

LOOKING AHEAD  
WITH CONFIDENCE

# FOREWORD

The world in which we live is becoming more and more complex. It is a world in which we don't always have access to the information needed to make considered choices, while there is often also high pressure to make decisions. It is in precisely this world that confidence is so important: for international trade, but also for the development and marketing of new products and services.

More and more companies are focusing their strategy on long-term value creation. They approach the market integrally; that is to say, not only as a selling market, but also out of their responsibility to contribute to a safe, healthy and sustainable society. The quality infrastructure of standardisation, conformity assessment and accreditation actively supports this responsibility.

This is the motivation for the people at the RvA. The RvA wishes to contribute to a well-functioning international society via effective quality standards and inspection bodies. A society with open trade and room for innovation and sustainability.

The RvA's teams assess the competence, impartiality and consistency of these inspection bodies. They do this conscientiously and with the support of a new Executive Board.

The Board of Supervisors feels jointly responsible and shows that it is closely involved in the work of the RvA, so that you can count on a transparent and expert organisation.

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors,  
Yvonne van Rooy, *Chair*

THE RVA WISHES TO CONTRIBUTE TO A WELL-FUNCTIONING INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY VIA EFFECTIVE QUALITY STANDARDS AND INSPECTION AGENCIES.



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# INTRODUCTION

Since June 2019, Roeland Nieuweboer and Joep de Haas have formed the RvA's new Executive Board. They have taken the baton from Jan van der Poel, who steered the ship as a very successful helmsman for seventeen years and has now retired. Who are these two new directors? What do they believe to be the added value of accreditation? How do they translate this into strategic plans? And what will the impact be for the stakeholders?

## Confidence: a shared responsibility

In a world that is becoming increasingly complex, we see a growing need for confidence. We want to be able to assume that products and services meet certain requirements, and that our environment is clean and safe. In part, this is managed by laws and regulations. Due to increasing internationalisation, however, governments and public authorities have less and less influence. This creates an urgent appeal to the private sector, because that is where the primary responsibility to substantiate our confidence now lies. More and more companies and institutions are responding to this, because they wish to contribute to a safe, healthy and sustainable society. At national and international

level, market parties themselves are formulating the quality standards that products and services must meet. The power of these private standards is that they have not been imposed top-down, but arise in dialogue with many stakeholders; there is therefore a great deal of support for them. Suppliers can have their products and services assessed objectively against these standards, to demonstrate that they are doing their work properly.

## Accredited once, accepted everywhere

The European Union also attaches great importance to market surveillance and takes responsibility therein. For this reason, we have had national accreditation bodies, such as the RvA, in Europe



**Roeland Nieuweboer** is the Chairman of the RvA's Executive Board. After studying Law at Leiden University, he worked for the police and at organisation consultancy Berenschot. He was a director at the VROM Inspectorate and member of the management team of the Dutch Environment and Transport Inspectorate, where he was involved in the supervision of high-risk companies, among other things. In addition to this, he has done a great deal of work on improving the service provision in licensing. Quality management is the common thread throughout his work. The fact that he 'grew up with the scent of cocoa in his nose', in the industrial hub of the Netherlands (Zaandam), probably explains his keen business sense. With his knowledge of the public and private sectors, he knows how to make the right contacts and build bridges. Trivia: travelling unusual countries, love of opera, classical music and movies, avid catamaran sailor.



since 2010. It is a well-known statement that you can't ask for trust: it has to be given. Accreditation can be the basis for this. It contributes to assuring the quality of products and services that are brought onto the market. The RvA's clients are known as *conformity assessment bodies*: laboratories, inspection bodies, certification bodies, verification bodies, etc. They assess whether suppliers' products and services satisfy the set requirements. At the RvA, we express our confidence in conformity assessment bodies by declaring that they are operating competently, impartially and consistently. This is how we guarantee trust. And this trust has a wide reach, because all European accreditation bodies have concluded an agreement

with each other, which means: *accredited once, accepted everywhere*. Other countries therefore adopt the confidence that we express as the RvA. And vice versa.

### What is the added value of accreditation?

But accreditation is more than just a good addition to government supervision. Since 2010, the RvA has been an autonomous administrative authority of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate. Our origins, however, are as a private party, born out of a common desire from industry and politics. We therefore envisage a broader role for the RvA: how can we help further improve the quality infrastructure that we are part of? We are in dialogue

about this with our most important stakeholders. What is the value of accreditation for them? What developments do they have to deal with? How do they regard our policy and our service provision? This generates entirely different conversations than when you discuss rates or processing times – also important, but accreditation has so much more value. The purpose increasingly takes precedence over the task: why are we actually doing this? It comes down to business value and public value. What are the concrete benefits for a company? And what is the contribution to society? For instance, inadequate quality management leads to waste, among other things. This has consequences not only for the environment, but also for the com-

**Joep de Haas** is a member of the RvA's Executive Board. After studying Law at Leiden University, he fulfilled management and board functions at various industry organisations, Boekel De Nerée Lawyers and Notaries, and consultancy firm Wissenraet Van Spaendonck. He was appointed as operational director of the RvA in 2013. With his extensive knowledge of the field and all stakeholders, the continuity of the RvA is in very safe hands. In his work, he is always fanatically searching for the connection between internal and external: what is happening around us, and how can we proactively respond to it? And: how can we form coalitions with respect for everyone's interests, so that we can all achieve more? Responsibility and entrepreneurship, within the boundaries of an autonomous administrative authority, are keywords here. Trivia: a Brabant native through and through, with Rotterdam as his second home, evenings at the dinner table with the whole family, active sport lover (sailing, hockey, golf).



pany's returns. One of the challenges that the RvA faces is in highlighting that value in the coming years.

### The importance of the human factor

Raising awareness of that added value starts from within. We have lots of talented employees at the RvA. We want to give them the opportunity to consider how we can improve our service provision. For example, if we want to achieve better collabo-

ration, this will have implications for our organisational structure. We present questions such as these to our colleagues, with a number of preconditions. It's great to see how they are able to effectively interpret these. More importantly, this shared responsibility ensures greater job satisfaction. Which is very important, because accreditation primarily is and remains a people business. We are looking ahead with confidence.

## WHAT DOES THE CORONAVIRUS MEAN FOR OUR SERVICE PROVISION?

This public report has been written while complying with the measures to combat the spread of the coronavirus. The consequences are significant, for our health and our economy. During this period, confidence is more important than ever. Within the quality infrastructure, that means confidence in the work of accredited bodies. Our clients are facing the challenge of assuring the quality of conformity assessments under these complex circumstances. We at the RvA are ensuring that our confidence in their work is also justified now.

Moreover, this situation will continue to be a game-changer. In response to the demand to work from home as much as possible, companies and institutions from all sectors have quickly learned to work in a different way. This also applies to the RvA. In the coming period, we will examine what lessons we can learn from this and how we can incorporate them into our service provision. We welcome your feedback and creative ideas in this regard!

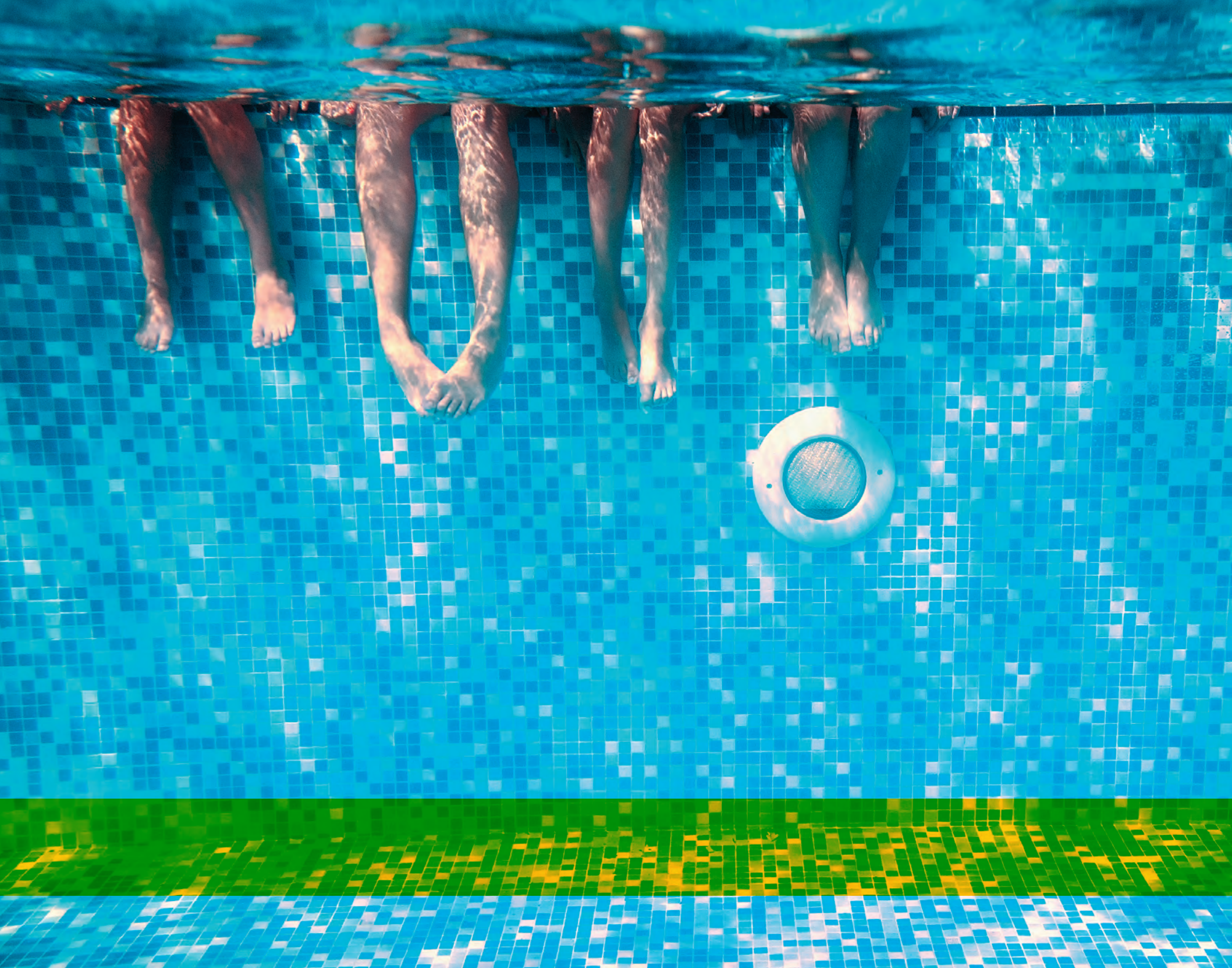






“  
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# 1

## Working on confidence

How does this online shop handle my personal data? Can I sufficiently trust this hospital's laboratory results? Are these eggs free of salmonella? Does this product comply with the necessary specifications? Is the claim about this appliance's energy consumption correct? Is it in fact as sustainable and safe as it promises? These are just a few examples of questions that concern us every day.

