

Sustainable Economies Due diLigence:  
good EXamples and the role  
of social dialogue

**COOP ALLEANZA 3.0**  
**Italy**

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CASE STUDY  
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE

PROJECT NO. 101126464

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June 2025



Case study of the Sustainable Economies Due diligence: good EXamples and the role of social dialogue (SEDLEX) project, led by DIESIS Network with the financial support of the European Commission (Project no. 101126464)

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

For their committed participation in the SEDLEX project, DIESIS Network thanks:

- » **Research Institute for Work and Society, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (HIVA - KU Leuven)**  
Belgium
- » **Innova eG**  
Germany
- » **The associated partners of the project and external experts.**

## **Published by:**

**DIESIS Network**

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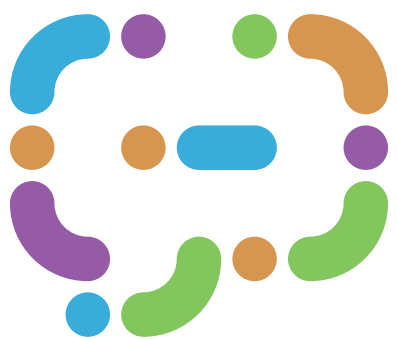
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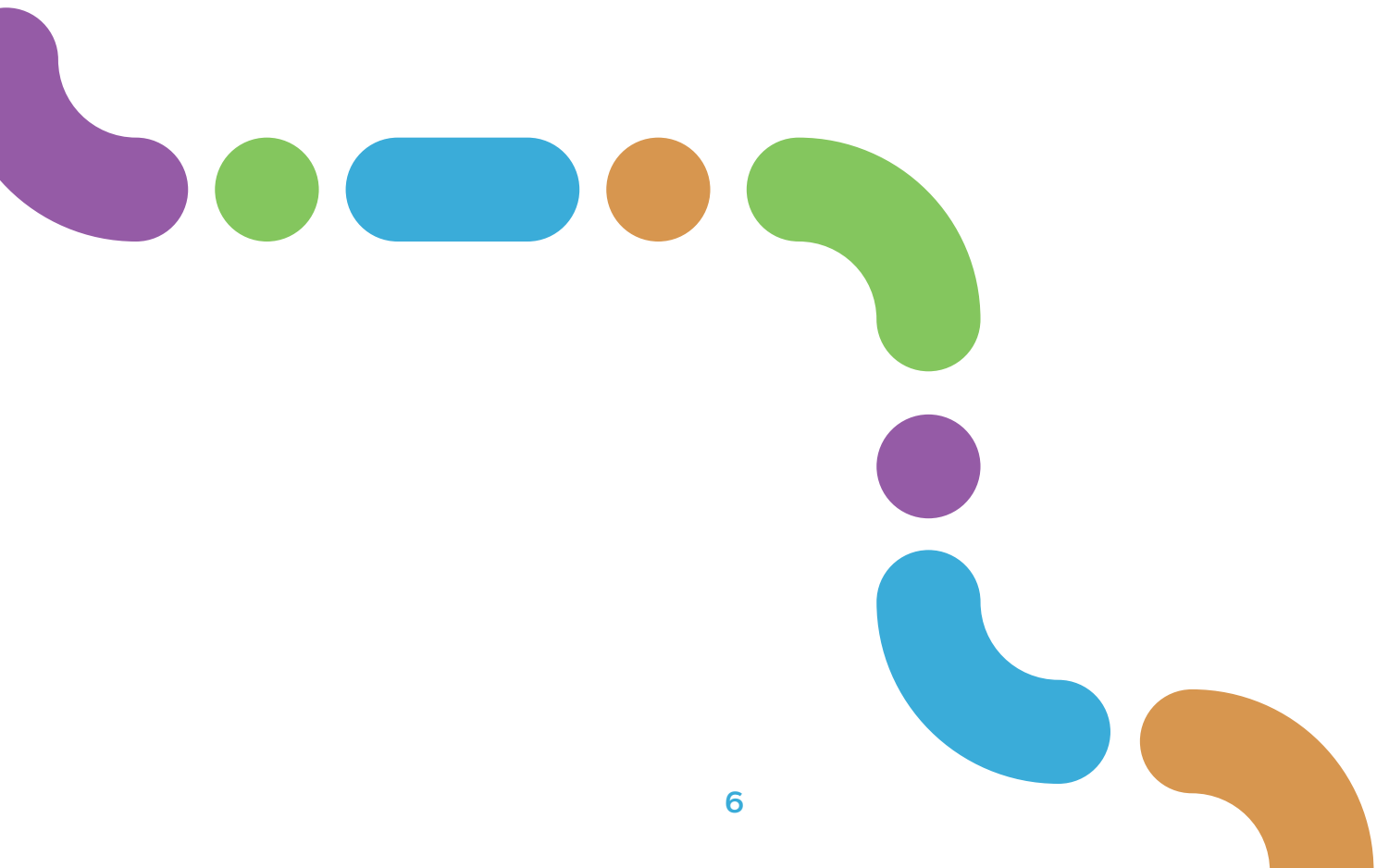
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01

# Organisational model and legal status



## Case study: COOP ALLEANZA 3.0 – Italy

Coop Alleanza 3.0 is a large Italian retailing cooperative.<sup>1</sup> With almost 350 supermarkets and hypermarkets and nearly 16,000 workers, it is present from north to south in eight regions of Italy: Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Veneto, Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, Marche, Abruzzo, Puglia and Basilicata. More than **2.2 million members** make up its social base. All these members make the cooperative **one of the largest in Europe by membership**. The centrality of the members is guaranteed by the governance structure, designed with the aim of fostering participation and increasing transparency. Coop Alleanza 3.0 is legally registered as a “Società Cooperativa” (S.C.).

The cooperative is affiliated to the **Coop System**<sup>2</sup> umbrella organisation of consumer cooperatives in Italy. The Coop System brings together 77 consumer cooperatives – of which Coop Alleanza 3.0 is the largest – operating via **ANCC-Coop** (*Associazione Nazionale Cooperative di Consumatori – Coop*).

The purchasing and marketing centre of Coop System is **Coop Italia**. Coop Italia is the leading retailer in Italy, well-known for its emphasis on quality, sustainability and social responsibility. The cooperative values that guide the actions of the cooperative are those that drove the Rochdale Pioneers, the founders of the first modern consumer cooperative in England in 1844.

