

What is the CVO?

→ CVO stands for "*cotisation volontaire obligatoire*" or voluntary compulsory contribution. This term is commonly used by French dairy professionals to refer to **CNIEL's subscription fee**.

This term reflects two quite distinctive aspects of the fee. First it is **voluntary**, given that CNIEL's member organizations decide freely and unanimously on the amount of the fee, which finances CNIEL. Second, it is **compulsory**: as soon as CNIEL requests approval for the agreement on the fee amount, the CVO becomes payable by all French dairy industry professionals represented by CNIEL.

→ The CVO is **a fee based on collected milk, paid by dairy farmers and processors**. The principle of this fee was defined in a CNIEL agreement on 10 February 1976 and made compulsory by law on the basis of article L 632-13 of the French rural and maritime fishing code.

→ The way in which this fee is collected is also regulated: in particular, processors must collect the CVO from farmers and pay it to CNIEL based on the quantities of milk delivered to them. They add their own fees as processors to these sums. Because **CNIEL's actions support all dairy industry professionals**, the French authorities approved the CVO, enshrining its rules of procedure and prerogatives in legislation.

By approving the CNIEL agreement establishing the CVO, State intervention is aimed at **avoiding "freeloaders"**; i.e. stakeholders who benefit from CNIEL measures and actions without contributing. The payment of this fee is therefore compulsory for all dairy industry professionals.

→ CNIEL is a private association that acts in the general interest of the companies and organizations it represents. Thus, as confirmed by the French Constitutional Council in a decision on 17 February 2012, CVOs are not taxes but private debts recovered by the association: "CVOs do not in any way constitute taxes."

→ The use of CNIEL resources derived from the CVO is **strictly controlled**. CNIEL's accounts are presented at its General Assembly and, for transparency, are systematically verified by an auditor reporting to the government (Ministry of Finance), as well as published in the official bulletin.