

PUBLIC REPORT 2012

Trust in the future

Dutch Accreditation Council (RvA)



*I am interested in the future
more than the past because I intend
to live in it.
(Albert Einstein)*

FOREWORD

Dear reader,

Whether it is with regard to the economy, our safety in all kinds of forms or the accessibility of good care: consumer confidence is often linked to the future and in this connection someone else must ensure that everything will be all right. That other must provide confidence but without anyone indicating what the measure for confidence is. This is a difficult task, we will not deny it.

So long as everything is going well, nobody says anything. As soon as things go wrong, it often appears that an unexpressed expectation has not been fulfilled. That unexpressed expectation is often that it must be 'impossible' for 'it' to happen.

On the other hand in some cases it is indeed accepted that things can go wrong. Think of near-disasters involving aircraft, unintended consequences of operations, building site accidents and so much more. To this the response in many cases is not: how can we exclude them, but how can we reduce them, what can we learn from this, so that the chances of this happening again become smaller?

The work of the RvA fits in with the latter because we establish in advance whether the organisations we assess are independent and expert and have their own culture for improvement.

Accreditation provides confidence assurance that these organisations, which are testing, measuring, inspecting and certifying will do well in the future. This is not a guarantee that things will never go wrong in the same way as holding a driving license doesn't guarantee that a driver would never cause a traffic accident. But that the

confidence consumers and others can have in the quality of the work on the basis of accreditation by the accredited establishments is justified, where this is often experienced unconsciously as obvious.

As the RvA we try to create bridges between users, the public sector and accredited establishments. All of us must bear in mind that we can influence today the confidence in the future by making standards more explicit and learning together from what often goes wrong. This report is about building confidence in the future. In it you can also find the story of the work we are doing today on building confidence.

We hope you enjoy reading it and that it gives you a challenging perspective on a future with confidence.

all

Jan van der Poel
Chief Executive



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*“Never be intimidated by the future.
The weapons of reason by which you
defend yourself now will also be of use to
you then when it is necessary”
(Marcus Aurelius)*

TRUST IN THE FUTURE

Contribution by the Dutch Accreditation Council (RvA)

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

The year 2012 is coming to an end. As Christmas approaches, Marcia Luyten has a talk in the Buitenhof television programme with two ‘éminences grises’ of Dutch politics, Hans Wiegel and Ruub Lubbers, and two younger people who are also involved in the future of our society: Dennis Wiersma, chairman of FNV Jong, and Ijmert Muilwijk, chairman of CNV Jongeren. It was a debate between two generations, quite confrontational but highly respectful. Generations meet each other in the truest sense of the words.

Several subjects were reviewed such as the gap that has arisen with regard to pensions between the baby-boom generation and the younger people. The central subject is the confidence in the future. Obviously, some statements will not make you cheerful. Both older gentlemen indicated that a fundamental lack of trust on all fronts has crept up on our society. But nevertheless, one of the last statements by Ruud Lubbers was: “Let’s look at the future of the Netherlands and restore confidence in the society.”

Several days later on 25 December, Queen Beatrix gave her traditional Christmas address. She calls for the people to trust our constitutional State. This is the basis of a just society. But according to Queen Beatrix this trust must be earned. A quotation: “Openness and tolerance forms a major basis of trust. Throughout the ages our society drew strength from the presence of people with different cultural and ideological backgrounds. Tolerance made our country strong.”

The core task of the Dutch Accreditation Council (RvA) is to guarantee the confidence of the people, the public sector, companies and bodies. In the first part of this report you will not only find an account of the manner in which our organisation contributed as an autonomous administrative authority in 2012 to cementing trust but also our contribution to confidence in the future. In the second part you can read the positive views of several people with regard to confidence in the future. We do this in the form of a representation of two personal interviews with Paul Schnabel, director of the Social and Cultural Planning Office, and Louise Gunning-Schepers, chairman of the Executive Board of the University of Amsterdam and Hogeschool [Polytechnic] of Amsterdam. We also had a very fascinating group discussion on this topic with Ed Nijpels, whose role includes being chairman of our Supervisory Board, André Knottnerus, chairman of the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy, and Frits Spangenberg, founder of the market research company Motivaction.

These are authentic opinions which you perhaps might not always share. However: they are a source for reflection. Reflection fits into a report such as this one. It is a line we started as autonomous administrative body with the public report for 2010.

What remains, is the question: “In what way will the market cement trust in the future?” We put this question to four organisations that play a major role in the certification of the service provision and products. You can find their opinion in several columns which are also included in the second part of this report.

The authors are the following:

- Kees Pasmooij, until recently chairman of the Vereniging Overleg Certificatie-instellingen association, a vital organisation which because of its role supervises the reliability of the products and services which we want to trust.
- Paul Hesselink, until recently chairman of Fenelab, the trade association of accredited laboratories and calibration and inspection bodies and also General Director of Kiwa.
- Marc Thelen, attached as medical manager to the clinical chemistry and molecular biology department of Amphia Hospital in Breda. In addition, as an initiator he provides guidance to the transition of the laboratory specialisms to the ISO-standard 15189.
- Albert Jan Maat, chairman of LTO Nederland, the entrepreneurs’ organisation for the agricultural sector in the Netherlands.

In the core text of this report we offer you our account of the activities undertaken by the RvA in the year 2012 in realising its social role of guaranteeing confidence. After this introduction you will subsequently read more about the contribution which we can and will continue to make to the formation of a more cohesive public sector, the organisation of supervision and advice, the international developments in the area of accreditation, the internal developments and quality care and the transition of medical laboratories from a national to an international standard.

A report such as this should obviously also include the more ‘solid’ details. Therefore following on from this you will find information about the organisation of our primary process, the composition of the executive committees and advisory bodies providing an essential contribution to the duties of the RvA, a brief overview of the financial results for the year 2012, the information of our work in figures, the accepted scheme managers, the marks of the RvA and a glossary of the abbreviations used.

And finally, let us return to the overture of this introduction. In it we refer to a special meeting in the Buitenhof television programme and the Christmas address of our monarch. And then there was the statement of our queen in her abdication address: “The responsibility for our country must be in the hands of a new generation.” In short: new, inspiring challenges are facing us.

The answer is in all cases unequivocally positive. This is apparent not only from the contents of this public report but certainly also from the talks we had and the columns from the market. With dedication and involvement the RvA will also continue in the coming years to contribute to cementing trust in the future.

The national government will start to work more cheaply, more flexibly and more efficiently, with less administrative and official fuss and regulatory pressure. This should contribute to improvement of the service provision to the people and to businesses. Policy and implementation will be simplified, supervisory duties and advisory roles will be joined, duties terminated or decentralised to other authorities and deregulation will be forcefully continued. This will lead to lower compliance costs.
(Coalition agreement 29 October 2012)

ACCREDITATION AS A BRIDGE OF CONFIDENCE BETWEEN A COHESIVE PUBLIC SECTOR AND SOCIETY. VISION AND PRACTICE.

Society assumes that the reports and certificates issued by the assessment bodies are reliable and offer security for our health, safety and the environment. We often rely on this blindly and as a result great disappointment is expressed with regard to setbacks. This is understandable. But much is being done to prevent faults. However, the exclusion of faults would not be 100% achieved, however much we say that we want this. It would yield an unliveable and unaffordable society.

In this connection the RvA fulfils a sort of bridging role. The core activities of the RvA are aimed at determining in advance the expertise, independence, impartiality and the ‘self-purifying operation’ of the management system of bodies assessing the quality, safety and trustworthiness of products and services.

The Accreditation Council takes the responsibilities of the market parties and supervising authorities as a starting point. This means that the suppliers of products and services are primarily responsible for the safety of the consumers. In our opinion the effectiveness of the work of official inspectorates would be increased if they focussed more on detection and enforcement and less on indirect forms of control, as this is already happening by certificates and accreditation. The outcomes of their work could then more often form an input for improving the controls carried out by the market parties themselves, and of the systems of external supervision by accredited laboratories, inspection

bodies and certifiers. The risk assessments formulated by the official inspectorates can help address any problems jointly. It is a joint approach for a common as well as a social interest for all the respective parties.

In this way we aim on the one hand for a proper division of roles and type of work and on the other hand for good communication in order to establish jointly what are the most important possibilities for improvement and how they can be realised. In 2011 the RvA indicated to the ministries which possibilities it was contemplating. In 2012 we explained this in many discussions and presentations at the ministries. In the meantime this has contributed to several concrete projects. A part of this has already been realised, others will be implemented in 2013. We will review them below on the basis of the three variants which we proposed last year:

1. Notification and Designation
In order to issue certificates of conformity for CE marking, bodies are often notified by or on behalf of ministers. Brussels considers accreditation for the respective area of operation sufficient proof of expertise. Other forms of demonstrating expertise are discouraged and made unattractive. The statements of notified bodies are recognised throughout Europe in connection with free movement of goods and services.

The Accreditation Council considers that the Dutch public sector authorities notifying the bodies should better use accreditation as an alternative way of assessing the notified bodies - often called NoBos, an abbreviation for ‘Notified Bodies’ - which these authorities are still currently conducting themselves. This encourages the European harmonisation of the notified bodies. The work method in connection with accreditation can then be coordinated between the ministries, the bodies and the RvA. This would create accreditations which comply with the expectations of the national authority as well as the international standards. In addition, accreditation contributes to transparency, regular and structured supervision and European support.

From 1 July 2013 onwards in connection with the Construction Products Regulation the Ministry of the Interior, Construction and Housing decided to re-notify the inspection agencies for building products on the basis of accreditation. The Ministry also authorises the RvA to make these notifications in the database of NoBos, called NANDO.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid: ‘SZW’) takes care of European notification and national designation of certification and inspection bodies on the basis of the designation criteria proposed by the field of activity. The assessment of the bodies on the basis of these criteria, strongly resembling accreditation, has been outsourced to the RvA. In 2012 the first assessments were carried out, as much as possible by overlapping already existing accreditations in order not to increase the burden

for the bodies. In this way trust can be built up between the parties and within a few years they can probably be incorporated into the accreditation protocols. The SZW Inspectorate can keep its finger on the pulse via its market supervision and feed its findings back to the RvA in order to improve the system where necessary.

Since 2012 the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment has been notifying in Brussels inspection agencies for inland vessels on the basis of an accreditation. Specific methods have been jointly determined by the RvA and the Human Environment and Transport Inspectorate (Inspectie Leefomgeving en Transport: ‘ILT’) and have been laid down by the RvA in a Specific Accreditation Protocol. In this connection the ILT can keep its finger on the pulse and feed its findings back to the RvA in order to improve this system too where necessary.

Via the Dutch Emissions Authority the same ministry is going to use accreditation for the notification of verification agencies in connection with the Emission Trading Scheme. In this scheme a small error of measurement can save or cost millions.

2. Reduction of inspection pressure
Since the previous cabinet period sound ways are already being sought in order to reduce the pressure of inspection on companies with a good track record. For instance inspections could be carried out less often if there was proper self-regulation. Inspectorates could then deploy their manpower in less properly regulated and higher-risk sectors. To this end it is important that the public sector and the market are aware of each other’s

expectations, that the parties acknowledge and use each other’s criteria and that they do not each apply their own yardstick.

The RvA considers this to be a very feasible option, an option which is also in line with previous positions of the cabinet with regard to the use of accreditation and certification. In 2012 the Ministry of SZW announced that it will be deploying the Labour Inspectorate less with regard to companies that voluntarily have an OHSAS certificate according to the SCCM scheme. Along comparable lines in the domain of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport: ‘VWS’) the HKZ certification in mental healthcare is incorporated as a risk-mitigating factor. We are looking forward to the evaluation: will this approach mean there will soon be as many, fewer or more problems than with the traditional inspection approach?

We are in talks with the Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority about the way in which defects in compliance they have established can be improved by companies certified under accreditation and what is to be applied as a detection threshold. After all, not all defects constitute a risk to food safety.

3. Self-regulation
Policy departments of the various ministries can focus on self-regulation via the so-called ‘Integral Balancing Framework’. This means that the ministries have to formulate the expectations of and the criteria for the result to be achieved. A system can then be designed in consultation with the scheme managers and the RvA which meets the expectations and the required results.

