



SURVEY OF MANITOBA CO-OPERATIVES

FINAL

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1.0 Introduction

Communications Services Manitoba engaged PRA Inc. to conduct a survey of co-operatives and credit unions/caisse populaires in Manitoba. The objectives of this research are to:

- ▶ gather information about co-operatives from board members
- ▶ understand the business practices of co-operatives in the province

To collect this information, PRA, in consultation with Communications Services Manitoba, designed a questionnaire (Appendix A).

1.1 Survey method

Communications Services Manitoba provided PRA with mailing addresses for 408 co-operatives, credit unions, and caisses populaires. The methodology for the survey involved an initial mailing of the survey package, which included a copy of the survey, a letter (Appendix B), and a postage-paid return envelope, to all 408 businesses. Approximately two weeks later, PRA mailed a reminder postcard to all co-operatives that had not returned their survey. After another two weeks, PRA mailed another survey package to all non-responders.

Overall, 240 of the 408 businesses returned a completed survey, yielding a 59% response rate. Table 1 summarizes the methodology used for this research.

Table 1: Summary of methodology	
Survey method	Mail survey
Sample size	408
First survey mailing	March 30, 2009
Reminder postcard date	April 17, 2009
Second survey mailing	May 4, 2009
Survey cut-off	May 22, 2009
Completes	240
Response rate	59%

1.2 Profile of co-operatives

Table 2 shows co-operatives that participated in the survey represent a range of business types.

- ▶ The most common types of co-operatives, representing about 1 in 5 each, are housing (18%) and credit unions/caisses populaires (17%).
- ▶ About 1 in 7 co-operatives are retail or marketing (14%).
- ▶ About 1 in 10 are daycares (11%), utility (9%), or recreation (9%) co-operatives.

Table 2: Type of co-operative	
<i>Q1. Please indicate the nature of your co-operative from the list below.</i>	
	% (n=240)
Housing	18%
Credit union/caisses populaires	17%
Retail/marketing	14%
Daycare	11%
Utility	9%
Recreational/community club	9%
Community service	5%
Agriculture/producer	5%
Cattle feeders	3%
Farmers' market	2%
Preschool/nursery school	2%
Fishing	1%
Communications	1%
Transport	1%
Trailer park/campground	1%
Artist/artist studio	1%
Employment	<1%
Other	2%
No response	1%
Note: Respondents could provide more than one response; column will sum to more than 100%.	

As shown in Table 3:

- ▶ Most co-operatives (about 6 in 10) are well-established, having operated for 20 or more years. Slightly less than 1 in 10 has operated for less than 5 years.
- ▶ Most co-operatives appear to be single locations, as 3 in 4 co-operatives have one location in Manitoba, with 7 in 10 operating in one community.
- ▶ Overall, these co-operatives employ approximately 6,100 staff, although most employ 10 or fewer. The number of employees ranges from 0 to 500 employees with about 1 in 4 report having no employees.

Table 3: Profile of co-operatives	
Q2. In what year was your co-operative first established?	
Q3. How many locations (i.e., branches, offices, etc.) does your co-operative have in Manitoba?	
Q4. In how many different towns or cities in Manitoba is your co-operative located?	
Q5. How many full- or part-time paid staff does your co-operative employ?	
	% (n=240)
Years in operation	
Less than 5 years	9%
5 to 9 years	10%
10 to 19 years	16%
20 years or more	57%
No response	8%
Number of locations	
1	74%
2 to 4	15%
5 or more	8%
Towns or cities in Manitoba	
1	71%
2 to 4	15%
5 or more	5%
No response	9%
Employees	
No employees	24%
1 to 9	34%
10 to 49	26%
50 to 99	5%
100 or more	8%
No response	4%

Most co-operatives in Manitoba are relatively small. Given that most co-operatives in Manitoba are single location businesses, it is not surprising that almost 6 in 10 have an annual gross income of less than \$500,000, including 4 in 10 with an annual income of less than \$100,000. About 3 in 10 businesses report an annual income of \$1,000,000 or more, including 13% with earnings of more than \$10 million annually. See Table 4 for complete results.

Table 4: Annual earnings	
<i>Q6. In its last fiscal year, approximately what was the gross income of your co-operative?</i>	
Gross income	% (n=240)
Less than \$100,000	41%
\$100,000 to \$499,999	17%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	7%
\$1,000,000 to \$4,999,999	13%
\$5,000,000 to \$9,999,999	3%
\$10,000,000 or more	13%
No response	7%

As one might expect, co-operatives that have been in business longer have more locations, are in more communities, have more employees, and report higher annual gross incomes.

