



Exploring Key Factors for Success in Cooperative Viticulture: A Comparative Study of Slovenia and Austria

Erforschung zentraler Erfolgsfaktoren im genossenschaftlichen Weinbau:
Ein Vergleich zwischen Slowenien und Österreich

Polona Scheuba*, Jochen Kantelhardt and Lena Schaller

Institut für Agrar- und Forstökonomie, Universität für Bodenkultur, Österreich

*Correspondence to: polona.scheuba@gmail.com

Received: 24 November 2024 – Revised: 05 April 2025 – Accepted: 11 Juni 2025 – Published: 17 Dezember 2025

Summary

Cooperatives play a vital role in agriculture by boosting farmers' market power through resource pooling. In the wine sector—marked by perishability, yield fluctuations, and marketing challenges—they are especially important. Despite their long-standing presence, satisfaction with individual cooperatives varies. This study examines success factors for wine cooperatives in Austria and Slovenia. Interviews with eight experts and qualitative content analysis identified key factors: production rules, obligatory delivery quotas, price stability, member and farm characteristics, governance, service provision, outlet structure, and external influences such as legal frameworks, CAP support, and production regions. While payment modalities were less important, expert views diverged on cooperative focus: Austrian experts preferred specialised cooperatives, while some Slovenian experts favoured multi-sectorial approaches for broader social benefits.

Keywords: Wine production, Cooperative success, Success Factors

Zusammenfassung

Genossenschaften spielen eine zentrale Rolle in der Landwirtschaft, da sie die Marktstellung kleiner Betriebe durch die Bündelung von Ressourcen stärken. Im Weinsektor, der durch Verderblichkeit, Ertragsschwankungen und Vermarktungsherausforderungen geprägt ist, sind Genossenschaften von besonderer Bedeutung. Trotz ihrer langen Geschichte variiert die Zufriedenheit mit einzelnen Genossenschaften erheblich. Diese Studie analysiert den Erfolg von Weingenossenschaften in Österreich und Slowenien. Interviews mit acht SchlüsselexpertInnen und eine qualitative Inhaltsanalyse identifizierten kritische Erfolgsfaktoren: genossenschaftliche Produktionsregeln, verpflichtende Lieferquoten, Preisstabilität, Mitglieder- und Betriebsmerkmale, Governance, Dienstleistungsangebot, Vermarktungsstrukturen sowie externe Einflüsse wie rechtliche Rahmenbedingungen, GAP-Unterstützung und Produktionsregionen. Während Zahlungsmodalitäten weniger bedeutend waren, zeigten sich Unterschiede in den Schwerpunkten der ExpertInnen: Österreichische ExpertInnen bevorzugten spezialisierte Genossenschaften, während einige slowenische ExpertInnen multisektorale Modelle wegen ihrer breiteren sozialen Vorteile favorisierten.

Schlagworte: Weinproduktion, Erfolg von Genossenschaften, Erfolgsfaktoren

1 Introduction

European farmers are often at a disadvantage in terms of market leverage due to their relatively small size compared to other market actors (EC, 2019). Producer organisations (POs), such as cooperatives, aim to strengthen their position by reducing costs, sharing risks, and improving market access (EP, 2019; EC, 2022), though their prevalence varies by country and product (Bijman & Iliopoulos, 2014). Despite their advantages, many farmers prefer to remain independent, and participation in cooperatives is declining (Verhees, Sergaki & Dijk, 2015). Overall, cooperative success is mixed: while some thrive, others shut down (Hirsch, Mishra, Möhring & Finger, 2019). This raises the question of why cooperatives differ so widely in their performance and whether common success factors can be identified.

In wine production, cooperatives play a key role, making the sector a suitable case for examining cooperative success factors. Austria and Slovenia share similar production conditions, with wine traditionally marketed through cooperatives since the Austro-Hungarian monarchy (ÖRV, 2022). Slovenia leads the EU with 71% of its wine produced by cooperatives, compared to Austria's 15% and the EU average of 40% (Zadrúžno, 2023; Fanasch & Frick, 2018; Bijman & Iliopoulos, 2014).

This research article takes a closer look at the reasons behind the success of cooperatives in viticulture, using Slovenia and Austria as examples. Comparing these two countries may help explain why, despite having similar structures and histories, they have developed so differently in terms of cooperative presence. Insights in this field could contribute to improving internal operations within cooperatives and supporting their development and adaptability.

2 Literature Review

Cooperative success is a complex area, influenced by many factors, and the occurrence of cooperative failure is not rare (Harper, 1991). With the help of the literature, seven key categories of specific factors that can influence the success of a cooperative have been identified.