Coop Alleanza 3.0's **governance model** is based on cooperative principles: members exercise ownership through the rules and instruments of democratic participation, according to the principle of “one

member, one vote”. Members’ rights and duties are set out in the “Rules of Mutual Exchange”. The members are the primary stakeholders of the cooperative as they are, at the same time, its owners and the main beneficiaries of the services it provides. As a consumer coop, it is inspired by fundamental values such as freedom, democracy, social justice and solidarity: the integration of the ethical-social and entrepreneurial dimensions is based on them. Cooperatives all over the world refer to the values of the Rochdale Pioneers: this is stated in the ‘*Declaration of Cooperative Identity*’, approved in 1995 by the Manchester congress of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA).<sup>3</sup> The ICA resolutions have been adopted by the Italian consumer cooperatives through the ‘*Charter of Values*’: “A consumer cooperative is a society founded on people, established to satisfy the common needs of its members concerning primarily the purchase of goods and services (but also more generally of an economic, cultural and social nature)”.

The cooperative has a governance model that **distinguishes the functions of policy and control**, which are in the hands of the owners, from those of management. The **owners** are represented by the president while management is entrusted to the general manager. The objective is to improve efficiency in the management of the company and the simplification of processes, guaranteeing **member participation** and transparency. The **board of directors** consists of 31 members, representing all the territories where the cooperative is present. The president and members of the board of directors

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1 Source: <https://www.coopalleanza3-0.it> (retrieved 24.06.2025)

2 Source: <https://www.legacoop.coop/> (retrieved 24.06.2025)

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3 Source: <https://ica.coop/en/cooperatives/cooperative-identity> (retrieved 24.06.2025)

cannot hold office for more than three consecutive terms, each of which lasts three years. Finally, the board of directors is supported by a) the ethics commission; b) the board of auditors; and c) the electoral commission. The **council of social representation** gives voice to the demands of the territories and plays a linking role between the members and the management of the cooperative.

Every year, members of the cooperative have the opportunity to approve the **financial statements** through a series of **local assemblies** held across the country. In 2023, a total of 86 territorial assemblies were organised, with more than 40,000 votes cast. These culminated in the **general assembly**, attended by 130 delegates from all over Italy. Together, the consumer members who give life to the cooperative approved the 2023 annual report, which closed with a profit of €20 million.

The **statute** describes what the cooperative does, for whom and in what way.<sup>4</sup> These are the rules that the co-operative must abide by in carrying out its activities and the rules that define its relationship with its members, who are the very *raison d'être* of Coop Alleanza 3.0.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: <https://www.coopalleanza3-0.it/cooperativa/coop-alleanza-30/statuto.html> (retrieved 24.06.2025)

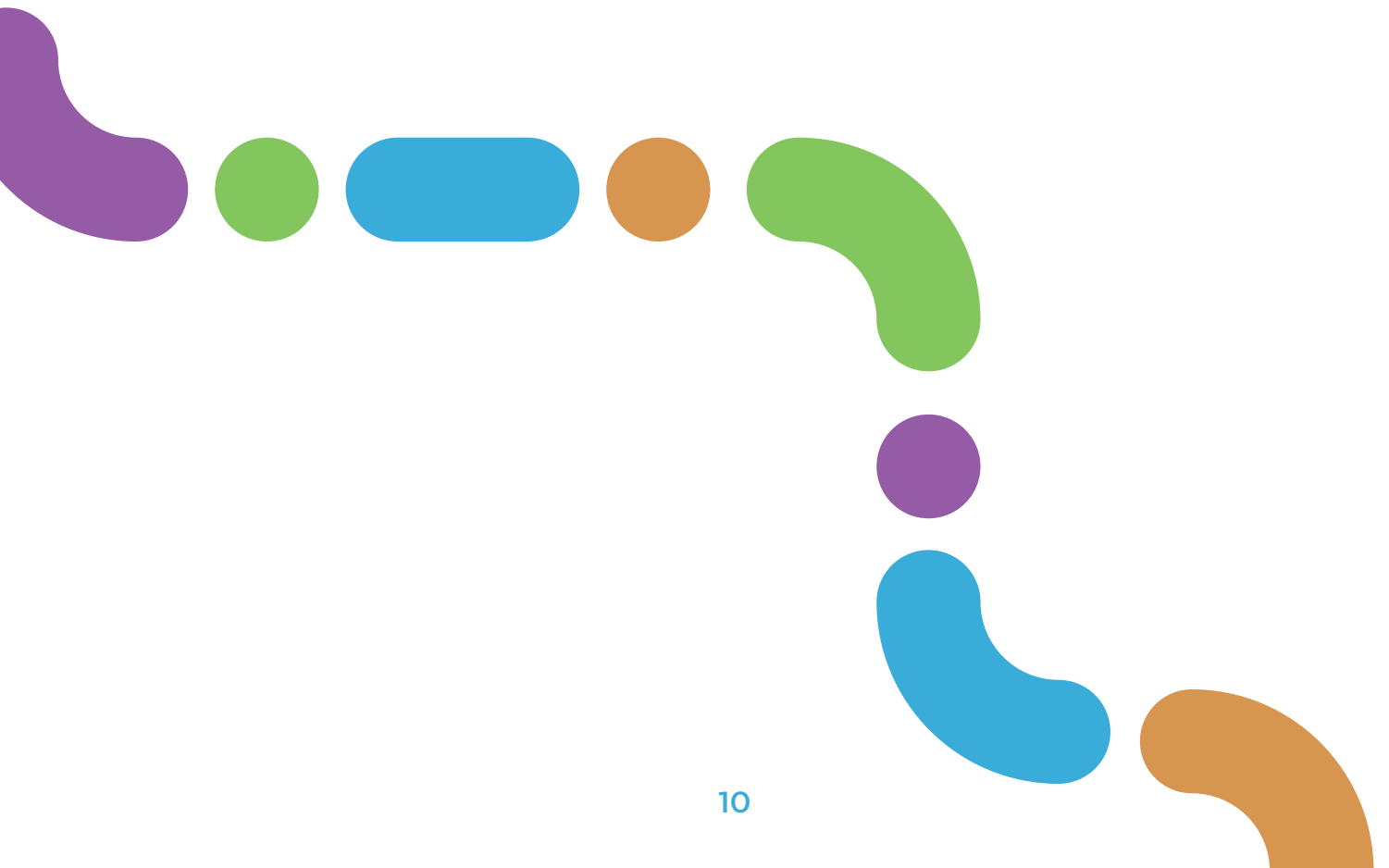


## Case study: COOP ALLEANZA 3.0 - Italy



# 02

## **Background of the company**



## Case study: COOP ALLEANZA 3.0 – Italy

Coop Alleanza 3.0 was born in January 2016 from the merger of Coop Adriatica, Coop Consumatori Nordest and Coop Estense. Previously, in 2014, Coop Adriatica's members voted unanimously to merge with Coop Veneto, a small consumer cooperative trading in the provinces of Venice, Padua and Vicenza.

