

Guaranteed Trust

Public report 2010

RAAD VOOR ACCREDITATIE



What is accreditation?

Nationally and internationally buyers need confidence with regard to the quality and safety of goods and services provided. If these are guaranteed it would not only benefit the buyer but also the supplier. This strengthens his position in the market. In order to be able to give an objective guarantee, the supplier can have his product or service assessed and tested by an accredited, independent certification or inspection body. This is possible for any imaginable sphere of work such as healthcare, construction, energy, food, environment, social affairs and transport.

Certificate of conformity

If the result of the assessment is good, the assessment organisation will issue a certificate of conformity for the product or service. This statement usually consists of a certificate or a report. That is why we call these bodies 'conformity-certifying bodies'. Such bodies must be impartial and have the competence to issue this certificate. Only then is it useful and reliable.

Surveillance of the conformity-certifying body

The RvA has been appointed by the government as the national accreditation body to assess the expertise, the impartiality and the management system of conformity assessment bodies. Thereby the RvA offers a guarantee of trust amongst the public sector, the buyers and the suppliers.

Foreword

Dear reader,

This is the first public report in which the Dutch Accreditation Council RvA reports on its activities as an autonomous administrative authority.

In this new capacity our actual work has not changed. That was and still is accreditation of conformity assessment bodies and keeping them accredited. But our new status required some changes. This entailed changes in regulations, in ways of working and in accountability.

For the core of our work the concept of confidence is indispensable. Accreditation is putting trust in an organisation. In the context of our new capacity obtaining trust is also important. For instance the confidence of the Ministries that accreditation is excellent evidence of expertise and impartiality, that they can trust accreditation. Ministries can use this in their policy and during their inspections and thereby reduce the administrative and regulatory burdens for companies.

What confidence means in the world of healthcare, of greenhouse gases and of food safety you can read in three interviews in this report. What this means in the daily work practice of people at RvA you can read in several personal profiles. In this way we want to show you our core values.

With a view to ease of reading we opted for offering you the formal financial report separately via www.rva.nl (documents).

We hope you enjoy reading it!



Jan van der Poel
Chief Executive



Ed Nijpels
Chairman of the Supervisory Board

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Introduction

Being trusted and expressing confidence

Accreditation is primarily all about trust as indicated by the Latin root of the word. It is about the confidence that the Accreditation Council should give to the society, about the confidence that buyers, users and authorities can and should trust the impartiality and expertise of laboratories, of testing and inspection institutions and certification institutions. The confidence in certificates, reports, results, grandly called 'certificates of conformity', is guaranteed in that way.

2010: a year of fundamental changes

Throughout Europe what was originally a private accreditation system has in the meantime been legally embedded in a European Regulation which the Netherlands implemented at the end of 2009 via the Dutch National Accreditation Body Appointment Act (Wet aanwijzing nationale accreditatie-instantie). In this Act the RvA has been appointed as the national accreditation body. In this Act the RvA was also appointed as an autonomous administrative authority (zelfstandig bestuursorgaan: 'ZBO') with retention of its private law status as a foundation.

When accreditation based on European harmonised accreditation standards is involved the activities of the RvA will be of the nature of public law and they are thereby covered by the Dutch General Administrative Law Act (Algemene wet bestuursrecht).

Because at the request of the Minister of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation ('EL&I') the RvA also conducts accreditation on the basis of the standards for medical laboratories, proficiency tests, producers of reference materials, verification and validation of greenhouse gases, these activities are also covered by the sphere of work of the ZBO.

All multilateral agreements for mutual recognition of accreditation are thereby covered by the public law activities of the RvA. Other activities of the RvA, such as the accreditations on the basis of the CCKL Praktijkrichtlijn for medical laboratories and assessment activities for the designation of certification and inspection agencies by the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment ('SZW'), are beyond the scope of the ZBO. These activities form roughly 20% of the turnover of the RvA.

The change does not appear to be very great. Nevertheless in 2010 it had a considerable effect on the operations of the RvA. Our organisation must not only comply with the requirements of the ISO/IEC 17011, General Requirements for Accreditation Bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies<I would also mention the title here for non-insiders reading this>, but it must also operate within the ranges of the General Administrative Law Act (Algemene wet bestuursrecht) and also comply with the Dutch Autonomous Administrative Authorities Framework Act (Kaderwet ZBO).

Partly with a view to the interest of our stakeholders we made efforts to develop as few as possible extra rules and regulations. Intensive and constructive consultation with the legal department of the Ministry of EL&I resulted in the problems being solved satisfactorily. But there were several inescapable changes:

- As a public authority the RvA now also issues individual decisions apart from the documents already in existence.
- All accreditation rules and regulations are converted into a set of policy rules and regulations which will be referred to in the individual decision.
- Accreditation applications are honoured if they are 100% complete.

- The complaints scheme and the objection/appeal procedure have been changed. The General Administrative Law Act has lower thresholds than the private law regulations which the RvA applied previously.
- The Articles of the RvA have been partly adjusted in order to comply with the National Accreditation Body Appointment Act and the Dutch Autonomous Administrative Authorities Framework Act.
- A communication protocol has been co-ordinated with the Ministry.

A ‘culture shock’ with positive effects

Obviously these fundamental changes meant quite a ‘culture shock’ for everybody working at the RvA. On top of this there was the internal move, the introduction of a new organisational structure and the implementation of new business software. These changes constituted a more than strong appeal to the motivation and dedication of all staff members.

We coped very well with this. The evidence of this can be found in the ‘Peer Review’ which we were able to undergo as an EA (European Co-operation for Accreditation) -MLA (Multi Lateral Agreement) partner in September 2010. This Peer Review consisted of a one-week assessment by seven colleagues belonging to other national accreditation bodies from all over Europe. This assessment was focussed on two main points: the accreditation in itself and in particular attending to implementation of the European Regulation.

Several useful matters emerged from this assessment which the RvA addressed in the meantime. In the Autumn of 2011 the report will be dealt with in the EA as well as the assessment of the measures taken by the RvA to solve the findings in practice. We were happy with the general impression of our Peers that the RvA is a competent and well organised accreditation body.

Because accreditations are valid for four years the European Regulation provides that the conformity assessment bodies must be credited in the Member State of their domicile by 1 January 2014. In 2010 we saw the first effects of this. In the meantime some accreditations in other European countries have been transferred to the local accreditation bodies. Roughly 30 more will follow in the coming years. The other way around we also received a transferred accreditation.

Looking back on 2010 we can state that the organisation is properly set up. That did not happen without any hiccups. Our direct clients certainly experienced inconvenience from our ‘bustle’ in the first half year. We appreciate it very much that in most cases clients had a lot of understanding of this. All the staff members of RvA as well as the assessors engaged by the RvA as self employed persons demonstrated outstandingly in 2010 that their heart was in the matter. Under sometimes difficult circumstances they always managed to continue with the accreditation. We therefore also thank them warmly by means of this report!

Outlook

One thing you can be sure of: RvA will not rest on its laurels in 2011 and subsequent years. Operationally we are working hard to improve our service to the accredited organisations. We want to plan assessments further in the future, respond to client needs for consultation as regards content, react quicker with regard to interim extensions and communicate with the client better.

Often the wishes of the clients are quite understandable. For an organisation of limited size covering a wide range of spheres of work it remains a question of optimisation. In order to realise this we are improving our knowledge structure in 2011.

As regards content in 2011 we are concentrating on:

- Further involving interested parties in the sphere of work of the RvA by means of Advisory Panel of Interested Parties still to be established and a seminar in this connection.
- Building contacts with the healthcare people in the field. By increasing market forces in this sector it is important that there is still sufficient harmonisation of certificates, testing and inspections. The instruments of the RvA and its accredited organisations can be a good tool in this connection.
- Co-ordination with Ministries and Government regulators: how can the Ministries use accreditation in connection with notifying bodies, with Brussels and with regard to national directions? This enables assessments conducted by the Ministries themselves to be omitted. And how can Government regulators use accreditation to organise their supervision more effectively? This offers the public sector major opportunities to cut costs and to reduce the administrative burden on companies. In addition, harmonisation of notifications is one of the motives of the European Regulation. In this, trust is also a key word. In 2011 we will again be pleased to devote all our energy and expertise to this .

A new reporting form

Herman Gorter has already written: "A new Spring, a new sound." Since the Accreditation Council has become an autonomous administrative authority, this has also had consequences for the manner in which we report about our activities in the past year. The traditional annual report has become a public report but also a report providing a sound substantiation of the activities in 2010. Concretely this means that this report consists of two sections:

In the first section, 'How guaranteeing trust and confidence works', you can find particular information about our activities, vision, ambition and the commitment to our work. A central theme in this connection is the guaranteed trust offered by RvA, whether the authorities, the consumer or the people, the suppliers of services or products, the certifying bodies or the inspection bodies are involved. But for our organisation it also applies that accreditation is especially 'work involving people'. Good contact, internally but also with our clients is of paramount importance to us. You can find examples of this in several interviews on the theme of 'trust' and short texts outlining the work and the commitment of our staff.

Do you want more business information? Let us refer you to the second section: 'Trust is evidenced by transparency'. This section includes the formal details for the year 2010. By placing these details in the second section this does not mean that we consider them less important. On the contrary! This time we opted to first let you get to know the fascinating dimension of our social task. The choice is up to you where you start your reading. Whatever you choose, this report will introduce to you the renewed role of the Accreditation Council as a ZBO.