Legal factors play a critical role, particularly in regulated industries like wine production (Simpson, 1999). Effective legal frameworks must be timely, practical, and stable to support cooperatives (Bijman, 2016; Garnevska et al., 2011; Kutscher, 2019; Simpson, 1999). Clear operational rules including delivery quota for farmers are equally vital to ensure mitigation of free-rider issues, product quality and predictability (Harper, 1991; Storchmann, 2018; Simpson, 1999).

Economic success in cooperatives depends on performance, efficiency, and financial sustainability, driven by economies of scale, competitive pricing, and effective cost management (Azadi et al, 2010; Carlberg et al, 2006; Oliveira & Wander, 2021; Sexton & Iskow, 1988; Theuvsen & Franz, 2007). Prices paid to farmers and added value play a crucial role (Dejene & Getachew Regasa, 2015; Storchmann, 2018;

Theuvsen & Franz, 2007). External support and access to capital can further enhance the development of cooperatives and their long-term viability (Bruynis et al, 2001; Carlberg et al, 2006; Simpson, 1999; Moon & Lee, 2020).

The success of cooperatives heavily depends on factors related to cooperative members such as member attitudes, loyalty, trust, and commitment, as well as the cooperative's alignment with members' expectations and needs (Azadi et al, 2010; Bruynis et al, 2001; Garnevska et al, 2011; Dejene & Getachew Regasa, 2015; Hakelius, 1996; Oliveira & Wander, 2021; Theuvsen & Franz, 2007; Ünal et al, 2009; Wanyama, 2012). Member homogeneity is also identified as an important success factor (Bijman, 2016; Dejene & Getachew Regasa, 2015; Harper, 1991; Hansmann, 2006).

Cooperative success is influenced by structural factors such as a robust institutional framework, regional production capacity, and infrastructure (Bijman, 2018; Simpson, 1999; Dejene & Getachew Regasa, 2015). Factors such as production area, member composition, and focusing on key activities also play a role (Fanasch & Frick, 2018; Harper, 1991).

Key factors for cooperative success in internal governance include effective management, transparent strategic planning and robust internal organisation (Amini & Ramezani, 2008; Azadi et al, 2010; Bijman, 2016; Bruynis et al, 2001; Carlberg et al, 2006; Crowley et al, 2005; Dejene & Getachew Regasa, 2015; Garnevska et al, 2011; Harper, 1991; Oliveira & Wander, 2021; Sexton & Iskow, 1988; Theuvsen & Franz, 2007). Success also depends on adaptability, risk management, member involvement, public perception and the provision of valuable services for members (Amini & Ramezani, 2008; Bijman, 2016; Bhuyan, 2007; Brusselaers et al, 2014; Dejene & Getachew Regasa, 2015; Hakelius, 1996; Moon & Lee, 2020; Wanyama, 2012).

In the competitive landscape of wine production, marketing plays a particularly vital role—arguably more so than in many other industries (Couderc & Marchini, 2011). Unlike products that compete largely on price, wine stands out through its unique characteristics and strong emphasis on differentiation (Höhler & Kühl, 2014). Success is driven by outlet diversification, access to premium markets and developing well-established brands that enhance revenue potential (Azadi et al, 2010; Dejene & Getachew Regasa, 2015; Harris et al, 1996; Höhler & Kühl, 2014; Moon & Lee, 2020; Sexton & Iskow, 1988; Storchmann, 2018;).

Additional factors influencing the success of wine production cooperatives include adaptation to the local environment, political neutrality, and external events with potential impacts from reputation and historical background warranting further exploration (Brusselaers et al., 2014; Harper, 1991; Kutscher, 2019).

3 Method

The primary research question - "How can the success of cooperatives be defined, and what are the key factors contributing to cooperative success in the wine industry in Austria

and Slovenia?” was addressed through a five-step procedure: pre-study, questionnaire development, expert interviews, qualitative content analysis and the presentation of results.

Qualitative Content Analysis

Following Mayring’s (2010) approach, after the topic selection the research began with the formulation of the guiding question. A preliminary literature review was conducted to develop initial categories that shaped both the study’s framework and the design of the interview questions. This review drew on existing research and offered an overview of the current state of knowledge. Key findings were summarised to support the development of analytical categories and inform the interview structure.

Building on these insights, a questionnaire was created and used in expert interviews. The interview responses were transcribed and analysed using Mayring’s (2010) method of qualitative content analysis, which ensures transparency and clarity through a structured and rule-based process.

The analysis followed deductive principles and was centered around the predefined categories. Citations and concrete examples from the interviews were used to illustrate the main findings. When questions covered multiple topics, they were broken down into subcategories, while less relevant responses were grouped under broader themes. Expert responses were evaluated and the main factors outlined by each expert were identified. Diverging opinions—particularly those within the same national context—were documented, and possible reasons for these differences were explored during both the interviews and the analysis phase.

