

**THE COOPERATIVE AND THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY:
EMBRACING COLLABORATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY**

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59642/JRTMED.1.2023.01>

Universal Decimal Classification: 334.73

JEL Classification: Q01, Q56, P13

Abstract

The article investigates how cooperatives and the circular economy complement each other, highlighting their relevance in building a sustainable future. By integrating circular economy principles into cooperatives, sustainable resource management and opportunities for development are fostered. Cooperatives, with their collaborative nature and focus on member interests, provide an ideal framework for implementing circular economy practices. They promote efficient resource collection, reuse, and recycling, reducing environmental impact and dependence on finite resources. Collaboration among cooperative members, local communities, and other stakeholders facilitates knowledge exchange and resource sharing, vital for circular economy implementation. The article also highlights key aspects of this collaborative approach. The collaboration between the members of the cooperative, the local community and other interested entities contributes to the exchange of knowledge, experiences and resources necessary for the implementation of the circular economy. By joining forces, these key participants can develop innovative initiatives and projects that deliver economic, social and environmental benefits. Finally, the authors emphasize the importance of promoting and supporting cooperatives within the circular economy model. By promotion of collaboration and creation of an enabling environment for the development of circular economy-oriented cooperatives, a sustainable future can be constructed, where resources are managed efficiently, waste is minimized, and communities develop in a sustainable way.

Keywords: cooperative, circular economy, sustainability, Sustainable Development Goals, recycling, environmental challenges

1. Introduction

Cooperatives, as organizations that are based on strong values and principles, represent a sustainable and participatory type of business. They take responsibility for their members and

the communities in which they operate, embracing a holistic approach for an economic and social development.

One of the key principles of cooperatives is concern for community and sustainable development. These organizations aim to provide solutions and address social, economic and environmental challenges through their activities. Also, they encourage the responsible use of resources, promote ethical business practices and focus their efforts on sustainable growth and long-term prosperity. The development strategies of cooperatives globally reflect their commitment to sustainability and participation. These strategies aim to promote and strengthen cooperative models in different sectors and fields of activity.

Thus, *A People-Centered Path for a Second Cooperative Decade. The 2020-2030 Strategic Plan* (adopted in 2020) [12, p. 6] is a continuation of *The first Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade initiative. 2020 Vision*, which was adopted in 2013 [13]. This strategic plan expands the development vision of cooperatives and sets clear goals for the next decade.

One of the main objectives of this strategic plan refers to the cooperative business model in order to become a recognized leader in promoting economic, social and environmental sustainability and address environmental and social responsibility challenges.

At the same time, cooperatives have a significant impact in multiple fields and are found in almost all areas proposed by the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) established by the United Nations [18]. They help reduce poverty, stimulate economic growth, promote gender equality, ensure access to health and education, promote sustainable energy, lead responsible consumption and production, among others. Therefore, the actions of the Strategic Plan for the period 2020-2030 are strongly linked to the Sustainable Development Goals, with a special focus on the 12th goal - Responsible consumption and production.

This connection between cooperatives and the SDGs underlines the importance of cooperatives in the process of addressing global challenges and promoting a responsible consumption and production model. Cooperatives assume the role for promoting sustainable practices in terms of resource use, waste management, environmental protection and responsible consumption. They encourage innovation and the development of sustainable business models that ensure a balance between economic, social and environmental aspects.

Thus, the *Strategic Plan 2020-2030 - A people-centered path for the second cooperative decade* [8; 9], represents a distinct trajectory for cooperatives for the upcoming period, focused on fostering sustainable and responsible growth. Through the implementation of this strategic plan and proactive collaboration with various organizations and institutions, cooperatives aim to become leaders in the field of economic, social and environmental sustainability, contributing to building a more sustainable and fairer future for all [8; 9].

2. The degree of investigation of the problem currently, and purpose of research

The role of cooperatives in building a sustainable future is paramount. The achievements of cooperatives in sustainability are intrinsically linked to existing theoretical frameworks and practical applications. Scholars and practitioners have provided valuable insights into cooperative models, governance structures, and cooperative principles that contribute to

sustainable results. Based on this work, our research endeavors to enhance knowledge and comprehension of cooperative practices that drive sustainable development, but also, a sense of purpose and belonging.

Furthermore, the relationship between existing results in theory and practice will be explored, by determining how our research aligns with these advancements.

