

**Quality promotion in Europe
Belgium**

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QUALITY PROMOTION IN EUROPE
Belgium

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1. Introduction

In Belgium the political situation has an important bearing on policy in the field of quality. In recent years there has been a significant change in the relationship between the national government and the different regions of Flanders, Walloon and Brussels. As a result, the responsibilities of the three regional governments with respect to business policy has increased significantly. Consequently, quality programmes is almost entirely the responsibility of the regional governments, while the national government in Brussels has no significant role. In this report, quality activities and support schemes are clearly distinguished for the three regions: Brussels, Walloon and Flanders. In respect to quality, the three regions may almost be considered as three individual countries.

The role of the national government in Brussels with respect to quality is, however, very important in (but also limited to) the field of accreditation and certification. In 1990, the national government passed a law, on the initiative of the National Ministry of Economic Affairs, concerning the accreditation of certification and inspection bodies as well as testing laboratories. The law supports the creation, through Royal Decrees, of an official accreditation structure, which guarantees a credible, neutral and objective system for accreditation and certification at the national and European level. Under this law, the first seven certification bodies were accredited in 1992.

2. The Emergence of Quality as an Issue

The first initiatives in the field of quality originated in the region of Flanders in 1970. Several West-Flemish entrepreneurs visited Japan and witnessed the impressive expansion of Japanese businesses - the result of a sustained application of quality products and services. The visit led directly, in 1971, to the creation of a provincial centre for education, training and support with respect to total quality management in companies - the 'Centre for Quality West-Flanders' (CKZ - Centrum voor Kwaliteitszorg). The second provincial centre for quality, 'CKZ Antwerp' was established the same year - the initiative for this centre being taken by industry representatives, especially from the mechanical and electrotechnical industries. Two years later CKZ Brabant was established. During the 1980s three more centres for quality were established in Flanders; CKZ East-Flanders (1981), CKZ Limburg (1982) and CKZ Flemish Brabant (1986). Similar centres were established in the Walloon region: Centre pour la Gestion de la Qualité (CQ) Liege-Luxembourg and the CQ Hainaut-Namur. In this respect the influence of Fabrimetal (Federation of the Mechanical and Electrotechnical Industry) has been very important. Within the country, Fabrimetal fulfilled has played a pioneering role with regard to

quality. Most centres were established on the initiative of Fabrimetal companies. Fabrimetal also provided secretarial support for several of the centres in their first few years of operation.

In 1973, the Belgium Centre for Quality BCK/CBQ¹ was established as a national umbrella organization in order to provide national representation in the EOQC² (European Organization for Quality Control). At that time Belgium was the only country in Europe which was not a member of EOQC.

Public initiatives in the field of quality are rare. The first public initiative was taken by the Flemish government in 1982. The Minister of Education provided financial support in order to implement TQM in the field of secondary education. A policy committee 'Total Quality Management in Education' was established to carry out the programme. More information about the programme is given in chapter 5.1. The initiative gave the impulse to the establishment of several Acts (Decreten) by the Flemish government concerning quality in education. An Act (Decreet) is, in this respect, not national law but has force in the region in which it was passed. One Act determined that quality had to be part of the curriculum of schools and universities and another obliged the training of teachers in the field of quality. Also, the D.O.O.³ (Department of Education Development) in Flanders established standards with respect to quality in school organizations. In 1984, the Flemish government explicitly recognized the importance of quality to the economy. The Flemish government agreed with the need for a quality policy which:

- promoted total quality management in businesses; and
- developed an image of Flemish quality in other countries.

A consequence of this decision was the establishment in 1985 of the Flemish Centre for Quality - VCK (Vlaams Centrum voor Kwaliteitszorg) as an umbrella organization for the provincial quality centres in Flanders. This establishment was supported by the Flemish government with a financial contribution of 1,4 million ECU in total for a period of 5 years up to 1990. A condition of this support was that VCK and the centres for quality should eventually become self-supporting and maintain its level of activity in the years following.

The most recent development in the field of quality has been the agreement of a national law⁴ concerning the accreditation of certification and inspection bodies, as well as testing

¹BCK-CBQ: Belgisch Centrum voor Kwaliteitszorg/Centre Belgique pour la gestion de la Qualité: description is given in chapter 3.

²EOQC, established in 1957, is now EOQ.

³D.O.O.: Dienst Onderwijs Ontwikkeling, Flemish Ministry of Education.

⁴Royal Decree of 20 July 1990 (Official Journal 16124, 22 August 1990) on the accreditation of certification and inspection bodies as well as laboratories.

laboratories. This act was established on the initiative of the National Ministry of Economic Affairs in July 1990. The Belgian business community and certification organizations had wanted the law for several years. Its passing at last allowed official certification and accreditation to be undertaken. In March 25th 1992, the first seven certification bodies were officially accredited by the National Committee for the Accreditation of Certification bodies which certify Quality Assurance Systems (NAC-QS). The NAC-QS has been created in 1989 on the initiative of the Belgian Standardization Institute (BIN/IBN) together with the VCK⁵, the Wallon Quality association (AWQ⁶), the Brussels Quality Centre (KCGB/CQRB⁷) and a number of other organisations in order to provide the necessary framework for the official recognition of Belgian certification bodies according to NBN standards.

