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MULTILATERAL PROJECTS - DEVELOPMENT OF INNOVATION

WP2 GAP Analysis Report

Comparison of cooperative movement and learning models targeted to cooperatives

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I. INTRODUCTION

I.a. AIMS AND PURPOSE

This report consists of results from WP2 Gap analysis whereas the objective of WP2 is to set the scene; e.g. to investigate the state-of-the-art in partner countries and make a comparison of cooperative movements and learning models targeted to cooperatives in each of the participant countries.

As evident, participant countries are on different level considering the cooperative movement and thus the purpose of this analyse is to cast a light on different status and what can be learned from these different circumstances.

These analyses will form a base for the on-going activities in development of the Conventus learning system.

I.b. METHODS

In order to analyse the context of different types of cooperatives and identify possible learning objectives the analysis was based on two kinds of data collection:

- Firstly, every partner received a special gap analysis form in order to fill out regarding the status of the cooperative movement and existing learning models in each partner country (see in Appendix I) based on existing data and materials.
- Secondly, each partner interviewed 4-6 individuals chosen according to special criteria (see Appendix II) in order to cast a light.

WP2 is coordinated by Bifröst University – a draft of this report was introduced in a meeting in Iceland on 27th of March 2012.

I.c. DELIVERABLES

The deliverables of this report is to form a basis for on-going development of the Conventus learning model:

- The status of the cooperative movement in each participating countries
- The status of learning systems designed for cooperatives in each of the participating countries
- Learning needs of cooperatives (questions and answers)
- Draft of a curriculum framework

II. DESCRIPTION OF COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT

This chapter includes statistics and descriptions on cooperative movements in partner countries.

Comparison of co-op situation in partner countries					
	FINLAND	ICELAND	ITALY	POLAND	SWEDEN
Number of inhabitants	5.375.276	320.000	60.681.514	38.000.000	9.415.570
Number of co-op employees	37.480	800	1.100.000	300.000	63.000
Number of co-op companies	4.227	35	43.000	9.000	12.500
Number of co-op federations	9	1	12	62 ¹	22
Largest co-op business sectors	Retail trade Banking Wood processing	Retail trade Housing Food process	Agriculture Banking Social	Housing Agriculture / Dairy Consumer	Consumer Housing Agriculture
Number of individuals for establishing a cooperative	3 ²	Not required ³	Depends on sector ⁴	5 (social coop), 10 for all other	3
Specific law on cooperatives	Yes ⁵	Yes	Yes	Yes	No, but there is a special law for economic associations
Co-op employees % of inhabitants	0,7%	0,3%	1,8%	1%	0,7%
Average no of employees pr co-op company	9	23	26	33	5

¹ 17 have national status

² But if you want to maintain your employer status and the rights for the unemployment allowances, you have to have 7 persons (min).

³ If more than 15 then the cooperative has to make detailed written resolution.

⁴ Minimum 3 for labour, social service coops; 50 for the consumer; and 200 for credit

⁵ The cooperative act (Osuuskuntalaki 28.12.2001/1488).The renewal of the legislation is going on (equivalent with the legislation of limited company legislation)

II.a. MAIN OBSTACLES FOR ESTABLISHING A COOPERATIVE IN THE REGION/COUNTRY

Summary: Two main obstacles for establishing new cooperatives are identified: Lack of financing and limited knowledge of co-op as a business format. The economic downturns in Europe generally prevent people from investments in new businesses. This affects all sectors and all business formats. However the co-operative business format should attract risk averse investors. Therefore the two obstacles mentioned above could be overcome by increased awareness and business education in the regions.

This is however not the case in Trentino, Italy where it does not seem to be any particular obstacle for establishing a cooperative. On the contrary, the political and socio-economical frameworks in the province of Trentino favour and support their development.

In Poland on the other hand the government's attitude and the unfavourable legal conditions in which cooperatives have to operate is preventing development of the co-operative movement.

The Icelandic authorities are neither supporting nor preventing co-operative establishment. No strategy exists on this issue.

Finland: Insufficient information of the cooperatives as the form of the enterprise and employment. The form of the enterprise is demanding and complicated. The people are not aware of the benefits of the cooperatives and can more easily solve the daily problems of the enterprise by using other enterprise forms. There is not so strong tradition for business but cooperatives are an established form for certain services, especially in rural areas. The people should know each other very well and should be committed to the cooperative. It is difficult to get sufficient consensus of the decisions in the modern individualistic society. It's also difficult to find active leaders for cooperatives. There is also a need of the persons, who are also interested in taking care of the paper work in the cooperative. The special training for cooperative enterprising and team development is needed. Who pays? There are insufficient amount of good business ideas for the cooperatives. The other forms of the enterprises can be more practical and clear. There is a lack of identified social need in the society for just this form of the enterprise

Iceland: Probably the main obstacle for establishing cooperatives is a lack of economic investments. The economic situation in Iceland does not allow for business investments and the stimulus for enterprise investment is low. Another obstacle is the negative attitude to co-operatives and linkage to controversial businessmen and a certain political movement. Most of the existing co-operatives consist of elderly members and there is a lack of renewal in the membership.

Italy: There are no particular obstacles for establishing a cooperative in the Province of Trentino. On the contrary, the political and socio-economical frameworks favour and support their development.

Poland: The main reason for the diminishing number of cooperative societies is the government's attitude and unfavourable legal conditions in which cooperatives have to operate which is also the reason for the lack of interest of Polish citizens in setting up new cooperatives (the exception here is social cooperatives sector). Another reason is the lack of knowledge of an average Polish citizen on the cooperative business model and the negative communist heritage when cooperative societies were forced into the centrally-planned economy.

Sweden: Financing: There is a considerable lack of knowledge about the cooperative movement and the form of enterprise; cooperative association

II.b. NATIONAL/REGIONAL BUSINESS SUPPORT FOR COOPERATIVE ESTABLISHMENT

Summary: All the countries/regions, except Iceland, offer support for setting up new co-operatives and for sustaining co-op companies. This support is provided both by local governments and co-operative federations. However this varies between the countries and between regions within each country. Sweden has 25 co-operative support organisations covering all the country, while Finland has a mix of support provided by regional business advisors and co-operative organisations and in the Province of Trentino Italy the local government is offering the support. In Poland the social cooperative sector is the only one which is supported on a national level.

Finland: The regional offices of Ministry of the Employment and Economy are organizing and financing the cooperative establishment. In Kemi-Tornio region, 1-2 new cooperatives / year. The management consultants of the offices evaluate the business plan and can buy the training program for the cooperative. There are also other local consulting opportunities, which are financed by the public resources. Guidance and consulting opportunities exist and there is a special support for farming and social cooperatives.

Still, the public business support and advisory system varies a lot between different regions. Cooperative expertise is also just starting build-up in the organisations during the on-going development project for business advisors. Compared to e.g. Sweden, there are only 2-3 regional associations which are specialised in cooperative advising. Financial support can be regarded neutral to all enterprise forms.

Nationally, Pellervo Confederation of Finnish Cooperatives publishes guide leaflet and e-material for cooperative establishment, and also gives mainly legal advice for cooperatives. Also Coop Finland Association gives first phase advice according to its members' voluntary input, and has large resource in cooperative expertise and experienced educators and advisers. This resource is not effectively used due to lack of financing. Some cooperatives are also committed to offer advice.

Iceland: No, but some local cooperative enterprises might have some internal educational programmes for the employees. In some regions attempts are made to restore former co-operatives that have gone bankrupt or to maintain those who are still alive.

Italy: The local legal framework supports and encourages the development of the coops through 2 different financing programmes: one for setting up new coops and one for sustaining projects to allow their growth. It is important to underline that the Province of Trento is an Autonomous province which means the local government has legislative power respecting but independent of the national jurisdiction in some fields as: education, environment, transport, social services, etc...

Poland: Social cooperative sector is the only one which is supported on a national level (to some extent also so called „cooperative farmers’ groups). The unemployed and the disabled setting up social cooperatives can obtain some financial support via The Labour Office. The members of social cooperatives are also exempt from healthcare fees for the period of three years.

Sweden: There are 25 Coompanion centres in Sweden – at least one in each county

II.C. THE COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT’S SOCIAL EFFECTS IN THE REGION/COUNTRY

Summary: The main social contribution provided by the co-operatives consists in welfare activities and work that affects the well-being of society. This includes co-operatives supporting inhabitants with social- and economic difficulties and co-operatives taking care of environmental issues. In Poland the members of co-operative societies altogether with their families form almost half of the nation’s population. Cooperative business model is associated with stability, social safety and strengthening of the democracy. Another form of social contribution is work with producing local foods. This kind of social effects can be seen especially in Trentino, Italy and Sweden.

