

Co-op Lab - Private Co-Owners Association - Introduction and Overview

Co-op Lab is a private, non-commercial Association where people agree to act honourably as equal co-owners and co-custodians of a shared “knowledge commons”. All members agree to stand under Natural Law by agreeing to cause no harm, loss or injury. It is not a company, charity or public service but a private contract between Members who agree to co-operate for mutual benefit using common sense.

Members contribute in order to match their needs and offers with those of other members. In effect, members, their organisations and their projects can share diverse resources, skills, time, knowledge, projects, creative works and opportunities within a trusted private network.

The co-owned digital platform facilitates interactions, employing a private AI to make the matches when posted so people, organisations and projects can find the support and resources they require simply. As a critical mass of co-owners arises in any location, balanced growth will arise as members learn to co-operate in a self-governing local hub-and-spoke network.

Ongoing, a novel “Market-Space” can unfold grounded in Real Values with untold opportunities able to arise founded on trust and common sense. Indeed, local networking can evolve to address social, cultural, economical, financial, political and any other issues.

Member join through a three step process to understand and accept a Member Entry Covenant. Each becomes a co-owner and co-custodian in their private standing as they freely and knowingly accept the Co-Owners Agreement, its Schedules and the process to develop a local Co-op Lab network. They confirm their agreement that the Association is private, voluntary and non-commercial.

The contract places every Member as an equal co-owner and co-custodian of the shared intellectual commons; no one has a superior share or tradable stake. Contributions remain the property of each member, who grants other Members reciprocal access. Confidentiality and internal privacy are core duties: materials and discussions stay inside the Association unless the contributor explicitly agrees otherwise. All digital tools, including AI, are there to help with indexing, search and matching; Members remain responsible for how they interpret and use any information.

Governance is simple: ultimate authority rests with the Members, each holding one equal vote. Members elect Committees (central and local) to handle day-to-day administration as fiduciary agents delegating limited, revocable authority. The Committees maintain archives and digital infrastructure, manage membership applications, support development of local Co-op Labs and Hub Guilds, oversee cost-sharing finances and ensure that confidentiality and security standards are upheld.

Three core policy Schedules define: (A) what Committees can and cannot do; (B) data, confidentiality and information handling; and (C) financial policy, due process, discipline and communications. All activity is cost-sharing only, with transparent accounts, no profit distribution, no public advertising and no commercial services to the general public.

Structurally, Co-op Lab is a network of independent but aligned Private Members Associations: the central Co-Owners Association, Local Co-op Lab PMAs, and sector-specific Local Hub Guild PMAs. Each is self-governing and financially separate, with no partnership, joint venture, corporate group or shared liability created between them.

Local Co-op Labs develop “local mirrors” founded on the original contractual Agreement in a given locality. They facilitate local specialists to assemble Hub Guild PMAs as focus groups for any sector - health, arts, construction, food, technology, sports, entertainment, food and so on. Members can establish or join hub guilds related to their interests, talents and aspirations to exchange skills, time, knowledge, goods and services in workshops and projects guided by experienced practitioners. By developing projects and workshops together, these specialist groups can co-operate in a system of hands-on education; while developing assets worthy of investment.

Meanwhile, all Guild activities across the network remain private, non-commercial and cost-sharing. Breaches of confidentiality, misuse of materials or departures from non-commercial or honourable conduct are handled through internal due-process: complaints, review, hearings where needed, and outcomes such as caution, suspension, expulsion or withdrawal of recognition.

For someone arriving on the platform, the journey to understanding and accepting the contract is clarified in four steps - supported by simple animations, voice-overs and documents – each to be completed before moving on:

- **Step 1 “What Is Co-op Lab - why join”** explains its nature, why it exists, and what it means to be a co-owner and co custodian owner rather than a user- customer.
- **Step 2 “ How It Serves Us ”** how the platform matches needs and offers; while developing a unique “local audit” of available skills, time, knowledge, goods and services for common benefit.
- **Step 3 “The Covenant”** guides the Member through the contract and how it is ‘mirrored” in networks of local Co-op Labs and their hub-and-spoke hub guilds - their role and responsibilities as co-owner and co-custodian; network governance; confidentiality; non-commercial character; committees; data handling; internal dispute-resolution