- ▶ About 4 in 10 businesses (39%) that were established 20 or more years ago have an annual income of \$500,000 or more. This compares to 11% of co-operatives that have been in business for less than 20 years.
- ▶ Businesses with 5 or more locations (90%) are more likely than those with 1 or fewer (15%) or 2 or 4 (69%) locations to report annual incomes of \$500,000 or higher.
- ▶ And, as would be expected, as the number of employees grows so does the gross income. Just 3% of co-operatives with one (or fewer) employees have a gross annual income of \$500,000 or more. This compares to 100% of co-operatives with 100 or more employees.

1.3 Profile of respondents

Results in Table 5 show the profile of co-operative members who completed the survey.

- ▶ Most respondents were in executive positions, including president or CEO (35%) and executive director or general manager (30%). This was not surprising, given that the survey was addressed to the attention of the president of each co-operative. Other common positions include administrative assistants (14%), chair of the board (9%), and the treasurer (8%).
- ▶ The respondents have been in their position ranging from a few months to 42 years, but appears to have been involved with the co-operative for much longer –ranging from a few months to 54 years. In fact, just 30% of have been in their position for 10 years or longer, while 55% have been with their co-operative for 10 years or longer.

Table 5: Profile of respondents	
Q41. What is your current position at your co-operative?	
Q42. How long have you been in your current position?	
Q43. How long have you been involved with this co-operative?	
	% (n=240)
Current position	
President/CEO	35%
Executive Director/General Manager	30%
Administrative Assistant	14%
Chair of the Board	9%
Treasurer	8%
Secretary/Treasurer	5%
Office/Property Manager	3%
Past-President	<1%
Other	4%
Time in current position	
1 year or less	16%
2 to 4	30%
5 to 9	24%
10 to 19	22%
20 years or more	8%
No response	1%
Time involved with co-operative	
1 year or less	5%
2 to 4	18%
5 to 9	21%
10 to 19	30%
20 years or more	25%
No response	1%

2.0 Member involvement

Overall, these co-operatives report having almost 700,000 members, ranging from 3 to 108,000 members.¹ It appears that there is much diversity among the size of co-operatives, with about 4 in 10 co-operatives having less than 50 members, while 3 in 10 have 500 or more members. Table 6 shows a breakdown of membership in Manitoba co-operatives.

Table 6: Membership	
<i>Q7. In total, approximately how many members does your co-operative have?</i>	
Members	% (n=240)
1 to 9 members	7%
10 to 49 members	30%
50 to 99 members	14%
100 to 499 members	18%
500 or more	30%
No response	1%

Table 7 shows the proportion of co-operative members who have the right to vote at their co-operative's annual general meeting (AGM). Overall, almost all members (93%) have the right to vote at their AGM. In fact, 8 in 10 co-operatives say all their members have the right to vote, while 1 in 20 say fewer than half do.

Table 7: Right to vote	
<i>Q8. How many of those members have the right to vote at your annual general meeting?</i>	
Proportion of members who have the right to vote	% (n=240)
1% to 24%	3%
25% to 49%	2%
50% to 74%	5%
75% to 99%	8%
100%	80%
No response	3%

¹ This is a count of the total number of members; not a count of unique members.

As shown in Table 8, among all members:

- ▶ Seven in 10 co-operatives report that fewer than half of members attended their last AGM, including half who say less than one-quarter of their members attended.
- ▶ About 1 in 7 co-operatives estimate that three-quarters of their members or more attended their last AGM, including 10% of co-operatives that had all their members attend.

Table 8: Attended AGM		
<i>Q9. Approximately how many members attended your co-operative's last annual general meeting?</i>		
	%	
	(n=240)	
	All members	Right to vote
1% to 24%	50%	45%
25% to 49%	20%	19%
50% to 74%	14%	15%
75% to 99%	5%	7%
100% (or more)*	10%	11%
No response	2%	3%

* A few co-operatives indicated that more members attended their AGM than their current number of members.

According to results in Table 9:

- ▶ About half of co-operatives in Manitoba do not have any specific criteria, as they allow anyone to be a member.
- ▶ Other co-operatives have specific criteria for membership, most often that members are users of their products or services (30%) or producers of their products and services (10%). Other criteria for membership include workers (6%), landowners (3%), and seniors (2%).

Table 9: Who can be members of co-operatives	
<i>Q10. Who can be members of your co-operative?</i>	
Who can be members?	%
(n=240)	
Anyone	49%
Users of the product/service	30%
Producers of the product/service	10%
Workers in the co-operative	6%
Meet policy requirements	3%
Owners/landowners	3%
Referrals/sponsored	3%
Seniors	2%
Family	2%
Ethnic groups	1%
Those who buy shares	1%
Other	1%
No response	<1%

Note: Respondents could choose more than one response; column will sum to more than 100%.

3.0 Governance issues

In this section, we explore the makeup of co-operative board of directors and some issues around training of directors.