In Finland, like in Poland, the social contribution of co-operatives appears more in job creation and increased employment. In Sweden, new cooperatives are emerging in social and healthcare and household services. In Iceland the social effect can be seen in support of local sport clubs and cultural events.

Finland: Naturally the big, national cooperatives are important employers and service suppliers in the regions, but they are working like the other companies. The special social role don’t exists. But in the areas where there is sustainable cooperative development and advise service especially employee-owned cooperatives are growing in numbers and creating jobs e.g. for just graduated young professionals.

Iceland: Not much. In small villages where the co-operatives are active they frequently support the local sport club, cultural events etc.

Italy: In the Province of Trento cooperative enterprises carry out an important role in the local socio - economic framework, contributing to the creation of wealth and employment, and supporting the well-being of both cooperative members and the local community. Today, the

volume and importance of cooperation in the Province can be seen in its numbers - almost half of the approximately 500,000 inhabitants are cooperative members; producing a total income of €2.6 bn p.a. and providing work for about 17,000 people. The cooperative sectors are diversified with 536 enterprises mainly in the fields of credit, retail, agriculture, work, services, housing and social.

Some examples:

- social coops represent the most widespread network of social service business concerns in Trentino. They provide social support (care and assistance to disadvantaged people such as young people and adults who are going through social, personal and economic difficulties, individuals with psychiatric problems, the elderly, disabled, immigrants, etc.), educational and recreational services and create employment opportunities for individuals who find themselves in disadvantaged situations. Moreover the existing integrated system of social and labour cooperatives favours and increases job opportunities for disadvantaged people and so lower public costs for the welfare services;
- the consumer coops in the mountain villages, supported by the cooperative system in Trentino, ensure the provision of basic services for the inhabitants of such small communities. These coops are often the only shop in the village that not only provide a commercial service but have an important social function in the local community as for example as a meeting point especially for older people;
- The network of small coops in different economic sectors (agriculture, tourism...) in the mountain areas offer the possibility of local employment helping to lessen the increased depopulation phenomenon typical in these difficult areas;
- The participative and collective nature of the cooperative enterprise model and the congenital concern for the community (7th Cooperative Principle) allow the implementation of the coop model for the management of renewable energy sources; the cooperative banks (Casse rurali), in line with their specific regulation, invest in the local territory facilitating families and local businesses. The banks are active in the community where they are based contributing in financing cultural and sport associations/events, scholarships...

Poland: Cooperative sector has a substantial social influence. Polish cooperative sector translates into 9.000 cooperative societies, 8 million members and around 300.000 employees. Members of cooperative societies altogether with their families form almost half of the Polish population. Cooperative business model is associated with stability and social safety due to cooperative principles which determine democracy, solidarity, self-help, cooperation etc. – all the features that the corporate world is deprived of.

Sweden: Yes, by the social enterprises that are rapidly increasing in number and that they become part of community development. An increasing number of cooperatives is formed in the field of renewable energy, such as wind power and biogas, as well as new cooperatives emerging in the healthcare, social care and household services. Small-scale collaboration in local food is also an area for growth within the cooperative movement (within rural areas such as Skaraborg)

III. GENERAL ATTITUDE TO COOPERATIVES COMPARED TO OTHER BUSINESS FORMS

In order to cast a light on the idea of general attitudes on cooperatives in partner countries, each partner interviewed 4-6 individuals according to specific criteria (see Appendix II). Thus, these results are based on this data collection.

Summary: Generally the attitudes towards co-operatives are two folded: Positive among those who are working in the co-operative sector but more sceptical attitude or limited knowledge among others. The attitude also varies between regions where the co-operatives are dominating and those where the co-operatives are in minority. The attitude is more positive in stronger co-operative areas than the ones with few co-operatives. Although the public authorities acknowledge the value of co-operatives they usually do not demonstrate this in actions to support business start-up. For example in Finland, there are positive attitudes towards healthcare cooperatives. In Sweden, young people have positive attitudes towards cooperative entrepreneurship and there is a growing interest among politicians, decision makers and the target group.

Poland has special situation where the attitude to co-operatives is unfavourable mostly due to the recent historic heritage which is connected with the communist times. Cooperative business model is not perceived as an alternative business model in Poland.

III.a. FINLAND

As we described early, the other enterprise forms are more simply and more competitive for the establishing small enterprises in the region. See the reasons above.

Nationally, the general attitude varies between different regions being more favourable in the areas which have cooperative development organisation. Certainly, very often cooperatives are not regarded as "real" enterprises although e.g. in retail cooperatives are the biggest. However, in Finland there are positive attitudes towards healthcare cooperatives.

How can this attitude be described further?

According to interviewees at a labour cooperative, the attitude towards cooperatives in the 1995 was contradictory. On the other hand, the Labour movement (metal workers union) and the SAK (Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions) but on the other hand they were facing heavy resistance from construction workers union and Kainuun entrepreneurs. Now the situation is more balanced. Cooperatives are being accepted as business forms like any other forms because they play by the same rules as other entrepreneurs do, by paying their bills and take good care of their employees. In other parts of Finland the situation varies. There are bad experiences from cooperatives but even the government is trying to sort them out.

Therefore, the attitude is twofold. There are co-operatives, which get neutral reaction, for example, SOK (Finlands biggest co-operative market). The service cooperatives are little known and their role in society is challenging. Service cooperatives are having difficulties to find their

space with the growing companies. Labor cooperatives are viewed positively, but their field of operation is small.

The values that cooperatives should put forward in everyday life are democracy, taking care of co-workers, doing together and community are the main values. Wages are higher than average and the board is the highest decision maker. The lack of democracy can be seen in the lazy attitude of participating in meetings and common occasions. Most of our workers aren't members and they aren't planning on joining us.

Co-operative thinking is based on the idea that man needs another human being, and man becomes man only by being a member of the community. Socially, economically and morally sustainable values are the core of the co-operatives. Co-operatives are building a globally sustainable world in which not only humans but nature also is important. In practice, the values are low today.

In the last few years it has been notable that younger age groups don't have the passion to take part in the administration and it feels like they lack the cooperative spirit. To many people our enterprise is just a place to make your salary. Youngsters these days don't have the same kind of flexibility that founders had. Too, driving self-interest and greed are virtues nowadays. The media is involved. An ideal model is an American society. Co-operatives have no place in this kind of ideology. Luckily the model of thinking is changing. People are more interested in public affairs. People are starting to see each others as partners. Even in Britain they are building the "Big Society", where the cooperatives have more moving space. In Finland there is also the Historical perspective, The Soviet Union. However, co-operative there was just a bad joke. New generations will think of history without the burden of these thoughts.

The positive attitude towards cooperatives may have born from that in the last couple of years people have grown tired of the marketing forces and want to have some humane touch for entrepreneurship. The green ideology, carbon footprint and other ecological ideas have helped. The philosophy of cooperatives is to be nonprofit organization and to serve its members. It's a great way to start when you want to keep the world alive.

Thus, the attitude is becoming positive. This will depend on many factors. The industrial period and the capitalism, has come to an end. Era is being replaced, and with it the values and attitudes. Post-industrial culture is a co-operative. People build relationships, networks and partnerships with everyday life. The current supply and service concept does not work. It favors transnational companies and their ideology. Britain and elsewhere are making attempts to self-sustaining communities. Financial conditions are changing. The financial system is collapsing. People are forced to organize their livelihood and their services without the municipality and the state. It will increase the opportunity to share activitie.

Attitudes towards cooperatives in comparison with other enterprise forms

Compared to other forms of businesses, sometimes people see the cooperatives as 'playgrounds' and they can be them if the operations are based on community and they don't work for profit. Cooperative is a working form for business if the members are capable and they have the right attitude. The success is always related to entrepreneurs. Cooperative is a fine choice if you want to

productize or market products of different corporations. Cooperatives are on the rise. The idea of working together intrigues people.

In what way could negative attitude be altered or changed?

The negative attitude is strongly linked to not knowing enough and some may have bad experiences from cooperatives. The more we inform people about cooperatives the more positive effect we get. If you only know theory, it won't get you far. People should market more efficiently the cooperative ideology (sustainability etc).