The findings were systematically assessed in relation to the research question, and the relevance of each success factor was categorised as high, medium, or low using a colour-coded system. A comparative analysis between Slovenia and Austria was then carried out to highlight common patterns and investigate the causes of any differences.

Questionnaire & Interviews

A questionnaire structured around seven key factors described above was developed. The experts were selected based on their expertise in cooperative viticulture and diverse professional backgrounds, allowing them to shed light on the topic and respond to the questions from various perspectives.

In both countries, two experts were selected from the practical field of cooperatives—operators actively involved in cooperative wine production in their daily work. These experts came from different wine regions and represented different types of cooperatives, to provide a broad overview of the sector. The other two experts from each country were selected for their wide-ranging knowledge of the sector of wine and cooperatives, with professional experience in external institutions such as ministries, chambers, or sectoral organisations.

The questionnaire was translated into Slovenian and German to facilitate data collection in the experts’ native languages. Interviews were conducted between 16 October and

3 December 2023. Two interviews were carried out in person, while the remaining interviews were conducted online.

The interview questions were divided into a general introductory section and eight thematic sections (including “other factors”). The general part aimed to lay the foundation for the subsequent sections and included broader questions that were not directly linked to cooperative success. However, these questions helped identify additional relevant factors not covered in the existing literature and established a contextual connection to the topic.

The questions in the thematic sections were developed based on findings from the literature review. Depending on the subject, interviewees were either asked to provide further insights into how specific aspects function in their country (e.g., production rules—what rules are applied within cooperatives, and how they differ between them) and their impact on cooperative success, or solely about the impact on success if the factor had already been thoroughly examined in the literature (e.g., the legal framework in each country). Follow-up questions were asked during the interviews if needed for clarification or further details. The full interview guideline is provided in the appendix.

From each interview, the most important factors highlighted by the experts were identified based on their responses. In addition to the factors identified through the literature, Expert 2 from Slovenia emphasised the conflict between cooperative sales and on-farm direct sales, while Expert 4 from Austria highlighted the importance of attracting new cooperative members.

4 Results

Several experts emphasised that an understanding of the historical development of cooperatives is essential to fully comprehend their current situation. In Slovenia, cooperative development was disrupted after World War II, when cooperatives were used as political instruments. In Austria, although the political context was different, many cooperatives also struggled—mainly due to weak internal regulations that failed to meet member expectations. Around the turn of the millennium, both countries saw restructuring, which changed market conditions and cooperative structures. Austrian cooperatives, always specialised in wine, were often merged or closed during this period. In contrast, nearly all Slovenian cooperatives operate across multiple sectors, with wine as just one among many products. While cooperative reputation has improved in both countries, experts see further potential for development.

Core factors influencing the success of cooperatives in Slovenia and Austria

The operational environment for cooperatives in both countries presents challenges, yet it is acknowledged that some cooperatives significantly outperform others. This research aimed to uncover the reasons behind these varying success

rates. The findings indicate that, in both Austria and Slovenia, the success of a cooperative in viticulture is influenced by a set of similar key factors.

Among the **internal factors** are: (1) efficiency and competitiveness, (2) cooperative production rules and obligatory delivery quotas, (3) prices paid to farmers and their stability, (4) characteristics of members and their farms, (5) the cooperative board and management, (6) service provision, and (7) the cooperative outlet structure. The **external factors** include: (8) the general legal framework, particularly in relation to CAP support, and (9) the production region.

The majority of factors critical for a cooperative's success are internal and within the cooperative's control. Efficiency and competitiveness are pivotal, relying on robust internal organisation and influenced by various factors highlighted during the interviews. In both countries, establishing clear internal production rules, particularly concerning the obligatory delivery quota, has proven to be a key aspect of success. Most Austrian cooperatives nowadays have a well-defined structure with mandatory delivery obligations for farmers and penalties for non-compliance. Alternatively, some cooperatives create substantial price differentials between „committed values“ and „free-market prices“ to encourage farmer commitment. While such contractual agreements are also common in Slovenia, they often lack enforcement or tangible consequences, particularly when cooperatives operate under challenging conditions and fear losing members. Ensuring guaranteed or predictable quantities enables cooperatives to offer satisfactory prices and maintain stability, which is crucial for their success.

Both Slovenia and Austria have small-scale farms, high on-farm diversification, and many part-time farmers. Cooperatives in both countries mainly engage small and part-time farmers—summed up by one of the experts as “more farmers than hectares.” Experts agree that farm size, focus, intensity, and farmer characteristics like age and education influence cooperative operations and success.