### Confidence in an increasingly complex world

As a buyer of products and services, we need information to give us confidence. This need hasn't changed over the years, but with longer logistics lines and increasing global trade, it is becoming more and more complicated to obtain information. In our grandparents' day, they knew exactly where their food came from; nowadays, we buy ready-made fruit juice in the supermarket and we have no idea where it comes from. Furthermore, the digital transformation has created a new world which is much more elusive than the traditional world of products and services. Confidence is also needed here. Companies and institutions use information that may contain our personal data. For what purpose, and how? We have no notion of it. But naturally we want them to act with integrity.

### The tendency: an increasing control reflex

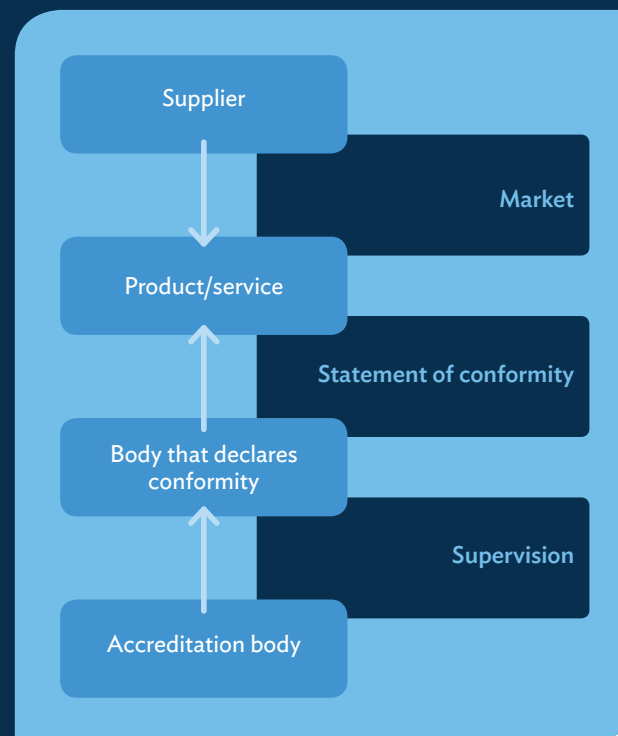
How do we handle this? Increasingly, mistrust seems to predominate in our society. The demand for monitoring and supervision is on the rise. When something goes wrong somewhere, public opinion pounces on it. Especially after larger incidents or series of events. We see this directly in reports about investigations by the Dutch Safety Board and the political responses to them. Some of them result in a parliamentary investigation or even a parliamentary inquiry, such as the Fyra high-speed train service. The reflex then is usually either more rules and more supervision and enforcement. In some cases, that will definitely help. Stricter supervision or even administrative or criminal action can be an impetus to improve, particularly for parties who have insufficient intrinsic motivation. But of course, there are also limits to what we are able to regulate from above.

## THE CHAIN OF CONFIDENCE

The RvA's work is focused on corroborating trust. This occurs by means of competent, impartial and consistent supervision:

- Suppliers can have their products and services assessed objectively, for instance by a laboratory, inspection body, certification body or verification body. This applies to every imaginable sphere of work: health care, environment, construction, energy, food, transport, finance, etc.
- Is a supplier satisfying the requirements? Then it will receive a statement of conformity in the form of a certificate or report. The assessing parties are thus also called *conformity assessment bodies*.
- This statement is most valuable when the assessing party is operating competently, impartially and consistently. The RvA therefore assess whether conformity assessment bodies are competent. In the event of a good result, the organisation becomes accredited.

The RvA thereby forms the last link in the chain of confidence.



### Responsibility of the market

Many market parties do indeed want to be compliant and satisfy the national and international laws and regulations. In fact, this often gives them an edge over other companies and institutions. They also see the importance of harmonised standards: quality standards from ISO (International Organization for Standardization) and NEN (Royal Netherlands Standardization Institute), and the further requirements developed by sectors, such as schemes. In some cases, they *must* satisfy these

requirements, because they have been made mandatory by the Dutch or European legislator, or by other parties, such as medical unions, in the case of medical laboratories. The purpose of these requirements can vary greatly. They can be developed from the perspective of market regulation, a 'ticket to trade' from a B2B model, or consumer protection. For instance, the presence of a certified quality management system is usually a precondition for participation in public tenders.

### How can we facilitate trust?

Ultimately, trust is the most important aspect in business (and personal) relationships. It is essential for a society that wants to be safe, healthy and sustainable. Francis Fukuyama calls trust the social capital which, if abundantly present, is a success factor for economic prosperity. And according to Stephen Covey, trust is 'the new currency of our interdependent, collaborative world'. These are elegant statements which can be substantiated. What we need are companies and

institutions that work on that trust and take responsibility in the matter. But trust needs to have a point of focus; it requires a certain standard. Harmonised standards form the basis for this. The value of these standards is that they have not been imposed top-down, but have come about with the participation of many stakeholders. With the aim of guaranteeing an objective quality perception of products and services, and thereby cultivating confidence among buyers.

### The RvA as a third party

It is sometimes helpful to have this confidence substantiated by a third party. As a national accreditation body, the RvA fulfils this role in our society. Our clients (laboratories, inspection bodies, certification bodies, verification bodies, etc.) assess, for instance, whether providers of products and services satisfy the set requirements. We in turn assess whether these conformity assessment bodies are carrying out their work competently, impartially and consistently – and on the basis of harmonised standards. As a third party, we are able to determine for others whether their confidence

in products and services is justified. The literal translation of justified is ‘demonstrable’. Through our assessments and accreditation logos, we provide evidence that one party can trust the other. Confidence is also the common thread that runs through the relationship between the RvA and (potential) accredited parties. The RvA even presumes trust. This includes an open and unbiased attitude.

### An eye on the higher purpose

The challenge for the RvA is in maintaining a balance between ‘the letter’ (the standard) and ‘the spirit’ (the intention) in assessments. This balance is sometimes discussed with accredited parties and their interest groups. Overly strict emphasis on a literal omission often leads to a debate between professionals about the chosen solution. In any case, what we should avoid is organisations mainly focusing on control and losing sight of the higher purpose. Because when that happens, things like personal responsibility, proactivity and mutual trust are lost. Which is precisely *not* our intention at the RvA. At the same time, standards are not an




*Working with clients on confidence in products or services: that's what gives me my drive to work.*

Maaike van Kessel, *Project Coordinator Accreditation Assessments*



obligation-free guideline. In our interactions with (future) accredited parties, it is important to evaluate whether the party to be assessed intends to follow the regulations or standard and to take responsibility for this. And, moreover, whether it is prepared to learn lessons from matters that come to light during the assessment. A climate of learning and improvement only arises with trust in each other, so that open and honest conversations can be held. This is an art form in itself.



CONFIDENCE IS  
ESSENTIAL FOR  
A SOCIETY THAT  
WANTS TO BE  
SAFE, HEALTHY  
AND SUSTAINABLE.







A portrait of Femke de Vries, a woman with dark, curly hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark top. The background is dark and out of focus.

# What is *the purpose* of supervision?

Why is confidence so important for a properly functioning society? What role does supervision play in this? And where are the opportunities to promote effective supervision? A conversation with Femke de Vries, managing partner at strategic consultancy firm &samhoud and affiliate professor of supervision.

Femke de Vries is managing partner at strategic consultancy firm &samhoud and affiliate professor of supervision at the University of Groningen. She has previously been a board member of the Netherlands Authority for the Financial Markets and secretary-director of De Nederlandsche Bank.

### CONFIDENCE IN A JUDGEMENT

As a consumer, we cannot, or can hardly, assess whether products and services satisfy certain quality requirements. We therefore largely have to rely on the judgement of others. This requires trust: do we believe in the expertise, integrity and goodwill of companies or institutions? Good supervision, for example by parties such as the RvA, ensures that our confidence is justified. This is very valuable, because trust keeps our entire economy running and makes a significant contribution to our mental well-being: it removes people's uncertainty and thus brings peace to society.

### KEEPING AN EYE ON THE HIGHER PURPOSE

This makes supervision a powerful tool. At the same time, we must be vigilant against unintended effects in the long term. What we still fail to fully realise is that every form of supervision provokes strategic behaviour. As an example, if you measure the quality of accounting firms based on the quality of their files, then the focus will shift to the latter. The means (satisfying the requirements)

thus becomes an end in itself. What you often see is that people are only concerned with ticking off checklists, and they no longer dare to take any responsibility for substantive choices. Naturally, that cannot be the intention. Every supervisor should then regularly consider the strategic behaviour to which its 'measuring method' could lead.

### IN DIALOGUE WITH THE SECTOR

By entering into conversations with the sector about this, you prevent supervision from becoming a kind of cat-and-mouse game. Supervision operates by virtue of mutual trust. Companies and institutions must be prepared to provide information, to accept the opinion of the supervisor, and to take their corporate responsibility. By the same token, their input can also help to facilitate effective supervision: are there things that are currently being overlooked, but are in fact very relevant for improving the overall quality level? We must encourage this continuous dialogue from all sides, because good supervision is in everybody's interests.



We must prevent supervision from becoming a kind of cat-and-mouse game.





# 2

## The value of accreditation

Almost every country in Europe has a national accreditation body. In the Netherlands, that is the RvA. The RvA is an autonomous administrative authority of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate. Our primary task is to accredit and keep accredited what are known as *conformity assessment bodies*: laboratories, inspection bodies, certification bodies, verification bodies, etc. But what is the value of this?

### More confidence between European member states

‘The particular value of accreditation lies in the fact that it provides an authoritative statement of the technical competence of bodies whose task is to ensure conformity with the applicable requirements’, as is stated in European Regulation 765/2008. This regulation also states that accreditation contributes to more confidence between member states with regard to the competence of conformity assessment bodies. Accreditation helps to maintain the value of certificates and reports issued by these bodies at the internationally agreed level. A declaration of accreditation confirms that accredited bodies are operating competently, impartially and consistently, and are thus able to assess whether the providers’ products and services satisfy the relevant national and international standards.