How could the development of new learning model for cooperatives and introducing 'best practice' in establishing a new cooperative (in various sectors) help people to look at the cooperative form as a possible enterprise form for their new business model?

Whether people see cooperatives as potential business, it depends on resources and will. Get inside cooperatives and be active members. Found cooperatives if they are needed in your area. Use the services of cooperatives all the time. As a result, the government should be more helpful. The cooperative laws should be remade, the government should establish cooperative 'hatcheries' and give them financial support.

III.b. ICELAND

The common opinion of several persons we interviewed is that the general attitude among Icelanders is rather negative towards co-operatives since most of the dominant cooperatives went bankrupt in the 1980s. Following this economic collapse some the co-op leaders were blamed and accused of making dubious economic actions for their own economic interest.

How can this attitude be described further?

Since then the dominant political strategy in Iceland turned towards increased support for privatisation and free-market capitalism. The economy grew dramatically, especially the privatised banking system, until it collapsed in late 2008 with dramatically economic consequences for the whole Icelandic economy. Since then some changes in the attitude to the economy has taken place, especially in relation to the private market. This negative attitude to the co-operative movement is somewhat changing after the great economic downturn of the Icelandic economy in 2008. This can be seen in the general debate on how to re-establish the Icelandic economy.

Presumably the attitude is more positive towards co-operatives among the population in rural areas where there still exists co-op retail shops or other form of co-operatives. Also those who endorse more sociality ideology are more likely to be in favour of co-operatives than other business formats.

Attitudes towards cooperatives in comparison with other enterprise forms

After the economic collapse, discussions have become more evident to maintain more equality and fairness in business, such as social responsibility and sustainable emphasis. Therefore, certain re-evaluation has occurred in the labour market and the focus has turned 'back to basics' – respondents claimed that following the recession, possibly people would be more open to other company forms and that the cooperative ideology could apply to the economic and political situation in Iceland today.

In what way could negative attitude be altered or changed?

In recent years, little or no public debate or discussion regarding the cooperative form has taken place. People do not seem to be aware of the ideology of the cooperative form and the fact that it is used in many of our neighbouring countries. Therefore, a discussion that is free of the old political debate (without the past 'getting in the way') might interest young people (who may not remember this political past) who are interested in establishing their own businesses. Thus, by introducing and discussing the cooperative form on a public level might be one way to do it. Another aspect would be to review the cooperative law and make them both more flexible and accessible.

Cooperative law – make it more accessible

How could the development of new learning model for cooperatives and introducing 'best practice' in establishing a new cooperative (in various sectors) help people to look at the cooperative form as a possible enterprise form for their new business model?

The learning model would most probably have a positive impact whereas active public discussion is needed. Thus by introducing the ideology of the cooperative form, without the political connection from the past, could be ideal.

III.C. ITALY (TRENTINO)

Cooperative system in Trentino today is both a social and cultural movement in close relationship with the community, which contributes to resolving and improving the welfare of its members and also for the community. The general feeling of the population in Trentino appears quite positive about the cooperatives as for instance, they represent 90% of the agricultural market share, 55% credit, 38 % consumer, and almost 90% social services.

However, when public bodies look at the cooperative enterprises, they think in terms of SMEs in general. Also the local academic world seems not to pay much attention to this business model, in spite of the important impact on the local economic and social context, as the University of Trento has no specific courses about the cooperative and social enterprise. It must be taken into account that on national level, little is known about the attitudes towards cooperatives in Italy.

How can this attitude be described further?

In general, the opinion towards cooperation in Trentino is quite positive. Historically, cooperation is very important for this region, as it began 121 years ago in a period of famine and poverty. Local

people are not only proud of their roots, but also strongly believe and defend their origins and traditions. Cooperation is therefore fundamental part of the cultural background and history here, having been passed down the generations to present day - many families continue the tradition with children following in parents' footsteps, e.g. young people whose parents and relatives are agricultural cooperative members have great knowledge about coops and believe that they are the best enterprise form for their activity.

Today, cooperation represents a large proportion of the local economy: more than 500 cooperatives in 4 different sectors. Almost all the social sector is served by cooperatives; 90% agriculture; 55% credit; and 38% consumer. Some remote mountain villages, for example, have only the one shop, which is a cooperative providing for all the local needs – a non-cooperative form of enterprise would probably not even take the risk in opening, as they would find it difficult to survive.

There is also much interest at a political level, with a local government councillor for the development of cooperation, and a specific intent to carry on this tradition having introduced cooperation as a subject into local schools.

As an autonomous region in Italy with a unique history, the cooperative district that has successfully developed in Trentino over the last 121 years has not only inspired people with its deep rooted values and principles, but has also provided practical support for a region that could have otherwise had problems in social and economic survival.

Some figures can also prove the local success of the cooperative form: more than half of the local population are members of one or more cooperatives; there are more than 30,000 people employed in cooperatives; coops demonstrated resilience to the present economic crisis; the Casse Rurale banks are obliged to invest locally and so they avoid the excessive risk-taking and investments in foreign financial products.

In comparison to the rest of Italy, this region is more open to this alternative business model.

Attitudes towards cooperatives in comparison with other enterprise forms

As there is such a large proportion of the local economy made up of cooperatives, the general attitude is positive and therefore generally in favour of cooperation, which not only provides many work opportunities for the local community, but also fundamental services and products. However, there may also be a negative note, especially with young people who may be resistant towards labour cooperatives as industry is still considered an attractive option today, and so worker cooperatives may not be so popular. Younger people today are also not so well informed about cooperation, that despite its deep roots, communications are not as efficient as they could be.

In what way could negative attitude be altered or changed?

In the event of a negative attitude, for example linked to the younger generations, positive action could be taken by introducing specific training, increasing communications and providing more suitable information.

How could the development of new learning model for cooperatives and introducing 'best practice' in establishing a new cooperative (in various sectors) help people to look at the cooperative form as a possible enterprise form for their new business model?

Further to the previous observations, more training, and especially innovative models, would help and encourage the development of the cooperative model. Cooperativism is not only an effective business model but also a culture, and so requires specific attention and support to defend its values, which have an important role in building and keeping a democratic society, respecting all the peoples and their individual roles in society.

Planned training activities, qualifications and recognition, would especially motivate the younger generations and make the cooperative form of enterprise a more attractive career option. But at the same time all members would benefit from more training opportunities.

III.d. POLAND

The attitude is unfavourable mostly due to the recent historic heritage which is connected with the communist times. Cooperative business model is not perceived as an alternative business model. For the past 20 years the cooperative business model has been disregarded by the political elites of the country. The result of which has been the diminishing number of cooperative societies – it has diminished by half since 1989.

The second reason for unfavourable growth conditions is law giving more privileges to commercial companies than cooperative societies which pushes co-operators to seek the way out of the cooperative sector.

How can this attitude be described further?

In Poland, generally, the attitude is not favourable, both among the representatives of political powers and mass media, which translates into the same negative opinion of the majority of Polish people (apart from the persons connected with the cooperative sector). However, there has been some positive change of the attitude. The cooperative ideas are becoming more and more attractive among certain youth groups, the attitude of some politicians has been gradually improving. The President of Poland has expressed some positive opinion on the cooperative sector and has organized a cooperative forum.

There are couple of reasons for this attitude:

- The main one is the lack of knowledge on cooperative business model and its historical role in Poland, as well as its great importance in the countries of Western Europe.
- The cooperative business model is most often associated with the era of communism in Poland, when it played a negative role as it was totally subordinated being kind of a tool of the centrally governed economy. The cooperative sector did not manage to clear itself of the burden of the discredited cooperative activists of the communism era.
- There is certain fascination with the liberal ideas and disapproval of all communal forms in favour of individualism. One of the other reasons, and that applies mostly to 90's, is some

pathological practices of some cooperative societies which influenced how the whole cooperative sector was perceived.

- The last but not least is the tendency of generalizing – some negative phenomena referring to one sector (housing cooperatives) influence the way other sectors are perceived. There are 4.5 million Polish families inhabiting housing cooperatives so their problems refer to 1/3 of the Polish population. The media, informing about some pathological phenomena occurring in housing cooperatives, refer to cooperatives in general (without the adjective housing), which contributes to negative generalisations.

Thus, the attitude to the cooperative sector is rather negative.