Its main activity is food and non-food retailing, carried out through a network of supermarkets and hypermarkets and also through an online sales channel, managed through a dedicated company; in addition, Coop Alleanza 3.0 operates – either directly or through subsidiaries – in other areas of interest to members and consumers, such as energy, insurance, culture and information.

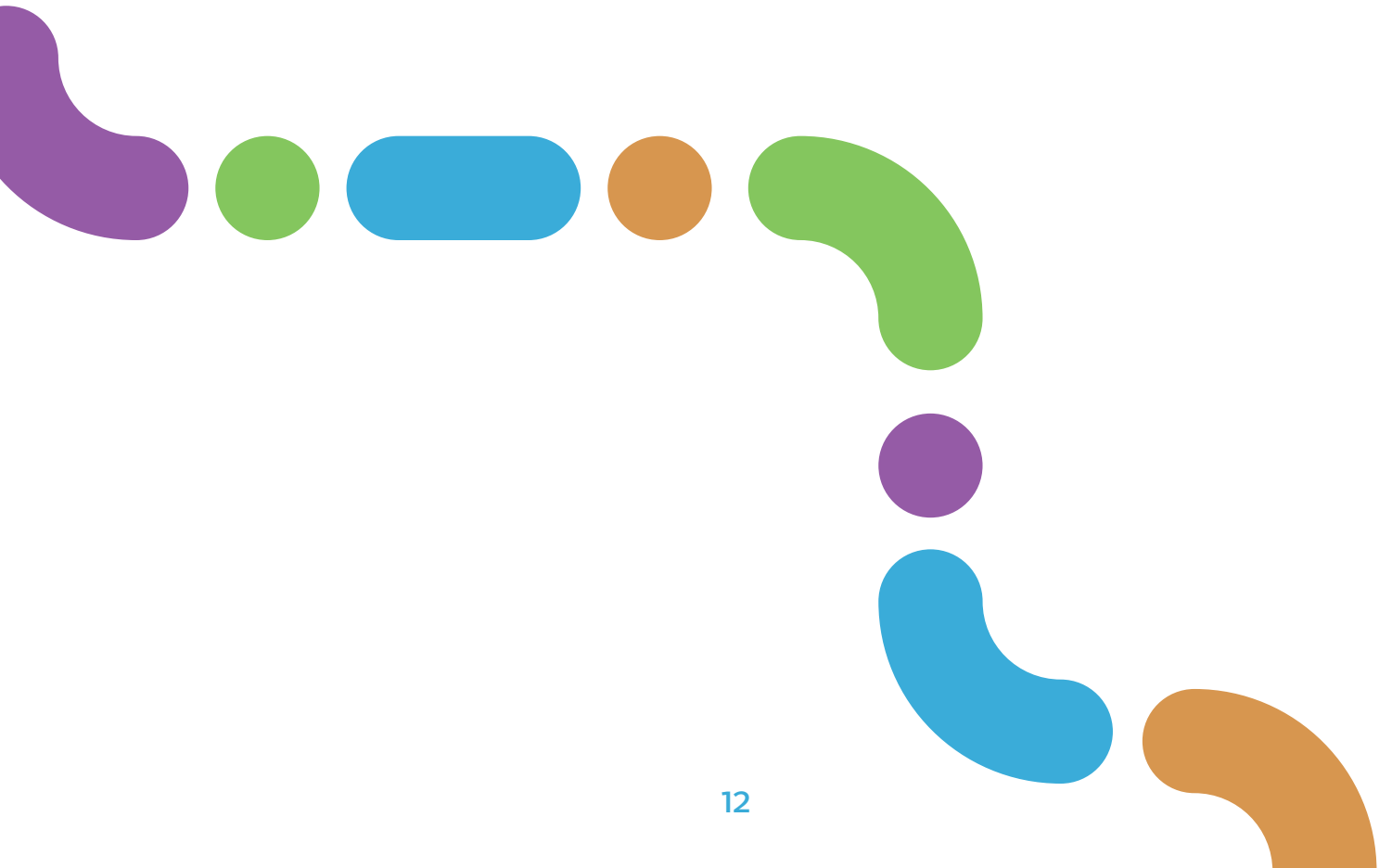
The chain of supermarkets and hypermarkets the cooperative operates offers a wide range of products including food, beverages, household items, and personal care products. Coop Alleanza 3.0 places a strong emphasis on promoting local products and sustainability, often collaborating with local producers to ensure high quality and traceability of food items.

Coop Alleanza 3.0 is characterised by its commitment to ethical consumption and cooperative principles, focusing on serving the community while maximising member benefits. It participates in various social initiatives, supporting projects that promote education, environmental sustainability, and responsible consumption. The company also implements technological innovations to enhance customer experience, such as online shopping and loyalty programmes.

As of 1 January 2018, Coop Eridana also merged with Coop Alleanza 3.0: this added a guarantee of quality and convenience for its members and customers, by purchasing of consumer products collectively while being competitive on the market. By 31 December 2023, Coop Alleanza 3.0 had a total of 2,230,072 members.

03

# **Corporate sustainability due diligence (CSDD)**



## Case study: COOP ALLEANZA 3.0 – Italy

Coop Alleanza 3.0 manages every activity in a responsible way, with particular attention to people and the environment. Sustainability is at the core of the cooperative's mission and consequently of its daily actions.

The cooperative's **Sustainability Report 2023**<sup>5</sup> shows how it intends to progressively adapt its reporting to the requirements of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). Although the directive is still in the process of being transposed into Italian law, some information has already been aligned with the new European sustainability reporting standards. For instance, climate-altering emissions, at scope 1 and 2 levels, are now more comprehensively reported than in previous years, and are calculated by extending the scope of reference to subsidiaries. It has become essential to ensure the highest quality of the data provided. For this reason, the information was collected and processed according to a structured process and implemented according to the requirements of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards to ensure the reliability of the data. The use of estimates was limited as much as possible.

The Sustainability Report 2023, with reference to the GRI standard indicators, was voluntarily subjected to a limited audit by the independent company Bureau Veritas. It reports the main results produced by the cooperative in the calendar year 2023. The cooperative has always been committed to guaranteeing its members and consumers quality products. In particular, branded products are produced in

cooperation with selected suppliers and according to stricter specifications than those required by current regulations and in line with due diligence principles.

The commitment to environmental protection is also developed in collaboration with the public administration, through participation in actions and initiatives promoted both locally and at regional, national and European levels. This is the case, for instance, of the adhesion to the European 'Net zero cities' plan, through specific decarbonisation actions that Coop Alleanza 3.0 has committed to implement by 2030, in two agreements signed with the municipalities of Parma and Bologna, within the framework of their respective climate contracts.