3.1 Board of directors makeup

As Table 10 indicates:

- ▶ The size of the board of directors of Manitoba co-operatives ranges from 0 to 18 directors, with most (8 in 10) having a board of 5 to 9 members.
- ▶ Most co-operatives appear to be pleased with the size of their board, as the vast majority (over 9 in 10) say the size of their board is about right. Just 3% say it is too small, while 5% say it is too large.
- ▶ Directors' terms range from a few months to 11 years with about 8 in 10 have terms of 2 to 3 years. About 1 in 10 have terms of one year or less, while very few (1%) have terms of 4 years or more.
- ▶ Election to the board is mixed, with about 4 in 10 saying directors are elected through both a competitive process and by acclamation. Another 4 in 10 say directors are elected by acclamation, while 1 in 5 have a purely competitive process.

Table 10: Board of directors	
Q11. How many directors are currently on your co-operative's board?	
Q12. What is the usual term for a director?	
Q13. Are directors usually elected through competition (i.e., more than one person is seeking the position) or acclamation?	
Q16. In your opinion, is the size of the board too small, about right, or too large?	
	% (n=240)
Directors on the board	
1 director or fewer	1%
2 to 4	9%
5 to 9	78%
10 directors or more	11%
No response	1%
Size of board	
Too small	3%
About right	92%
Too large	5%
No response	<1%
Term length	
1 year or less	10%
2	42%
3	44%
4 years or more	1%
No response	3%
Directors elected by	
Competition only	18%
Acclamation only	38%
Both	42%
No response	3%

Overall, it appears that co-operatives find it difficult to find new members for their board. As shown in Table 11:

- ▶ About 6 in 10 say it is difficult to find members to *stand for positions on the board*, including 13% who say it is very difficult. Another 4 in 10 say it is easy, although just 5% say it is very easy.
- ▶ Respondents find it slightly easier to find members to *be officers on the board*, as over half say it is easy, including 7% who say it is very easy. Slightly less than half say this is difficult, including 10% who say it is very difficult.

Table 11: Ease of finding members for board position		
<i>Q14. How easy or difficult is it to find members who are willing to stand for positions on the board?</i>		
<i>Q15. How easy or difficult is it to find members who are willing to be officers of the board (e.g., president, secretary, treasurer)?</i>		
	Ease of finding members who are willing to...	
	% (n = 240)	
	Stand for positions on the board	Be officers of the board
Very easy	5%	7%
Easy	36%	48%
Difficult	45%	35%
Very difficult	13%	10%
No response	2%	<1%

The number of members a co-operative has appears to play some role in how easy or difficult it is to find members for the board.

- ▶ Co-operatives with the fewest members, 9 or fewer (65%), are most likely to say it is easy to find members who are willing to stand for positions on the board. This compares to 39% of respondents with 10 or more members. However, this difference is not statistically significant.
- ▶ The inverse relationship is found for finding members who are willing to be officers. Co-operatives with 500 or more members (78%) are most likely to say it is easy, compared to 45% with fewer than 500 members. Once again, this difference is not statistically significant.

There does not appear to be an association between the ease of finding members to stand for positions or to be officers and either the length of their term or how they are elected.

3.2 Board meetings and role

The number of co-operative board meetings range from none to 38 times a year. Three in 4 boards meet at least 6 times a year, including 38% who meet 12 times a year or more.

Most respondents are very happy with the number of board meetings held per year, as 9 in 10 say they meet the right amount of times. Just 2% say they meet too often, while 5% say they do not meet enough.

Table 12: Board meetings	
Q21. In a typical year, how many times does the board of directors meet?	
Q22. In your opinion, does the board meet too often, about the right amount, or not enough?	
	% (n=240)
Frequency of meetings	
Never	<1%
Once a year	6%
2 to 3	8%
4 to 5	12%
6 to 11	35%
12 times or more	38%
No response	1%
Board meetings occur	
Too often	2%
About the right amount	91%
Not enough	5%
No response	2%

As might be expected, co-operatives with larger gross revenues have more board meetings. For example, 59% of those with revenues of half a million or more report that the board of directors meets 12 times or more annually, compared with 29% of those with revenues of less than \$500,000.

According to Table 13, co-operative boards appear to have three main roles: *setting policies for their co-operatives* (84%); *overseeing the co-operatives finances* (64%); and *managing the day-to-day operations of their co-operative* (33%). The first two fit with the role of the board as a governing body, while the last-named is more of a hands-on or managerial role for the board.

Table 13: Role of the board	
Q23. What is the role of the board of directors for this co-operative?	
	% (n=240)
Set polices	84%
Oversee finances	64%
Manage day-to-day operations	33%
Set strategic plan/direction	2%
Development and education	2%
Capital projects	1%
Other	<1%
Nothing	<1%
No response	2%
Note: Respondents could provide more than one response; column will sum to more than 100%.	

Co-operatives with a gross annual revenue of \$500,000 or more annually are much less likely than co-operatives with an annual income of less than \$500,000 to report their board is *involved in management of the day-to-day operations* (4% compared to 43%) and *overseeing the finances of the co-operative* (44% compared to 73%).