Success is according to the experts strongly influenced by the roles of the president and board members, who should reflect membership, have a clear strategy, and maintain regular communication with management and members. Balancing continuity and change within the board is vital to foster belonging, ensure long-term focus, and support decision implementation. The director, often the cooperative's public face, plays a crucial management role and must be knowledgeable about cooperative operations.

Service provision, especially focused on advisory services, is another key success factor for viticulture cooperatives, except those selling wine in bulk. Providing services ensures long-term success and high-quality products. Given that viticulture typically has an annual harvest cycle, maintaining high quality is essential. Despite the costs, experts believe that robust service provision is critical if a cooperative aims to produce high-quality wines and foster member loyalty.

A diversified outlet structure is also crucial as it reduces reliance on a single market operator and provides security during crises. The most successful cooperatives often seek

to enhance their market presence through exports, which, although financially demanding, can significantly boost their profiles. Conversely, cooperatives that sell wine in bulk tend to secure their sales through multi-year contracts that specify price ranges, delivering to other outlets only under exceptional circumstances.

Other influential factors beyond direct cooperative control include the general legal framework and the production region. Regarding the legal framework and support initiatives, such as CAP funds, experts often pointed out that the available investment support does not adequately reflect the needs of cooperatives, particularly concerning their economic structure and financing requirements. Cooperatives that invest heavily, often those planning for long-term success, may feel the impact of these limitations more acutely.

Factors influencing the success of cooperatives in one of the countries

Some factors were considered important by experts in one country but were not seen as equally significant in the other. These include: (1) the homogeneity of members, (2) the size of the viticulture cooperative, (3) legislation specifically focused on cooperatives and (4) a clear focus on viticulture, and (5) environmental responsibility.

Slovenian experts see minor link between cooperative size and success, aside from economies of scale. In contrast, Austrian examples demonstrate that during periods of cooperative reorganisation, larger cooperatives that remained in the market became major players, enjoying substantial benefits such as a strong presence in export markets.

Views differ on the importance of cooperative legislation. Austrian experts see the Cooperative Law as a sufficient framework that doesn't affect success. In Slovenia, however, legislation is partly seen as needing reinforcement. The law doesn't define the director's role, leaving the president as the top authority, which has caused issues in the past. Slovenian experts call for stronger laws to better guide cooperatives, regulate non-member relations, and reduce unprofessionalism.

Views on cooperative focus differ. Austrian experts note cooperatives have historically specialised and merged for greater efficiency. In Slovenia, there is no clear consensus on whether success comes from specialised cooperatives or those reflecting members' mixed structure across several sectors. The argument for the latter is that diversification helps balance risks and ensures stability, while generating social benefits as well.

When it comes to environmental responsibility, Austrian producers and cooperatives have significantly improved environmental efficiency in production, notably through the nationwide “Nachhaltig Austria” label, which guides consumers toward sustainable wine choices. In contrast, although Slovenian cooperatives are increasingly adopting sustainable practices, experts note these efforts remain unrecognised by consumers—likely due to limited consumer interest.

Factors not playing a role in the success of the cooperatives

Although complex structures and payment modalities in cooperatives are often viewed negatively, experts in Slovenia and Austria agree these do not significantly affect success if payment periods remain reasonable. New members may initially be surprised but usually adapt if grape compensation is satisfactory. Significant differences exist between bulk and bottled wine cooperatives due to sales timing and structure. Some cooperatives' statutes allow payment delays when later sales promise greater benefits, a flexibility that experts say improves management and member satisfaction.

Experts in Slovenia and Austria agree that factors like the political environment, obligatory membership fees, fairness, transparency, cooperation with non-members, and political orientation do not directly impact cooperative success. Also, membership fees or shares, usually one-time provisional payments, are not significant in either country. Coopera-

tion with non-members now occurs only when aligned with economic interests, reflecting a shift from past practices and playing no major role in success.

5 Discussion

Many factors influencing cooperative success identified in the literature were confirmed by experts in Slovenia and Austria. Both emphasised the importance of a supportive legal framework, echoing Bijman (2016), who stressed timely, practical, and flexible laws, along with preferential treatment for cooperatives over other business forms. Experts highlighted deficiencies in how cooperatives are addressed within the Common Agricultural Policy's investment framework. This is especially relevant for policymakers, who must recognise cooperatives as key actors in family-based agriculture and support them with adequate legal and financial measures in order for them to be successful.

Table 1: Comparison of interview results in Slovenia and Austria green: relevant; yellow: mixed/semi-relevant; red: unimportant for cooperative success in Slovenia/Austria.