Jan van der Poel
Chief Executive

Daniëlle Aldershoff
Operational Director

How guaranteeing trust works



Vision, mission and core values

Vision

The Accreditation Council wants to be the national accreditation body that:

- performs accreditations transparently in all the desired sectors, both private and public;
- increases the confidence of society in services and products by the certificates of conformity issued to its clients;
- provides the quality image of the organisations assessed by the RvA;
- contributes to removing trade barriers;
- is a strong link in the global accreditation network;
- is seen internationally as a leading accreditation organisation;
- offers its staff challenging work.

Mission

The Dutch Accreditation Council RvA ensures that interested parties can have justified confidence in all the certificates of conformity and assessment reports issued under its supervision.

Core values

In all its acts our organisation has the following core values as its starting points:

- competence,
- impartiality and independence,
- market orientation,
- people-orientation,
- honour,
- transparency.

If we put the first letters of these words in Dutch next to each other, it reads as the abbreviation 'commit', this is an abbreviation indicating 'commitment'. It is also this commitment based on our core values that offers clients an actual guaranteed trust.

Dutch Accreditation Council RvA: guaranteed trust

In recent years the theme of 'trust' has certainly played a major role in many social discussions. These discussions are for instance focussed on the trust in national or international politics, the economy or the reliability of products and services of suppliers. It appears from researches that people have a great need for more trust and thereby confidence. An example of this is the quarterly messages about the Continuous Research in People's Perspectives that the Social and Cultural Planning Office (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau) has been conducting since 2008.

The RvA fills a major role in guaranteeing trust and confidence for the buyers of products and services. Our vision, mission and core values express how important trust is for accreditation activities, certainly because the RvA measures other organisations and independently and impartially assesses whether they are competent and comply with the standards and guidelines. In this public report we will show how we translate our mission into our work practice. One of our core values is 'transparency'. This report on our activities in 2010 contributes to this transparency. Obviously, in this connection we will also take a look ahead into the future.

Sjaak Hendriks has been working for almost two years as a Lead Assessor at the RvA.

"In the past I have been active in various roles in quality care. I have worked in independent laboratories, in the production, for scheme owners and as head of quality for a large retail organisation. So I have been on various sides of the table and thereby experienced personally how important the aspect of trust is when it boils down to statements by institutions that assess conformity.

Safe children's toys, safe food, clean water. It is so important that people can trust that the surveillance of these goods is properly carried out.

I have always considered that the work of the RvA was the key to this trust. That is why I think it is fantastic that I can contribute to this now via my work for the Council."

A guarantee of quality and safety

Without always being aware of this, consumers and entrepreneurs are faced with accreditation every day. As the national accreditation body the Accreditation Council monitors for instance bodies which issue quality marks. These quality marks guarantee the quality and safety of products and services. Accreditation and regular surveillance of the bodies issuing quality marks lead to increasing the further confidence of consumers in for instance the reliability of laboratory research in hospitals, the safety of drinking water and the quality of food. But entrepreneurs must also be able to rely on the fact that their suppliers comply with the current (inter)national standards. Accreditation ensures that consumers and businesses can have confidence in granted quality marks.

National recognition

The performance of accreditation is a heavy responsibility. Our staff members are thoroughly aware of this. It is so to speak in their genes and they feel closely related to the mission and core values of our organisation. They help to give shape to accreditation, which in our country is the highest form of private and public supervision of inspection agencies. In the National Accreditation Body Appointment Act which came into force on 1 January 2010 the Dutch government appointed the RvA as the only national accreditation body for the private and public domain. Thereby the RvA has become an autonomous administrative authority (ZBO).

International recognition

The international recognition of the RvA as the accreditation body has been laid down in multilateral agreements with roughly sixty countries. For Europe these run via the European Co-operation for Accreditation (EA) and worldwide via two umbrella organisations: the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Laboratory Accreditation Co-operation (ILAC). The RvA takes an active role in these organisations for the optimum harmonisation of national and international standards, rules and regulations.

Surveillance is good but trust is better

Roger van Boxtel is chairman of the Management Board of the healthcare insurer Menzis. In addition, he is a member of the Executive Board of VNO-NCW and a Board Member of Zorgverzekeraars Nederland. He has been a member of the Upper House for D66 since 7 June 2011.

Roger van Boxtel has been active for many years in the public sector. From 1994 until 1998 he was a member of the Lower House (from 1995 onwards also Vice-Chairman of the parliamentary party of D66). From 1998 until 2002 he was Minister for the Big Cities, Integration Policy and ICT. Apart from his responsibility for addressing the problems in the big cities and the co-ordination of the integration policy he was entrusted with the government information policy and the co-ordination of the millennium problem.

Roger van Boxtel about trust, certification and accreditation

“When I was in primary school I was once hit by a teacher. I told this at home and my mother was so incensed and fanatical about it that she did not even ask the reason but took immediate action with the full approval of my father. She told that teacher the plain truth: what’s come over him to betray the trust of a child in that way! So she really stuck up for me. Only then did I realise for the first time really that I could blindly trust the support of my parents.

Another example: as a boy of 13 years I had been seriously ill. With blaring sirens I was taken to hospital and had to remain there for about three months after a heavy operation. At such a time, and I did not even realise this then quite consciously, you blindly trust the physicians and nurses assuming that you will also come out again healthy. So this is a new dimension, all to do with trust in the care you receive as a patient.”

Trust: honouring arrangements is a matter-of-course

“I think that the essence of trust consists in the tacit assumption that you honour your mutual arrangements. That makes trust a core value which you perhaps should feel more than you can rationalise it. I adhere to the school that departs from the principle that you must give trust in order also to earn it. You give trust for instance in the education of your children in the hope and assumption that this trust will not be betrayed. My starting point is the belief in the good of people and that it will also remain like this.

If I look at the business aspect I have to find that my trust has sometimes been betrayed, for instance with regard to a large merger project that imploded. The cause? The steady dissipation of trust during that process. But I also experienced that things can be done differently. Recently a minor healthcare insurer contacted us because they wanted to join Menzis. From the first until the last investigation the trust remained continuously present and this was mutual. The definitive ‘deal’ appears on the face of it to consist merely of a paper act but in such a case as this one it was also a seal of continued trust.

Let me be honest: I also disappoint people sometimes. I am not the person to walk on water and have a right to feel beyond any doubt when the trust that people have in me is concerned. To say that trust as a value is of paramount importance to you is nice but the hour of truth strikes at the moment you have to prove it.”

From ‘low trust’ to ‘high trust’

“Trust appears to be a current phenomenon, but that is not so. You can go far back into history, but I look at recent history. What fascinates me is how big the impact of the Second World War has been on this point. After the war many people had lost their trust in everything, in humanity, their neighbours or their trust in certainties for the future. The period after the war is called ‘recovery’. However, it was not just the economic recovery we often refer to but in my eyes also particularly a moral and social recovery. In politics there was a feeling borne widely that a lot of trust had to be created for instance by guaranteeing collective interests: social security, housing, elementary collective provisions. The figurehead of this recovery was Minister President Willem Drees who was not for nothing called ‘Father Drees’. He created trust amongst the population for instance by creating the foundations of the Dutch General Old-Age Pension Act (‘AOW’).

We are now in a period in which many people wonder whether we have not overshot into over-regulation. In the end, from the holy shrine from which you could expect consolation and relief, the idea was left of a government guaranteeing your personal happiness. This is a fallacy since the government cannot provide for everybody's happiness. Lack of trust in the government and other institutions is often embedded in wrong expectations and the disappointments arising from this."

But nevertheless, this over-regulation is something we are indeed struggling with on all kinds of fronts. As a Minister I experienced two horrible events from very close by: the cafe fire in Volendam and the fireworks disaster in Enschede. After having coped with the initial shock the question often emerges: how could this have happened and where did the government fail? Then there is a reflex to create more rules, new certainties. This again creates expectations of the 'risk-less society' type, which we all know doesn't really exist. But please note: it is important that there are rules and surveillance mechanisms guaranteeing the trust of customers and people but the adage 'surveillance is good but trust is better' is often forgotten.

The core question often forgotten in this connection is: How can you substantiate new regulations such that the public or customer understands that those rules are worthwhile and that they start to trust these rules? Put another way: How do you get from 'low trust' to 'high trust'?"

Trust in certification

"As a healthcare insurer we are intensively engaged in guaranteeing quality. It is in our genes but our insured people also want to be able to trust that we are buying the best care for them. This is one of our major tasks: reducing the lack of people's confidence when they are involved in healthcare provision. Guaranteeing quality is therefore a *conditio sine qua non*.

On the one hand we automatically trust the certified protocols for instance of professional associations that determine what is the best method of treatment. We do not check this; we trust it. If hospitals or medical specialists do not comply with this, they will not become eligible as a supplier. That is why certification forms the basis of our trust in the quality of our suppliers.

On the other hand as a healthcare insurer we also develop independent initiatives where guaranteeing quality is concerned. An example is our TopZorg service. In intensive consultations with patients' organisations we selected ten frequently occurring treatments such as removing tonsils, groin ruptures and breast cancer. We also made an inventory of what were the most important quality requirements of patients. Examples are quick access to treatment, the medical quality of the diagnosis and treatment, the quality of the information provision and the after-care. On the basis of these requirements we selected for each disorder several hospitals which complied with this. These hospitals receive the TopZorg quality mark from us. In formulating our quality criteria we also based ourselves on the guidelines of the quality institute for healthcare, the Dutch Institute for Healthcare Improvement ('CBO'). True: it is not an officially recognised quality mark granted by a recognised institute that has been accredited as well but it does show that pursuing trust in quality is also of paramount importance for healthcare insurers.