In our research, we have examined the impact of cooperatives in building a sustainable future. Thus, cooperatives play a vital role in promoting sustainability across different sectors. Through their collaborative and inclusive nature, cooperatives have demonstrated their ability to implement sustainable practices effectively. They actively engage members, stakeholders, and communities in decision-making processes, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility towards sustainable development. In the majority of countries, there exists national legislation regulating the activities of cooperatives, and sometime, legislation for particular types of cooperatives, for example, agricultural, consumer, health, insurance, banking. Furthermore, each cooperative organization, regardless of their location, is obliged to adopt its own internal statutes or other such document such as the articles of association which establish all aspects of the cooperative's functioning, including the abiding by and implementation of the cooperative principles, values, ethics, with a particular focus on member benefits and social responsibility. This regulatory framework is one of the distinctions between a cooperative organization and other legal entities.

The article aims to emphasize the significant contribution of cooperatives in promoting the circular economy and building a more sustainable society. It accomplishes this goal by showcasing examples of sustainable practices and demonstrating the positive impact of cooperatives in this field. Case studies and empirical analysis have shown that cooperatives excel in resource management. By adopting principles of the circular economy, cooperatives optimize resource utilization, minimize waste generation, and promote efficient recycling and reuse principles, all the while engaging consumers, members and citizens at large towards a shift to more responsible and sustainable consumption patterns and healthy lifestyles.

3. Applied methods and materials

Within the process of research, a comprehensive review of the existing literature on cooperatives, circular economy, and sustainable practices was conducted. Extensive research was undertaken to gather a wide range of information and insights. Furthermore, the success stories of numerous cooperatives that have implemented sustainable practices to promote the circular economy were carefully analyzed.

To ensure a robust analysis, data and information from diverse sources were collected and analyzed by means of: examining case studies, relevant statistics, and other representative resources.

The synthesis of the gathered information allowed to highlight the crucial role of cooperatives in promoting the circular economy. By integrating diverse sources and examples, the article aims to provide readers with a strong understanding of the topic and emphasize the positive impact that cooperatives have in building a more sustainable perspective.

4. Results obtained and discussions

Cooperatives represent a specific type of organization where human principles are prioritized over profit. They are defined, according to the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), as autonomous associations of persons voluntarily united to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise [14]. Thus, cooperatives possess a dual nature, which combines the economic and social components, thus ensuring a balance between economic activities and social concerns. Synthesizing various information regarding the role of cooperatives in society and the economy, we can conclude that *these forms of business exercise a complex function and have an important role:*

- Promoting participation and involvement of members: cooperatives encourage the active and responsible participation of individuals in economic processes, developing the spirit of initiative and responsibility. Due to the principle of economic democracy, members are given the opportunity to make decisions and actively participate in management processes [15].
- Stimulating local economic development: Cooperatives support local entrepreneurship, small and medium-sized businesses, contribute to economic growth and job creation, as well as promote local production and consumption [6].
- Improving the living conditions and well-being of members: Cooperatives have the capacity to engage in various sectors such as food, housing, healthcare, renewable energy, education and more. By ensuring the satisfaction of fundamental necessities, cooperatives actively contribute the growth of the overall well-being and quality of life for individuals within the community.
- Promotion of ethical values and social responsibility: Cooperatives' activity is based on ethical principles and social responsibility, thus proving sustainable benefits to members and the community as a whole by acting in an ethical and responsible manner in relation to employees, customers, the environment and society at large.
- Creating and strengthening communities: Cooperatives promote solidarity, collaboration and building strong social relationships, contributing to social cohesion and the development of sustainable communities.

Overall, based on the above, we can conclude that cooperatives bring significant value to society and the economy, promoting fundamental principles such as solidarity, equality, democratic participation and sustainability.

The system of cooperatives is considered one of the most numerous and organized economic-social systems in the world. According to the data provided by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), approximately 3 million cooperatives are registered globally [16]. This substantial number shows the extensive impact these organizations exercise on the global economy and the communities in which they activate.

Also, it is important to mention that about 12% of the world's population is a member of a cooperative [16]. This serves as the basis to state that cooperatives attract a significant number of members and that people are actively involved in these organizations.

Cooperatives also provide employment opportunities for approximately 10% of the employed population [16]. This makes us state that cooperatives play a key role in creating and

maintaining jobs, thereby helping to boost local economies and increase the well-being of community members.

