

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

**Biocoop
France**

CASE STUDY
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE

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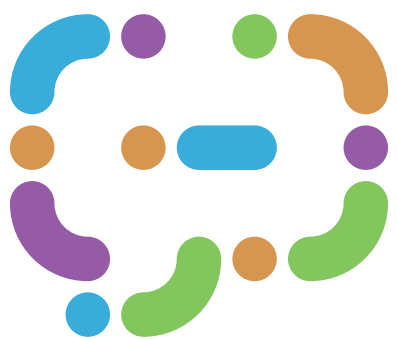
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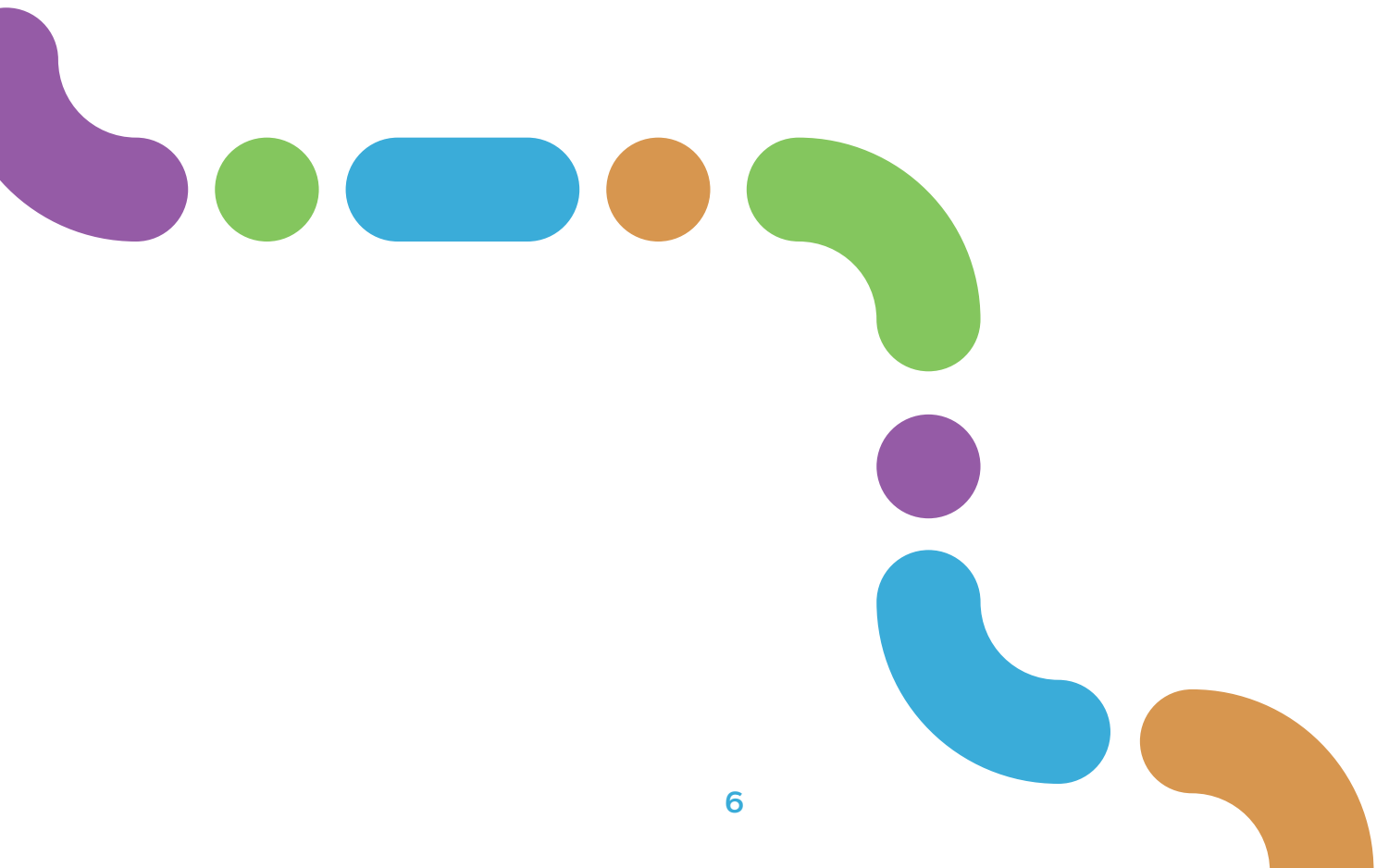
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01

Organisational model and legal status



Case study: BIOCOOP – FRANCE

Biocoop is a leading French cooperative dedicated to the distribution of organic, fair-trade, and locally sourced products. Since its establishment in 1986 it has grown into the largest organic distribution network in France, uniting independent retailers, producers and consumers behind a shared mission of sustainability and ethical trade. Its legal structure and organisational model reflect its commitment to cooperative values, democratic governance and social responsibility.

Legal status: a cooperative public limited company with variable capital

Biocoop operates as a *société anonyme à conseil d'administration* (public limited company with a board of directors) with a variable capital cooperative structure. This means that while it functions as a commercial entity, its governance is member-driven, allowing for flexibility in capital contributions and membership. The variable capital model enables new cooperators (such as retailers and suppliers) to join the network without fundamentally altering the cooperative's governance. Unlike traditional corporations where shareholder profit is a primary objective, Biocoop's structure ensures that profits are reinvested in the cooperative's mission, rather than distributed to external investors. This reinforces long-term sustainability and ethical business practices.

The cooperative is governed by a board of directors, which represents its diverse stakeholders, including store owners, employees and organic producers. The decision-making process follows democratic principles, ensuring that all members have a say in the strategic direction of the cooperative.

Organisational model: a decentralised yet unified network

Biocoop's business model is unique in the organic retail sector because it combines decentralised store ownership with a strong collective identity. The network consists of over 750 independently owned stores, each of which adheres to the cooperative's ethical charter, purchasing policies, and sustainability commitments. Unlike conventional franchises, Biocoop stores are not owned by a single corporate entity but are operated by independent entrepreneurs who choose to be part of the cooperative. This model fosters local decision-making, community engagement and adaptability, while preserving the collective strength of the Biocoop brand. The cooperative also integrates producers and consumers into its governance. This approach ensures that Biocoop's policies support organic farmers, local producers and sustainable agricultural practices, rather than being driven solely by commercial interests.

Biocoop's purchasing strategy is a key element of its organisational model. It prioritises:

- ➔ 100% organic products, with strict sourcing requirements;
- ➔ Fair trade and local production, supporting regional supply chains;
- ➔ A zero-waste and low-carbon approach, reducing packaging and environmental impact.