Accreditation as a guarantee of trust

“I already indicated above that when procuring and contracting healthcare suppliers we fully rely on matters such as certified protocols. They form a condition for us. You might wonder then what added value accreditation brings. It is the confidence that you know that those certifiers or inspections themselves are also sufficiently competent to assess and monitor suppliers. It is a comfort for us to know this since we don't have to check whether that certification is justified.

But as a customer and supplier I do have one wish where the role and duty of the regulatory institutions such as the RvA are concerned. As a healthcare insurer I once approached a different comparable institution with a topical question which we really struggled with. We asked for advice based on their expertise. They could not give this advice because it fell beyond their statutory task. What I hope is that such an institution will be open to advise us from its own expertise. Obviously this is only one example. It might be completely different kettle of fish with other institutions. With specific reference to the role of the RvA it is my wish as a healthcare insurer that an institution such as this also keeps an eye on sometimes unnecessary 'stacking of supervision' and that it would not hesitate to express this.”

The profit of Accreditation

Certification and accreditation

The terms 'certification' and 'accreditation' are quite often confused in practice. Many people even think that accreditation and certification are identical. This is not the case. What are the similarities and the differences?

Similarities

- Assessment according to (inter)national standards.
- Issue of a certificate or statement.

Differences

- *Certification: a form of conformity assessment whereby an independent and impartial body states that a product, process, system or person complies with specific requirements.*
- *Accreditation: the activity by which an independent and impartial body authorised to this end states that a conformity assessment body complies with specific requirements and is thereby competent to execute specific conformity assessment activities such as certification, inspection, calibration or testing.*

Let's be honest: for a lot of people the term 'accreditation' does not immediately summon up a clear picture. It is often associated with bureaucracy: rules and surveillance of institutions formulating or monitoring rules. Concepts such as 'certification' and 'quality mark' are more easily recognised. A well-known, classic example is the KEMA QUALITY MARK. If the plug of an extension cable or the iron is provided with a KEMA QUALITY MARK the consumer will know that he can trust the safety of it. A medical specialist wants to be able to trust the quality of the service of research laboratories, also in the interest of the patient. Added to this the terms 'accreditation' and 'certification' are often confused. The text under the illustration to this chapter explains this further.

The first question is obvious: what is accreditation and how does it differ from certification? However, for many the answer to a different question is more decisive: What does accreditation actually yield? Put in another way: What is the profit of accreditation? There is an answer for three target groups.

Customers

As a consumer/end-user you want to be able to trust the quality and safety of the products or services you buy, whether this concerns the quality of eggs bought in a supermarket or the safety of digital information you use. However, there is yet another group of customers. We call them the 'customers on behalf of the customers'. Just think of the healthcare insurer buying healthcare services in the interest of its customers, the patients. Or think of the procurement department of a technical trade organisation entering into contracts with suppliers for the members of that trade organisation. The phenomenon of 'procurement' is often quite wrongly associated with the idea that the price is decisive. Obviously the price plays a major role but the quality or safety argument also counts heavily in this connection. More than this: a recognised certificate or quality mark is often a requirement for a supplier to be able to tender with regard to being awarded a contract.

The question comes up of the extent to which the certifying bodies carry their work out properly. Do they themselves also comply with the requirements to perform their activities in a competent and responsible manner? As the highest link in the 'chain of trust' the RvA ensures this by deciding whether or not they deserve accreditation. This guaranteed trust creates confidence. This is the profit for the end-user and the 'buyers on behalf of the buyers'.

Suppliers

Many entrepreneurs and their employees pursue their trade out of a passion for and commitment to their service or product. This means that by nature they aim at the highest possible quality. It is quality they would like to see recognised. The highest degree of quality acknowledgement is accreditation by the RvA.

Obviously, suppliers also have an economic objective. This not only applies to commercial organisations; non-profit organisations cannot escape either from offering their services in accordance with acceptable economic objectives. They can only achieve these economic objectives if they can manage to establish and retain a strong market position. Factors such as guaranteed quality, safety, trust and confidence play a major role in this. Formal recognition and accreditation of that recognition are of decisive importance when it is all about the market position and a strong economic basis. This is profitable for the supplier.

Ed Wieles is Head of the Strategy and Development department of the RvA.

“Because of national and international developments the sphere of work and the role of the RvA are tremendously dynamic. The special status we have had as ZBO since 2010 puts a great responsibility on the RvA. A more provocative attitude is essential in order to be able to respond to the expectations of our stakeholders.

My diverse interest areas have full play at the RvA. Purely technical cases alternated or combined with managerial and policy subjects. From free-range eggs to charitable causes, from healthcare to shipping and from environmental care to computerisation. You can hardly come up with a subject where accreditation does not play a role.

So I am proud of our small RvA which has played and is still playing a leading role in Europe but also worldwide in the formation of an international accreditation structure. Global trade, established and emerging economies are now enjoying the fruits of this structure.”

Public Sector

One of the core duties of the public sector is to guarantee the public interest and thereby create trust amongst the people. To that end legislation is being developed. The implementation and enforcement of that legislation often does not take place centrally from Ministries but is often entrusted to autonomous administrative bodies such as the new Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority, the Dutch Central Bank, the Information Management Group and the Dutch Accreditation Council RvA. Obviously the public sector is closely monitoring that autonomous administrative bodies fulfil their duties properly. This has been provided for in the Dutch Autonomous Administrative Authorities Framework Act (Kaderwet ZBO) and via the European Regulation. But regulations cannot cover everything. The basis of this is also trust.

In executing its duties the Dutch Accreditation Council RvA applies core values such as ‘competence’, ‘impartiality and independence’, ‘integrity’ and ‘transparency’. In context with the other core values of ‘market-orientation’ and ‘people-orientation’ the RvA guarantees the trust that the public sector has in us. Not only our organisation as a whole but also each individual employee is aware of the major responsibility we have been entrusted with. That is also profit, profit for the general public, the public sector as well as the people.

The international dimension of trust

Liz van Velzen has been working for the RvA as a project assistant since 2009. Her accounts include certification and inspection bodies in the Netherlands, Ukraine, Kenya and the United States.

“In March I was in Burkina Faso (West Africa) where accreditation does not exist. I managed to explain to one Burkina citizen what it means. He reacted with delight: “How wonderful it would be if we also had such a system!”

Suddenly I realised how difficult it is if you can be so easily fobbed off with poor products and services and there is a huge search to find reliable partners in the market. There is no quality mark that points out the right direction with one hundred percent certainty.

I felt proud to be allowed to keep a small cog running in this big system by which as the RvA we can ensure that trust expressed by conformity assessment bodies will never become an empty concept.”

Accreditations are mutually recognised internationally (Mutual Recognition/Acceptance). To that end accreditation bodies enter into agreements within the global umbrellas of IAF and ILAC and the regional umbrella for Europe: the EA.

What is good enough for one country, is good enough for the other country. Accreditation operates as a passport for products and services with the result being a justified trust by buyers and users.

Peer review

In order to support the trust the accreditation bodies assess each other. This takes place in a so-called Peer Review, in which a team of assessors of other accreditation bodies verify whether the assessed organisation complies with the agreed international ISO/IEC 17011 standard. This is a guarantee of the expertise and independence of the accreditation body.

In the Autumn of 2010 the Dutch Accreditation Council RvA underwent such a Peer Review. The result was that a few obscurities and gaps were detected in the work processes of the RvA. In the meantime measures have been taken to discontinue these and to remove the cause. The Peer Review team checks up on the measures and their execution.

In its turn the RvA also contributes to Peer Reviews in other countries by sending lead assessors and assessors for such Reviews. In an EA connection co-operation took place in 2010 in the evaluations of Luxembourg and Albania. In an IAF connection the RvA provided the lead assessor for the assessment of the Asia-Pacific region.

European co-operation

The European Regulation for co-operation which came into force at the beginning of 2010 dominated the discussions and activities at European level. In Germany and Italy multiple accreditation organisations had to be merged into one single body. In other countries, including the Netherlands, a private organisation under public control was established. This resulted in a lot of extra effort for the accreditation bodies involved.

In addition, in connection with the EA hard work was carried out in order to justify the expectations of the European Commission. They include:

- a permanent solid Peer Review system;
- notification of inspection agencies by Member States on the basis of accreditation;
- gathering accreditation knowledge in Brussels.

The European Commission expressed its confidence in the work of the EA and its members. In particular notification of inspection institutes which do their work cross-borders throughout Europe is important for Brussels. The Regulation makes it clear that notification on the basis of accreditation would have to take place. It is true that a Member State has the possibility to demonstrate in a different way that the accreditation conditions have been met but this is a difficult route. It speaks for itself that national directions should also be based on accreditation. In the Netherlands this is currently not mandatory.

The RvA opened the dialogue with directing Ministries in order to guarantee trust in the appointed inspection agencies in the future via accreditation.

The European co-operation also has the consequence that in the event of re-accreditation the RvA has to complete its accreditations in other European countries within a period of four years. For instance we transferred accreditations in Belgium, Slovenia and Greece. The other way around an accreditation was transferred to the RvA by our German colleague.

Globally

The autonomous organisations of ILAC (Laboratories) and IAF (Certification) are co-operating intensively in several areas. This applies to the organisation and the completion of the Peer Reviews, for communication and for assistance of countries just starting with accreditation.

In 2010 both organisations decided that accreditation of inspection bodies will be organised globally by ILAC. Previously this was done separately in both organisations.

In the IAF it has been confirmed that the ISO standard ISO 26000 aimed at Corporate Social Responsibility is explicitly not intended for certification. The members of the IAF will strictly monitor this.

