

# STRATEGIC PLAN OF ICA ROAP 2000-2004



**International Co-operative Alliance**  
Regional Office for Asia & the Pacific  
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# STRATEGIC PLAN OF ICA ROAP 2000-2004

ICA ROAP has embarked on a more proactive planning process to renew its focus on members. In doing so, it can provide better services to members and, in turn, generate adequate resources (income) to make its operations more productive and sustainable.

## **Preamble**

The "ICA Organizational Review" constitutes the basis for the formulation of the ICA Strategic Plan, held in Singapore from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> June 1999. The Organizational Review components are:

- I. Promote the co-operative values, identity and image, and help to protect co-operatives by influencing public policy and by demonstrating the co-operative difference in the market.*
- II. Support and facilitate the development of co-operatives as efficient businesses in all countries.*
- III. Assist and support the sectoral organisations within the ICA in their efforts to provide useful business services to their members, and promote mutually-beneficial collaboration between sectors.*
- IV. Maintain strong Regional Offices, working with and supported by and collaborating closely with Head Office, which are the focal points for delivering tailor-made services to ICA members in the regions.*

- V. *Be led by the global Board which policies provide strategic guidance and coordinates the policy development of the entire ICA family of organisations.*
- VI. *Represent in its membership all co-operative movements and sectors which conform to the ICA's Co-operative Identity Statement.*
- VII. *Be a "learning organisation" which facilitates and supports the development and exchange of information about best co-operative practices, innovative activities, and new forms of co-operative development.*
- VIII. *Be a centre of information and expertise for and about co-operatives around the world.*
- IX. *Play a leading role in civil society by influencing major global issues.*
- X. *Be supported by adequate resources to achieve its purpose.*

The following environmental scan must be weighed against the organizational review to put the ICA ROAP on the map of Asian realities before putting the organization on a firmer path to sustainability.

## **Socio-Economic Crisis**

The currency crisis that started in Southeast Asia in July 1997 has degenerated into a full-blown economic and social crisis across Asia. The early prognosis of early recovery has proven to be too optimistic, with most of the so-called "tiger economies" experiencing contraction in economic output and hopes for early recovery still doubtful. In fact, the crisis has already started to spread across the globe, raising the specter of global recession and prolonged crisis for most of Asia. This is especially so if the faltering Japanese economy, the main engine of growth for Asia, takes time or fails to recover.

The structural reforms pursued by countries to restore macro economic health and the corporate restructuring adopted by the private sector to survive, in the meantime, has palpable impact on household economies - rising unemployment, lower standards of living, and higher incidence of poverty. These are real problems affecting a

growing number of the population. For the middle-income population who became the product of East Asia's booming economies over the last decade, the painful adjustment has come not only from loss of jobs but also from loss of assets. For the poor, whose ranks have swelled because of the crisis, the situation has driven them further down the ladder of development. They are taking refuge in the underground economy or otherwise in the rural economy, which is still largely characterized by low agricultural productivity and low income potential. If the crisis drags on for some more years, its long-term impact could be debilitating. For instance, the drop in the number of people accessing education or even the opportunities for higher learning could slow down economic development even further.

Economic reforms being implemented by different governments, starting with those designed to strengthen the financial system, are calculated to restore economic growth. When economic recovery will actually happen is subject to much debate, premised for the most part on macro economic assumptions. In the meantime, the depth of the crisis has heightened the realization that to sustain economic development over the long-term, reforms in the social and political spheres have to take place as well. Indeed, the increasing vulnerability of political structures can be expected to open up democratic space in many countries. In line with this, the importance of civil society and the organized structures that invigorate it will increasingly be recognized.

Regardless of how the present crisis unfolds, the situation already presents a real opportunity for co-operatives to demonstrate their value to society. This is an opportunity not only to expand their reach, their business and related activities, but also to explore new areas of service to society at large. If co-operatives can be considered as social innovation, the time is ripe for expanding the scope of such credential.

## **Diversity of Asian Countries**

Of course, the impact of the present crisis particularly on the general population varies from one country to another. This has to do with the different levels of economic development of these countries as well as the relative strength of the social and political structures in place. Economies with better macro economic fundamentals are generally

expected to recover from the crisis faster. So too are those countries that are enjoying political stability.