3.3 Training for board members

About 6 in 10 co-operatives provide new directors with some type of training and many provide multiple forms of training, most often orientation (42%) or board training (35%). Conversely, 4 in 10 provide new directors with no type of training.

Table 14: New board member training	
Q17. Are new directors provided with board training, orientation, or some other training?	
	% (n=240)
Yes	59%
Yes, orientation	42%
Yes, board training	35%
Yes, other training	16%
No	40%
No response	1%
Note: Respondents could provide more than one response; column will sum to more than 100%.	

Overall, half (50%) of co-operatives have provided development opportunities for directors in the past two years. In total, co-operatives have allocated almost \$1 million and 900 days in the past two years to development and training.

Table 15: Development opportunities	
Q18. In the last two years, have directors been provided with development opportunities (e.g., workshops or information sessions)?	
Q19. In the last two years, how much money has your co-operative allocated to board members' development and training?	
Q20. In the last two years, how many development and training days has your co-operative provided to its board members?	
	% (n=240)
Provided directors with development opportunities	
Yes	50%
Money allocated to board members' development and training	
None	51%
Less than \$500	3%
\$500 to \$999	3%
\$1,000 to \$4,999	18%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	3%
\$10,000 or more	10%
No response	13%
Number of development and training days provided	
None	50%
1	6%
2 to 4	9%
5 to 9	11%
10 or more	14%
No response	10%

The larger the co-operative's revenue, the more likely board members are to be provided development opportunities, the more money they spend on such opportunities, and the more development and training days they provide. For example, among the co-operatives with annual revenues of half a million or more, 81% report providing such opportunities compared with just 37% of those with revenues of less than \$500,000.

3.4 Agreement with aspects of their co-operative

We asked respondents to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree with seven statements about their co-operative. The results shown in Figure 1 indicate:

- ▶ Slightly less than 9 in 10 agree (and about 1 in 10 disagree) that:
 - *the functions of their board are clearly defined*, including 41% who strongly agree
 - *board members promote the vision of the co-operative*, including 40% who strongly agree
 - *board members clearly understand their roles and responsibilities*, including 36% who strongly agree

- ▶ About 8 in 10 agree (and about 1 in 5 disagree) that:
 - *their board has clear governance policies in place*, including 39% who strongly agree
 - *their board has a compelling plan for the future of their co-operative*, including 26% who strongly agree

- ▶ About 3 in 4 agree (and about 1 in 4 disagree) that:
 - *their board reviews its business or strategic plan on an annual basis*, including 41% who strongly agree
 - *their co-operative has a current business or strategic plan in place*, including 35% who strongly agree