NAC-QS plays an important role in implementing the law concerning accreditation and certification. The rationale for the statutory regulation of accreditation is that the credibility, neutrality and objectivity of systems for certification and accreditation are best guaranteed by law. The law of July 20th 1990 covers only the basic principles of accreditation and certification. Because of its simple structure the law allows different accreditation and certification structures to be defined and implemented. In this way, it is easy to adapt to changes in the international certification and accreditation structure. Also, the accreditation structure provides, from the start, the possibility of cooperation between the different national governments, regions and provinces while allowing each to retain their own competences.

The law is based on the following principles:

- the law is voluntary in nature, e.g. it is not supposed to impose rules on all companies or institutions, but only on those companies who wish to provide credible references indicating that they are operating in accordance with internationally recognized standards; and,
- the law is based on a simple and pragmatic approach: maximum transparency and coherence is guaranteed, and takes into account, as far as possible, existing systems (on condition that these provide a coherent whole which can be coordinated at the national level).

The law will be operationalised by several Royal Decrees in the near future.

The establishment of a National Council for Accreditation and Certification⁸ in January 1991 was a logical first step leading from the Accreditation Act of July 1990. The overall objective of the Council is to guarantee the realization and coordination of the accreditation system.

⁵Vlaams Centrum voor Kwaliteitszorg

⁶Association Wallone pour la Gestion de la Qualité, see chapter 3

⁷KCGB-CQRB (Kwaliteitscentrum Gewest Brussel - Centre pour la Gestion de la Qualité de la Région Bruxelloise): Centre pour la Qualité de la Région Bruxelloise, see chapter 3

⁸Royal Decree of 24 january 1991 (Official Journal 2140, 2 february 1991) on the establishment of the National Council for Accreditation and Certification.

The task of the Council is:

- to coordinate the principles and procedures concerning accreditation and certification;
- to accumulate, distribute and publish information with respect to activities in the field;
- to ensure that all interested parties are involved in activities of accreditation and certification;
- to promote and coordinate all efforts which lead to agreements of mutual recognition at the international level; and,
- to give advice with respect to coordination and certification.

The Council was officially installed in July 1991 and is composed of representatives from the National Ministry of Economic Affairs and other national ministries, the Flemish, Walloon and Brussels regional governments, Belgium Standards Institute (BNI/IBN), Belgian Calibration Organization (BKO) together with representatives from many other industrial and consumer organizations, trade unions, and accredited certification bodies.

Diffusion of Quality

In 1989 a study⁹ was carried out by PRACK¹⁰ (association for practice-oriented and participative management and total quality management) in conjunction with the Belgian National Bank and some large companies, to investigate the situation in Belgium with regard to Total Quality Management. About 1400 companies of all industries were questioned. 600 (42%) of the companies replied. 28% of the companies said that total quality management was applied. Two-thirds of these companies had applied TQM for over two years. 73% of the respondents defined TQM as 'to better control the quality of our products', 60% as 'to motivate and involve employees in the company' and 52% regarded TQM as 'a global strategy'.

The companies were also questioned about their motives for the implementation of TQM. Approximately 70% answered that the implementation of TQM was a strategic choice for a new management approach; 40% considered it as a good selling argument and 35% implemented TQM under the pressure of clients. Other findings of the study were that small companies had enough capacity for a systematic TQM policy that TQM activities are least progressed in medium-sized companies, and that time appeared to be the most important reason (51%) for difficulties with the implementation of TQM, i.e. TQM was not given the highest priority.

According to W. de Pril 'The life cycle of TQM, as it was introduced fifteen years ago, is nearly at its end¹¹'. Four phases can be distinguished: an awareness phase, an implementation

⁹Source: De Standaard, *Ruim kwart Belgische bedrijven streeft actief integrale kwaliteit na*, 1989, & De Financieel-Economische Tijd, *Kwaliteitsstreven strandt op gebrek aan vorming en tijd*, 1989.

¹⁰PRACK: Vereniging voor Praktijkgericht en Participatief Management en Integrale Kwaliteitszorg, see chapter 3.