Governance and decision-making

Biocoop's governance is built on participative democracy, where decision-making power is distributed among its members rather than concentrated in a small group of executives or external shareholders.

Its governance structure includes:

- ➔ A general assembly, where cooperative members vote on major decisions;
- ➔ A board of directors, elected by members to oversee strategic direction;
- ➔ A cooperative charter, which outlines the ethical commitments of all stores and partners.

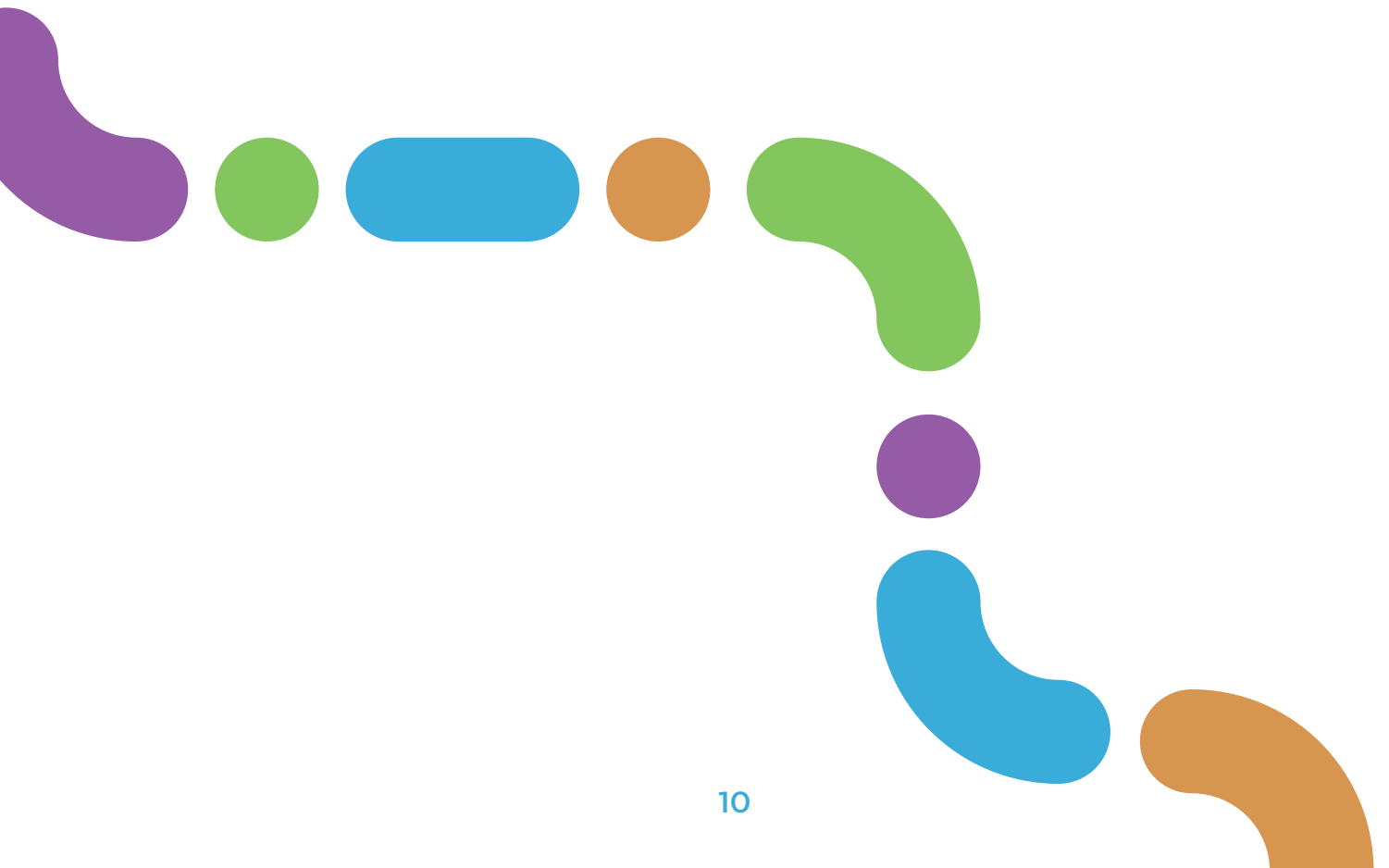
This model ensures that ethical and environmental considerations remain central to business operations, rather than being overridden by financial motives.

Case study: BIOCOOP - FRANCE



02

Background of the company



Case study: BIOCOOP - FRANCE

The roots of Biocoop can be traced back to the 1970s, a period marked by a burgeoning interest in organic farming and ecological movements across France. During this time, numerous consumer cooperatives emerged, driven by individuals seeking alternatives to conventional agricultural practices. These cooperatives promoted environmentally friendly farming methods and gave consumers access to organic products. In 1986, recognising the strength in unity, 50 of these consumer cooperatives came together to form Biocoop. This unification was designed to pool resources, share expertise, and establish a cohesive national network dedicated to the advancement of organic agriculture.

Following its inception, Biocoop saw significant growth. By 2014, the network encompassed 345 independent organic shops across France, accounting for approximately 15% of the national organic market. This expansion was facilitated by the establishment of technical and management teams, centralised platforms and a proprietary brand. These initiatives enabled Biocoop to streamline operations and maintain consistent quality standards across its network.