In 2012 a discussion was held with the Ministry of Safety and Justice about accreditation of laboratories engaged in DNA tests and accreditation of forensic research.

There were discussions with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment regarding a quality mark scheme for temping agencies.

At European level the employees of the RvA contributed to harmonisation of accreditation criteria via schemes for food safety, a current theme with interfaces to the Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority.

In 2013 the RvA will also communicate intensively with the ministries with regard to the above three themes. We are convinced that thereby we can contribute to achieving a more cohesive public sector, which in future will also enjoy society’s trust that important matters such as health, safety and the environment are being guaranteed at a good level.

SUPERVISION AND ADVICE: GUARANTEEING CONFIDENCE

The Dutch Accreditation Council (RvA) is allowed to operate with a high degree of independence but forms of supervising the work of the RvA and advice in the accreditation decision-making process are of major importance in this connection. They guarantee independence, expertise and provide a critical evaluation of our activities.

Supervision and advice contribute to a major extent to the trust of the public sector, society and our customers in performing our activities. Various bodies and committees are active in the RvA to this end. 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.

Minister of Economic Affairs
Pursuant to EU Regulation 765, the Dutch National Accreditation Body Appointment Act (Wet aanwijzing nationale accreditatie-instantie) and the Dutch Independent Executive Agencies Framework Act (Kaderwet ZBO), the Minister supervises the RvA via regular communications as laid down in the protocol dated 18 November 2010, by approval of rates, budgets, annual accounts, amendments to the Articles, appointment of Director and by attending the EA Peer Review.

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.

*What wise rulers are obliged to do:
not solely and exclusively take into account the wrongs that exist
at certain times but also those which can arise in future
and this should be countered by all possible means.
(Machiavelli)*

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

- commercial sector,
- public sector,
- research/technology,
- healthcare/medical,
- food and goods,
- quality.

When selecting the Members the major personal qualities are:

- wide knowledge and experience of professional organisations;
- being able to advise and encourage properly;
- objective, detached approach;
- integrity and sense of responsibility;
- independent and critical attitude;
- formulation of a balanced opinion.

The Members of the Supervisory Board are appointed for a period of three years and can be reappointed twice for the same period.

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 the suspension or withdrawal of accreditations of bodies that have been granted accreditation. It receives information from the Executive Board and the management about measures and sanctions against 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.

Objection Chairmen Committee
It is possible that there may be an objection to a decision by the RvA. If that is the case, the Chairmen Committee for Objection 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 this 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.

EA Multilateral Agreement Committee
In order to remain a signatory of the MLA the RvA must satisfy the requirements of the European Regulation 765/2008 and the ISO 17011. Every four years the RvA is assessed by a team of about eight ‘peers’ in the form of a Peer evaluation. Representatives on behalf of the Ministry of Economic Affairs (Ministerie van Economische Zaken: ‘EZ’) are invited as a standard in this connection.

Executive Board
The Director/Chief Executive is responsible for the realisation of the Accreditation Council’s objectives, its strategy and policy, and the developments resulting from these. He accounts for this 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.

Management

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

The forms of supervision and advice outlined in this chapter are a major contribution towards the RvA having confidence in the future. This is confidence that not only applies to our organisation, but also to our clients and the civilians. Therefore this is the place to thank all these members for their input in the year 2012.

The only limit to our realisation
of tomorrow will be our doubts of today.
(Franklin D. Roosevelt)

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Accreditations are mutually recognised internationally (Mutual Recognition/Acceptance). To this 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. Certificates of conformity operate as a passport in the free trade of products and services with the result that trust is created amongst buyers and users. Accreditation should justify this trust.

Peer Review

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

In Europe, apart from this, there are also evaluations with regard to the additional requirements for national accreditation bodies on accreditation and market supervision laid down in Regulation 765/2008.

The Accreditation Council will again be subjected to a Peer Review at the end of 2013. The complete report will, after it has been determined, be published on the website of the RvA, www.rva.nl.

In its turn the RvA also contributes to Peer Reviews in other countries by sending lead assessors and assessors for such Reviews. In connection with European cooperation for accreditation assistance was rendered in 2012 to the evaluations of the National Accreditation Bodies of Turkey, Poland and Norway. In connection with the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) the RvA provided the lead assessor for the assessment of the Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC) in the Asia-Pacific region. The RvA provides a major contribution to the training of and the continuous refresher courses for these peer reviewers.

International normalisation is the basis of harmonisation

The assessments of the RvA take place on the basis of accreditation standards. In order to harmonise these assessments internationally, a standards framework is required which has international force. For laboratory and inspection activities these are currently the ISO standards, which enjoy worldwide support. This movement got into its stride later with regard to the certification activities. In this respect the European EN standard and the international IAF Guidelines were effective side by side. In the meantime there are ISO standards for certification of management systems and people.

In 2012, after many years of work, the ISO accreditation standard for product certification, the ISO/IEC 17065, appeared. Moreover, renewed versions of the standards for the accreditation of inspection bodies and medical laboratories have come into effect. An ample transitional period has been determined for all these standards in order the save the extra costs for the accredited establishments which would result from a faster implementation.

In 2011 the ISO 14065 standard for the accreditation of the validation and certification of greenhouse gases was added to the area of operations of the RvA. This is important for the trust that society should have that the emission rights of greenhouse gases are being determined in the proper way.

Europe

The EA was put on a formal basis via European Regulation EU 765/2008. The Peer Review is a process acknowledged throughout Europe. Accreditation of a European establishment is legally effective for harmonised standards throughout Europe.

In order to promote harmonisation when standards appear (again) at European level, trainers will be trained who can pass on the European interpretation locally to colleague assessors. In 2012 too the RvA provided many European trainers.

In the areas of health, safety and the environment there are many European guidelines. In order to enhance compliance with them, inspection bodies are being notified at national level to Brussels, the so-called ‘Notified Bodies’. Although these bodies are only accredited nationally they are considered to have the expertise to be able to carry out their activities throughout Europe. So their results must be recognised throughout Europe. According to Regulation 765 accreditation is the obvious route for the Member States to determine the expertise of inspection bodies. In order to allow this to take place unequivocally in Europe, the EA has drawn up a guideline (EA -2/17) specifically for use at Notified Bodies.

The RvA applied this guideline to its assessments for the first time in 2011. In 2012 in the Netherlands the experiences were evaluated with the bodies and the notifying authorities. We are inputting these experiences into the discussions on this subject in the EA.

Globally

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

In 2012 the ILAC formulated standpoints in the area of the traceability of measurement values to international standards. The Inspection Committee established in 2011 held its first meeting in 2012 and was busy introducing the renewed accreditation standard for inspection bodies.

In 2012 the IAF unequivocally laid down the minimum requirements for time spent by certification bodies in a document that is compulsory for all accredited certification bodies. A start was made on determining the minimum requirements for the drafting of reports on certification assessments. In the IAF community a lot of attention is being paid to the reliable certification of management systems. Additional methods are being worked out in order to determine whether certificates have been granted with good reason. Control audits, unannounced inspections and shadow audits are solutions being reviewed.

Within the global accreditation community more regions are increasingly arising such as EA. It is often quicker to harmonise within these regions. How the regions which actually form the basis of the global, mutual recognitions are related to individual countries in the membership of ILAC and IAF, still has to crystallise in the coming years. Not all EA MLA signatories are also a member of IAF/ILAC.

The status of the participation in mutual recognition as of April 2012 was:

EA:
35 signatories in 35 countries

IAF:
54 signatories in 51 economies

ILAC:
80 signatories in 66 economies

Of establishments accredited by the RvA 32 laboratories and 32 certification bodies have taken out a license to be able to carry the ILAC mark or the IAF mark respectively on their statements.



*If you dedicate yourself completely to the present
it indicates a general
short-sightedness with regard to the future
(Albert Camus)*

THE INTERNAL ORGANISATION

As of 1 January 2010 the RvA went for a fundamental change in its management structure. In 2010 and 2011 this structure had to gain shape, be embedded into the organisation and find support amongst its personnel. At the same time our personnel had to get used to the consequences for our work of the autonomous administrative agency (‘ZBO’) status becoming effective in 2010. In 2012 the process in this respect has become clear. We specifically chose not to start any new time-consuming internal projects but to follow the routes already taken and to finish what had been started in the previous years. This created a calm atmosphere in the organisation and space to dedicate ourselves optimally to the quality of our services. This was obviously with the objective of also continuing to guarantee confidence in future in the way the Accreditation Council expects and which we ourselves certainly expect.

Personnel

The total number of employees remained almost level in 2012. On 31 December 2012 93 employees were permanently employed by the RvA and six employees had a flexible employment contract. All together this is a work force of 86.9 FTE with an average age of 48.3 and an average of 8 service years.

But several shifts took place in the work force in 2012 because seven employees resigned from the RvA and eight new employees started this year. One of the employees who resigned was the Operational Director. At the beginning of 2013 we conducted a successful recruitment to fill this vacancy. The new Operational Director, mr. J.A.W. de Haas, started on 4 March 2013.

In addition, two new positions were created in the RvA in 2012: a functional manager and a part-time lawyer. The functional manager has an important role in streamlining the increasingly further expanding ICT provisions and in addition acting as an intermediary between ICT and the operational work process. The lawyer was appointed because the RvA with its ZBO status is increasingly more involved in legal cases pertaining to administrative law.

The details referred to above only relate to the employees directly employed by the RvA. In addition, we work together with roughly 750 external professionals and assessors who are deployed on call for specific assessments. All together this is the equivalent of about 25 FTE work. In order to guarantee the quality of the assessments, with the future in mind, the assessor management department is working continuously on maintaining and where necessary expanding this pool of specialists. In anticipation of the expected retirements of experts and the need for new experts in certain fields, an assessor management workgroup started at RvA in 2012. This workgroup is mapping the capacity need for the coming years and developing an action plan to be able to fulfil this need. Moreover, the workgroup is focussing on the cooperation between the assessor management department and the operational departments.

Absenteeism policy and employee satisfaction

In 2012 extra attention was paid to cutting back absenteeism due to illness. The management followed a workshop to improve skills in dealing with absenteeism due to illness and to make uniform arrangements about procedures in this area. The result was that in 2012 absenteeism due to illness reduced by 0.7% to 4%.

In May/June 2012 the RvA had an employee satisfaction survey carried out by an external agency. For the proper operation of the organisation it is important to know where there are any problems preventing efficient and practical work. This survey showed points for improvement which were already partly addressed in 2012 and which are partly included in the annual plan for 2013. Overall, the score of the RvA employees was an ample 7.

Training and education

In order to guarantee quality, now and in the future, it is essential to pay continuous attention and time to training and education. The world of accreditation and accreditation standards is constantly in flux. In order to provide good and reliable services personnel must be aware of the latest developments in the area of accreditation but must also develop their other skills or keep them at the required level. In addition, it is important to let the assessors carry out their work with the least possible mutual differences (harmonised). A lot of energy and time is put into this as well.

In 2012 over 250 days were spent on education and training by employees of the RvA. Part of this training was given internally by our own trainer; part of the training was outsourced to external agencies.

A lot of attention was paid to training in the area of skills and communication. Communication training is relevant to all RvA employees. Skill training is detailed according to personal need, for instance training in the area of often-used software, in order to improve efficiency and output. Basic accreditation training and training with regard to assessing according to accreditation standards in connection with the process of settling-in employees are often given internally. These are hardly available in the market. In connection with harmonisation and professionalisation of assessment, almost 500 assessors in total gathered together on 18 days to achieve uniform opinions according to an accreditation standard relevant to them. The outcomes of the scheme for settling different interpretations were for instance used as case subjects.

ICT and Facility Management

As mentioned earlier, the resources in ICT have increasingly expanded at RvA. In 2012 new software was purchased in order to manage (non-primary) processes and software for Facility Management. Personnel have been trained to work with this software so that it can be optimally deployed.

Cooperation and efficiency

At RvA the consultation structure reached its definitive form in 2012. The cooperation and distribution of work between the various departments have profited from this. The lines are short and clear and that aids efficiency. The divisions of duties in the management team are also better synchronised and this has a positive effect on the speed with

which processes are dealt with and the quality of the service. Moreover, in 2012 a start was made on a fixed structure for evaluations and the follow-up of the findings arising from this. The effects of this will become noticeable from 2013 onwards.