Influence on success of cooperative			
Section	Factor	SI	AT
Legal framework	General political environment		
Legal framework	Legal framework		
Legal framework	Legislation focused on cooperatives		
Legal framework	Cooperative production rules and obligatory delivery quota		
Legal framework	Obligatory membership fee		
Economic factors	Efficiency and competitiveness of cooperatives		
Economic factors	Prices and their stability		
Economic factors	Payment modalities		
Characteristics members/farms	Characteristics		
Characteristics members/farms	Homogeneity of members		
Structural factors	Production region		
Structural factors	Viticulture cooperative size		
Structural factors	Cooperative focus		
Structural factors	Alternatives to cooperatives		
Internal governance	Active board		
Internal governance	Cooperative management		
Internal governance	Risk reduction, fairness and transparency		
Internal governance	Cooperation with non-members		
Internal governance	Service provision		
Marketing	Outlet structure		
Marketing	Cooperative brands		
Further factors	Political orientation		
Further factors	Climate change adaptation		
Further factors	Wine scandal		
Additional factors	Conflict between direct selling and cooperative		
Additional factors	Acquisition of new members		

Echoing Harper (1991), Storchmann (2018), Fanasch and Frick (2018), experts stressed the importance of clear operational rules to prevent member opportunism and ensure high-quality internal processes and final products. Such regulatory clarity is crucial for the success of viticulture cooperatives in both countries and should be widely adopted across all agricultural cooperatives to prevent free-riding.

The literature often highlights prices paid to farmers as crucial for cooperative success. Researchers like Theuvsen and Franz (2007), Storchmann (2018), and Dejene and Gatachew Regasa (2015) see above-average prices as vital for long-term viability—a view shared by interviewees, who consider competitive pricing key. Although cooperatives aim for this, challenges like insufficient quality and unclear rules can hinder achievement.

Contrary to Saitone, Sexton, and Malan (2018), interviewees believe payment timing has little long-term impact on cooperative success, provided prices are sufficiently high. While delayed payments may reduce short-term appeal, experts argue this can be offset by competitive pricing. They note it is unrealistic for cooperatives to pay farmers immediately after grape delivery, before wine is produced and sold, as this would strain finances and violate cooperative principles. In successful cooperatives, prices exceed market levels, but payments are made with some delay compared to other market operators.

For cooperatives to succeed, farmers must recognise that they collectively *are* the cooperative. Experts noted that many adopt a passive stance, voicing concerns without engaging actively, which also makes it hard to find committed board members. Active participation in governance is essential for implementing effective strategies (Theuvsen & Franz, 2007; Ünal et al., 2009; Garnevska et al., 2011; Oliveira & Wander, 2021; Pathak & Kumar, 2008). Experts emphasise this understanding needs to become more widespread, as farmer involvement remains insufficient.

Experts were divided on the value of a focused approach for cooperative success. While most agreed with Harper (1991) that focusing on core activities is vital, some Slovenian experts argued that this can neglect social aspects and the realities of small-scale farming. They suggested that diversification across farms and within cooperatives may not enhance competitiveness but supports long-term stability by addressing broader rural challenges.

Mayring's qualitative content analysis was considered appropriate for the research given the broad scope and existing pre-study materials. However, due to the inherent diversity within agriculture and cooperatives, the interviews could not capture every detail, which may limit the findings. A more detailed analysis would benefit from distinguishing between bulk and bottled wine cooperatives, as they face significantly different challenges and success factors. Each cooperative operates uniquely, shaped by diverse factors related to agricultural production and cooperative models. Consequently, what works for one cooperative may not apply to another. Furthermore, factors not generally considered crucial for success might be vital for certain cooperatives, and vice versa.