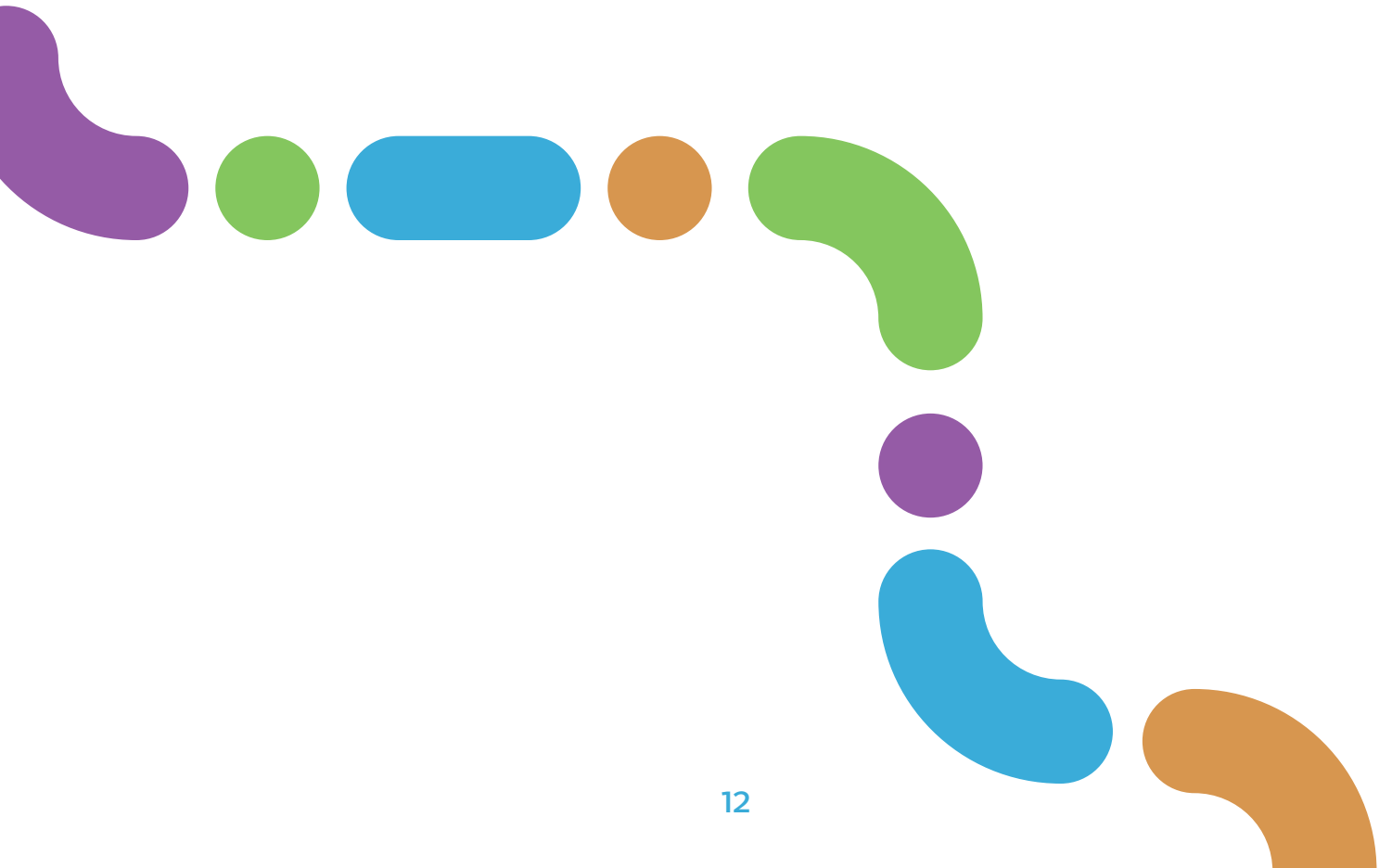
Central to Biocoop's philosophy is a commitment to equity, cooperation, and respect for stringent social and ecological criteria. These values are enshrined in a formal charter, which is detailed through four comprehensive conventions covering retailing, management, social and ecological practices. This charter guides the cooperative's operations and ensures adherence to its founding principles.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Biocoop's rapid growth led to internal and external criticism concerning its adherence to organic values. In response, the cooperative took deliberate steps to reaffirm its core principles. This included strengthening partnerships with organic producers, emphasising local sourcing, and enhancing the role of producers within the cooperative's governance structure. These measures were aimed at preserving the integrity of Biocoop's mission amidst expansion.

Today, Biocoop stands as a testimony to the power of cooperative action in promoting sustainable and ethical food systems. Its journey from a coalition of local cooperatives to a national leader in organic retail underscores the effectiveness of its model and the enduring appeal of its values.

03

Corporate sustainability due diligence (CSDD)



Case study: BIOCOOP – FRANCE

Biocoop's commitment to corporate sustainability due diligence (CSDD) is deeply embedded in its cooperative model and ethical business approach. As France's largest organic and fair-trade retail cooperative, Biocoop has developed a sustainability strategy that integrates environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria into its core operations. The cooperative prioritises local sourcing, supply chain accountability and fair value distribution, positioning itself as a leader in ethical and sustainable retail.

Environmental responsibility: a low-carbon and circular economy approach

Biocoop has made reducing its carbon footprint a strategic priority, aligning its sustainability policies with the Paris Agreement's climate objectives. The cooperative aims to reduce its CO₂ emissions by 25% by 2030 (compared to 2020 levels) through key initiatives such as:

- ➔ Decarbonising logistics and supply chains by using biogas-powered trucks and optimising transport routes. In 2023, 71% of Biocoop's truck fleet was equipped with biogas engines, reducing emissions across its distribution network;
- ➔ Reducing packaging waste by expanding its bulk product offerings and introducing reusable packaging. Currently, 35.4% of Biocoop's product range is sold without single-use packaging, with a goal of reaching 50% by 2025;
- ➔ Sustainable sourcing practices, including strict zero-deforestation policies for products like coffee and cocoa, and increasing agroforestry practices among partner farms.

Social responsibility: fair trade and ethical sourcing

Biocoop's cooperative governance model ensures that sustainability is not just a compliance measure but a core principle of its business. The cooperative actively supports organic farmers and fair-trade supply chains, helping producers secure fair prices and stable market access.

Key initiatives in social sustainability include:

- ➔ Fair trade leadership: in 2023, 25.7% of Biocoop's sales (excluding fresh produce) came from fair trade products, with a target of reaching 30% by 2025;
- ➔ Guaranteed minimum pricing for farmers: Biocoop signs three-year contracts with its producer groups, ensuring stable income and preventing price volatility;
- ➔ Financial support for sustainable farming: the cooperative distributed €960,000 in fair-trade premiums to its Paysan.ne.s Associé.e.s (partner farmers) to support investments in organic and regenerative farming;
- ➔ Biocoop's social due diligence extends to consumer access to organic food. In 2023, 63% of Biocoop stores participated in at least one social solidarity programme, including food donations and partnerships with community organisations.

Governance and compliance: transparency and ethical business practices

Biocoop has strong governance mechanisms to uphold its sustainability commitments, ensuring full compliance with corporate sustainability due diligence (CSDD) principles. Its governance model is built on transparency and democratic decision-making, with participation from store owners, employees, producers and consumers.

Biocoop's sustainability governance includes:

- ➔ Regular ESG impact assessments, including an Ecocert 26000 evaluation, where the cooperative scored 89% in 2023 for its CSR maturity;
- ➔ Full traceability of supply chains, ensuring ethical sourcing and compliance with strict organic and fair-trade standards;
- ➔ Commitment to ethical business practices, reinforced by its Entreprise à Mission status, which legally embeds social and environmental objectives into its corporate governance;
- ➔ By aligning its governance with sustainability best practices, Biocoop demonstrates that corporate sustainability due diligence is not just a regulatory obligation but a strategic advantage.