The issue of globalization was for sometime largely taken for granted as an inevitable part of modern economy. The crisis, however, has allowed the doubtful voices to argue for regulation in the market, including some form of control in financial flows across the world. This issue will dominate economic debate for sometime to come. In the meantime, individual countries will position themselves in a spectrum of policy options, ranging from relatively open market environment to relatively closed regulatory regimes.

Co-operatives in different countries, therefore, will be facing different challenges; they will have to make different adjustments in response to the policy options adopted by their respective governments. Generally, however, there will be openness by various governments to the co-operative option as they endeavour to mobilize more involvement from the citizenry and indigenous solutions to problems.

## **Diversity of Co-operatives**

In a large number of countries of the Region co-operatives have followed the traditional patterns of growth without attempting any diversification in their business activities. As a result credit co-operatives confined themselves to credit business and single purpose co-operatives only doing the limited range of business.

With the forces of open market economy and aggressive designs of private enterprises, competition has become intense. Members have found many other alternatives to satisfy their needs. Co-operatives following the narrower paths have begun to find it hard to survive. In some countries, as a result of government policies, certain types of co-operatives were not able to either establish themselves or to expand their operations e.g., consumer co-operatives in Indonesia. Due also to traditional attitudes and market environments consumer co-operatives did not flourish in countries like India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh while they were able to establish themselves in Japan, Korea, Singapore and Malaysia.

Co-operatives generally have been co-operative-centred rather being member-centred. In order to enlist the support and participation of their members, co-operatives have to diversify their activities to the

extent that members expect their co-operatives to become multi-functional service providers. Agricultural co-operatives of Japan are a case in point where the range of their services are from the cradle to the grave. Multipurpose co-operatives in some of the SAARC countries have begun to broaden the spectrum of their services. This tendency towards diversification is needed to maintain a constant interaction with the members.

## **Role of State**

Deep involvement of the State in the development of co-operatives has produced mixed results in their growth pattern. While on the one hand, it has succeeded in bringing out multi-dimensional co-operative growth and diversification, it has obstructed the process of emergence of member-based and controlled co-operatives imbued with co-operative values. Implementation of economic reforms, de-emphasizing an active involvement of state in economic activities, has placed co-operatives in a situation of their transition from a state sponsored to member driven and professionally managed competitive economic system. The present environment characterized by absence of well defined state policy on co-operative development in the face of clear policy perception about the role of private and public sectors and NGOs and slow paced co-operative legal reforms has made the situation further complicated. This underscores the importance of a State Policy which redefines the Government's role and commitment to respect autonomy of co-operatives by creating and nourishing a conducive legal, economic and administrative environment. In other words, the State should emerge as an enabler and catalyst to promote co-operatives. Its relationship with co-operatives would be based on mutuality of interest and partnership.

## **Role of Multinational Corporations**

The present day world witnesses a global economy with free flow of capital, goods, technology and services. The multinational corporations with their inherent strengths in the spheres of technology, resources and management techniques; and with commanding heights in mass production and delivery of goods and services, have acquired significant leverages to influence the market. The credo of these corporations is competition and profitability. In such a situation



no enterprise can remain unaffected from multinationals. Co-operatives, too, would face tough competition from these institutions. There is every possibility of entry of multinationals in the traditional areas of economic activities where co-operatives have strengths, such as, agro-processing, distribution of consumer articles, financial services, etc. In the predominantly agricultural countries the multinationals will target at rural markets which constitute the principal membership and customer base of co-operatives. There are hardly a very few co-operatives, which have adequate preparedness to meet this challenge of emerging competition from multinationals. Their dependence on protection of Government, low level of technology, and lack of managerial capabilities, quality control and market strategy compounded with inadequate capital base continue to inhibit their growth as competitive enterprises in a free economy. The co-operatives, therefore, have no other option but to formulate and implement a proactive strategy, not only to preserve and protect the patronage of their existing clientele but also to expand and widen it further by offering new products and services. They may also consider to enter into strategic business alliances with multinationals for obtaining advantages of technology and resources.