These statistics show us the significant contribution of cooperatives to the economy and society, highlighting their importance in terms of sustainable development, economic growth and improving the living conditions of community members.

The size of cooperatives at the European level is also impressive. According to data provided by Cooperatives Europe, the organization representing cooperative interests in Europe, 141 million members, 4.7 million employees and 180,000 businesses are members of this organization. These figures once more demonstrate the scale and importance of these organizations in the European economic and social landscape.

Cooperatives in Europe have a significant impact on economic activities, sustainable development, innovation and social cohesion in territories. They help generate economic activities and stimulate economic growth in various sectors such as agriculture, industry, services and others. Through cooperatives, principles such as sustainability, social responsibility and democratic decision-making are promoted, which contribute to sustainable development and strengthening community cohesion.

The cooperative is not only an efficient economic model, but also a catalyst for development and progress in Europe, an engine of innovation, opening up new business avenues, promoting advanced technologies, and addressing social and environmental challenges. Through their active involvement and commitment to cooperative values, these organizations contribute to building a more equitable, sustainable and inclusive society [1].

Recognizing the importance and role of cooperatives on a global level, *the United Nations Organization (UN) declared 2012 - the International Year of Cooperatives*. This initiative aimed to promote and support cooperatives around the world and highlight their significant contribution in multiple fields.

The actions promoted globally, regionally, nationally and locally during the International Year of Cooperatives emphasized the role of cooperatives in economic development, in ensuring financial stability and in enhancing the well-being of members.

Thus, by promoting the universal values of solidarity, equality and cooperation, the cooperative has become an economic and social model that emphasizes the needs of members and sustainable development. The International Year of Co-operatives highlighted that the cooperative can play a key role in addressing global challenges such as climate change, poverty, inequality and sustainable development as a result of the cooperatives' contribution in creating jobs, promoting social inclusion, providing essential services and developing local communities.

At the same time, the cooperative was recognized as an essential partner in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the UN, contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Thus, the International Year of Cooperatives reinforced the belief that the cooperative can constitute a powerful tool for building a more sustainable and equitable future through local actions and the active involvement of community members.

In sustainability, the change of the traditional paradigm of linear production and consumption through a more efficient, regenerative and sustainable system will occur by adopting the principles of the circular economy.

The circular economy represents a fundamental economic concept in sustainable development, with the objective of using resources efficiently and minimizing the impact on the environment through a continuous cycle of production, consumption and reuse. In this context, cooperatives can play a key role in promoting the circular economy and building sustainable communities.

For the first time, the definition of the circular economy was formulated by the *Ellen MacArthur Foundation*, which is a non-profit organization that actively promotes the transition to a circular economic model. Thus, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation defines the circular economy as a regenerative system in which resources are used and reused efficiently, in this way replacing the traditional model of linear production and consumption [7].

The circular economy is based on principles such as reducing, reusing, recycling and regenerating resources, which is in contrast to the traditional linear economy model where resources are extracted, used once, and disposed of.

By adopting the principles of the circular economy, cooperatives can contribute to the efficient use of resources and as a result to the minimization of the impact on the environment. For example, cooperatives can develop waste collection and recycling projects, promote the exchange of goods and services between members, or implement business models based on rental, repair and reuse activities [19]. For the cooperative to become a catalyst for sustainable development, it is essential that each member of the cooperative system changes their attitude and consumption behavior. Thus, members should be aware of the impact of their own choices and adopt responsible consumption practices.

By involving the community in the cooperative's activities, members and consumers can become more educated in terms of the circular economy principles and sustainable practices. In this regard, the cooperative can constitute a place where members and the community learn and adopt responsible consumption habits, such as reducing waste, purchasing sustainable products, or participating in resource exchange and redistribution schemes [5]. Thus, through training programs and awareness campaigns, the cooperative can promote behavioral changes and encourage active involvement in sustainable practices.

As a result of partnerships and collaborations with other organizations and enterprises engaged in circular economy activities, cooperatives can benefit from the expertise as well as necessary resources needed to develop a cooperative ecosystem that promotes sustainable practices and models [22].