Sources

- Amini, A. M. & Ramezani, M. (2008). Investigating the Success Factors of Poultry Growers' Cooperatives in Iran's Western Provinces. *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 5(1), 81 – 87.
- Azadi, H.; Hosseininia, G.; Zarafshani, K.; Heydari, A. & Witlox, F. (2010). Factors influencing the success of animal husbandry cooperatives: A case study in Southwest Iran. *Journal of Agriculture and Rural Development in the Tropics and Subtropics*, 111(2), 89 – 99.
- Bhuyan, S. (2007). The “People” Factor in Cooperatives: An Analysis of Members' Attitudes and Behavior. *Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 55, 275 - 298. doi:10.1111/j.1744-7976.2007.00092.x
- Bijman, J. (2016). Agricultural Cooperatives in the Netherlands: Key Success Factors. In *International Summit of Cooperatives, 11. October 2016 – 13. October 2016*. Retrieved from <https://edepot.wur.nl/401888>
- Bijman, J. (2018). Exploring the sustainability of the cooperative model in dairy: The case of The Netherlands. *Sustainability*, 2018(10), 2498. doi:10.3390/su10072498
- Bijman, J. & Iliopoulos, C. (2014). Farmers' Cooperatives in the EU: Policies, Strategies and Organization. *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics*, 85(4), 497 – 508.
- Brusselaers, J., Poppe, K., & Azcarate, T. G. (2014). Do policy measures impact the position and performance of farmers' cooperatives in the EU? *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics*, 85(4), 531 – 553.
- Bruynis, C. L., Goldsmith, P. D., Hahn, D. E. & Taylor, W. J. (2001). Key Success Factors for Emerging Agricultural Marketing Cooperatives. *Journal of Cooperatives*, 16 (2001), 14 – 24.
- Carlberg, J. G.; Ward, C. E. & Holcomb, R. B. (2006). Success Factors for New Generation Cooperatives. *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review*, 9(1), 33 – 52. doi:10.22004/ag.econ.8208
- Couderc, J.-P. & Marchini, A. (2011). Governance, commercial strategies and performances of wine cooperatives: An analysis of Italian and French wine producing regions. *International Journal of Wine Business Research*, 23, 235 – 257. doi:10.1108/17511061111163069
- Crowley, E., Baas, S., Termine, P., Rouse, J., Pozarny, P. & Dionne, G. (2005). Organizations of the Poor: Conditions for Success. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. In *International Conference on Membership-Based Organizations of the Poor from 17. January 2005 to 21. January 2025: Theory, Experience, and Policy*. Ahmedabad: FAO.
- Dejene, E. and Gatachew Regasa, D.G. (2015). Factors Affecting Success of Agricultural Marketing Cooperatives. *International Journal of Cooperative Studies*, 4(1), 9 – 17. doi:10.11634/216826311706630
- European Commission [EC] (2019). The Directive on Unfair Trading Practices in the agricultural and food supply chain. Retrieved on 04.05.2024, from <https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/document/download/292c98d9-5df5-4c9e->

- b92f-090b5b171afd_en?filename=brochure-utp-directive_en.pdf
- European Commission [EC] (2022). Producer and inter-branch organisations. Retrieved on 12. November 2022, from https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/agri-food-supply-chain/producer-and-inter-branch-organisations_en
- European Parliament [EP] (2019). Cooperatives - Characteristics, Activities, Status, Challenges. Retrieved on 26. November 2022, from [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/635541/EPRS_BRI\(2019\)635541_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/635541/EPRS_BRI(2019)635541_EN.pdf)
- Fanasch, P., & Frick, B. (2018). What Makes Cooperatives Successful? Identifying the Determinants of Their Organizational Performance. *Journal of Wine Economics*, 13(3), 1 – 27. doi:10.1017/jwe.2018.28
- Garnevska, E., Liu, G. & Shadbolt, N. (2011). Factors for Successful Development of Farmer cooperatives in Northwest China. *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review*, 14(4), 69 – 84.
- Hakelius, K. (1996). *Cooperative Values - Farmers Cooperatives in the Minds of the Farmers*. Uppsala: The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.
- Harris, A., Stefanson, B. & Fulton, M. (1996). New Generation Cooperatives and Cooperative Theory. *Journal of Cooperatives*, 11, 15 – 28. doi:10.22004/ag.econ.46188
- Harper, M. (1991). *Cooperatives and Other Group Enterprises: What are the Critical Factors for Success?* Cranfield: Enterprise Development Centre, Cranfield School of Management, Cranfield Institute of Technology.
- Hirsch, S., Mishra, A., Möhring, N., & Finger, R. (2019). Revisiting firm flexibility and efficiency: Evidence from the EU dairy processing industry. *European Review of Agricultural Economics*, 47(3), 971 – 1008. doi:10.1093/erae/jbz003
- Höhler, J. & Köhl, R. (2014). Position and Performance of Farmer Cooperatives in the Food Supply Chain of the EU-27. *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics*, 85(4), 579 – 595.
- Kutscher, W. (2019). Winzergenossenschaften in Österreich. In W. Klinger, & K. Vocelka (eds), *Wein in Österreich – Die Geschichte* (198 – 206). Wien: Brandstätter.
- Mayring, P. (2010 [1983]). *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. Grundlagen und Techniken* (11., aktual. u. überarb. Aufl.). Weinheim: Beltz
- Moon, S. & Lee, S. (2020). A Strategy for Sustainable Development of Cooperatives in Developing Countries: The Success and Failure Case of Agricultural Cooperatives in Musambira Sector, Rwanda. *Sustainability*, 12, 8632. doi:10.3390/su12208632
- Oliveira, O., & Wander, A. (2021). Factors for the success of agricultural cooperatives in Brazil. *Journal of Agriculture and Rural Development in the Tropics and Subtropics*, 122(1), 27 – 42. doi:10.17170/kobra-202102113202
- Österreichischer Raiffeisenverband [ÖRV] (2022). *Raiffeisen in Österreich*. Retrieved on 5. February 2023, from <https://www.raiffeisenverband.at/de/raiffeisen-in-oesterreich0/geschichte.html>
- Pathak, R. D. & Kumar N. (2008). The Key Factors Contributing to Successful Performance of Cooperatives in Fiji for Building a Harmonious Society. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 31(6), 690 – 706. doi:10.1080/01900690701465871
- Saitone, T., Sexton, R. & Malan, B. (2018). Price premiums, payment delays, and default risk: understanding developing country farmers' decisions to market through a cooperative or a private trader. *The Journal of the International Association of Agricultural Economists*, 49(3), 363 – 380. doi:10.1111/agec.12422
- Sexton, R. & Iskow, J. (1988). *Factors Critical to the Success or Failure of Emerging Agricultural Cooperatives*. Davis: Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of California. *Giannini Foundation Information series*, 88(3), 1 – 53.
- Simpson, J. (1999). *Cooperation and cooperative in southern European wine production: The nature of successful institutional innovation*. Madrid: Universidad Carlos III de Madrid - Instituto Figuerola.
- Storchmann, K. (2018). Introduction to the Issue: Wine Cooperatives. *Journal of Wine Economics*, 13(3), 239 – 242. doi:10.1017/jwe.2018.51
- Theuvsen, L. & Franz, A. (2007). The Role and Success Factors of Livestock Trading Cooperatives: Lessons from German Pork Production. *International Food and Agribusiness Management Association*, 10(3), 1 – 23. doi:10.22004/ag.econ.8164
- Ünal, V., Güclüsoy, H., & Franquesa, R. (2009). A comparative study of success and failure of fishery cooperatives in the Aegean, Turkey. *Journal of Applied Ichthyology*, 25(4), 394 – 400.
- Verhees, F. & Sergaki, P. & Dijk, G. (2015). Building up active membership in cooperatives. *New Medit*, 14, 42 – 52.
- Wanyama, F. O. (2012). *Cooperatives for African Development: Lessons from the Experience*. Kisumu County: School of Development and Strategic Studies, Maseno University.
- Zadružno (2023). *Zadružno iz Slovenije*. Retrieved on 24. July 2023, from <https://zadruzno.si/zadruzno-iz-slovenije>