Attitudes towards cooperatives in comparison with other enterprise forms

As far as legal context is concerned, cooperatives are treated worse than commercial companies/private firms. What is missing is stable cooperative legislation, all legal initiatives tend to abolish or limit the scope of activity of the cooperative sector. It has a great impact on – alongside the already mentioned factors – the general attitude towards cooperatives and it certainly does not encourage people to set up new cooperatives.

In what way could negative attitude be altered or changed?

In the Polish context, first and foremost by educating politicians, journalists and the youth to make them understand that the cooperative sector is not the relict of the old times; that cooperatives proved to be immune to the global crisis, that cooperatives are important for worldwide economies. The second thing would be to provide a good, stable cooperative legislation. Those sectors which have succeeded lately were provided with reasonable legal solutions. The third thing would be to support all initiatives, especially of the young people setting up new forms of cooperatives (social cooperatives for example) and forms resembling cooperatives which may contribute to the attitude change.

How could the development of new learning model for cooperatives and introducing 'best practice' in establishing a new cooperative (in various sectors) help people to look at the cooperative form as a possible enterprise form for their new business model?

Education should exemplify the advantages of choosing the cooperative business model by showing the best practices not only in other countries, but also in Poland. It would be worth underlining what problems – similar to those in Poland – have been solved with the help of cooperative sector, but also what kind of obstacles occurred while setting up and daily activities of cooperatives and how these problems were overcome. Cooperative values and principles should also be stressed as factors which strongly differentiate cooperative sector from the commercial one. We should also remember about the cooperative traditions and all the great persons who have been connected with the cooperative sector throughout the history. It should be emphasized that being a cooperator is the reason to be proud, but not to be ashamed.

III.e. SWEDEN

There is great lack of knowledge about this specific form of enterprise, cooperative economic association. The legal name of a cooperative in Sweden is “economic association” and since we have a large amount of voluntary associations, there is confusion about the name itself. Lots of young people have positive attitudes towards cooperative entrepreneurship and the interest in social enterprise is increasing among politicians, decision makers and the target group.

How can this attitude be described further?

In general people know much too little about cooperatives in Sweden. Cooperatives are not considered as an important part of the economy and most people and institutions are very ignorant concerning cooperatives. Even if in fact half of the inhabitants are members of a cooperative their knowledge is very often limited to big established cooperative enterprises like Consumer Coop (KF), Housing Coop (HSB and Riksbyggen) Insurance (Folksam) and Funeral Coop (Fonus) while we have at least 6 000 more of smaller cooperatives in almost 300 branches.

The ignorance comes from the fact that the cooperative form of enterprising still is quite rare in our country. There is a great lack of knowledge regarding cooperatives as a form of running a business and cooperatives are sometimes regarded as an old and outdated way of running a business, a thing of the past. The main reason is that in comparison with other enterprise forms the co-ops are in minority even if many of the most innovative enterprises today are cooperatives. And of course the fact that we have too little resources among the small new cooperatives to do a lot of marketing means that we attract too little attention. And in addition, the fact that Sweden lacks united cooperative body like Cooperatives UK or Legacoop or Confcooperative which would have given us a better visibility.

Attitudes towards cooperatives in comparison with other enterprise forms

As mentioned above too few know about co-ops which means that much too often other forms of enterprising seem to be the normal way to entrepreneurship! Organisations devoted to other forms of enterprises are sometimes reluctant to cooperatives as a form of enterprising and try to describe us as less efficient. Many people are a bit suspicious about a form of enterprise where you have to trust a lot of others in your ambitions. But of course, It all depends on the level of knowledge and therefore it is very important that the UN has chosen "Cooperative enterprises build a better world" which points out that we are not only as good as other forms on the same market but even better since we have the double goal of both being economically efficient and democratically efficient while the others only have an economic goal.

In what way could negative attitude be altered or changed?

In fact I would say that questions 4 and 5 could both be answered in the same way. What we need is more of cooperation within the cooperative enterprises and more of visibility. One way of doing this is to point out best practises and describe the benefit in economic or social terms. It turns out that as soon as people get to know more about cooperative enterprising they tend to be very positive. Where people are positive the reason is better knowledge and where they are negative the reason is too little knowledge!

How could the development of a new learning model for cooperatives and introducing 'best practice' in establishing a new cooperative (in various sectors) help people to look at the cooperative form as a possible enterprise form for their new business model?

Knowledge will definitely help. Learning models in combination with a network of good examples would probably inspire a few. A new learning model for co-ops is absolutely the best way to do it and in fact exactly what the 25 Coompanion offices in Sweden are practising every day. This is a successful model that every year makes it possible for around 600 new cooperatives in Sweden to be born with Coompanion collaborators as midwives!

IV. LEARNING MODELS TARGETED TO CO-OPERATIVES

At the moment, learning models for co-operatives exist in Finland, Italy (Trentino), Poland and Sweden. However, there is no special tailor-made learning model for cooperatives existing in Iceland. However, Bifröst College (the predecessor of Bifröst University) delivered substantial learning models specially designed for the Icelandic Cooperative Movement 1977-1987, especially for employees working in retail stores, for general managers and executives (Kaupfélagsstjórar) and these short courses were held both at Bifröst and Bifröst staff also travelled around the country.

IV.a. ORGANIZATIONAL FORM OF THE COOPERATIVE TRAINING (PUBLIC OR PRIVATE)

Summary: Generally where there is a cooperative training, it is supervised by national cooperative agencies, such as in Trento (by Formazione Lavoro, privately owned by FTC), Sweden (Coompanion) and in Poland (National Cooperative Council). However, In Finland, the training is implemented into the regional university tailored business training programs.

In Finland, the training is implemented into the regional university tailored business training programs, financed by Ministry of Economy and development, whereas a part of that programme is to introduce the cooperative issues as one form of the enterprise forms (Public form).

In Italy (Trentino) the training within the cooperative system is provided and managed by Formazione Lavoro – FL (Training for Working) which is a privately owned company of FTC (private form). It offers training programmes which individual co-ops can independently access due to their individual learning strategies. Courses are usually held in the cooperatives themselves or centrally in the FL classrooms in Trento where more enterprises may be involved (inter-enterprise courses).
ATH: Þetta er sama eða svipað fyrirkomulag og var á Bifröst árin 1977-1987.

In Poland, the National Cooperative Council altogether with some sectoral auditing unions organize more and more regular trainings according to yearly plans, however the NCC responds also to current needs of cooperatives by running ad-hoc courses. The courses are optional and they are always a response to the needs of cooperative societies.

In Sweden, training programmes for cooperatives are provided by Coompanion and other cooperative organizations (public/private?) – however, no mandatory cooperative training is provided.

IV.b. MEANS OF FINANCE FOR COOPERATIVE TRAINING MODELS

Summary: In Italy (Trentino), Poland and Sweden, training models are partly financed with public resources whereas in Finland, the programme implemented into the regional university business studies is financed in full by public resources. Some of the programmes are free, especially for cooperators and cooperators to-be. In Sweden, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth provides advisory that is free of charge. Organizations like Local cooperative associations, FL (FTC) in Italy; National Cooperative council in Poland and Coompanion in Sweden are main organisers of the training modules. Some of the models seek support into national and/or EU projects, especially in FTC and Coompanion. In most cases, participants (such as cooperators or cooperators to-be) do not have to pay course fees.

	PUBLIC RESOURCES	FREE OF CHARGE?	ORGANIZED BY	NATIONAL / EU PROJECT	PARTICIPANTS THEMSELVES?
Finland	Regional university business programme	Yes, for cooperatores and cooperators to-be	Local cooperative Association (OK Verkko) - funding from member's fees	One project focusing on business advisors	Participants or organizations finance course fees
Italy (Trentino)	60% by special regional law	Some are free (regional law), other financed by coop enterprises	FL (owned by FTC)	FTC in collaboration with FL – various EU funded projects	Courses generally free for individuals. In some cases anagerial training is paid by participants.
Poland	None	Yes, except for certain target groups	National Cooperative Council	Yes	Yes
Sweden	2/3 by public sector, consultancy income, EU funding	Some advisory is free of charge, financed by the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional growth	Coompanion	Coompanion depends partially on national and international projects	Cooperators seldom or never pay for their coop education and training

Public resources

In Finland, the Ministry of Employment and economy finances the regional university business programme. The Ministry of Education and culture finances courses produced by cultural and civic organizations (KSL Civic Association for Adult learning which has strong commitment for the cooperative development.

