

## Inter-Tertiary Institution Project Competition in Mauritius

*United Nations general assembly has proclaimed the year 2025 as the International Year of Cooperative, underscoring the vital role cooperatives play in sustainable development. This year's theme “Cooperatives Build a Better World” underscores the enduring global impact of cooperatives, positioning them as essential solutions to today's global challenges. It highlights their contributions to sustainable development across social, economic, and environmental dimensions, showing how cooperatives are key drivers in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The theme also emphasizes the unique ability of cooperatives to foster inclusive growth and strengthen community resilience.”*

The National Co-operative College (NCC) is a corporate body established under Section 103 of the Co-operatives Act 2016 and operates under the Ministry of Industry, SME, and Co-operatives. As the leading training institution for the local co-operative movement, NCC is mandated to impart education and training to co-operative stakeholders to enhance their societies' efficiency and promote co-operative entrepreneurship among youth, women, and the general public to strengthen the movement and encourage entrepreneurship.

**In view of celebrating the International Year of Cooperatives 2025 and to promote and develop cooperative entrepreneurship among youth, the National Co-operative College (NCC) is launching an inter-tertiary institution project competition in Mauritius for second and third year students. The competition will focus on the following topics:**

- **Cooperatives and Sustainable Development** – Exploring how cooperatives can contribute to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **Youth and Innovation in Cooperatives** – The role of young entrepreneurs in modernizing and expanding cooperative enterprises and rejuvenating the local cooperative movement
- **Technology and Digital Transformation in Cooperatives** – How fintech, AI, and digital platforms can enhance cooperative operations in the local context.
- **Women in Cooperatives** – Promoting gender equality and empowering women through cooperative enterprises.
- **Resilience of Cooperatives in Times of Crisis** – Examining how cooperatives support communities during economic or environmental challenges.
- **Green and Eco-Friendly Cooperatives** – The role of cooperatives in promoting sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, and waste management.

**Note:** Participating groups must choose only one topic from the list above.

### **Aims and objectives of the project competition:**

The competition aims to encourage university students to engage in cooperative entrepreneurship and development through innovative project proposals. Its objectives are as follows:

1. **Promoting Cooperative Values:** Encouraging students to explore and propose projects aligned with cooperative principles.
2. **Fostering Innovation:** Inspiring creative and practical solutions for cooperative business models.

3. **Enhancing Research and Awareness:** Strengthening knowledge and understanding of cooperatives within the academic sector.
4. **Encouraging Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Engaging students from diverse fields such as engineering, agriculture, and business faculties to develop sustainable cooperative solutions.
5. **Providing Implementation Opportunities:** Identifying outstanding projects for further support and potential real-world application.

## Terms and Conditions for participation

### 1. Eligibility

- 1.1 The competition is open to students enrolled in tertiary institutions in Mauritius recognized by the Higher Education Commission (HEC).
- 1.2 Projects must be submitted by groups comprising a minimum of five (5) and a maximum of seven (7) students.
- 1.3 Participants may be part of only one group, and each group may submit only one entry.

### 2. Project Requirements

- 2.1 Projects must align with the cooperative business model and address economic, social, or environmental challenges in Mauritius.
- 2.2 The project should propose an innovative, new, or improved cooperative initiative in agriculture, finance, technology, or social services within the local context.
- 2.3 Submissions must be original and must not have been previously published, presented, or awarded in any other competition. They must also comply with copyright laws and not infringe upon any intellectual property rights.

### 3. Submission Guidelines

- 3.1 The project must be typewritten and submitted in English as follows:
  - Maximum **3,000 words** (excluding appendices, abstract).
  - Font: **Times New Roman, 12pt, 1.5 spacing.**
  - Must include:

- **Title Page**
- **Abstract (maximum 200 words)**
- **Introduction & Problem Statement**
- **Objectives & Expected Impact**
- **Methodology & Implementation Plan**
- **Financial & Feasibility Plan**
- **Sustainability & Scalability**
- **Conclusion & Recommendations**

3.2 All entries should reach the Director, National Co-operative College (NCC), Bois Marchand Road, Terre Rouge by the **specified deadline**. Late submissions will not be accepted. Each entry must clearly include the name, address, and telephone number of each team member, along with the name of the university.

#### **4. Evaluation Criteria (100 Points Total)**

Projects will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Innovation & Creativity (20 points)** – Originality and feasibility of the idea.
- **Relevance to Cooperative Principles (20 points)** – Alignment with cooperative values and principles.
- **Impact & Sustainability (20 points)** – Potential long-term benefits and social, economic, or environmental impact.
- **Financial Viability (15 points)** – Realistic financial planning.
- **Research & Data Support (15 points)** – Use of credible sources and analysis.
- **Presentation & Clarity (10 points)** – Structure, coherence, grammar and professionalism.

#### **5. Competition Timeline**

- **Call for Applications:** 3 March – 7 March, 2025
- **Deadline for First Submissions:** 18 April 2025
- **Preliminary Screening, Mentoring Feedback & Improvements:** 22 April – 9 May, 2025
- **Final Submission:** 20 June 2025
- **Evaluation & Winners' Selection:** 30 June 2025

- **Award Ceremony:** An Award Ceremony will be organised in **July 2025**. The date will be communicated to all winners and participants in due course. All participants will be remitted a **Certificate of Participation** on that occasion

## **6. Awards & Recognition**

**1st Prize: Rs. 35,000 + shield + certificate of participation**

**2nd Prize: Rs. 25,000 + shield + certificate of participation**

**3rd Prize: Rs. 15,000 + shield + certificate of participation**

Outstanding projects may be considered for further development opportunities.

## **7. Intellectual Property**

- 7.1 By submitting a project, participants grant the **National Co-operative College (NCC)** the right to use, publish, and promote their work for educational and promotional purposes.

## **8. Code of Conduct**

- 8.1 Participants must adhere to ethical research and presentation standards.
- 8.2 Any form of misconduct, including misrepresentation or violation of competition rules, will result in disqualification.
- 8.3 The decisions of the evaluation panel are final and cannot be contested.

## **9. Liability & Disclaimers**

- 9.1 NCC is not responsible for any data loss or disputes arising among team members.
- 9.2 The competition timeline is subject to change, and participants will be informed accordingly.

## **10. Acceptance of Terms**

- 10.1 By participating in the competition, all team members acknowledge and agree to abide by these terms and conditions.