, Barbara Jones, Paul Hazen, and Catherine Ford)
- Alliance Committee on Co-operative Research
- Alliance Committee on Co-operative Law
- Steering Committee of World Co-operative Monitor (Euricse)
- Alliance Sectoral Organisations (via the Sectoral Organisation Liaison Group)
- Alliance Regional Offices
- Alliance Principles Committee

Recommendations – Report Implementation: The Consultant should also produce recommendations as to the potential partners that the Alliance might engage in order to implement the data collection and analysis (Phase II), and ensuing modulated phases of the Report.

IV. Process

The delivery schedule must allow for announcement of the indicators at the Alliance General Assembly and Global Conference in November 2015. The identification of an implementing partner should take place by 1 September 2015.

The Alliance Global Office can facilitate or arrange discussions with key informants that might be able to provide input and feedback for the draft, but the Consultant should have familiarity with the subject and access to key thinkers in this field.

V. Time Frame

Task	Deadline	Who	Notes
Proposal Deadline	15 January	Consultant	
Selection of Consultant	1 February	Alliance	
Strategic discussion with Consultant – Refinement of tasks and work plan	7 February	Alliance & Consultant	
Submission of Draft I of indicators	15 March	Consultant	
Strategic discussions between Consultant and relevant Alliance partners	31 March	Consultant & Partners	
Refinement of indicators – Submission of Draft II	31 April	Consultant	
Submission of Weight System proposal	31 April	Consultant	
Submission of Database architecture proposal	15 May	Consultant	
Submission of Recommendations to Report Implementation	31 May	Consultant	
Strategic discussions between Consultant and relevant Alliance partners	10 June	Consultant & Partners	
Proposals / Identification of Implementing Partner	15 June	Consultant & Alliance	
Final submission of complete report	25 June	Consultant	
TBC: Presentation of Indicators at Alliance BoD	30-31 July	Consultant & Alliance	Buenos Aires
TBC: Presentation of Indicators at Alliance AGM	10-13 November	Consultant & Alliance	Antalya, Turkey

Please submit your proposal to Hanan El-Youssef, Strategy Manager at elyoussef@ica.coop by 15 January 2015.