## **Co-operatives Running the Sick Companies**

Intense competition in the market has resulted into closure of a number of uneconomic and non-viable companies and undertakings in some countries. Under such circumstances employees of these institutions have been the big sufferers. This has also aggravated the problem of unemployment. Co-operatives have offered workable solutions to meet such situations. The employees of sick companies have taken initiative to form their co-operatives to run these companies. They have mobilized capital by investing their pension and provident funds. Notable among these are co-operatives in Korea and India. These examples show that while on the one hand competitive market may drive many a businesses out of economic stream, it may also open up opportunity for growth and development of new generation workers' co-operatives, which may provide a positive direction to market to solve the problems of unemployment. However, this requires timely and positive response from co-operative leadership.

## Cultural Impact

Co-operatives reflect the state of mind and culture of human society. In general terms these are also perceived as institutions of the poor and the disadvantaged, which might be true to some extent. Their vision thus tends to be narrow or limited following the traditions of the majority group of the society. Their methods are traditional and the level of business operation is restricted. With the influx of modern electronic media and technology and the range of services being provided by multinationals and other private enterprises, co-operative way of doing business has also undergone some change. Many traditional co-operatives have gone in for computers and modern office and business management, staff training has been introduced, general upkeep of premises has improved, better negotiations based on information sharing has been accepted and diversified business operations have been undertaken.

The Asia-Pacific region offers a variety of alternatives because of diversity in cultures, social attitudes, religions and work methods. The society is moving fast from rice alone to hamburgers and fast food behaviour. Where drinking milk was considered 'silly', the production and consumption of milk has increased considerably. Co-operative offers a strong platform for the society to change and adapt to the changing environment.

## Conditions for Change

The new era of globalization, and the inevitable need for ICT (Information and Communication Technology) made it imperative that ICA ROAP has to embark on a new path if it hopes to carry out its mission and achieve its goals.

In fact, the alternative is losing the ground ICA ROAP may already have gained and the advantages that co-operative membership brings. A few objective conditions point to the need for change as we enter the new millenium:

- *Age of Information.* We are already living in the Age of Information. Products, services and technology that are created are built on the power of information. In the coming millenium, it is predicted that e-commerce will constitute more than half of all

business transactions in the world. Co-operatives, big and small, will be part of this electronic world, as ICA *member organisations* gain more access to information and their expectations are dictated by the power that such access brings. Higher value-added will be ascribed to those products and services that are information-based or related.

- *Globalization.* Globalization is driving consolidations, acquisitions, mergers and strategic alliances in the business world. This is creating pressure on big co-operatives to follow the trend – and to re-examine their orientation to the community and their relationship with members.
- *Changing context of development.* In the 70's and the 80's, the focus of development was on the deprivation of people and the need to redirect resources to the needy and economically disadvantaged. Development aid was seen as a means of transferring resources from the rich to the poor, from north to south. The decade of the 90's, however, has seen a reassessment of this thinking, thanks to the many failures attributed to development aid and the increasing budget deficits in donor countries.

## Defining Organizational Change

These conditions have fundamental implications on the way ICA ROAP defines its functions and relates to its membership. They call for a re-orientation and new strategies for dealing with the opportunities as well as threats that accompany the changing environment.

First, the “information revolution” that is taking place and the increasingly global orientation of members are creating new needs and expectations. In an expanding and changing world, members will be looking for an “ideological meeting point.” This means some key institution or event where they can seek a reaffirmation of their own identity and of their values. ICA ROAP is already trying to serve this end by bringing regularly cooperators together. But the value that members will give to this event will be predicated more on their ideological expectations.

Second, members will be seeking for global information on their markets. This is now available in databases of research and business institutions. The commercial value of such information is expected to increase more and more as there will be greater demand from the

market and more database institutions cash in on the opportunity. ICA ROAP can either cash in on this opportunity or lose it by default to private institutions. If it cashes in, not only will it have provided a service that will add value to members; it will also have developed an important source of revenue.

Finally, all this means that there is tremendous potential that can be realized by refocusing on members and their future needs and expectations. This also entails a funding and programming strategy that moves away from old-fashioned development aid to new development paradigms that empowers our members to reach new heights of distinctions. ICA ROAP will have to re-orient its institutional strategies towards increasing more member-content in its programming and to source investment funds from members first and foremost, and alternatively from friendly sources.