### A ‘ticket to trade’ for businesses

In addition to this statutory basis, accreditation may be on a voluntary basis. Indeed, the origin of quality considerations and conformity assessment lies in industry, with the intention of providing customers with assurance about the quality of products in long logistics lines. And conformity assessment still forms a ‘ticket to trade’ for businesses. Not only within Europe, but also between global regions. The system of standardisation, conformity assessment and accreditation is a major ‘hoop’ that permits access to global trade. It helps businesses to demonstrate, at an international level, that they are a reliable partner. One great example is that one of our clients can proudly say its company can supply products under accreditation to parties such as Boeing and NASA.

### A level playing field for our clients

The RvA assesses whether conformity assessment bodies are doing their work properly. To this end, we emphasise three aspects: competence, impartiality and consistent operation. Competence concerns the (technical) proficiency of employees of accredited or applicant parties and the suitability of methods and facilities. In addition, the bodies must demonstrate their impartiality with regard to the organisations to which they provide their services. The saying 'he who pays the piper calls the tune' is often quoted in this context. This is precisely why the RvA thoroughly evaluates this impartiality, as well as in the case of acquisitions or mergers: are there any conflicts of interest in the

performance of their duties? In the event of a good result, we give a declaration of accreditation. This declaration puts our clients on a level playing field: it proves that they are doing their work properly and honestly, thereby strengthening their competitive position.

### How do we guarantee our impartiality?

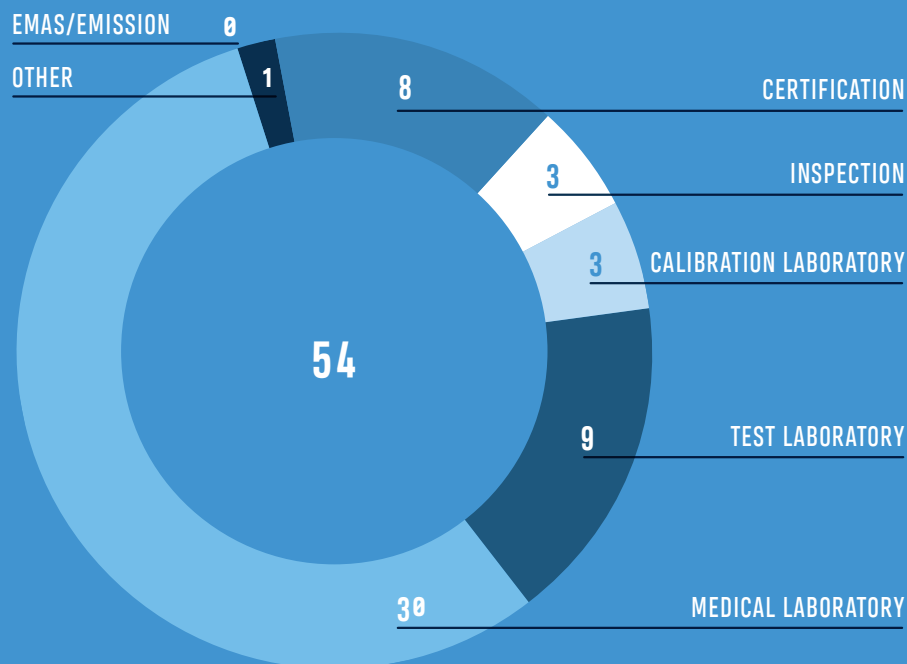
The RvA is also subject to requirements. It is important that the impartiality of our activities is guaranteed. For this reason, we carry out an annual risk analysis, as defined in ISO/IEC 17011, the standard that accreditation bodies must satisfy. This standard describes risks, measures, residual risks and threats. Aspects such as possible finan-

cial pressure on the RvA, the objectivity of external assessors and collusion due to a prolonged stay during an assessment are addressed. We present this risk analysis to our stakeholders for assessment in the advisory panel of stakeholders, with the question of whether our impartiality is sufficiently guaranteed. Every four years, the RvA also undergoes an intensive peer review from the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA), during which other European accreditation bodies scrutinise our competence, impartiality and consistency. They assess the RvA against the European Regulation 765/2008 and ISO/IEC 17011. The next peer review is planned for 2021.



**A DECLARATION OF ACCREDITATION PUTS  
OUR CLIENTS ON A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD.**

## NEW ACCREDITATIONS BY TYPE



## STAY IN THE LOOP!

We love to keep our contacts up to date about new accreditations, (international) developments and freelance contracts. We do this online via various channels:



### *Our monthly newsletter*

You can sign up for this via our website ([www.rva.nl](http://www.rva.nl)).



### *Our LinkedIn page*

We provide regular (news) updates via [www.linkedin.com/company/raad-voor-accreditatie](https://www.linkedin.com/company/raad-voor-accreditatie).



### *The news page on our website*

We publish news reports and new (versions of) documents on [www.rva.nl/nieuws](http://www.rva.nl/nieuws).



### *Our separate recruitment site for freelance contracts*

We regularly post new contracts for freelance experts on [www.werkenvoorderva.nl](http://www.werkenvoorderva.nl).

You can find more information about the RvA on [www.rva.nl](http://www.rva.nl).



**838**

accreditations granted

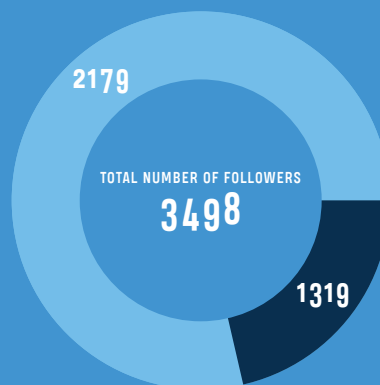


**54**

new accreditations

## OUR LINKEDIN PAGE

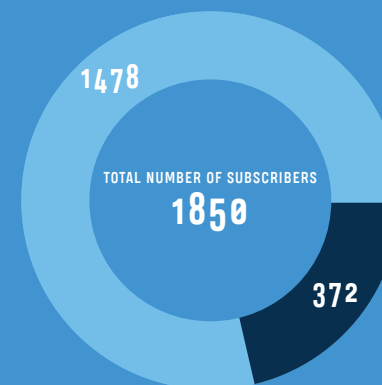
AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2019



■ NEW FOLLOWERS IN 2019

## OUR NEWSLETTER

AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2019



■ NEW SUBSCRIBERS IN 2019

### Expert RvA assessment teams

The RvA also continuously works on the expertise of its team leaders and (freelance) assessors or technical experts. A team of recruiters keeps the assessor file in order, for instance. This is essential, because accreditation and conformity assessment encompass so many sectors. One look at our website or those of the interest groups Fenelab and NVCi clearly show how extensive this field is. To recruit assessors, we often also depend on the cooperation of companies, professional associations and trade unions.

New assessors receive basic training regarding the standard. For instance, in 2019 we gave a three-day training to assessors of medical laboratories (ISO

15189). This training has been well received and is being intensified for other standard areas. Alongside the substantive aspect, the training of specialists has another core component: how to conduct assessments. To be effective, both individually and as a team, a sense of processes and relationships is also important. In particular, it can be difficult for people with so much substantive expertise and drive to maintain an open and unbiased attitude. The RvA is aware of this. Expertise must lead to attachment, a provisional judgement, but above all to a constructive conversation before reaching a final conclusion. Effectiveness lies in the assessed party's acceptance of the insight and in their willingness to improve.

## WORKING FOR THE RVA

Our working area covers many different sectors: health care, environment, construction, energy, food, transport, finance, etc. In order to serve our clients effectively, we work with approximately 700 freelance technical experts. Depending on market demand, they are deployed for RvA assessments for 5 to 35 days a year. It is an ongoing challenge to have sufficient experts in our portfolio for all domains. In 2019, our recruitment team once again managed to bind the necessary technical experts to the RvA.

We regularly post new freelance contracts via LinkedIn, [www.werkenvoorderva.nl](http://www.werkenvoorderva.nl) and our [newsletter](#).





*We acknowledge both the technical and the human aspect of the work of accreditation. It is precisely this interplay that contributes to confidence.*

*Ailin Chou, Project Coordinator  
Accreditation Assessments*

A portrait of Willemijn Noordhoek, a woman with short brown hair and black-rimmed glasses, smiling. She is wearing a black blazer over a black top. The background is dark.

# Accreditation as a *policy instrument*

The Dutch government designated the RvA as the national accreditation body in 2010. Since then, the RvA has been an autonomous administrative authority which reports to the State Secretary of Economic Affairs and Climate (Economische Zaken en Klimaat: ‘EZK’). What is the value of accreditation as a policy instrument? We asked Willemijn Noordhoek, Economic Infrastructure Team Coordinator at the Ministry of EZK.

Willemijn Noordhoek is Economic Infrastructure Team Coordinator at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate. The European internal market for products, accreditation and conformity assessment, among other things, all fall within this domain.



### WHAT DOES CONFIDENCE MEAN?

As a society, we want to be able to blindly trust the quality and safety of products and services. We want meat to be low in bacteria and blood counts to be correct, for instance. Naturally, we must cover risks as much as possible. At the same time, we sometimes talk about this as if we are increasingly striving for a risk-free world. Is something going wrong? Then this is soon followed by a call for more government supervision: 'The system has failed!' But there is no such thing as zero risk. You can't prevent everything.

### ASSESSING THE ASSESSORS: A ROBUST SYSTEM

Products and services need to comply with all kinds of rules. The first responsibility lies in the market itself: there lie the knowledge and skills. Conformity assessments allow suppliers to show that they are doing their work properly. But as a government, you naturally want to carry out some checks, because the public interest is so major. The RvA assesses conformity assessment

bodies for their competence, impartiality and consistent operation. Assessing the assessors. We have thereby created a robust system. Not flawless, but certainly something we can feel comfortable with.

### MORE FAMILIARITY AND A DIFFERENT IMAGE

In this way, accreditation makes an excellent addition to government supervision: it ensures that confidence is justified. But we also see that this value is not yet being fully utilised. This is to do with the unfamiliarity of the system on the one hand, and the technical image on the other hand. This is an important task, for both the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate and the RvA: how can we more effectively get this policy instrument on the radar and overturn the existing image? Knowledge transfer plays a significant role in this. So does a less modest attitude: shouting more loudly from the rooftops about the value of this system can create a snowball effect.

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Not flawless, but certainly something  
we can feel comfortable with.



# 3

## A future-proof RvA

Coming from the ambition to maintain or even increase the added value of accreditation, we are working on future-proofing the RvA. After all, we have an important public duty and an authoritative position in the quality infrastructure. We want our activities to contribute to a well-functioning international society; a society with honest trade and room for innovation and sustainability.