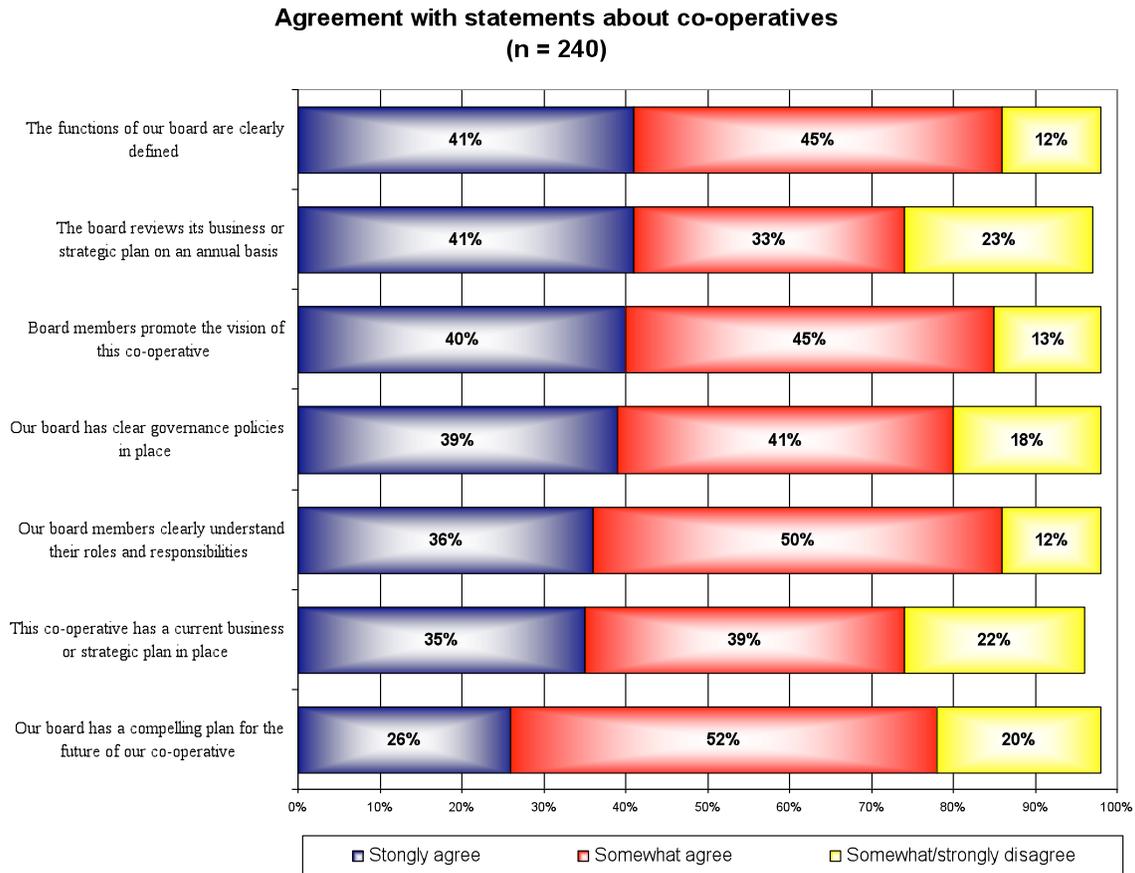


Figure 1

Larger co-operatives are more likely to agree with many of the statements outlined in Figure 1. Those co-operatives with annual gross revenues of \$500,000 or more are more likely to agree with each of these statements, and do so strongly, than are those with annual revenues of less than \$500,000. For example:

- ▶ *This cooperative has a current business or strategic plan in place.* Over 9 in 10 of the larger co-operatives (annual revenue of \$500,000 or higher) at least somewhat agree, including 63% who strongly agree. This compares with about 2 in 3 smaller co-operatives, including 24% who strongly agree.
- ▶ *The board reviews its business plan or strategic plan on an annual basis.* Over 9 in 10 large co-operatives agree, including 65% who strongly agree. This compares with about 2 in 3 smaller co-operatives, including 32% who strongly agree.

4.0 Community involvement and membership in associations

In this section, we examine Manitoba co-operatives' involvement in their communities, along with their membership in associations.

4.1 Support local community

Half of Manitoba co-operatives provide financial or non-financial support to local community events. Overall, these co-operatives allocated approximately \$3.5 million to community events in their past fiscal year.

Table 16: Support for local communities	
<i>Q31. Does your co-operative support the local community through financial or non-financial support of community events?</i>	
<i>Q32. In the last fiscal year, approximately how much did your co-operative give towards sponsorship or other community support?</i>	
	% (n=240)
Supports local community through community events	
Yes	49%
Money allocated to community events	
None	57%
Less than \$500	4%
\$500 to \$999	3%
\$1,000 to \$4,999	7%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	4%
\$10,000 or more	20%
No response	5%

Co-operatives with annual incomes of \$500,000 or greater are more likely to support local community events than co-operatives with incomes of less than \$500,000. Among those co-operatives with annual incomes of \$500,000 or more, 85% provide such support, compared with 35% of those with revenues of less than \$500,000. Among those who allocate money to community support, larger firms tend to give more.

4.2 Staff volunteer time

About 1 in 3 Manitoba co-operatives allow staff to participate in volunteer activities during paid, working hours. This represents almost half (48%) of co-operatives with staff.

Overall, co-operative employees volunteered over 12,800 hours in the past fiscal year, averaging about 50 hours per co-operative (about 200 hours for those that allowed it).

Table 17: Staff volunteer activities	
Q33. Does your co-operative allow staff to participate in volunteer activities during paid, working hours?	
Q34. In the last fiscal year, for how many paid hours did your staff volunteer in the community?	
	% (n=240)
Allows staff to volunteer during paid, working hours	
Yes	35%
Hours allocated	
None	65%
1 hour or less	3%
2 to 9	2%
10 to 49	11%
50 to 99	1%
100 hours or more	10%
No response	9%

Again, larger co-operatives are more likely to allow staff to volunteer during paid, working hours. Some 65% of those with annual revenue of \$500,000 or more do so, compared with 23% of those with annual revenue of less than \$500,000.

4.3 Associations

Almost half of Manitoba co-operatives belong to a co-operative association. For the most part, the types of co-operatives they belong to tend to reflect the type of business they are running. Among those who are members, the most common associations co-operatives belong to include:

- ▶ Credit Union associations, including the Credit Union Central Manitoba (9%); Credit Union Central Canada (2%); and other credit union associations (3%)
- ▶ Federated Co-operatives Ltd. (7%)
- ▶ Manitoba Co-operative Association (5%)
- ▶ Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada (5%)
- ▶ Canadian Co-operative Association (4%)

See Table 18 for complete results.