Biocoop's CSDD strategy goes beyond compliance, and embeds sustainability into every aspect of its business. By focusing on low-carbon logistics, fair trade partnerships and ethical governance, the cooperative exemplifies a holistic approach to sustainability. Its proactive due diligence ensures that its operations not only meet regulatory standards but also drive

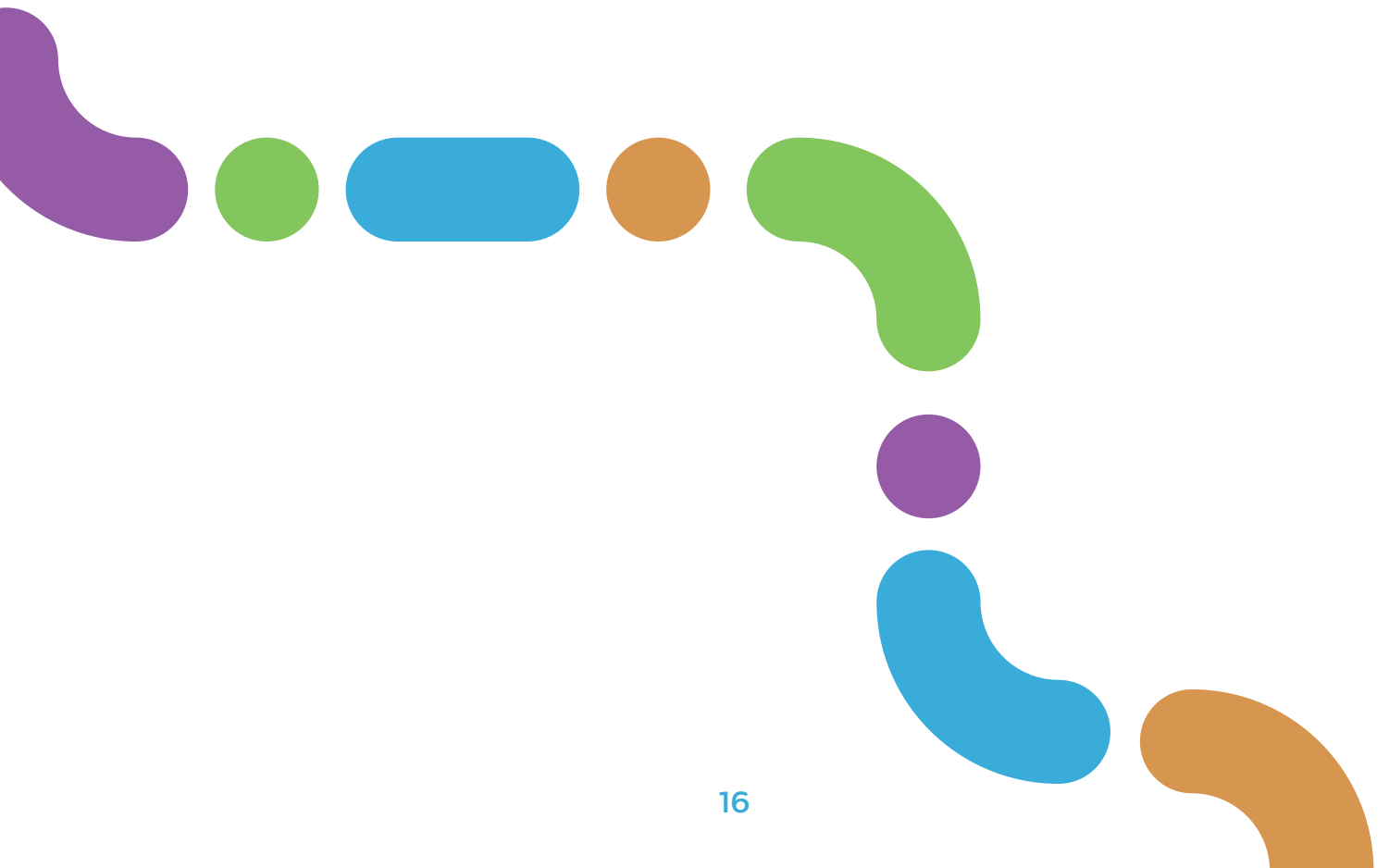
positive environmental and social impact. As Biocoop continues to expand, its cooperative model serves as a benchmark for responsible business practices in the organic and fair-trade retail sector.

Case study: BIOCOOP - FRANCE



04

Social dialogue



Case study: BIOCOOP – FRANCE

BioCoop's rapid expansion has presented challenges¹ in maintaining effective social dialogue within the organisation. While the cooperative is built on democratic governance and ethical values, its decentralised structure has resulted in inconsistencies in labour practices and employee representation across its network of stores.

In 2021, Biocoop faced strikes and protests by employees in various stores, reflecting concerns over working conditions, wage disparities, and the perceived erosion of cooperative values. Employees expressed frustration that increased workloads due to expansion had not been matched by adjustments in wages, support or consultation in decision-making. The lack of a unified approach to social dialogue across different stores exacerbated these tensions.

A key factor in these challenges is the absence of a standardised union representation structure across the cooperative. While some larger stores, particularly those with more than 20 employees, have mandatory employee representatives, there is no national platform connecting Biocoop workers through a common union or collective agreement. This decentralised approach, while fostering local autonomy, has led to varying levels of worker engagement and representation, depending on individual store owners. Some locations prioritise higher wages and better conditions, while others adhere only to minimum legal requirements.

Despite these challenges, Biocoop's management has acknowledged the need to reinforce social dialogue. In response to employee concerns, efforts have been made to improve communication channels between employees, store owners, and the cooperative's leadership. This has included creating forums for regular discussions, introducing more standardised labour practices, and reaffirming Biocoop's commitment to cooperative principles in the workplace. However, the cooperative's decentralised governance model still limits the uniform application of these measures across all stores.