### An entrepreneurial attitude

The relationship with our stakeholders is a crucial factor in this. We therefore wish to be proactive in our interactions and be approachable for discussions about our policy and our services. Together, we can take the whole playing field to a higher level. For example, how are we dealing with new working spheres? How do we arrive at new perspectives in existing and familiar areas? How can we innovate in a world that is changing more and more quickly? This requires an entrepreneurial attitude within the RvA. Naturally, we are bound by our status as an autonomous administrative authority and there are binding international policies, from the aforementioned EA (European co-operation for Accreditation) as well as from ILAC (International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation) and IAF (International Accreditation Forum), two umbrella organisations which

facilitate harmonisation of accreditation between countries and regions at an international level. But, more importantly, there are also lots of opportunities.

### In dialogue with our clients

In 2019 we started organising client meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to enter into dialogue with accredited bodies about the collaboration with and service provision of the RvA. It took some time to find the best format. The idea was to make them ‘meetings on the way home’, in various regions, to lower the barrier to participation. The turnout was more than enough to have a good conversation. In many cases, the question ‘What keeps you busy?’ turned out to be sufficient to get the dialogue started and subsequently make the connection to our work.

## INTERESTED PARTIES

There are various interested parties in the field of accreditation:

- direct clients of the RvA (conformity assessment bodies);
- direct clients of conformity assessment bodies;
- the market;
- governments;
- scientific and educational institutes;
- organisations in the field of standardisation;
- scheme owners;
- representatives of employers and employees;
- end users.

Good interactions with these stakeholders are important for further increasing the confidence. This applies to the confidence in the organisations accredited by the RvA, but also to the confidence within our society.





These client meetings provided a lot of concrete feedback and advice. One of the issues that came up frequently was the need for a good interpretation of the standards used. Another issue is that there is often the perception of criticism during assessments, which dampens the initial motivation to perform and organise properly. Although we want to encourage (potential) clients to learn and improve in a positive way, this isn't always how it is experienced. The RvA team leaders emphasise 'the way up' often enough, but it is the negative points in particular that remain. Perhaps this says something about how the human brain works. One of our clients noted that she encourages her col-

leagues to 'dot the i's' for weeks, and then sees that after an intensive assessment, the energy ebbs away. We see these as important signals which require further analysis.

#### **Intensifying the collaboration**

These client meetings are a good example of how we are actively seeking contact with our environment. But we are doing more. For instance, we regularly have conversations with NEN (Royal Netherlands Standardization Institute) and the policy departments of ministries. We greatly value these interactions and are looking into how we can further intensify them. As an example, we actively



*Our clients go through the same process, and yet we have an understanding of their individual context.*

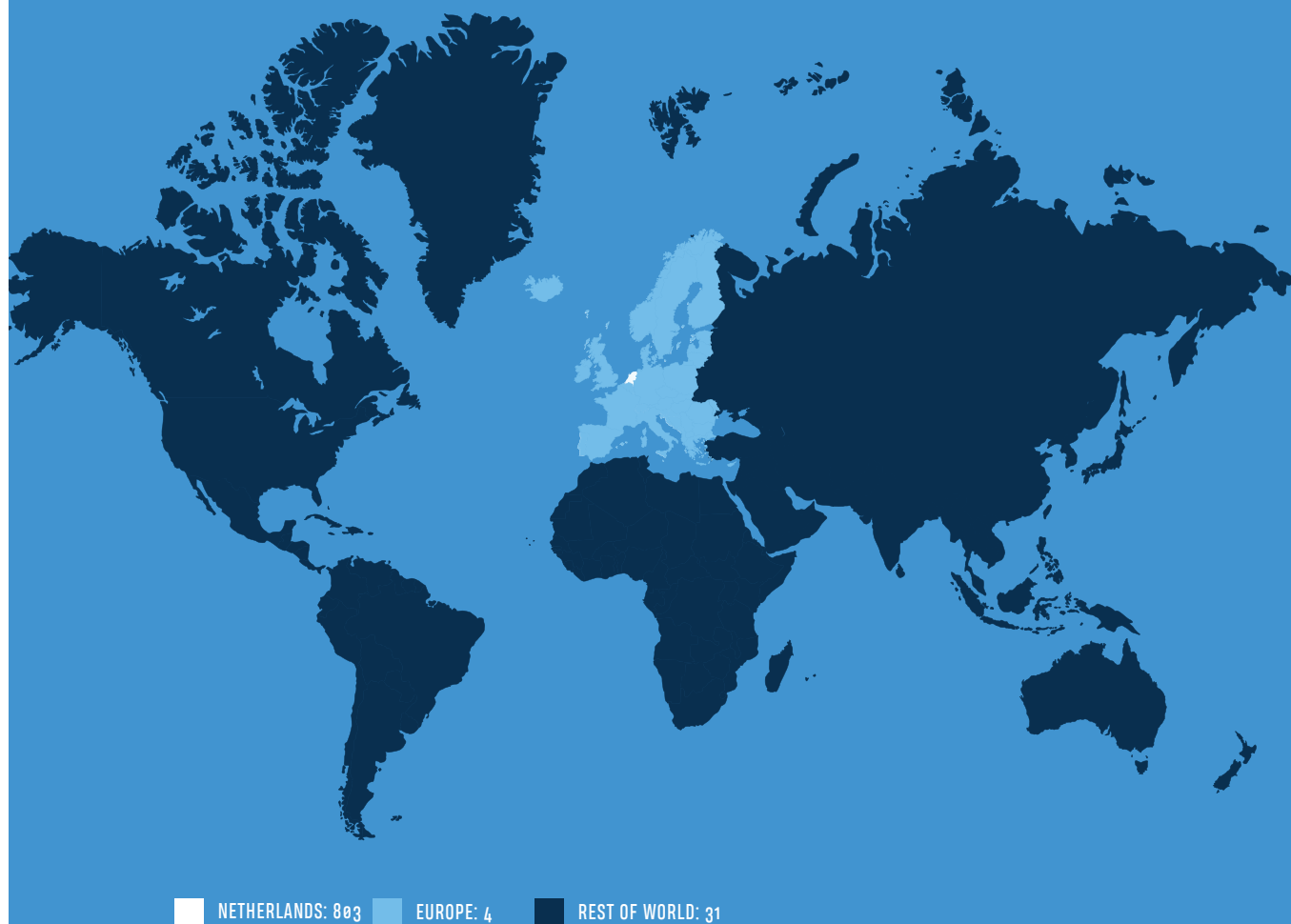
Sten Strooker, *Project Coordinator  
Accreditation Assessments*

OUR AMBITION IS TO BE  
CONSTANTLY CONNECTED  
WITH OUR ENVIRONMENT.

support the initiative of administrators of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate for improvement of the recognition of standardisation, conformity assessment and accreditation. We are doing this in cooperation with NEN and interest groups Fenelab and NVCi. Another example is that we are actively participating in working groups of the EA and ILAC/IAF at an international level. Our team leaders are especially renowned for their contribution to policy-making within various working groups. The great thing about that is that we don't just 'get', we also 'give'. So it is a two-way street.

Our ambition is to be constantly connected with our environment. Being able to trust each other, assuming the best, and wanting to learn and improve together are the core values here. In this way, we are working towards a better future.


## GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF ACCREDITATIONS GRANTED BY THE RVA









A portrait of Claudia Pronk-Admiraal, a woman with shoulder-length brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark jacket and a thin necklace with a small pendant.

# The RvA as a *reliable partner*

Atalmedial's laboratories process over 20,000 tubes of blood and pots of other biological samples for diagnostic research every day. In addition, over 20,000 patients annually are supervised on the use of anticoagulant medication. What does accreditation mean for your business operation? We asked Claudia Pronk-Admiraal, Chairman of the Executive Board of Atalmedial.

Claudia Pronk-Admiraal is Chairman of the Executive Board of Atalmedial, one of the largest cooperation partners in the Netherlands in the area of laboratory diagnostics and thrombosis care.

### MEANINGFUL RESULTS

Good medical care ‘starts with certainty’. Our ultimate goal is to assist care providers and patients with intelligent diagnostics so that they can make informed choices in regard to health and disease. This goes a great deal further than simply forwarding reliable numbers. We also give *meaning* to results, with all the expertise surrounding them, by sharing knowledge where it is needed. This applies to substantive issues, but also to other issues that are relevant in the care process, such as those concerning digital coordination. By doing so, we deliver added value in the chain. A well-functioning quality system forms the foundation for this.

### AN OBJECTIVE MIRROR

We recently completed a large-scale merger process, wherein the laboratories of three hospitals were assimilated in our ‘centrally decentralised’ model. Integrating different cultures and systems while simultaneously guaranteeing the continuity, quality and security of your services is no easy task. We submitted our project plan to the RvA in advance.

They helped us, in a constructively critical way, to think about the potential consequences and demonstrability of certain steps: if you do this, what will that mean for the organisation, for your people? The RvA is a ‘club’ with lots of knowledge, experience and creativity; something that also benefited us at other crucial moments in the process. This means that, even though you aren’t directly linked to each other, you can act as partners to keep providing the best diagnostics – even in a rapidly changing environment.

### SHARING KNOWLEDGE MORE WIDELY

The great thing about these kinds of conversations is that synergy is created. By exchanging knowledge, you can bring critical points to light and respond to them as an organisation. It also makes it more enjoyable. Of course, the RvA is always seeking to strike the balance between advising clients and holding up an objective mirror to them. But it could be interesting to investigate how knowledge about key themes such as risk management can be shared more widely and across sectors, for instance in the form of knowledge networks.



The RvA is a ‘club’ with lots of knowledge, experience and creativity; something that benefited us at crucial moments in the merger process.





# 4

## Developments around standards

We assess our clients based on European harmonised standards. These standards are developed within ISO (International Organization for Standardization) in consultation with the relevant stakeholders. In 2019, two new standards were published to meet market demand: a standard for the validation and verification of claims, and for biobanking. There were also developments in other domains.

### **A new standard for the validation and verification of claims (ISO/IEC 17029)**

In 2019, a new standard for the validation and verification of claims was published: ISO/IEC 17029. On the basis of information (data), organisations can make a certain statement about their working method, products or services, i.e. a 'promise'. This occurs in very diverse domains: corporate social responsibility, sustainability, financial management, algorithms, integrity/ethics, etc. To demonstrate the correctness of such a claim, they can have it validated or verified by a competent and impartial body. ISO/IEC 17029 describes the requirements that these bodies must satisfy when they assess claims – and the RvA offers the opportunity to accredit such companies and institutions.

Applying this new accreditation standard requires further investigation into:

- the future transition from accreditations for ISO 14065 (the standard used for claims concerning emission of greenhouse gases) to accreditation based on ISO/IEC 17029;
- the possibility and desirability of conversion from current accreditations for ISO/IEC 17020 or ISO/IEC 17065 for activities in which data verification plays an important role to accreditation based on ISO/IEC 17029;
- the application of the new standard for working spheres that are not currently performed under accreditation, such as claims concerning corporate social responsibility and financial reporting.