The quality project started up in 2012 is - apart from better guaranteeing our PDCA cycle for continuous improvement - also aimed at achieving even more clearly defined processes and at including benchmarks in this, for instance for the completion time.

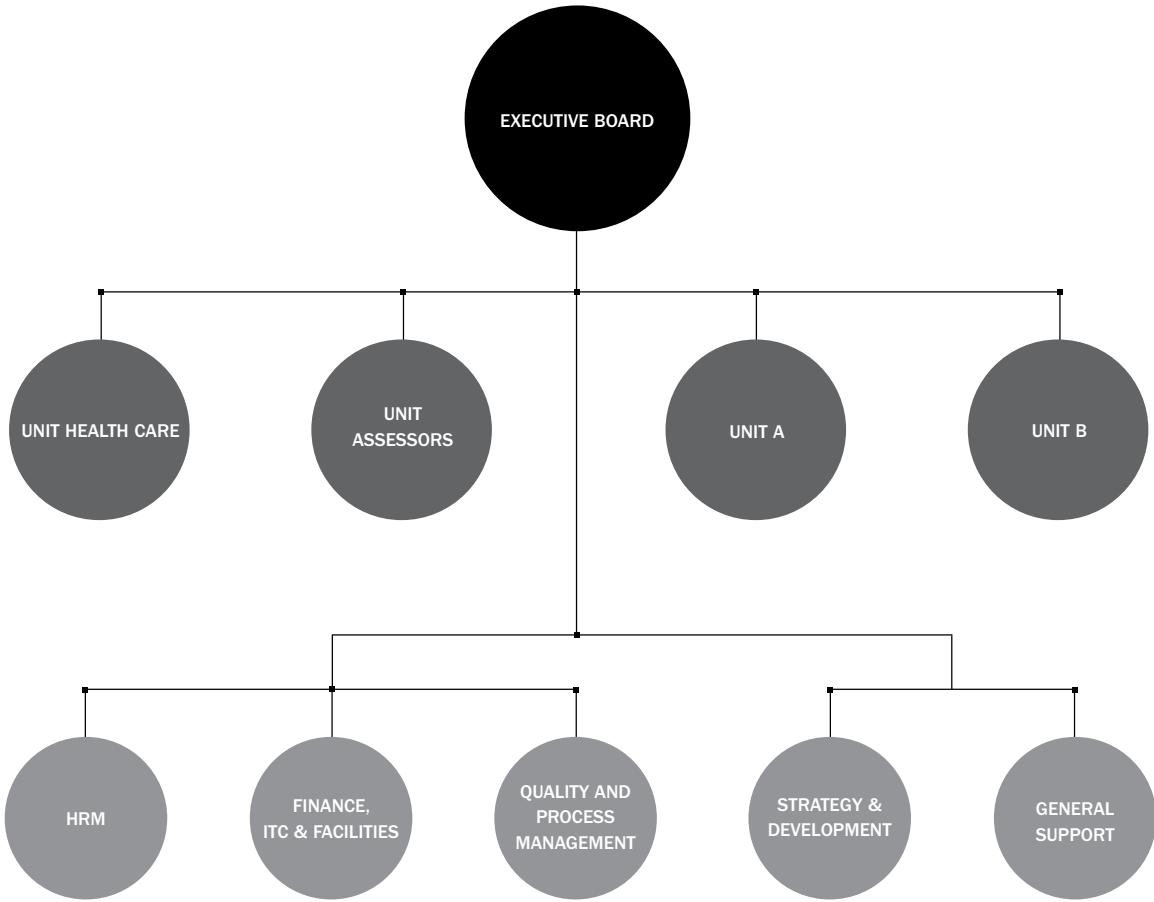
Annual Plan according to the A3 method

In 2012 the RvA worked for the first time with an annual plan according to the A3 method. This is an annual plan with a lot of cohesion in which objectives and points for action are directly related to mission, vision and success-determining factors, all this compiled in A3 format in an orderly and digital manner. The initial experiences with this method have been very positive. The big lines can be easier adhered to throughout the year and the focus on objectives is better. For 2013 this method has therefore again been used for the formulation of an annual plan. Points of action or objectives that were not completely finished in 2012 are included in the annual plan for 2013 so that a meticulous completion is guaranteed and certain points are not lost.

The future

In 2013 the streamlining of internal processes continues in full. The aim is to improve our own quality and efficiency. In addition, a lot of attention will be paid to the continuity of our knowledge base built up over past years. During the course of the year lead assessors in particular will be recruited and settled in, in order to anticipate several lead assessors resigning due to retirement later in 2013 and 2014. The internal lead assessors form the lion's share of our knowledge base.

Finally, in 2013 three other matters will also keep our organisation busy again: the internal quality project of the RvA, the Transition Project in which over 250 medical labs will move in a time frame of four years from a nationally recognised to an internationally recognised accreditation standard and three processes in which accredited establishments move to a new standard version. You will read more about this elsewhere in this report.



Only the watchfulness of public opinion
ensures the future of a society.
(Noam Chomsky)

QUALITY LEADS TO CONFIDENCE
IN THE FUTURE

Internal quality care and handling
complaints and reports

The Accreditation Council 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 for instance use observations during internal audits, complaints and feedback we have received from users of accredited services.

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 Independent Executive Agencies Framework Act (Kaderwet ZBO).

In 2012 the accent of the internal audits was on the implementation and effectiveness of the preventative and corrective measures. In addition, we concentrated on following the internal procedures and work rules in the organisation. We have established that we want to improve ourselves on both points. A quality project was started to improve the effectiveness of our system and the embedding of this in the organisation and this continues into 2013. 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.

Handling complaints about the RvA

According to the provisions in the Dutch General Administrative Law Act (Algemene bestuurswet: ‘Awb’) the RvA has a complaints scheme in place for any complaints about its management. This scheme has been published as the Policy Directive BR-008 and is directly accessible on www.rva.nl. In 2012, in most cases the organisation did not yet achieve the processing period of six weeks but the number of complaints where this was indeed reached has doubled. The objective for 2013 is to improve this processing period further and to have dealt with all the complaints at least within 3 months.

From the complaints about the RvA in the year 2012 the following particular aspects emerged:

- the communication between RvA and the accredited organisation;
- the (project) management of assessments.

The complaints partly led to a project to improve the planning process. In addition, the quality project mentioned above must contribute to improvement on these points.

More than half of the complaints originated from the sector of certification bodies and inspection agencies. Interpretation of standard texts at these bodies tends to lead 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. Should there be an important specific difference of opinion about the interpretation of the standard, the assessed establishments can submit this to the RvA by reporting an interpretation dispute.

Complaints being dealt with
concerning the performance of the
RvA per category

Accreditation category	2012	2011	2010
Laboratories	4	1	3
Inspection	8	1	1
Certification	6	5	17
CCKL			
Code of Practice	1	0	0
Other	7	7	5
Total	26	14	26

In 2012 all complaints about the performance of the RvA were declared admissible. Of the complaints dealt with from 2012, 15% were found to be justified, 35% partly justified and 50% not justified. One complainant turned to the National Ombudsman because of the way his complaint was dealt with. In this connection the Ombudsman advised to make a clearer distinction in the communication between complaints about the RvA and reports or signs about accredited establishments. This recommendation has been adopted and implemented.

Processing notices of objection

In 2012 objections to a decision of the RvA were lodged four times. The decisions against which objections were lodged related to:

- accreditation extension restricted to one year,
- tougher control,
- the formulation of the decision,
- Request for information under the Dutch Government Information (Public Access) Act (Wet openbaarheid van bestuur: ‘Wob’).

There was one session of an objections committee. In two cases the parties lodging objections withdrew the objection after additional communication and arrangements. In one case the decision on the objection was appealed from. An appeal brought in 2010 was withdrawn in 2012.

Reports and signs of dissatisfaction
with accredited establishments

Reports on the conduct of accredited establishments should first be made known to that establishment. If the establishment complained of does not deal with the complaint properly, the complainant can turn to the RvA.

In 2012 a relatively large number of reports and signs were received about certification and inspection bodies. In particular the subject matter was the quality or the conduct of the auditors and inspectors. With regard to laboratories the use of the right methods and the reference to accreditation require particular attention. Attention by authorities in the course of enforcement resulted in extra complaints about the correctness of the final audits of asbestos removal and soil quality for instance. Signs such as these, but also those in connection with the public debate, gave the RvA reason in many cases to conduct extra investigation by itself. If the complaint - and thereby the extra investigation of the RvA - appears to be unjustified, the establishment complained of without grounds will not pay for the investigation. The RvA will then bear the costs.

Recorded reports about the perfor-
mance of accredited establishments
by category

Accreditation category	2012	2011	2010
Laboratories	7	0	0
Inspection	12	10	7
Certification	15	6	13
CCKL			
Code of Practice	0	0	0
Other	0	4	3
Total	34	20	23

I found that patients receive sparse information about quality and that it is unclear how reliable this information is.
There is no fixed point where you can find that up-to-date information.
Many people have worked hard on quality improvement and the development of standards, guidelines and protocols.
My compliments for this but it is going too slowly and is insufficiently systematic.
Pooling knowledge and power is the motto.
(Edith Schippers, Minister of VWS)

MEDICAL LABORATORIES: IN THE LEAD WITH TRANSPARENT QUALITY

In the world of healthcare there is much ado about providing, buying and transparency of quality. What for many specialisms is still a rather young field, has already been standard for over 10 years for medical laboratory specialisms. More than 70% of the Dutch laboratories have been accredited on the basis of the CCKL (Foundation for the Promotion of the Quality of Laboratory Testing and for the Accreditation of Laboratories in Healthcare) Code of Practice (‘PRL’).

Laboratory accreditation
The CCKL accreditation is being used by over 250 medical laboratories to demonstrate their expertise and quality in the area of regulation as well as the contribution to the diagnosis and treatment of patients. This system originates from scientific associations of the respective specialisms such as clinical chemistry and medical microbiology and has been extended into fields such as pathology, embryology, hospital pharmacy and job tests. The Dutch Code of Practice played a major role in the formation of the ISO 15189 standard for medical laboratories which has in the meantime been accepted internationally. By complying with this standard the results of the Dutch medical laboratories are qualified for use in international research. Working for clients in other countries is also facilitated by this. Via this standard health insurers have an independent benchmark making the quality to be bought objective.

Transition to the ISO 15189:2012 standard
The appearance of the 2012 version of this standard was the immediate reason for the scientific associations and the RvA to consider how CCKL accredited establishments could move with due care and under control from accreditation on the basis of the Code of Practice to accreditation on the basis of the international ISO 15189 standard. In this connection the starting point is to retain as much as possible the involvement of the sector that launched the CCKL system so successfully. In order to be able to comply with the internationally recognised standard, work is carried out in particular on training and qualification of assessors, the assessment regime and defining the accredited areas of operation. Moreover, it is important that the CCKL guideline is of an outlining nature and that the ISO standard leaves more space to self-demonstrate that the criteria have been complied with.

In order to assess these important major adjustments for the laboratories, with the smallest possible extra burden on them, a transitional period of four years has been determined, commencing on 1 January 2015. Prior to this the transition plan formulated in cooperation between the scientific associations of the laboratory disciplines and the RvA will be tested in several pilots.