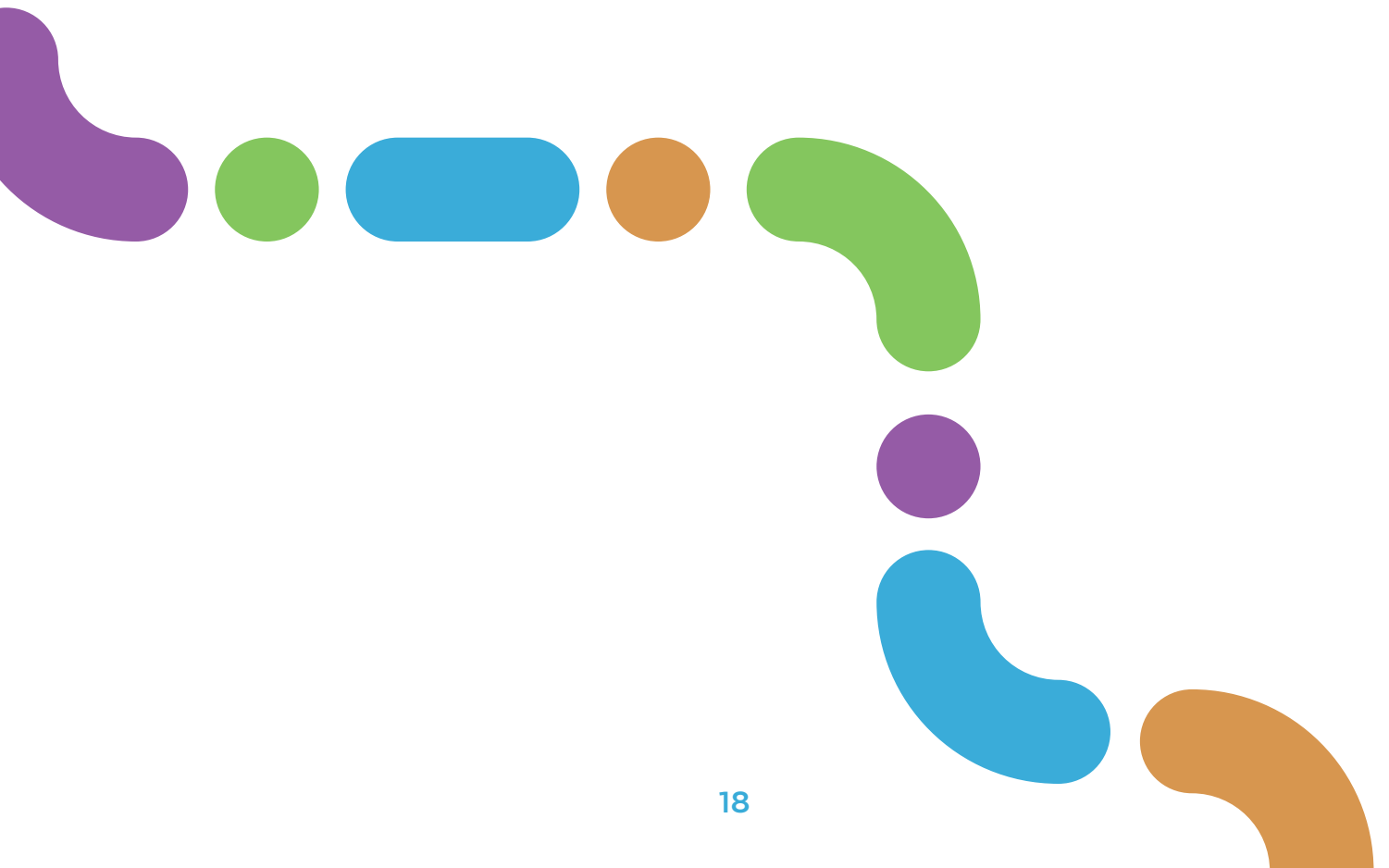
Biocoop's situation underscores the tensions between cooperative values and business expansion. The cooperative's growth has allowed it to expand access to organic and fair-trade products, but it has also revealed the difficulty of maintaining consistent social dialogue and worker engagement in a rapidly growing organisation. While Biocoop's model is based on democratic decision-making, not all employees are *sociétaires* (cooperative members), which limits their ability to influence governance decisions.

This experience highlights the importance of strong, adaptable social dialogue mechanisms in cooperatives undergoing growth. Biocoop's response – recognising the issue and working towards improved communication and worker participation – demonstrates an ongoing commitment to its founding values. However, for Biocoop to fully align its labour practices with its cooperative identity, greater standardisation of social dialogue and stronger worker representation mechanisms may be needed across its expanding network.

¹ For more information, see <https://www.radiofrance.fr/france-culture/conflits-sociaux-a-biocoop-le-symptome-d-une-croissance-trop-rapide-5890050>

05

Challenges and opportunities



Case study: BIOCOOP – FRANCE

Opportunities:

Biocoop's extensive network of over 700 independent shops positions it as a frontrunner in the organic market, enabling it to influence consumer preferences and promote sustainable consumption. This broad reach allows Biocoop to champion organic agriculture and fair-trade practices, catering to a growing demographic of consumers who prioritise ethical and sustainable products.

The cooperative's unwavering commitment to ethical sourcing and environmental stewardship resonates with contemporary consumer values. By prioritising local distribution channels and supporting organic production, Biocoop not only reduces its carbon footprint but also strengthens local economies and fosters community resilience.

Biocoop's cooperative model, which emphasises democratic governance and member participation, fosters close relationships with producers and consumers. This structure promotes economic inclusion and responsiveness to community needs, enhancing the cooperative's reputation and consumer loyalty.

Challenges:

Despite these advantages, Biocoop faces intensifying competition, particularly from conventional retailers entering the organic sector. These entrants often employ aggressive strategies, such as price undercutting and extensive marketing campaigns, challenging Biocoop to differentiate itself while adhering to its core values.

The cooperative's rapid expansion has also introduced internal challenges. Maintaining consistent labour practices and effective social dialogue across a decentralised network of independent stores has proven complex. In 2021, Biocoop experienced internal conflicts, including strikes and protests, highlighting concerns over working conditions and the perceived erosion of founding cooperative values. Additionally, environmental challenges, such as climate change, pose risks to Biocoop's supply chain. Fluctuating agricultural outputs due to unpredictable weather patterns can disrupt product availability and quality, necessitating adaptive sourcing strategies and robust relationships with producers to ensure supply chain resilience.

Impact of the cooperative structure:

Biocoop's cooperative framework offers both strengths and complexities. The emphasis on member ownership and democratic decision-making fosters a sense of shared purpose and community engagement. This participatory approach can lead to innovative solutions and a strong alignment with consumer values.

However, the decentralised nature of the cooperative can result in inconsistencies in labour practices and challenges in maintaining a unified organisational culture across all stores. Balancing local autonomy with the need for cohesive policies requires continuous dialogue and effective governance mechanisms.

Biocoop's cooperative structure provides a solid foundation for ethical retailing and community

engagement. However, it also necessitates careful management to navigate the complexities of growth, competition, and internal cohesion. By leveraging its cooperative principles, Biocoop can continue to thrive while staying true to its mission of promoting sustainable and fair-trade practices.

To capitalise on these opportunities, Biocoop is actively investing in employee training and development, ensuring that its workforce remains equipped to drive innovation and uphold cooperative principles. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and engagement, the cooperative not only strengthens internal expertise but also enhances its resilience in the face of emerging challenges.