The status of the participation in mutual recognition on 1 May 2011 was:

EA:	30 signatories in 30 countries
IAF:	49 signatories in 46 economies
ILAC:	72 signatories in 59 economies



The balance between enforceable and non-enforceable trust

Since July 2010 Yvo de Boer has been attached to KPMG as advisor in the field of climate change and sustainability. In this role he contributes as the 'global ambassador' of KPMG to the development of a sustainability vision and strategy for KPMG clients. In addition, he is for instance attached to Maastricht University and a Board member of numerous organisations focussing on sustainability, climate change and energy issues.

Before he joined KPMG Yvo de Boer was active in various (inter)national roles. The most important of these was his role as Head of the Climate Secretariat of the United Nations (UNFCCC). In that period he was for instance chairman of the international climate conferences which took place on Bali (2007) and in Copenhagen (2009).

Yvo de Boer on trust and accreditation

“A while ago we decided to have a porch built onto our house. We had this done by a contractor who was the previous owner of our house and with whom we had become friendly in the meantime. In doing so he engaged a second contractor whom he in his turn knew personally. We had a purely conceptual talk with both of them about our ambitions. A price came up which we did not deeply doubt. What has in the meantime been constructed is a porch that exceeded all our expectations. This has to do with trust anchored in a personal relationship which is at least as decisive a factor in building and strengthening trust as the realisation that you can count on guaranteed quality.”

Dimensions of trust

“I define trust as the certainty that an agreement will also be actually fulfilled. Next, the detailing consists of measurable and concrete elements and of less measurable and concrete elements. If I see the famous CE quality mark on the bottom of the box of an extension cable, it gives me the confidence that this cable complies with a certain European standard. For instance I will never have an unqualified electrician mess about with the electrical wiring in my house.

Trust in suppliers of products or services is created firstly by compliance with recognised and measurable standards. Next, it should be monitored that suppliers also continue to comply with those standards. I call this enforceable trust. In addition, there is also non-measurable or non-enforceable trust. This must generally be earned, for instance by the experiences you have with a supplier or by a wide and good reputation of such a business in the market. I call this experienced trust. If businesses comply with an accredited standard and moreover have a very good reputation in the market, this also creates a little bit of non-enforceable trust and thereby they strengthen their position. A certificate or quality mark alone is not enough. There are also people who die unnecessarily in certified hospitals.”

The ass and the stone

“The current Cabinet chose as one of its core themes the recovery of trust in the public sector. This is not unjustified because people and businesses have been losing their confidence in the public sector in recent years. An old adagio in this connection is: ‘Wherever an ass falls over a stone, there he will never fall again.’ Say for instance that the business sector is the ass and the public sector - if things go according to wish - puts that stone once every four years in a different place, as an ass you have two options: trust that stone again or avoid being tripped up by it again even if it's a different stone and it's in different place. I think that the source of betrayed trust is often based on the absence of clear arrangements, wanting to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds and thereby being vague. The unavoidable consequence is that different interpretations of the arrangements are created. Because of such different perceptions trust can be betrayed.

I experienced the problem of vague arrangements and the different interpretations arising from this during my period with the United Nations. For instance at the end of that period it was arranged that as from the year 2020 onwards 100 billion dollars on an annual basis would be provided to the developing countries in order to support these countries in reducing their emissions. However, nothing was clearly laid down about the extent to which this involved public or private funds,

about the question where exactly this money would be spent or which specific countries would be eligible for financing. You then see the initial happiness of about 100 billion dollars evaporate every year. So unclear arrangements leave a wide scope for different interpretations.”

Measuring is knowing, guessing is missing

“Certainly when it is all about matters such as air quality whereby the international aspects plays a major role, the role of certifiers and measuring bureaus is crucial. Measuring is knowing and guessing is missing. In order to guarantee the quality of air it has to be regularly determined whether the arrangements are actually being adhered to. That is why measuring is very important. Then it is not only about measuring in an inspection sense which is experienced as negative but also about measuring in a positive sense.

Take as an example the traffic policy. As far as this is concerned we would be guided by the manner in which this is addressed by the city of New York. Temporary roundabouts or other traffic provisions are constructed there before they decide to build them definitively. They will then measure very systematically what the effect of those provisions are in terms of accidents, traffic fatalities, sales of the shops in such a work area, employment, etc. This way it is possible to measure in a positive sense what the yield of such an operation is. If it is then ascertained that this operation is a good thing, it is a positive outcome of the measuring. We tend to overlook this positive side of measuring and that is unfortunate.

Certifying institutions have a great responsibility: they guarantee for me the quality and safety of the product or the service I buy. Do these products or services meet anyway certain measurable standards? If that is the case, I can trust the quality. But then those institutes should regularly come to check whether the quality and safety standards determined are being realised in practice.

It is striking that Chinese businesses love ISO certification. How come? There is a stubborn image in the market that Chinese businesses produce inferior products and that they will, given the chance, circumvent the quality and safety regulations. Once businesses have ISO certification, they are much less troubled by this label. This indicates the interest that businesses can have in certification.”

Guarantee by accreditation

“Does accreditation have any added value? Why would you want to assess certifying institutions as well? On the face of it this question might seem justified. We have arranged our democratic world such that we have built-in all kinds of control mechanisms, perhaps because once bitten, twice shy. Is accreditation of those institutions then still necessary?

Let me tell you an experience from my time at the United Nations. We set up projects which had to lead to a reduction in emissions. That reduction has a certain value. We offered the opportunity to let certifying bodies verify whether those emissions were also in practice avoided or reduced. You then do two things: first you look at the possibilities, the competence of such a certifying body in order to actually carry out that verification. Secondly you formulate several internationally accepted standards and procedures for the certifying bodies involved. This appears to have created a closed circle of trust, but the

temptation of corruption or fraud remains present. After all, the market value of emission reduction or avoidance could lead to the certifier closing an eye in order to receive a fat amount into his bank account.

This risk is a major reason for creating international supervisory bodies, i.e. accreditation bodies, guaranteeing the quality of the certification. This applies no less on a national level. Above these accreditation bodies there is again the public sector verifying whether accreditation bodies are supervising certifying bodies in a fair manner. This closes and guarantees the circle of trust. That is the importance of accreditation.”

Supervision and advice: extra guaranteed trust

Paul Mollevanger is an Accreditation Project Manager at CCKL/RvA.

“That is where I want to work” I thought when two years ago I saw an advert for CCKL/RvA. Gradually through my work in a genetic laboratory, quality thinking had become a part of myself. You have to set yourself requirements that guarantee care. For instance if someone has the task of telling a pregnant couple that they are expecting a disabled child, this person should be absolutely certain that the results of your examination are correct.

Now, on ‘the other side of the table’ I encourage and give guidance to laboratories to obtain and retain a better quality system. I look back with satisfaction on an accreditation process when I see that a laboratory has grown in its quality thinking and has raised its system to a higher level.

What is the added value of my work? People who ask for care can be confident that they will receive the best care they deserve. So that they literally benefit from it. Because quality of life requires quality of work.”

The Dutch Accreditation Council RvA is allowed to operate with a high degree of independence but forms of supervision of the work of the RvA and advice in the accreditation decision-making process are of major importance in this connection. Supervision and advice contribute to the trust of the public sector, society and our customers in performing our activities. To this end various bodies and committees are active in the RvA. In the organisational chart in Appendix 2 you can see the relation they have to each other and their composition. In this text we will outline the role and activities of the different bodies and committees.

Supervisory Board

The Supervisory Board of the RvA is comparable to the Supervisory Board of a commercial organisation. This Board ensures that the Executive Board realises the objectives of the RvA. Selection of the Members takes place on the basis of expertise and competencies.

It is preferable for the following competence areas to be represented on the Supervisory Board:

- commercial sector;
- government;
- research/technology;
- healthcare/medical;
- food and goods;
- quality.

When selecting Members the major personal qualities are:

- wide knowledge and experience of professional organisations;
- being able to advise and encourage properly;
- objectivity/impartiality;
- integrity and sense of responsibility;
- independent and critical attitude;
- being able to formulate a balanced assessment.

Executive Board

The Director/Chief Executive organises the realisation of the RvA’s objectives, the strategy and the policy, and the developments resulting from them. This Executive Board accounts for this to the Supervisory Board.

Management

The management of the RvA consists of the Director/Chief Executive and the Operational Director. They take care of a proper policy and management of the organisation and they report on this to the Supervisory Board.

Objection Chairmen Committee

It is possible that there may be an objection to a decision by the RvA. If that is the case, the Objection Chairmen Committee will be engaged. This Committee consists of at least one and not more than five legally trained Members. If a notice of objection has been received, the Executive Board will appoint a Member of the Chairmen Committee to form an advisory committee for that objection. The Members of the Committee are strictly independent. They will never be Members of the Executive Board of the RvA and do not carry out any activities under the responsibility of the Executive Board. They are appointed by the Supervisory Board. This guarantees impartial treatment of objections.

Accreditation Committee

The Accreditation Committee consists of four members. They are appointed by the Supervisory Board on the basis of their expertise in accreditation, their integrity and independence. The Accreditation Committee meets once a month. Its duty is to advise the Director/Chief Executive about granting accreditations. In addition, the Committee has the power to advise on suspending or withdrawing accreditations of bodies that have been granted accreditation. It receives information from the Executive Board and the management about the measures and sanctions with regard to bodies.

The Accreditation Committee does not take decisions. The decision-making is entrusted to the Executive Board. If the Executive Board has a different view from the advice of this Committee, the Supervisory Board will be heard. The Accreditation Committee reports annually on its activities to the Supervisory Board.