Table 18: Co-operative associations	
Q35. Is your co-operative a member of a co-operative association?	
Q36. To which co-operative association(s) does your co-operative belong?	
	% (n=240)
Member of co-operative association	
Yes	47%
Association	
Credit Union Central Manitoba	9%
Federated Co-operatives Ltd.	7%
Manitoba Cooperative Association	5%
Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada	5%
Canadian Co-operative Association	4%
Other Credit Union associations	3%
Credit Union Central Canada	2%
Other agriculture associations	2%
Canadian Worker Co-op Federation	1%
Manitoba Child Care Association	1%
Co-op Manager Association	1%
Other child care associations	<1%
Other*	10%
Don't know/no response	3%
Note: Respondents could mention more than one association; question responses will sum to more than 100%.	
* The other category contains associations mentioned by fewer than 1% of respondents.	

Co-operatives with annual gross revenues of \$500,000 (79%) are more likely than smaller co-operatives (34%) to report being a member of a co-operative association.

About 1 in 5 co-operatives indicate that they belong to other industry associations; most of these are also co-operative associations, with the exception of the Manitoba Child Care Association (7%). Among other non-co-operative associations that Manitoba co-operatives belong to, none are mentioned by more than one respondent. See Table 19 for complete results.

Table 19: Other associations	
Q37. Is your co-operative a member of any other association related to your industry?	
Q38. To which association(s) does your co-operative belong?	
	% (n=240)
Member of other associations	
Yes	22%
Association	
Manitoba Child Care Association	7%
Other agriculture associations	3%
Other Credit Union associations	3%
Other child care associations	1%
Co-op Manager Association	<1%
Canadian Co-operative Association	<1%
Credit Union Central Manitoba	<1%
Federated Co-operatives Ltd.	<1%
Other*	8%
Don't know/no response	1%
Note: Respondents could mention more than one association; question responses will sum to more than 100%.	
* The other category contains associations mentioned by fewer than two respondents.	

Slightly more than 1 in 4 co-operatives have a policy in place that supports doing business with other co-operatives. Another 1 in 20 (6% overall, 9% of those without a policy) says they do business with other co-operatives, but it is an informal process since it is not part of their policy.

Among those who do not have a policy in place, the main reasons for not having one are:

- ▶ They feel they do not need one or do not see a reason to have such a policy (26%).
- ▶ There are no other co-operatives in their community to do business with (6%) or their co-operative is too small to do business with other co-operatives (6%).

Almost half (47%) of co-operatives without a policy in place to support business with other co-operatives say they do not know why they do not have such a policy or did not provide a response. See Table 20.

Table 20: Policy for doing business with other co-operatives	
Q39. Does your co-operative have a policy in place that supports doing business with other co-operatives?	
Q40. Why do you not have such a policy in place at this time?	
	% (n=240)
Policy to do business with other co-operatives	
Yes	27%
Why they do not have a policy	
	(n = 169)
Do not need one	26%
Done informally	9%
No co-operatives in our community	6%
Co-operative is too small	6%
Have not discussed it	4%
Nature of business/competition	3%
Other	2%
Don't know/no response	47%
Note: Respondents could mention more than one association; question responses will sum to more than 100%.	

5.0 Conclusion

Survey results indicate there is a lot of diversity among co-operatives in Manitoba. From small, single-person businesses with only a few members to co-operatives with many locations across the province with hundreds of employees, co-operatives vary in size, location and in the services they provide. As an exploratory attempt to obtain baseline data from co-operatives in Manitoba, this survey provides substantial information about membership involvement, governance practices, and the co-operatives' commitment to their communities.

As might be expected, the size of the co-operative is key to many of the practices. Smaller co-operatives, based on annual revenues, appear to have less developed governance structures for the training and development of their board members. This is not to infer that board members of smaller co-operatives are not dedicated and hard working, but rather because of the resources available they are less likely to have the training and support to follow the best practices in governance. Also, board members of smaller co-operatives are much more involved in their co-operative's day-to-day operations and may not have time to commit to training and development activities.

Other challenges also exist in terms of the involvement of co-operative members. For example, on average, about one-third of members attend their co-operative's AGM, although almost all have the right to vote. Further, many co-operatives say it is difficult to find members to join the board. With that being said, many co-operatives are good corporate citizens and contribute to communities in the form of sponsorship, volunteerism and support for community events.

Appendix A

Questionnaire

Survey of Co-operatives

This survey asks you to provide information about your co-operative, including its background, membership involvement, and governance. Your honest responses to this survey will help us determine where Manitoba's co-operatives are succeeding and identify potential areas where programs or services could help strengthen the co-operative sector.

When you have completed this survey, please return it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope to PRA Inc., a national research firm that we have contracted to conduct this research. PRA will keep your responses confidential, and only they will know that you responded. Responses will be reported in aggregate form only.

We would appreciate receiving your completed questionnaire by **May 13, 2009**.

Please return it to PRA either in the enclosed postage-paid envelope or fax it toll-free to **1-800-717-5456**.

If you have any questions, please call Nicholas Borodenko of PRA at 1-888-877-6744.