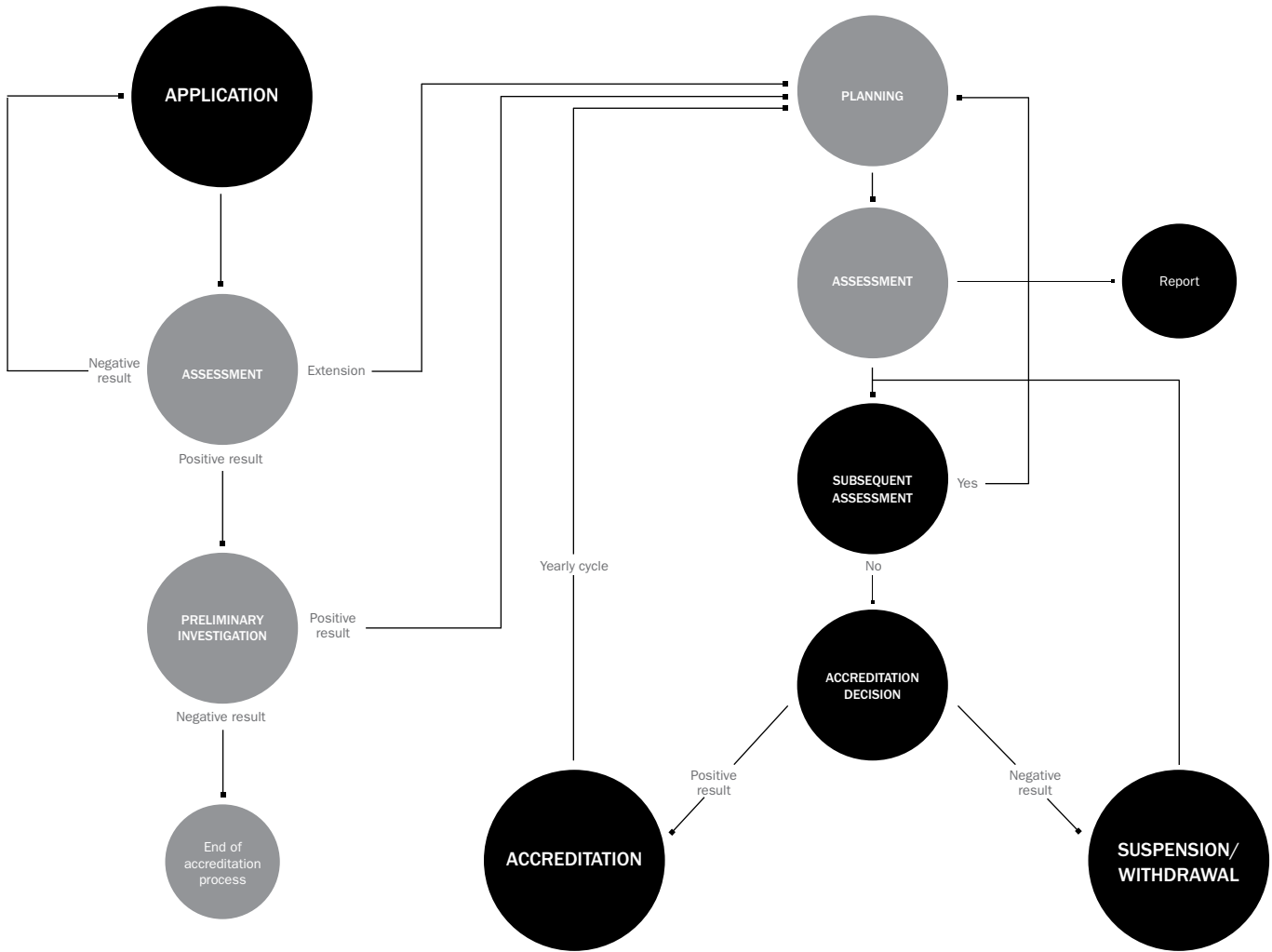
Future-proof trust
In an era in which mergers and other forms of economy of scale of medical laboratories are taking place, the fact that these laboratories are again raising the bar somewhat higher for themselves demonstrates a sense of responsibility. During a meeting for interested parties in January 2013 the health insurers present expressed their appreciation of this step. Their major argument was: they could very well make a procurement criterion of it.

To conclude this contribution we return to the quotation by Minister Edith Schippers with which we opened. This included a mention of the ‘pooling of knowledge and power’ motto. The Dutch medical laboratories are certainly aiming for this, also in international context. It is an extraordinary challenge with much perspective for confidence in the future!

THE FACTS BEHIND TRUST IN THE FUTURE
Annexes

Annex 1

THE PRIMARY PROCESS OF THE
DUTCH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL (RVA)



Annex 2

ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES AND
ADVISORY COMMITTEES

This overview contains the composition of the administrative bodies and advisory committees as of 1 March 2013. In addition, we regularly engage advisory panels the composition of which can vary. Hence you will not see any names of the members of these advisory panels in this summary.

Supervisory Board

- drs. E.H.T.M. Nijpels (Chairman)
2nd session period until 22 June 2013
- dr. A.G.M. Buiting
2nd session period until 1 January 2014
- dr. S.A. Hertzberger
3rd session period until 22 June 2015
- ing. J. Visser
2nd session period until 27 March 2014
- ir. L. Visser
1st session period until 26 October 2014

Executive Board and Management

- ir. J.C. van der Poel
(Director/Chief Executive)
- mr. J.A.W.M. de Haas
(Operational Director)

Accreditation Committee

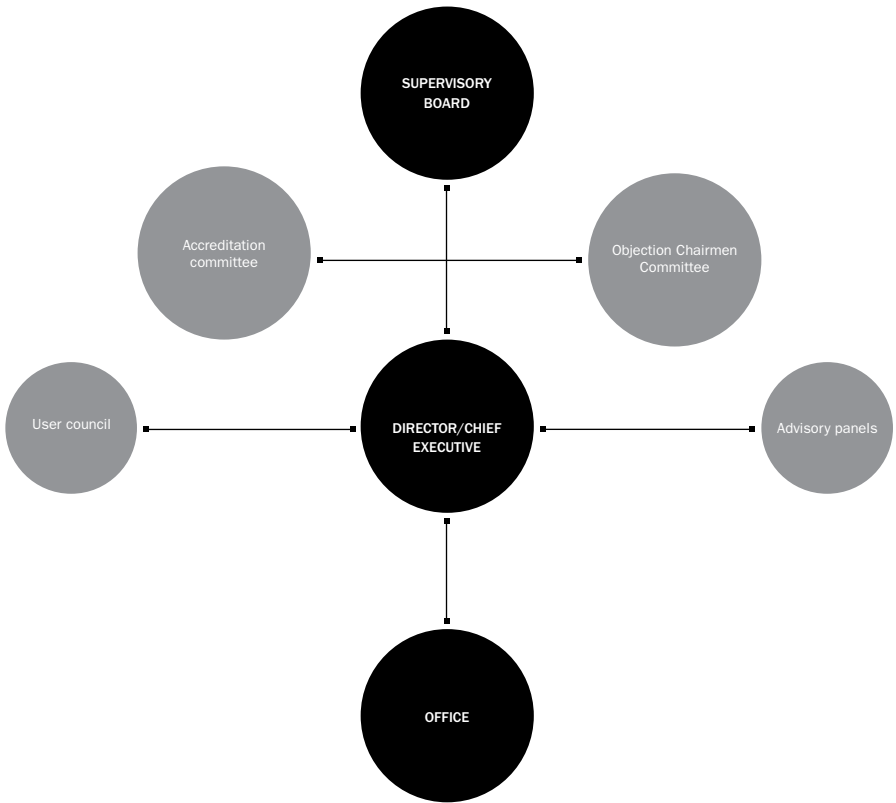
- ir. M.N.D. de Vries (Chairman)
- dr. W. Huisman
- K.J. van Schalm
- Prof. dr. ir. O.A.M. Fisscher

Objection Chairmen Committee

- mr. L.A.F.M. Kerklaan
- mr. M.N. van Zijl

User Council

- ir. J.C. van der Poel (RvA, Chairman)
- mr. J.A.W.M. de Haas (Operational Director RvA)
- P. Cornelissen (VOC)
- B. Meekma (VOC)
- H. Tolman (Fenelab)
- ing. R.P. Veerman (VEROCOG)
- J.H.F. van der Wart (Fenelab)
- Vacancy 2x (Medical labs)



Annex 3

BRIEF FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

As an independent foundation and ZBO the Dutch Accreditation Council (RvA) is a non-profit organisation. Our independence is guaranteed via the Dutch National Accreditation Body Appointment Act (Wet aanwijzing nationale accreditatie-instantie: ‘Wanai’) and by a modern governance structure with the Supervisory Board, the Accreditation Committee and the Objection Committees.

We also guarantee our independence 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. That also provides confidence in the future.

The figures have been taken as a summary from the adopted annual accounts for 2012. 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 Economic Affairs and provided with an unqualified report, can be viewed on www.rva.nl. If you type the search word “jaarrekening” (annual accounts), you will have access to the annual accounts for 2012. Obviously we will be pleased to send you a copy at your request. You can contact us via telephone number +31 (0)30 23 94 500.

Balance sheet as at 31 December 2012
(x € 1,000)

Assets	2012	2011
VFixed assets	224	360
Receivables and		
Transitory Assets	3,271	2,886
Liquid resources	2,729	2,552
Total	6,224	5,798
Liabilities	2012	2011
Equity capital	3,010	2,737
Short-term debts and		
transitory liabilities	3,214	3,061
Total	6,224	5,798

Profit and loss account for 2012 (x €1,000)
The income of the RvA is generated particularly from activities carried out on the basis of rates. We determine these rates on the basis of a discussion of the budget with the User Council and after approval by the Supervisory Board and the Minister of Economic Affairs. The activities level was approx. 5% higher than estimated. This was particularly caused by:

- extra assessments in connection with the transition to the new version of the 17021 standard which appeared in 2011;
- a larger number of extension assessments than anticipated;
- the SZW project.

Although this involved having to hire an extra number of external assessors, nevertheless a higher positive result was able to be achieved. The result is added to the reserves.

Results for 2012 (x € 1,000)

	2012	2011
Net turnover	12,422	11,241
Costs of turnover	3,958	3,314
Gross margin	8,464	7,927
Personnel costs	6,034	5,543
Miscellaneous		
expenditures	2,221	2,243
Sum total of costs	8,255	7,786
Operational result	209	141
Interest income	63	59
Result	272	200

Rates
The starting point - subject to special circumstances - is to increase the rates by not more than the index of Statistics Netherlands (CBS) for business services. The rates have been adjusted as follows:

	2012	2011
Index applied	1.8%	1.1%
Rate (lead) assessor	+1.0%	+1.1%
Rate specialists	+1.0%	+1.1%
Other rates	+1.0%	+1% to +1.1%

The rates for the activities in connection with the CCKL Code of Practice were also increased in 2012 by 1.0% (in 2011 by 1.1%). These rates are not covered by the Ministerial approval but for the rest are formed in the same manner as the other rates.

Annex 4

OUR WORK IN FIGURES

Confidence in the future also requires the possibility of audits. A summary in figures of our activities in 2012 will be found in this Annex. As a comparison we also added previous figures in several cases.

Accreditations granted as at 31 December

Standard	Explanation	NL. 2012	Abroad 2012	Total 2012	NL. 2011	Abroad 2011	Total 2011
Certification							
EN 45011	Products & Services	45	7	52	43	7	50
ISO/IEC 17021	Management systems	48	38	86	50	42	92
ISO/IEC 17024	Persons	6	1	7	8	1	9
Subtotal certification		99	46	145	101	50	151
Inspection							
ISO/IEC 17020	Inspection	125	5	130	122	6	128
ISO/IEC 14065	Inspection	5	0	5	0	0	0
Subtotal inspection		130	5	135	122	6	128
Laboratories RvA mark							
ISO/IEC 17025	Calibration	56	3	59	54	3	57
ISO/IEC 17025	Testing	230	16	246	225	17	242
ISO/IEC 17043	Proficiency testing	13	2	15	12	1	13
ISO Guide 34	Reference materials	2	0	2	2	0	2
ISO15189	Medical laboratories in Multilateral Agreement	9	2	11	10	1	11
Subtotal laboratories		310	23	333	303	22	325
Regulation (EG)							
Nr. 1221/2009 (EMAS)	EMAS verification	1	0	1	1	0	1
Total RvA mark		540	74	614	527	78	605
Laboratories healthcare							
CCKL Code of Practice	Medical laboratories	246	0	246	246	0	246
Total number of accreditations granted		786	74	860	773	78	851