As the principal entities within social economy, occupational policies, and inclusion initiatives, cooperatives hold a crucial position in actively participating and making significant contributions to the advancement of the circular economy, thanks to the following:

- the harmonious combination of economic and social activities for the benefit of its members and communities;
- the activity is based on principles, values and ethics that prioritize generally human values; omnipresence on the geographical dimension (local, regional, international);

- the diversity of economic activities, covering the most varied fields of activity (production, agriculture, trade, financial sector activities, pharmaceutical, renewable energy, etc.), as well as social ones (education, employment, concern for the community);
- diversity of types of cooperatives (producer cooperatives; consumer cooperatives; labor cooperatives; cooperatives with multiple stakeholders) etc. [17].

We believe that the implementation of circular economy principles within cooperatives would bring enormous potential for sustainable development. By adopting a continuous cycle of production, consumption and reuse, cooperatives have the capacity to diminish reliance on finite resources, mitigate environmental impact, and advocate for the efficient utilization of available resources. This can lead to cost savings, increased efficiency and generate competitive advantages for cooperatives.

The role of cooperatives in promoting circularity and sustainable development is recognized at international and European level, and there are global policies that support their development. The following documents can be considered as relevant examples of policies in this regard:

1. *The UN Resolution "Cooperatives in Social Development"* of 2021 emphasizes the great role of cooperatives in promoting a fair transition to the circular economy and recommends that governments support cooperatives as sustainable and successful enterprises that directly contribute to the creation of decent jobs, the eradication of poverty and hunger, education, social protection and the enhancement of the capacity of all types of cooperatives [24].
2. Through the *Resolution "Promoting the social and solidarity economy for sustainable development"* of 2023, the UN encourages member states to promote and implement national, local and regional strategies, policies and programs to support and strengthen the social and solidarity economy (SSE), in which cooperatives are a key actor [25].
3. *A new Circular Economy Action Plan for a cleaner and more competitive Europe* (2020) is an important initiative announced by the European Commission, which aims to promote sustainable consumption, optimize the value chains of key products and prevent waste throughout the life cycle product life. The plan aims to preserve the resources used in the EU economy for as long as possible [8].
4. The European Commission, through *"Building an economy that works for people: an action plan for the social economy"* (2021), provides a framework until 2030 to support the development of the social economy by means of cooperatives. Through this support framework, cooperatives can benefit from assistance and resources to develop and implement circular practices and strengthen their role in promoting a more sustainable and social economy [9].
5. The communiqué entitled *"Making the most of the social economy's contribution to the circular economy"*, published by the EU and the OECD in 2022, recognizes that the social economy has played a pioneering role in the adoption of circular practices and sustainable business models of over the decades. Thus, decision-makers are recommended to support cooperatives and other social economy entities that are active in adopting the circular economy principles, by encouraging innovation, facilitating access to finance, conducting public procurement from social economy entities,

promoting collaboration between social economy organizations, public actors and businesses traditional, as well as supporting the increase in the professional qualification of employees [20].

Thus, analyzing the policy documents, we observe that the role of cooperatives in promoting the circular economy is recognized and appreciated at the European level.

We strongly believe that by adopting business models based on circular principles, cooperatives can contribute to maintaining the value of products and materials for as long as possible, thus reducing the amount of waste generated. This transition to the circular economy will bring many benefits for citizens and will improve the quality of life.

For example, through the waste collection and recycling initiatives, cooperatives could contribute to waste prevention and efficient resource management. The development of business models based on rental, repair and reuse will result in life extension of products and overconsumption reduction.

Also, by promoting the purchase of sustainable products and participating in resource exchange and redistribution schemes, cooperatives can encourage responsible consumption habits. This can be achieved through educational and awareness campaigns of the impact that consumer choices have on the environment and society.

Thus, cooperatives can promote the purchase of sustainable products, which are manufactured with recycled or renewable materials and have a low impact on the environment during their life cycle. Through these practices, cooperatives can encourage members and the community to adopt responsible consumption oriented towards more durable and sustainable products.

Cooperatives can also facilitate participation in resource exchange and redistribution schemes. Arguing the above, we believe that by implementing the principles of the circular economy, cooperatives will contribute to the creation of a more sustainable and efficient economy through *various strategies and actions*, such as:

- Cooperatives can encourage members to promote durable products that have a long-life cycle and which require fewer resources for their manufacturing.
- Resource sharing among members such as vehicles, equipment, workspaces. This will result in the reduction of individual consumption and will optimize the use of the existing resources.
- Cooperatives can develop programs to collect and recycle products and materials so that they can be reused or transformed into new products. Also, in order to facilitate the exchange of goods between members, repair centers could be organized.
- Cooperatives can offer rental or leasing services for members instead of purchasing their own goods.