In Italy (Trentino), at least 60% of the training activity delivered to cooperative enterprises is financed by a specific regional law for the divulgation of cooperative principles and values in order to train the members and the management of cooperative enterprises in the region.

In Poland - no

In Sweden, Coompanoin is financed by two-thirds on a regional basis by organisations, the public sector, consultancy income and EU funding. One-third is provided by the Swedish Government through the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth.

Free of charge, organized by cooperative organizations / societies?

In Finland, a local cooperative association OK Verkko in Satakunta region (Western Finland) arranges free courses for cooperators and cooperators to-be. Funding for these courses is derived from the association's member fees and voluntary work input from local cooperatives themselves.

In Italy (Trentino) some courses are free as they are 100% financed by the regional law or by the FTC; other courses are co-financed by the participant cooperatives.

In Poland, yes.

In Sweden, the financial support from Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth enables Coompanion to offer at least some of the advisory services free of charge.

National or EU project

In Finland, there is one project (Yhdessä yrittämään) and its focus is on educating business advisors. Financing comes from ESF and national resources.

In Italy (Trento) the FTC has in collaboration with FL carried out different projects financed by the EU programmes. These projects are mainly focused on development of cooperative training methodologies and innovative contents.

In Poland, yes.

In Sweden, Coompanion depends partially on the project activities (both national and international projects).

Participants / Co-operators / to-be cooperators themselves

In Finland, partpcipants or their organizations finance the course fees, e.g. for Pellervo Institute's and Coop Finland Assotiation's courses.

In Italy (Trentino), courses for individual members are generally free of charge, as they are offered by cooperatives or consortiums (in line with the 5th ICA's principle). In some cases such as managerial training which includes a part about the coop model, fees are paid directly by the individual who participates, e.g. „Masters for managers and assistant managers“ provided by FL or other master courses provided by EURICSE (European research institute or cooperative and social enterprise) based in Trento.

In Poland, yes.

In Sweden, cooperators pay very seldom or never for their cooperator education and training.

IV.c. OTHER LEARNING OR CONSULTANCY MODELS TARGETED TO COOPERATIVES?

Summary: In Finland and Sweden, some form of consultancy is available for cooperators and cooperators to-be to develop their business ideas. In Trentino (Italy) FL offers training services to local cooperative banks, to young people and to the community. In Poland and Iceland, however, no consultancy or other learning model is available.

In Finland, advisors at the employment offices, and at the regional development organizations offer consultancy to cooperators. KSL Civic Association for Adult Learning published year 2011 a tool for teachers concerning the pedagogic approach and content of studies for employee-owned enterprises (e.g. worker cooperatives), but this does not include strict learning programme or material. Project Netco (ESF 2005-2007; Pellervo Confederation, Coop Finland, Sataosaajat and Idekoop) released self-study material for small-scale cooperatives, also in English (<http://www.palveluosuuskunnat.net/opiskelu/eng/index.html>).

In Trentino, Italy, FL have in recent years offered training services to the local cooperative banks, especially for young people and the local community, including cooperative and social entrepreneurship trianing – an effective way to give importance to the fundamental principles of cooperation in emerging areas for development, especially through young people in this case.

In Poland, no.

In Sweden, the incubator for cooperatives is to give cooperators to-be a possibility to develop their business ideas.

IV.d. SUBJECTS ON COOPERATIVE KNOWLEDGE IN CURRICULA OF SECONDARY OR HIGHER EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Summary: Subjects on cooperative knowledge are indirectly a part of the curricula in partner countries. In Finland, the cooperative knowledge is included only in the business economy education and in cooperative network studies (providing multidisciplinary studies in cooperative and in the context of social economy in Sweden).

In Polish secondary schools there are certain aspects of cooperative knowledge conveyed to the students and at university level solely to the students of economics, agriculture and social studies. At the moment, subjects devoted to the cooperative movement are being piloted in Italian secondary schools but have not been incorporated in the curricula.

In Finland, it is only included in the context of the common business economy education (social studies). Nationally, There are 13 special cooperative courses in different universities, and they are now coordinated through network. Co-op network studies is a university network, established in 2005, which offers its students multidisciplinary studies in co-operative and social economy as an interdisciplinary co-operation network and develops research and teaching in the field. The network consists of nine universities and it is co-ordinated by the University of Helsinki Ruralia Institute in Mikkeli.

In Italy (Trentino) there is currently no cooperative knowledge incorporated into curricula, but this year a pilot project in cooperative education has been launched in high schools with the collaboration of FTC.

In Poland, no, there are no subjects devoted solely to cooperative movement. However, as for secondary schools in classes devoted to entrepreneurial skills there are certain aspects of cooperative knowledge conveyed to the pupils. The scope of that actually depends on a teacher's knowledge and will. As for higher education, knowledge on the cooperative system is conveyed only to the students of economics, agriculture and social studies. However, there are no subjects devoted solely to cooperative model.

In Sweden, not specifically about cooperatives, only in the context of social economy.

V. FURTHER DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING TRAINING AND LEARNING MODELS

V.a. AIMS OF PROGRAMMES, CONTENT AND CHARACTER OF THE PROGRAMME

Summary: In Finland, the aims of the cooperative learning programs are business-oriented and focused on practical orientation. The aims of the cooperative program in Sweden consider the regional importance of creating sustainable job opportunities within the cooperative sector and the programmes in Trentino, Italy and Poland are more implemented in the development of the community, along with the practical orientation by emphasising the cooperative values and principles for the community.

The programme in Trentino Italy consists of 26 modules divided into 8 thematic areas and in Poland and Sweden, most trainings are devoted to specific themes along with being highly specialized.

The partners conclude that it is important to make a division between courses regarding the ideology of the cooperative form (which should be free) and practical training for cooperative managers and staff. The aim of this module is to build a bridge between those two perspectives and in that case, we should look at the previous Skills project, for inspiration.

FINLAND	ITALY (TRENTINO)	POLAND	SWEDEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational preconditions of the cooperatives The cooperative as the form of the enterprise Business planning Administration of the cooperative Management of finances and taxation Acts Establishment in the real life The operative management of the cooperative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train management and directors of cooperative enterprises Guarantee development of the cooperative enterprise Maintain cooperative values and principles in the community Provide economic and financial instruments and knowledge Have tools useful for understanding customer needs and satisfaction Be able to effectively communicate and market services provided Introduce innovation into the enterprise and recognize the opportunities offered by the local context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical orientation – solving concrete organizational-technical-economical problems met by cooperative managers in everyday work Reflections on history and tradition of the cooperative movement Cooperative values and principles Creating new cooperatives (social cooperatives, cooperative farmers' groups) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create sustainable cooperative enterprise job opportunities

In Finland, main aims consist of operational preconditions of the cooperatives, the cooperative as the form of the enterprise, business planning , administration of the cooperative, management of finances and taxation, acts, establishment in the real life, the operative management of the cooperative

In Italy (Trentino), training of management and directors within the cooperative movement has become essential prerequisite to effectively guarantee development of the cooperative enterprise. Cooperatives are invited to plan their own training programmes about cooperative culture and enterprise for their board members, managers, directors and auditors. Still today cooperative values and principles continue to be a great resource and heritage for our communities and for the development of our territory, to the point of establishing an important font of competitive advantage. The proposal is not to separate technical training from “cooperative” training, but to create a common base that stems from the history of cooperative thought to progress to a better understanding and valorisation of the place of the cooperative enterprise in the market today, and the role and expertise of the cooperative system in Trentino:

- **Objectives of LAPIS – Laboratory for encouraging social and cooperative entrepreneurship.**

In addition to providing economic and financial instruments and knowledge for the management of cooperative enterprises, the course also includes the topics of marketing and communications, and includes a laboratory on corporate creativity. These three macro areas of the programme represent the core for the activities of a possible cooperative enterprise. In fact, it is important to acquire good skills to better move within the labyrinth of tax regulations; to have tools useful for understanding customer needs and satisfaction; to be able to effectively communicate and market services provided; to introduce innovation into the enterprise; and recognize the opportunities offered by the local context; all coherent with the values and principles of the cooperative enterprise.

FL published a detailed catalogue (www.formazione-lavoro.net). It counts 26 modules divided in 8 thematic areas: Cooperative culture; Cooperative Economy; Cooperative management; Cooperative legislative framework; Accounting and tax system; Financing system; Cooperative enterprises and marketing; Communication and networking. In addition the catalogue includes 7 training pathways: Expert for the cooperative culture; Cooperation for a better world, Training for the new coop managers, Governance: how to manage the coop enterprises, Living within the cooperation, The challenges of the world today, The auditing of the cooperatives in the region of Trentino- AltoAdige.

