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Regional Economic Communities

A practical business paradigm which is viable in the long-term –

a concept worth living.

By Anna-Lisa Schmalz (main author) and Tim Reeves (co-author)

***Actively caring for our own
livelihoods – now and for the future:***

We jointly-own regional companies.

We use our own barter currency.

**We decide and act in ways that allow
us to *look forward to the consequences.***

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a concept by Anna-Lisa Schmalz (main author) and Tim Reeves (co-author)

Translation by Anna Reeves and Tim Reeves

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1 What they're for

This paper presents a **concept** for a way of performing economic activities which puts the emphasis on cooperation and individual responsibility. It offers a variety of possibilities for businesspeople, freelancers and permanent employees, citizens and investors to harness their individual resources, skills and knowledge within a larger context, yet without losing their autonomy in the process. The major design considerations were to:

- Safeguard the provision of basic needs in the future
- Further the causes of sustainability and long-term viability
- Make ordinary citizens participants and co-owners of local firms
- Make trade as local as possible, depending on the type of goods
- Establish a value-based complementary currency, units of which will be created and annulled by the citizens using it, according to necessity
- Invigorate the local community – help people to know and value each other more
- Help people to take responsibility – for themselves, the region and the whole biosphere

A **Regional Economic Community** is a tool for financing and linking together companies within a region which want to change the way their company functions to make it more viable for the future, and therefore more economical as well as socially and ecologically sustainable. It also takes part in non-profit projects which improve the quality of life within the region in a sustainable way.

The citizens, local authorities, institutions and corporations which take part in the Regional Economic Community can monitor the effect of their financial investment in detail based on comprehensive reporting, the criteria of which are laid down during the general meeting.

The economic community also boosts regional economic cycles through the possibility of exchanging goods and professional services using an interest free and complementary barter currency independently of national money. Beyond the professional services, the barter currency also serves the remuneration of neighbourly help and thus supports the development of personal responsibility and the social life of the community within the region.

The authors have built on the experiences and insights which they have gathered in their social and economic environments, as well as the unease they feel in light of the global crises. Their heartfelt desire is to offer a practical basis on which a shared learning process for a redesign of our life and work environments can take place – a design which is both empathic and viable for the long-term future.

2 Why we need them

The egocentric world-view is not viable in the long term, because its picture of the world is wrong. This is because the basis of ones own life is shared with and made by countless other beings, or in the case of resources there is only a finite amount available. The egocentric view ignores these facts. It demands more than would be sustainably possible and thus destroys the basis of its own life. We don't need to look far to be able to see that humanity is moving fast towards such a fate.

The only attitude which can survive in the long term is that which puts the well-being of the community of all beings on this planet foremost, actively cares for them and takes responsibility for achieving this goal.

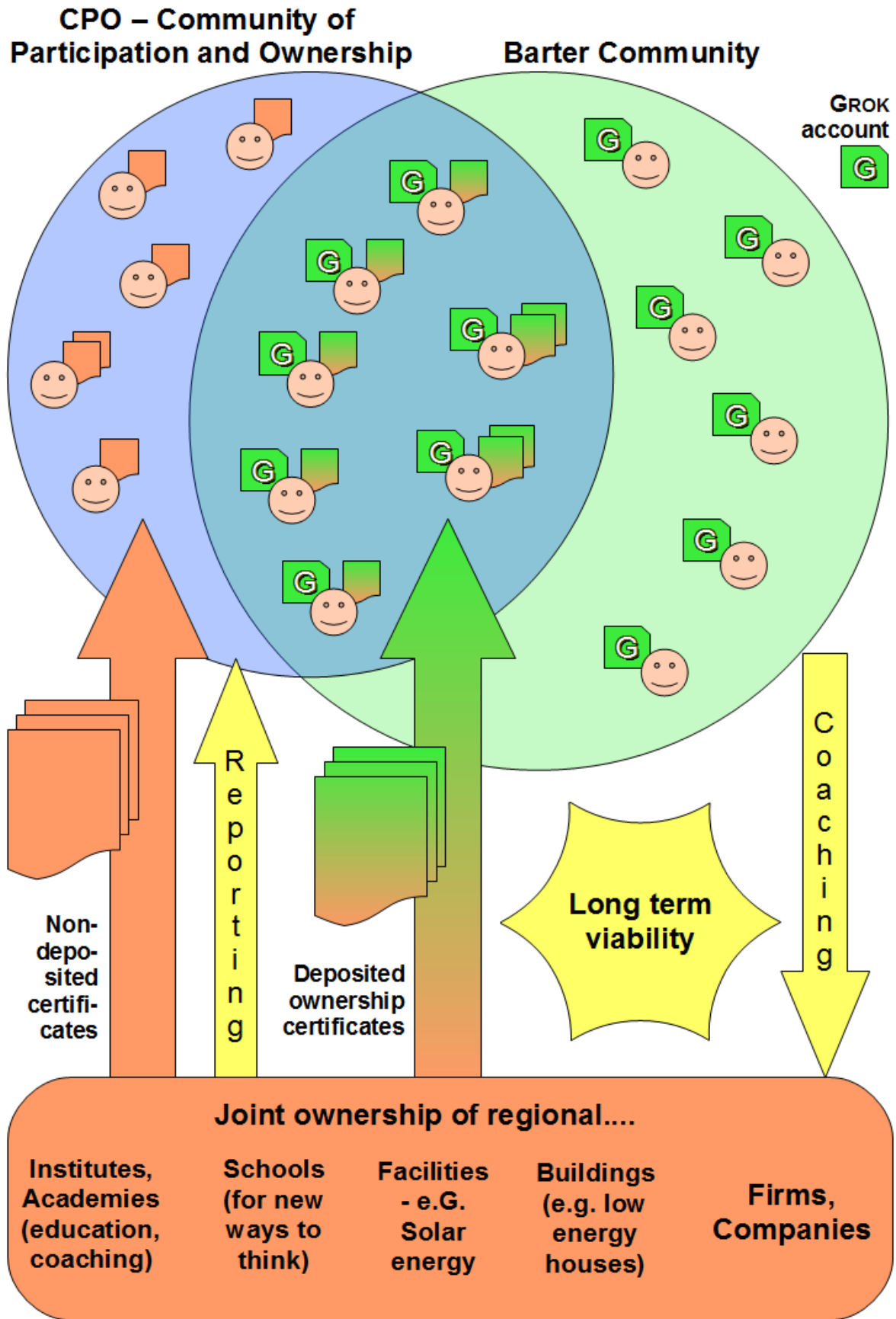
A global way of thinking leads to local action. The Regional Economic Community was devised to put these insights into practice. It consists of a community of participation and ownership (CPO) and a barter community founded on the CPO. It invites all the citizens within the region to step back fully into personal responsibility, in both the economic and interpersonal respects, *and provides the tools required to do so.*

Each economic community is focused within a particular region, in order to strengthen the interpersonal community there, keep transport routes short and aid the independence from global imponderabilities. Sustainability and Long-Term Viability (see chapters 5.2 and 5.3 about these terms) have been the basis for the development of the concepts presented in this paper – in order to guarantee and fairly distribute our common basis for life.

The decisions made by the citizens participating in the economic community have an immediate effect on their economic welfare, as well as on their immediate social and ecological environment. Furthermore, by helping people to act with more personal responsibility we lighten the load of other regions of the planet, because we are less dependent on *their* resources. Thus a free and fair global trade can develop.

A learning process begins, which contributes more and more towards economic activities and a way of living together which are viable for the future.

3 The Big Picture



The CPO – Community of Participation and Ownership – allows citizens, local authorities and regional investors to become part-owners of local firms, properties and institutes which are committed to sustainability and long-term viability.

Sustainability and long-term viability are indispensable key concepts in the design of the CPO. The CPO only acquires full or partial ownership of companies which actively and continuously strive for more ecological, economic and social sustainability. Coaching and reporting ensure the implementation.

There are CPO shares with and without voting rights, but one legal or natural person can only have one vote at the general meeting. The owners of shares with voting rights share part of the responsibility for the way business is performed in their area.

The barter community encourages both professional barter trades and neighbourly help, both of which are remunerated in GROKS, the complementary currency of the barter community.

Any number of CPO shares can be deposited with the barter-ring. For each share deposited the account holder gets a fixed increase of her credit limit. Deposited shares cannot be sold.

GROKS only come into existence when a barter-ring member uses her credit facility to pay for goods or services. So doing, she goes into the “healthy red”, since no interest is charged on the credit, which is backed by the value of the deposited shares (and thus is without risk).

So the GROK is at the same time a value-based currency (“real money”) and a necessity currency – it is created as needed by the barter participants in the moment that a service is remunerated. There is (and can be) *no central regulation of the currency* in circulation.

Shares in the CPO (“certificates of ownership”) can be purchased with pounds / dollars or GROKS; they can also be acquired by contribution in kind or working for the CPO or one of its companies.

Citizens (and firms) without CPO-shares can open a GROK account without a credit facility. They can only spend the GROKS which they have first themselves earned within the barter community.

4 Before we get into details...

This concept is intended to serve as a basis for discussion. It can be used whole or in part to found Regional Economic Communities. It may be developed further and modified, and should not be seen as a rigid framework which can only be put into practice in the way described and no other.

At some points, the concept requires re-thinks of the readers which might seem like too much to ask from a person. We know well from personal experience that this may unintentionally trigger pre-existing negative associations. We ask our readers to see this as a positive sign and as an invitation to dismantle belief-patterns of enmity and dissolve the associated negative images.

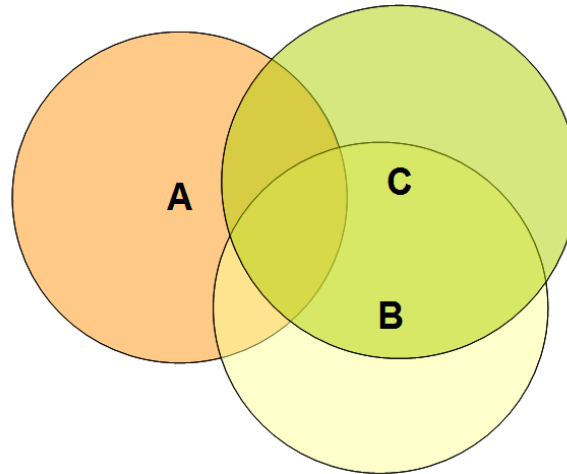
Since we have named only men in the acknowledgements, we use the female form where both men and women are meant in the following text, to improve the balance – and because it describes the concepts of a feminine mentality which we so desperately need.