Recommendations given by Accreditations Committee per report

Norm	RvA mark 2012	Healthcare 2012	Total 2012	RvA mark 2011	Healthcare 2011	Total 2011
Initial assessment						
positive recommendation	23%	20%	22%	28%	30%	29%
Re-assessment of						
positive recommendation	72%	69%	70%	67%	60%	64%
Postponed reports	1%	6%	4%	3%	8%	5%
Negative recommendation	4%	5%	4%	2%	2%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Geographical spread of the accreditations granted under the RvA mark as at 31 December				New accreditations			
				Category	2012	2011	2010
Country	2012	2011	2010	Certification	6	7	5
The Netherlands	540	527	510	Inspection	11	10	7
Rest of Europe	23	25	33	Calibration laboratory	3	3	3
Rest of the world	51	53	47	Test laboratory	18	19	15
Total	614	605	590	Other	3	0	4
				Totaal RvA mark	41	39	34
				CCKL Code of Practice	13	21	20
				Total	54	60	54
Number of reports submitted to the Accreditations Committee				Invoiced RvA mark assessment days, broken down by type of investigation			
Year	Number			Assessment type			
2012	227			in %	2012	2011	2010
2011	181			Initial assessment ¹	8	9,8	8,6
2010	200			Extension	10,6	9,7	9,4
2009	202			Re-assessment	25,3	18,2	26,6
Number of applications for new accreditations (excluding extensions)				Surveillance			
	2012	2011		assessment	56,2	62,3	55,4
RvA mark	29	48		Total	100	100	100
CCKL Code of Practice	9	13		Invoiced RvA assessment days, broken down by the role in assessment team			
Total	38	61		Role in %	2012	2011	2010
Number of applications for extension investigations (RvA mark)				Lead assessor	62	53	55
	2012	2011		Assessor	10	8	6
Certification	41	57		Specialist	28	39	39
Inspection	16	23		Total	100	100	100
Calibration laboratory	7	7		Number of assessments of CCKL Code of Practice			
Test laboratory	76	81		Assessment type	2012	2011	2010
Subtotal	140	168		Initial assessment	12	16	22
Schemes	22	38		Audit	72	59	72
Other	1	2		Document audit	3	14	24
Total	163	208		Re-assessment	67	56	47
				Total	154	145	165

¹Including preliminary investigation

Suspended accreditations						
Category	Voluntary 2012	Imposed 2012	Total 2012	Voluntary 2011	Imposed 2011	Total 2011
Certification	2	8	10	2	**3	5
Inspection	2	*2	4	0	*1	1
Calibration laboratories	0	*1	1	1	1	2
Test laboratories	0	0	0	3	0	3
Other	0	1	1	0	0	0
Total RvA mark	4	12	16	6	5	11
CCKL Code of Practice	1	0	1	2	1	3
Total	5	12	17	8	6	14
* of which 1 partial suspension						
** of which 2 partial suspension						
Withdrawn accreditations						
Category	Voluntary 2012	Imposed 2012	Total 2012	Voluntary 2011	Imposed 2011	Total 2011
Certification	***11	4	15	4	0	4
Inspection	*3	1	4	*3	0	*3
Calibration laboratories	1	0	1	4	0	4
Test laboratories	1	0	1	14	0	14
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total RvA mark	16	5	21	25	0	25
CCKL Code of Practice	**2	0	2	*3	0	*3
Total	18	5	23	28	0	28
*of which one partial withdrawal						
**of which two partial withdrawal						
***of which three partial withdrawal						

Some of the withdrawals set out above are caused by the transition to the accreditation body of the country of residence in connection with EUR 765/2008.

Annex 5

ACCEPTED SCHEME MANAGERS

Scheme managers 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. Thus a scheme manager is not an assessment body but formulates the standards and manages them.

The first duty of scheme managers is aimed at structurally preventing high-risk situations, in consultation with all the relevant interested parties via the schemes developed, and to describe measures that can reduce risks. In doing this they provide an important contribution to the chain that must bring about the clients’ trust in the future.

The scheme managers themselves must also meet the rules laid down in regulations by the RvA in close consultation with the stakeholders. These regulations include rules applicable to the formal cooperation between the scheme managers and the RvA. The legal form of a scheme manager 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 manager and managed by him.

In cooperation with the scheme managers the criteria on which the schemes are assessed were collected into a document by the RvA. 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 managers? The following list offers an overview of the state of affairs on 1 March 2013.

Area of activity of scheme manager	Foundation	Website
• Contractors (working safely)	Foundation for Cooperation for Safety (SSVV)	www.vca.nl
• General management and improvement of effectiveness and efficiency of organisation	Continuous improvement in SMEs	www.continuverbeterenmkb.nl
• Working conditions and safety management (Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series: OHSAS 18001)	Foundation for Coordination of Certification of Environmental Management Systems (SCCM)	www.sccm.nl
• Occupational health and safety services	Foundation for Certification Management Regulation of Occupational Health and Safety Services (SBCA)	www.sbca.nl
• Asbestos	Foundation for Asbestos Certification (Ascert)	www.ascert.nl
• Car damage	Foundation for Quality Management in the Motor Repair Sector (KZS)	www.focwa.nl
• Soil, water and archaeology	Foundation for Infrastructure of Quality Assurance in Soil Management (SIKB)	www.sikb.nl
• Contract catering	Foundation for Contract Catering Certification (Cercat)	www.cercat.nl
• Criminality prevention and fire safety	Centre for Criminality Prevention and Safety (CCV)	www.hetccv.nl
• Animal feed sector	(Laboratory/Production/Warehouse (GMP+)	www.gmpplus.org
• Digital certificates	Foundation Electronic Commerce Platform Netherlands (ECP)	www.ecp.nl
• Distribution of pesticides	Foundation for the Certification for the distribution of crop protection agents (CDG)	www.stichtingcdg.nl
• Healthcare, welfare and social services	Foundation for the Harmonisation of Quality Assessment in the Healthcare Sector (HKZ)	www.hkz.nl
• Green areas	Groenkeur	www.groenkeur.nl
• HACCP systems	Foundation for Certification of Food Safety (SCV)	www.foodsafetymanagement.info
• Food safety (management) systems	Foundation for Wooden Packaging Marking (SMHV)	www.fssc22000.com
• Wooden packaging	Foundation for Certification Inspection and Maintenance of Heating Installations (SCIOS)	www.smhv.nl
• Inspection and maintenance of heating installations	Foundation for the Certification Scheme for Cable Infrastructure and Pipelaying Companies (CKB)	www.scios.nl
• Cable infrastructure and pipe laying companies	Foundation for climate-friendly procurement and business (SKAO)	www.ckb.nl
• Climate-friendly Enterprising		www.skao.nl

<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Milieukeur agro/food, non-food, Barometers, Groen Label Kas, Maatlat Duurzame Veehouderij en Aquacultuur (agricultural / food, non-food environmental quality mark, barometers, green label for greenhouses, sustainable cattle farming measuring rule and aquaculture)• Poultry sector (Integrale KetenBeheersing Egg, Integrale KetenBeheersing Chicken) (= integral chain control)• Potting soil and substrate</div>	<div>Foundation for eco-labels (Stichting Milieukeur: ‘SMK’)</div>	<div>www.smk.nl</div>
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Debt counselling</div>	<div>Marketing Board for Poultry and Eggs (PPE)</div>	<div>www.pve.nl</div>
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demolition work</div>	<div>Foundation for potting soil and substrate (RHP)</div>	<div>www.rhp.nl</div>
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taxi industry• Technical installation sector</div>	<div>Netherlands Standardisation Institute (NEN)</div>	<div>www.nen.nl</div>
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motor coach business</div>	<div>Foundation for Safe and Ecological Demolition (SVMS)</div>	<div>www.veiligslopen.nl</div>
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pig sector (Integral KetenBeheersing Pig)</div>	<div>Taxi quality mark (TX-KEUR)</div>	<div>www.tx-keur.nl</div>
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working safely in electrical engineering</div>	<div>Foundation for Quality Assurance in the Installation Sector (KBI)</div>	<div>www.kbi.nl</div>
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vertical transport</div>	<div>Foundation for Motor Coach Company Quality Mark (SKTB)</div>	<div>www.sktb.nl</div>
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vehicle dismantling</div>	<div>Animal Sector Compliance Office (CBD)</div>	<div>www.cbd.info</div>
	<div>Foundation for Certification of Persons in Electrical Engineering (STIPEL)</div>	<div>www.stipel.nl</div>
	<div>Foundation for Supervisory Certification of Vertical Transport (TCVT)</div>	<div>www.tcvt.nl</div>
	<div>Foundation for Quality Management in Vehicle Dismantling (KZD)</div>	<div>www.kzd.info</div>

Annex 6

QUALITY MARKS OF THE DUTCH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL (RVA)

How do you recognise whether an accredited service provision is taking place? You can see it by means of the following marks on certificates or reports.



Calibration Mark RvA K000
The accreditation mark for accredited calibration laboratories. Laboratories are allowed to display this accreditation mark if they have demonstrated that they provide valid results in a technically competent manner and that they work according to a management system safeguarding the traceability to international standards. Calibration is essential for production processes and forms the basis for testing laboratories and many inspection activities. Accreditations are carried out according to ISO/IEC 17025.17025.



Testing Mark RvA L 000
The accreditation mark for accredited testing laboratories. Laboratories are allowed to display this accreditation mark if they have demonstrated that they are able to provide valid results in a technically competent manner and that they work according to a management system. Accreditations are carried out according to the ISO/IEC 17025 standard.



Medical laboratory diagnostics Mark RvA M 000
The accreditation mark for accredited medical laboratories. This accreditation mark can be displayed by medical laboratories if they have demonstrated that they are able to provide valid results, that they are competent and work according to a management system. In comparison with ISO/IEC 17025, extra attention is given to the pre-analytical phase (advising, sampling), the post-analytical phase (interpretation, diagnosis) and the contribution to patient care. Accreditations are carried out according to the ISO 15189 standard.



Inspection Mark RvA I 000
The accreditation mark for accredited inspection bodies. Inspection bodies are allowed to display this accreditation mark if they have demonstrated that they are able to conduct inspections in a competent, consistent and independent manner. Inspection determines whether a design, a product or batch meets the requirements for each individual object or for each batch. For supervision by the RvA the ISO/IEC 17020 standard is applied to inspection bodies.



Products Mark RvA C 000
The accreditation mark for accredited accreditation bodies for product certification. For product certification purposes certification bodies are evaluated against EN 45011 for product certification (including services and processes). Certification bodies assess product designs and products in the new build, production or preparation phases. Under certain conditions products produced can be provided with a quality mark linked to this. This system is regularly used in European Directives.



Management Systems Mark RvA C 000
The accreditation mark for accredited certification bodies for the certification of management systems. Certification bodies are evaluated against ISO/IEC 17021 for them to certify organisations for example on the basis of ISO 14000, ISO 18001, ISO 9001 and VCA.



Personnel Mark RvA C 000
The accreditation mark for accredited certification bodies for the certification of persons. The certification bodies are evaluated on the basis of ISO/IEC 17024. The certification bodies are then allowed to issue certificates under accreditation indicating that persons have a certain professional skill. Such a certificate is distinguished from a diploma by the limited period of validity of the certificate of professional skill. So this will have to be periodically re-demonstrated.

Outside the ILAC (International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation) and the EA (European Cooperation for Accreditation) -MLA (Multilateral Agreement)



EMAS Mark NL V 000
The accreditation mark for accredited EMAS verification bodies. In connection with EMAS verification, certification bodies are evaluated according to the EMAS criteria (Regulation (EC) No. 1221/2009). Accredited verification bodies assess annual environmental reports.



Proficiency Testing Mark RvA R 000
The accreditation mark for accredited organisers of inter-laboratory investigations. Laboratory tests are conducted to compare the outcomes of tests and calibrations of individual laboratories. These investigations are set up to demonstrate the equivalence of (accredited) laboratories. Accredited organisers of inter-laboratory tests are evaluated against ISO/IEC 17043.



Reference Materials Producers Mark RvA P 000
The accreditation mark for accredited producers of reference materials. Since 1 May 2008 laboratories producing reference materials and also themselves awarding the values can have these activities accredited according to a combination of ISO Guide 34 and ISO/IEC 17025. Since mid-2013 only accreditation according to ISO Guide 34 has been possible.



CCKL Mark
The accreditation mark for accredited medical laboratories according to the CCKL Code of Practice. This accreditation mark can be displayed if medical laboratories have demonstrated that they can carry out medical-diagnostic laboratory tests with a high degree of reliability and certainty in accordance with the relevant standards. Extra attention is given to the pre-analytical phase (advising, sampling), the post-analytical phase (interpretation, diagnosis) and the contribution to patient care. This accreditation is not covered by the EA-MLA.

