

DELPHI STUDY ON THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS: COOPERATIVISM AND OTHER MODELS

Introduction and background

The **United Nations Organization (UN)** declared 2012 as the **International Year of Cooperatives** worldwide to raise greater public awareness about the contributions of cooperative enterprises to economic and social development and about reaching the Millennium Development Goals.

This **DELPHI study** is performed in the framework of the United Nations International Year of Cooperatives 2012, as a research to start a debate to contemplate the future of business organisations in general and cooperatives in particular, in order to determine the key factors of future cooperatives and to present the most probable future scenarios for these factors to an international expert panel.

The study is open to both international experts in the field through the Node network of the **MILLENNIUM PROJECT** from around the world, and to relevant international actors related to the cooperative world or linked somehow to the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) and government agencies.

The Millennium Project is a global think tank started in 1996 that brings together international experts from corporations, universities, NGOs, UN agencies and governments through more than 40 nodes around the world in a participatory process that explores how to address global challenges and build a better future through the use of forward-planning tools.

Methodology

The **Delphi** method seeks to both highlight convergences of opinion and consensus on specific topics, by questioning experts through successive questionnaires. The most frequent target of Delphi studies is to provide clarity to experts in areas of uncertainty in order to contribute to decision-making.

The technique has gone through several versions. Here, we will use the most commonly used in the framework of the MILLENNIUM project, the so-called "**Real Time Delphi**". In classic Delphi techniques, the opinions gathered in an initial round are presented to participants in subsequent rounds. By contrast, there are no rounds in the Real Time Delphi and the opinions are fed back to participants in real time. As in the classic Delphi technique, participants

remain anonymous to each other and may omit any question. Anonymity is ensured and the answers cannot be related to the answerer.

Trend analysis performed prior to the survey shows a future with continued major changes and shifts taking place in the general economy and hence in the environment of business organisations in particular. The variables relevant to the future of organisations and companies are numerous but the most important that resulted from the trend analysis, classified according to areas, are given below:

- AREA 1: ENVIRONMENT AND MARKETS
- AREA 2: THE COMPANY
- AREA 3: LABOUR MARKET
- AREA 4: OTHER VARIABLES

For each of these variables, a number of future scenarios (to 2020-2030) have been drawn up, which form the basis of the Delphi survey put to experts and which are presented below.

To obtain these scenarios, a thorough review was performed of documents of existing research and studies into sources relative to the above variables, which is why only scenarios are included that were documented in such studies, thus avoiding untested assumptions. This is the cause that at times some scenarios may seem somewhat limited, because reliability of sources prevailed over completeness of its scope, although the participants had the opportunity to enrich these achievements with contributions and clarifications in a space for remarks provided in each question.

As far as the **participants** are concerned, over 100 experts from around the world have participated in this Delphi study, from a wide variety of countries, professional experience and sectors. The study was performed between February 23 and April 15, 2012.



Global Expert Studies

Using Real Time Delphi

Future of Business Organisations Futuro de las Organizaciones Empresariales

Delphi on the Future of Business Organisations: Cooperativism and other Models

Delphi Sobre el Futuro de las Organizaciones Empresariales: Cooperativismo y otros Modelos

To see a reference paper on this topic [click here](#) (use your browser's back arrow to return here)

Please answer the questions in the form below. When you return please enter as a returning participant AND use this email address: millennium-project@igc.org AND this study code: **orgs**. This study is scheduled to close on 2012-05-15..

By pass introduction

This DELPHI study is being carried out within the framework of the International Year of Cooperatives 2012, as research that will stimulate debate and reflection on the future of business organisations in general and on cooperatives in particular, in order to be able to determine key factors for a future cooperative model. For each one of these variables, a series of hypotheses for the future have been formulated (to 2020-2030), these are used as the basis for the Delphi questionnaire presented below. When formulating the hypotheses, a documentary analysis was made of the main existing research and studies from sources relating to each one of the analysed variables, only hypotheses that were documented in those studies have been included, so avoiding untested hypotheses. This means that the hypotheses may be somewhat limited in some cases, given that the reliability of the sources has been prioritised over the exhaustiveness of its scope, although the participants have the chance to enrich these scopes by making contributions and points in the comments section provided for each question.