5 Terminology

The terms most necessary for understanding this paper are briefly explained in this chapter.

5.1 Region

The region is defined here as a catchment area of 40 kilometres (25 miles) around the headquarters of the Regional Economic Community. The regions of different regional economic communities may overlap.



5.2 Sustainability

The following text is a translation of an excerpt from the German article on sustainability (Nachhaltigkeit) on Wikipedia:

The concept of sustainability describes the usage of a regenerative system in such a way as to maintain its essential properties and such that its resources can replenish naturally. [...]

The term sustainability is commonly understood to be made up of three components, which are also called the three pillars of sustainability.

- **Ecological sustainability** describes the goal of maintaining nature and the environment for future generations. This includes the conservation of biodiversity, prevention of climate change, looking after the countryside in its original form as well as generally a considerate handling of the natural environment.
- **Economic sustainability** makes the postulate that the economy be designed such that it may offer a permanent and stable basis for yield and affluence. The protection of economic resources from exploitation is of special importance.
- **Social sustainability** understands the development of a society to be a path which enables participation of all its members. This includes a balancing of social forces with the aim of achieving a society which is [...] permanently worth living in.

5.3 Long-term Viability

A society which is viable for the future ensures that its members can reliably and permanently satisfy their needs and at the same time develop and grow as people. A company which is viable for the future sees itself as part of such a society and ensures that it can permanently supply an amount of products which remains as stable as possible.

Long-term Viability includes sustainability, but goes beyond it. A *non-sustainable* economic activity uses up resources without caring about how they are created. Such behaviour can therefore not be viable in the long-term.

Besides the social, ecological and economic sustainability (cf. Chapter 5.2), the concept of long-term viability includes resilience against possible crises. A company is resilient in this respect if it can endure setbacks in any area without being forced out of business.

An example: A grocery store can be sustainable in all three areas by generating its own energy via solar panels or wind turbines, offering only organically produced products, paying its employees a fair wage, etc. If it is however dependent on deliveries of goods which are transported over long distances via lorry, then it is not viable for the future. If the deliveries fail to appear for whatever reason, then it will be sold out within days. It then has no future.

The criteria for long-term viability change continuously as the awareness of this topic grows. This **learning process** is a part of the long-term viability. It develops and unfolds in the exchange between capital providers, employees of the community of participation and ownership and the companies who have joined it, external experts and the general public.

Important prerequisites for this learning process are **transparency** and **simplicity**. The learning process can only be effective if the successes, failures, prerequisites, aims, assumptions and risks are communicated openly and as simply as possible.

Transparency also creates **trust** and furthers **cooperation**. If for example salaries, wages and business profits are laid open, then an unfair remuneration is not possible. If for example objectives and needs of companies, employees, suppliers and consumers are openly debated, a genuine cooperation between all parties involved can develop.

5.4 Barter

We use the term barter to mean the exchange of services without use of state money ("legal tender"). The participants are known collectively as a barter-ring is a barter community. It includes all the members registered for bartering. These can be private persons, self-employed people, businesswomen or companies.

Every participant of the barter community gets an account whose currency is the complementary barter currency (we have chosen the name G_{ROK} – see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grok>). The service which Mrs. Smith has provided for Mrs. Jones is paid for by Mrs. Jones through a transfer of the agreed amount of G_{ROKS} onto the account of Mrs. Smith. The G_{ROKS} do not exist as physical cash – there are no notes or coins.

5.5 What you can do with money

Helmut Creutz distinguishes three different basic functions of money:

1. Money as a tool for bartering
2. Determination of the value of products and services in units of money
3. Money as a means of storing value

The function of money as a tool for bartering conflicts with the function for storing value. As a bartering tool the money has to stay in circulation, whereas it is taken out of circulation for storing value.

In the Regional Economic Community, the shares (holdings) of the CPO (Community of Participation and Ownership) serve as storage for value, while the GROKS serve the needs of the barter community as a means to exchange goods and services.

5.6 Complementary Currency

A complementary currency is a currency which complements the state's currency system. The intention involved in the creation of a (complementary) currency determines its function.

The state's currency serves the processing of business transactions in a competition-oriented economy. In order to aid competition, the currency always has to be kept scarce. The (scarce and thus expensive) money capital is in the foreground of the competition-orientated economy.

The complementary currency is used for barter transactions in a cooperative economy which puts the *social* capital into the foreground. This currency is intended to support society and there should always be enough available. In order to keep the means of exchange readily available, the complementary currency is defined as a mutual credit system (see chapter 8.3) and equipped with a circulation safeguard.

6 Introduction

6.1 Conventional economics

We live and work within a system of economics which encourages us to amass personal wealth. Since only a few are able to possess significantly more than the average person does, one has to be better or quicker than the “contenders” – which is usually called competition, or even rivalry.

Conventional economics uses social and ecological resources to make the highest possible profit in the form of money and private property. To this end it orients itself by the globally available resources, in order to be able to produce in the most cost-effective way. The results of this are, among others, competition for dwindling resources, dependency on suppliers scattered all over the globe, rising unemployment, aggressive marketing, the addiction to status symbols, a lowering of the quality of life, etc.

Most companies nowadays are structured according to a predominantly male way of thinking: The employees are expected to follow the brief orders of their superiors. The background of decisions is usually not adequately explained. The main responsibility lies with the bosses. Although the employees have a clear opinion about certain working processes or products, they do not (get to) voice it. The idea of employee participation tends to have a negative connotation. The bosses of such companies work more than average hours and don't always feel up to their responsibility – although they often try to hide this because they see it as a sign of weakness.

6.2 Cooperative economics

A sustainable way of doing business

The Regional Economic Community orients itself equally to economic as well as social, ethical and ecological values. Economic action for example should take the global view into consideration, support the social life of the community, set off learning processes and be ecologically sound. All human beings, those currently alive as well as future generations, benefit from this way of performing economic activity, in the form of a higher quality of life.

The Regional Economic Community adopts a predominantly feminine way of thinking: The reasons leading to important decisions should be communicated clearly, so that others can understand the logic and contribute their own insights and doubts, as appropriate. This in turn allows each worker / participant to fulfill their role responsibly – no one should be able to say “I knew better, but I had to follow orders”. The intelligence and creativity of all involved is needed in order to achieve the maximum potential of sustainable products and manufacturing methods. Further, since all are now involved in having ideas and reaching decisions, no individual need suffer from burn-out. This principle of transparent justification of decisions applies within and between companies, and extends to the general public (or at least to all members of the CPO, see chapter 7).

6.3 Goals of a Regional Economic Community

- To ensure that everyone's basic needs can be met by regional companies
- Active participation of as many citizens as possible in these regional companies

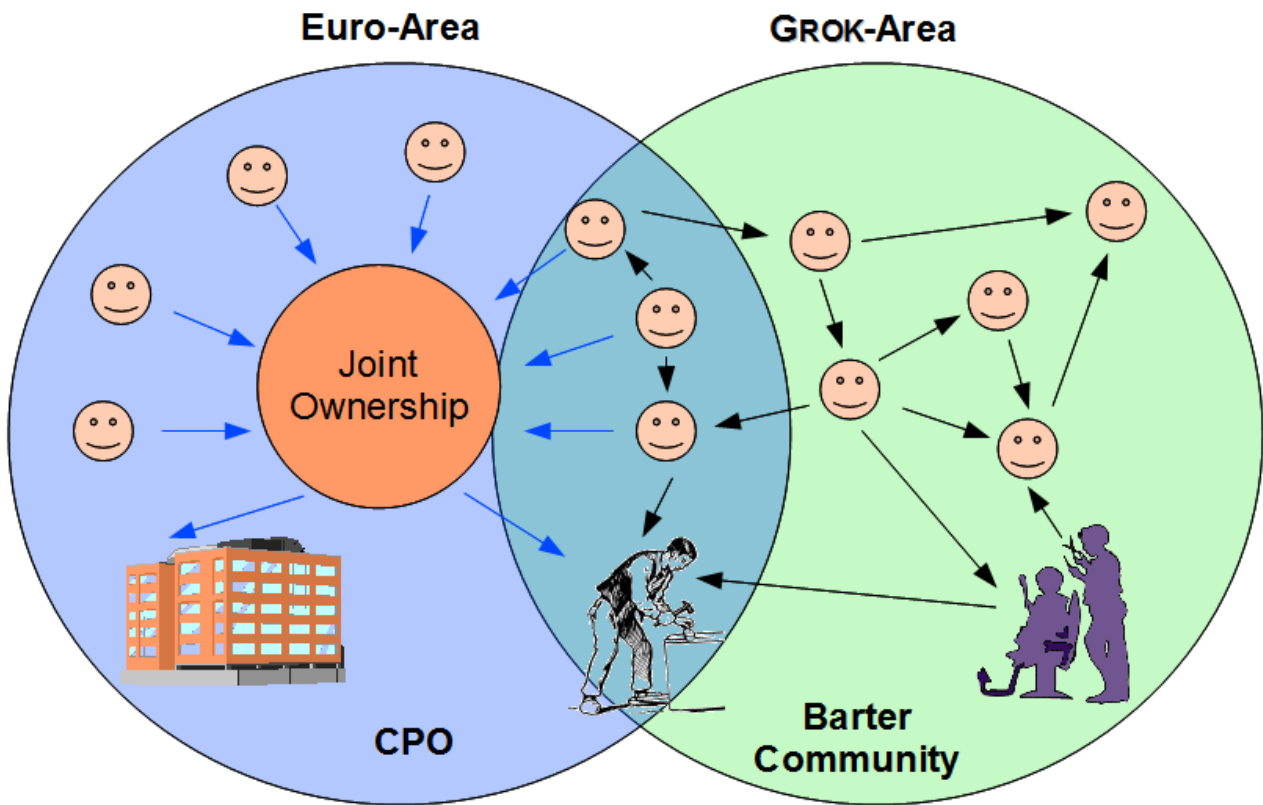
- Actively assisting these companies to work in an increasingly long-term viable way
- Strengthening of community and accepting of responsibility for co-determination and co-design of regional economic cycles
- That more and more people think critically about the (social and ecological) values which mean quality of life for them and act accordingly
- That more and more people think about what sustainability and long-term viability really mean and imply
- Long-term financial investment in sustainably operated assets (firms, institutes, facilities)
- Reduction of dependency on the euro (or pound / dollar), which is burdened by interest

6.4 Structure of a Regional Economic Community

Achievement of the above mentioned goals is attained through a Regional Economic Community, which consists of a community of participation and ownership (CPO) in combination with a barter community.