Annex 7

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BZK
Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations
CBD
CoMore business services
CCKL
Institute for the promotion of quality in laboratory research and for the accreditation of laboratories in the healthcare sector
CCV
Dutch Centre for crime prevention and safety
CDG
Certification of distribution in crop protection agents
CE
Conformité européenne
Cercat
Certification of contract catering
CKB
Foundation for a cable infrastructure and pipe-laying companies certification scheme
CNV
National federation of Christian trade unions
EA
European Cooperation for Accreditation
ECP
Dutch foundation for Electronic Commerce Platform
EMAS
Eco Management and audit System
EN
European Standard
EU
European Union
EZ
Ministry of Economic Affairs
Fenelab
Dutch Federation of accredited laboratories and inspection bodies
FNV
Dutch trade union federation
GMP
Good Manufacturing Practice

HACCP
Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points
HKZ
Foundation for the harmonisation of accreditation in the healthcare sector
IAF
International Accreditation Forum
ICT
Information and Communication Technology
IEC
International Electrotechnical Committee
ILAC
International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation
ISO
International Organization for Standardization
KBI
Foundation for quality control in the installation sector
KZS
Foundation for quality management in the motor repair sector
LTO
Netherlands Agriculture and Horticulture Organisation
MKB (SME)
Small and medium enterprises (SMEs)
MLA
Multilateral Agreement
MRA
Multilateral Recognition Arrangement
NEN
Netherlands Standardisation Institute
OHSAS
Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series
PDCA
Plan Do Check Act
PPE
Poultry and eggs marketing board
RHP
Netherlands control system for commercial potting composts
RvA
Dutch Accreditation Council (RvA)
SBCA
Foundation for monitoring certification in health & safety services

SCCM
Foundation for the coordination of certification of environmental management systems
SCIOS
Foundation for the certification, inspection and maintenance of heating installations
SCV
Foundation for food safety certification
SIKB
Foundation for infrastructure for quality assurance of soil management
SKAO
Foundation for climate-friendly procurement and business
SKTB
Foundation for the motor coach company quality mark
SMHV
Foundation for marking wood packaging
SMK
Foundation for Dutch eco-labelling
SSVV
Foundation cooperation for safety
STIPEL
Foundation for person certification in electrical engineering
SVMS
Foundation for safe and ecological demolition
SZW
Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
TCVT
Foundation for supervision of certification for vertical transport
TX-Keur
Taxi quality mark
VCA
Safety checklist for contractors
VEROCOG
Association of independent superintending companies and grain factors
VOC
Association representing certification and inspection bodies
ZBO
Autonomous administrative authority

CONNECTION LEADS TO CONFIDENCE
Personal visions of trust in the future



Kees Pasmooij

Up to and including 2012 Kees Pasmooij has been chairman of the VOC sector organisation (Association representing certification and inspection bodies). His aim: putting certification more clearly and more positively on the market. He has been for instance active at Fokker, TNO (Netherlands organisation for applied scientific research) and since 1987 General Director of ABOMA, specialising in safety issues in the building and machine world. He regularly published articles on working conditions issues.

VOC: Quo Vadis?

The aim of a certificate is to create trust. The trust that the quality is correct: with regard to the sustainability, safety or any subject whatsoever in relation to the product. This demands quite a lot from these certificates and from those issuing them. An overkill of certificates undermines their importance and insufficient content does this likewise. And last but not least it imposes requirements on the certifying bodies. A stamp from the Dutch Accreditation Council (RvA) does help, but is it enough?

Gaining trust is hard work but retaining trust is even more work. In principle soundness and reliability are in the genes of the certifying bodies but the current, difficult market conditions can put these basic principles under pressure. Then too certificates must continue to justify their distinctiveness.

The VOC acknowledges this development and has tackled the future. It has been decided to invest more in consultations with the stakeholders. After all, certificates are not there for the VOC members themselves, but for their clients. Trust requires acceptance of the circumstances

under which and the conditions on which certificates are issued. In modern parlance: this requires transparency.

In times of economic slump the question quite quickly arises: “Certification, what does it cost?” This is understandable although the question should really be: “What is it worth to me?” This not only applies to those receiving certificates but certainly also to those issuing them. On the playing field of markets, prices and competition, you can only answer that question yourself. You go for it or you don’t.

Trust comes on foot and goes on horseback and that costs something. Stronger yet, that should cost something. In the first place effort and attention, in the second place time and in the third place investment. Certification is the ball you are pushing up the mountain. If you let go of it, it rolls down.

Certification is by definition focussed on the future. Quo Vadis? Well VOC is busy with this.

Sociologist Prof. Dr. Paul Schnabel has been the Director of the Social and Cultural Planning Office and professor at Utrecht University since 1998. He is amongst other things a columnist for NRC Handelsblad, Het Financieele Dagblad and the historical magazine Maarten. Apart from this he has many social functions for numerous organisations such as the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Catharijneconvent Museum, the Nederlands Openlucht Museum (Dutch open-air museum), the Germany Institute and the Stichting De Ombudsman foundation. Since 2006 the Volkskrant considers him as one of the most influential Dutchmen. In 2010 he received the medal of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen) that is awarded every other year. As from 1 May 2013 Paul Schnabel has been appointed as the Crown-appointed member of the Dutch Social and Economic Council (Sociaal-Economische Raad).

The Social and Cultural Planning Office (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau: ‘SCP’), established in 1973, is an inter-departmental, scientific institute that carries out social-scientific research both on request and unsolicited. The SCP reports to the government, the Lower and Upper House, the ministries and social and public-sector organisations. Formally it falls under the responsibility of the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport.



Paul Schnabel

PEOPLE WANT SAFETY

A plea for clarity and continuity by Paul Schnabel

It was the 10th of January 2013. It was quite a grey day when we went to visit the Ministry of VWS where the Social and Cultural Planning Office is situated. The new year had hardly started, one more reason to exchange ideas with Paul Schnabel, Director of the Social and Cultural Planning Office about the question of how we can have confidence in the future. Looking out on the grey clouds in the sky does not appear to be an impediment to a clear vision. On the contrary.

Loss of confidence? Personal experiences

“I personally never had a loss of confidence in the future. But I can imagine that for a great many people this is a very important issue at the moment: will I retain my job, what will happen to my pension, will my children still have opportunities, is my mortgage not too high? Those types of things. For myself I cannot remember a situation in which that played a role. I have never been so ill that I thought I would be finished and I have never been unemployed either. But to be quite honest, I

always seem to avoid risks. As a student I never went overdrawn at the bank and I never dared to buy that just a little too expensive house. And yes, I paid off my mortgage.”

The confidence of society

“In society there is certainly less confidence. But it is a good thing to sound out the feeling and image formation against the reality. I tend to consider this rather in a historical way and then you see for instance that there have never been so few wars in the world. That is a blessing. It is curious that people think that there is war and conflict everywhere but that is the result of the media. Nowadays these images are immediately presented to us. Civil wars are a completely different story. What is happening in Syria and Mali is obviously terrible. But in recent years we hardly have any real wars any longer. Just look at the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 17 countries, if I count them quickly. This happened almost without loss of blood. If you look at South America, you have to admit that there are essentially no military dictatorships any longer. Apartheid has been abolished and Africa is climbing out of the dumps. These are things of which I say: just count the profit; this is something we as humans should be very happy about.

Obviously there are countries where things are still bad, but you can see that there is less hunger and shortage in the world, more schooling and better healthcare. China, India, Brazil and also Indonesia are the impressive and massive examples. If you look at a country such as the Netherlands, I often say that due to a lack of comparison we insufficiently

realise the blessings we live with. Everything we have has become so matter-of-course but everybody who has lived and worked in somewhat less orderly countries, is astonished as to how properly everything has been organised here, how fairly everything is divided. Obviously there are also corruption scandals and so on, but they are comparatively quite few. My sister lived in Africa for a long time. There is day and night security, not only provided by security guards but also by electronic protection and bars in front of the windows. China is developing fast but for the older people there is hardly anything. Many Americans still have no access to proper healthcare and in many countries good education can only be had for a lot of money. So let's count our blessings!

For that matter, I do not agree with the idea that confidence in the future is completely gone. It is true that people are very worried about themselves and about the future for their children. Politicians are not trusted very much but we still trust the operation of democracy. Despite the euro-crisis we trust the value of our money and therefore we are saving. At the same time we have arrived at the point at which a good deal of people think: "I really don't need anything else." An example? I have a car that is now 14 years old. It runs and that is fine for me. This sometimes elicits remarks such as "Paul, are you not ready for another car?" Yes, probably, but it really does not have to be a new one.

But let's be honest: we cannot deny the concerns of many people for the future of their children, any more than the concern about the question what there is still for you

to do if you are over fifty and you lose your job. The chance that you then find another job is very small, with the risk that you will be on the dole within two years. Then you would be worried about becoming poor and rightly so. Also when you discover that your home is too expensive and you want to go to a cheaper home, that cannot be done. You are stuck with your mortgage debt and this keeps pursuing you. These are naturally the consequences of decisions you took yourself in the past and which you cannot withdraw from. Where there is fear, confidence disappears."

What the politicians can do to restore confidence

"What has been missing since the beginning of this century is stability in and continuity of policy. Policy should tally, be clear and should not limp from the one leg to the other. People need certainty that what has been agreed, for instance in a coalition agreement, will be done and then also stay that way. People always look for safety and security and turn to the government and in return they give their trust. Trust is a mechanism for reducing social complexity, as was already formulated by the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann forty years ago. It is unavoidable that one must take a risk with regard to the future and often you do this in the always quite risky trust that things will then not suddenly turn out completely differently than yesterday or today. One example is the rise in house prices. That they could not continue to rise like that was to be expected but there were only very few who counted on a sudden drop in prices. Another example can be found in investments that people made and in connection with which many

have lost a lot of money in the meantime. Investments are often made on the basis of trust in the advice of experts. The risk remains with the investor, but if it appears to be much greater than foreseen, it affects trust in the system. Trust has a component where one thinks that the risk is justified. So, as soon as it appears that things can no longer be trusted, the need for increasing control arises. We can see this nowadays but if there is too much control everything comes to a standstill. Control makes life complicated, trust makes life easier. Unfortunately sometimes also too easy. That is the real unbearable lightness of being."

Positive developments

"I find computerisation to be developing in a very positive way. I am certain that we are only at the beginning of this. I think the speed of information exchange is most important. It is sometimes about very simple things, as for instance my sister who as a grandmother can talk via Skype, if necessary, every day with her children and grandchildren in the United States. In the past one wrote a nice letter, but that took three months to get there. Or my cousin who is a big adventurer who went for instance for six months to Indonesia to surf there, but contacts her family at home every other day. It gives a very safe feeling, certainly for her parents. Also look at bank payments: I no longer have to fill in all kinds of slips or go to the bank. I just transfer the amount in the evening at home from my computer. Obviously there are abuses, criminals are active, but people can be cautious in this respect. If you receive a letter from Nigeria in which they promise you 20 million euros or an e-mail with the title

"This is your ING Bank", containing all kinds of spelling errors, you would know that you have to click those away immediately.

In the political atmosphere I see that this cabinet has only just started. I hope they will remain in session for a long time. This is not a political choice but a choice for politicians who in the end will have the time not only to prepare important measures but also to carry them out. I see five tendencies in society that I already mentioned many years ago: individualisation, informalisation, internationalisation, intensification and computerisation. There are of course isolation and loneliness attached to individualisation but let's not forget that this also existed in the past. Then it could happen that you were expelled from the safe circle, certainly if your behaviour was slightly different. Intrinsically I think that we have gained profit. The emancipation of women also belongs to this, something we hadn't begun 50 years ago. Everywhere elements are attached of which I think: Just count your profit; it's not all that bad, in any event not everything is bad."

