



Former housing of CCRB, Kromme Nieuwegracht, Utrecht 1924-1957

Coöperatieve Centrale Raiffeisen-Bank

Until 2016 the organisational structure of Rabobank in the Netherlands was one of local banks supported by a central organisation. The Coöperatieve Centrale Raiffeisen-Bank was a forerunner of the Rabobank. Established in 1898, it was the oldest and biggest central bank organisation in the history of rural lending in the Netherlands. In 1972 the Coöperatieve Centrale Raiffeisen-Bank (CCRB) merged with Coöperatieve Centrale Boerenleenbank and became Rabobank.

1898 Establishment and goal

The Coöperatieve Centrale Raiffeisen-Bank (CCRB) was established on 12 June 1898 in Didam as the Coöperatieve Vereniging van Raiffeisen-banken en Landbouwverenigingen by the Nederlandsche Boerenbond and the representatives of six cooperative agricultural credit banks. It was located in Utrecht. In 1903 the original name was changed.

The CCRB was a central organisation of members of local rural credit cooperatives (Raiffeisenbanken) in the Netherlands. It operated as the central bank for its members. For the local banks the CCRB also served as the giro clearing institute, central investment institution, knowledge centre, advocate and control body. In its control body role, the

Establishment of the Coöperatieve Centrale Raiffeisen-Bank 1898

CCRB's capital base consisted of an unlimited number of shares each with a value of FL 500 1899





General Members' Meeting CCRB in Tivoli in Utrecht 1923

Photographer: N.V. Nederlandsch Fotopersbureau

CCRB conducted regular inspections to supervise the management and administrative control at the local banks. This situation was the result of the dual cooperative structure and the statutory obligations. In 1953 the statutory aspects of this role were enhanced based on the Credit System Supervision Act (1952) whereby the regulator in the Netherlands (De Nederlandsche Bank, referred to as DNB) delegated supervision of the CCRB banks to their central organisation. As a banking institution, the CCRB itself came under direct supervision of DNB from 1952. For many years it had been a lender to large regional and national agricultural organisations and cooperatives.

The cooperative structure of CCRB consisted of three bodies: the management board, the supervisory board and the general meeting (of the members). The general meeting monitored and supervised the activities of the other two bodies. It also selected the members of the management and supervisory boards, drew up the profit and loss account and the balance sheet, and took decisions on all matters relating to the association.

Membership of the CCRB was open to all rural credit cooperatives in the Netherlands (Raiffeisenbanken) and other rural cooperative organisations whose articles of association had been approved by the board of CCRB. In practice the latter consisted of a few joint bank and trade associations. There were not many Raiffeisenbanken in the south of the country, since nearly all rural credit cooperatives in that region were members of the Coöperatieve Centrale Boerenleenbank (CCB). Membership was not compulsory for these local banks.

Stable growth

In the early twentieth century the Raiffeisen model quickly gained ground in the Netherlands. Between 1900 and 1920 CCRB saw the number of member banks rise from 21 to 320. By 1930 this number had increased to 658. In the 1950s a few other banks joined, due in part to the new legislation on supervision, bringing the number of member banks to a record 732. Following local mergers in subsequent years, the total number of banks contracted to 617 by the time the national merger took place in 1972.

High point of 732 member banks



Former housing of CCRB St. Jacobsstraat 30 in Utrecht 1970

In contrast, in the same period (1952-1972) the total number of members at the local banks grew from 210,000 to 518,000.

Like the agricultural credit unions, by this time the Raiffeisen banks had become more than just the exponents of agrarian business. For instance, they had extended their banking activities to serve small- and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). With the dawn of the computer age, the banks acquired many private individual customers. In the 1960s people started to flock en masse to the banks to open a current account. These private accounts, as they were known, and the rise of cheques for payments heralded a new chapter in the history of payment transactions, in which automation of the banks was to play a key role.

In the wake of these changes came new forms of service provision and products, such as mortgages, insurance products and travel agency services. For mortgages, in 1966 the CCRB created the Raiffeisenhypotheekbank. It also expanded its insurance broking activities by, amongst other things, taking a stake in the insurance company known as 'De Twaalf Gewesten'. Like CCRB this company was active in the agriculture sector. In 1970 CCRB acquired the financial intermediary Transandine Handelsmaatschappij nv in Amsterdam. As its activities expanded so too did the number of staff employed by CCRB.

The CCRB in Utrecht city centre

In the early years the CCRB was located at Drift 12 in Utrecht at the office of one of its management team members, the notary Jhr. Mr. W.E. Bosch van Oud-Amelisweerd. In 1900 when the practice moved office, the CCRB went with it. When the notary stopped in 1906 it was time for the CCRB to move on. The explosive growth of the CCRB entailed many more relocations to properties in the historic heart of Utrecht.

In the early 1950s the CCRB decided to commission a brand-new building in the city centre. In 1957 the company and some 300 staff members moved to a distinguished and efficient office building in the St. Jacobsstraat. The decorations on the facade and framing the stone entrance illustrated the bank's historical links with the agrarian sector. In 1968 a modern extension was built alongside this building to house the bank's newly acquired computer systems.



In Utrecht the banks were even right next door, ca. 1970

Photographer Bart Stap

Merger of the CCRB and the CCB into the Coöperatieve Centrale Raiffeisen-Boerenleenbank B.A., known as Rabobank 1972

Merger to form Rabobank

As the distinctions within the banking sector blurred and banks expanded their branch networks, the sector was becoming increasingly competitive in rural and urban areas alike. In many places there were both a Boerenleenbank and a Raiffeisenbank.

Integration was therefore the next logical step. The establishment of the N.V. Gemeenschappelijk Bankkantoor in The Hague in 1949 had already signalled the start of collaboration. This body dealt with some of the payment transactions for large companies and organisations which were serviced by both central bank organisations. There was increasing collaboration on other fronts as well (for instance, consultation or a form of collaboration) between both organisations.

Following two years of preparation, in May 1972 the member banks of both organisations voted in favour of a merger. On 1 December 1972 the merger of the CCRB and the CCB into the Coöperatieve Centrale Raiffeisen-Boerenleenbank B.A., known as Rabobank, became a reality.

Further reading

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