The **community of participation and ownership** aims to spread ownership of local businesses to as many local citizens as possible, whereby the businesses will be run in an increasingly sustainable (and transparent) manner by qualified manageresses. Private and institutional investors, preferably from the region, can become joint-owners in these companies by acquiring corresponding certificates of the CPO – either by purchase using national or complementary currency, or by contribution in kind or services.

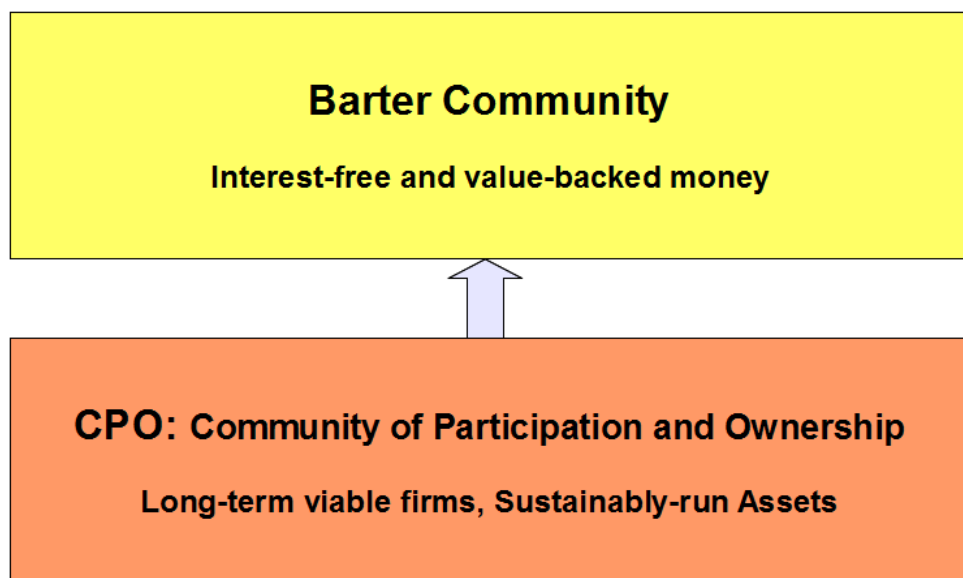
The **barter community** uses a complementary currency to boost regional economic cycles. It enables the exchange of professional and neighbourly services without being dependent on money provided by the state. The services are remunerated in the barter currency. The same laws and tax rules which apply to conventional purchases also apply to such exchanges.



CPO and barter community

The CPO and the Barter Community complement one another.

The holdings of the CPO serve as basis for the complementary currency of the barter community, so that this complementary currency is completely underpinned by sustainably operated assets. The possibility made available through the barter community, of exchanging services without money provided by the state, again encourages the companies to do business in a more long-term viable way.



7 Community of Participation and Ownership (CPO)

7.1 Mission and Goals

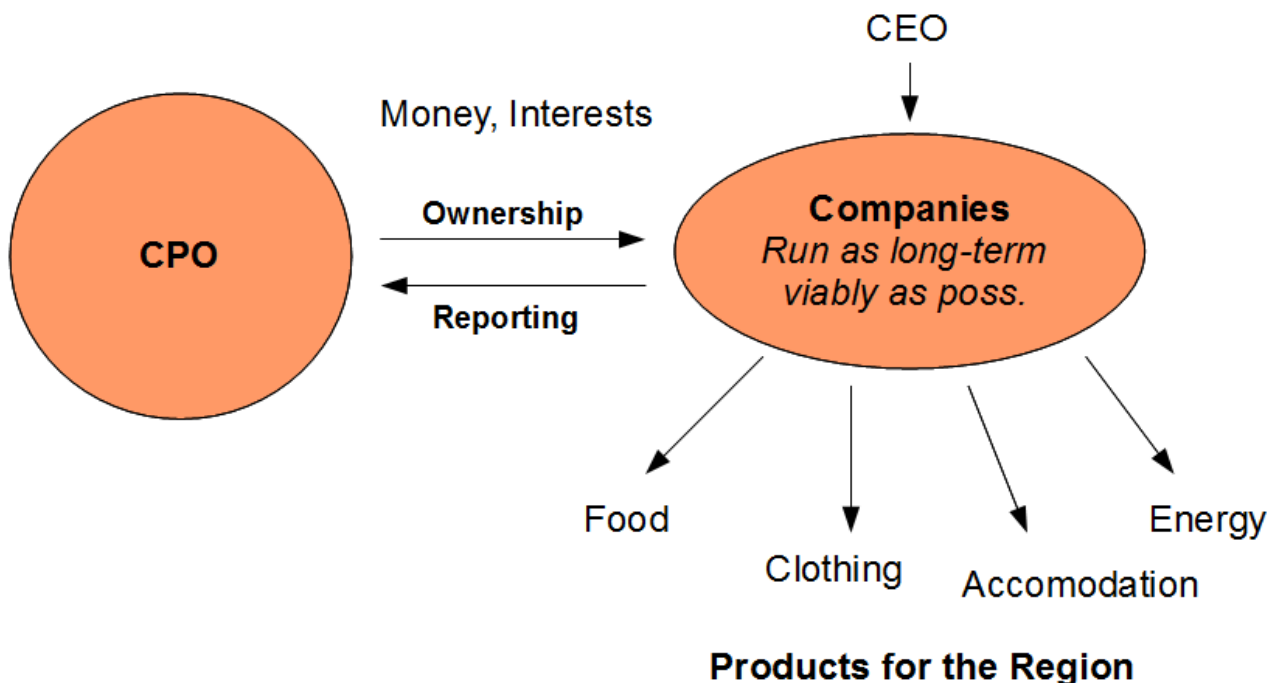
The CPO fully or partly owns companies within its region (within a maximum of 40 kilometres from its headquarters) which pledge to do their business in a long-term viable and regional way.

The goal is to build up and sustain companies in the region which can meet the needs of the local population.

Companies which are fully owned by the community are handed over to a chief executive to be run in a professional and sustainable way. The contract to run it is signed for an unlimited amount of time – the intention is to have the same chief executive run it permanently.

The CPO determines the criteria of long-term viability on which the companies in which it has (full or partial) stakes have to report annually. These criteria can be adapted annually.

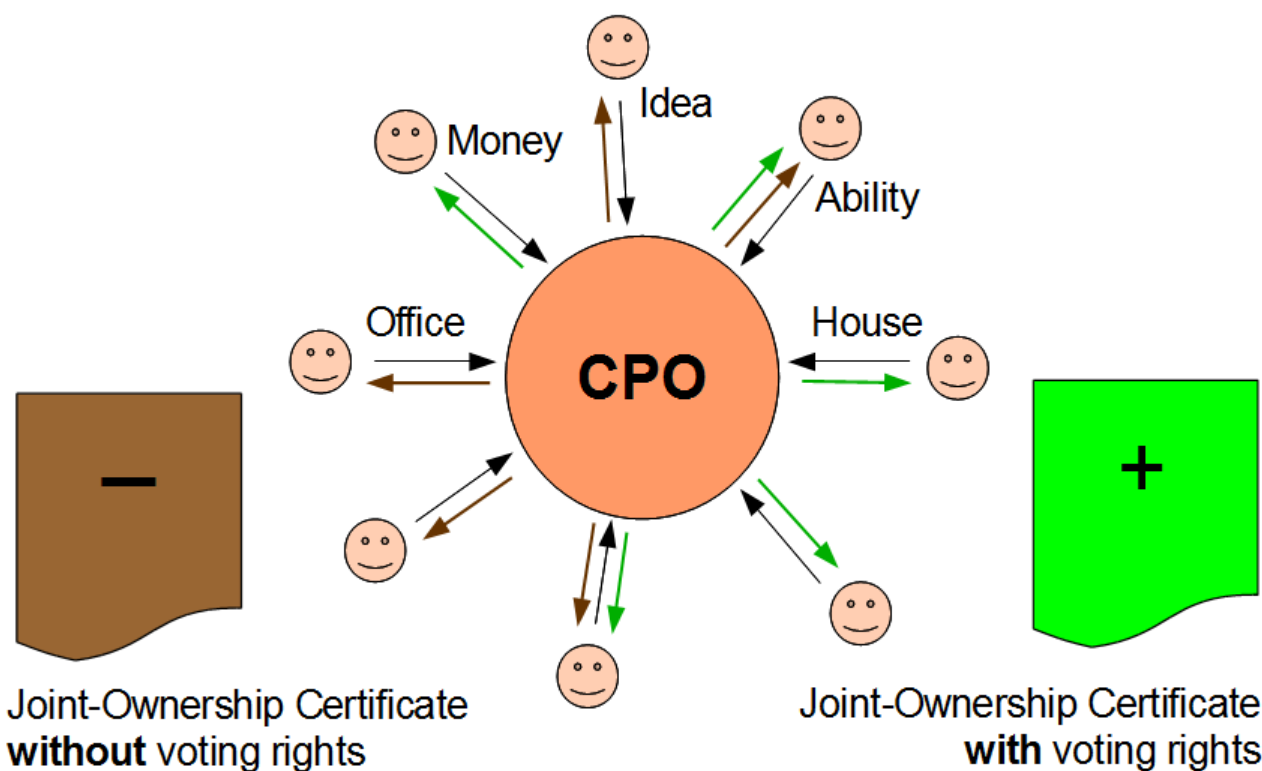
The CPO may also participate in regional housing or community projects, provided that they aim for long-term viability. These projects do not have to return a profit, they are however required to submit reports in the same way as the companies.