General information

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Please indicate the nature of your co-operative from the list below.</p> <p>Credit union ±01
 Caisses populaires ±02
 Housing ±03
 Day care ±04
 Community service ±05
 Utility ±06
 Retail/marketing ±07
 Recreational/community club ±08
 Agriculture/producer ±09
 Farmers' market ±10
 Cattle feeders ±11
 Employment ±12
 Fishing ±13
 Communications ±14
 Transport ±15
 Other (<i>please specify</i>) _____ ±66</p> <p>2. In what year was your co-operative first established?
 Year _____</p> | <p>3. How many locations (i.e., branches, offices, etc.) does your co-operative have in Manitoba?
 _____</p> <p>4. In how many different towns or cities in Manitoba is your co-operative located?
 _____</p> <p>5. How many full- or part-time paid staff does your co-operative employ?
 _____</p> <p>6. In its last fiscal year, approximately what was the <u>gross</u> income of your co-operative?</p> <p>Less than \$100,000 ±1
 \$100,000 to \$499,999 ±2
 \$500,000 to \$999,999 ±3
 \$1,000,000 to \$4,999,999 ±4
 \$5,000,000 to \$9,999,999 ±5
 \$10,000,000 or more ±6</p> |
|--|---|

Member involvement

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>7. In total, approximately how many members does your co-operative have?
 _____</p> <p>8. How many of those members have the right to vote at your annual general meeting?
 _____</p> <p>9. Approximately how many members attended your co-operative's last annual general meeting?
 _____</p> | <p>10. Who can be members of your co-operative?
 (Check all that apply)</p> <p>Anyone ±01
 Producers of the product/service ±02
 Users of the product/service ±03
 Workers in the co-operative ±04
 Other (<i>please specify</i>) _____ ±66</p> |
|--|---|

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read each question carefully and check (✓) or write in the appropriate response. Return your completed questionnaire by toll-free fax (1-800-717-5456) or in the envelope provided.



Governance issues

11. How many directors are currently on your co-operative's board?
Number of directors: _____
12. What is the usual term for a director?
_____ years
13. Are directors usually elected through competition (i.e., more than one person is seeking the position) or acclamation?
Competition ±1
Acclamation ±2
Combination of competition and acclamation ±3
14. How easy or difficult is it to find members who are willing to stand for positions on the board?
Very easy ±4
Easy ±3
Difficult ±2
Very difficult ±1
15. How easy or difficult is it to find members who are willing to be officers of the board (e.g., president, secretary, treasurer)?
Very easy ±4
Easy ±3
Difficult ±2
Very difficult ±1
16. In your opinion, is the size of the board too small, about right, or too large?
Too small ±1
About right ±2
Too large ±3
17. Are new directors provided with board training, orientation, or some other training? (Check all that apply)
Yes, board training ±1
Yes, an orientation ±2
Yes, other training ±3
No ±0
18. In the last two years, have directors been provided with development opportunities (e.g., workshops or information sessions)?
Yes ±1
No ±0
19. In the last two years, how much money has your co-operative allocated to board members' development and training?
Approximately \$ _____
20. In the last two years, how many development and training days has your co-operative provided to its board members?
Number of days: _____
21. In a typical year, how many times does the board of directors meet?
Times per year: _____
22. In your opinion, does the board meet too often, about the right amount, or not enough?
Too often ±1
About the right amount ±2
Not enough ±3
23. What is the role of the board of directors for this co-operative? (Check all that apply)
Managing the day-to-day operations of the co-operative ±01
Setting policies for the co-operative ±02
Overseeing the finances of the co-operative ±03
Other (please specify) _____ ±66

Please rate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
24. Our board has a compelling plan for the future of our co-operative	±4	±3	±2	±1
25. This co-operative has a current business or strategic plan in place	±4	±3	±2	±1
26. The board reviews its business or strategic plan on an annual basis.....	±4	±3	±2	±1
27. Board members promote the vision of this co-operative	±4	±3	±2	±1
28. The functions of our board are clearly defined	±4	±3	±2	±1
29. Our board members clearly understand their roles and responsibilities	±4	±3	±2	±1
30. Our board has clear governance policies in place.....	±4	±3	±2	±1

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read each question carefully and check (✓) or write in the appropriate response. Return your completed questionnaire by toll-free fax (1-800-717-5456) or in the envelope provided.



Community involvement and membership in co-operative associations

31. Does your co-operative support the local community through financial or non-financial support of community events?

Yes ±1
 No ±0 **[SKIP TO Q33]**

32. In the last fiscal year, approximately how much did your co-operative give towards sponsorship or other community support?