User Council

The User Council is an advisory panel laid down in the Articles. This Council consists of representatives of the direct RvA clients. The Supervisory Board receives the minutes of the meetings, so that it can include the opinions of users in its deliberations.

Growing trust in our work and our quality

Since 2003 Simone Kooy has been Accreditations Project Manager at the Healthcare Unit (CCKL). In 2010 she was particularly involved in a special assignment: the implementation of the new ERP system at the RvA, called 'RADAR'.

"It was a huge challenge to organise the whole process in Radar in a manner which was practicable for everybody. The most important was to streamline the processes and in doing so to give each element the necessary attention. What I like is to offer support in the daily work process and to organise this as optimally as possible.

What I would like to achieve is that my colleagues gain a better and quicker insight into the progress of the accreditation processes amongst our clients and in their daily activities so that they can carry out their work more conveniently and with pleasure. This also creates a better service provision to our clients. This has obviously not yet been achieved everywhere but hard work with much enthusiasm is carried out on this."

The internal organisation in 2010

In the year 2009 the Dutch Accreditation Council RvA started ambitiously on several large internal projects: transition to the autonomous administrative authority status ('ZBO status'), a new organisational and consultation structure, the move of the Healthcare Unit (CCKL) to Utrecht and the installation of a completely new computerisation system.

The year 2010 was dominated by the build-up. In 2010 all projects got their definitive form and the new structures were embedded into the organisation. And throughout all improvement projects hard work has been done on maintaining and where necessary improving the quality of the service provision by the RvA.

Personnel

On 31 December 2010 85 permanent staff members and four temporary workers were employed by the RvA, all together representing 77.5 FTE. The average age of the staff members was 47 years and the average service years of the staff members is 7.4 years. In 2010 the RvA bid five staff members farewell and welcomed eleven new colleagues, amongst whom was the new Head of HRM. Three staff members obtained a new role in the RvA and one staff member celebrated her 12.5 year anniversary.

In addition, the RvA cooperates with approx. 750 external specialists (lead assessors, specialists, assessors) who are being deployed in the field for assessments.

Organisational structure

1 January 2010 was the official start date of the new organisational structure of the RvA. The management has been extended to two persons. Apart from the existing Director/Chief Executive a new Operational Director has joined the organisation. The primary process has been placed in four units: two General Units, the Assessors Unit and the Healthcare Unit (previously CCKL).

In the beginning of 2010 CCKL moved from Putten to Utrecht so that the RvA is now operating entirely from one single office. The office of the RvA in Utrecht has been thoroughly renovated in that period. This was not an easy job because in the meantime we had to continue our work full tilt. The result is that the four new operational units in Utrecht can co-operate in a practical manner, in light and open spaces with short communication lines and good interaction.

In the new organisation an innovative consultation structure with clear responsibilities and reports has also been set up. At the end of 2010 we can say that all new structures got their new forms and that they yield profit in time, energy and quality. Many staff members of the RvA had to work very hard for this in 2010. This inevitably sometimes went at the expense of the time and energy we could spend on our clients. In the beginning of 2011 the service and service provision of the RvA was fortunately again at the level that the clients can expect from us and that we particularly expect from ourselves. This has been confirmed in the Spring of 2011 by the User Council of the RvA.

Human Resources Management (HRM)

The new Head of the HRM department started in 2010 with a quality drive in the area of personnel matters. In 2010 the emphasis was particularly on management support of the operational units in the area of HRM and on internal training and knowledge transfer. A training matrix has been formulated by which the

knowledge of the staff members of the RvA in all areas is guaranteed. Moreover, a lot of energy has been invested in internal training. In 2011 this policy will be continued.

Computerisation

The introduction of a new ERP system (RADAR) demanded more time and attention from the staff members in 2010 than had been planned. A standard package has been bought that has been adjusted to the specific requirements of the RvA. However, in practice the activities of the RvA required more tailored solutions than could be estimated in advance. Throughout 2010 a lot of time has been spent on settling in and training staff members and right until the beginning of 2011 tailored adjustments to the software still had to be made. The system is now fully commissioned for the daily, operational work process. Everybody is now familiar with it and in the meantime it has become an indispensable support in optimising our service provision.

Autonomous administrative authority (ZBO)

Since 1 January 2010 the RvA has become an autonomous administrative authority, often indicated as a ZBO. This required a lot of adjustments in the administrative organisation. Rules, forms and letters have been adjusted and a lot of energy has been spent instructing and training staff members. Regulations for notices of objection and an objections committee have been established and introduced and all work procedures have been studied in order to see whether changes were required. The talks we were able to have with 'experienced' ZBOs such as the AFM and NZA were very useful in this connection. We much appreciate their preparedness to answer our questions about ZBO status and to suggest practical solutions.

Quality system

For an organisation assessing others on quality, a proper internal quality system is of paramount importance. All the activities carried out by the RvA are based on regulations, a standard, a policy rule or other documentation determined in writing. Which arrangements the RvA and its clients should comply with is exactly laid down in these documents. In addition, all applications, investigations and assessments are carried out using standardized forms in order to guarantee the quality.

The management of all these documents, rules and forms is the responsibility of the quality co-ordinator of the RvA. Since 2010 he has been able to use to this end an advanced document management system called Vivaldi. At the moment staff are working hard to transfer the final documents to this new system.

Lead assessors consultations of the RvA General and auditor days of the Healthcare Unit

In order to be able to provide constant and consistent quality, especially in the assessments, there are regular consultations between internal and external lead assessors of the RvA and the auditors of the Healthcare Unit.

In 2010 five consultations took place with 22 internal lead assessors of the RvA. In these consultations practical matters and cases were raised which the lead assessors are faced with in their daily practice and for which fine-tuning is required. After all, it is of great importance that all lead assessors assess, interpret and report in the same manner. Because this not only applies to the internal but also to the 21 external lead assessors, for each sphere of work (Certification,

Evaluation & Calibration, Inspection) joint consultations were organised twice for all lead assessors.

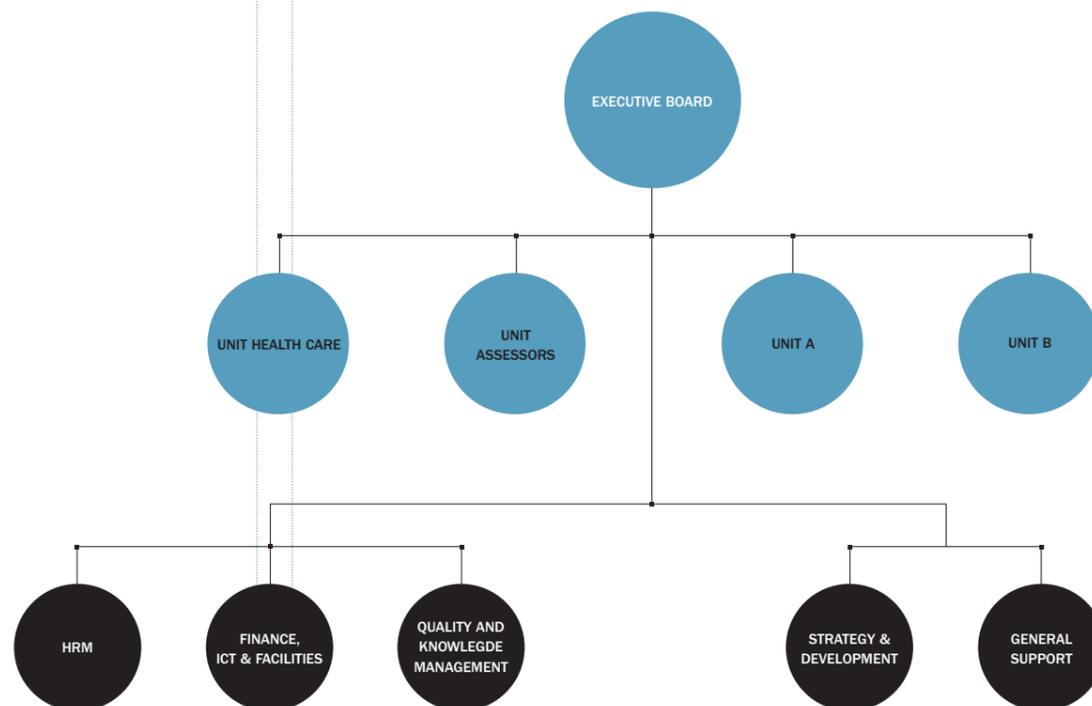
In 2010 the Healthcare Unit organised nine similar consultations for auditors of which five days were for specialists, two for lead assessors and two for official secretaries. The purpose of these days was: to learn in an interdisciplinary manner from each other in the area of audit skills, techniques and experiences. The auditor days were well attended and are a major step in the mutual harmonisation of the assessments by the Healthcare Unit.

Anniversary

2010 was an anniversary for the RvA. On 14 September the RvA had been in existence for exactly 15 years. It is a special anniversary to which a lot of attention was given this time by all staff members and representatives of the Supervisory Board, the User Council and the Accreditation Committee going out on a Saturday afternoon and evening. It is a good way to shake off the renovation and computerisation dust and to get to know colleagues better outside the office environment.

2011

After the hectic year of 2010 in which the words 'new' and 'improving' predominated, the RvA aims at having peace and quiet return to the organisation in 2011. We want to complete all the internal projects of 2010 properly, completely and to everybody's satisfaction. This should be to the satisfaction of the staff members of the RvA but certainly also to the satisfaction of our clients. In 2010 they had to be patient with us from time to time. In 2011 we want to show that quality, service and trust have priority in all respects. Therefore our attention in 2011 will be completely focussed on our core duties: service provision and accreditation.