We have plotted various transition routes for this.



## ACCREDITATION AS AN ADDITIONAL INSTRUMENT FOR GOVERNMENT SUPERVISION

In 2019, the RvA held talks with policy-makers and supervisors in various domains regarding accreditation in the context of statutory regulations (national or European).

Examples of subjects that were discussed were:

- European Cybersecurity Act;
- the European regulation on drones (unmanned aircraft);
- the European regulation on fertilising products;
- the Dutch implementing regulations concerning fertilisers (Uitvoeringsregeling Meststoffenwet);
- type approval of motor vehicles;
- the Alcohol, drugs and medication Testing (Traffic) Regulation (Regeling alcohol, drugs en geneesmiddelen in het verkeer);
- the CETA treaty (under the trade agreement with Canada);
- the European controls regulation (controls on feed and food);
- online gaming (the Remote Gambling Act: 'Wet Kansspelen op Afstand');
- the use of artificial intelligence in the legal process;
- the certification of sports innovator centres;
- the notification of Dutch designated bodies with respect to CE marking.





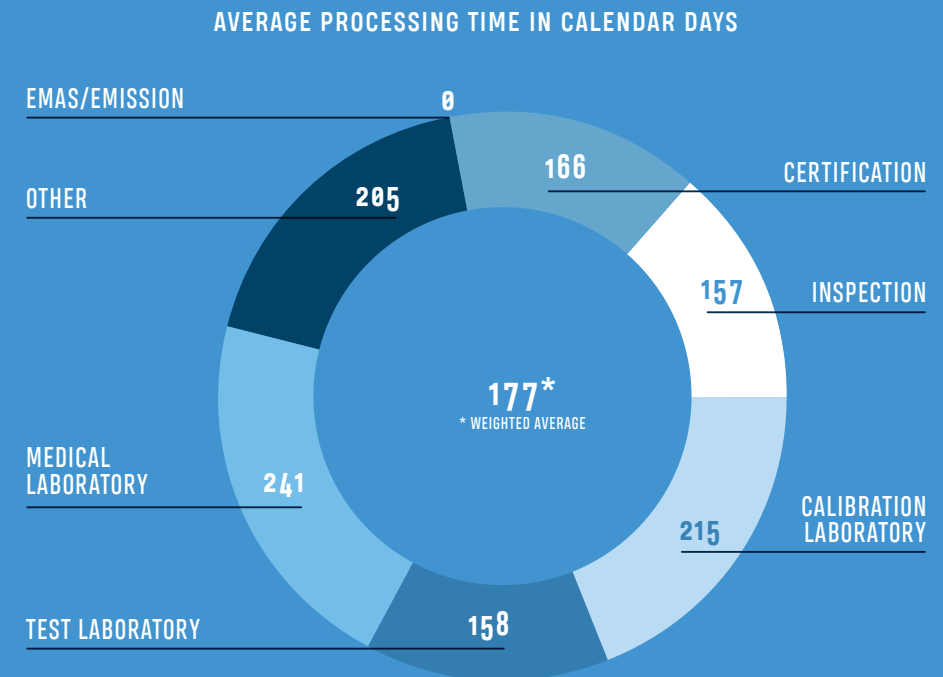
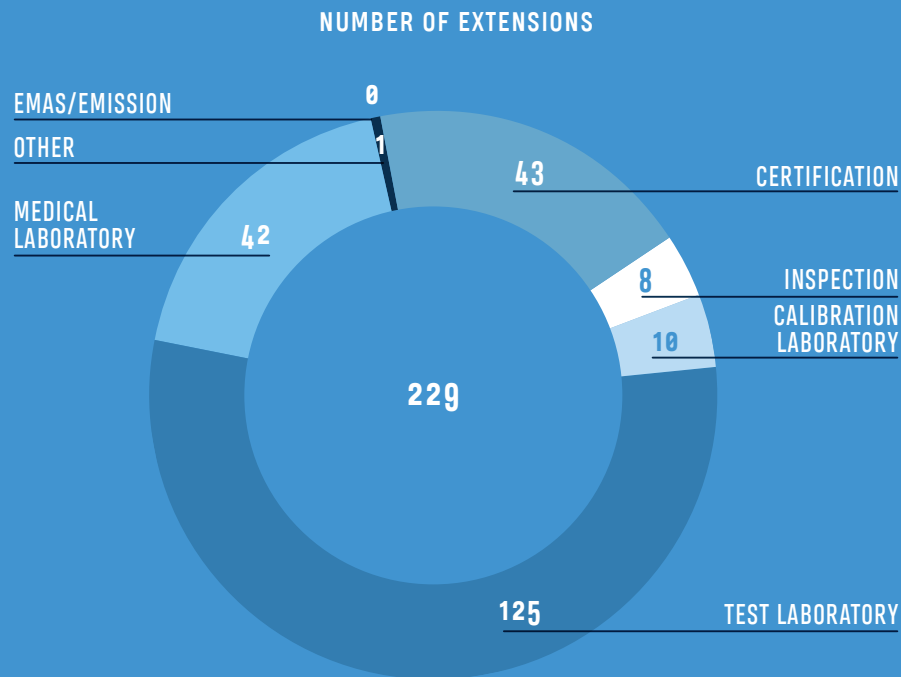


### A new standard for biobanking (ISO 20387)

Additionally, in 2019 ISO published a new standard for biobanking: ISO 20387. A biobank is a databank with biological material such as blood, urine or tissue. This concerns bodily tissue which patients donate in the context of medical research and which is stored for medical scientific purposes after completion of that research. This standard for the accreditation of biobanks concerns the storage, registration and provision of biological material. The storage of this material must satisfy certain requirements in order to ensure that it can still be used over time for further research. The registration systems must also guarantee that information about the material is easy to find and that the purpose for which the material has been used is recorded, for instance if it has been 'loaned' for research elsewhere. Naturally, specific rules guaranteeing privacy are applicable here.

In future, this new standard may obtain a wider scope of application. This quality assurance could also be valuable for research in agriculture and livestock farming.

## EXTENSIONS OF THE SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION PER TYPE



**WE ASSESS OUR CLIENTS  
BASED ON INTERNATIONALLY  
HARMONISED STANDARDS.**



### Privacy in the context of the GDPR

In 2019, regarding product development, we also had regular contact with the Dutch Data Protection Authority (Autoriteit Persoonsgegevens: 'AP') about certification in the context of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Certification bodies that offer their services in this domain and apply for accreditation for this must come forward with a certification scheme. The RvA then evaluates whether this scheme is worthy of accreditation – something we did several times in 2019. But the accreditation of such a scheme can only take shape if the AP has also approved it: does it meet the statutory requirements? European rules must first be drawn up for this. This leads to long delays.

### Asset management (ISO 55001)

Asset management was also a topic of attention in 2019. The ISO 55000 series, which consists of three different standards, offers owners of capital

goods a tool to manage their assets in an appropriate, sustainable and cost-effective way. This concerns, for instance, buildings, roads, sewers, water, green spaces, etc. ISO 55001 is one of the three standards. It describes the requirements for asset management systems. This standard can be used as the basis for the certification of management systems. We granted the first accreditation against this standard in 2019.

### The transition to ISO/IEC 17025:2017

With the transition to a new version of ISO/IEC 17025, 2019 was an important year for the accredited test and calibration laboratories. Towards the end of 2019, it appeared that only 49 of the more than 300 accredited laboratories had successfully navigated the transition. The other laboratories face the challenge of finalising the transition before the internationally agreed deadline of 30 November 2020.



*I think it's important to be actively participating in the development of harmonised standards. They form the foundation for confidence.*

Casper van Erp, *Lead Assessor*

A portrait of Gerard Kerkman, a middle-aged man with thinning hair, wearing a dark suit jacket over a white shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is dark and out of focus.

# Confidence in *certificates*

To be able to be a reliable partner for clients, non-life insurers need to be able to estimate the risks to which companies are exposed. What added value does accreditation provide in this process? Gerard Kerkman, member of the Fire and Risk Expertise platforms of the Dutch Association of Insurers, offers his perspective.

Gerard Kerkman is Head of Risk Engineering at non-life insurer HDI Global SE in the Netherlands. Additionally, he is a board member of the Risk Expertise platform and a member of the Fire platform of the Dutch Association of Insurers. He is also a member of the RvA's Advisory Panel of Stakeholders.

### WHAT DO WE EXPECT FROM EACH OTHER?

As an insurer, we visit companies, inspect processes and make risk assessments. This primarily comes down to looking carefully and asking the right questions. But it's also about having a good conversation: what are the risks, what can we take on in the insurance policy and where should a client do something about prevention? What is important here is that we come to a joint conclusion: we will insure this. Clients assume that, as soon as they experience damages that they themselves cannot shoulder, we will take over the costs within their policy. Trust plays a crucial role in this work: you have to know exactly what you can expect from each other if something goes wrong.

### THE RvA AS 'QUALITY WATCHDOG'

Naturally we have the necessary knowledge in-house to identify business risks. But we also always look at certificates when providing insurance. We want companies to have their products, services and management systems assessed by third parties: for instance, does a fire alarm system or sprinkler

system satisfy the set requirements? Obviously, a certificate of this kind needs to have value. The point is that there are many certification schemes in circulation that don't always prioritise the public interest. It is impossible for us to examine all of those schemes in detail. Therefore, we want to rely on the opinion of inspection and certification bodies. The RvA is an extra 'quality watchdog' in this process. Have certificates been issued under accreditation? Then we can rely on them.

### MORE ADDED VALUE

For insurers, the RvA is an important player in the quality chain. This also applies in the field of scheme owners. We are in discussions about this, because scheme owners no longer fall under the direct supervision of the RvA. This means that schemes for fire safety now only come to its attention via inspection and certification bodies. We would prefer it if the RvA were to assess these schemes again, because we would then have an extra assurance of quality. It is great to see that this alert is being taken seriously.

The RvA is an extra 'quality watchdog'.  
Have certificates been issued under accreditation?  
Then we can rely on them.