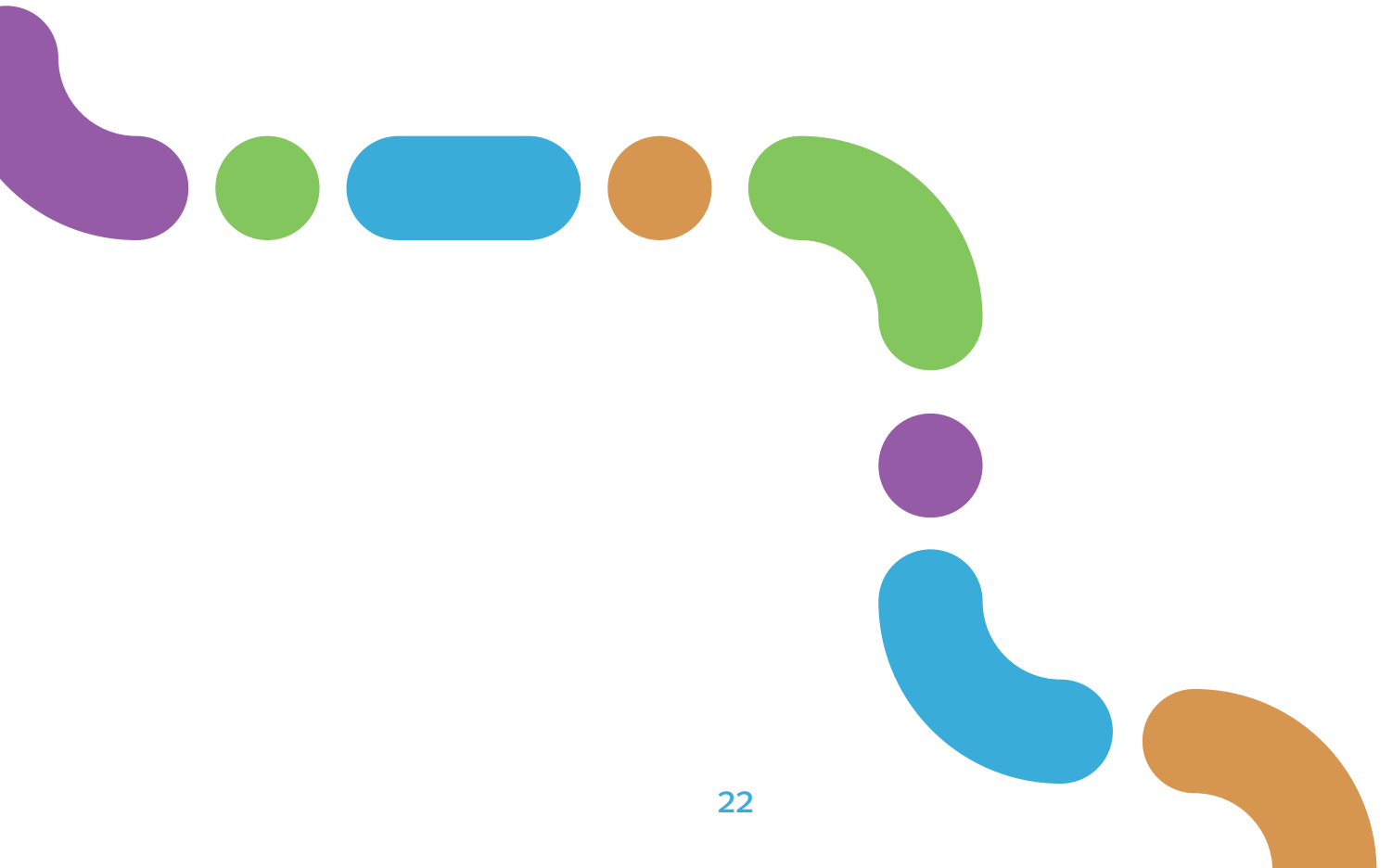
Biocoop has developed a robust environmental, social and governance (ESG) strategy that is aligned with its cooperative values and commitment to sustainability.

Case study: BIOCOOP - FRANCE



06

Strategies and actions



Case study: BIOCOOP – FRANCE

The company integrates environmental responsibility, social equity, and strong governance principles into its operations, ensuring a holistic approach to sustainable business practices.

Environmental (E) strategy: commitment to sustainable practices

Biocoop's environmental commitment is deeply rooted in its mission to accelerate the ecological transition. The cooperative has implemented various initiatives to reduce its environmental footprint, including sustainable logistics, responsible sourcing, and waste reduction. One of its key objectives is to reduce CO₂ emissions by 25% by 2030 compared to 2020 levels, aligning with the Paris Agreement's climate goals.

A major step toward this goal is Biocoop's shift towards sustainable transport solutions. The company has invested in biogas-powered trucks and innovative refrigeration technologies that use kinetic energy to reduce fuel consumption and emissions. Additionally, Biocoop's logistics platforms are certified HQE (*Haute Qualité Environnementale*) and ISO 14001, ensuring high environmental performance in storage and distribution.

Another critical environmental strategy is Biocoop's commitment to sustainable sourcing. The cooperative prioritises locally produced goods, with 86% of its products originating from French farms. Biocoop also works closely with organic farmers to support agroecological practices that enhance biodiversity and soil health. Through initiatives such as "Cocorico,"

Biocoop has successfully reintroduced local supply chains to reduce reliance on imported raw materials, thus minimising the environmental impact of transport.

Seasonal products are also a fundamental principle at Biocoop. The stores strictly follow seasonal availability, meaning that certain fruits and vegetables, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, aubergines, peppers and strawberries, are not stocked outside their natural growing season. Unlike many other organic and conventional retailers that offer these products year-round, Biocoop prioritises a more sustainable approach, reducing the environmental impact associated with out-of-season production and long-distance transport.

Waste reduction is another key pillar of Biocoop's environmental strategy. The cooperative was the first organic retailer in France to eliminate plastic water bottles from its stores in 2017, and it continues to expand bulk product offerings to minimise packaging waste. By 2025, Biocoop aims for 50% of its products to be sold in bulk or in reusable packaging, reinforcing its commitment to circular economy principles.

Social (S) strategy: fair trade, employee well-being, and community engagement

Biocoop's social responsibility extends beyond its supply chain to encompass fair trade practices, employee well-being, and community support. The cooperative ensures fair compensation for farmers and producers through long-term contracts that guarantee stable prices. In 2023, Biocoop allocated

€960,000 in fair trade premiums to support small-scale farmers and sustainable agricultural projects. Employee well-being is at the heart of Biocoop's social strategy. The cooperative promotes equitable working conditions, offering permanent contracts to 75% of its workforce and maintaining a wage gap ratio of 1:5 between the lowest and highest salaries. A strong focus on professional development is evident in Biocoop's extensive training programmes, which equipped over 2,900 employees with new skills in 2023.