Ownership of viably-run companies

7.2 Funding

The CPO issues joint-ownership certificates with and without the entitlement to vote. It determines the amount and price in pounds or dollars itself. At the CPO's conception, a certificate may cost 1000 pounds or dollars. Joint-ownership certificates issued later may differ in price – it depends on the value in pounds or dollars of the share certificates which are already in existence at that time. Shares of the CPO can be acquired as multiples of thousandths by means of national money (one-time payment or instalments), active involvement or contribution in kind.



Issue of joint-ownership certificates

There are those types of work which serve to increase the value of material goods (e.g. the renovation of a building), and those aimed at maintaining ongoing business operations or the production of consumer goods (e.g. the planting of salad). Some types of work lie somewhere in between (e.g. the search for and correction of faults in a production facility). The question of how much of the members active involvement can be paid with *joint-ownership* certificates depends on the assessment or estimation of how much this work contributes to the long-term viability of the company.

The purchase or transfer of shares with the entitlement to vote is only possible with the approval of the CPO. Approval is not necessary for shares without the entitlement to vote.

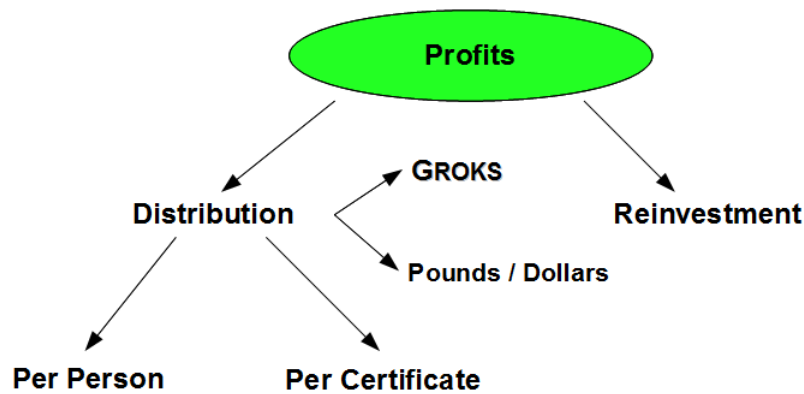
Financing via loans from financial institutions is not envisaged, and for good reason: Nowadays, retail prices contain on average about 40% interest costs. The exact value for a given product is calculated from this product's share of the interest burden of the entire supply chain involved in making it. If the products are manufactured using interest-free capital, then the amount of money saved in this way can be used to help in the development of sustainability.

7.3 Profit distribution

The surplus generated with the investments from the members can be reinvested by the CPO or distributed among the holders of the *joint-ownership* certificates.

The distribution of surplus can be performed on a per person or per certificate basis. It may be paid out in the national currency or in the complementary currency of the barter community.

If the surplus is paid out per person and not per certificate, then this corresponds to an unconditional basic income for those citizens which have participated in the CPO with at least one (fully paid) certificate.



Possibilities for profit distribution

The distribution per person creates an incentive that as many citizens as possible participate in the community through one certificate and contribute to the common good through their active engagement.

On the other hand, this regulation may deter investors who otherwise might have made a bigger amount of capital available to the community.

The General Meeting of the CPO decides how the surplus is to be used (see chapter 7.6.1).

7.4 Register of joint-ownership certificates

The CPO maintains a register of its joint-ownership certificates. The following details are included for each certificate:

- whether it comes with the entitlement to vote or not
- to whom it belongs
- whether it is fully paid-up or if not, what fraction has been paid
- whether it has been deposited for an account of a barter participant, and if so, in whose favour

As detailed in chapter 8.2.2, a credit range is granted against the deposit of joint-ownership certificates for an account. The deposited certificates can be personal property or assigned from a guarantor.

Share certificates deposited for a barter account may not be transferred to another owner. Exception: The owner of an account may buy the share certificates which a guarantor has deposited in her favour. The decision for the purchase is made by the two people involved.

7.5 Duration of company (co-) ownership

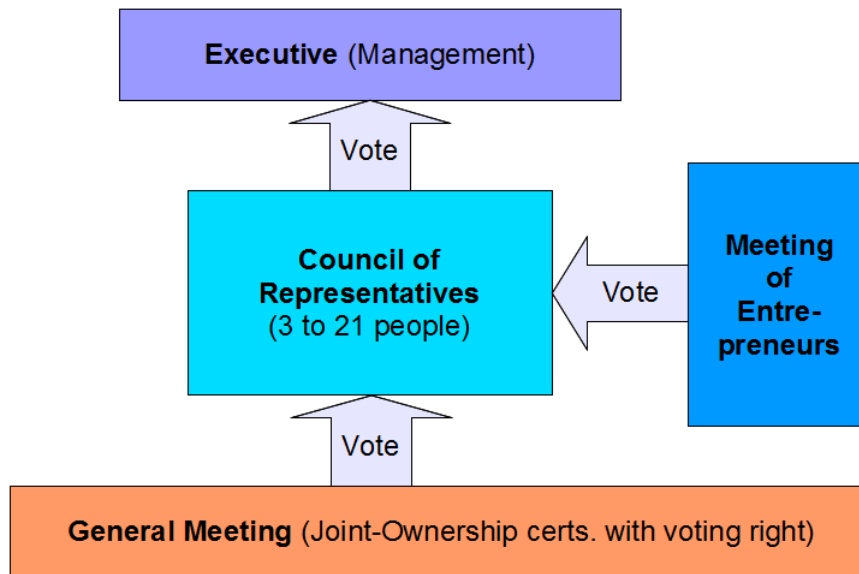
The participation of the community in its companies is intended to last. It is not planned to sell the holdings at some later point to make a profit.

If a company which is only partly owned by the community decides on a change of direction away from a long-term viable development, then the CPO will sell its investment in that company as quickly as possible.

Should a chief executive decide on such a change of direction, then the community will terminate her contract without notice.

7.6 Institutions of the CPO

The Community of Participation and Ownership is governed by the following bodies:



7.6.1 General Meeting

The general meeting consists of all those members who hold *joint-ownership* certificates of the CPO with the entitlement to vote. The members are informed via the website and via e-mail about the latest developments of the CPO. General meetings are held as necessary, at least once a year. Every member has one vote.

The general meeting takes decisions on the following matters:

- which criteria of long-term viability the companies which the community has participated in have to account for
- on raising more capital through new *joint-ownership* certificates
- on re-investment versus distribution of the surplus

7.6.2 Meeting of Entrepreneurs

The meeting of entrepreneurs is for communication and the building up of networks between the companies of the CPO. Synergies and common interests can be discovered here. Cooperation between the companies may lead to economic savings and contribute to the solution of current issues.

7.6.3 Council of Representatives

The council of representatives consists of an odd number of natural persons – at least three and a maximum of twenty-one. The rounded up half of the council members are elected by the general meeting, the remainder at the meeting of entrepreneurs.

All members of the council of representatives have to hold at least one *joint-ownership* certificate with the entitlement to vote. They are elected for a term of five years each. Should a member resign from the council early, a by-election takes place at the next respective meeting.

The work carried out as a member of the council of representatives is paid appropriately depending on its extent. The amounts payed can be viewed by those members of the CPO which have the entitlement to vote.

The council of representatives assists the executive with advice and controls its work. It reports to the general meeting on this.

The council of representatives may call an extraordinary general meeting if necessary.

7.6.4 The Executive

The Executive is the management instance of the Community of Participation and Ownership. Its members are appointed and recalled by the Council of Representatives.

Members of the Executive Committee are paid appropriately for their work. The Council of Representatives decides how much this should be, and in which ways it is paid.

7.7 Companies (co-)owned by the CPO

7.7.1 Management

Companies which are fully owned by the CPO are handed over permanently to a chief executive, who must run the respective company in a professional and long-term viable way. The chief executive may also be the previous owner of the company.

The business domains and legal forms of the companies which the CPO can participate in are not constrained. The essential criterion is that the company aims for a long-term viable and regional way of doing business.

7.7.2 Financial Support and other assistance

The CPO supports its companies through its financial holdings and thus makes them less dependent on loans from banks. The companies pay less or no interest to the banks. They can use the money saved in this way to become more long-term viable.

Apart from the financial contributions, the companies receive active support from the citizens of their surrounding area. Through the open communication of the companies with the citizens, understanding of each other grows, a broader range of people are involved in decisions, regional customers are gained and the companies find it easier to orient themselves to the needs of the customers. This leads to greater planning reliability for the companies regarding the marketability of their products.

The aim is not to support only those companies which already do business in a long-term viable way, but in particular to support companies through financial and active participation in their endeavour for long-term viability. However, the consistent orientation towards long-term viability is the prerequisite for the participation of the community in the company.

7.7.3 Reporting

The reporting serves to comprehensively illustrate the value of the companies. Apart from the financial performance figures which are nowadays commonplace in company reports, ecological, social and regional criteria play an important role in the assessment of a company. They reveal the state of the company's long-term viability. By taking such criteria into account, the management can communicate decisions which are sensible with regard to the future development of the company, even though they may bring short-term financial disadvantages with them.

The companies (co-)owned by the CPO commit themselves to a comprehensive annual reporting which takes not only economic data into consideration, but also social, regional and ecological criteria for sustainability as well as the other aspects of long-term viability. The criteria to be taken into account for the reporting should be measurable without major effort. They are laid down by the general meeting of the CPO, in cooperation with the affected chief executives, external experts and the general public, and may be adapted annually. The company reports are published on the website of the community.

7.7.4 Transparency

In the interest of long-term viability (cf. chapter 5.3), the greatest possible transparency within the companies as well as in their relationship with the CPO is expected of them.

Crises lead first and foremost to greater insecurities concerning the assessment of further development. In the interest of resilience, the participating companies report to the CPO as early as possible on the insecurities and risks they have recognized, and work on finding creative and innovative solutions together with capital providers, employees, experts and dedicated citizens.

8 The Barter Community

Building on the joint-ownership certificates of the CPO (cf. chapter 7.2), a barter community (barter-ring) is founded, whose currency unit is called G_{ROK}. Every joint-ownership certificate of the CPO has an equivalent value of 1000 G_{ROKS}.