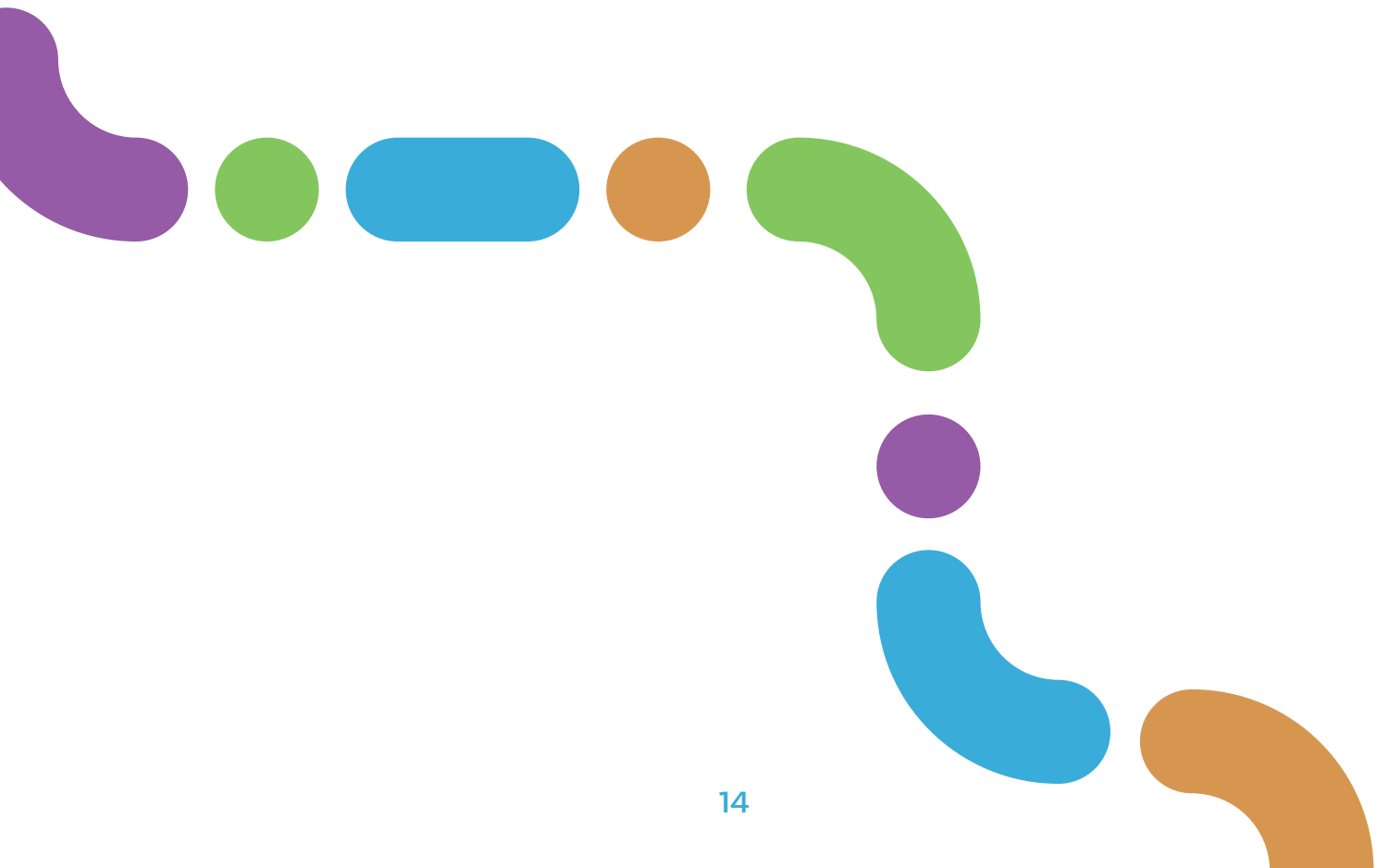
In order to strengthen its commitment in the direction, in line with the CSRD, the cooperative's **2024-2027 sustainability plan** includes new initiatives to reduce energy consumption from fossil fuels and to define a decarbonisation plan based on an initial measurement of climate-changing emissions that is also proposed in the Sustainability Report.

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<sup>5</sup> Source: <https://www.coopalleanza3-0.it/cooperativa/sostenibilita.html> (retrieved 24.06.2025)

# 04

## **Social dialogue**



## Case study: COOP ALLEANZA 3.0 – Italy

Regarding social dialogue within the cooperative, including the involvement of employees via trade unions and works councils, the cooperative has always promoted good working conditions and well-being for its employees.

During 2023, 131 trade union and works councils meetings were held, at which various topics were discussed, including new openings and the restructuring of shops, and aspects of work organisation. A total of 41 **agreements** were signed regarding business and financial issues. One of them concerns the outsourcing of activities carried out at the warehouses in San Vito al Tagliamento, Reggio Emilia, Anzola Emilia and Cesena; the agreement was signed in November, preserving employment levels: all workers were in fact relocated to other production units of the cooperative.

On 1 January 2023 the new **Supplementary Agreement of Coop Alleanza 3.0**<sup>6</sup> came into force, signed with the trade unions active in the cooperatives and approved by the workers at the end of 2022. The agreement, which covers all areas of operation, confirms a fixed company bonus, which complements the one defined at national level, and introduces the quarterly variable salary, linked to the achievement of shop objectives and additional to the annual variable. The focus on investing in people is confirmed by a training plan and the plan to hire new resources and

increase the hours for part-time employees.

In April 2023, Coop Alleanza 3.0 signed with the national trade unions (Filcams CGIL, Fisascat CISL, and UILTuCS), at the Ministry of Labour, the **expansion contract** ("*Contratto di Espansione*")<sup>7</sup> that initiated an important generational change and skills upgrading process, with a mix of measures including voluntary early retirement; to prevent workforce reduction it committed to hiring 550 new full-time employees, including professional apprenticeship contracts, enhancing part-time positions and a comprehensive training programme. Thanks to this instrument, 923 employees benefited from early retirement and about 600 new workers were hired.

The **Academy** of Coop Alleanza 3.0<sup>8</sup> serves as the cooperative's corporate university, and acts in a widespread and transversal way. It is a physical and digital ecosystem, consisting of in-person classrooms, distance learning classrooms, online courses, video content and in-depth materials, which through the platform can be enriched and consolidated day by day. The academy highlights the strategic importance that training – continuous, specialised and contextual – has always had for Coop Alleanza 3.0: an area in which each employee, both at headquarters and at the point of sale, can personalise their individual growth path, articulating it between free training and

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6 The supplementary agreement of Coop Alleanza 3.0 is a document that complements and specifies the National Collective Labour Agreement (CCNL) for the commerce sector, applicable to the cooperative's employees. Essentially, it is an agreement that governs specific aspects of the employment relationship within Coop Alleanza 3.0, going beyond the provisions of the national contract.