Social dialogue plays a crucial role in Biocoop's governance. The cooperative has implemented structured mechanisms to foster employee participation in decision-making processes. This includes regular assemblies and consultations to ensure that employee voices are heard, particularly in response to concerns over workload and wage disparities raised during labour disputes in 2021.

Biocoop's commitment to social equity extends to its community engagement programmes. The cooperative actively supports food security initiatives, such as its annual "Collecte Bio Solidaire", which redistributes organic food products to vulnerable people. In 2023 alone, Biocoop provided nearly 80,000 organic products to social organisations and contributed nearly €100,000 to food aid programmes.

Governance (G) strategy: democratic decision-making and ethical business practices

As a cooperative, Biocoop operates under a democratic governance model that ensures equal participation among stakeholders, including store owners, producers, employees and consumers. The governance structure is based on a one-person, one-vote system, reinforcing transparency and accountability in decision-making.

The cooperative's ethical framework is codified in its *Charte de Déontologie* (Code of Ethics), which outlines principles of fairness, cooperation and transparency. Biocoop upholds rigorous standards in supplier relations, ensuring long-term partnerships based on ethical and sustainable criteria. This includes strict adherence to fair trade principles and supplier evaluations to prevent labour exploitation.

Biocoop's governance also prioritises financial sustainability while maintaining its cooperative mission. Unlike publicly traded companies driven by shareholder returns, Biocoop reinvests at least 50% of its profits in business development, innovation and employee benefits. This reinvestment strategy ensures that growth remains aligned with the cooperative's social and environmental commitments.

The cooperative's commitment to ethical business practices extends to its transparency in reporting. Biocoop publishes annual sustainability reports detailing its ESG performance, allowing stakeholders to assess the company's progress toward its sustainability goals. This commitment to accountability

Case study: BIOCOOP – FRANCE

reinforces stakeholder trust and strengthens Biocoop's reputation as a leader in ethical retail.

participation further enhance Biocoop's credibility as a values-driven enterprise.

Biocoop's ESG strategy is deeply embedded in its cooperative identity, demonstrating that economic success and sustainability can go hand in hand. Its environmental initiatives reduce carbon emissions and promote sustainable agriculture, while its social strategies ensure fair trade, employee well-being, and community engagement. Strong governance practices rooted in transparency and democratic

By integrating environmental, social and governance principles into its operations, Biocoop not only sets a benchmark for sustainable business practices but also serves as a model for companies seeking to balance financial performance with social and environmental impact. Through its cooperative model, Biocoop proves that businesses can thrive while remaining committed to ethical and sustainable growth.

Implementing CSR policies at Biocoop Neudorf

As a cooperative network, Biocoop has long been a pioneer in implementing sustainable and ethical business practices, guided by the principles outlined in its *Charte de Déontologie* (Code of Ethics). While overarching corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies are decided at the national and cooperative level, their practical application falls to the independently owned and managed Biocoop stores, such as Biocoop Neudorf in Strasbourg. This case study explores how the cooperative's high standards in ethical sourcing, environmental responsibility, and fair labour practices are integrated into daily operations at the shop level.

Values at the core: a personal commitment

For the owner of Biocoop Neudorf, joining the cooperative was not simply a business decision but a reflection of deeply held values. Coming from a background in conventional retail, he deliberately chose the Biocoop network because of its ethical approach, which fitted his personal convictions about sustainability, fair trade, and responsible business practices. Unlike traditional retail chains where financial performance is often the sole driver, he emphasises that being part of Biocoop allows him to prioritise people and the planet without compromising business viability.

These values are shown in the way he manages his store – ensuring that employees are fairly compensated, fostering a participatory work environment, and maintaining close and transparent relationships with local suppliers. The cooperative model empowers him to make decisions based on ethical and social priorities rather than just profitability, an approach that he acknowledges would be much harder to implement in a standard franchise or corporate-owned supermarket. He describes CSR not as a compliance obligation but as a natural extension of his commitment to sustainable retail, showing how cooperative values shape business practices at the store level.

Challenges and local adaptation

Despite the overarching CSR framework, local store managers like Biocoop Neudorf's owner retain operational independence, leading to variations in implementation. For example, while Biocoop promotes equitable wages, actual salaries depend on each store's financial viability. Similarly, while Biocoop audits national suppliers, store managers are responsible for verifying local suppliers, which might rely on more informal assessments.

A model for cooperative-led CSR implementation

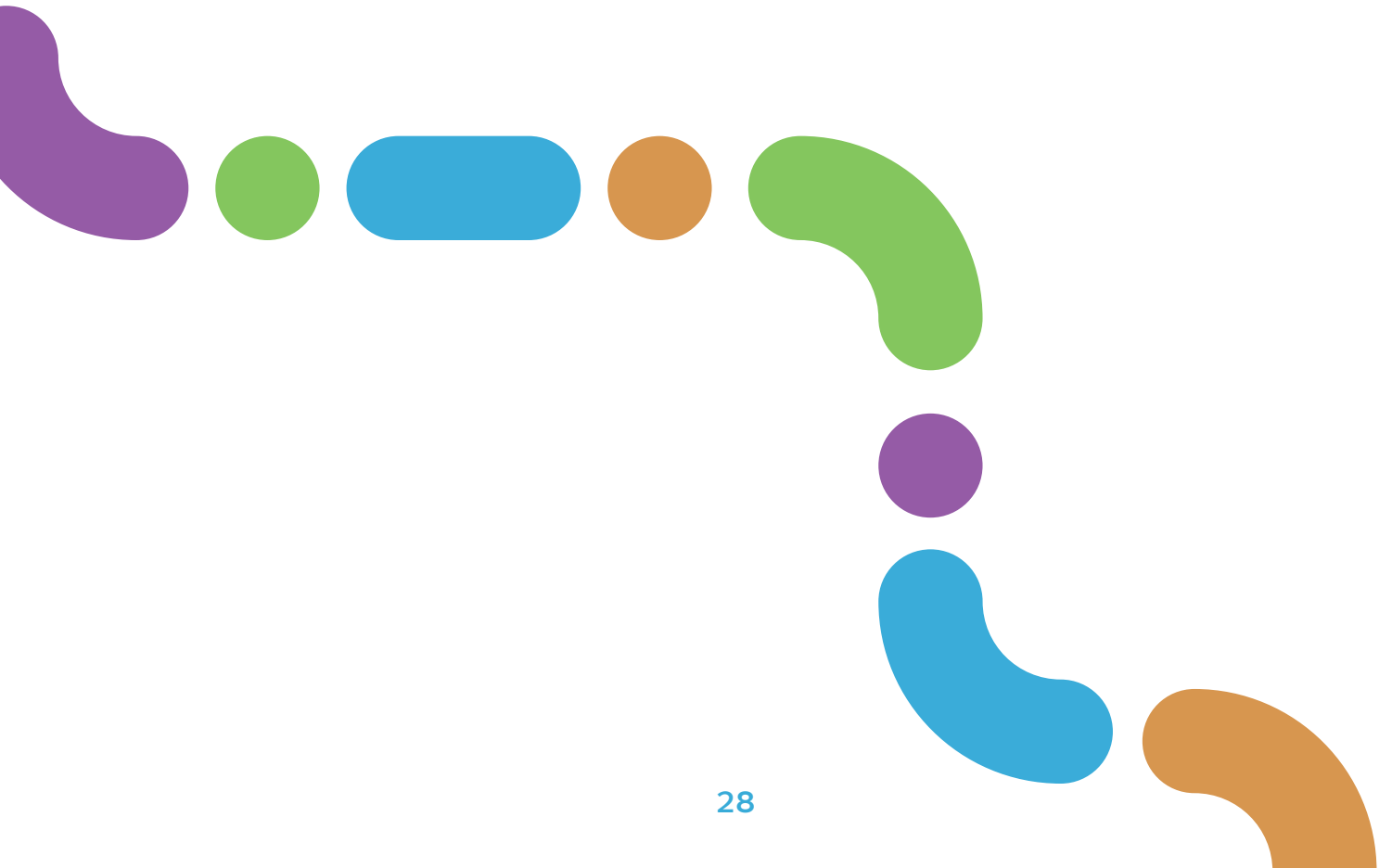
Biocoop Neudorf exemplifies how cooperative-driven policies can effectively trickle down to local businesses, ensuring strong ethical and sustainable practices even in independently managed entities. While CSR obligations are not legally imposed, they are deeply embedded in the culture and day-to-day decision-making, demonstrating the power of value-driven, cooperative business models in fostering sustainability and social responsibility.