8.1 Mission and Goals

The goals of the barter community are

- to further trust, tolerance and cooperation between the participants
- to achieve a balanced give and take between the participants
- to organise regular meetings, parties and events
- to encourage the trial of offers beyond the regular job market
- to meet needs which otherwise could not be met due to lack of money
- to become more independent of the pound or dollar and their associated inflation
- to protect the environment through regional economic cycles

8.2 Barter accounts and the Marketplace

8.2.1 Barter account

There are private and business accounts. Every natural person is eligible for a private account. Companies and participants which offer professional (taxable) services receive a business account. Self-employed people may thus keep a private as well as a business account.

The barter account currency is the G_{ROK}, and each account starts with a balance of zero. It is marked as being of private or business type in a way which is visible to all participants.

Natural persons and companies can use G_{ROKS} and/or pounds or dollars to remunerate goods or services which they exchange. The employees can also have their work remunerated in either way. In addition, private neighbourly help can be paid for via the private accounts.

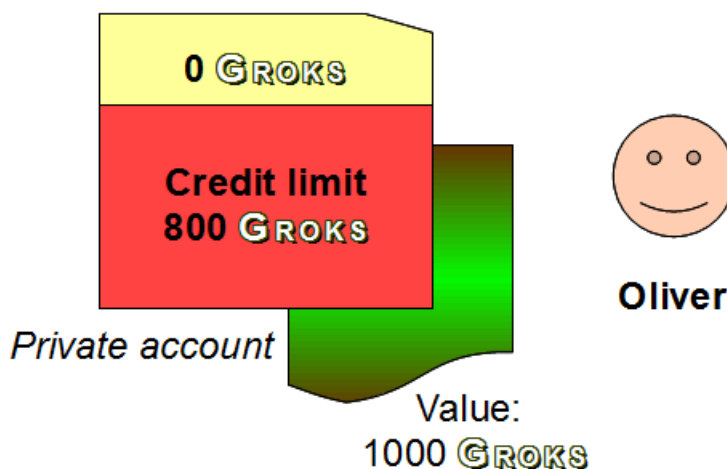
Private accounts for which at least one joint-ownership certificate of the CPO has been deposited (see chapter 8.2.2) take part in the distribution of surplus of the CPO, if it is decided that there should be one (cf. chapter 7.3).

The G_{ROK} accounts of the barter community are managed online via the internet, using an advertising and online-accounting software. The remuneration of the barter transactions is booked by the participants themselves. Access to a computer with internet is thus a prerequisite.

A barter account may, upon application, be suspended for a limited amount of time if there is a good reason (for example a prolonged illness). During this time no circulation safeguard fee (see chapter 8.3.2) is charged. The corresponding advertisements (see chapter 8.2.3) are no longer published.

8.2.2 Credit facility

The owner of a barter account can get a credit range for her account by depositing joint-ownership certificates of the CPO as security. For every deposited certificate, her credit range is extended by 800 G_{ROKS}. Certificates which have only been partly paid for can not be deposited.



Credit facility for a barter account

The difference between the 800 G_{ROKS} granted as credit limit and the equivalent value of a joint-ownership certificate of 1000 G_{ROKS} serves as security, should the circulation safeguard fee accumulate (see chapter 8.3.2 on this). In the case of complete utilisation of the credit range, this buffer suffices to cover the fee for 5½ years.

It is possible to act as guarantor for another participant. In this case, the guaranteeing participant deposits joint-ownership certificates of her own for the barter account of the other participant. This procedure does not require any vetting or approval, it is decided solely by the two participants.

The depositing of the joint-ownership certificates for the barter account is noted in the certificate register (cf. Chapter 7.4) of the CPO. The certificates are barred from sale for the duration of the depositing.

In contrast to many other barter communities, this one does not give away a starting balance in the beginning and does not grant a credit range without the depositing of a security. Every barter participant contributes something first (joint-ownership certificate, guarantee from another participant or a service of her own) before she can receive a service. This regulation creates trust in the barter currency.

8.2.3 Marketplace

Every participant of the barter community can post advertisements for what they have to offer and also what they are looking for, which are published within the community on the internet. Advertisements are tied to a barter account. The marking of the account as either private or business type makes it clear whether it is a professional offer, for which also an invoice is to be provided by the person offering it, or whether it is private neighbourly help without any warranty.

8.2.4 System account

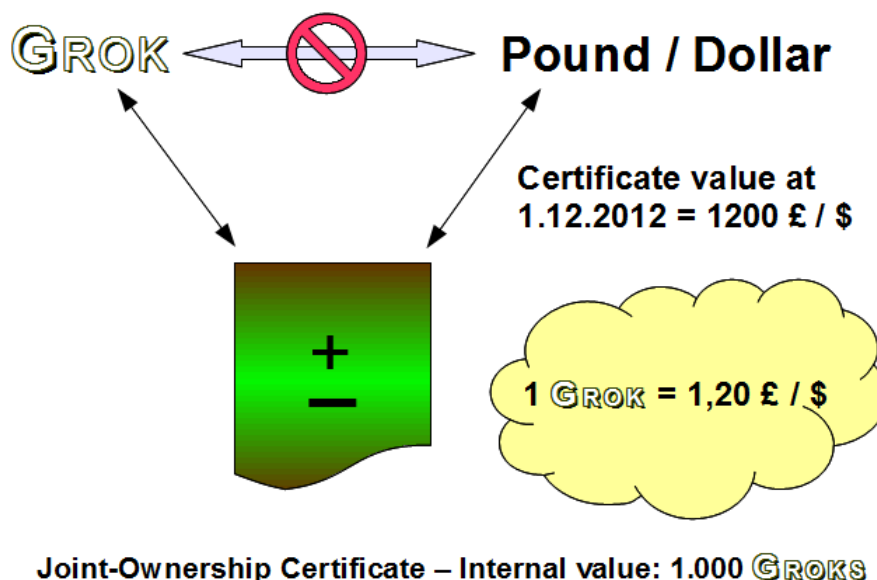
The CPO keeps a system account which is exempted from the circulation safeguard fee (see chapter 8.3.2). Only sales and purchases of joint-ownership certificates which are remunerated in GROKS are made via this account. The system account is needed especially during the closure of barter accounts which are overdrawn (cf. chapter 8.5.2).

8.3 Barter currency

Building on the joint-ownership certificates of the CPO, the barter community uses the complementary currency GROK as a value-based medium of exchange. This means that the GROK is fully backed by sustainably operated assets (e.g. firms, institutes, facilities).

The value of a GROK can always be expressed in pounds or dollars (and vice-versa) via the relationship of both to the underlying assets in the form of one joint-ownership certificate:

1000 GROKS = 1 joint-ownership certificate = Current value of the certificate in pounds or dollars



The value of the GROK

At the same time, the GROK is also a **necessity money** (mutual credit system): It is created as needed by the barter participants in the moment that a service is remunerated. The amount of GROKS in circulation thus need not (and indeed cannot) be centrally controlled.

An example: Ms. Jones looks after the kids of Ms. Smith for 20 GROKS. Both women did not yet have any balance on their barter accounts. Ms. Smith goes overdrawn by 20 GROKS. The 20 GROKS now being credited to Ms. Jones have been created at this moment in time. If Ms. Jones now goes and buys vegetables for 12 GROKS at the greengrocers, whose barter account balance then shifts from -150 GROKS to -138 GROKS, then the 12 GROKS have disappeared from circulation again at that moment.

8.3.1 Transparency

The sum of all the credit balances of the CPO is at every moment equal to the sum of all the amounts loaned to people (the amounts by which their accounts are overdrawn).

The maximum amount of G_{ROKS} available is however limited by the sum of the credit ranges of all accounts. This can only be exceeded slightly should the security buffer (cf. chapter 8.2.2) between the credit range and the total value of the deposited joint-ownership certificates be needed for the circulation safeguard.

Both the maximum amount of G_{ROKS} available and the amount currently in circulation may be viewed by the members of the barter community at any time.

8.3.2 Circulation safeguard

To ensure that the money keeps flowing for the purpose of bartering and is not hoarded (cf. chapter 5.5), it is subject to a regular circulation safeguard fee. The fee for the G_{ROKS} is 1% per quarter. This means that every three months, 1% is deducted from the balance of the barter account of every barter participant. The circulation safeguard is applied to positive account balances, and possibly also to negative account balances.

This fee does not disappear from the system, but is used according to the stipulations of the general meeting (cf. also chapter 8.7).

Due to the circulation safeguard fee, the currency intentionally loses its advantage over goods and services. Like these, it is subject to an ageing process and loses value when stored. Unlike the rate of inflation, the amount of the circulation safeguard fee is known right from the start.

In order to avoid the circulation safeguard fee one has to invest any money which is not currently needed in long-term projects which will in future always return a good yield as reliably as possible. We call such projects "long-term viable" (cf. chapter 5.3).

G_{ROKS} which are currently not needed may for example be lent interest-free to a company of the CPO (cf. chapter 8.3.4). They may also be used to buy new joint-ownership certificates, should the CPO or another barter participant offer some for sale.

8.3.3 Convertibility

The G_{ROK} can not be converted directly into pounds or dollars. It can however be converted into joint-ownership certificates of the CPO (if they are available via the system account of the CPO), which can then be sold on the pound or dollar based market. Note that (only) for certificates with the entitlement to vote the approval of the CPO is required (cf. chapter 7.2).