¹¹W. de Pril: vice-president CKZ East-Flanders. Source: De Kwaliteitskrant, *Waar naartoe met de kwaliteitszorg in België*, Dossier Kwaliteitsorganisatie's, april 1992.

phase, an audit phase and finally a certification phase. The awareness and implementation phase is considered to be completed and the audit and certification phase has now been entered. Companies are less dependent on the support of quality centres. The organizations that promote quality have to adapt to the new situation and should concentrate less on promotion and awareness. Training and the exchange of experiences are important nowadays. An exception is the service sector, with the observation that 'Total Quality Management stops at the factory gate'¹², i.e. TQM is mainly applied in the product industries and barely developed in the service sector. The introduction of quality in the service industry is an increasingly important issue for the regional and provincial quality centres. The Flemish centres are already developing initiatives for the introduction of TQM in the service industry, but little progress has so far been made.

The question has arisen as to whether the government should play a more important role in the field of quality¹³. For instance should the government support companies financially as in other countries? The opinion often expressed is that if companies regard quality as important, they will undertake quality improvement activities by themselves. It is argued that the best service government can provide for companies is to implement TQM itself in order to function more efficiently - thus saving companies time in their dealings with government.

Table 1: Overview of Developments in the Field of Quality 1970-1992

1971 :	Establishment of first (provincial) quality centre: West-Flanders
1973 :	Establishment of the Belgian Centre for Quality as umbrella organization of all regional and provincial centres, membership of Belgium in EOCQ
1982 :	First public initiative: 'implementation of TQM in Education' subsidized by the Flemish government
1985 :	Establishment of VCK, subsidized by the Flemish government
1989:	Establishment of National Committee for the Accreditation of Certification Bodies (NAC-QS)
1990 :	Establishment of the Accreditation and Certification Law
1991 :	Establishment of the National Council for Certification and Accreditation
1992 :	First official accreditation of seven certification organizations by NAC-QS

¹²A. Geirnaert, president VCK. Source: De Kwaliteitskrant, *Waar naartoe met de kwaliteitszorg in België*, Dossier Kwaliteitsorganisatie's, april 1992.

¹³Source: De Kwaliteitskrant, *Waar naartoe met de kwaliteitszorg in België*, Dossier Kwaliteitsorganisatie's, april 1992.

3. The Quality Infrastructure

The network of organizations in the field of quality is clearly structured. The network consists of different levels which are closely interrelated. At provincial level, eight centres for quality 'CKZs/CQs' are responsible for the promotion and support of quality activities in companies. These organizations operate almost identically and are all autonomous. At regional level the Flemish, Brussels and Walloon Centres for Quality, respectively VCK, KGCB/CQRB and AWQ are active. These are the umbrella organizations for the provincial centers found in Flanders, Brussels and Walloon. At the national level the Belgian Centre for Quality (BCK-CBQ) is the umbrella organization for all of the provincial and regional quality centres. It is responsible for the international representation of Belgium. Additionally, the Belgium Standards Institute and the National Council for Accreditation and Certification are the two national organizations for the preparation of standards and for the accreditation of certification organizations.

Certification

Quality systems are certified by several national and foreign certification bodies. In 1989, NAC-QS¹⁴, was established to accreditate certification bodies of quality assurance systems. NAC-QS is composed of representatives of BIN/IBN (4), VCK (4), AWQ (4) and KCGB/CQRB (2). NAC-QS contributes to the execution of the accreditation and certification law, and continues to play an important role in defining and creating the accreditation structure. NAC-QS and the Dutch Council for Certification agreed¹⁵ in 1991 to assist each other in the accreditation of certification organizations of quality systems. This cooperation will lower the costs of accreditation. Another advantage is the reinforcement of the position of Belgium in the field of accreditation and mutual recognition of certification bodies.

The first seven certification bodies were accredited by NAC-QS in March 1992. These included BQA (Belgian Quality Association), Bureau Secco, AIB-Vinçotte, Bureau Veritas Quality International, SGS European Quality Certification Institute, Det Norske Veritas and Eurosym. In the near future the acknowledgement and withdrawal of accreditations will be determined by Royal Decree within the terms of the law on Accreditation and Certification of July 1990. From this point accredited certification bodies will be notified for international or foreign institutions in view of the conclusion of agreements for mutual recognition.

¹⁴NAC-QS: National ACcreditation-Quality Systems.

¹⁵Cf. Vlaams Centrum voor Kwaliteitszorg, *België-Nederland: samen akkrediteren is goedkoper*, De Kwaliteitskrant, nr. 3, april 1991, Zellik.

