

## VI DZ BANK Group and DZ BANK opportunity report

The details relating to DZ BANK are included in the opportunity report for the DZ BANK Group. A separate opportunity report is not prepared for DZ BANK. Unless stated otherwise, the disclosures relating to the DZ BANK Group also apply to DZ BANK.

### 1 Management of opportunities

The DZ BANK Group defines **opportunities** as situations in which potential income can be unlocked and/or potential cost savings can be achieved.

The management of opportunities is integrated into the **annual strategic planning process**. The potential for returns is identified and analyzed on the basis of various macroeconomic scenarios, trends, and changes in the market environment, and then included in strategic financial planning. Details about the strategic planning process are presented in chapter I.2.4 in 'DZ BANK Group fundamentals' in this (group) management report.

Opportunity management is an integral component of **governance** and is therefore taken into account in the general management approach, in the management of subsidiaries via appointments to key posts, and in the DZ BANK Group's committees. Details about the governance of the DZ BANK Group can be found in chapter I.2.2 in 'DZ BANK Group fundamentals' in the 2023 (group) management report.

### 2 Potential opportunities

#### 2.1 Potential opportunities from macroeconomic developments

The statements made in the outlook on the expected business performance of the DZ BANK Group in the year ahead are based on the macroeconomic scenario that DZ BANK considers to be the most likely.

If economic conditions in the relevant markets are better than expected, opportunities may arise for the DZ BANK Group. In a positive scenario such as this, the easing of the trade disputes between China and the US would avoid further barriers to trade affecting, in particular, the EU and Germany, the latter being heavily dependent on exports. The global economic downturn, especially in China, would be milder and shorter than expected and would not materialize in the US, which would lessen the risk of a global recession. Political stability and continuity in the US and a rapid end to the war between Israel and Hamas could also have a positive impact on the situation.

In spite of populist governments and high levels of government debt in the EU, stability in the eurozone – forged through European economic policy, joint solutions, and a gradual fall in interest rates – would drive growth in the European economy. Effective use of transmission protection instruments of the European Central Bank (ECB) would also mean that countries in the eurozone could continue to obtain finance easily. This would have a positive knock-on effect on the financial and capital markets. Furthermore, a gradual fall in interest rates would lessen the impact of factors that drive inflation, such as wage/price spirals. In the US, too, a downward movement in interest rates would have a positive effect on the country's budget and government debt. If interest rates remained high or even edged up further, however, net interest income and the net interest margin in the Bank sector and life insurance business in the Insurance sector would be positively impacted.

Consumer confidence could increase and improve if the German government's ongoing budget crisis can be remedied in the near term. A decline in energy and commodity prices – potentially supported by a foreseeable

end to the war in Ukraine – could help to boost confidence further. In combination with a fall in the rate of inflation toward the level targeted by the ECB, this would have a positive impact on the German economy. Moreover, an absence of further price corrections in the real estate markets coupled with declining interest rates would benefit the DZ BANK Group's financial performance and provide stability, above all for the commercial real estate market.

All of the positive factors outlined above are highly unlikely to materialize together. From the DZ BANK Group's perspective, however, even the occurrence of individual factors would create an environment for the financial sector that would probably benefit the individual business models and the financial position and financial performance of the DZ BANK Group as a whole. Stable conditions in the financial and capital markets would have a positive impact on the net interest income and net fee and commission income generated from customer business and on net income from insurance business. In particular, an assumed economic recovery could potentially limit the net expense recognized for loss allowances and thereby help to increase the Group's net profit.

## 2.2 Potential opportunities from regulatory initiatives

Regulatory changes and initiatives may provide banks and insurance companies with the opportunity to offer products or services that are better tailored to customers' needs. For example, sustainability aspects are becoming increasingly important for many customers when making purchases and investments. Initiatives at European level, such as sustainable finance strategies and proposals for an EU green bond standard, underline the significance of sustainability aspects for the financial sector. Further development of these initiatives may lead to customers and the markets participating in sustainable finance initiatives on a greater scale, which would provide banks and insurance companies with the opportunity to strengthen the unique selling points of their products and services and to unlock potential growth in sustainable finance. This would have a positive impact on, for example, net fee and commission income and net interest income.

## 2.3 Potential opportunities from strategic initiatives

The strategic focus in the DZ BANK Group (see chapter I.1 in 'DZ BANK Group fundamentals' in the 2023 (group) management report) follows the guiding principle of fulfilling the role of a **network-oriented central institution and financial services group**. Business activities are centered on the local cooperative banks and their customers. The objective of this strategic approach is to consolidate the positioning of the Cooperative Financial Network as one of the leading financial services providers in Germany on a long-term basis. The partnership between the cooperative banks and the entities in the DZ BANK Group is built on the principles of subsidiarity, decentralization, and regional market responsibility.