Therefore, through the implementation of these principles and strategies, cooperatives have the potential to generate additional benefits for their members, the community, and the environment. And the development of a cooperative business model based on the principles of the circular economy will not only contribute to the resilience of the cooperatives' sector, but will also foster the advancement of a more inclusive and environmentally friendly economy across society.

In arguing of the above mentioned, relevant are the results of a study from Quebec in the *TIESS Économie sociale et économie circulaire research project*, which investigated the

interconnections of the circular economy and the social economy. This study examined various organizations within the social economy in form of associations, cooperatives, mutual societies, social enterprises, etc. These results presented important findings in supporting the arguments presented above. [27].

This study investigates the relation between cooperatives and the circular economy, analyzing preferred strategies and business models, as well as cooperative needs in relation to the circular economy. By gaining insights into these aspects, it enables the development of an action plan framework to support cooperatives in their engagement to promote circular economy principles. By examining 26 social enterprises in Quebec, the project successfully identified eight distinct business models employed by social enterprises in the circular economy [27].

These models include developing, manufacturing and selling products made from reclaimed materials, coordinating the sharing of tools and products within a community, sorting and packaging clothes, furniture and other goods for resale, providing waste management services to put them back together available through sale or donation, repairing products to extend their life, recovering materials considered "waste" to transform them into new products, providing industrial services by creating new products from waste, and providing citizens with access to tools and training to repair and manufacture products in a workshop.

Although the TIESS project did not specifically explore business models in relation to cooperatives and the circular economy, a survey conducted by CQCM of cooperative federations in Quebec revealed a latent interest among them in integrating the circular economy into their future action plans. It was found that cooperatives can pursue multiple strategies and business models, and the level of adoption of these strategies and models varies among preliminary, pilot, and well-established cooperatives.

There is significant potential for cooperatives to play an important role in promoting the circular economy. By leveraging existing resources, cooperatives can help reduce waste and increase sustainability, while generating positive social and economic impact in their communities. However, cooperatives face obstacles such as lack of financial and human resources, and the involvement of members is essential to move towards the circular economy.

The model proposed by the authors within the TIESS project is presented in figure 1.

In fact, there is mutual integration between circular business models and cooperative business models [11]. Cooperative models are intrinsically linked to the principles of the social and sustainable economy, which align perfectly with the principles of the circular economy.

Cooperatives already have a social and community orientation, and adopting circular business models allows them to become even more economically and environmentally sustainable. Through practices such as recycling, reusing, sharing and repairing, cooperatives can actively contribute to reducing waste and conserving resources, while promoting the development of local communities.

At the same time, circular business models can benefit from the involvement of cooperatives, as they bring with them expertise in democratic governance, active member participation and accountability to the community. Cooperatives can help build a more democratic and

inclusive circular economy, where decisions are made collectively and benefits are shared fairly.