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7 The Expansion Agreement of Coop Alleanza 3.0 is an arrangement that allows employees nearing retirement to access early exit measures, while simultaneously promoting the hiring of new staff and the training of current employees. This agreement, signed with trade unions, aims to support generational turnover and the alignment of workforce skills with new technological needs.

8 Source: <https://academy.coopalleanza3-0.it/> (retrieved 24.06.2025)

professional training. In 2023, the commitment to training was strengthened, with more than 222,000 hours of training being undertaken. Excluding temporary workers, training activities involved more than 14,900 employees during the year, making an average of about 15 hours of training for each worker. A detailed analysis of the composition of participants shows a strong investment in training for managerial employees, who each received an average of 39 hours of training, due to the numerous growth paths undertaken and the skills upgrading activities included in the expansion plan.

In addition to the hours of action in the sense of didactics, there were also training tutorials and self-study on **Coopedia**, the internal portal that allows you to follow courses online, consult the encyclopaedia of professions and exchange ideas with colleagues via a forum. Over 75,000 hours were devoted to occupational health and safety, while another 125,000 concerned managerial, technical and institutional training.

The safety and well-being of people in the workplace is a priority objective for the cooperative, as set out in its **occupational health and safety policy**. For this reason, significant resources are also invested each year to make shops, logistics centres and offices safe and comfortable, and to guarantee constant information and training on health and safety at work.

All available initiatives and services can be accessed through a dedicated web portal, which had almost 14,000 members at the end of 2023. Over the past year, more than 18,000 requests have been made through

the online form. In addition, all workers receive email updates on corporate welfare opportunities (62 mailings in 2023) and can communicate quickly with dedicated staff, including via a WhatsApp number. A questionnaire survey was also conducted during the year to find out workers' assessment and expectations regarding the services offered and the way they are offered and delivered. More than 4,000 workers took part in the survey, and they generally expressed a high level of satisfaction with the communication and support provided, indicating a preference for everyday and simple digital tools (such as WhatsApp), but also a desire for relationships and human relations to manage the welfare world.

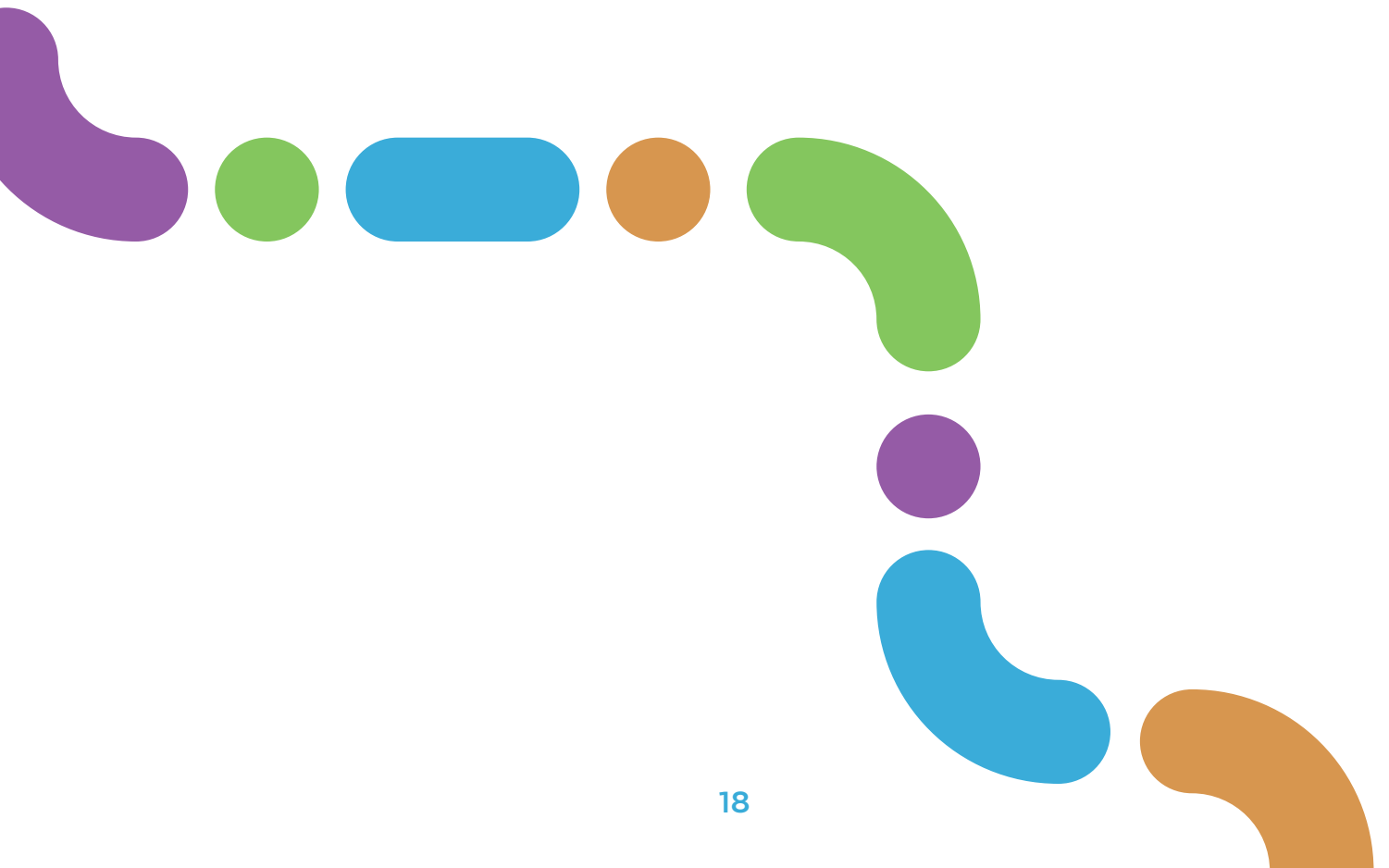


## Case study: COOP ALLEANZA 3.0 - Italy



# 05

## **Challenges and opportunities**



## Case study: COOP ALLEANZA 3.0 – Italy

In May 2024, the distinguished Italian newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore* named Coop Alleanza 3.0 among Italy's 240 '**Sustainability Leaders**'.<sup>9</sup> This ranking, compiled annually by *Il Sole 24 Ore* in collaboration with the research firm Statista, recognises Italian companies that demonstrate exceptional commitment to environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices. The list is updated annually based on a set of 40 ESG parameters derived from companies' sustainability reports. The institute analysed the publications of 1,900 companies operating in Italy. Alleanza Coop 3.0 is the only company in the food retail sector to be included in the ranking. Alleanza Coop 3.0 also awarded the **Quadro Fedele prize** in January 2024 by *Aircs* (Italian Association of Social Economy Auditors).<sup>10</sup>

In continuity with the theme of sustainability, the cooperative has been invited to bear witness to and contribute to various study and research activities, conducted by Bologna and Parma universities, the Retail Institute, *Pandora* magazine, and the University for SDGs, as well as by *Legacoop* at territorial level and by *Impronta Etica*, an association for the promotion of social responsibility, with which the cooperative is associated.