Case study: BIOCOOP - FRANCE



07

Good practices and lessons learned



Case study: BIOCOOP - FRANCE

Biocoop's structure, which blends cooperative governance with a network of independently managed shops, offers valuable insights into sustainable business practices, ethical supply chain management, and corporate social responsibility. This model demonstrates how a business can balance collective ideals with local adaptability, ensuring that sustainability is embedded in everyday operations while allowing store owners the flexibility to navigate their specific economic and social contexts.

At the heart of Biocoop's success is its cooperative governance. Unlike conventional corporations driven by shareholder profits, Biocoop reinvests its earnings in strengthening its mission of sustainability, fair trade and local production. The cooperative structure ensures democratic decision-making, where key stakeholders, including store owners, producers, employees and consumers, contribute to shaping business strategies. This model fosters a strong sense of collective responsibility, ensuring that ethical and environmental considerations remain central to operations rather than being secondary to profit motives. The cooperative also maintains strict standards on sourcing, requiring stores to adhere to policies that prioritise 100% organic products, local supply chains, and fair-trade goods. By structuring its purchasing strategy around long-term partnerships with organic farmers and sustainable producers, Biocoop ensures price stability, ethical working conditions, and reduced environmental impact throughout its supply chain.

One of Biocoop's defining strengths is its commitment to sustainability beyond simple compliance. The cooperative actively pursues initiatives aimed at reducing its carbon footprint, including investments in low-carbon logistics such as biogas trucks and the expansion of bulk food retailing to minimise packaging waste. At the national level, Biocoop enforces policies that prohibit the sale of air-transported goods and requires all fresh produce to be seasonal, a practice that distinguishes it from many organic retailers that continue to offer out-of-season imports. These environmental commitments, coupled with strict supplier audits and sustainability reporting, position Biocoop as a leader in responsible retail.

While these cooperative principles set a strong ethical framework, their implementation at the store level varies significantly due to the independence of each Biocoop shop. The case of Biocoop Neudorf highlights the strengths and challenges of this decentralised model. Store owners who voluntarily align themselves with Biocoop's sustainability values integrate these principles naturally into their business operations. The owner of Biocoop Neudorf, for example, applies fair wage policies, ensuring that salaries start at 10% above minimum wage, and fosters close relationships with local suppliers to maintain transparency and ethical standards. However, because each Biocoop shop is independently managed, there is no enforced standard for employment practices, leading to variations in wages, benefits and employee representation across stores. While some store owners invest in worker well-being, others adhere only to the minimum legal requirements, illustrating the challenges of maintaining uniform social responsibility across a decentralised network.

Another key challenge is ensuring consistency in ethical sourcing at the local level. While Biocoop conducts national supplier audits, individual stores are responsible for verifying their local suppliers. Unlike conventional retail chains that centralise supply chain management, Biocoop allows its shops the freedom to source local products, a practice that strengthens regional economies and reduces transport emissions. However, this decentralised approach also means that ethical and environmental compliance relies heavily on the diligence and personal commitment of store owners, rather than on an enforced corporate standard. Some store managers take proactive steps to assess working conditions and sustainability practices among their suppliers, while others may lack the resources or incentive to conduct thorough checks.

Despite these challenges, the cooperative structure provides key advantages that help independent stores navigate market pressures. The collective purchasing power of Biocoop enables shops to access high-quality organic products at competitive prices while benefiting from shared logistical support. Additionally, cooperative training programmes ensure that store managers and employees remain informed about best practices in sustainability, fair trade and ethical business management. However, store owners must still operate within the realities of their local economies, balancing their commitment to cooperative values with the need to remain financially viable in a competitive retail landscape.

Biocoop's model offers valuable lessons on how ethical business practices can thrive when they are deeply embedded in company culture rather than imposed as regulatory obligations. The cooperative demonstrates that a decentralised structure, when guided by strong shared values, can drive sustainability, fair trade and social equity across an extensive network. However, its experience also underscores the challenges of maintaining consistency in social and environmental policies when local decision-making remains highly autonomous. The tension between collective governance and individual store independence highlights the need for ongoing dialogue, stronger support mechanisms, and potentially more structured oversight to ensure that Biocoop's principles are uniformly upheld.

Ultimately, Biocoop's cooperative model serves as a powerful example of how businesses can prioritise sustainability and social responsibility without compromising their economic resilience. Its success is rooted in the voluntary engagement of store owners and employees who share its mission, proving that ethical business practices are most effective when they are embraced as core values rather than treated as external constraints. The Biocoop case suggests that for cooperative and value-driven enterprises to achieve their full potential, they must continuously balance local autonomy with shared accountability, ensuring that sustainability remains not just an ideal but a lived practice at every level of the organisation.

Case study: BIOCOOP - FRANCE



Sources

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- ✦ Interview:

Owner of a Biocoop shop in Strasbourg (28 January 2025)

- ✦ Website

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Case study: BIOCOOP - FRANCE





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