The DZ BANK Group develops and implements **strategic initiatives and programs** at three levels:

Firstly, the entities in the DZ BANK Group work on strategic projects and initiatives in collaboration with the cooperative banks and Atruvia, with the BVR taking a leading role. The strategy agenda entitled 'Shaping the future cooperatively' provides a framework within which the entities of the Cooperative Financial Network are implementing the initiatives in the strategic KundenFokus (customer focus) project with the aim of establishing an omnichannel model to strengthen their competitiveness.

Secondly, the entities in the DZ BANK Group have jointly identified key areas of collaboration (such as operating models and sustainability) that offer potential to reinforce their future viability and profitability. The aim is to continue to develop and take action in these areas of collaboration over the coming years.

Thirdly, each individual entity in the DZ BANK Group pursues its own strategic initiatives. One example is the 'Verbund First 4.0' strategic program at DZ BANK, which is designed to ensure the organization's resilience for the future. The program is aimed at improvements in three key areas: market presence (network-focused, customer-oriented, and digital), control and production processes (efficient, effective, and focused), and corporate culture (performance-driven and integrative). The 'Verbund First 4.0' strategic program is updated

continually in line with requirements. This transformation is being driven predominantly by key topics such as sustainability, digitalization, and employer branding.

**BSH** describes its long-term objective through its vision of being the leading product and solutions provider in the homes and housebuilding cooperative ecosystem. It intends to remain the market leader in the home savings market and, together with the cooperative banks, become the no. 1 in the home finance market. In addition, it is making inroads into new areas of growth for homes and housebuilding by maintaining a firm focus on customers and facilitating close collaboration between the cooperative banks and BSH's field staff on marketing. BSH is a center of excellence (provider of products and solutions) for consumer home finance, supporting the cooperative banks and playing an important part in strengthening the Cooperative Financial Network's market position. The evolution of BSH's role into that of a solutions provider for its bank partners and its integration into the homes and housebuilding cooperative ecosystem address the demand for end-to-end solutions and the development of new business models centered around customers' basic needs alongside financial products and extending the value chain.

**DZ HYP** is forging ahead with digitalization in many areas of its business. In consumer home finance, it is further expanding its role as a decentralized product supplier for the banks in the Cooperative Financial Network. Competitive products, rapid processes, and a risk-adjusted pricing model give banks scope to generate income through fees and commissions and through cross-selling options. The integration of Atruvia's omnichannel platform will be a central focus in 2024, enabling DZ HYP to support local cooperative banks with best-in-class products and services on this platform that they can use to advise customers on consumer home finance. The main aspects of DZ HYP's FK Digital project in its corporate customer business are deploying data optimally within processes, improving interfaces, and unlocking the associated potential for greater efficiency while, at the same time, catering to the current and future requirements of market players and supervisory authorities alike. The initial implementation phase of FK Digital began in July 2023 and is expected to be completed in spring 2025. This should also help to further optimize the bank's streamlined, profitable approach incorporating intensive customer relationship management. The bank has also drawn up a strategy for implementing the DZ HYP cloud infrastructure. In 2024, it plans to finish establishing the fundamental cloud infrastructure and migrate the majority of the IT landscape to the future operating model. The real estate sector has the potential to play a key role in combating climate change. DZ HYP sees its own role as supporting the green transformation of the economy in order to channel cash flows toward more sustainable business, for example by financing more energy-efficient real estate.

**R+V's** vision is to be the cooperative center of excellence for insurance, healthcare cover, and retirement pensions, working closely with its sales partners. Making customers happy is the cornerstone of future success under its strategic program, WIR@R+V. The program is designed to boost R+V's earnings power by putting a greater emphasis on profitability so that it can continue to make a significant contribution to the success of business in the Cooperative Financial Network. R+V also remains firmly focused on its growth strategy of strengthening areas of importance for the future, such as healthcare and long-term nursing care, membership, sustainability, and the omnichannel approach. By delivering a consistently robust business performance, it can maintain sufficient financial strength to be able to remain a reliable partner and deliver on its value propositions in the long term.

In response to the changing conditions in which it operates, **Union Investment** has created the internal FitForFuture program, which establishes the strategic areas of investment going forward. These areas of investment include not only sustainability and digitalization but also a 'learning organization'. Other key areas are the cementing of Union Investment's positioning as an active asset manager and the Masterplan platform in its retail business, which chimes with the aim of harnessing the potential of high-net-worth customers and the related product range. This investment in the future will be cost-neutral and will thus help to secure the profitable growth of the Union Investment Group.

Positive effects from the strategic programs and initiatives could have a beneficial impact on, for example, net fee and commission income, net interest income, or administrative expenses.