The ‘Lock on the door’

Wim Schreuders is inspector-general of the new Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (nVWA). He has been working for the public cause since 1977 and is proud to be a civil servant.

In his first job with the tax authorities he had the opportunity to develop as a manager. Afterwards he was employed by the Municipalities for a short time as an interim manager. In 2004 he became General Director of the Work and Income Centre (Dienst Werk en Inkomen) in Amsterdam. From that position he returned to the Government in September 2009 in his current position.

*In the period that Wim Schreuders worked in Amsterdam he wrote a book *Meesterlijk Middenmanagement* [Masterly Middle Management]. With this book and a personal website he wants to inspire middle managers to perform better.*

From its establishment in 2004 onwards Philip den Ouden has been the Director of the Federatie Nederlandse Levensmiddelen Industrie (FNLI). This umbrella organisation of businesses and trade organisations in the Dutch food industry generates an annual turnover of over 50 billion euros and offers employment to over 100,000 people.

Philip den Ouden studied Business Economics at Erasmus University. Before he joined the FNLI he was amongst other things general secretary of the European Federation of Intercultural Learning, Director of Smit Havensleepdiensten in Rotterdam and Vice President Public Affairs and Communication at Koninklijke Ahold in Zaandam. He combines his current activities for the FNLI with several board memberships including the Healthy Weight Covenant [Convenant Gezond Gewicht] steering committee, the Food Preservation [Verduurzaming Voedsel] steering committee, the Stichting Kids Vitaal foundation and the Stichting Reclamecode foundation.

A talk with Wim Schreuders and Philip den Ouden

“Accreditation is for me the ‘lock on the door’ in the chain of trust. When a certifying body has been accredited I know for sure that safety and quality are guaranteed to the last instance.”

“For me the power of accreditation also lies in the realisation that the RvA is independent. It is not a party here that has certain interests; impartiality is guaranteed. This creates actual trust.”

It is 10 June 2011. Not only Germany but the whole of Europe is mesmerised by the current EHEC crisis. That is the day on which we had a fascinating and inspiring talk in the office of the RvA with Wim Schreuders, Inspector General of the new Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority and Philip den Ouden, Director of the Federatie Nederlandse Levensmiddelen Industrie. The host was Ed Wieles, Head of Strategy and Development of the RvA.

Report of a talk about trust, mutual and international co-operation, innovation in supervision and the importance but also the limits of certification and accreditation.

Trust: clear arrangements but also openness and vulnerability

Wim Schreuders: “I am more vulnerable and more open than the average manager and just talk with people about things I find difficult. In this connection I assume unthinkingly that I can trust people never to pull the rug out from under me when I am open. During the procedure that at the time led to my appointment as Director of the Work and Income Centre of Amsterdam Municipality, the assessment bureau reported that this openness and vulnerability were a huge risk for Amsterdam. The Municipality did not follow that advice and put its trust in me. And it had a good outcome. For me that openness, vulnerability and trust of others are a way of co-operating with each other. Until now I have never been disappointed in this.”

Philip den Ouden: “There is something that still surprises me every day. I enter a shop and ask someone for a certain article. Then I take in essence a completely worthless note out of my pocket which by chance shows €20. We don’t call money for nothing ‘the dross of the earth’. But nevertheless: that man or woman trusts completely that with that note I am giving him or her the value back for the article I acquire. It really is unbelievable. As a society we exchange symbols which one wonders what they really represent. We perform acts which have meaning for everybody only because we have agreed this with each other. I think that is the ultimate form of social trust. For our society it is also essential that this trust exists.”

Co-operation and role certainty

Wim Schreuders: “For me trust means the conviction that the other will act from genuine intentions and try to provide quality. I stand by my starting point that people want to do the good things. This is how I put trust in people and this I expect in return.”

Philip den Ouden: “For me the essence of trust is a certain degree of predictability that someone does what we agreed with each other, whatever happens. You must have role certainty in doing this. What Wim said is certainly also important. The word ‘integrity’ fits in with it. For instance it sometimes

comes over as more believable and more confidence inspiring if an assistant of the nVWA says that he doesn't know something."

"Obviously we do not always follow the same line. As I just said before: it is all about role certainty in our teamwork even if this involves monitoring mutual trust. I think that people who perform daily acts during the production process should do this according to a fixed pattern so that the consumer can trust it. We see the role of the nVWA as that of the custodian of that trust, so they have a different role to ours as a representative of entrepreneurs."

Wim Schreuders: "I recognise role certainty. This is underpinned by the important aspect that I can trust the aim of the sector to ensure that food is safe for the consumer. What it is all about is that you realise that heart and soul is put into working on quality and safety. This makes the teamwork and negotiations a lot simpler. Obviously, I also experience it sometimes differently: negotiation situations where the motive from which one speaks is unclear. That makes it all much more complex."

Philip den Ouden: "We share one thing: maximising food safety. This can simply not be under discussion. This is an element in our food chain that is never competitive. On that point we try in co-operation to optimise continuously the obviousness of the trust in that food safety."

Limits of trust

Wim Schreuders: "You can pose the question of how you should deal with the expectation of the people that everything is safe. You can only start the dialogue with the society if it has the general idea that the risks have been covered extremely well. That is the dilemma of our job: everybody tends to talk about extreme risks while we only get into the limelight if those extreme risks are in the news. It is then an almost impossible task to win back this trust. We should communicate more about ordinary risks. It will make us more visible and this creates from the start more trust when those extreme risks which cannot be banished are under discussion. If you are unknown it will be difficult to gain trust. That is why talking regularly with each other is so important."

Philip den Ouden: "These consultations, that discussion is indeed very important. Our joint talks are in essence always about trust. In this connection you cannot merely rely on the blue eyes of the other. We also expect certainty from the regulator role and that is something that goes without saying. This supports our trust. Together we should earn the trust of the Dutch and European people. And at the moment this includes in society a strange type of paradox. We are expected to say that food safety is absolute but you will never hear this out of my mouth. This means that there are always risks we can never completely exclude. However, the attitude of our environment is that it expects zero risks. What really surprises me each time is the response when sometimes the wind blows harder than predicted by the KNMI (Dutch weather forecaster). Then the KNMI is blamed for the storm. This is a fact that we have to cope with in our chain but also together with our regulator."

Certification: the balance between concrete agreements and soft factors

Philip den Ouden: "Certification is for me guaranteeing trust. If a company in Twente delivers something to a firm in Zaandam, it certainly wants to know that his customers will not keel over. But this company also has customers in for instance Paris or London. They have the same question and prefer to inspect the whole factory. If there is then one single organisation that does it for you and issues an official statement that this producer has neat and proper operations, it makes a great difference. In the market at large certification is a link ensuring a guaranteed trust."

Since January 2010 Mylène Pijnenburg has been manager of one of the two units maintaining contact with the accredited bodies and making sure that these bodies are annually assessed.

“The red thread in my career is quality care in the food and agricultural sector. Therefore in 2006 I started as an account manager in the RvA for bodies in this sphere of work. From my former work I know how important trust is in the world of testing, inspection and certification. Many of my colleagues have a background in one of the numerous spheres of work in which the RvA is active. That is why involvement and motivation is high and the diversity likewise. This makes the work challenging and varied for me.

I feel at home with the core values of the RvA: competence, impartiality and independence, market- and people-orientation, integrity and transparency. Together with my colleagues I want to design and promote these core values further.”

Wim Schreuders: “Providing quality is complex. Certification makes quality manageable. Apart from the good intentions it determines a certain standardisation so that you know for sure that there is no misunderstanding about what you mean by that quality. But those standards don’t determine everything. I also think it is important what an organisation intends by becoming certified. You would want the motivation for obtaining a certificate to form part of obtaining it anyway. Let me be honest: we also encounter organisations which give us the impression that they do it because it has to be done and then think: ‘Well, that’s done then. Next year the following round.’ Certification should also include a type of predictability whereby you can give an answer to the question whether the organisation that will receive this certificate, is also worth it. I am convinced that certifiers ‘are tasting’ during the process what their motivation is. I myself also noticed this in my contacts with companies, for instance with regard to the embedding of quality care in training or personnel adverts, you name it.”

Philip den Ouden: “That’s right. There are people who always drive 50 km per hour in the built-up areas but there are also people who only drive 50 km if they see a police car in the distance whilst that policeman knows for sure that 200 metres further down the road they would again drive 80 km per hour. Wim describes the dilemma, certainly also the dilemma for the public sector, very well. Now the nVWA is indeed quite an outsider in our European society because it offers trust to our chain under the slogan ‘horizontal supervision’ to guarantee quality also between the chain companies themselves. So it is supervision on surveillance. As the business sector we are very happy with this because we see how positively this filters down through the chain. It is for us of great economic importance that this authority is also considered by society as an authority.”

Wim Schreuders: “For me there is really only one thing paramount: not supervision but food safety.”

The international dimension of trust

Certainly if food safety is an issue, the international inter-institutional co-operation with regard to supervision is regularly criticized. How should this continue in future?

Philip den Ouden: “The question is whether we could have prevented such a risk as with the EHEC bacterium or the dioxin poisoning. Perhaps this is one of the risks we run from time to time, things that just happen, like earthquakes. What it boils down to at such moments is that in an international connection we choose to lay the responsibility for communication on the authorities and to put our trust in them so that the representation of facts is unequivocal. Sometimes it also means that you choose to keep your mouth shut and not make rash statements. We have learned this in particular.”