The **EU Code of Conduct on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices**<sup>11</sup> is a voluntary

initiative launched by the European Commission on 5 July 2021. Coop Alleanza 3.0 has joined, via **ANCC-Coop**.<sup>12</sup> The objective of this document is to achieve environmentally and socially sustainable food supply chains through the voluntary collaboration of companies. Joining this code includes a commitment to reinforce the transition to sustainable food systems by taking on voluntary environmental and social sustainability goals throughout the **supply chain**, and a voluntarily commitment to improve and communicate sustainability performance. This all helps reduce the overall environmental footprint. Under this code, the cooperative has defined a set of goals to be achieved by 2025. They are divided into four macro-topics:

1. *Environment*: production processes that safeguard the environment, soil, air and water quality, and protect biodiversity, animal welfare, responsible/sustainable use of water resources, reduction and valorisation of waste and scrap, in a logic of circularity;
2. *Ethics*: to protect workers' rights and a fair economic return for the different players in the chain;
3. *Safety*: to ensure safe and healthy food and to contribute to the nutrition education of the population and to a wider dissemination of healthy diets and lifestyles, based on the principles of the Mediterranean diet;
4. *Partnership*: to strengthen networks and alliances

9 Source: [https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/economia/pmi/2024/05/20/coop-alleanza-3.0-confermata-leader-della-sostenibilita\\_111817d6-3d65-4ef6-9834-34a5a3334434.html](https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/economia/pmi/2024/05/20/coop-alleanza-3.0-confermata-leader-della-sostenibilita_111817d6-3d65-4ef6-9834-34a5a3334434.html) (retrieved 24.06.2025)

10 Source: <https://aircs.it/it/archivio-premio-quadrofedele.php?n=111>

11 Source: [https://food.ec.europa.eu/horizontal-topics/farm-for-k-strategy/sustainable-food-processing/code-conduct\\_en](https://food.ec.europa.eu/horizontal-topics/farm-for-k-strategy/sustainable-food-processing/code-conduct_en) (retrieved 24.06.2025)

12 Source: <https://www.forumterzosettore.it/organizzazioni/soci/ancc-coop-associazione-nazionale-delle-cooperative-di-consumatori-coop/> (retrieved 24.06.2025)

between producers, processors, distributors and consumers, with a view to sustainability.

It will be the European Commission that will systematically monitor the achievement of the set objectives, together with the other European actors participating in the project.

Regarding the challenges, the **digital transformation** and the shift towards online shopping was accelerated by the pandemic. Coop Alleanza 3.0 must continue to invest in digital platforms and e-commerce solutions to meet customer expectations and stay relevant. **Competition** in the retail sector, especially among the grocery and supermarket chains, is fierce. Coop Alleanza 3.0 competes with not only other cooperative chains but also large national and international brands that can offer aggressive pricing and wider product ranges.

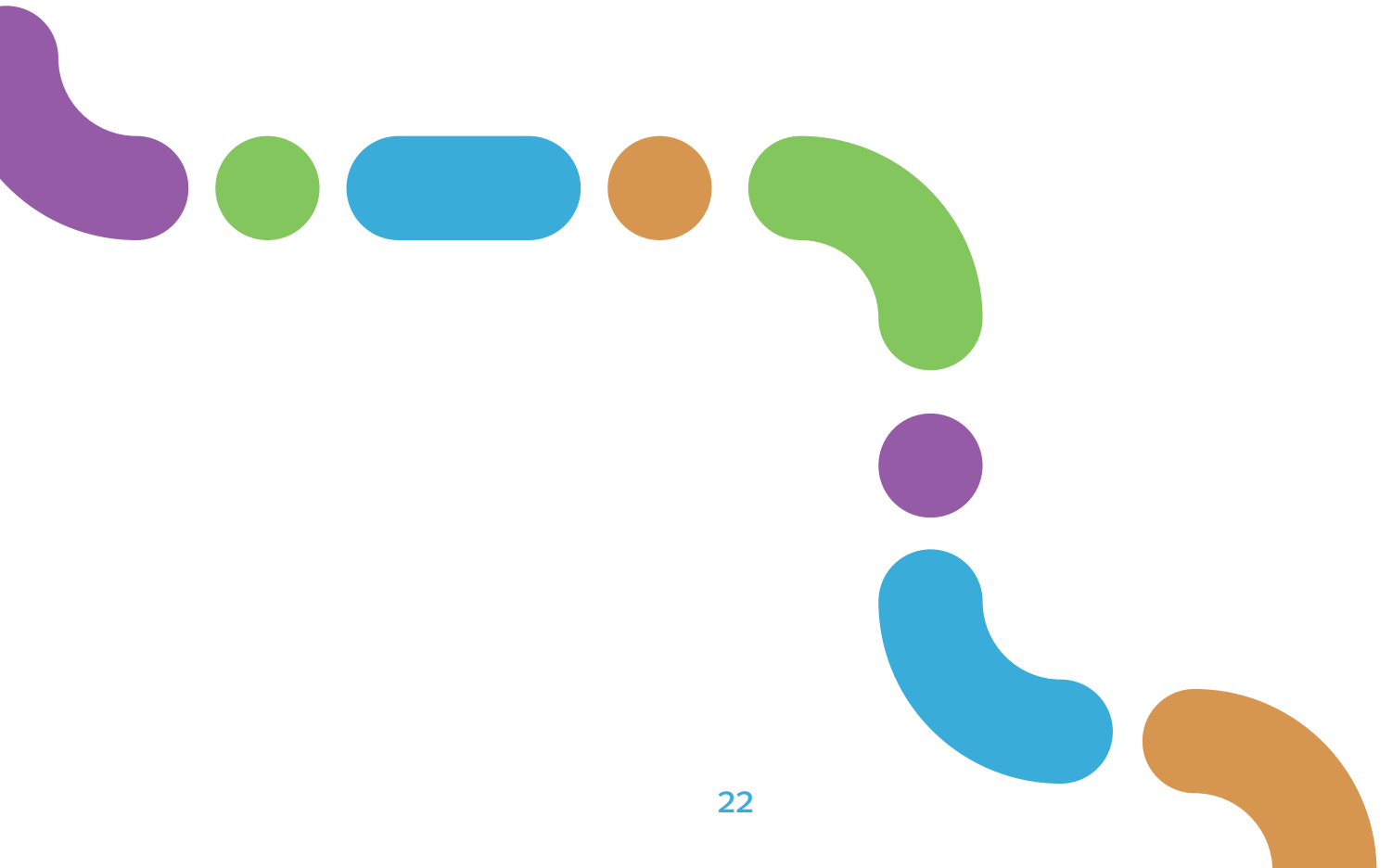
It is also important to focus on **member engagement** and, as a cooperative, engaging and retaining members is vital to success. Understanding and meeting the expectations of members while fostering a sense of community and participation can be challenging.