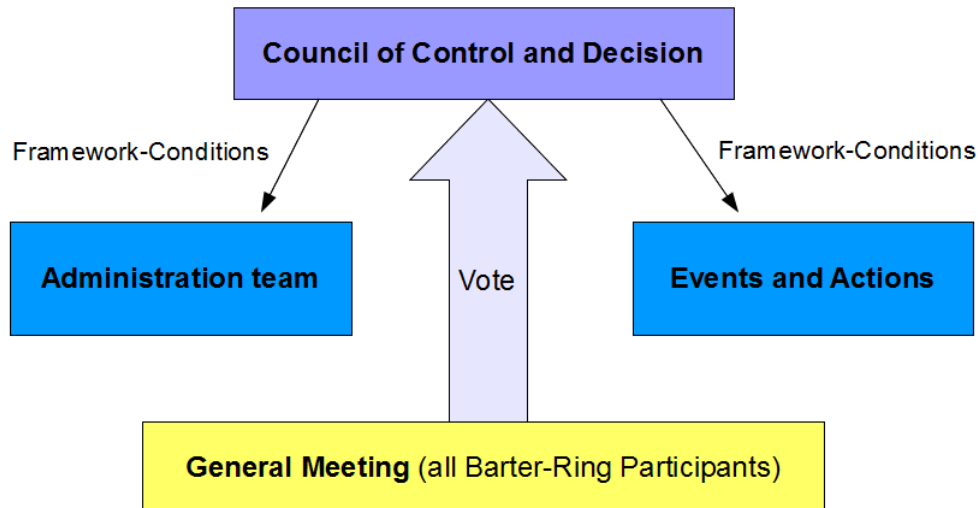
8.3.4 Lending

G_{ROKS} may (only) be lent interest-free. The lender thus avoids payment of the circulation safeguard fee (cf. chapter 8.3.2).

Every form of banking activity using G_{ROKS} (e.g. collecting deposits, re-lending borrowed G_{ROKS}, charging of interest on G_{ROKS}, exchange for pounds / dollars or other barter currencies), and the participation in such an activity initiated by others, is not allowed.

This is to avoid the slippery slope into the widely known problems of the financial sector. A secondary effect of this is that the barter-rings in Britain will not have to be under the supervision of the FSA (Financial Services Authority).

8.4 Institutions of the Barter Community



The work performed for these groups is remunerated in G_{ROKS}.

8.4.1 General Meeting

The general meeting is held at least once a year, and additionally by request if necessary. It elects the members of the council of control and decision or confirms the existing ones.

It decides on the amount and usage of the fees of the barter community, while taking into account the work to be covered which is necessary for the administration and organisation of the community (cf. chapter 8.7 on this).

8.4.2 Council of Control and Decision

The Council of Control and Decision (CCD) monitors the work of the Administration and the Events and Actions groups, and takes any decisions necessary to ensure that the day to day activities of the Barter Community occur in accordance with its statutes, any applicable decisions of the General Meeting, and in general accordance with the will of the members, inasfar as this is known. The Council consists of 3 to 5 members and takes decisions via simple majority.

In order to be elected to the Council of Control and Decision you have to have already previously worked for the foundation of the barter community or in one of its groups in an active way. The barter participants should be able to assess the reliability and the sense of responsibility of the members of the council before the election takes place.

The CCD prescribes the basic principles and the general framework of the barter community by which the other groups are bound. Apart from this, the groups work autonomously. Further groups may be formed as required.

8.4.3 Administration team

The Administration team deals with the registration formalities, maintains the contact data of the members and, if applicable, collects the registration and annual fees. It also takes care of the internet portal and the remuneration system.

8.4.4 Events and Actions group

The Events and Actions group looks after the organisation of parties and regular events for getting to know each other.

8.5 Membership

8.5.1 Admission

Natural persons at least 14 years old and local companies can join the barter community. Everyone from the region who has something to offer to the others may participate. The following people / companies are **entitled** to admission into the barter community:

- the CPO as a company
- the companies fully or partly owned by the CPO
- the owners of joint-ownership certificates with or without the entitlement to vote
- the employees of the above mentioned companies.

No other companies or persons have an automatic right to admission. Anyone excluded due to misuse of the barter community also does not have any entitlement to admission.

Every person has to provide an identity card or passport during the admission. Companies are admitted into the barter community by application from an authorised representative.

Participation in an information event, in which the basic principles of the barter community and the differences to the pound or dollar system are made clear, is a prerequisite for admission.

During registration every member selects two participants of the barter community (no companies) as intercessors, who will support her in finding a solution in the case that a conflict arises. The intercessors also have the power of attorney over the barter account of the member, should the member be dead, unavailable due to illness or accident, or unreachable for more than three months (or refuses to communicate for that long). In this last case, the (futile) attempts to make contact with the member must be documented.

It is possible for a member to reject her selection as an intercessor, in which case the new member has to name another intercessor. The intercessors of a member company should not be employed by that company.

The General Meeting decides on whether to charge a registration and/or an annual membership fee.

8.5.2 Termination of Membership, Expulsion

Membership of the barter community may be terminated by the member at any time without giving any reasons.

In the case of an account balance of zero, any joint-ownership certificates that the member may have deposited are returned in full.

Should the barter account be in the red, the corresponding amount of certificates is retained: The account is balanced by a transfer from the system account of the CPO (cf. chapter 8.2.4), in return for which the corresponding amount of joint-ownership certificates is allocated to the system account in the certificate register.

A positive account balance can be transferred to another member or exchanged for certificates of the CPO, if they are available via the system account at that time.

Misuse of the barter community leads to immediate expulsion. If transactions have been made in connection with the abuse then they are to be reversed. If possible and appropriate the offending member can be sued for damages. Any remaining joint-ownership certificates of that member are only returned to her after the legal case has been closed.

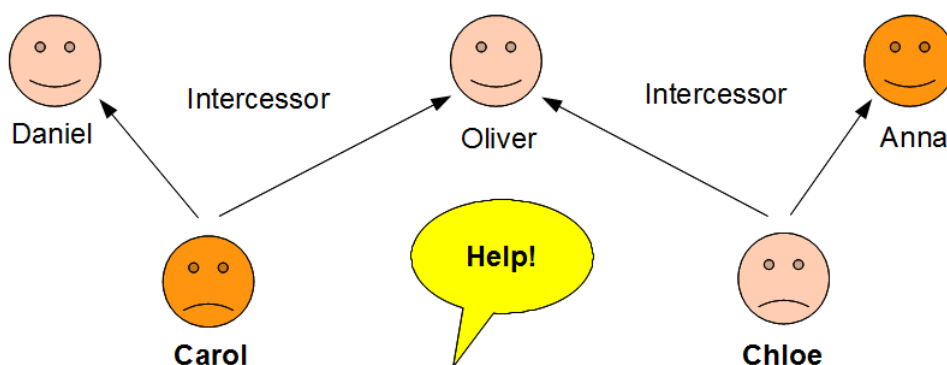
8.5.3 Stored and Visible Member Data

Every member is displayed with a photograph (for companies with their logo) and contact details, as well as links to her two intercessors in the barter community. The barter account is prominently marked as being for a private person or a business.

For under-age members their age is also published.

8.5.4 Conflict resolution

If a conflict arises which cannot be resolved by the parties themselves, then the first thing to do is to ask their intercessors for support. If a solution still can not be reached, then a mediator is to be called in, whose effort is remunerated by the two conflicting parties. The contract negotiated with the mediator is then published within the barter community.



Should the people involved take legal action, then this will also be published within the barter community.

8.6 Barter trades

8.6.1 Remuneration

The remuneration of barter trades is performed online via the barter accounts of the two participants. The remuneration of a service may be carried out in GROKS or partly in GROKS and partly in pounds or dollars. If the available amount of GROKS or the credit range is not sufficient for the remuneration of a transaction then the transaction cannot be completed.

8.6.2 Coverage Query

Before a barter trade is bindingly agreed, the recipient of the service may grant the offerer a coverage query in order to document that she can afford it. During this query, the corresponding amount of GROKS are reserved for the offerer on the recipients account for an amount of time which is determined by the recipient of the service.

Usage of the coverage query may be subject to a fee.

8.6.3 Assessment

Every transaction should be evaluated by the people involved in it (as on eBay).

8.6.4 Level of Prices

The level of prices within the barter community may (and probably should) develop differently to those in the pound or dollar market (e.g. nursing services may be worth more than those of lawyers). In this case, there should be open communication with the tax authorities regarding taxable services in order to achieve a balanced solution for all parties involved.

8.6.5 Legal and Fiscal Requirements

For barter trades which are remunerated using GROKS, the same legal and fiscal requirements apply as for services which are paid for in pounds or dollars. Professional services are subject to income tax and VAT. Fraud and tax evasion will not be tolerated.

For the purpose of calculating taxes, the conversion into pounds or dollars can be made in the following two ways:

- via the value of the joint-ownership certificates (cf. chapter 8.3) or
- via direct comparison of one's own service in GROKS and pounds / dollars – if a barter participant regularly charges 50 £ / \$ or 40 GROKS for the same service, then a GROK is equivalent to 1.25 £ / \$ for this participant and this service.

In the latter case, the 40 GROKS would be treated as £50 / \$50 for tax purposes.

8.7 Fees due

The work carried out for the administration and organisation of the barter community is remunerated. To this end fees are charged, the amount and usage of which is decided by the General Meeting. The fees have to be made at least so high that the expected amount of work needed for

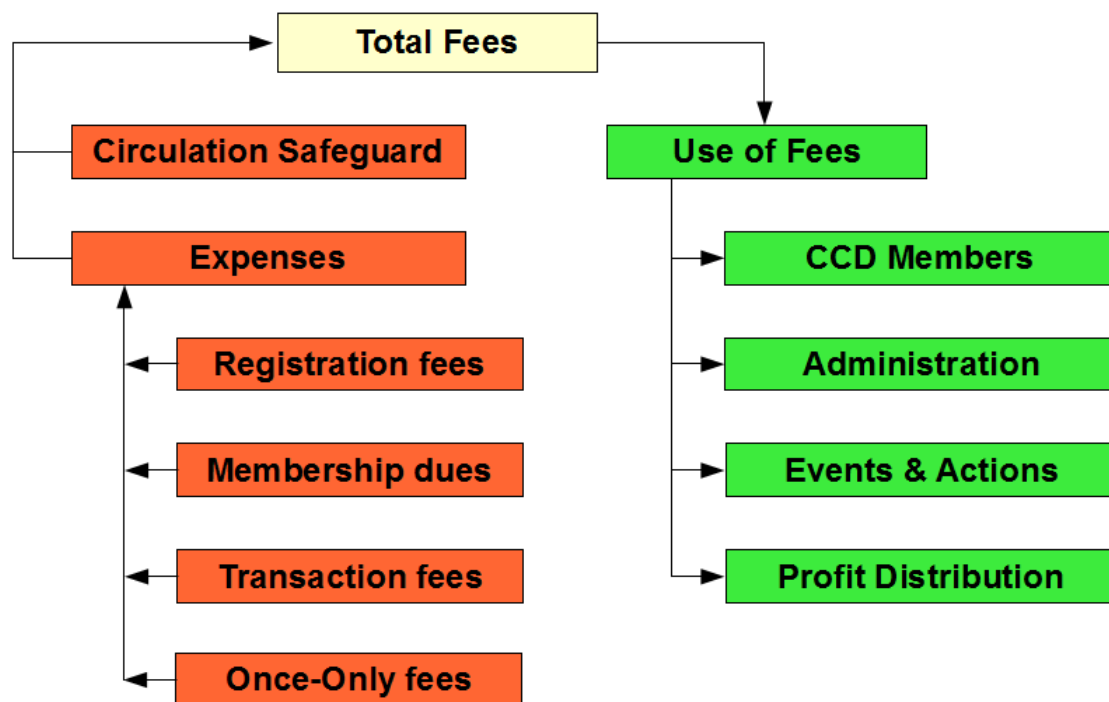
administration and organisation can be remunerated. The amount of work estimated for the following year is presented openly at the General Meeting.