Wim Schreuders: “This is a difficult problem not only in a national but also in an international perspective. As a regulator on the one hand you are involved with agreements and on the other hand with having to act professionally. For instance how quickly can you issue a ‘Rapid Alert’? In my opinion making unequivocal statements is essential: the provision of information should be centralised. Clear arrangements will have to be made in this connection; arrangements which everybody should then observe. Certainly after this matter it is a subject we are going to focus on in European inter-institutional co-operation. Only if there are clear arrangements is it possible to guarantee trust.”

Trust is evidenced by transparency



Administrative bodies and advisory committees

Appendix 1

Please find in this overview the composition of the administrative bodies and advisory committees on 1 May 2011.

Supervisory Board

drs. E.H.T.M. Nijpels – Chairman
drs. G.H.W. Baalhuis
dr. A.G.M. Buiting
dr. S.A. Hertzberger
ing. J. Visser

Executive Board and Management

ir. J.C. van der Poel – Chief Executive
ir. D.E. Aldershoff M.Sc. – Operational Director

Accreditation Committee

ir. M.N.D. de Vries – Chairman
prof. dr. ing. T.W. Hardjono
dr. W. Huisman
dr. ir. J.M. van der Meer

Objection Chairmen Committee

mr. L.A.F.M. Kerklaan

User Council

ir. J.C. van der Poel – Chairman
ir. D.E. Aldershoff M.Sc. – Operational Director
Th.J.W. Cieremans – VOC
P. Cornelissen – VOC
dr. M. Curfs – FMLS
dr. P.G.M. Hesselink – FeNeLab
dr. G. Ponjeé – Medische labs
Ph. de Ryck – FeNeLab
ing. R. Veerman – VEROCOG

Finances in a nutshell

Appendix 2

As an independent foundation the Dutch Accreditation Council RvA is a non-profit organisation. We secure our independence through a modern governance structure with the Supervisory Board and the Accreditation Committee.

We guarantee our independence also by a healthy but limited amount of equity capital. This prevents us from taking too great financial risks when conformity issuing bodies decide to discontinue accreditation if the RvA takes a decision which is disagreeable to them.

These figures have been taken as a summary from the adopted annual accounts for 2010. No rights can be derived from them. The full annual accounts as prepared and adopted after approval by the Supervisory Board and the Minister of EL&I and provided with an unqualified report, can be viewed on www.rva.nl. If you enter the search word "jaarverslagen" (annual reports) you gain access to the report of the annual accounts for 2010 of KPMG. Obviously we will be pleased to send you a copy at your request. You can contact us via telephone number (030) 23 94 500.

Balance sheet as at 31 December 2010 (x € 1,000)

Assets	2010	2009
Fixed assets	398	402
Receivables, transitory assets	3.019	3.222
Liquid resources	2.769	2.711
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	6.186	6.335
Liabilities	2010	2009
Equity capital	2.537	2.243
Short-term debts and transitory liabilities	3.649	4.092
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	6.186	6.335

Profit and loss account as at 31 December 2010 (x € 1,000)

The income of the RvA consists in particular of activities carried out on the basis of rates. These rates are determined on the basis of a discussion of the budget with the User Council and after approval by the Supervisory Board and the Minister of EL&I.

The level of activities was slightly lower than budgeted, in particular as a result of a non-ZBO activity being missed out on: assessing the inspection agencies at the request of the Minister of SZW.

Results x € 1,000	2010	2009
Net turnover	10,683	11,017
Costs of turnover	3,442	3,552
Gross margin	7,241	7,465
Personnel costs	5,139	4,695
Other costs	2,063	2,770
Sum total of costs	7,202	7,465
Operational result	39	0
Income deriving from interest	30	76
Result	30	76

Rates

The objective until now has been to let the rates rise with not more than the CBS business service index. The rates have been adjusted as follows:

	2010	2009
Index previous year	2.0%	4.1%
Rate (lead) assessor	+2%	+2.0%
Rate specialists	+1.8%	+2.3%
Other rates	+0% to +1.5%	+3 to 4 %

The rates for the activities in connection with the CCKL Praktijkrichtlijn have been increased by 2% in 2010 (in 2009 no increase was implemented). These rates are not covered by the Ministerial approval but for the rest are formed in the same manner as the other rates.

Quality care

Appendix 3

The RvA has its own quality care system in order to guarantee the execution of its mission and objectives. To monitor and optimise the proper operation of the system we use for instance observations during internal audits, complaints and feedback we have received from users.

Each year a management assessment will determine whether the quality care system meets our own wishes, the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011, the European Regulation EU 765/2008, the Dutch National Accreditation Body Appointment Act and the Dutch Autonomous Administrative Authorities Framework Act.

In 2010 the focus of the internal audits was on meeting these requirements. Because of the change in the RvA's status and due to the peer Review by our European colleagues, this was an obvious choice. The management assessment was discussed with the Supervisory Board. The processing of complaints is a permanent agenda item in the meetings of the Supervisory Board and in the management meetings.

In 2010 the RvA was externally assessed by EA. The report will become available during the course of 2011. Representatives of the Ministries of EL&I and of BZK-WWI followed the assessment as observers.

Processing complaints

Since its establishment the RvA has had a complaints and appeals scheme based on private law. This scheme is being adjusted in order to comply with the Dutch General Administrative Law Act. We will publish the renewed scheme in 2011.

Not all the signals of the possibly poor operation of the RvA can be qualified as a complaint within the sense of the Dutch General Administrative Law Act. That is why we have regarded all recorded signals in the year 2010 as complaints. From these 'complaints' about the RvA in the year 2010 two particular aspects emerged:

- Complaints about assessors
- Complaints about the service

The majority of the complaints originated from the direction of the certification institutions. Interpretation of standard texts at these institutions leads rather to an almost legal discussion. Sometimes the assessor is blamed for this and a complaint then results. In order not to obfuscate the complaints scheme unnecessarily, a so-called dispute settlement scheme has been set up for some time. Should there be a difference of opinion with regard to the contents, for instance about the interpretation of the standard, the assessed parties can submit this to the RvA. The complaints about the service were caused in particular by the 'internal bustle' at the RvA. You can read more about the causes of this elsewhere in this report. In the meantime the quality of the service provision has been improved. The User Council confirmed this in the Spring of 2011.

The RvA uses complaints about the accredited parties to give extra attention in their assessment to the complaints processing by the accredited party itself. With regard to serious cases the RvA decides to investigate immediately. If the complaint appears to be unjustified, this will be at the expense of the RvA. In other cases the accredited party himself will bear these costs.

Recorded complaints about the performance of accredited institutions by category

<i>Accreditation category</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2009</i>
Laboratories	0	2
Inspection	7	10
Certification	13	16
CCKL Praktijkrichtlijn	0	0
Other	3	5
Total	23	33

<i>Accreditation category</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2009</i>
Laboratories	3	5
Inspection	1	9
Certification	17	3
CCKL Praktijkrichtlijn	0	0
Other	5	3
Total	26	20

Profit and loss account as at 31 December 2010 (x € 1,000)

The income of the RvA consists in particular of activities carried out on the basis of rates. These rates are determined on the basis of a discussion of the budget with the User Council and after approval by the Supervisory Board and the Minister of EL&I.

The level of activities was slightly lower than budgeted, in particular as a result of a non-ZBO activity being missed out on: assessing the inspection agencies at the request of the Minister of SZW.

Our work in figures

Appendix 4

Trust requires the possibility of surveillance. Please find in this Appendix a summary in figures of our activities in 2010 in comparison with the figures of the year 2009.

The certification numbers include the following healthcare-related schemes:

- one institution for individual certification in the field of Emergency Aid/Company Emergency Response;
- one institution for product certification in the field of the bronze quality mark and Prezo in healthcare;
- seven institutions offering ISO9001 compatible HKZ schemes;
- ten institutions that are accredited for ISO9001 sphere of activity 38 (in part).

Accreditations granted as at 31 December

Standard	Explanation	the Netherlands 2010	Abroad 2010	Total 2010	the Netherlands 2009	Abroad 2009	Total 2009
Certification							
EN 45011	Products&Services	44	6	50	42	7	49
ISO/IEC 17021	Management systems	49	42	91	47	45	92
ISO/IEC 17024	Persons	8	2	10	11	1	12
Subtotal certification		101	50	151	100	53	153
Inspection							
ISO/IEC 17020	Inspection	118	5	123	112	6	118
Laboratories General							
ISO/IEC 17025	Calibration	53	7	60	56	6	62
ISO/IEC 17025	Testing	215	18	233	212	19	231
ISO/IEC 17043 ¹	Proficiency testing	12	1	13	11	1	12
ISO Guide 34	Reference materials	2	0	2	2	0	2
Subtotal laboratories		282	26	308	281	26	307
EC no.761/2001	Verification EMAS	1	0	1	2	0	2
Total General		502	81	583	495	85	580
Healthcare laboratories							
CCKL Praktijkrichtlijn ²	Medical laboratories	238	0	238	225	0	225
ISO15189	Medical laboratories in MLA	8	0	8	7	0	7
Total Healthcare		246	0	246	232	0	232
Total number of accreditations granted		748	81	828	727	85	812

¹ This standard is the follow-up of the ILAC Guide 13. ² These accreditations are not covered by the ZBO.