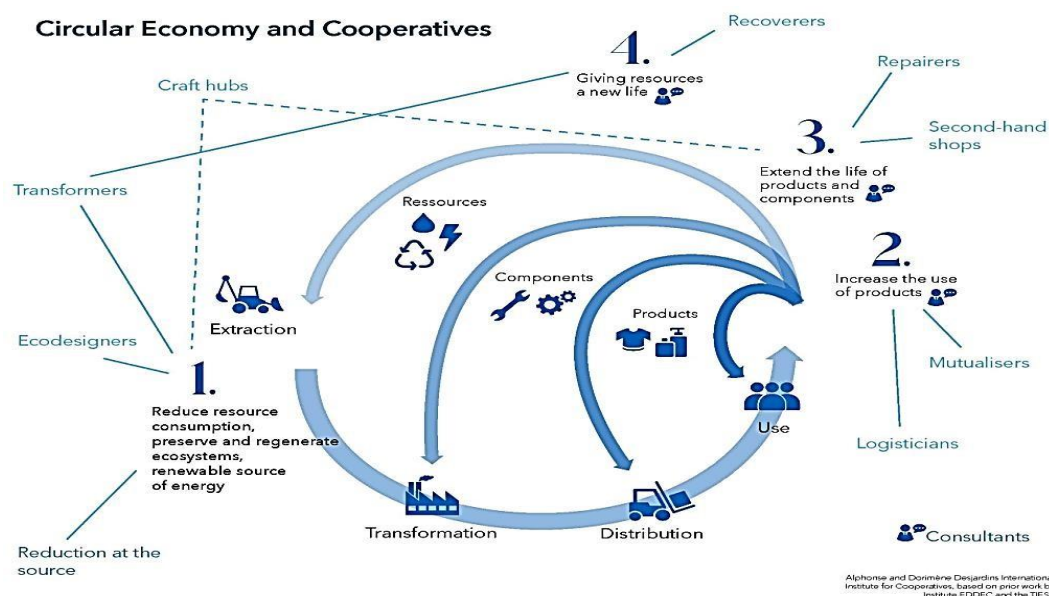


Figure 1. Circular Economy and business models of cooperatives

Source: [27]

By integrating circular business models and cooperative business models, a strong synergy can be achieved where economic, social and ecological benefits complement each other. Cooperatives can add value to the circular economy through active member involvement, local connections and commitment to sustainability. At the same time, circular business models can support the growth and development of cooperatives by generating sustainable business opportunities and creating partnerships with other entities in the circular sector.

Thus, the integration of circular business models and cooperative business models can lead to a powerful combination where the principles of the social and sustainable economy merge with the objectives of the circular economy, contributing to building a more sustainable, inclusive and prosperous society.

The implementation of circular economy principles in cooperatives has been carried out in various countries around the world and has had significant results in promoting sustainable development and sustainable business. Here are some relevant examples:

Coopérative Pointcarré in Belgium has implemented a circular business model in fashion. They collect used clothes, repair and refurbish them, then offer them for sale in their own shop. This model promotes the sustainable use of clothes and reduces waste in the textile industry [2].

Cooperativa Integral Catalana in Spain has as its main objective the construction of an alternative and sustainable economy. They implement recycling, composting and resource reuse practices to create a more sustainable and resilient community. Some examples of activities carried out by CIC are [3]:

- ♣ Recycling: CIC facilitates the collection and recycling of various types of waste, including paper, glass, plastic and metal. These materials are processed responsibly

and reintroduced into the value chain, thus reducing the need to extract new resources and minimizing the impact on the environment.

- ♣ Composting: The cooperative promotes composting practices among the community. This involves collecting organic waste, such as vegetable and fruit scraps, and then turning it into high-quality compost. The compost obtained is later used to fertilize gardens and agricultural land, thus replacing chemical fertilizers and contributing to the creation of a sustainable cycle of resources.
- ♣ Reuse: CIC promotes the reuse and repair of products to extend their life. They encourage the community to donate used items and furniture, which they refurbish and put back into circulation. This reduces the amount of waste generated and promotes the principle of circularity, where resources are used efficiently and sustainably.

Les Amis de la Terre - a French cooperative focused on promoting the circular economy in the construction sector. They develop energy renovation projects for buildings, using recycled and sustainable materials to reduce energy consumption and minimize environmental impact [4].

The Food Assembly - a cooperative platform present in several European countries, including Belgium, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which facilitates direct sales between local producers and consumers. This promotes local consumption and the reduction of packaging and transport associated with conventional supply chains [23].

These examples demonstrate that different case studies of cooperatives were able to successfully implement circular economy principles in different sectors and industries.

Figure 2 presents a model (elaborated by us) that outlines the integration of sustainable practices within cooperatives. Thus, *the implementation of sustainable activities within the cooperative is possible to be achieved through the following measures:*

- a) To mitigate the environmental impact, cooperatives should conduct a comprehensive estimation of their activities in terms of waste management, efficient resource consumption, greenhouse gas emissions.
- b) One of the most important measures for a cooperative is the transition to renewable energy sources. For example, the installation of solar panels or wind turbines on buildings can reduce dependence on polluting energy sources and reduce the carbon footprint.
- c) The cooperative should encourage members to use efficiently energy. This may involve installing more energy-efficient equipment and energy-saving practices.
- d) The cooperative should implement an effective waste management system that would promote recycling and composting. This should involve the creation of the separate waste collection infrastructure - separate containers for different types of waste. Also, an important aspect is educating members to recycle and separately collect waste.
- e) It is recommended for the cooperative to encourage its members to use sustainable means of transport, such as bicycles or public transport through carpooling or ride-sharing programs.
- f) The cooperative can support local producers and farmers who practice sustainable agriculture. For this, the organization of local producer fairs is encouraged, as well as selling local products in cooperative stores.