## Case study: COOP ALLEANZA 3.0 - Italy



# 06

## **Strategies and actions**



## Case study: COOP ALLEANZA 3.0 – Italy

For the cooperative, ESG objectives are important criteria to be fulfilled, and this is done through the implementation of **concrete strategies and actions** such as those outlined. Governance that feeds ESG parameters relates to organisational models in which these principles are an integral and substantial part of corporate mechanisms. Coop Alleanza 3.0 prioritises ESG parameters including environmental, social and governance principles, and integrates them into its core operating models. This means these principles are not just add-ons, but are integrated into the company's decision-making, resource allocation and control systems. Effective ESG governance ensures that the company's actions align with ethical and sustainable practices, benefiting all stakeholders, including shareholders, employees, customers, and the wider community. They are a strategic choice endowed with means, resources, objectives and instruments of control so that it can be fully implemented.

With regard to the **environmental goals** in particular, the cooperative addresses the **supply chain**. The cooperative - through Coop Italia, a national buying consortium for all Italian consumer cooperatives - has signed agreements with suppliers to select the best quality raw materials and to use the most advanced and sustainable production processes. It is committed to verifying that its trading partners keep to their commitments.

In addition to raising awareness and involving suppliers on safety and ethical issues, Coop Italia conducts **annual audits** along the production chain, with the cooperation of auditing organisations,

national and international universities, research institutes and individual cooperatives. As an example, in 2023 the cooperative exerted strict control over the 763 suppliers of branded products, carrying out 1,300 audits and more than 11.6 million analytical determinations, more than in 2022.

Another important fact concerning the protection of the health of its consumers is that for the past 40 years Coop Italia has had a **laboratory** where it conducts analyses to combat fraud and verify the authenticity of agri-food products, through biomolecular, chemical and micro-biological analyses and, finally, to assess the organoleptic qualities – or performance, in the case of non-food – of branded products. In fact, in 2023, approximately 4,733 analytical determinations on 2,384 samples were carried out by the cooperative's laboratory.

An additional noteworthy aspect is that it has strengthened its commitments to quality and safety for its consumers, giving them the opportunity to make more informed and conscious choices. The cooperative has made the **labels** of its branded products complete and more accurate than required by current regulations through the application of transparent labels. Through these labels, consumers can know exactly where those products come from.

### Social dimension

Coop Alleanza 3.0 has a strong **female participation**, since women represent 76.1% of employees. The presence of female workers in positions of responsibility is 51.8%, a percentage that decreases

considerably if one narrows the field of observation to managers and executives.

It is also the case that 62% of women workers have a part-time contract, while 76.5% of men are employed full-time. The commitment to ensure that all workers have the opportunity to grow also emerges from the data on career paths: 62% of those launched during the year concern female workers and, of the 219 paths successfully completed in 2023, those completed by women account for 73%.

The cooperative supports maternity and thus facilitates the return to work of new mothers with instruments tailored to individual requests. In 2023, new maternity leaves totalled 145, with an average duration of 157 days; for those completed during the year, the rate of return to work was 97.8%. This approach is also meant to be a concrete step forward on the now dramatic issue of the birth deficit in Italy.

New instruments to promote **gender equality** have been introduced with the new integrative contract, effective from January 2023. For example, an additional paternity leave has been established for new fathers, with the allocation of five more days of leave than already provided for by law. The possibility was formalised for all parents to take advantage of reduced hours, additional leave, facilitated shifts and expectations, with rules defined in relation to the age of the children, up to the age of 12.

The **gender pay gap** is the average difference in gross hourly earnings between men and women, which is almost always to the disadvantage of the latter. It is a multidimensional phenomenon endemic in societies

around the world, the result of cultural legacies that promote cultural models based on gender inequality. From this point of view too, the cooperative has tried in its own small way. With respect to the remuneration balance between women and men, calculated with respect to both gross and net remuneration, there is no significant difference in treatment between men and women. In fact, it should be considered that for each role, particularly for point-of-sale roles, there are no differences in grading and salary treatments.

Another remarkable statistic with respect to Goal 8 of the United Nations sustainable development goals<sup>13</sup> on decent work and economic growth relates to the cooperative's commitment to favouring the employment of differently abled or **socially disadvantaged people**: at the end of 2023, there were 821 workers protected by the relevant legislation, covering almost the entire legal provision.

From 1 January 2023, with the new company integrative contract, the **cooperative welfare system**<sup>14</sup> was unified, extending the same opportunities to workers in all territories, and enhanced with new initiatives.

The corporate welfare programme entitled '*Più per te*' (More for you) gives the cooperative's employees many opportunities, divided into three areas: time, health and saving. These range from extra leave for family assistance to personal loans at preferential rates, prevention packages, discounts on shopping

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<sup>13</sup> Source: <https://globalgoals.org/goals/8-decent-work-and-economic-growth/> (retrieved 24.06.2025)

<sup>14</sup> Source: <https://www.legacoop.coop/coop-alleanza-3-0-un-welfare-che-ascolta-i-lavoratori-e-risponde-ai-loro-bisogni/> (retrieved 24.06.2025)