Geographical spread of the accreditations granted as at 31 December

<i>Country</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2009</i>	
The Netherlands (ZBO)		510	502
Remainder of Europe		34	37
Remainder of the world		47	49
Total		591	588

Number of reports dealt with by the Accreditations Committee

<i>Year</i>	<i>General</i>
2010	182
2009	202

Invoiced assessment days, broken down by type of assessment

<i>Assessment type</i>	<i>2010 in %</i>	<i>2009 in %</i>
Initial assessment	8.6	7.0
Extension	9.4	7.9
Reassessment	26.6	33.9
Surveillance assessment	55.4	51.2
Total	100	100

Invoiced assessment days, broken down by the role in assessment team

<i>Role</i>	<i>2010 in %</i>	<i>2009 in %</i>
Lead assessor	55	44
Assessor	6	15
Specialist	39	41
Total	100	100

Number of assessments of CCKL Praktijkrichtlijn

<i>Assessment type</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2009</i>
Initial assessment	22	17
Surveillance	72	54
Documents Surveillance	24	38
Re-assessment	47	36
Total	165	145

New accreditations granted in 2010

<i>Accreditation category</i>	<i>Number</i>
Certification	7
Inspection	8
Calibration laboratories	3
Test laboratories	15
CCKL Praktijkrichtlijn	15
Other	2
Total	50

Disputes, suspensions and withdrawn accreditations

Disputes

A dispute is a difference of opinion between the assessed party and the RvA assessor about the interpretation of the standard requirements.

<i>Assessment of dispute</i>	<i>Number 2010</i>	<i>Number 2009</i>
Non-conformity correct	21	20
Non-conformity incorrect	6	4
Non-conformity partially correct	3	2
Not admissible	1	2
Total	31	28

Suspended accreditations

<i>Accreditation category</i>	<i>Voluntary 2010</i>	<i>Imposed 2010</i>	<i>Total 2010</i>	<i>Voluntary 2009</i>	<i>Imposed 2009</i>	<i>Total 2009</i>
Certification	2	3	5	3	5	8
Inspection	1	1	2	1	1	1
Calibration laboratories	0	0	0	0	2	2
Test laboratories	1	2	3	2	2	4
CCKL Praktijkrichtlijn	1	0	1	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5	6	11	6	10	15

Withdrawn accreditations

<i>Accreditation category</i>	<i>Voluntary 2010</i>	<i>Imposed 2010</i>	<i>Total 2010</i>	<i>Voluntary 2009</i>	<i>Imposed 2009</i>	<i>Total 2009</i>
Certification	13	2	15	7	1	8
Inspection	4	1	5	0	0	0
Calibration laboratories	1	0	1	10	0	10
Test laboratories	10	0	10	8	0	8
CCKL Praktijkrichtlijn	0	2	2	0	0	0
Other	1	0	1	0	0	0
Total	29	5	34	25	1	26

Accepted scheme owners

Appendix 5

Scheme owners are organisations developing and managing schemes used by laboratories and certification or inspection bodies in performing their assessment task. These schemes set a standard for suppliers who want to obtain a certificate or other form of approval. Only when the supplier meets the quality and safety requirements laid down in the scheme will the assessment body issue a certificate or quality mark. So a scheme owner is not an assessment body but formulates the standards and manages them.

The scheme owners themselves must also meet the standards laid down in regulations by the RvA in close consultation with the stakeholders. These regulations include rules applicable to the formal co-operation between the scheme owners and the RvA. The legal form of a scheme owner is in practice always a foundation. This enables the RvA to enter into a so-called 'acceptance agreement' with these organisations. This acceptance is not an accreditation because this applies exclusively to the assessment bodies. It can apply to one or more schemes developed by the scheme owner and subsequently managed by him.

In co-operation with the scheme owners the RvA collected into a document the criteria on which the schemes are assessed. This document makes a connection with the requirements of the accreditation standards and indicates how these can be used in formulating the schemes. More information in this connection can be found on our website.

Who are the accepted scheme owners? The following list offers an overview as at 1 May 2011.

Area of activity of scheme owner	Foundation	Website
Product certification		
• Animal feed sector	GMP+	www.gmpplus.org
• Installation sector	KBI	www.kbi.nl
• EurepGAP	SCV	www.foodsafetymanagement.info
• HACCP process certification	SCV	www.foodsafetymanagement.info
• Soil management quality assurance infrastructure	SIKB	www.sikb.nl
• Integral Chain Control Eggs	PPE	www.pve.nl
• Integral Chain Control Pigs	CBD	www.cbd.info
• Integral Chain Control Chickens	PPE	www.pve.nl
• Agro/food environment mark	SMK	www.smk.nl
• Non-food environment mark	Groen Label Kas SMK	www.smk.nl
• Wooden packaging	SMHV	www.smhv.nl
• Compost and substrate	RHP*	www.rhp.nl
• Debt counselling	NNI	www.nni.nl
Management system certification		
• Occupational health and safety services	SBCA	www.sbca.nl
• Occupational health and safety management systems	SCCM	www.sccm.nl

• Car damage	KZS	www.focwa.nl
• Continuous improvement in SMEs	Continu Verbeteren in het MKB	www.continuverbeteren.nl
• Certificatie Contract catering	Cercat	www.cercat.nl
• Criminality prevention and safety	CCV	www.hetccv.nl
• Crop protection products	CDG*	www.stichtingcdg.nl
• Green areas	Groenkeur*	www.groenkeur.nl
• HACCP management systems	SCV	www.foodsafetymanagement.info
• Harmonisation of quality assessment in the healthcare sector	HKZ	www.hkz.nl
• Information security	ECPNL	www.ecp.nl
• Inspection and maintenance of heating installations	SCIOS	www.scios.nl
• Cable infrastructure and pipe laying companies	CKB	www.ckb.nl
• Quality management disassembly	KZD	www.kzd.info
• Environment systems	SCCM	www.sccm.nl
• Demolishing	SVMS	www.veiligslopen.nl
• Contractors Safety Checklist (VCA)	SSVV	www.vca.nl
Person certification		
• Electrical engineering	STIPEL	www.stipel.nl
• Taxi quality mark	TX-KEUR	www.tx-keur.nl
• Motor coach business	SKTB	www.sktb.nl
• Asbestos expertise	SCA	www.ascert.nl
• Debt counselling	NNI	www.nni.nl

* new scheme owners in 2010

List of abbreviations

Appendix 6

AFM	Financial Markets Authority
Awb	General Administrative Law Act
BAG	Basic Record of Addresses and Buildings
CA	Accreditation Committee
CBD	CoMore business services
CCKL	Foundation for the Promotion of the Quality of Laboratory Testing and for the Accreditation of Laboratories in Healthcare
CCV	Centre for Criminality Prevention and Safety
CCvD	Central Board of Experts
CE	European Conformity
CEN	European Committee for Standardization
CENELEC	European Committee for Electro-technical Standardization
CKB	Foundation for the Certification Scheme for Cable Infrastructure and Pipelaying Companies
CMI	College of Medical Immunologists
EA	European co-operation for Accreditation
ECP.NL	Foundation Electronic Commerce Platform Netherlands
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EL&I	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation
EMAS	Eco Management and Audit System
EN	European Standard
EPA	Energy Performance Advice
EurepGAP	European Good Agricultural Practice
EZ	Ministry of Economic Affairs
EU	European Union
FeNeLab	Federation of the Dutch Associations of Laboratories and Inspection Institutions
FMLS	Federation of Medical Laboratory Specialists
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points
HKZ	Foundation for the Harmonisation of Quality Assessment in the Healthcare Sector
IAF	International Accreditation Forum
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEC	International Electro-technical Committee
IGZ	Inspection for Healthcare
ILAC	International Laboratory Accreditation Co-operation
IM	Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment
ISO	International Organisation for Standardization
KBI	Foundation for Quality Assurance in the Installation Sector
KLEM	Society for Clinical Embryology
Kwalibo	Quality Soil Testing
KZD	Foundation for Quality Management in Vehicle Dismantling
KZS	Foundation for Quality Management in the Motor Repair Sector
MKB	Small and medium-sized businesses
MLA	Multilateral Agreement
MRA	Multilateral Recognition Arrangement
NEN	Netherlands Standardisation Institute
NIAZ	Netherlands Institute for Accreditation in Healthcare
NMa	Dutch Competition Authority
NNK	Netherlands Network Quality
NRGD	National Register of Court-Appointed Experts

NVKC	Netherlands Society for Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine
NVVP	Netherlands Society of Pathologists
nVWA	new Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority
OHSAS	Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series
OPTA	Independent Post and Telecom Authority
PDCA	Plan Do Check Act
PPE	Marketing Board for Poultry and Eggs
PR	Public Relations
RvA	Dutch Accreditation Council RvA
RvT	Supervisory Board
SAP	Standard Accreditation Protocol
SCA	Foundation for Certification of Occupational Health and Safety Services
SCA	Foundation for Certification of Asbestos
SCC	Foundation for Certification of Contract Catering
SCCM	Foundation for Coordination of Certification of Environmental Management Systems
SCIOS	Foundation for Certification Inspection and Maintenance of Heating Installations
SCV	Foundation for Certification of Food Safety
SIKB	Foundation for Infrastructure of Quality Assurance in Soil Management
SKTB	Foundation for Motor Coach Company Quality Mark
SMHV	Foundation for Wooden Packaging Marking
SMK	Foundation for Environmental Seal of Approval
SSV	Foundation for Co-operation for Safety
STIPEL	Foundation for Person Certification in Electrical Engineering
SVMS	Foundation for Safe and Ecological Demolition
SZW	Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
TX-Keur	Taxi mark
VAL	Society for Doctors in Laboratory Diagnostics
VCA	Contractors Safety Checklist
VEROCOG	Association of Independent Superintending Companies and Grain Factors
VKGL	Society for Clinical Genetic Laboratory Diagnostics
VNO-NCW	Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers
VOC	Association for Certification Institution Consultation
VWS	Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport
ZBO	Autonomous administrative authority

Colophon

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