Appendix I – Interview schedule

Table 2: Overview of the interviews in both countries

Interview	Country	When	Who	How
1.	Slovenia	16.10.2023	Cooperative expert	Online
2.	Austria	19.10.2023	Sectorial organisation	In person
3.	Austria	08.11.2023	Cooperative expert	Online
4.	Austria	13.11.2023	Ministry of Agriculture	In Person
5.	Slovenia	14.11.2023	Cooperative expert	Online
6.	Slovenia	20.11.2023	Agricultural chamber	Online
7.	Austria	23.11.2023	Cooperative expert	Online
8.	Slovenia	26.11.2023	Cooperative union	Online

Appendix II – Success factors highlighted by the experts (different order than in Appendix I)

Table 3: Success factors mentioned by the experts in Slovenia

Slovenia			
Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4
Active board	Active board	Characteristics	Active board
Legal framework	Cooperative management	Cooperative management	Cooperative management
Outlet structure	Characteristics	Efficiency and competitiveness	Efficiency and competitiveness
Prices and their stability	Efficiency and competitiveness	Outlet structure	Legal framework
Production rules and delivery quota	Outlet structure	Prices and their stability	Legislation focused on cooperatives
Service provision	Prices and their stability	Production region	Outlet structure

Table 4: Success factors mentioned by the experts in Austria

Austria			
Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Expert 4
Cooperative management	Cooperative focus	Characteristics	Active board
Environmental sustainability	Cooperative management	Cooperative size	Outlet structure
Homogeneity of members	Efficiency and competitiveness	Efficiency and competitiveness	Payment modalities
Legal framework	Payment modalities	Payment modalities	Prices and their stability
Prices and their stability	Prices and their stability	Prices and their stability	Production rules and delivery quota
Production rules and delivery quota	Production rules and delivery quota	Production region	Service provision

Appendix III – Interview Guideline Questions

General part

- What is your definition of a successful cooperative?
- Have you observed any developments when it comes to the operation of cooperatives and their performance in the past years?
- What is the general reputation of the cooperatives in your country? Does a good cooperative reputation influence the success of the cooperative?
- What is the historical background of cooperatives in your country? Does it also influence the success of current cooperatives and how?