The role of the RvA in cementing trust in the future

"Yes, in the past for the individual there was only the diploma and for the organisation the fact that you were there. Afterwards nothing was any longer reviewed. The physician did not have to qualify for being registered and re-registered in the BIG Register, the training accredited itself roughly. Those times have gone. Now one wants to know for sure that education is given properly or that sound healthcare is provided. One can no longer trust that this

all is automatically OK. So one can say that accreditation and registration are institutionalised forms of distrust that again raise trust. If people can no longer trust something that should be trustworthy, it is a good thing that others take over this task for them. Accreditation keeps the parties sharp with regard to themselves and in competition with others. Making this possible is the role of a body such as the Dutch Accreditation Council (RvA)."

Column

Until the summer of 2012 Paul Hesselink was the chairman of Fenelab. He is the General Director of the independent Dutch certification, laboratory and inspection authority Kiwa, which is globally active in guaranteeing quality, safety and sustainability for instance in the building, water and energy, transport, healthcare, agro-food, safety & security, sustainability, training and technology sectors. After his training as a (bio-)chemist and his promotion in biotechnology, he was working until 2003 first for TNO and then for SGS. All that time his interests have been innovation, pragmatism, sustainability and quality.



Paul Hesselink

Justified confidence in the future

As a chemist by profession I can do and know some things but there are also many I can't. For instance I cannot fly a Boeing 747, install gas pipes, prepare Boeuf Bourguignon nor repair an iPad. Certainly you don't want to see those first two going wrong. For these types of cases I rely on others. Is that bad? The Germans would say "Jein", (yesno). Of course it is quite pleasant that others take care of all that for me, but it does make me dependent. Put negatively: I have to wait and see whether it happens as I would like it to. In positive terms this is called 'trusting'. But sometimes things do go wrong. Certainly nowadays via the blog atmosphere or Twitter everybody urges that the wrongdoers are found or all such activities are prohibited by law via the politicians. That is of course impossible and it does not solve anything. Bad luck happens: alas, such is life. After all, you cannot take each Boeing apart before each flight to check whether it has metal fatigue or analyse each barrel of kerosine on its composition, nor check the cabin air for oxygen content or each bun for Salmonella. And you certainly can't do it all yourself.

Whereas these matters are indeed important in order to get out of that plane again in a healthy condition. So it is impossible to verify everything yourself but it is possible to make random checks according to an intelligent approach by a qualified third party. After all, after many flights I am still alive and kicking and I also expect that to be so after the next flight. Such a check is exactly what an accredited lab, inspection and calibration institute or certification body does: providing a justified confidence in the quality of a measurement, product, process or statement. This is done on the basis of sound protocols and under accreditation, so that it is evident that the respective organisation knows how well work has to be carried out. This is important for the present and also for the future, without being subject to influence or hype. In this way the world is kept well-organised and trustworthy for modern people: via well-founded statements by expert regulators which themselves are also checked again by the government or an accreditation body. This should not be done each time by hairsplitting verification, but in carefully-thought out outline. This is so that, partly on the basis of scientific insight and many years of experience, the necessary confidence can also be justified, both for now and for the future. By an accredited lab, inspection or calibration body or certification institute. Obviously preferably by the RvA.

Interview

Prof. dr. L.J. (Louise) Gunning Schepers is chairman of the Executive Board of the University of Amsterdam and Hogeschool [Polytechnic] of Amsterdam. Both institutions are managed by a joint Board that is formed via a personal union. Apart from this she has a large number of social functions such as the chairmanship of the Wetenschappelijke Adviesraad Aidsfonds (Scientific advisory board for aids fund) and the Supervisory Board of the Rijksacademie voor Beeldende Kunsten (Artists' institute for national and international top talent). She is also a member of the Board of the Concertgebouw (concert hall) and of the VSB Fonds (VSB fund). Before she took up her current function she was for instance chairman of the Health Council of the Netherlands, and university professor in Health and Society at University of Amsterdam. As from 1 May 2013 she has also been a Crown-appointed member of the Social and Economic Council.

The University of Amsterdam has a long history. This university originated from the Athenaeum Illustre (1632) and has currently 30,000 students, 5,000 staff members and a budget of over 600 million euros. It is one of the large general universities in Europe. Hogeschool (polytechnic) of Amsterdam like the University of Amsterdam aims to offer students and staff members all the facilities necessary in order to develop their talents in study and work.



Louise Gunning-Schepers

PROVIDE CLEAR QUALITY MECHANISMS

Cultivating trust in the future as a daily job

At the moment it is 29 January 2013. We have the honour of talking with Louise Gunning-Schepers, chairman of the Executive Board of the University of Amsterdam and Hogeschool [Polytechnic] of Amsterdam. She took over the latter role with much dedication from Jet Bussemaker, currently our Minister of Education, Culture and Science. Please read the report of a special talk with Louise Gunning-Schepers. Women at the top, we would like to highlight them.

Personal experience

"My daily work is cultivating confidence in the future. At the University and the polytechnic we train students for the future and we develop the basis of future innovation. So it is not surprising that I have great confidence in that future. I am a natural optimist and I cannot remember a single moment when I lost confidence in the future.

But I can imagine that outsiders sometimes have difficulties in assessing whether their trust in institutions is justified. This applies to healthcare, to schools and since the ‘Stapel’ affaire this also applies to science. In order to gain that trust it helps if institutions have clear quality mechanisms, mostly internal but then transparent and often an accreditation as the last step. We do this with regard to training courses, with regard to laboratories and we do this with regard to international surveys of research institutes. This is the way we let others have look into our kitchen and let our clients read the reports they issue about our kitchen. This is the way we earn trust.”

Positive developments

“I think that institutions are very much aware of the fact that the outside world is entitled to know that everybody is supervising this. I have seen an increased preparedness amongst institutions to allow supervision by the outside world and that they also organise their work with this in mind. They are prepared to provide more openness about their own work and the results and the assessment of the results by peers.

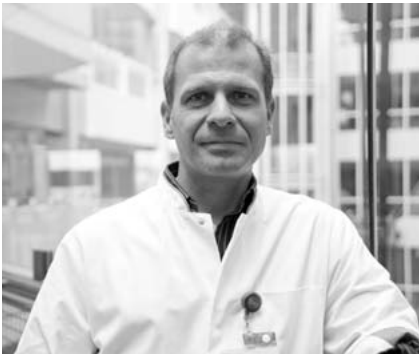
In addition, I have the feeling that in a political context there is increasing control in connection with incidents. Then you go from a high trust to a low trust situation. I am concerned about this. A society operates in general much better if there is trust. If you are going to check everything, you lose trust in the process. If the starting point is one of little trust, you spend much more on control.”

What does society need to gain more trust in the future?
“I think it is extremely important that there is openness about people’s own performances and results. Thereby it is possible for the expectations of the people to come closer to the reality. For instance in England the number of transplants were considered that had a good result. These came to several thousands. But in two or three cases it had gone wrong. The question is then whether you can put this in proportion and can make it clear that 100 percent does not exist. This requires you to take the time to explain this properly in detail instead of by one-liners. The preparedness to let this be evaluated by outsiders for instance in the form of certification or accreditation processes, is a way of having the reality described by others.”

The role of the Dutch Accreditation Council (RvA)
“It is essential that the things we measure as quality indicators are also considered as important by our clients or the outside world. The content of healthcare, the content of education and scientific integrity. Only measuring processes or meta-subjects can reduce trust instead of strengthening it because it looks as if we are avoiding the point. So in that respect there is a major challenge for accreditation.”

Column

Dr. M.H.M. (Marc) Thelen is connected to the Amphia hospital in Breda as a medical manager and clinical chemist. As chairman of the quality committee of the Dutch association for clinical chemistry and laboratory medicine he was the initiator of joining all the medical laboratory specialisms to study together with the RvA the transition from the CCKL Code of Practice into ISO15189.



Marc Thelen

Accreditation of medical laboratories 2.0: quality now even more recognisable

Where healthcare is concerned Dutch people also want to be able to assume that quality is a matter-of-course but because of the media or personal experience they are increasingly discovering that the obviousness of that quality is disappointing. Then, as a consumer, it is a good thing to know that the critical review is in good hands of the professionals.

In 2012 together with the scientific associations involved in medical laboratory diagnostics the RvA took a major step in making quality of medical laboratory care internationally recognisable. From now on medical laboratories will organise their way of working according to ISO15189 and apply to the RvA for accreditation of this. Therefore in connection with medical laboratory diagnostics the RvA makes recognisable those laboratories of which the consumers can trust the quality.

In the medical sector the laboratories have always been the trendsetters with regard to organising quality systems and aiming at making the quality of the service reviewable and

recognisable by accreditation. In Europe the Netherlands was a leader in formulating a quality standard for medical laboratories. That is how the CCKL Code of Practice came about on the basis of which most Dutch medical laboratories have in the meantime been accredited and on which the international ISO15189 standard was subsequently largely based. This leading role makes the Dutch internationally appreciated in the formation of the new versions of international standards. Partly due to that great involvement the Dutch medical laboratory field seized on the appearance of the most recent edition of the ISO 15189 to work jointly with the RvA on a transition from the CCKL Code of Practice to this international standard.

With regard to such a process, considering leaving something behind that is your pride and joy, a lot of mutual trust is required. It is trusting that you want to continue to find agreement with each other and trusting that a solution can be found for each practical objection. The RvA and the laboratory world found each other in this connection, by not putting the form but the standard central. The most important drive for solving every bump was the aim: recognisability of justified trust and thereby removal of concerns.

CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE? REALISE THE CONNECTION!

A discussion with Ed Nijpels, André Knottnerus and Frits Spangenberg

It is 20 December 2012, a day prior to that which according to the wrong interpretation of the Maya calendar would mark the destruction of the world. So we apparently just have time for a fascinating talk with Ed Nijpels, André Knottnerus and Frits Spangenberg, who are visiting the Dutch Accreditation Council (RvA) at Mariaplaats in Utrecht. These gentlemen did not know in advance that - as became apparent during this talk - they would agree with each so much about the positive approach to the future. In the meantime you know as well that the correct interpretation of the Maya calendar entailed that a new epoch has commenced. An epoch that may provide hope for the future. This report deals with this, a concise representation of a lively and certainly also personal and open conversation.

Personal experiences and visions
Our first question is directed at the personal experience of the persons interviewed. Have there been moments at which you lost confidence in the future and what did you manage to do to cope with it?

Frits Spangenberg: I did not lose my confidence in the future. I also refuse to do so. A personal example? I have had to wrangle for five years with the enforcers of environmental regulations because I wanted to build a little house somewhere in the Veluwe area. I was faced with all

kinds of institutions who do not cooperate with each other in any way whatsoever. In the end, this resulted in a 70 page report. This showed that by building this little house I would not endanger the stag beetle, the honey buzzard and the black woodpecker. So this took five years: people must persevere and continue to have confidence in the future.

André Knottnerus: I can say honestly that I have not had the feeling of losing confidence in the future. I was spared this; I was always able to remain confident. Luckily, there were also always good examples. Whether it was Nelson Mandela or people who find something you left behind and honestly return it to you. This luckily still happens. But I realise very well that people become sombre or perhaps get into problems when an accumulation of misfortune occurs. I think it is important how you deal with that. When I studied medicine my youngest brother became seriously ill. He died after two years. This caused me to press on with more determination, to take and use all the opportunities to use this in a wider context too for instance as chairman of the Health Council of the Netherlands. Setbacks obviously occur regularly but I have not really had a lack of confidence in the future. I am very privileged in this. However, you must want to work on it. You yourself can do a lot about it.

Ed Nijpels: I agree with the others. I am an incorrigible optimist. So whatever happens in life, I never thought that the end of days had come. In politics you of course experience high points with some regularity, but also many low points. Nevertheless, I never had



André Knottnerus

Since 2010 Prof. dr. André Knottnerus has been chairman of the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR), one of the most important advisory bodies to the Dutch government. In the period prior to that he was for instance chairman of the Health Council of The Netherlands, the scientific advisory body of the government in the area of public health. Just like Ed Nijpels André Knottnerus has many social functions on the side, in particular in the area of healthcare and science. He is also a professor in general practice medicine at Maastricht University. On behalf of the WRR he is currently closely involved in the Supervision, Balance and Responsibility project.

the feeling that I had completely lost my confidence in the future. I do see around me that there are people who have to cope with so many setbacks in one family that this creates a feeling of injustice in me. What did they do to deserve this? It is often unequally divided. However, like André I believe that people can themselves give direction to this to a major extent. This is also motivation to do something about it in the social sphere.

