

The strengths of the Co-operative Banks

GOVERNANCE

Governance: Members control their bank

Customers and members of co-operative banks are represented in the bank's governance structure through participation on boards, membership councils, etc. This also ensures that the banks make serving the members' interests their top priority.

Co-operative banks put the interests of their members and clients first. This is a principal feature of the co-operative model. Customers can become members and in this role they can exercise influence over the banks' policies. At the local level, members can provide advice concerning matters such as branch locations, opening hours, services and sponsorship activities. At the national level, the membership of the co-operative is comprised of the local member banks or the regional banks in countries such as France and Germany. These institutions are collectively the owners of the co-operative. Member ownership entails a more consensus-driven approach and prevents a strong focus on only one stakeholder because the member base is highly diverse.