\$ _____

33. Does your co-operative allow staff to participate in volunteer activities during paid, working hours?

Yes ±1
 No ±0 **[SKIP TO Q35]**

34. In the last fiscal year, for how many paid hours did your staff volunteer in the community?

35. Is your co-operative a member of a co-operative association?

Yes ±1
 No ±0 **[SKIP TO Q37]**

36. To which co-operative association(s) does your co-operative belong?

37. Is your co-operative a member of any other association related to your industry?

Yes ±1
 No ±0 **[SKIP TO Q39]**

38. To which association(s) does your co-operative belong?

39. Does your co-operative have policy in place that supports doing business with other co-operatives?

Yes ±1 **[SKIP TO Q41]**
 No ±0

40. Why do you not have such a policy in place at this time?

Background

To conclude, we have a few background questions that we use for statistical purposes. Your information will be kept confidential, and you will not be identified in any way.

41. What is your current position at your co-operative?

President ±01
 Chair of the Board ±02
 Executive Director ±03
 Past-President ±04
 Administrative Assistant ±05
 Other (*please specify*) _____ ±06

42. How long have you been in your current position?

43. How long have you been involved with this co-operative?

Thank you for your time.
 Please return your completed questionnaire by **May 13, 2009**
 in the enclosed postage-paid envelope to:

PRA Inc.
500-363 Broadway
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3N9

Or you can return it to PRA Inc. via toll-free fax:

1-800-717-5456

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read each question carefully and check (✓) or write in the appropriate response. Return your completed questionnaire by toll-free fax (1-800-717-5456) or in the envelope provided.



Appendix B

Letters to co-operatives

<DATE>

<CO-OPERATIVE NAME> President

<ADDRESS>

<CITY>, <PROV> <POSTAL CODE>

<SURVEY NUMBER>

Dear <CO-OPERATIVE NAME > President,

The Manitoba Cooperative Association, Manitoba Government, and Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities would like to invite you to take part in a survey of Manitoba co-operatives. This survey asks you to provide information about your co-operative, including its background, membership involvement, and governance. Your honest responses to this survey will help us determine potential areas where programs or services could help strengthen the Manitoba co-operative sector.

We would appreciate it if you could take the time now to complete and return your questionnaire. When you have completed the survey, please return it in the postage-paid envelope. If we do not receive anything from you by April 13, 2009, you may receive a notice reminding you about the survey.

To manage the survey process and also to ensure confidentiality, we have engaged the services of PRA Inc. (Prairie Research Associates). PRA will keep your responses confidential, and only they will know that you responded. All responses will be reported in aggregate form only.

If you would like more information about the survey or have questions about how to complete the questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact Nicholas Borodenko of PRA by phone at 1-888-877-6744 (toll-free) or by email (borodenko@pra.ca).

Thank you in advance for your participation!

Sincerely,

Vera Goussaert
Manitoba Cooperative
Association Inc.

Maurice Hince
Economic Development
Council for Manitoba
Bilingual Municipalities

Mona Cornock
Manitoba Agriculture,
Food and Rural Initiatives



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Recently the Manitoba Cooperative Association, Manitoba Government, and Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities sent you a questionnaire. If you have already completed and returned it to us, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please do so at your earliest convenience.

The survey was sent to co-operatives from across Manitoba, so it is extremely important that your responses are included. The information collected from this study will help us determine where Manitoba's co-operatives are succeeding and identify potential areas where programs or services could help strengthen the co-operative sector.

If, by some chance, you did not receive the questionnaire or it was misplaced, please call Nicholas Borodenko of PRA Inc. at 1-888-877-6744, and another package will be sent to you.

Sincerely,

**Vera Goussaert
Manitoba Cooperative
Association Inc.**

**Maurice Hince
Economic Development
Council for Manitoba**

**Mona Cornock
Manitoba Agriculture,
Food and Rural Initiatives**

<DATE>

<CO-OPERATIVE NAME> President
< ADDRESS>
<CITY>, <PROV> <POSTAL CODE>
<SURVEY NUMBER>

Dear <CO-OPERATIVE NAME> President:

We recently sent you a survey from the Manitoba Cooperative Association, Manitoba Government, and Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities. Your views are very important, and, as we have not received your completed questionnaire, we are providing you with a replacement copy. If you have already replied, please ignore this letter and accept our thanks for your participation.

While your participation in the survey is entirely voluntary, we hope you will participate and provide as much information as possible. We want to ensure that you have the opportunity to participate in this study. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and will be combined with those of other co-operatives in the final report. In order to include your co-operative's information, **please return the enclosed survey in the postage-paid envelope by Wednesday, May 13, 2009.**

If you would like more information about the survey or have questions about how to complete the questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact Nicolas Borodenko of PRA Inc. by phone at 1-888-877-6744 (toll-free) or by email (borodenko@pra.ca).

Sincerely,

Vera Goussaert
Manitoba Cooperative
Association Inc.

Maurice Hince
Economic Development
Council for Manitoba
Bilingual Municipalities

Mona Cornock
Manitoba Agriculture,
Food and Rural Initiatives