# 5

## Quality management: continuous improvement

**In our service provision, we strive for operational excellence: how do we create more value for our clients? In 2019, we once again paid the necessary attention to topics such as short processing times from application to accreditation decision, fast and constructive communication, clear and client-friendly processes and transparent and flexible planning of assessments. Resulting in good client satisfaction.**

### **A flexible organisation**

The world is changing at a rapid pace. This requires a flexible organisation that can adequately respond to new developments. For this reason, we devoted a lot of attention to our organisational structure in 2019. The operational units that take care of the planning of and communication about assessments and their contents are evolving into one unit. This unit will consist of different teams, each of which will facilitate the assessment process for their client portfolio. Both the works council and colleagues from the operational units themselves are closely involved in this process. In addition, the staff departments are in transition. For instance, in 2019 the conventional IT department evolved further towards an Information, Quality and Process Management department. By assigning the 'quality assurance function' to this department, the Strategic and Technical Manage-

ment department can focus on policy development and harmonisation around accreditation standards.

### **Further digitalisation via Digishift Rv@**

We also want to move towards a much more IT-driven provision of services. The Digishift Rv@ programme, which we launched at the end of 2018 and fully pursued in 2019, is a first step in this transformation. Projects within this programme comply with all new legislation in the domain of information security, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). They also contribute to better service provision to clients, better communication with clients during assessment processes and more efficient organisation of our work processes. In 2019, we started four new projects within this programme that we will complete in 2020. These relate to:

- modernisation of our IT infrastructure;
- creation of an IT application that allows a large part of the accreditation process (the reporting about assessments) to be handled digitally via a portal);
- digital setup and processing of the entire planning process of RvA assessments;
- complete digitalisation of the declaration process and purchase invoicing process.

### Paying attention to information security

Digital security is a major topic everywhere, including at the RvA. Every day, we deal with a multitude of information that must be handled carefully. Our policy is based on the Dutch Government Information Security Baseline. This concerns the availability of information (information must be available at the desired time and in the right places), the integrity of information (information must be correct and complete and the information systems must store and process correct and complete information) and the confidentiality of information (information must only be accessible to those who are authorised to access it). We started developing this policy at the end of 2019, and we will implement it in 2020.

### Streamlining the improvement process

Every year a management review determines whether our management system ensures that we are realising our objectives and whether we are continuously complying with our own rules, the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011, the European Regulation 765/2008, the Dutch National Accreditation Body Appointment Act (Wet aanwijzing nationale accreditatie-instantie) and the Dutch Autonomous Administrative Authority Framework Act (Kaderwet zelfstandige bestuursorganen). This management review is discussed with the Board of Supervisors. The processing of complaints, objections and appeals is a permanent agenda item in the meetings of the Board of Supervisors and in Board meetings.

Alongside these standard activities to take actions for improvement, we worked hard in 2019 to further establish and safeguard the process of continuous improvement. Many quality activities take place within the RvA. These include:

- conducting internal audits and themed audits (where a specific part of our process is closely examined, for example compliance with work work instructions);

- handling complaints, notifications and alerts;
- handling objections against RvA decisions;
- handling interpretation disputes;
- actions in response to client satisfaction surveys.

The aim is to take actions for improvement from all these activities in a structured way, so that we can accurately manage our PDCA cycle (plan, do, check, act). The first operational improvements were implemented in 2019. But a great deal of work will also need to be done in 2020 to further optimise this process.

### What do our clients say?

Since 2016, our clients have had an accessible opportunity to share their opinions about three parts of the accreditation process: the application process, the assessment process and the decision-making process. If we look at the trend of the four client satisfaction surveys carried out so far, the average score has risen slightly to 7.4. A score that we at the RvA are moderately positive about, because it still leaves plenty of room for improvement! This improvement mainly lies in reducing the processing time of the application process and increasing the speed of the decision-making

## THE RESULTS OF OUR CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY IN 2019



**7.4** Our clients rated the RvA at an average of 7.4.

**8** Interaction with RvA employees received an 8

**9** Reporting of assessments scored a 9

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS PROCESSED ABOUT THE RvA  
(WITH BREAKDOWN BY WORKING DOMAIN OF NOTIFIER)

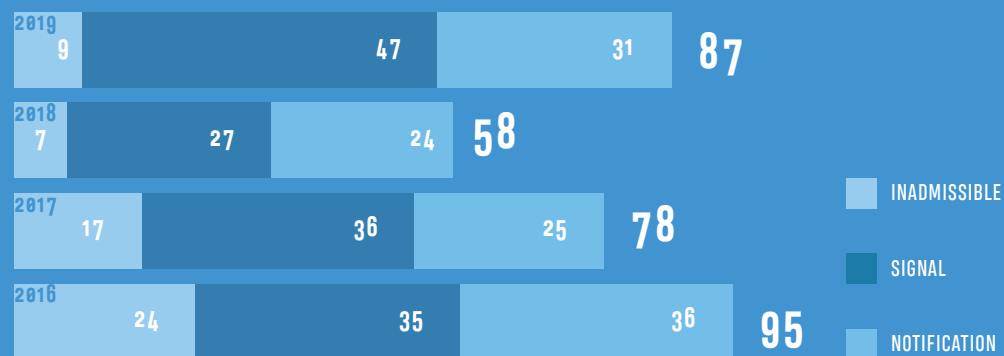
process. With regard to the former, we will be in dialogue with our clients to jointly look into how we can implement this reduction. The RvA scores extremely well when we ask clients about their experiences of contact with RvA employees (*an average of 8*) and the reporting of assessments (*an average of 9*).

## Processing complaints

In accordance with the Dutch General Administrative Law Act (Algemene wet bestuursrecht), the RvA has a complaints procedure in place for any complaints about the RvA as an administrative authority. This procedure, QA-008, can be accessed directly via our website ([www.rva.nl](http://www.rva.nl)).

In 2019, 27 complaints were processed. The majority of the complaints were about the processing time of an application for accreditation and our communication with the client. When it became apparent in early 2019 that timely handling of complaints by the RvA left something to be desired, we made major efforts to improve coordination and collaboration between all parties involved. This led to the percentage of complaints that were handled on time in 2019 increasing from 50% in the first quarter to 90% in the fourth quarter.

## NUMBER OF NOTIFICATIONS AND SIGNALS RECEIVED ABOUT ACCREDITED ORGANISATIONS





## Notifications and signals

In the event of dissatisfaction or doubts about the work of an accredited organisation, a notification or an alert can be submitted to the RvA. In the first case, the RvA investigates the notification with the accredited party and feedback is provided to the notifier. In the event of a signal, the RvA will, as it sees fit, incorporate the information into the supervision of the accredited organisation. The notifier will not receive any feedback in this case.

The valid notifications and signals received in 2019 related to organisations accredited for inspection or certification. They primarily concerned the working method and the processing of complaints by accredited organisations.

Generally speaking, notifications or signal are investigated during the next regular assessment. In response to a notification or signal, the RvA's Executive Board can decide to carry out an extra

assessment if the content of what has been signaled is such that doubts are raised about the reliability of the work of the accredited organisation. In 2019, the decision to perform an extra assessment was made ten times. In five cases, the doubts seemed to be justified and the respective organisation had to take measures to prevent recurrence in the future. In three cases, the doubts appeared to be unjustified.



WE STRIVE FOR OPERATIONAL  
EXCELLENCE: HOW DO WE CREATE  
MORE VALUE FOR OUR CLIENTS?



**100**

salaried  
employees



**11**

new salaried  
employees



**43**

men



**57**

women



**714**

freelance technical experts



**86**

new freelance technical  
experts contracted

### Processing objections, appeals and 'WOB' freedom of information applications


We did not receive any WOB applications (applications under the Dutch Government Information (Public Access) Act [Wet openbaarheid van bestuur]) in 2019. Four objections were lodged against a decision of the RvA. The decisions against which objections were lodged concerned the withdrawal of a part of the accreditation (two objections) and the restriction of the duration of accreditation (two objections). Three objections were declared (partially) justified and one objection was declared inadmissible.



*Bringing our work to  
the attention of a wide  
target audience via  
clear communication:  
that's what makes my  
work challenging.*

Kirsten van Wanum, *Executive  
Secretariat Assistant*



A portrait of Andreas Steinhorst, a middle-aged man with dark hair, wearing a dark suit, light blue shirt, and dark blue tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression.

# Accreditation: of *international* importance

Just like other European accreditation bodies, the RvA is affiliated with the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA). The task of this umbrella institution is to encourage harmonisation between its members. What is the value of accreditation at a European and global level? A conversation with Andreas Steinhorst, Executive Secretary of the EA.

Andreas Steinhorst is the Executive Secretary of the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA). He was formerly the managing director of DACH, the German accreditation body for chemistry, and of the German national accreditation body DAkkS which was newly founded in 2008.

### A PROVEN TOOL

Nationally and internationally, consumers want to be able to trust the quality and safety of products and services. That confidence needs to be based on something. Accreditation plays a significant role in this. So-called *conformity assessment bodies* assess whether products satisfy the set requirements. Have they been accredited by an EA member? Then we can assume that these bodies are operating competently, impartially and consistently. Accreditation is also a proven tool for European and national authorities. For instance, high risk products and services may only be assessed by accredited bodies.

### ACCREDITED ONCE, ACCEPTED EVERYWHERE

Once every four years, each EA member undergoes an intensive assessment by peer bodies from other European countries. This means we can transparently demonstrate that they satisfy the requirements of the European Regulation 765/2008 and the international ISO/IEC 17011 standard. Has an EA member successfully passed a peer review of this kind? Then all countries

must acknowledge the equivalence of its services – as well as the certificates and reports issued by conformity assessment bodies under its supervision. *Accredited once, accepted everywhere.* Ultimately, these certificates and reports are a ‘passport’ for products and services that providers bring onto the European and global market.

### RESPONDING TO THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

One of the challenges we face is the digital transformation: how will we deal with developments like blockchain, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity? The system of conformity assessment and accreditation will also play a major role in these areas. The EA maintains close contact with the European Commission to ensure that new instruments are accredited in accordance with the European Regulation 765/2008. But our members are faced with the biggest challenge: they have to respond to these new sectors effectively, so that citizens and companies can continue to trust certificates and reports in the future.

How will we deal with developments like blockchain, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity?



# A quick recap of 2019...



Upon the occasion of Jan van der Poel's departure as Director/Chief Executive of the RvA, we organised a symposium for our contacts: *The value of confidence*.



Since 22 June 2019, Roeland Nieuweboer (l) and Joep de Haas (r) have formed the RvA's new Executive Board. You can find out more about them in the introduction to this report.



We also welcomed several international parties this year. This included two delegations from China and representatives of the American Food and Drug Administration (FDA).



The RDW Testcentre gave RvA employees a look behind the scenes...





The RvA became a signatory of the ILAC-MRA for the accreditation of organisers of proficiency testing according to ISO/IEC 17043. Roeland Nieuweboer received a certificate for this at the IAF and ILAC annual general meeting.