- g) Cooperatives should collaborate with various organizations and institutions to develop and implement sustainable initiatives. This may result in partnerships with non-governmental organizations, local authorities, universities or other cooperatives that share the same sustainability goals.
- h) Cooperatives have a unique opportunity to contribute to the collection of secondary raw materials from the population due to their close ties and engagement with local communities. By expanding their cooperative networks, outreach efforts, and member participation, cooperatives can establish effective systems for collecting, recycling, and repurposing secondary raw materials, thus promoting sustainability and resource conservation.

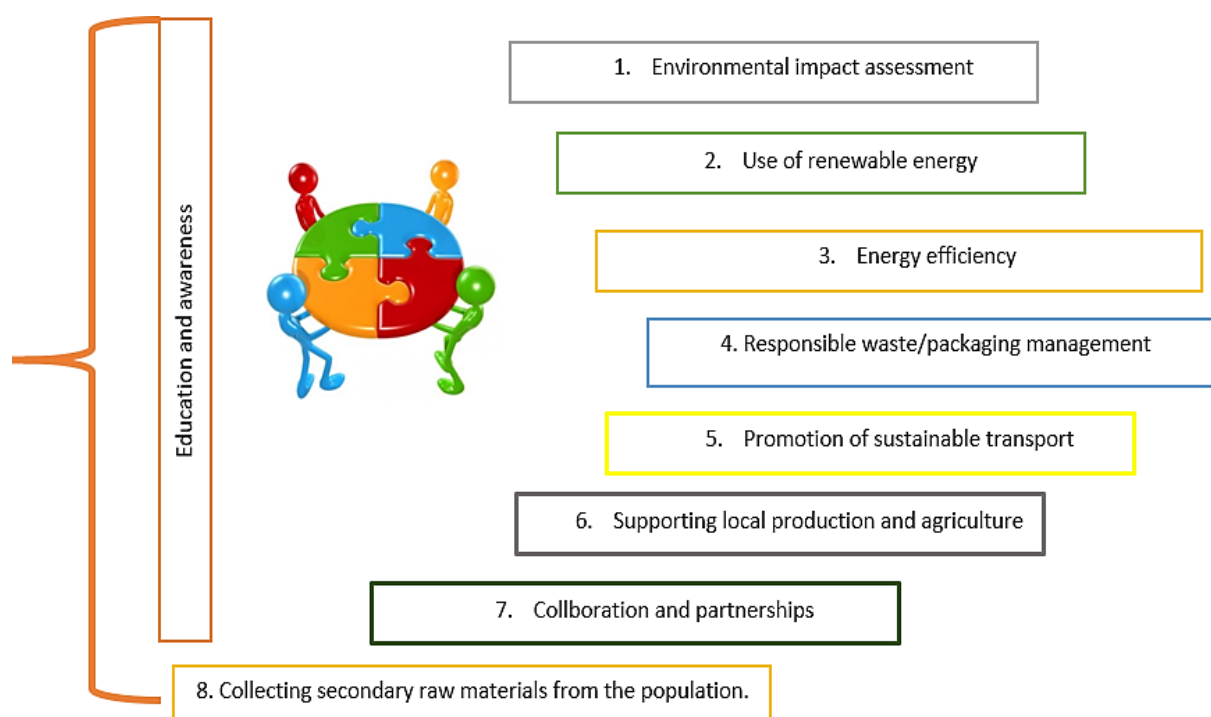


Figure 2. Framework for Implementing Sustainable Practices in Cooperatives

Source: elaborated by authors

A special role is given to education and awareness measures, because through education and awareness, cooperative members can better understand the impact of their actions on the environment. Cooperative members should be aware of the benefits that sustainable activities bring, not only to the environment, but also to the community and the local economy. These benefits may include reducing energy costs, improving public image and attracting new customers interested in sustainability.

Cooperatives can organize training sessions and workshops to teach members sustainable techniques and practices. These may include training in energy efficiency, waste management practices, organic farming techniques, or other relevant skills. The awareness campaigns among members of community may include the distribution of informative materials, the organization of themed events or interactive activities that draw attention to environmental and sustainability issues. These measures can help create a more sustainable cooperative that reduces environmental impact and promotes a more sustainable way of life.

Their implementation requires commitment and involvement from cooperative members, but can bring long-term benefits, both for the environment and the local community.