## **ICA ROAP Work Plan (2000-2004)**

The Planning Session discussed and approved the following goal, outputs, inputs and activities for the period 2000 to 2005. The organisational structure approved by the meeting is enclosed herewith.

### **Goal**

By 2005, ICA ROAP will become a "Center of Co-operative Excellence" recognized and sought after by co-operatives and other organizations.

### **Key Result Areas**

- a. Co-operative Identity and Image;
- b. Policy Development and Legislation;
- c. Leadership and (Value-Based) Professional Management;
- d. International Co-operative Trade Network (ICTN);
- e. Gender Mainstreaming;
- f. Information, Communication and Technology (ICT); and
- g. Specialisation and Integration (sectoral priorities of key development partners such as Agriculture, Consumers, Youth, Health, Financial Services, Housing, Tourism).

# Outputs

- a.1 Co-operatives in the region ICIS-based and driven.
- a.2 Government and Public recognize the coop difference.
- b. Co-operative Policies and Legislation in accordance with ICIS across the region.
- c. More "Co-operative Professionals".
- d. Effective Inter-Coop Business Linkages established and consolidated.
- e. Equal Participation is an established practice in Co-operatives and ICA.
- f. Reliable Data Base and Information System established and used by co-operatives and non-co-operatives.
- g. New Generation Co-operatives established.

# Inputs

*Output: a.1 Co-operatives in the region ICIS-based and driven.*  
*a.2 Government and Public recognize the coop difference.*

- Adopt and implement co-operative social audit with active involvement of members.
- Publish success stories and other co-operative information.
- Formulate and implement an effective communication strategy.

*Output: b. Co-operative Policies and Legislation in accordance with ICIS across the region.*

- Policy and legislation workshops, consultations and ministerial conferences.
- National studies to monitor implementation.
- Publication of results.

*Output: c. More "Co-operative Professionals".*

- Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and Leaders workshops.
- Create tools for operationalising value-based management (e.g. CD-Rom).
- Networking with academic and professional institutions.

*Output: d. Effective Inter-Coop Business Linkages established and consolidated.*

- Facilitate inter-sectoral fora (clustering).
- Promotion and facilitation of business linkages and joint ventures.
- Publication.

*Output: e. Equal Participation is an established practice in Co-operatives and ICA.*

- Operationalise the Manual on Women in Decision-Making.
- Increase effectiveness of Women's Forum and Women's Committee.
- Operationalise recommendations.

*Output: f. Reliable Data Base and Information System established and used by co-operatives and non-co-operatives.*

- Workshops on information systems and procedures among data-based experts in Mos.
- Computerisation of data base.
- Modernisation of ICA ROAP library.
- Marketing of co-operative ICT products.

*Output: g. New Generation Co-operatives established.*

- Facilitate workshops, services, and exchanges.
- Information and publication of best practices and innovations.

***Attachment: Detailed ICA ROAP Work Plan for the Year 2000.***

# ICA ROAP WORK PLAN FOR THE YEAR 2000

## KEY RESULT AREA : COOPERATIVE IDENTITY AND IMAGE

Output	Inputs (Activities)	Time Frame
Adoption & Implementation of Coop Social Audit.	Collect information about social audit tools from selected member organisations.	April-June
	Formulation of broad guidelines for social audit.	July-October
	Circulating the guidelines to Standing Committee members for review and adoption.	Nov.-December
Implementation of ICIS (ICA Coop Identity Statement).	Appointment of consultants to document best practices and case studies in three coop sectors (agriculture, finance and consumers).	April-May
Improved Regional Information Network.	Publish quarterly Aspacon, Coop Dialogue, Annual Report, Booklets/Brochures and production of CDs and other materials.	Jan-December
	Publish Newsletters at the ICA Regional Assembly and other events.	June

