

A Board of Guardians is an effective body for providing the structural function of oversight. Its functions need to be much more specific than those currently performed by most supervisory boards.

A Board of Guardians should perform the following tasks, ensuring that:

1. The co-operative's common purpose is always the focus of the enterprise and that it carries out its real function, reporting annually to the membership on this matter
2. The annual operating plan is always purpose-driven and decided in full consultation with the membership
3. A range of audits, including a financial audit, an environmental-impact audit and an annual co-operation audit, is conducted at least annually. (A co-operation audit independently checks that organisations are functioning as genuine co-operative)
4. All senior executive posts are filled only by persons willing to commit to the common purpose and that their performance is reviewed annually
5. Membership is properly valued and constantly promoted
6. A pool of effective member-leaders is developed
7. All elections for members' representatives and leaders are properly conducted
8. All senior executives receive thorough, competent training on how to function effectively within a co-operative enterprise
9. Proper capacity-building programmes are provided to develop effective member participation
10. A remuneration policy is designed and implemented to support the achievement of the co-operative's purpose
11. The enterprise is not in any way involved in speculation
12. Regular constitutional reviews establish that the organisation's structure, codes of practice, system of governance and rules remain fit for purpose.