Part I: Impact of legal framework and contract arrangements on the success of cooperatives in viticulture.

- Do you believe that the general cooperative legal framework in your country has an influence on the success of cooperatives and how?
- What production rules are set in cooperatives? How much do they differ between the cooperatives? Do you believe that production rules can impact cooperative success and how?
- Do cooperatives determine a specific obligatory delivery quota for farmers? Are farmers often obliged to deliver their full production? If not, is there a rule on what part of the production they can process/sell on their own? How does it influence the cooperative success?
- According to the cooperative law farmers should pay an obligatory fee to be part of the cooperative. Can the level of this fee influence farmers participation in a cooperative? How can it interfere with the cooperative success?

Part II: Impact of economic factors on the success of cooperatives in viticulture.

- How efficient and competitive are cooperatives in viticulture compared to other business operators in the sector? Can their efficiency impact cooperative success and how?
- Do cooperatives offer producer prices above the average, and can they ensure price stability? On what factors do prices paid to farmers depend? Is price setting and their level a factor which influences the success of a cooperative and how?
- Are there any common patterns when it comes to the payment modalities (paying grapes to farmers)? Can payment modalities influence the success of a cooperative and how?
- What other financial sources beside the contributions of their members can cooperatives use (credits, governmental support)? Do cooperatives in your country have issues accessing financing? Can this influence the success of a cooperative and how?

Part III: Impact of the characteristics of cooperative members and their farms on the success of the cooperative

- Can characteristics of members (e.g. education, age, sex, cooperative mindset, commitment) and membership (e.g. share of young farmers) engaging in cooperative influence its success and how? What about the personality of farmers participating in a cooperative?
- Is there a specific type of farms (mixed, family, full-time farms, organic farms) that rather participates in a viticulture cooperative in your country?
- Would you say that cooperative members in your country are homogenous when it comes to types and management? Does this influence the cooperative success?

Part IV: Impact of structural factors on the success of cooperatives in viticulture.

- Can the density of wine production in the region lead to cooperative success and how? What structural changes do you observe in the wine production in your country? Can they have an influence on cooperative success and how?
- Could you estimate what are the viticulture cooperative sizes (ha of production and number of members) in your country? Are there big differences between the single cooperatives and between cooperatives and companies? Does the overall acreage and the number of members covered by the cooperative have a connection to the success of the cooperative and how?
- Do wine cooperatives in your country usually only work in wine production or do they cover several sectors? Can focus on only one or a few core activities (e.g. cooperative only buying and processing grapes/wine) influence the success of the cooperative and how?

- What alternatives to cooperatives do exist in your country? Can their presence have an influence on the cooperative success and how?

Part V: Impact of internal governance on the success of cooperatives in viticulture.

- Can an active board of the cooperative influence its success and how?
- Can the cooperative management (its technical knowledge, interest, education, experience, professionalism, and communication) influence the success of the cooperative and how? Does decision-making process have an impact on the success of the cooperative and how?
- How do cooperatives in your country reduce risks? Can risk management influence cooperative success and how?
- Would you describe cooperatives as fair and transparent? Can this influence the cooperative success and how?
- To what extent do cooperatives work with farmers which aren't their members? Do cooperative members in your country usually also work with their cooperatives in business terms (beside the selling of grapes – e.g. for input purchasing) or is this not necessary the case? How can this influence success?
- Do wine cooperatives in your country usually provide any additional services for farmers (e.g. advice service, machinery)? Which ones? Do you think that the provision of additional services can benefit the cooperative success and how?

Part VI: Impact of marketing on the success of cooperatives in viticulture.

- Do some cooperative wine cellars also produce their own wine? What influence could this have on a cooperative success?
- What is the outlet structure viticulture cooperatives in your country sell to? Do you believe that delivering distinguished markets can impact cooperative success and how?
- How recognized and valued are the viticulture cooperative brands in your country? Do you believe that brand creation has an impact on the success of a cooperative and how?
- Do the cooperatives/wine producers in your country commonly market their wine? How can this influence the presence on the external markets and the cooperative success?

Part VII: Impact of further factors on the success of cooperatives in viticulture.

- Are cooperatives in your country politically oriented? If yes, does the orientation influence the cooperative success, and how?
- Do measures taken to adapt to climate change and extreme weather situations influence the success of the cooperatives in the long term and how?
- Do events like the wine scandal in Austria have a long-term impact on cooperative success which is still notable today and how?

Part VIII: Crucial factor for the cooperative success

- Are there any further factors that could according to your opinion influence the cooperative success?