**KEY RESULT AREA : POLICY DEVELOPMENT & LEGISLATION**

<b>Output</b>	<b>Inputs (Activities)</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
<p>Coop Policies and Legislation in accordance with ICIS Across the Region.</p>	<p>Second Critical Study on Coop Law and Policy in selected countries.</p>	
	<p>Formulation of Terms of Reference and Questionnaire.</p>	<p>March-April</p>
	<p>Identification and appointment of national consultants (13).</p>	<p>May</p>
	<p>Circulation of questionnaire to national consultants.</p>	<p>June</p>
	<p>Conduct of field studies and discussions on draft report of National Workshop including travel costs.</p>	<p>July-October</p>
	<p>Submission of final reports of national consultants to ICA ROAP.</p>	<p>October</p>
	<p>Scrutiny and finalisation by ICA ROAP (consultancy).</p>	<p>November</p>
	<p>Printing and publication.</p>	<p>December</p>
<p>Cooperative Think Tank Consortium, in Australia.</p>	<p>2nd week of November</p>	



Output	Inputs (Activities)	Time Frame
To seek Agreement on Appropriate Dimension to the enactment of new ILO Recommendation No.127; Collaboration between Trade Unions and Cooperatives; and between ICA ROAP and ICFTU.	Regional Workshop on Trade Unions and Cooperatives.	Oct - November
	Submitting proposal to ICFTU/ILO.	April
	Identification of resource persons.	May
	Identification of workshop venue.	May
	Conduct of case studies.	June
	Publication of report.	December

**KEY RESULT AREA : LEADERSHIP AND VALUE-BASED  
PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT**

Output	Inputs (Activities)	Time Frame
<p>More Cooperative Professionals within the Cooperative System in the Region.</p>	Finalise program of CEO workshop with resource persons.	March
	Finalise brochure and information materials on CEO workshop.	April
	Send invitations to CEOs and second in command.	May
	Facilitate CEO workshop.	September
	Follow-up results of CEO workshop.	December
<p>Coop Trainers Accredited by ISO.</p>	Assist CLT in organising an ISO 9000 training for coop trainers of national cooperative organisations.	Jan-March
	Participate in the ISO 9000 training in Bangkok.	August
	Support CLT in follow-up of the training.	Nov-December
<p>Inter-Cooperative Tourism Seminar Organised.</p>	Coordinate preparation of seminar at ANGKASA.	Jan-March
	Participate in the Inter-Coop Tourism Seminar in Malacca.	12-14 April.

Output	Inputs (Activities)	Time Frame
HRD Committee and Training Organised.	Finalise IT seminar with resource persons. Organise HRD Committee meeting and IT seminar in Bangkok. Follow-up action plan from seminar.	January 24-26 Feb. June-December
Coop movements of the region persuaded to implement the recommendations of the VBPM seminar held in Pune; Training modules on VBPM in coops formulated.	Appointment of consultants (3) from India and Thailand. Drafting of Training Modules. Organisation of national workshop of cooperative trainers to test the modules. Finalisation of modules.	April April-June July August
More Cooperative Professionals.	Professional Training of Managers at IFFCO. 14th ICA/Japan Training Course on Strengthening Management of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia. 1st Part of the Training Course in India including Field Visits in Thailand. 2nd Part of the Training Course at IDACA.	October 12th Nov.1999 to 22nd April 2000. 2nd January - 29th February. 1st March - 22nd April.

**KEY RESULT AREA : INTERNATIONAL COOP TRADE NETWORK**

Output	Inputs (Activities)	Time Frame
Effective Inter-Coop Business Linkages Established.	Gather information from cooperatives and non-cooperatives interested in trade.	Jan-June.
	Post information in ICA ROAP Website.	Jan-June.
	Monitor "message box" for trade opportunities.	Jan-December.
	Monitor/facilitate trade deals.	Jan-December.