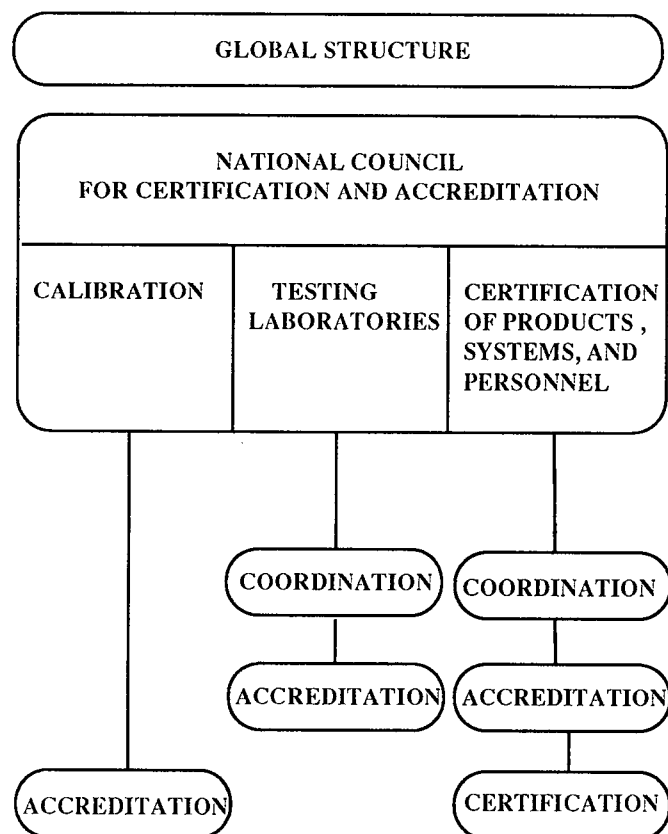
Standardization

The Belgian norms (NBN) are established by the Belgian Standards Institute (BNI/IBN). The institute collaborates with other standardization institutions such as BEC (Belgian Electrotechnical Committee). BNI/IBN allocates the BENOR-mark of conformity (for the electrotechnical standards this is the CEBEC-mark).

In addition, BIN/IBN is the Belgian centre for information on technical regulations and standards.

BIN/IBN is nationally and internationally active at different levels. At the national level BNI/IBN has close contact with private sector and governmental organizations. At the international level the institute is member of the ISO and CEN. There is also close contact with the Dutch Standards Institute NNI as part of the Benelux cooperation. BIN/IBN is a non-profit organization and is one-third financed by the Government, one-third by industry, and one-third by revenue raised by the sales of standards, etc.

Figure 1: The Accreditation and Certification System in Belgium



source: Lathuy, L.B., Ministry of Economic Affairs,
"L'Accreditation et la Certification en Belgique", july 1991

In the European context for accreditation and certification (EOTC and the EQS- the European Committee for Quality Systems), an advisory committee on the certification of quality systems (BQS - Belgian committee for Quality Systems) was installed within BIN in agreement with the Ministry of Economic Affairs. It was on the initiative of this committee that the Council for Accreditation and Certification NAC-QS was installed in 1991 in conjunction with AWQ, KCGB-CQRB and VCK .

Promotion, Awareness and Consultancy

As mentioned above, organizations undertaking these activities are primarily located at the regional level. These will be described in the relevant sections, below.

Provincial Organizations for Quality

The nine Belgian provinces are covered by eight provincial centres for quality. The Flanders region contains five provincial centres (CKZ West-Flanders, CKZ Antwerp, CKZ East-Flanders, CKZ Limburg and CKZ Vlaams-Brabant); the Brussels region has one (CQ Brabant) and Walloon two (CQ Liège-Luxembourg and CQ Hainaut-Namur). The first centre was established in 1971 (CKZ West-Flanders) and the other centres were established in the following years.

The centres are responsible for most activities developed in the field of quality for regional companies. The objective of the centres is to promote and support Total Quality Management in all industries. Target groups are all companies located in the area. In looking at the activities undertaken by the centres, it is possible to distinguish between services and products. The services package includes the following activities:

1. awareness: organization of information sessions, courses, seminars, study days, etc.
2. consultancy: advice and support with respect to implementation and improvement of TQM.
3. working groups: working groups are installed within the centres to deal actively with specific problems (e.g. new developments), to exchange information with companies by means of publications or other activities.

The products that are made available by the centres are publications, magazines, books, audio-visual material (e.g., video tapes) etc.

The Walloon centres appear to be less developed than the Flemish centres. They fulfill awareness, information and training activities, but provide little advice and support to companies.

About 1700 companies are members of one of the Flemish or Walloon provincial quality centres. The centres have non-profit status - 'VZW': *vereniging zonder winstoogmerk* and are

mainly funded by membership fees from companies while receiving no financial contributions from the public sector. Evidence suggests that the centres are happy with the financial autonomy this arrangement guarantees.

Regional Centres for Quality

Because of the linguistic and new administrative structure of Belgium, the Walloon and Flemish regions each have their own umbrella organization. In Flanders, this is the Flemish Centre for Quality (VCK), and in Walloon, the Walloon Association for Quality Management (AWQ). In addition, there is a 'regional' centre for the capital Brussels, KCGB-CQRB (Kwaliteitscentrum Gewest Brussel - Centre pour la Gestion de la Qualité de la Région Bruxelloise). This centre is closely related to CQ Brabant.