Frits Spangenberg: That is true and at the same time I think that we as a society are insufficiently focussed on enhancing empowerment, personal power. In our care concepts we are very good at confirming the situation. It is really only window dressing. Take for instance the poverty programs. That is to hide strong enforcement in a regime. If you look a little bit further into this, you see that almost as many people are working in the poverty industry, in enforcement, the provision and the encouragement as there are poor people.

Ed Nijpels: But there is quite a difference between what you say and what André mentioned earlier. There are obviously things that befall you and which are life-threatening, where you just have to say farewell to life. You cannot compare them with social setbacks.

André Knottnerus: Indeed, sometimes people just need support. But you should not consider this independently from the ‘package deal’ that there should also be empowerment. I completely agree with Frits. Because that is ultimately anyway what people have to continue

with and what they can develop. It always remains important: education, development, empowerment. If you don’t pay attention to that, people will ultimately end up worse. People are capable of a lot. Even more than that: they support the society. There is no institution that can operate without the people being committed. There are so many, many initiatives in society, that you not only can have confidence in but also should have confidence in. For the public sector it is important to see that the capacity for finding solutions is very big. The public sector should harvest more in that respect, certainly at a time when it is also itself indicating that it wants to give more responsibility to society. This should then also actually be done. Don’t impose too many control mechanisms on this.

Ed Nijpels: I think that we are in an enormous transitional period in which the relationships between the public sector and the people must be completely reshaped. Because of economic and other causes such as emancipation and increased empowerment of the people, the public sector has to re-determine what its task is. And all this while the same people still partly live with an old concept of public sector. This will be a process in fits and starts. I think that it will still be a long while before the relationship between the public sector and the people is again clear.

Frits Spangenberg: This development also requires a revolutionary change in public sector thinking. The public sector assumes nowadays still too much distrust instead of trust. A good example are the tendering



Ed Nijpels

Drs. Ed Nijpels is chairman of NIngenieurs, the Dutch trade association of consultancy, management and advisory firms, established in 1917 under the then name ONRI. He is also a member of the Executive and General Board of VNO-NCW (Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers) and a member of the Urgenda Platform, a forum of many alternative thinkers who want to dedicate themselves to making the Netherlands more sustainable. Formerly he was a member of the Lower House, Minister of the then Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment ('VROM'), mayor of Breda and Royal Commissioner in the province of Friesland. Apart from his current activities Ed Nijpels has many social functions on the side. One of these is the chairmanship of the Supervisory Board of the Dutch Accreditation Council (RvA).

procedures used. Contracts don't go to the best ones but are allocated on the basis of distrust, distance and formality, not on the basis of mutual trust.

André Knottnerus: 'Trust' is obviously an important word in this conversation but it is also actually something you cannot do without in society. This should not be a naive trust; one should also retain a discerning capacity and remain alert especially when people try to give priority to their own interests. This 'I-centred society' is fully present but I foresee a turnaround. I think that people also have a healthy feeling about where they go or don't go beyond the pale. In this connection the example function is of decisive importance.

Ed Nijpels: It is not easy for the people. At the moment their experience is that the last three sacred shrines have tumbled: the reliability of science, the medical world, the Catholic Church. This makes the people restless.

André Knottnerus: Yes, certainly, and it is of course often 'event driven'. This is not always representative, but issues are exposed with good reason because this forms the basis for achieving improvement. At the same time we should not forget that with all that media abuse there are also many well-meaning, competent administrators. That is hardly shown. And it should be ensured that this image is balanced. The trust in institutions is still rather high, between 60 and 70 percent. That also still applies to science. The people can generally still make a distinction between basic trust and when things go wrong.
Ed Nijpels: The public sector must sometimes traditionally give

answers to questions, but you see that the politicians are no longer able to organise several things. So we are ready for new arrangements. Politicians will have a different function, because they have also become part of the mediocracy.

Frits Spangenberg: The illusion of the day is very dominantly present. You see that in all kinds of questions in the Lower House for which an enormous system obviously has to be put into operation. In actual fact at that level it is more about a media circus. Talking about a mediocracy....

Ed Nijpels: I read today in the Volkskrant an interesting story about the changing role of the city compared with the State. In it the theory is unfolded that the city is increasingly becoming more important for the people and that the role of the mayor is becoming more important. In the meantime there are many examples. Take for instance the mayor of New York, who said: "The State can no longer handle it so the City will tackle it, whether it is about obesity or anti-smoking policy."

Frits Spangenberg: I agree with this completely. You can see this in the actions of Eberhard van der Laan, the mayor of Amsterdam, for instance with regard to the Ajax riots on Museumplein. He went there personally and you saw that it worked.

André Knottnerus: If there is a big problem in a municipality, the presence of the mayor is increasingly more important. How does he or she respond to the situation? That mayor can provide trust, peace and quiet. It makes



Frits Spangenberg

In 1984 Frits Spangenberg established the renowned market research agency Motivaction. For several years he was active as president of ESOMAR, the worldwide organisation of marketing research and public opinion polling firms and a member of the ESOMAR council. After his directorship he remained attached to Motivaction as consultant and supervisor of the staff members of this firm. He also acts regularly as an advisor and gives lectures at home and abroad. We have here someone with a wide knowledge of developments in the market and thanks to this knowledge often also refreshing and sometimes a slightly contrary vision. It is a vision that in any event causes us to reflect.

a big difference. You can see that this role is increasingly becoming important.

Positive developments
What positive developments do the gentlemen see when it is about confidence in the future? They start talking again with great fervour.

Ed Nijpels: For me that is in the first place the increased empowerment of the people, the fact that they become less dependent on the public sector and institutions, can now take decisions themselves on all kinds of fronts for which in the past they needed other people or organisations. In essence this is a very positive development: people who are in control and remain aware of their own responsibilities. You can see that emerging everywhere in the world. In the meantime the social media are playing a decisive role in this.

Frits Spangenberg: Ed Nijpels now brings two very interesting aspects together: the empowerment of the people and the tendency to take control. I am also very optimistic about this, however much those two aspects sometimes also lead to an abundance of complaints and questions. But that is part and parcel of it and we have to learn to live with it.

André Knottnerus: Me too, I agree completely with Ed Nijpels' statement. The increase in empowerment in our society goes sometimes in fits and starts, but it is an important development which will continue. However: that development will also have to go hand in hand with the people bearing their own responsibility. Otherwise it would not work in the end. I am also happy that it can be ascertained nowadays that

an open mind about the world around us is increasingly coming back in the Netherlands. That is extremely important. In addition, the tremendous development in knowledge is also very positive. More can be achieved than is delivered nowadays. Take for instance sustainable energy. Technically a lot more is possible than is nowadays brought about due to all kinds of governance problems. I think that there are a very many great challenges in that area. Moreover, I see another positive development in the increased understanding of the function of setting examples, a greater awareness of the implications of your behaviour if you take special responsibility. This not only applies to footballers but also to bank managers, politicians, scientists and so on. It is my belief that currently this is going in the right direction.

The role of the RvA
We ask the gentlemen about the role which the RvA plays or can play in the recovery of confidence in the future.

Ed Nijpels: Only a while ago we talked about new arrangements and relationships in our society and we ascertained that it will still take a long time before a balance has again been reached. Due to the emergence of the social media the empowerment of the people will only increase. What can the public sector then still do? Certification and accreditation belong to the cases which are no longer left to the public sector itself, but in connection with which social organisations such as certification and inspection bodies can indeed provide trust to the people. For instance that the people can assume that the

plug they buy reasonably satisfies the requirements. Or that when their blood is sampled, that it will be examined in a laboratory in an accurate, accredited manner. In that respect I am convinced that the role of certification and accreditation is going to increase further.

André Knottnerus: I think that accreditation fits very well in the network of supervision in which the central government obviously plays an important role where enforcement is concerned, encouraging personal responsibility, and it must make sure that things also develop as they are intended and arranged. But the public sector and regulators can no longer do this on their own. They need the private sector, the market and the people. You cannot go towards a control society. We cannot pay for this, but even more important: we don't want to live in such a society. So personal responsibility must be built-in. And in my opinion there is an important link in this where the RvA also makes an essential contribution: this self-regulation must be detailed in a sound manner but should give the incentive and include checks and balances so that it can be monitored. So this link is very important and this link can still be strengthened.

Ed Nijpels: I would like to add something to this: there is no society without risks. Politicians should realise this and the people as well. That it could exist is a myth.

Frits Spangenberg: The public sector often feels forced to interfere and that is in itself understandable. But in many cases this leads to rendering the people

into some sort of infantile state. As soon as an incident occurs somewhere, egged on by the media the people shout: "We cannot allow this to happen again. Somebody should interfere." The public sector always responded to this very benevolently. So regulations were created and intervention took place. And the media is dominated by that type of thing. It is too easily forgotten that the people themselves should consider these things in a socially-intelligent way. Thinking for themselves and the personal responsibility of the people remain decisive factors in our society. Supervision via an organisation such as the Dutch Accreditation Council (RvA) can play a major role in this respect.

André Knottnerus: It is also about political leadership. Political leadership indicates that you maintain a type of consistency, even though you have the wind against you in the form of all kinds of undesired events. Anyway, I see that awareness increasing. But it remains a very difficult job. We say far too often and too easily: "Politicians only look at the short term." This is often a threat. But you must obviously survive that short term to get to the long term. And at the same time this dilemma can only be solved by making the long term more central to the political debate and retaining self-control with regard to the hype. That should be expected in politics. Political leadership should be able to lean on supervisory forms cementing confidence in the future.

Column

Albert Jan Maat is chairman of LTO Nederland, the entrepreneurs' organisation for the agricultural sector in the Netherlands. It represents almost 50,000 entrepreneurs and dedicates itself to their economic and social position and for the trust of society in this sector.



Albert Jan Maat

Confidence in the future? Make sure there are clear rules and supervision!

Trust is the basis of good relationships between the people and businesses. A breach of trust often evokes the response from the public sector of more regulation and legal rules. In recent years this has been increasingly more often up for discussion.

Luckily there is something in-between and in that respect the Dutch Accreditation Council (RvA) fulfils a major role. After all, self-regulation for arrangement of economic activities in a sector is a much used model in the Netherlands.

The agri-sector has commodity boards that can arrange issues themselves jointly (employers and employees) on the basis of the Dutch Organisation of Business and Industry Act (Wet op de bedrijfsorganisatie), whereby each entrepreneur can be bound from the point of view of the general as well as the sector interest. The rules for preventing and combating infectious animal diseases come to mind. If cattle breeders do not observe the rules, this could cause disproportionate damage to the society and the sector itself.

Unfortunately the cabinet decided to abolish commodity boards. We are now going to work on this with the Ministry of Economic Affairs to continue to arrange the issues properly and transparently for the people and therefore also in the interest of the enterprises in agriculture and horticulture. This means arrangements in food chains about guaranteeing the quality of the production process and of products when they go from the one link (agriculture and horticulture) to the other link in the chain (processing products). Often the rules are laid down in certification systems.

For transparency in the temping agency sector LTO Nederland as the party hiring temporary workers has already for years joined the Dutch Labour Standards Foundation (Stichting Normering Arbeid: 'SNA'). Inspection bodies checking entrepreneurs and temping agencies with regard to compliance with the arrangements in SNA are accredited by the Dutch Accreditation Council (RvA). Independence and transparency are in this respect necessary starting points and provide a balanced playing field in the transactions between temping agencies and entrepreneurs.

In short: the importance of the work of the Dutch Accreditation Council (RvA) for our sector is self-evident. The starting point is confidence in the future, embedded in rules and arrangements understandable by everyone and with supervision of the compliance in practice.

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What is accreditation?

Both nationally and internationally buyers need to be confident of the quality and safety of goods and services provided. If these are guaranteed it not only benefits 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-assessment bodies'. Such bodies must be impartial and have the competence to issue this certificate. Only then is it useful and reliable.

Assessment of the conformity-assessment body

The RvA has been appointed by the government as the national accreditation body for assessing the expertise, the impartiality and the management system of conformity assessment bodies. Thereby the RvA offers a future-proof guarantee of confidence amongst the public sector, our buyers and our suppliers.