For the first time, the RvA organised a number of client meetings, where we discussed the collaboration with and service provided by the RvA. These meetings provided a lot of concrete feedback and advice.



The Dutch Data Protection Authority (Autoriteit Persoonsgegevens) and the RvA signed an information protocol. This protocol contributes to more efficient and effective supervision of GDPR certification.

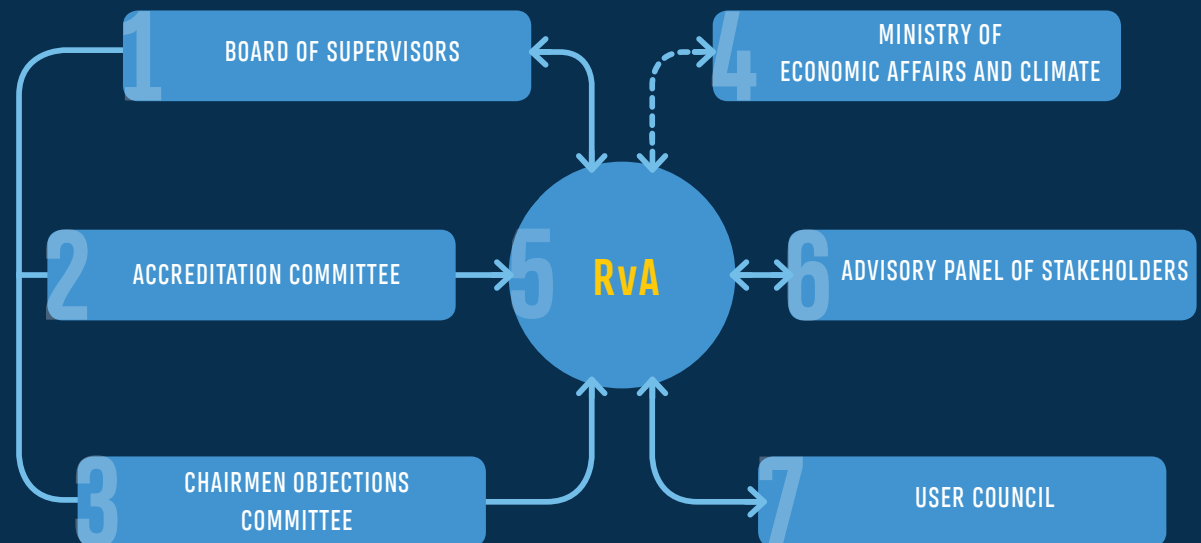


This year we celebrated the successful completion of a large-scale transition project: around 250 medical laboratories moved from CCKL to RvA accreditation.

# 6

## Supervision and advice

The RvA may and must operate with a high degree of independence, but forms of supervision of the work and advice in the decision-making process are also of major importance in this regard. They guarantee the expertise, impartiality and independence of the RvA and provide a critical evaluation of our activities and our business operations.





## 1 Board of Supervisors

The Board of Supervisors ensures that the Executive Board realises the objectives of the RvA. The members are selected based on expertise and competences. It is preferable for the following competence areas to be represented on the Board of Supervisors:

- business sector
- public sector
- research/technology
- health care/medical
- food and goods
- quality assurance

## 2 Accreditation Committee

The Accreditation Committee consists of four members appointed on the basis of their expertise in accreditation, their integrity, and their independence. Its duty is to advise the Executive Board with regard to granting accreditations.

## 3 Chairmen Objections Committee

In the event of objections against a decision by the RvA, a member of this Committee will be engaged. The members of this Committee are strictly independent.

## 4 Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate

The RvA must comply with the relevant provisions of the Dutch Autonomous Administrative Authorities Framework Act (Kaderwet zelfstandige bestuursorganen) and European Regulation 765/2008. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate supervises this. Insofar as this relates to the substantive side of the RvA's work, it can rely on the EA (European co-operation for Accreditation) peer reviews which the RvA undergoes every four years.

## 5 Executive Board

The responsibilities of the Executive Board include the realisation of the goals and business operations of the RvA. The two-person Executive Board is assisted by two advisory panels: the Advisory Panel of Stakeholders and the User Council.

## 6 Advisory Panel of Stakeholders

This panel consists of representatives of the public sector, direct clients of the RvA, direct customers of our clients, scheme owners and scientific institutes. The aim of the panel is twofold:

- to give solicited and unsolicited advice on general policy matters;

- to guarantee the impartiality of the RvA in the further development of the substantive policy.

## 7 User Council

The User Council consists of representatives of the RvA's direct clients and it advises the RvA on the budget, rates, and the quality of the service provision. The User Council has also been informed about the plans around and contents of the digitalisation projects that are being developed. The design of the user interface for these systems may be discussed via a limited number of client panels.

### EA MULTILATERAL AGREEMENT COMMITTEE

In order to remain a signatory of the EA's Multilateral Agreement (MLA), the RvA must satisfy the requirements of European Regulation 765/2008 and the international ISO/IEC 17011 standard. Every four years, the RvA is assessed by a team of approximately ten 'peers' in the format of a peer review.

## Members of administrative bodies and advisory committees

This overview contains the composition of the administrative bodies and advisory committees as of 1 March 2020.

### Board of Supervisors

- Mr Y. C. M. T. van Rooy LL.M. (*Chairman*)  
1st term until 1 December 2021
- Ir. L. Visser (*Vice Chairman*)  
3rd term until 26 October 2020
- Prof. dr. J. van den Heuvel  
1st term until 1 August 2020
- Dr. ir. I. Mastenbroek  
2nd term until 13 March 2022
- Ir. P. F. van Rhede van der Kloot  
1st term until 31 August 2020

For the report of the Board of Supervisors for 2019 please refer to the financial report for 2019, which you can download via our website ([www.rva.nl](http://www.rva.nl)). You can find more information there about the members of the Board of Supervisors and their additional functions.

### Board of Supervisors

- Mr R. D. Nieuweboer LL.M. (*Chairman of the Executive Board*), as of 22 June 2019
- Mr J. A. W. M. de Haas LL.M. (*Member of the Executive Board*), as of 22 June 2019

### Resigned members:

- Ir. J. C. van der Poel (*Director/Chief Executive*), as of 22 June 2019

### Accreditation Committee

- Prof. dr. ir. O. A. M. Fisscher (*Chairman*)
- Prof. dr. E. Bakker
- Dr G. H. M. Counotte
- Ir. C. K. Pasmooij

### Chairmen Objections Committee

- Mr A. Pahladsingh LL.M.
- Mr M. N. van Zijl LL.M.

### Resigned members:

- Mr L. A. F. M. Kerklaan LL.M., as of 2 December 2019

### Advisory Panel of Stakeholders

- Prof. dr. Ph. Eijlander (*scientific institutes, Chairman*)
- Dr R. Baumgarten (*medical laboratories*)
- Mr J. A. van den Bos LL.M. (*Inspection Board, state inspectorate*)
- Ir. N. F. J. Hendriks (*NVCi, certification and inspection agencies*)
- Drs. H. P. L. van den Heuvel (*LTO, primary sector*)

- Ir. J. J. N. M. Hogeling (*VNO-NCW, industry*)
- R. Karel (*Fenelab, laboratories and inspection agencies*)
- Ing. G. J. W. Kerkman (*Dutch Association of Insurers, non-life insurers*)
- Drs. A. Koopman (*Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate, ministries*)
- Dr H. S. Mülder (*Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, public sector supervisors*)
- Dr H. C. Ossebaard (*Dutch National Healthcare Institute, standardisation*)
- Dr M. W. H. Pieksma (*VSL Dutch Metrology Institute, metrology*)
- Ir. F. W. Stuyt (*VuS, scheme administrators*)
- Ir. R.H. van Terwisga (*NEN, standardisation*)

### User Council

- Dr S. M. Bruisten (*medical laboratories*)
- B. van Doorsselaere (*VEROCOG*)
- Dr B. G. Hepkema (*medical laboratories*)
- R. Karel (*Fenelab*)
- Dr B. M. A. Kroon (*Fenelab*)
- Ir. O. T. H. van Panhuys (*NVCi*)
- W. van Vreeswijk (*NVCi*)

We are deeply thankful to all members for their input in 2019.

**THESE FORMS OF  
SUPERVISION AND  
ADVICE CONTRIBUTE  
TO A JUSTIFIED  
CONFIDENCE IN OUR  
WORK.**





# 7

## Our work in figures

Confidence also requires the possibility of controls. In this chapter you will find an overview in figures of our activities in 2019. We have also added previous figures for comparison in several cases.



## Accreditations granted as at 31 December 2019

Standard	Explanation	Netherlands 2019	Abroad 2019	Total 2019	Netherlands 2018	Abroad 2018	Total 2018
<b>CERTIFICATION</b>							
ISO/IEC 17065	Products and services	58	3	61	47	3	50
ISO/IEC 17021	Management system	47	16	63	44	17	61
ISO/IEC 17024	Persons	5	0	5	5	0	5
Certification subtotal		110	19	129	96	20	116
<b>INSPECTION</b>							
ISO/IEC 17020	Inspection	133	1	134	128	1	129
Inspection subtotal		133	1	134	128	1	129
<b>RVA MARK LABORATORIES</b>							
ISO/IEC 17025	Calibration	59	0	59	57	0	57
ISO/IEC 17025	Testing	248	7	255	242	7	249
ISO/IEC 17043	Proficiency testing	13	1	14	14	1	15
ISO 15189	Medical laboratories in MLA	234	6	240	210	5	215
ISO Guide 34	Reference materials	2	0	2	2	0	2
Laboratories subtotal		556	14	570	525	13	538
ISO 14065	EMAS/Emission	4	1	5	4	1	5
Regulation (EC) No. 1221/2009 (EMAS)	EMAS verification	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>RvA mark total</b>		<b>803</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>838</b>	<b>753</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>788</b>
CCKL mark laboratories							
CCKL Code of Practice*	Medical laboratories	0	0	0	22	0	22
<b>Total number of accreditations granted</b>		<b>803</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>838</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>810</b>

\* These accreditations fall beyond the scope of the autonomous administrative authority

As in previous years, more than 50% of the increase in the total number of accreditations granted in 2019 is due to the transition of medical laboratories from the CCKL Code of Practice to ISO 15189. An effect of the approaching Brexit is also visible: for the most part, the relatively high number of new certification accreditations concerns certification bodies that have relocated their activities as notified bodies under the European directives to the Netherlands.