VCK promotes and extends TQM in Flanders in cooperation with the provincial centres for quality. In its function as an umbrella organization the VCK is not directly involved with businesses, but is more oriented to sector associations and top management. VCK carries out a number of activities:

- project certification: to encourage certification of businesses.
- project education: introduction of TQM in the field of education to increase quality awareness; and,
- promotion: promotion activities in the Flemish region; contact with sister organizations in Belgium and abroad.

Additionally, VCK has a particular task as an interlocutor with the national government and the Flemish government. In the other direction VCK is the transfer-point to the Flemish provincial centres for information about European and international developments in the field of quality (EOQ, ISO). VCK is totally private and autonomous. It was established with financial support from the Flemish government (see chapter 2), but, at present, neither the Belgian nor Flemish governments provide financial support. The VCK income consists of contributions from the Flemish provincial centres for quality and from its own activities. AWQ is the Walloon counterpart of VCK. Its mission and objectives are identical to those of VCK. AWQ was established on the private initiative of several industrialists and was not subsidized (in contrast with VCK) by the Walloon government. The activities of AWQ are mainly awareness, information and training, but its activities are less developed than the activities of VCK.

AWQ does not offer consultancy to companies in the field of quality management. Within AWQ three working groups operate. The working groups concentrate on certification, training and measurement. From early in its creation AWQ has tried to draw the Walloon government's attention towards the importance of quality. The two provincial centres for quality 'Liège-

Luxembourg' and 'Hainaut-Namur' in Walloon are members of AWQ.

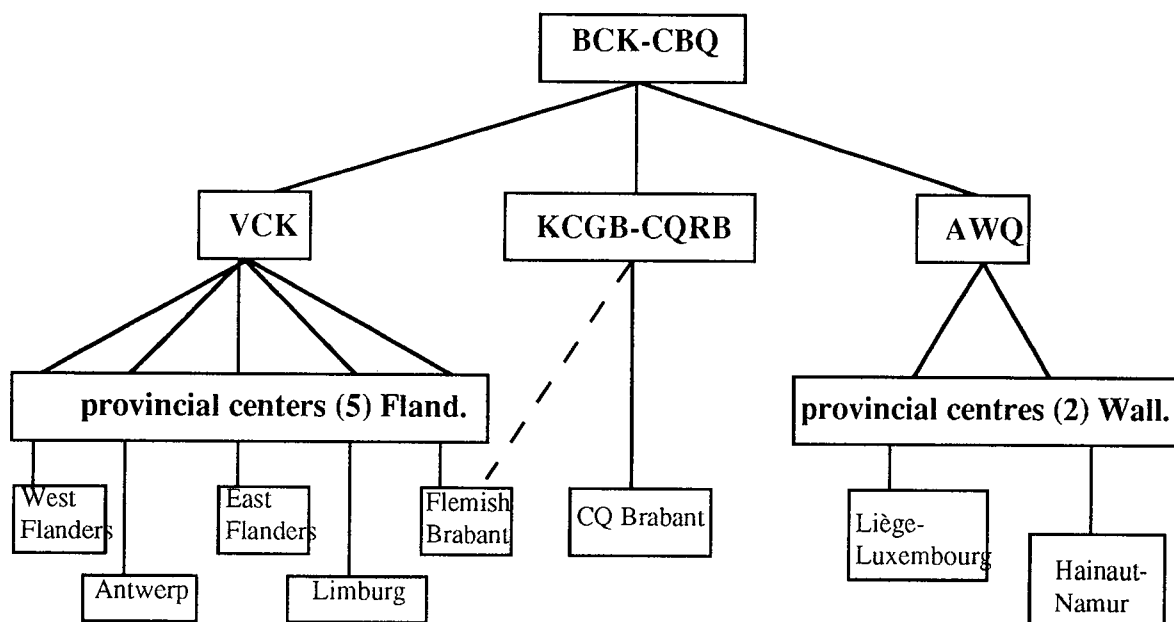
An important activity of both VCK and AWQ is the presentation of Total Quality Management awards in the regions of Flanders and Walloon. These awards are granted every two years. Companies which have obtained remarkable results in the field of TQM, are considered for the Quality Award. There are two awards available, one for a small or medium-sized company and one for a multinational company. In addition, the VCK presents an award for the best quality managers of the year. The main purpose of these awards is to improve company awareness to of TQM activities.

The National Centre for Quality

The Belgian Centre for Quality (BCK-CBQ) was established in 1973 in order to represent Belgium in the EOQC. The centre is now the umbrella organization of the three regional centres AWQ, VCK and KGCB-CQRB. The objective of BCK is 'to stimulate with all appropriate means the use and implementation of techniques and way of thoughts of quality control, in order to increase in this way the quality and security of goods and services'. In its regulations, the most important task of BCK-CBQ is described as follows: -

'To be the coordinator between the provincial centres and to be the official interlocutor between the national and international institutions'. Through membership of the provincial and regional centres about 1700 companies are members of BCK. In 1992, BCK organised, in cooperation with VCK, the EOQ'92 conference in Brussels.