El presente estudio DELPHI se realiza en el marco del Año Internacional de las Cooperativas 2012, como una investigación que promueva el debate y la reflexión sobre el futuro de las organizaciones empresariales en general y sobre las cooperativas en particular, de cara a poder determinar los factores clave del modelo de las cooperativas del futuro. Para cada uno de esas variables, se han formulado una serie de hipótesis de futuro (a 2020-2030), que son la base del cuestionario Delphi a expertos que se presenta a continuación. A la hora de formular las hipótesis, se ha realizado un análisis documental de las principales investigaciones y estudios existentes de fuentes relevantes en cada una de las variables analizadas, de manera que sólo se han incluido hipótesis que estuvieran documentadas en tales estudios, evitando así hipótesis no contrastadas. Ello supone que las hipótesis pueden resultar algo limitadas en algunos casos, dado que se ha priorizado la fiabilidad de las fuentes frente a la exhaustividad de su alcance, aunque los participantes tienen la oportunidad de enriquecer estos alcances realizando aportaciones y matizaciones en el apartado de comentarios dispuesto en cada pregunta.

The trend analysis carried out prior to this survey describes a future in which significant changes and mutations will continue to take place in the economic world in general and, therefore, in the organisation and company environment in particular. Variables relevant to the future of organisations and companies are numerous, but the most important identified in the trend analysis are included in this questionnaire, grouped in the fields indicated below.

El análisis de tendencias realizado previo a esta encuesta dibuja un futuro en el que continuarán las importantes transformaciones y mutaciones que se están produciendo en el mundo económico en general y por ende, en el entorno de las organizaciones y las empresas en particular. Las variables relevantes para el futuro de las organizaciones y empresas son numerosas, pero las más importantes que se han identificado en el análisis de tendencias se señalan a continuación, en función de los siguientes ámbitos:

[FIELD/ÁMBITO 1: Environment and Markets / Entorno y Mercados](#)

[FIELD/ÁMBITO 2: Business Management / La Empresa](#)

[FIELD/ÁMBITO 3: Job Market / Mercado de Trabajo](#)

[FIELD/ÁMBITO 4: Quantitative Variables / Variables Cuantitativas](#)

When filling out the questionnaire, you may omit any questions you wish and you do not have to complete the whole questionnaire in one visit. When you return to the questionnaire, you will see your previous answers, which you can edit or add to them as you wish, and also the answers by other participants and the averages of ratings. You can submit your responses by clicking on "Submit this page" button that are in the rows, for submitting your entries thus far, or at the end of the form, for submitting all the responses at once. You are encouraged to return often, but please plan to complete your input before March 31, 2012.

Al completar el cuestionario, usted puede omitir cualquier pregunta que desee y no tiene que terminar el cuestionario entero en una visita. Cuando usted vuelve al cuestionario, verá sus respuestas anteriores, que puede corregir o ampliar como usted desee, y también las respuestas de otros participantes y las medias de valoraciones. Puede enviar sus respuestas pulsando el botón "Submit this page" (enviar esta página) que está en cada línea, para enviar sus respuestas hasta ese momento, o al final del formulario, para enviar todas las respuestas de una vez. Le animamos a volver al cuestionario a menudo, pero tenga previsto por favor completar su cuestionario antes del 2012-05-15.

Please return to the questionnaire often. When you return please enter as a returning participant AND use this email address: millennium-project@igc.org AND this study code: **orgs**.

Please remember to press **SUBMIT** at end of questionnaire.

