

Cooperative Legal Framework Analysis (LFA) Unpacked

Launch of the Legal Framework Analysis (LFA) for Cooperatives, *an activity co-funded by the ICA – EU Financial Framework Partnership Agreement and implement harmoniously worldwide by ICA Regional Offices*

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The International Cooperative Alliance, as custodian of the cooperative values and principles, has since 1897 formally recognized that law is not peripheral to cooperation, it is one of the decisive conditions that enables cooperatives to form, operate, scale, federate, and endure. Across jurisdictions, the quality of cooperative legislation determines whether cooperatives are treated as authentic member-owned enterprises or constrained within legal forms that dilute their identity and potential.

It is in this context that the ICA, through the #coops4dev partnership and with the support of the ICA–EU Financial Framework Partnership Agreement, launches the Legal Framework Analysis (LFA) for Cooperatives. This harmonized global research and analysis initiative builds on 79 national reports and 4 regional reports examining the state of cooperative legislation worldwide. The LFA is a harmonious effort among the ICA Regions and the Global Office to map, record, and understand the legal environments that shape cooperative development across continents.

This 90-minute global webinar marks the official unveiling of the LFA as a coordinated, regionally implemented activity of the ICA. It provides a shared platform for ICA member organizations, lawmakers, policy professionals, civil society partners, and actors from the diverse private sector to engage directly with the findings emerging from our Regions. Through this exchange, participants will gain insight into the nature, scope, and practical potential of cooperative legislation to support development at the national level.

The webinar will also address a fundamental question: what is the relationship between cooperative law and the ICA's mandate to safeguard cooperative identity? Cooperative legislation is the point at which values and principles are translated into enforceable structures. Provisions on democratic governance, member economic participation, indivisible reserves, autonomy, education, inter-cooperation, and concern for community are not abstract ideals; they require legal recognition and protection. The LFA helps illuminate where this translation is strong, where it is weak, and where reform may be needed.

A central feature of the session is a moderated exchange among ICA Regional officers leading the implementation of the LFA. This dialogue will explore how and why the ICA began engaging systematically with cooperative law, what constitutes “good” cooperative legislation, and whether the cooperative legal question is local, national, or international in character. Audience engagement tools will be used to encourage reflection and participation.

The core of the webinar is dedicated to regional reflections from the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia-Pacific. Experts closely involved with the LFA will present key findings and trends observed in their contexts, including noteworthy national experiences. These exchanges will demonstrate the diversity of legal approaches while highlighting shared patterns that define an enabling cooperative legal environment.

The session concludes with a methodological overview, outlining recent additions to the LFA and the ways Regions have adapted the implementation strategy to their realities. The European Commission, through the ICA-EU partnership, will underline the international and intra-regional value of this work.

This is also a call to collaboration. The LFA's objective is to develop a living body of knowledge on cooperative legal frameworks worldwide. Legal scholars, practitioners, institutions, and cooperative organizations are invited to contribute to this evolving effort.