Figure 2: Structure of Quality Centres in Belgium



The organization (see Fig 2) of the quality infrastructure has been criticized. It is said that there are too many circles and too many activities, such as seminars, working groups, congresses etc. However, the main reason for this situation is that a decentralized structure is thought to be necessary to effectively promote TQM in Belgium. A disadvantage of the decentralized structure is that the centres can not act as one unity to the public¹⁶. Activities of the different provincial associations overlap sometimes.

Sectoral Organizations

In addition to the regional and provincial centres for quality, a number of private sectoral organizations exists. In the building industry, WTCB¹⁷ (Scientific and Technical Centre for Building Industry) coordinates the activities of the Belgium Building Department of the EOQ, e.g. the promotion of ISO-9001 norms in the building industry.

In 1990 nineteen companies in the chemical industry established their own quality organization, called Qualichem. The objective of Qualichem is to disseminate information and to organize courses and meetings in order to transfer experiences in the field of quality. The target group of the organization is not only the chemical industry, but also suppliers and clients of the industry. In addition, some provincial centres for quality have sectoral working groups, e.g. for the software, graphic and textile industries. Working groups within VCK, operate towards the implementation of Total Quality Management in the health sector and education. PRACK (association for practice-oriented and participative management and total quality) was established in 1983 for the regions Walloon and Brussels, but nowadays operates nationally. PRACK organizes persons and companies who want to contribute 'to promote the alertness of companies and other organizations in Belgium by means of practice-oriented development of quality circles, participative management and Total Quality Management'. About 200 companies are members of PRACK. PRACK is member and co-founder of the European Federation of Quality Circles and Quality Management Associations (EFQCA). EFQCA organizes a European congress every two years and develops research projects at the European level.

In 1989, the national broadcasting organization BRT/RTBF (Belgian Broadcasting Organisation) ran eight television programmes on TQM. The broadcasts were the result of an initiative by the VCK in conjunction with BRT/RTBF and the RDAB (governmental service for labour intervention). The programmes were directed to the general public; employees, managers in industry and services, in the commercial and public sectors.

¹⁶Cf. C. Horrez, *Kwaliteitskrant, Waar naartoe met de kwaliteitszorg in België?*, april 1992.

¹⁷WTCB: Wetenschappelijk en Technisch Centrum voor het Bouwbedrijf.

Research

Limited information on quality research is available through a research project carried out in 1988-1989 by two institutes, UMIST¹⁸ (University of Manchester, Institute of Science and Technology, UK) and SQMI¹⁹ (Erasmus University, the Netherlands). The purpose of this project 'Total Quality Management in Europe', was to establish the 'state of the art' in teaching and research in European higher education as a basis for future developments of TQM. The project was initiated by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). EFQM stressed that more attention needed to be given to quality and quality management in Europe, and especially to the role of European Universities, Business Schools and Polytechnics in education and the teaching of TQM. In Belgium, only three universities responded to the research questionnaire: the University of Gent, The Catholic University Leuven and the University of Antwerp. Fifteen masters theses and one doctorate on TQM were listed. In addition, research was carried out in the three universities on the subjects of customer satisfaction, Just in Time, performance measurement etc. At the moment, there is no overview of recent research activities in the field of quality.

Training and Education

The provincial centres for quality and several commercial consulting firms specialising in the area offer internal training to companies implementing Total Quality Management. In addition there are a number of external training possibilities. The centres for quality offer a large number of courses, seminars etc. For example, CKZ Antwerp organizes about 24 courses on subjects such as Quality Philosophy, Methodology and Organization, Statistical Process Control, Quality Assurance Systems etc. As a result of the project 'Total Quality Management in Education' and consequent to the establishment of the act on quality in education (see chapter 2), quality management has been incorporated in the curriculum of schools and universities. Education on Total Quality Management is also provided at post-graduate level. In October 1986, CKZ Limburg and the Limburgian University Centre established together with the Post-graduate Centre²⁰ the first 'Masters in Total Quality Management'²¹ programme in the Benelux. The programme was originally directed towards the production sector, but was extended to the service sector in 1988-1989. The target group of the programme are managers and responsible staff personnel, e.g. quality managers and top managers, in production companies, service industries and the public sector. The programme intends to introduce

¹⁸University of Manchester, Quality Management Centre, Manchester.

¹⁹Strategic Quality Management Institute, Erasmus University, Rotterdam.

²⁰Post-graduate Centre (Postuniversitair Centrum Limburg) situated in Diepenbeek (Province Limburg).

²¹Masters in Total Quality Management: Masters in Integrale Kwaliteitszorg

participants to the TQM philosophy and in the large number of applications of TQM in different situations.