Questionnaire

	Questions	Probability and time of occurrence Probabilidad y horizonte de ocurrencia	Impact to the future of business organizations Impacto en el futuro de las organizaciones empresariales	Impact to the future of cooperatives Impacto en el futuro de las cooperativas
1	<p>Globalisation will continue, with a growth of exports and of Direct Foreign Investment (DFI) greater than that of GDP.</p> <p>La globalización continuará, con un crecimiento de las exportaciones y de la Inversión Extranjera Directa (IED) mayor que el del PIB.</p> <p>(details)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Submit this page</p>	<p>75</p> <p>Probability of occurrence by 2030 (1 to 100) Probabilidad de ocurrencia antes de 2030 (1 a 100) (67.6) (96)</p> <p>Importance to improving the standard of living (1=low; 10=high) Importancia para la mejora del nivel de vida (1=bajo; 10=alto) (11) (96)</p> <p>Your knowledge/expertise concerning this issue (1=none; 10=high) Su conocimiento y/o experiencia con el tema (0=ningunos; 10=experto) (6.7) (96)</p> <p>Reasons for your answer Explicación de su respuesta click here; hacer click aquí</p>	<p>How large will be the impact for enterprises? (1 to 10; 10=huge) ¿Cómo de grande será el impacto para las empresas? (1 a 10; 10=enorme)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="text" value="8"/></p> <p>Changes are OK Average: 8.2 (95)</p> <p>Reasons for your answer Explicación de su respuesta click here; hacer click aquí</p>	<p>How large will be the impact for cooperatives? (1 to 10; 10=huge) ¿Cómo de grande será el impacto para las cooperativas? (1 a 10; 10=enorme)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="text" value="3"/></p> <p>Changes are OK Average: 8.3 (93)</p> <p>Reasons for your answer Explicación de su respuesta click here; hacer click aquí</p>
2	<p>New definitions of GDP will be developed that will include all kinds of aspects relating to national well-being: energy, materials, eco-systems, social and human capital, etc.</p> <p>Se desarrollarán nuevas definiciones del PIB que incluyan todo tipo de aspectos del bienestar nacional: energía, materiales, ecosistemas, capital social y humano, etc.</p> <p>(details)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Submit this page</p>	<p>99</p> <p>Probability of occurrence by 2030 (1 to 100) Probabilidad de ocurrencia antes de 2030 (1 a 100) (67.2) (99)</p> <p>Importance to improving the standard of living (1=low; 10=high) Importancia para la mejora del nivel de vida (1=bajo; 10=alto) (14) (99)</p> <p>Your knowledge/expertise concerning this issue (1=none; 10=high) Su conocimiento y/o experiencia con el tema (0=ningunos; 10=experto) (7.3) (99)</p> <p>Reasons for your answer Explicación de su respuesta click here; hacer click aquí</p>	<p>How large will be the impact for enterprises? (1 to 10; 10=huge) ¿Cómo de grande será el impacto para las empresas? (1 a 10; 10=enorme)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="text" value="9"/></p> <p>Changes are OK Average: 6.5 (96)</p> <p>Reasons for your answer Explicación de su respuesta click here; hacer click aquí</p>	<p>How large will be the impact for cooperatives? (1 to 10; 10=huge) ¿Cómo de grande será el impacto para las cooperativas? (1 a 10; 10=enorme)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="text" value="9"/></p> <p>Changes are OK Average: 6.7 (95)</p> <p>Reasons for your answer Explicación de su respuesta click here; hacer click aquí</p>

Results

ENVIRONMENT AND MARKETS

As shown in the results, **movements and shifts** currently taking place or expected to take place in the coming years and decades with respect to **globalisation, growth of emerging countries and consequent increase in global competition**, will have a significant impact on the future of business organisations. In this regard, although the above phenomena may have a different impact on the future of cooperatives, it will still be significant.

The answers collected show that in the next two decades, the **main sectors in which development is greatest** are those related to the aerospace industry, health and safety, environment and climate change, energy, sustainable mobility and transport, and other industries related to chemistry, engineering and the agri-food industry. Also included are the fields of education, culture, sports and entertainment.

Furthermore, sectors **using future technologies** include nanotechnology, micro and nano-electronics, biotechnology, photonics, new materials and advanced manufacturing technologies. Thus, the likelihood of this scenario actually happening in the coming years is 80% according to the experts who participated in the study. Also included are **ICT industries and services that support other industries and sectors**. In this regard, special emphasis is given to new, currently non-existing developments in technology, which will be available in the coming years. In fact, many of the products and services that will be available in 2030 are not yet created. This, of course, poses a major challenge for companies.

The analysis shows that the **evolution of the main sectors of the future** described above, of which the outcome is highly likely to occur according to experts, will have a significant impact on business organisations as a whole. This variable reaches a score of 8.41 on a scale of 10, the highest score of the variables identified in this area. Next, the **formation of partnerships and cooperation networks for technological development and investments in R&D** is also considered to have a major impact on these organisations (8.29 out of 10), as well as the **continuation of globalisation and growth of exports and foreign direct investment** (8.17 out of 10).

Regarding the differential impact on cooperatives, the following stand out in particular: **setting up an effective and booster framework for cooperation between the public and private sector**, the **development of biotechnology in agriculture in developing countries**, and the **existing gap between rich and poor and the role of the non-profit sector**.

Furthermore, and of special relevance to cooperatives, these variables are precisely those that contribute most to improving the quality of life of people compared with the variables related to other business organisations. Apart from the above, the formation of partnerships and cooperation networks and greater purchasing power of developing countries, as shown in the following comparative table, are some of the variables with the greatest impact on cooperatives and on improving the quality of life.

IMPACT ON IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE	IMPACT ON COOPERATIVES	IMPACT ON BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS
Gap between rich and poor countries and the role of the non-profit sector	Formation of partnerships and cooperation networks	Evolution of the main sectors of the future
Reduction of the gap	Evolution of the main	Formation of partnerships

between rich and poor in terms of health care	sectors of the future	and cooperation networks
Gap in literacy levels between men and women in developing countries	Globalisation and the growth of exports and foreign direct investment	Globalisation and the growth of exports and foreign direct investment
Differences in innovation potential between rich and poor	Increased purchasing power	Increased purchasing power
Growth in GDP and world exports of South American countries	Establishing an effective and booster framework between the public and private sector	Fast GDP growth of developing countries
Development of biotechnology in developing countries in agriculture and industry	Fast GDP growth of developing countries	Growth of BRIC countries
Evolution of the main sectors of the future	Attraction of countries with higher population growth and per capita income	Greater level of protectionism
Establishing an effective and booster framework between the public and private sector	Development of biotechnology in developing countries in agriculture and industry	Attraction of countries with higher population growth and per capita income
Increased purchasing power	Gap between rich and poor countries and the role of the non-profit sector	GDP growth of "Next Eleven" countries
New definitions of GDP	Greater level of protectionism	China's GDP growth

