

# Assessing The Impact of Social Organizations in Taliouine: The Case of Saffron Cooperatives

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## Abstract

Saffron is the most expensive and sought-after spice in the world. Morocco is renowned for the high quality of its saffron, primarily cultivated in the Taliouine region. While its exact global ranking varies annually, Morocco is consistently listed among the top five saffron-producing countries. Aware of the socio-economic potential of social and solidarity economy organizations, particularly cooperatives, the Moroccan government has implemented various strategies and programs not only to promote the creation of cooperatives but also to actively support their growth and sustainability. These initiatives have led to a notable increase in the number of cooperatives in the Taliouine region in recent years. The aim of this paper is to examine the impact of saffron cooperatives on the Taliouine region, a remote mountainous area in southern Morocco that has long suffered from marginalization, poverty, and rural exodus. To address this objective, the paper is structured in two main sections. The first section establishes the conceptual framework of the social and solidarity economy, explores its organizational forms, and traces the development of Morocco's cooperative landscape over time. The second section presents our exploratory qualitative study, conducted with leaders of saffron cooperatives, in order to assess their socio-economic impact on the Taliouine region and to discuss the key findings.

**Keywords:** cooperation, *crocus sativus*, development, social and solidarity economy, spice