The lectures are given by professors and teachers of the Limburg University Centre, the Higher Economic School Limburg (from 1990 on part of the Limburg University Centre), and other universities in Belgium and from abroad. The teaching-language is Dutch/English. In 1989 the University of Mons in Walloon established its own post-graduate programme 'Masters in Total Quality Management', identical to the programme provided by the Post-graduate Centre in Flanders.

4. National Quality Schemes and Initiatives

At present there are no national quality schemes or other schemes in which stimulation of quality improvement plays a major role. The establishment of schemes for quality purposes by the national government remains unlikely. Ongoing developments in the political structure are resulting in business policy being increasingly defined and implemented at the regional government level.

5. Regional Quality Schemes and Initiatives

Three quality have been distinguished in the region of Flanders. Two schemes are global and concern education and promotion. The third scheme is sectoral and is aimed at consultancy in the field of quality in the industrial sector.

5.1 Global Schemes

Flanders

The programme 'Total Quality Management in Education' was started about ten years ago to implement TQM in secondary education in the Flanders region. The programme is carried out by the policy committee 'TQM in Education' in conjunction with six industrial companies (peterfirma's). These companies already have experience in TQM. They motivate and support Total Quality Management activities in schools of secondary education and assist in the training and education of management, teachers and students. The short term objective of the programme was to work step by step on quality improvement. The objectives in the long run were²² :

- to optimize the school organization through the introduction of TQM;
- to teach and train TQM as a specialism;

²²Cf. Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Vlaanderen Informatie brochure Kwaliteitszorg in Vlaanderen', Brussel, 1991.

- to engage education and industry to cooperate intensively; and
- to realize a substantial mentality change.

The programme started in 1982/1983 and is still continuing. In 1992 about 173 schools were involved.

The most important quality promotion scheme here has been 'Subsidies of the Flemish Government for Quality, Durability and Product Improvement with respect to the Ecology Criterium'²³. The scheme's Ecology Criterium was established in 1990 by the Flemish government for large companies and small and medium-sized companies. The scheme was established as a consequence of the Act of the national government concerning economic expansion. The application of this Act is determined by the regional governments. The Flemish government desired to take into account in its economic policy the main goal of the Brundtland report; i.e. durable development. Thus the objective of the Ecology Criterium Scheme is to stimulate investments in more environmentally responsible products and production processes. Five components form the basic elements of the scheme:

1. raw materials economization;
2. energy economization;
3. production improvement;
4. fire security and security of labour conditions; and
5. reduction of environmentally aggravating effects.

Work towards the five components can attract financial support of up to 15% of the investment costs. Target groups are small, medium-sized and large companies. Quality is an essential element of the 'production improvement' component. Importance is attached to the increase of quality and durability of products and production processes. The technical requirements of products are gauged against Belgian standards or European and international standards. An improvement in the production component has to be confirmed by a quality assurance system according to the ISO-9000 standards.

Walloon

In the region of Walloon no specific quality programme of the Walloon government exists. The only development in the field of quality on the part of the Executive has been the establishment of an Act (decreet) of September 1989 concerning the attribution of a Walloon quality label; appellation of local origin or appellation of Walloon origin. This quality label is a collective

²³Source: M. Mulder, first advisor Economic Expansion Large Companies, Ministry of the Flemish Community, *Het subsidiëren van kwaliteitsprojecten door de Vlaamse gemeenschap*, CKZ Oost-Vlaanderen, 1992.

mark determined by the Walloon government which indicates that a product produced or transformed in Walloon possesses a certain quality level. This Act²⁴ concerns principally product quality and does not refer to Total Quality Management.

5.2 Sectoral Schemes

One sectoral scheme in the field of quality was identified in Flanders. This scheme was called Horizon '92 and is based in the province of Limburg. Horizon '92 was developed by GOM-Limburg²⁵ (Provincial Development Society) and began in 1989. The purpose of the programme was to reinforce strategically, in view of European unification, the small and medium-sized companies in Limburg by means of external advice. This advice corresponded to both external and internal aspects of the firm. Examples of external aspects included: market research and strategic marketing planning, export organization, (transnational) collaboration with other companies and the implementation of quality systems according to ISO-9000 standards. The internal aspects concern: Total Quality Management, production control, planning and innovation (products, technology). 70% of the consulting costs were provided by the European Fund for Regional Development (EFRO) and the Province of Limburg. The remaining 30% of the costs had to be financed by the participating companies themselves. As of 1991, 59 projects had been carried out under Horizon '92 with 35 in the area of quality management. Table 2 provides an overview of the studies:

Table 2: Overview of Studies in Horizon '92

Year	Quality Management	Export Marketing	Total
1989	1	11	12
1990	3	11	14
1991	31	2	33
Total	35	24	59

Source: GOM Limburg Horizon '92.