In Poland, most of the trainings and courses are usually very practically oriented on solving concrete organizational-technical-economical problems met by cooperative managers in their everyday work. A very small place is devoted to the question of history and traditions of the cooperative movement, cooperative values and principles etc., what could substantially enlarge their knowledge and contribute to forming a „co-operator’s ethos“.

Since 2008 courses devoted to creating new cooperatives (social cooperatives, cooperative farmers' groups) have become very popular due to increasing unemployment rate and some privileges which simplify the setting up and management of a social cooperative.

Most trainings are devoted to specific themes. The training programmes are often highly specialised and cover an extract of a theme.

In Sweden, the aim is to create sustainable cooperative enterprises job opportunities. We can see that cooperative enterprises have very good survival rates and are far less likely to wind up their operations than sole proprietorships or limited companies.

Coompanion offers different programmes such as: Cooperative start-up courses; Basic economy, law and tax legislation; Education for supervisors in social cooperatives; Training programme for cooperators in social cooperatives; Education to politicians and decision makers; Business collaboration – small enterprises working together in cooperatives

V.b. SUCCESS RATE IN THE AIMS

Summary: In Finland, a cooperative was established (7 members) after one of the tailor made programme. In Trentino, Italy, LAPIS and other projects have generated both new cooperative enterprises and other non-cooperative autonomous enterprises. In Poland, start-up programmes have resulted in doubling the number of social cooperatives and an increasing interest in the form. In Sweden, Coompanion provides successful and satisfiable advisory services and the cooperative enterprise is the fastest growing corporate format in Sweden.

In Finland, a cooperative started in the tailored programme (7 persons)

In Italy (Trentino) the LAPIS project, and other projects such as INCIPIT, have generated both new cooperative enterprises (e.g. in Bassa Valsugana) and other non-cooperative autonomous enterprises.

In Poland, social cooperative start up programmes have been increasingly popular for the past 4 years, which resulted in doubling the number of social cooperatives (from around 150 in 2008 to almost 450 in March 2012). The interest of people in setting up cooperatives is stronger and stronger.

Thematic courses devoted to the other sectors are always frequented by co-operators, new editions of the old courses and brand new courses are most often fully frequented, which translates into the need for training and its quality.

In Sweden, Coompanion provide corporate advisory services for more than 5000 people every year and 94% of them are satisfied or very satisfied with the help they received. Cooperative enterprise is the fastest growing corporate format in Sweden, making inroads into more and more industries, surviving longest, freeing up entrepreneurial resources (including those of non-traditional entrepreneurs)

V.c. ACCESS, FORM AND TARGET GROUPS OF LEARNING MODELS

Summary: The learning models are open to everyone in all countries but Finland – however in Poland the free access is tied to the social cooperative start up and in Sweden it depends on the client. Main target groups are job-seekers, cooperators and cooperators to be, along with managers, politicians and decision makers. However, both Trentino, Italy and Poland emphasize to offer these courses to young people, unemployed and even disabled people. Organization of these learning models are generally on the hands of the National Cooperative agencies, except in Finland where the Regional office of the employment and economy is the responsible organization. In Sweden, these models started in the 1980s but most of the programmes started after 2000. No programme is run as a distance learning programme but they have higher education in social economy on university level which is not specifically for cooperatives and the ‘established cooperation’ also offers courses to its members.

	FINLAND	ITALY (TRENTINO)	POLAND	SWEDEN
Open to everyone?	Only for the investigated and evaluated candidates	Open for everyone	Yes, in case of social coop start-up but not in other sectors	Yes and no, depends on the client
Target groups	Jobseekers who are interested in establishing a coop	Presidents of cooperative enterprises Boards of directors and of statutory auditors Young people who aspire to become directors Managers of cooperative enterprises Cooperative members	Potential members, unemployed and disabled, professionals from open market, cooperative farmers groups and individual farmers	Everyone who wants to start a cooperative, politicians and decision makers, people outside labour markets.
Organizations running programmes	The Regional office of the employment and Economy (well known local expert)	Formazione Lavori, EURICSE	The National Cooperative Council and some sectoral auditing unions	Coompanion; SKOOP; KFO-The Cooperative Employers' Association, study associations and folk high schools
Start of programmes	24th May – 30th June 2010	LAPIS – 2002; INCIPIT – 2008; Training programmes for board members, managers, directors and auditors – 2002; PATTO DI SYSTEMA - 2012	Social cooperative and cooperative farmers' groups – 2008; other sectors since mid 90s.	In the beginning of the 1980s
Distance learning?	No	No	No	No – however a group analysis tool is owned by Coompanion and

				implemented through ICT
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V.d. OPEN TO EVERYONE?

In Finland, the programme is only open for the investigated and evaluated candidates.

In Italy (Trentino), the programme is open for everyone.

In Poland, yes in case of social cooperative start-up trainings. No in case of the other sectors.

In Sweden, it's both yes and no – it depends on who the client is.

V.e. TARGET GROUPS

In Finland, main target group is jobseekers who are interested in the establishment of the cooperative.

In Italy (Trentino), main target group consists of following stakeholders:

- Presidents of cooperative enterprises
- Boards of directors and of statutory auditors
- Young people who aspire to become directors
- Managers of cooperative enterprises
- Cooperative members

In Poland, in case of social cooperatives the target group is potential members – the unemployed, the disables, but also professional from the open market; for cooperative farmers' groups – individual farmers. In case of other sectors the target group varies according to the theme of the training – from employees to menagerial staff.

In Sweden, everyone who wants to start a company together in cooperative form; Politicians and decision makers; People outside the labor market and others (branch specific training programs).

V.f. RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATIONS RUNNING THESE PROGRAMMES

In Finland, the regional office of the employment and economy, the winner of the competition (in this case a wellknown local expert).

In Italy (Trentino) it is Formazione Lavori; EURICSE.

In Poland, The National Cooperative Council as well as some sectoral auditing unions.

In Sweden: Coompanion; SKOOP - the Swedish organisation that takes interest in social cooperatives; KFO - The Co-operative Employers' Association; Study associations and folk high schools. There is also a higher education in social economy on university level which however is not specifically designed for cooperatives.

V.g. START OF THE PROGRAMMES

Finland: 24.5-30.6.2010

Italy (Trentino):

- LAPIS – 2002
- INCIPIT – 2008
- Training programmes for board members, managers, directors and auditors – 2002
- PATTO DI SYSTEMA (System Pact) – 2012

Poland: In case of social cooperatives and cooperative farmers' groups the programmes started around 2008. In case of other sectors the programmes have been evolving since mid '90-ies according to current needs of cooperative societies.

In Sweden: The cooperation started in the late 1800's. In the middle of the 1900s Sweden was changed to an industrial society and through this reduced the cooperative movement. At the beginning of the 1980s Coompanion were formed which was the start of the new-co-operative movement. Resultated of this was training for the new cooperators. The 'established cooperation' also offers courses to its members.

V.h. DISTANCE LEARNING SYSTEM?

Finland: No

Italy (Trentino): No

Poland: No

Sweden: No, but Coompanion own and offers a group analysis tool, implemented through ICT.

V.i. THEMES, SYSTEMS OF CERTIFICATION AND QUALITY EVALUATION AND RECRUITMENT OF STAFF

Summary: There are certain theme differences according to coop sector in Trentino, Italy, Poland and Sweden but no great variations in Finland. Teaching staff are recruited from various sectors such as universities, cooperative enterprises and organizations, public representatives and other companies as well as well-known local experts. There are no systems of certification of cooperation training in Finland and Sweden, however, courses in Trentino, Italy have final written exams and Poland has recognized certification of cooperative training. Courses are valued with electric questionnaires in Finland and courses organised by public educational authorities or a part of EU funded programmes in Poland undergo internal evaluation. However, no quality evaluation is undertaken in Trentino, Italy and Sweden does not have that kind of system specifically for the cooperative movement, however, they are working on getting special certification for Coompanion advisers.