Beyond the remuneration of the work groups, the fees may also be used for hosting events, supporting social projects or for financing an unconditional basic income for the barter participants.

Since the circulation safeguard fee is an integral part of the complementary currency system and pivotal in its conception, the General Meeting may change its amount, but not abolish it entirely. Additionally, a registration fee in pounds or dollars and/or an annual membership fee in pounds / dollars or GROKS may be charged. A fee for granting and changing the credit range is also conceivable.

If an annual membership fee is charged, then this may also be settled through active work for the barter community. There are several ways to do this: Tasks which may arise at events (putting up tables and chairs, errands, selling drinks, etc.), work in one of the groups (administration, organisation), maintaining the online-accounting software, etc. For certain tasks, e.g. the maintenance of the software, the possession of adequate qualifications will be a prerequisite.

Fees paid in GROKS are not withdrawn from circulation, since the (final) recipients are also active members of the community.



The various fees in the barter community, and their uses

9 Scenarios

9.1 Founding a company

A newly trained craftswoman would like to set up her own business, however she does not have the necessary financial resources to do this, nor enough securities to receive a loan from a bank.

Since she is open to a long-term viable way of doing business, she comes into contact with the Regional Economic Community. The Regional Economic Community has its own surplus to reinvest, and it finds additional private and corporate sponsors in the region who would like to invest in a new long-term viable business and/or an existing business which is to be handed over.

The young craftswoman runs the business as the chief executive for an unlimited amount of time – she and her employees do not have to worry that their contracts may be terminated so that the business can be sold for a profit. She has a strong community on her side, which will actively support her also in times of crises, because it is in everyone's interest that the business can also be run well in the future. The community provides advice and accompanies her while she starts up as self-employed, with the focus being on long-term viability.

The new business is not dependent on the development of interest rates on the pound or dollar market, because it does not have to pay back any loans.

9.2 Transfer of ownership

A businesswoman in the region would like to retire and hand over her business. However, she is concerned that her employees should not be laid off.

The CPO takes over the existing business as a contribution in kind and in return gives newly created joint-ownership certificates with the equivalent value to the previous owner. The community finds a new chief executive for the business and provides its own experts so that the handover and the re-orientation towards a long-term viable way of doing business can take place as smoothly as possible.

The previous owner has several possibilities for using her new joint-ownership certificates (which can also be combined):

- She can sell them on the pound or dollar based market in order to use the proceeds, for example to pay off a mortgage on her house.
- She can trade them one by one for GROKS on the marketplace of the barter community, in order to barter for goods and services she needs in her daily life. The price of the certificates is negotiable, as with all other barter trades.
- She can trade a number of them for GROKS on the marketplace, and then lend the GROKS to a new long-term viable project – she may also wish to work part-time on the project herself.
- If she does not wish to "sell" her certificates, she can as a guarantor deposit them for the account of another community member. Thus GROKS can come into existence, backed by her certificates, for which she herself does not pay the circulation safeguard fee – a sort of

interest-free long-term loan. The favoured member could for example be an initiative to erect locally situated wind turbines, i.e. she has the option to support increased resilience of her home district.

- She can deposit them for a high credit limit on her G_{ROK} barter account, and use it for other business purposes. She can thus continue to make her knowledge and abilities available to the barter community on a part-time basis, and use the G_{ROKS} earned in this way to meet her daily needs. Furthermore, in this case she receives an unconditional basic income, if the general meeting of the CPO has decided to provide one.

9.3 A heavily indebted company

The senior executives of a regional company are close to giving up on the company because of high debts to the banks. On the other hand, they feel a responsibility for their employees and want them to keep their jobs. The company also fits the criteria of the Regional Economic Community quite well.

The CPO takes over the company, after it has drawn up a plan together with the current executives for paying back the debt of the company and for strengthening its orientation towards a long-term viable way of doing business. The money needed to repay the debts comes from the sale of joint-ownership certificates to private and institutional investors within the region.

Under the umbrella of the CPO and free from the burden of debt, the previous chief executives can begin to restructure the company step by step towards a long-term viable way of doing business according to the agreed plan. The jobs can thus be kept. Profitability can increase further through synergies with other companies of the CPO. The surplus which is to be expected from this is distributed among the certificate owners of the CPO.

9.4 Local authorities as investors for municipal functions

The council (local authority) is broke and can no longer run the town's indoor swimming pool. It neither wishes to close the swimming pool, nor to sell it to a private investor.

The local authority hands over the indoor swimming pool as a contribution in kind to the CPO and in return receives joint-ownership certificates of the community. It uses the certificates to get a credit range on its new G_{ROK} barter account with the barter community.

Via this account, the local authority can now for example pay for services from craftswomen which are necessary to repair the roof of a school. To generate income for the barter account, it can offer public services (bus tickets, lending fees of the library, etc.) in exchange for G_{ROKS}. It could possibly also accept payment for the business tax of the companies of the CPO fully or partly in G_{ROKS}.

The CPO founds a new company (for example in the form of a social cooperative) to run the indoor swimming pool. Together with the new management of the swimming pool, dedicated citizens and external experts it works out a concept of how the swimming pool can be run in a long-term viable way. Possibly it can arrange for a local energy supply for the pool, and the services required for the renovation are remunerated through joint-ownership certificates of the community.

10 Why participate?

The Regional Economic Community offers **businesswomen** the possibility to

- orientate their business towards a long-term viable way of operating
- make investments which would otherwise not be possible
- found or take over a company without any private capital
- use less capital provided by others
- find a successor for the businesses
- to participate in a regional economic cycle using interest-free money.

Private and institutional **investors**

- put their money into sustainably operated assets, and
- can observe the effects of their invested money in detail.

Self-employed people

- can charge for their wares or services in G_{ROKS} combined with pounds or dollars and
- thus find new clients in the region.

Employees and contractors of companies

- can acquire certificates of the CPO through their work and
- can extend their G_{ROK} credit limits by depositing them, if they wish.

The citizens

- gain an insight into the long-term viability and thus the sustainability of the companies
- get an income in G_{ROKS} for rendering neighbourly help
- profit from the regional development and securing of basic supplies within the region
- gain access to a platform for founding communal projects, e.g. housing development.

The **local authority**

- can transfer some of its projects to a social cooperative
- thus strengthening the citizen's sense of their own responsibility
- takes part in the interest-free payment of services
- supports the regional economic structure.

11 Legal forms

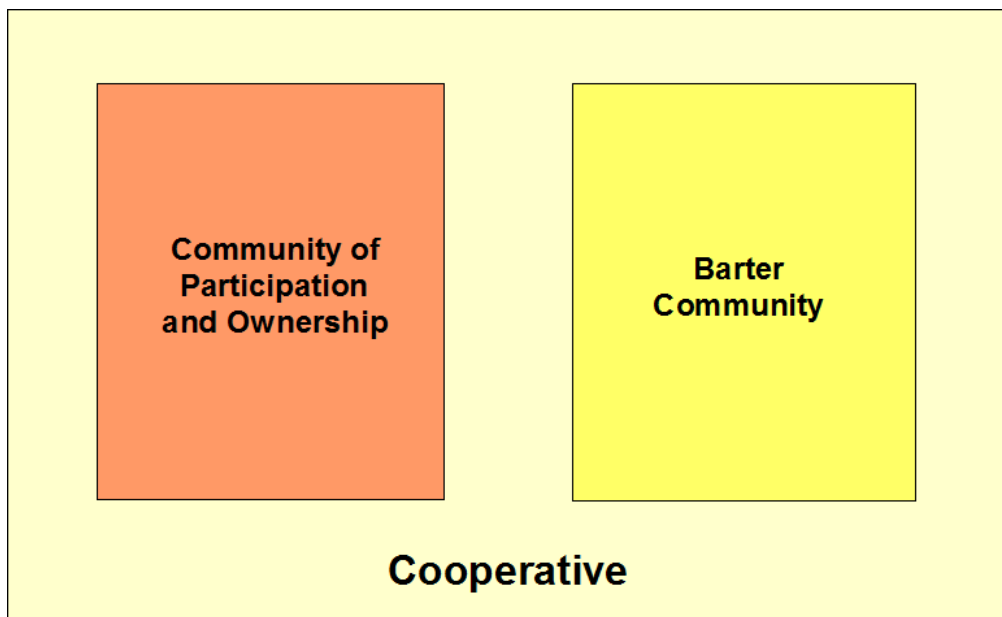
This is how the English wikipedia describes a Cooperative:

“A **cooperative** (also **co-operative**; often referred to as a **co-op**) is a business organization owned and operated by a group of individuals for their mutual benefit. Cooperatives are defined by the [International Co-operative Alliance's Statement on the Co-operative Identity](#) as [autonomous associations](#) of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through jointly-owned and democratically-controlled [enterprises](#).^[2] A cooperative may also be defined as a business owned and controlled equally by the people who use its services or by the people who work there. Cooperative enterprises are the focus of study in the field of [cooperative economics](#).”

This description matches the intentions of the Regional Economic Community very well.