**KEY RESULT AREA : INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION  
TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

Output	Inputs (Activities)	Time Frame
Establishment of Data Base and Library Information Centre	Design Website with NTUC Income.	January
	Market Website products/services (HRD Directory/Trade Directory).	Jan-March
	Expand products/services (Coop Forum/ Directory/Advertisements).	July-September
	Regional workshop on Data Base for selected countries.	3-7 April
	Upgradation of ROAP library.	Continuing.
	Hire one professional for hardware/ software support + equipment.	Jan-December

**KEY RESULT AREA : GENDER MAINSTREAMING**

<b>Output</b>	<b>Inputs (Activities)</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
<p>Equal participation is an Established Practice in Cooperatives and ICA.</p>	<p>To hold a validation workshop to finalise the leadership development manual.</p> <p>To publish the Manual and send it to Mos.</p> <p>To support a pilot project to test the Manual at least in one country.</p> <p>To organise national women's forum in Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Thailand, Korea, China.</p> <p>Organise Women's Forum in connection with the ICA Regional Assembly.</p> <p>Organise ICA ROAP Women's Committee Meeting.</p> <p>To have a meeting with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Women's Committee.</p> <p>Organise a regional conference on Gender in collaboration with ACCU and AWCF.</p> <p>Publish the report of Women's Forum.</p> <p>Make ICA ROAP Women's Committee data-base on web site.</p>	<p>May</p> <p>March/April</p> <p>Jan-December</p> <p>Jan-December.</p> <p>June</p> <p>June</p> <p>October</p> <p>March</p> <p>October</p> <p>Jan-December.</p>
<p>More Women Motivators in Rural Coops.</p>	<p>10th Training Course for Rural Women Leaders of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia.</p>	<p>August-Sept.</p>

**KEY RESULT AREA : SPECIALISATION AND INTEGRATION**

Output	Inputs (Activities)	Time Frame
Consumer Coop Development Consolidated.	<p><b>Consumer:</b> Organise Consumer Committee Meeting.</p> <p>Case study of a member coop.</p> <p>To support national seminars.</p> <p>Organise a Consumer Cooperative Training Program.</p> <p>Make ICA ROAP Consumer Coop data-base on web site (data bank work).</p> <p>Publish report of Consumer Forum.</p>	<p>25th June</p> <p>October</p> <p>Jan-December</p> <p>May-December</p> <p>Jan-December</p> <p>April</p>
New Generation Cooperatives Established and Consolidated.	<p><b>a: Youth</b> Organise a University/College Cooperative Committee Meeting.</p> <p>To prepare for the 3rd youth seminar to be held in Tokyo in June 2001).</p> <p>To support national workshops.</p> <p>Publish a leaflet on University/College Cooperatives.</p> <p><b>b: Health</b> Organise an APHCO Board Meeting/ General Body Meeting in Kerala.</p>	<p>25th June</p> <p>June</p> <p>Jan-December</p> <p>March</p> <p>27-28 March</p>

Output	Inputs (Activities)	Time Frame
Financial Coops Established in Bhutan.	Exploratory Mission to Bhutan.	April-June
Perspective Plan for Cooperative Development prepared for Iran.	National consultations on Perspective Cooperative Development Plan for Iran.	May
New Generation Cooperatives Established and Consolidated.	CICOPA Project (India - supported by CICOPA France): Follow-up on Evaluation. Follow-up for extension of Project.	April-May January
	New CICOPA Projects (India, Nepal, Philippines and Vietnam) with the support of CICOPA Spain (for three years= US\$ 200,000 per year). Meetings of Specialised Committees (Housing, RCBA, Agriculture).	January to December June
	Diagnostic Study of Craft Clusters in Five States in India to promote cooperatives.	April to October



**KEY RESULT AREA : BRINGING COOP PEOPLE TOGETHER &  
INNOVATING NEW DIMENSIONS OF COOP DEVELOPMENT**

Output	Inputs (Activities)	Time Frame
<p>Coop Solidarity and Cooperation among Coops in the Region Enhanced; New Challenges/ Opportunities for Coops in the Next Century Identified; and New Cooperative Development Projects/ Initiatives Identified and Implemented.</p>	<p>Regional Assembly/Specialised Committee Meetings; and Meeting of Asia-Pacific Cooperative Forum.</p> <p>Meetings, visits, consultations with multi-lateral agencies, e.g. ADB, International Research Institutions and Cooperative Institute of Canada, ACCORD, etc. to elicit their support and assistance for innovative projects.</p> <p><i>(This is seed money and recouped from registration fee of Asia-Pacific Coop Forum and support of multilateral agencies, e.g. ADB).</i></p>	<p>24-30 June</p> <p>January to December</p>