	FINLAND	ITALY (TRENTINO)	POLAND	SWEDEN
Theme difference according to coop sector?	No greater variations	Themes vary and courses are contextualized in different cooperative sectors in Trentino.	Yes, although majority of courses refer to themes common to all sectors some of the training is addressed to different sectors	Yes
Recruitment of staff	Well-known local experts	University, cooperative system (FL trainers, FTC, cooperative enterprises); consultants and professional trainers.	Experts from NCC and other coops, public representatives, university lecturers, special private companies	Cooperative organisations and other partnership organizations involved in financing and advisory services
Systems of certification of coop training	No	Some courses have final written exam and a cooperative bank has a system of obligatory training credits.	Recognized certification of cooperative training.	No, but they are planning to certify the Coompanion advisers
System or training quality	Electric questionnaires	No	Internal evaluation system in courses	Yes, but not specifically for the

evaluation (internal or external)			organized by public educational authorities or in EU financed projects	cooperative movement
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Does the training theme vary according to different cooperative sector?

Finland: No greater variation (a little).

Italy (Trentino): The themes vary - the courses are contextualized in different cooperative sectors in Trentino, especially where member status (agriculture, labour) requires particular attention towards the responsibility and opportunities of cooperative management. In some cases, training pathways are “inter-cooperative”, i.e. involving cooperatives from different sectors, in order to encourage an exchange of experiences and to help emerge success stories in networking and for the objectives of the business.

Poland: Yes, although the majority of courses refer to the themes common to all sectors (as e.g. accounting, taxes). More specific training courses are addressed to housing cooperatives (e.g. concerning housing stock management, energy efficient technologies), to dairy coops (quality control) and to other sectors that have specific needs.

Sweden: Yes, they may vary depending on who is the target group.

Recruitment of teaching staff

Finland: Well known local experts

Italy (Trentino) : The teaching staff come from the following areas:

- University
- Cooperative system (FL trainers, the FTC, cooperative enterprises)
- Consultants and professional trainers.

Teaching staff involved are listed at the end of the catalogue „System pact“ (Patto di sistema)

Poland: Trainings are conducted by the experts from NCC and other cooperative organizations, representatives of adequate ministries or governmental agencies, university lecturers, sometimes by specialized private companies.

Sweden: Cooperative organisations and other partnership organizations involved in financing and advisory services and well-known local experts.

Systems of certification of cooperative training?

Finland: No

Italy (Trentino): Some courses as for instance Maestri Cooperatori (Expert for the cooperative culture) and the Young govern the cooperative enterprises of the future foresee a final written exam. A credit cooperative bank has introduced a system of obligatory training credits for the re-election of the Board of Directors. In this case the credits are awarded with no exams, but with a minimum number of presences for the training sessions.

Poland: The certification of cooperative training is recognized by the cooperative movement. Some courses (e.g. those conducted by NCC) are conveyed under the auspices of the public educational authorities.

Sweden: No

Any system of training quality evaluation (internal or external)?

Finland: The questionnaires. Today they are electric

Italy (Trentino): No

Poland: The system of evaluation is an internal one; only in the case of the courses organized under auspices of public educational authorities or in the frameworks of projects financed from national or EU funds, a control/evaluation is possible. On the basis of the evaluation reports the improvements are introduced on the spot.

Sweden: Yes, but not specifically for the cooperative movement.

VI. SWOT ANALYSIS

SUMMARY	
STRENGTH	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training activities (FI, IT, PO, SE) • Co-operative culture/ideology (IS, IT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited knowledge of the co-op model (FI, IS, IT, PO) • Negative attitude to co-ops (IS, PO)
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased demand/interest for training (IS, IT, SE) • Using new and more sufficient methods for training (PO,SE) • Teach other co-operative organizations and cooperative enterprises have very good survival rates (SE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of new business investments (IS, IT) • Commercial companies taking over the “market” (PO)

Finland	
STRENGTH	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No great demands of the capital in the labour force intensive branches. • A lot of the guidance available (and not so expensive) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is needed an equal team and the branch orientated and regional training
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The social way to work, if you have a common concept (or ideology) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One person can clobber the whole team (or make troubles).

Iceland	
STRENGTH	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The co-operative ideology • Individual co-op shops in some rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative attitude to co-operatives because of the dubious economic management of the former powerful co-operative movement. • Few model examples of successful co-ops existing in Iceland • No training material available and no co-op business consultancy
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-establishment of the economy after the big downturn. • Positive attitude among young educated people toward the co-operative thinking. • Openness for new business models • Increased interest for business clusters in local areas, which have similarities to co-op. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of investments • Stagnation of the Icelandic economy • Hostile political agenda and lack of understanding towards emerging enterprises

Trentino, Italy	
STRENGTH	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • innovation; • qualified training providers; • cooperative cultural heritage and history; • cooperative mentality; • good network between the main local key actors (local government, university, FTC and its Consortias). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of formal/official recognition; • Recent methodologies in cooperative education and training and therefore not enough knowledge about it • Very few trainers/facilitators expert in this field.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various possibilities available; • Career path opportunities; • System pact makes training pathway mandatory for the coop board members and members. • Cooperative enterprises have very good survival rates and are far less likely to wind up their operations than sole proprietorships or limited companies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As quite a new and experimental approach, long term sustainability could fail; • Lack of funds; • Decrease of interest and motivation

Poland	
STRENGTH	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training programmes are response to current needs of cooperative societies • Practically oriented courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very small place devoted to the question of history and traditions of the cooperative movement, cooperative values and principles etc., what could substantially enlarge knowledge and contribute to forming a 'cooperator's ethos' • No modern forms of education (e.g. e-platforms) due to the lack of financial means and low level of knowledge on such forms in the society
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Room to make training processes still more attractive due to the so far unused potential of the Internet and modern forms of education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commerical companies taking over the „market“ and offering poor quality products-trainings

Sweden	
STRENGTH	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coompanion has been given an assignment from the government • Coompanion collaborate locally and nationally to develop new tools and methods and training concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coompanion depend on commissions from the state, project funding and other funding • Coompanion is a small organization and have difficulty keeping up with the development of training materials based on the needs of today's society • Limited knowledge
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That cooperative movement in Sweden continues to develop positively • That demand for training increases • That we through the international project cooperation may continue to develop the cooperative movement in our region • Teach other co-operative organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other organizations that purport to be co-operative education providers have discovered that there are funding opportunities within the co-operative area • That Coompanion not have the financial ability to evolve along with society's need for training

VII. PROCEEDING TO WP3: HOW TO DEVELOP CONVENTUS LEARNING MODEL AND CURRICULUM PLAN

In this report, the 'state-of-the-art' regarding the current state of cooperatives, general attitudes, existence of advisory support and a profile learning models for cooperatives in partner countries has been discussed and described. These information can be used as a part of teaching materials for the learning modules but also provide insight and ideas for further development of the Conventus learning model.

In order to proceed to WP3, two kinds of products that can serve as a certain guiding light into the next section of the project:

- Firstly by presenting certain questions on how to develop the learning model in terms of resources, presentation, aims of the model, ideal teaching staff, where model should be hosted, free of charge or not, target groups, themes, certification and evaluation
- Secondly

VII.a. HOW SHOULD THE CONVENTUS LEARNING MODULE BE DEVELOPED?

1. *Should present learning models for cooperatives be taken into account (best practices) and what kind of resources should we aim at (and how)?*

The results of the Skills project will be the basic platform of the model and complemented by the best practices of each partner, some existing, relevant material will be utilized as well as deliverables from work packages (like WP2 and WP3). Relevant WP leaders' co-ordinate this work.

This model (including the training materials) will be tested by partners in pilot project and potential trainers before it will be implemented. However, it must be taken into account that quick delivery for online modification is important.

2. *How should the aims of the models be designed?*

The main aim of the cooperative learning model can be divided into three main themes:

- To briefly introduce the history and ideology of cooperative movement
- To strengthen the ability of prospective and existing cooperative employees and managers on becoming better employees / managers and improve their work in teams
- To provide a learning support for prospective co-operators to establish a new cooperatives and partly to encourage new potential co-operative start-ups.

3. *What would be the ideal teaching staff (a mixture of scholars and experts from the field)?*

The teacher / trainers' consortium should present following criteria:

- Roots in and support of the cooperative principles and values
- Practical experience of managing a co-operative together with educational/pedagogical skills.
- Experience in cooperative advising, consultation and education
- Knowledge in group processes and team building
- Someone who can bring something new and developing to the cooperative and the cooperators

4. *Where should these models be hosted?*

During the development phase the training materials and the description of the model will be hosted in Moodle. By the end of the project it should be distributed to all the national e-learning systems, customised for each region/country.