11.1 The Regional Economic Community as a Cooperative

The Regional Economic Community is founded as a registered cooperative. Since the CPO and the barter community are strongly linked via the regulations concerning the surplus of the CPO (cf. chapter 7.3), they are run as two business divisions of this one cooperative.



Business Divisions of the Cooperative

In the following sections, the structure of the CPO and the barter community (as they have been described in the previous chapters) are projected onto the structure of the cooperative.

Note: This description currently follows German law regarding Cooperatives, and thus will almost certainly not be 1-to-1 applicable to the UK situation. But a description of the UK laws and possibilities would in turn not be applicable to the USA for example, and so on. We will be very glad to receive and incorporate suggestions specific to *your* local laws and customs!

11.1.1 Bodies of the Cooperative

The bodies of the Cooperative are, where applicable, those of the CPO (the CPO's Meeting of Entrepreneurs has no matching body in the Cooperative).

The **General Meeting** of the Cooperative consists of those persons who have joint-ownership certificates of the CPO with the entitlement to vote. The advisory council of the CPO takes on the role of the **Supervisory Board**. The Executive of the CPO is the **Board of Directors** of the Cooperative.

11.1.2 Business Division CPO

The business division CPO looks after the companies in which the Cooperative has participated fully or partly. It organises the Meeting of Entrepreneurs and manages the register of joint-ownership certificates as well as the system account (see chapter 8.2.4).

Certificates of the CPO without the entitlement to vote are issued by the Cooperative as certificates of participation in future yield.

Members of the CPO will generally also be members of the barter community, although this is not mandatory. It should however be noted that members of the CPO can only take part in the distribution of surplus if they maintain a barter account with the barter community.

11.1.3 Business Division Barter Community

The business division Barter Community is independent of the business division CPO. The boards and work groups of the barter community are not bound by orders from the board of directors or the supervisory board of the Cooperative.

The General Meeting of the barter community is *not* identical with the General Meeting of the Cooperative. Every member of the barter community has one vote in the barter-ring General Meeting.

The business division is run by the Council of Control and Decision (see chapter 8.4.2) elected by the barter-ring General Meeting. The administration is performed by the organisation team. The events group is responsible for the organisation of events.

In order to participate in the barter community it is not necessary to be a member of the Cooperative. The credit facility of the barter account can be safeguarded by the deposition of certificates of participation in future yield (= joint-ownership certificates without the entitlement to vote), for which membership of the Cooperative is not required.

11.2 Alternative legal forms

As well as a single registered cooperative society, the following alternatives have been considered.

11.2.1 Barter Community as a separate legal body

Barter Community and CPO can also be founded as separate legal entities.

In this case, the foundation of the barter community as a further Cooperative suggests itself. Since the barter community clearly also pursues economic goals, in particular by soliciting providers of professional taxable services, a club or foundation would not be applicable.

But since the two communities are closely linked through the regulations concerning the surplus (see chapter 7.3), combining them in a single legal form should be much easier.

11.2.2 Transfer of the assets to a security pool

The assets of the Regional Economic Community (shares in companies, real estate, joint-ownership certificates) could be stored in a security pool, which could (in Germany) have its own legal form as a partnership under the German Civil Code (BGB). The intent behind this idea was to reduce the local business tax.

This idea was rejected for the following reasons:

The Regional Economic Community aims to include the local authority – therefore it cannot at the same time use a tax loophole in order to avoid as much business tax from the German local authorities as possible (unlike in other countries, the German local authorities finance themselves mainly through the business tax from local companies).

If the CPO as a Cooperative were to give out joint-ownership certificates for assets which are owned by a security pool, not itself, then this would contradict the idea of transparency and simplicity – but these are essential criteria for long-term viability.

The burden of business taxes will minimise itself anyway. It has to be paid on interest from loans, leasing rates, rent payments, pension payments and other regular bills, payments for concessions and licenses. All these costs arise if the community doesn't own what it uses. The intention of the Regional Economic Community is exactly contrary to that. Its declared goal is to work with its own production means.

12 Starting up a Regional Economic Community

The steps described below do not have to be followed in exactly this order. Be open to creative deviations, as long as you don't lose sight of the overall plan.

12.1 Form a Founding Group

A community cannot be started single-handedly. Thus you will need to form a group with like-minded people, which is willing to take responsibility for the founding of the Regional Economic Community. The founding of a (German) Cooperative requires a minimum of three members.

Take time for each other and get to know the others as well as possible. Who is able and willing to do which tasks? Lay down rules for how you will want to deal with each other should conflicts arise. Practise communicating and interacting with each other in a respectful and open way. Experience and observation show that the energy of the founding group will ripple out to the new enterprise, sure as eggs is eggs!

The founding members ought to have understood the concept of the Regional Economic Community very clearly, including both the concepts of the CPO and the barter community.

However, it is essential and an absolute requirement for the foundation of this enterprise that the founding members see the new enterprise as a collaboration requiring team work: the emphasis is on cooperation and individual responsibility, not individual interests.

The founding members ought to be willing and able to buy the first joint-ownership certificates of the cooperative through monetary contributions, in order to cover the founding costs.

Keep a record of the time you are investing in the foundation. Reach an agreement within the founding group about how this time investment is to be remunerated (e.g. with joint-ownership certificates).

Determine who is to be the official contact person of the founding group.

12.2 A business plan for the Cooperative

Draw up a business plan for the Regional Economic Community. The business plan may also be needed in order to become a member of the cooperative union. In Germany, every cooperative has to be a member of a cooperative union.

Plan the infrastructure of the CPO as well as the barter community for their future operation. Will you need an office or are you going to work together in a decentralised way? Do you need new PCs?

Which tasks of the future operations will you be able to do yourself? Which do you want to outsource? What expenses are going to come your way and how will you cover them?

12.3 Proclamation – get your plans publicly known

Invite interested businesspeople, citizens, investors, representatives of the city council, etc. and introduce the concept to them. Afterwards, collect and sort through the ideas and impressions which you encounter at these events.

Find out who is willing to contribute financially and/or actively and in which areas. Collect the addresses of interested people. Speak openly with those people. Adhere to the principle of transparency from day one.

12.4 Cooperative Charter and Contracts

Put together the charter for the Cooperative as well as draft contracts. If possible, find a qualified solicitor or lawyer who wants to join the cooperative to work with on these topics.

Choose the cooperative union of which the new cooperative shall be a member. Pay attention to what support you get for which price from the different unions. Inform yourself about the founding costs.

12.5 Find appropriate businesses

The first one to three companies or projects which are to be run by the CPO have to be found. These can be existing companies which wants to become (more) long-term viable, or companies or projects which are to be newly founded.

In the case of an already existing company, you should make a preliminary contract with this company for the handover into cooperative property, before you work out a detailed plan for this company and begin courting the investors. A written statement of intent from both sides and laying out the next steps helps in finding the people to buy the joint-ownership certificates.

12.6 Realistic roadmaps for the businesses

Draw up plans how the companies can become (more) long-term viable. Determine the required money, skills and other resources as realistically as possible. Make a schedule which is also as realistic as possible.

12.7 Find and convince appropriate shareholders

Find shareholders who are willing and able to contribute the required money, material goods and/or do the necessary work.

12.8 Found the Cooperative

Once the first company / companies as well as potential shareholders have been found and a long-term viable plan has been made, you can found the Cooperative as prepared.

The founding meeting decides on the amount and price of the joint-ownership certificates needed in the beginning. The company / companies and their existing shareholders become members of the cooperative at the founding meeting.

12.9 Go!

Once the Cooperative has been founded, you can sell further certificates, install the infrastructure of the business divisions and start with the actual work ;-)

13 Literature, Films and Web-Links

13.1 Long-term viability and sustainability

13.1.1 Links

Link	Description
transitionculture.org	Rob Hopkins Blog
peakoil.com	Exploring Hydrocarbon Depletion – news and message boards

13.1.2 Books

David Holmgren: Permaculture – Principles & Pathways Beyond Sustainability

Rob Hopkins: The Transition Handbook – From Oil Dependency to Local Resilience (Transition Guides)

Joanna Macy, Molly Young Brown: Coming Back To Life – Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World

Jeremy Rifkin: The Empathic Civilization – The Race to Global Consciousness in a World in Crisis

13.2 Monetary systems

13.2.1 Links

Link	Description
monneta.org	Money Network Alliance for the Development and Implementation of Complementary Currencies
geldreform.de	Some links to monetary topics in English
themoneysyndrome.org	Presentation of the book The Money Syndrome by Helmut Creutz
reinventingmoney.com	Ideas and sources of information about money and banking
cyclos.org	Open Source Complementary Currency Software

13.2.2 Books

Helmut Creutz: The Money Syndrome

Bernard A. Lietaer: Future of Money – Creating New Wealth, Work and a Wiser World

Michael Rowbotham: The Grip of Death – A Study of Modern Money, Debt Slavery and Destructive Economics

14 Concluding remarks and acknowledgements

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We do not view this concept as our property, but as a freely accessible source of inspiration under the Creative Commons CC-BY license. If the concept or larger parts of it are copied, we wish to be named as the authors. We hope that indeed many people will be inspired to take action of their own, and will be glad of any feedback, especially on implementations based on the concept.

If you have any questions or feedback, I will be glad to receive your call or email.

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15 The authors



Anna-Lisa Schmalz, born 1962 in Bavaria, has a Masters Diploma in Maths, and has worked for over 20 years predominantly as an IT freelancer. One of her main objectives at work has always been to acquire a thorough understanding of customer requirements, in order to find economically efficient solutions for them. Since 2001 she has studied the psychological background of human development and gained significant personal experience in this field. Her youngest passions have been to understand the bottom line of how money works, and to gain in-depth insight into sustainability and viability.



Tim Reeves B.Sc., born 1954 in South England, studied Computing Science and (Astro-) Physics at QMC London. In 1977 he emigrated to Germany, where he still lives. He has worked predominantly as a programmer, also 6 years as a group leader for relationship topics and perception training. His thirst to understand the meaning of life sparked private study of cosmology, quantum physics and spiritual topics. In the course of time, these led to a noticeable leaning towards Tibetan Buddhism. He has 3 daughters, the eldest with a B.Sc. in Theoretical Physics from ICL. His personal orientation is to view and perceive things from as large a perspective as possible.