COMPANY

According to the consulted experts, and with a probability of occurrence of 81%, **the company of the future will need to establish a networked system combining knowledge** from several and diverse areas in an efficient and up to date manner. Thus, being open to knowledge from others, sharing knowledge and creating common knowledge will become priorities. Also, this group of experts believe that **India will maintain its global leadership in the outsourcing of Information Technology**. This scenario happening has a probability of occurrence of 79%. However, according to some, more countries must be included due to increasing competition.

The **financial participation of employees** will help organisations improve their competitiveness, and ensure a sustainable future. In this sense, besides a financial link, an effective participation of workers and worker-shareholders in the company is considered necessary. Also important are **major changes in the consumer of the future**, mainly because of a new middle class in emerging economies, a heightened sustainability awareness and technological development. Another fundamental variable concerns the **changes in business models as a result of more expensive and less abundant capital**, directly related to the higher interest rates caused by the distorted equilibrium between demand for capital and supply of savings. Finally, the **importance of extra-financial factors** must be highlighted and leading from that cashing in on value expectations in the medium and long term.

The company environment also establishes a clear differential impact on cooperatives compared to other business organisations. The participants in the study considered the variable relative to the **development of comprehension management as opposed to management by objectives or authoritarian approach**, as the variable with the greatest impact on cooperatives. Also noteworthy is the variable with a differential impact on cooperatives claiming that the cooperative model will be more developed in areas of energy, health, mobility and the financial sector, which besides pursues an "appropriate firm size" instead of a "grow-or-die" policy.

In terms of contribution to improving the quality of life of people, the variables clearly linked to cooperatives stand out again because of their greater contribution, such as a **greater development of the cooperative model** in areas of energy, health, mobility and the financial sector or **financial participation of the employee**.

LABOUR MARKET

According to the feedback from the Delphi questionnaire, the coming 20 years, the most likely scenario is that **recruitment of professionals will take place through social networks** with a lower cost and high quality. According to the participants, the probability that this happens stands at 85%. Also, according to this same group, it is highly likely (with 81%) that **the globalisation of the labour market will lead to a migration of workers to places with attractive labour markets**, resulting from the phenomenon "attracting talent" by some countries, while others will face the problem of a "brain drain".

Also, the impact on the future of organisations of this last variable of labour market globalisation will be major. It is followed closely with the same rating

of 7.44 points by a variable closely related to this topic, namely the development of globally focused strategies to attract talent, in addition to the variable that includes the concept of "flexi-time" relative to reconciling work and family life.

Regarding the differentiating factor in cooperatives, variables with the greatest impact on cooperatives (**family reconciliation and the "flexi-time" concept, worker migration as a result of globalisation of the labour market** or the **reduction of inequalities between men and women in education**) are those that contribute most to a better quality of life for people in general, as in the other studied areas.

OTHER VARIABLES

Finally, this fourth section analyses the main ideas of other developments that could affect the progress of business organisations of the future, considering the **impact on cooperatives**, as well as on **other variables which must be considered when determining trends for cooperatives**.

On a whole, developments with a focus on ethics and values because of the greater impact on cooperative organisations are identified directly. These values relate to **democratic management and equal rights, social responsibility and commitment to sustainability, solidarity values and fair trade**. It is also considered that the development of the cooperatives themselves can be a major boost to employment and development, mainly in less developed countries; thus, cooperativism is considered as a significantly growing future option in emerging countries.

Conclusions

These results confirm the hypothesis of the differential value of cooperatives in the future of business organisations. Although cooperatives are facing challenges that are similar to other business organisations in an increasingly global, interdependent, open and competitive world, **their contribution to the welfare of people and their quality of life is clearly greater**. Therefore, cooperatives are an effective tool for the progress of developing countries and the resulting narrowing of the gap between rich and poor.

As stated in the UN slogan for the International Year of Cooperatives, the Delphi study confirms that "**Cooperative enterprises help create a better world**".

Acknowledgement

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The MP Node in Spain would like to thank all the experts that have participated in the Real Time Delphi Study. For further information, please contact Ibon Zugasti, Chair of the Millennium Project Node in Spain at i.zugasti@prospektiker.es