5. Conclusions

Cooperatives play a vital role in promoting the circular economy by implementing sustainable practices, fostering innovation and design for longer product life cycles, engaging members and communities in circular practices, and creating sustainable jobs. These contributions are crucial in transitioning towards a more sustainable economic model that prioritizes resource efficiency, waste reduction, and environmental impact minimization.

Cooperatives have the potential to drive systemic change through policy advocacy and collaboration with all major stakeholders – economic operators, non-government associations, academia, consumer groups, policymakers, and consumers themselves. By actively supporting and advocating for favorable regulations and policies that incentivize circular practices, cooperatives can create an enabling environment for the broader adoption of circular economy principles across sectors.

Therefore, cooperatives have the potential to pioneer the adoption and promotion of circular economy principles, particularly in countries that have demonstrated a commitment to advancing sustainability.

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Rezumat

Articolul investighează modul în care cooperativa și economia circulară se completează reciproc, evidențiind relevanța lor în construirea unui viitor sustenabil. Prin integrarea principiilor economiei circulare în cooperative, se promovează gestionarea durabilă a resurselor și oportunități de dezvoltare. Cooperativele, datorită naturii lor colaborative și concentrării pe interesele membrilor, oferă un cadru ideal pentru implementarea practicilor economiei circulare. Ele promovează colectarea eficientă a resurselor, reutilizarea și reciclarea acestora, reducând impactul asupra mediului și dependența de resurse finite. Colaborarea între membrii cooperativelor, comunitățile locale și alte părți interesate facilitează schimbul de cunoștințe și partajarea resurselor, vitale pentru implementarea economiei circulare. Articolul evidențiază, de asemenea, aspectele cheie ale acestui abordări colaborative. Colaborarea dintre membrii cooperativelor, comunitatea locală și alte entități interesate contribuie la schimbul de cunoștințe, experiențe și resurse necesare pentru implementarea economiei circulare. Prin unirea forțelor, acești participanți cheie pot dezvolta inițiative și proiecte inovatoare care aduc beneficii economice, sociale și de mediu. În cele din urmă, autorii subliniază

importanța promovării și sprijinirii cooperativelor în cadrul modelului de economie circulară. Prin promovarea colaborării și crearea unui mediu favorabil dezvoltării cooperativelor orientate spre economia circulară, se poate construi un viitor sustenabil, în care resursele sunt gestionate eficient, deșeurile sunt minimizate și comunitățile se dezvoltă într-un mod sustenabil.

Cuvinte-cheie: cooperativă, economie circulară, sustenabilitate, Obiectivele de Dezvoltare Durabilă, reciclare, provocări de mediu

Аннотация

В статье исследуется, как кооперативы и экономика замкнутого цикла дополняют друг друга, подчеркивая их значение в построении устойчивого будущего. Интегрируя принципы экономики замкнутого цикла в кооперативы, поощряется устойчивое управление ресурсами и возможности для развития. Кооперативы и их совместный характер и ориентация на интересы участников обеспечивают идеальную основу для внедрения экономики замкнутого цикла в практике. Они способствуют эффективному сбору, повторному использованию и переработке ресурсов, уменьшая воздействие на окружающую среду и зависимость от ограниченных ресурсов. Сотрудничество между членами кооперативов, местными сообществами и другими заинтересованными сторонами способствует обмену знаниями и совместному использованию ресурсов, что жизненно важно для внедрения экономики замкнутого цикла. В статье также освещаются ключевые аспекты такого совместного подхода. Сотрудничество между членами кооперативов, местным сообществом и других заинтересованных лиц способствует обмену знаниями, опытом и ресурсами, необходимыми для внедрения экономики замкнутого цикла. Объединив усилия, эти ключевые участники могут разрабатывать инновационные инициативы и проекты, которые приносят экономические, социальные и экологические выгоды. Наконец, авторы подчеркивают важность продвижения и поддержки кооперативов в рамках модели экономики замкнутого цикла. К продвижению сотрудничества и созданию благоприятных условий для развития экономики замкнутого цикла кооперативов, можно построить устойчивое будущее, где ресурсы управляются эффективно, отходы сводятся к минимуму, и сообщества развиваются устойчивым образом.

Ключевые слова: кооперативы, экономика замкнутого цикла, устойчивость, Цели устойчивого развития, переработка, экологические проблемы

Received 12.05.2023

Accepted 26.06.2023

Published 30.06.2023