Moodle could proceed to be an option for hosting the module, as the software and the server environment is free of charge with appropriate IT support. However, this does not exclude other learning systems, only what is appropriate for each partner country to use.

Producing multimedia DVDs creates problems regarding feedback systems that can log results for analysis.

5. *Should they be free of charge and open to everyone (for promotional purposes) and how?*

All the deliverables shall be open to everyone, which is in line with a clause in the consortium agreement.

6. *How do we categorize and prioritize the target groups (present cooperators and/or cooperators to-be)?*

This is different from one partner region to another, according to the mapping of the co-operative situation in WP2. This is an issue for the consortium to discuss and should be co-ordinated by relevant WP leader. We can certainly learn from each other for the selection of target groups and also the method of approaching these groups. Thus project partners have knowledge of which target group is the most appropriate based on the local needs and that these target groups can provide knowledge so that the project can accomplish its objectives.

In order to summarize target groups could be:

- Members of cooperatives
- Employees of cooperatives
- Cooperative managers
- Cooperative trainers

- Cooperative advisors
- Others, such as politicians and policy makers

7. *Should there be different themes designed for different cooperative sectors (like they do in Trentino)?*

It would be ideal to approach different co-operative sector by customized training model. However, inevitably it would be difficult to meet very precise needs of different branches. Discussions at the last Conventus meeting in Iceland led to the conclusions that the main themes should be divided into two main perspectives:

Firstly to present the history and ideology of the co-operatives, including the democracy base of co-operatives. This theme could be used for all possible target groups. Too, working in a cooperative is based on universal cooperative principles and group work too builds on certain elements found in all countries.

Secondly, the model should take into consideration technical issues:

- Cooperative laws and regulations
- Developing / redeveloping cooperative business plan
- Generating / re-generating the coop team and organization, group process
- Establishing a cooperative within different sectors
- Management of cooperatives,
- Marketing (general marketing, e-marketing)
- Working in a coop; skills development
- Economic issues

Specific themes, tailor-made on special target groups could be for example:

- Shop-keeping for coop retailers
- Activities for social cooperatives
- Real estate laws and practicalities for the co-operatives in the housing sector
- Hygiene regulations for food processing co-operatives

It must though be taken into account that too detailed material will bring a vastly varied package of different approaches that do not reflect the project but the individual needs of local partners. Basic training for co-operators is the same for all groups, but some target groups will need a longer training time.

8. *Should the learning model provide participants with a special certification (and how)?*

A certificate could be an option [this might need further discussions during the project life cycle], however, emphasis should be on skills acquired.

9. *How should the evaluation (if any) be designed? (internal impact – participant's satisfaction and/or external impact - such as the establishment of new cooperatives)?*

The proposal set up a measurable criterion for the project and every partner should have this as a part of its quality control. The evaluation can be on different levels and periods and may be both internal and external:

Internal

- Participant's satisfaction on the learning model
- Evaluation of tools and methods of study / teaching
- Evaluation of teacher / trainer's performance

External

- Does this learning model lead to establishment of new cooperatives?
- Does this learning model have any impact on general attitudes towards cooperatives.

VII.b. CURRICULUM PLAN FOR CONVENTUS LEARNING MODEL FOR ON-GOING PROCESS IN WP3

This section consists of themes within the curriculum plan concerning the Conventus learning model and will be developed according to existing teaching material, time frame, methods and evaluation.

- 1. The history, ideology and status of the cooperative movement** (European / national level)
 - a. Historical background
 - b. Cooperative principles and values
 - c. The state-of-the-art of the cooperative movement – general attitudes
 - d. Economic impact and issues
 - e. Social and democratic impact and issues
- 2. Being a cooperative member** [this can be modified according to target groups]
 - a. The role of cooperative members in cooperative laws and legislation
 - b. The benefits for cooperative members
 - c. Social responsibility
 - d. Success stories – best practice (case studies)
- 3. Managing a cooperative** [this needs modification]
 - a. Cooperative laws and legislation
 - b. HRM - Generating the coop team and organization and group work
 - c. General skills development
 - d. Financial management and accounting
 - e. Marketing
 - i. General marketing
 - ii. Social marketing
 - iii. Customer relationship clubs
 - f. Social responsibility
 - g. Success stories – best practice (case studies)
- 4. Establishing an cooperative within different sectors – what is needed?**
 - a. Cooperative laws and regulations
 - b. Developing a cooperative business plan
 - i. Getting members
 - ii. Structure and strategy
 - iii. Doing a feasibility study
 - iv. Target group – marketing analysis
 - v. Financial plan
 - c. Success stories of establishment of cooperatives (case studies)

CONVENTUS PROJECT

WP2 GAP ANALYSIS: COMPARISON OF COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT AND LEARNING MODELS TARGETED TO CO-OPERATIVES

Please complete this form and send it to Sigrun Lilja Einarsdottir sigrunlilja@bifrost.is before 15th of March 2012.

Please put the name of your country and organization in the header of this document before submitting it

The objective of this work package is to set the scene: comparison of cooperative movement and learning models targeted to co-operatives in each of the participating countries. The participating countries are on different level considering the cooperative movement and that's why it is important to make an analysis of the situation. The analysis will later act as the base for the next activities and for planning the learning system.

WP will analyse the context of the different types of cooperatives involved in the project (social, labour, retail, etc.) in order to identify the learning objectives necessary to train a more aware and active co-operator. The work will mainly be based on existing materials and consisting of collecting this data. Some main actors on cooperative movement might also be interviewed.

Target groups for the project in each partner country will be identified and the need for adapted tools and methods will be reviewed. There might be varieties depending on the status of cooperative movement in the respective country.

1. Background information	
Partner name	
Region / Country covered	
Number of inhabitants	
2. Description of the cooperative movement	
How many cooperative companies are in the region/country?	
How many cooperative federations are in the region/country?	
How many employees are working in cooperatives in the region/country?	
Which are the three largest business sectors based on the cooperative model?	
How many individuals/enterprises are required for establishing a cooperative?	
Is there a specific law on cooperative organisations in the country? (Yes / No)	

What are the responsible organisations running these programmes?		
N/A		
When did these programmes start?		
N/A		
Are these learning/training programmes based on distance learning systems? If so, please describe the method:		
N/A		
Please describe the content and the main characters of the programmes:		
N/A		
Does the training theme vary according to different cooperative sector?		
N/A		
Where from does the teaching staff recruit? (academic centres, cooperative organisations, cooperative societies, open market)		
N/A		
Is there any system of certification of cooperative trainings?		
N/A		
Is there any system of training quality evaluation (internal or external)?		
N/A		
4. Please make a SWOT analysis of the learning models in your region		
Strengths		Weaknesses
Opportunities		Threats

IX. APPENDIX II: QUESTIONS FOR INVESTIGATING GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS COOPERATIVES

In order to get some indicators regarding general attitude towards cooperatives in your country / region, **please choose 4-6 interviewees** according to the following criteria:

- An experienced representative at a regional / national cooperative movement
- A long-term and active member of a cooperative
- Management advisor, who has experience in assisting cooperatives and is familiar with the cooperative form
- Municipality members or politicians who a) are in favour of the cooperative movement and/or b) are against it
- Other individuals that you consider to have insight into the cooperative sector in your country / region

Note that cooperative managers are excluded as possible interviewees.

Please use following questions in the interviews:

1. Please describe how you experience the general attitude towards cooperatives in this country / region.
2. What do you think is the reason for this attitude? Where does this attitude come from and why, in your perspective?
(Historical perspectives, cultural values, tradition in trading, political views, economic perspectives - ask for an example)
3. How is the general attitude in comparison with other enterprise forms? Is it in favour of the cooperative form or not? Why/why not?
4. *[If the interviewee considers the attitude to be positive]* In your perspective, what are the main reasons for this positive attitude towards cooperatives in your country / region?
5. *[If the interviewee considers the attitude to be negative]* In what way do you think that this attitude can be altered / changed? What actions need to be taken?
6. How do you think that developing new learning model for cooperatives and introducing 'best practice' in establishing a new cooperative (in various sectors) might help people to look at the cooperative form as a possible enterprise form for their new business model?

Please summarize one response for every question based on the responses of all interviewees and return results to Sigrún Lilja Einarsdóttir (sigrunlilja@bifrost.is) by Wednesday 16th of May at the latest.