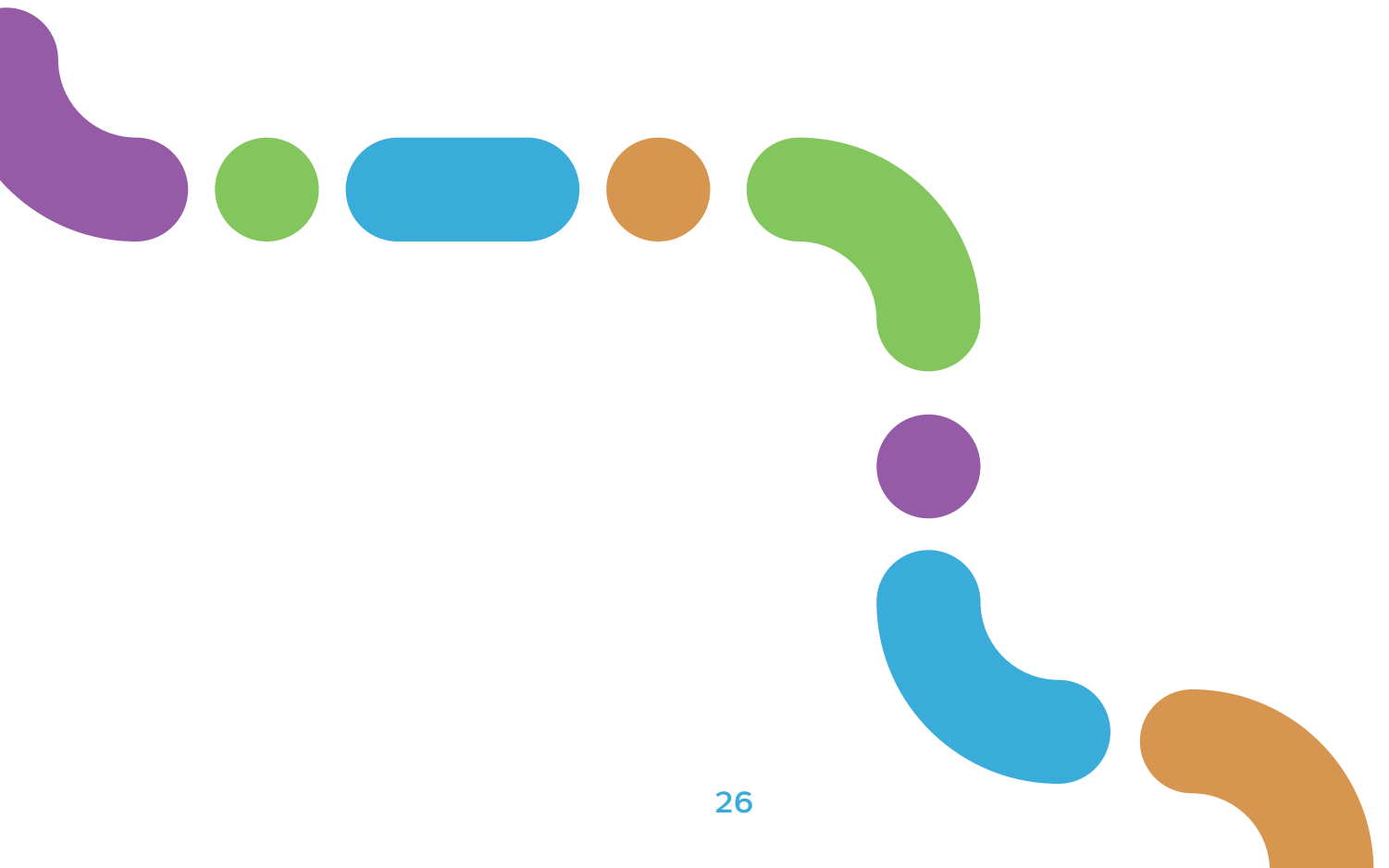
## Case study: COOP ALLEANZA 3.0 - Italy

in the cooperative shops and on services offered by group companies, and also educational paths for their children and incentives for sustainable mobility, also with positive environmental effects.

In conclusion, a **Welfare Commission** has been set up, which is tasked with investigating actions to prevent violence and harassment, as well as defining support actions through counselling and assistance to victims. Among the support actions, any workers who are victims of gender-based violence or family maltreatment can obtain a transfer to another point of sale, a period of unpaid leave and up to a maximum of 90 days of paid leave.

07

# Good practices and lessons learned



## Case study: COOP ALLEANZA 3.0 – Italy

In continuity with what was described in the previous section, it can be seen that the good practices implemented by the company are many and above all are detailed in their actions and purpose. To start with the commitment to gender equality which is common to all consumer cooperatives, Alleanza 3.0 has decided to launch at national level the '**Close the gap**' campaign.<sup>15</sup> This initiative is articulated in a series of concrete actions and commitments with the aim of promoting gender equality and fighting inequalities, involving members, consumers, employees and suppliers. On the internal front, the commitment is to build an increasingly inclusive and equal corporate culture, including through specific training courses and events.

As a good practice, in the autumn of 2024, the coop started activities to achieve **gender equality certification** according to UNI/PdR 125:22,<sup>16</sup> which will be achieved in March 2025.

In this regard, there are public documents on the coop's website concerning the **gender equality policy**, approved by the board in December 2024, and the **improvement plan**, an operational document that helps to understand the many actions undertaken as a result of the path started with the certification.

What emerges is how this can be a successful model

of social dialogue, thanks to the cooperative's ability to promote the collaboration and participation of its members, which is fertile ground for the achievement of concrete results such as the social integration of disadvantaged people and the implementation of aid projects.

Despite the many milestones still to be reached, the commitment and difficulties to be faced will always be a step towards a more economically, environmentally and socially sustainable society.

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<sup>15</sup> Source: <https://www.coop.it/close-the-gap> (retrieved 24.06.2025)

<sup>16</sup> UNI/PdR 125:2022 is an Italian reference practice that establishes guidelines for implementing a gender equality management system within organizations. Published by the Italian National Standards Body (UNI) on 16 March 2022, this standard aims to promote gender equality and foster inclusive workplace environments across both public and private sectors.

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Head of Sustainability CSR, Communication, Public and Member Relations Department, Alleanza 3.0  
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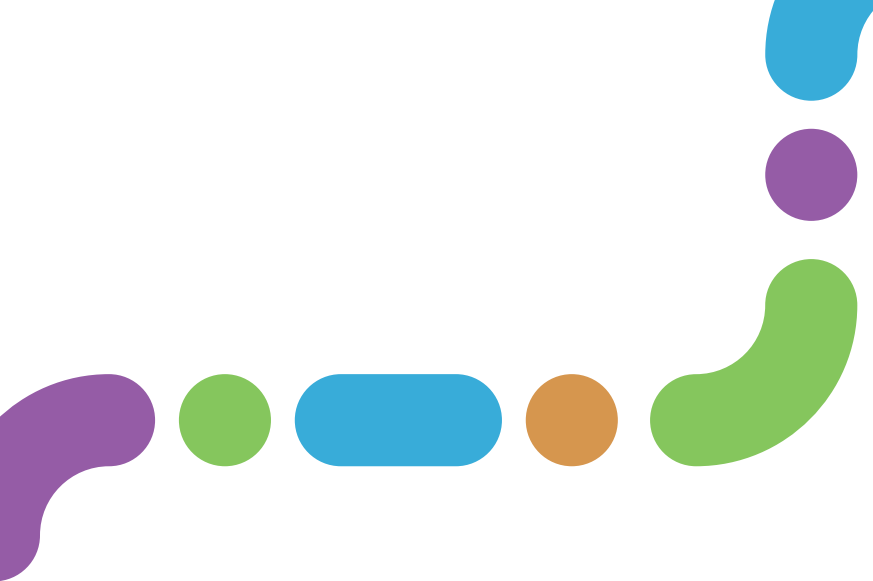
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## Case study: COOP ALLEANZA 3.0 - Italy





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