### New accreditations by type (number and processing time from application until decision)

	New accreditations	Average processing time in calendar days	New accreditations	Average processing time in calendar days
Decision in	2019	2019	2018	2018
Certification	8	246	5	332
Inspection	3	351	6	304
Calibration laboratory	3	341	4	291
Test laboratory	9	333	5	343
Medical laboratory	30	335	49	332
EMAS/Emission	0	0	0	0
Other	1	213	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>319*</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>327*</b>

\*This is a weighted average

The total number of new accreditations fell in 2019. This is related to the completion of the transition of medical laboratories from the CCKL Code of Practice to ISO 15189. The number of new accreditations of medical laboratories in 2019 was 30; 19 fewer than the previous year.

In 2019, the average processing time of initial assessments for all types of accreditations was 319 calendar days. This is an improvement in relation to 2018, when the average processing time was 327 calendar days. However, the distribution of processing times is high, varying from 6 to 15 months.



### Extensions of the scope of accreditation per type (number and processing time from application until decision)

	Extensions	Average processing time in calendar days	Extensions	Average processing time in calendar days
Decision in	2019	2019	2018	2018
Certification	43	166	60	232
Inspection	8	157	10	222
Calibration laboratory	10	215	6	279
Test laboratory	125	158	120	117
Medical laboratory	42	241	29	220
EMAS/Emission	0	-	1	169
Other	1	205	1	177
<b>Total</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>177*</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>170*</b>

\*This is a weighted average

Is there a relatively high number of extension projects for a specific accreditation standard? Then this is due to the transfer to new versions of schemes, standards or regulations. These projects are handled as extension projects, but have a different dynamic than regular scope extensions, and therefore a shorter processing time. Projects of this nature were not an issue in 2019. The increase in the number of scope extensions for medical

laboratories is in line with the number of accreditations for this standard.

The distribution of average processing times for extension projects is also high. It varies from 1 to 14 months. Over 99% of the extension projects receive a decision within 12 months. At 177 days, the average processing time per scope extension is somewhat higher in 2019 than in 2018.



## Interpretation disputes

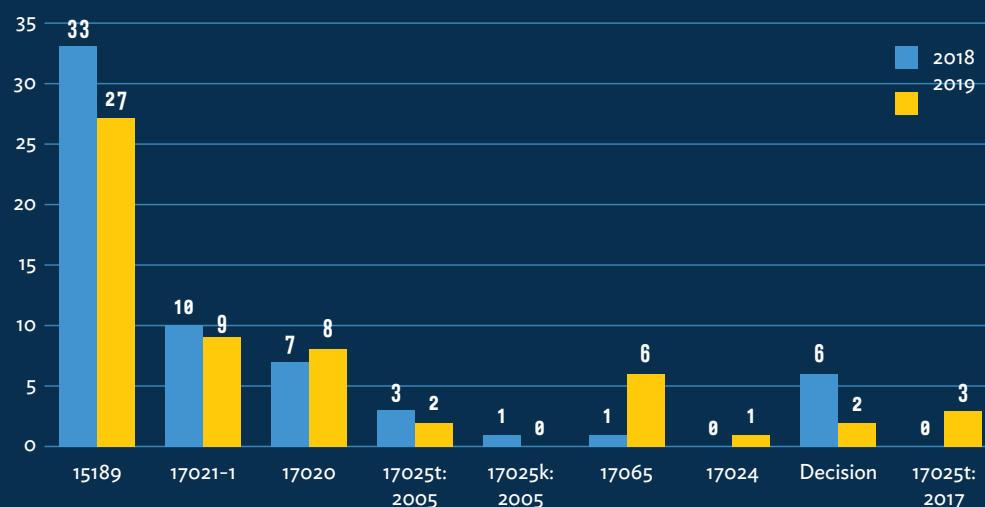
If an RvA assessment team concludes that a client does not comply with the requirements, the team will write a '*non-conformity*'. It may be that the client does not agree with the team's interpretation of the requirements. In that case, the assessed party has the opportunity to issue an interpretation dispute. The processing of such a dispute indicates how the standard should be interpreted. In relation to 2018, the number of submitted dis-

putes increased in 2019, from 65 to 90. However, the total number of admissible (and therefore processed) disputes has remained more or less the same over the last 3 years, hovering around 60.

In 2018 and 2019 we received a relatively high number of disputes concerning the ISO 15189 standard. The processing of these clarified the interpretation of this standard for all parties involved. We also included the results in the assessors' training, wherein extra attention has been paid to the

formulation of non-conformities. Furthermore, we have modified the procedure for handling disputes: the team leader is now the first to react to a dispute, by having another look at the formulation of a non-conformity. This often leads, in a short period of time, to more clarity regarding the non-conformity on the part of the client, or to a reformulation of the non-conformity by the team leader, thereby allowing the dispute procedure to be completed.

Interpretation disputes per standard:



The results of interpretation disputes:

At year-end	2019	2018
<b>Total number of disputes</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>60</b>
Non-conformity reformulated by team leader after consultation	4%	7%
Non-conformity withdrawn by team leader after consultation	17%	13%
Non-conformity is maintained unchanged	28%	27%
Non-conformity is maintained, but reformulated	1%	10%
Non-conformity (partially) withdrawn	7%	25%
Other outcome of dispute	3%	3%
Pending	3%	12%
Inadmissible	36%	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Suspended accreditations (for the entire scope)

Accreditation category	Voluntary 2019	Imposed 2019	Total 2019	Voluntary 2018	Imposed 2018	Total 2018
Certification	0	1	1	1	0	1
Inspection	0	0	0	1	0	1
Calibration laboratories	0	0	0	1	0	1
Test laboratories	0	1	1	4	0	4
Medical laboratories	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>RvA mark total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>

## Withdrawn accreditations (for the entire scope)

Accreditation category	Voluntary 2019	Imposed 2019	Total 2019	Voluntary 2018	Imposed 2018	Total 2018
Certification	3	0	3	3	0	3
Inspection	0	0	0	6	1	7
Calibration laboratories	3	0	3	1	0	1
Test laboratories	5	1	6	7	0	7
Medical laboratories	5	0	5	5	0	5
Other	0	0	0	2	0	2
<b>RvA mark total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>

## Suspended accreditations (for a part of the scope)

Accreditation category	Voluntary 2019	Imposed 2019	Total 2019	Voluntary 2018	Imposed 2018	Total 2018
Certification	0	7	7	0	1	1
Inspection	0	0	0	0	0	0
Calibration laboratories	0	0	0	1	0	1
Test laboratories	7	0	7	0	0	0
Medical laboratories	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>RvA mark total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

## Withdrawn accreditations (for a part of the scope)

Accreditation category	Voluntary 2019	Imposed 2019	Total 2019	Voluntary 2018	Imposed 2018	Total 2018
Certification	6	0	6	1	0	1
Inspection	1	0	1	1	0	1
Calibration laboratories	1	0	1	0	0	0
Test laboratories	1	0	1	6	0	6
Medical laboratories	40	0	40	29	0	29
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>RvA mark total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>37</b>



# 8

## Brief financial overview

The RvA is a not-for-profit organisation on the basis of its Articles of Association and pursuant to the European Regulation 765/2008. Our independence is guaranteed via the Dutch National Accreditation Body Appointment Act (Wet aanwijzing nationale accreditatie-instantie) and by a modern governance structure with a Board of Supervisors, an Accreditation Committee, an Advisory Panel of Stakeholders and a User Council. We also ensure our independence via a healthy capital position. This means that we are resilient against financial risks which might arise, for instance if clients decide to terminate the accreditation.

### Annual accounts

The figures alongside have been taken as a summary from the adopted annual accounts for 2019. You can download the full annual accounts via our website ([www.rva.nl](http://www.rva.nl)) or request them from us via [communicatie@rva.nl](mailto:communicatie@rva.nl).

The annual accounts have been compiled with due observance of the Dutch Autonomous Administrative Authorities Framework Act (Kaderwet zelfstandige bestuursorganen). The Guideline for Annual Reporting 640 'Not-for-profit organisations' (Richtlijn voor de jaarverslaggeving 640) has been used since 2018.

**Profit and loss account (x €1000)**

Results	Budgeted 2019	2019	2018
Net turnover	13,953	14,470	14,595
Expenses			
Personnel	8,209	8,183	8,161
Costs of outsourced work	3,529	3,863	4,103
Travel and accommodation costs	600	779	750
Depreciation of fixed assets	104	95	124
Other costs	1,849	1,549	1,277
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>14,291</b>	<b>14,469</b>	<b>14,415</b>
<b>Sum of income and expenses</b>	<b>-338</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>180</b>
Interest income	3	1	2
<b>Result</b>	<b>-335</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>182</b>
Costs charged to designated fund	350	131	-
Addition to designated fund	-	-170	-170
Changes to equalisation and other reserve	15	-37	12

**Balance sheet as at 31 December (x €1000) after appropriation of the result**

Assets	2019	2018
Fixed assets	279	373
Receivables and transitory assets	3,818	3,797
Liquid assets	2,852	3,532
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,949</b>	<b>7,702</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
Equity capital	4,210	4,208
Short-term debts and transitory liabilities	2,739	3,494
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,949</b>	<b>7,702</b>

The capital requirement was evaluated in 2014 and will be re-evaluated in 2020. The changed status of the RvA in 2010 into an autonomous administrative authority was one of the reasons to maximise the buffer capital (equity capital +/- designated fund) at 4 million euros in the coming years. The extent of the buffer capital at year-end 2019 was 3,772,984 euros; at year-end 2018, it was 3,809,804 euros.



**CONFIDENCE  
ALSO REQUIRES  
THE POSSIBILITY  
OF CONTROLS.**



## Distribution of invoiced time

For the kind of assessment:

Assessment type	2019 (total number of days 8,724 = 100%)	2018 (total number of days 8,680 = 100%)	2017 (total number of days 8,817 = 100%)
Initial assessment	7%	5%	5%
Extension	8%	7%	8%
Re-assessment	18%	17%	23%
Surveillance	57%	51%	43%
Witnessing	9%	10%	10%
Transition to ISO 15189	1%	10%	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Broken down by role in the assessment team:

Role	2019 (total number of days 8,724 = 100%)	2018 (total number of days 8,680 = 100%)	2017 (total number of days 8,817 = 100%)
Lead assessor	43%	45%	44%
Assessor	11%	11%	10%
Technical expert	46%	44%	46%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Including the assessment of corrective measures and witness sessions:

Deployment	2019 (total number of days 8,724 = 100%)	2018 (total number of days 8,680 = 100%)	2017 (total number of days 8,817 = 100%)
At client's site	48%	47%	47%
Preparation/reporting	49%	50%	50%
Travel outside the Netherlands	3%	3%	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>



*Contributing to the financial resilience of our organisation by mitigating risks: that's the challenge for me.*

Evert van Beekhuizen,  
Finance & Control Manager

# COLOPHON

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