²⁴Décret (Act) concernant l'attribution du label de qualité wallon, l'appellation d'origine locale et l'appellation d'origine wallonne, Official journal 9448, 28 november 1989.

²⁵GOM-Limburg: Gewestelijke Ontwikkelings Maatschappij Limburg.

In 1991, the majority of the studies were devoted to quality management. The content of the quality studies was:

- information and awareness of employees in companies;
- company diagnosis directed to quality activities in each region;
- definition of quality action plans;
- support of employees in the company who are responsible for the development of quality organization, working-procedures and instructions; and
- support and evaluation of the implementation of quality systems within the company.

The task of GOM consisted of registering consulting firms and assisting companies in problem definition and the choice of appropriate consultants. The programme was accessible for companies in the industrial sector, with less than 200 employees, situated in the province of Limburg and with a market abroad. In 1991, 31 of the 33 study projects concerned support for the implementation of quality systems according to ISO-9000 (EN 29.000) standards in small and medium-sized companies. Of the 59 studies, 24 finished in 1991. Most of these studies were carried out in the building materials, mechanical-electrotechnical, transport and chemical industries. The primary budget of Horizon '92 was already exhausted in August 1991, however an enlargement of the project was possible, thanks to increased financial contributions from the Flemish government and EFRO (European Fund for Regional Development).

6. Overview and Outlook

Belgium is at this moment in a politically transitional period. Regional governments have gained more political power and influence and have recently started to determine business policy.

In the field of quality, the national government takes important measures with respect to the establishment and development of a national accreditation structure. The law of July 20th 1990, concerning the accreditation of certification and inspection bodies, as well as testing laboratories, has offered the possibility to create a structure which can participate as a full partner at the European level.

With respect to the regional governments there have been, until now, only incidental initiatives in the field of quality and no consistent quality policy has really existed. However it seems likely that important new developments in the field of quality will emerge in the near future. The efforts of the quality organizations have persuaded regional governments to realize the importance of quality for their economic position relative to each other and to others (companies, countries).

At the moment the quality organizations in Flanders, especially VCK, are deliberating with the Flemish government on starting a couple of new programmes in order to stimulate Total Quality Management. In 1992 the Flemish government will decide upon these programmes. For

example, one of the proposed projects is the implementation of TQM in public services. The proposed programmes are not aimed at large company quality improvement/TQM actions and campaigns, but are based more on 'sharing quality management' between small and medium-sized companies. The idea is to employ a quality manager for several companies for a certain period. The quality manager supports these companies in quality improvement activities with the final objective of achieving ISO certification. The Flemish government will subsidize a percentage of the costs of employing the quality manager.

With respect to the Walloon region, new developments in the field of quality are being realized in the context of the national Act on Economic Expansion. This Act provides loans for economic expansion. At the business level, loans were given for market research activities. However, the application of the Act did not concern quality improvement activities. As a result of the increase of the political power of the regional governments, the Walloon government recently started redefining the scope of application of the Act. One application (in preparation at the time of writing), will partly apply to quality. The Walloon government will subsidize consultancy services to small and medium-sized companies. One of the subjects of the consultancy service will be quality audits undertaken with the purpose of certifying the company to international standards.

In conclusion, it is likely that there will be new developments in the field of quality on the part of the regional governments. The regional governments are developing plans to stimulate quality improvement activities. The scope of these plans is not clear enough at this moment to draw definite conclusions about future plans.

7. List of Quality Organizations

National Government
Ministry of Economic Affairs
23, Square de Meeûs
B-1040 Brussels
Tel: (32) 25 50 52 09

Flemish government
Ministry of Economic Affairs
Jozef II-straat 30
B-1040 Brussels
Tel: (32) 22 18 12 10

Walloon government
Ministry of Economic Affairs
Rue Mazy 25-27
B-5100 Jambes
Tel: (32) 81 33 12 11

Brussels-capital government
Ministry of Economic Affairs
Stefanietoren 1
Louizalaan 54
B-1050 Brussels
Tel: (32) 25 17 12 59

Belgian Institute for Normalization (BIN/IBN)
Avenue de la Brabançonne 29
B-1040 Bruxelles
Tel: (32) 27 34 92 05

Council for Certification and Accreditation
23, Square de Meeûs
B-1040 Brussels
Tel: (32) 25 50 52 09

Policy committee 'TQM Education'
 UIA-Universiteitsplein 1
 B-2610 Wilrijk
 Tel: (32) 38 20 29 66

Programme 'Masters in TQM'
 Post University Centre Limburg
 Universitaire Campus
 B-3590 Diepenbeek
 Tel: (32) 11 22 99 61

Quality Centres

National:

BCK
 Lakenweverstraat 21
 B-1050 Brussels
 Tel: (32) 25 10 24 33

Regional:

VCK
 Research Park De Haak
 B-1731 Zellik
 Tel: (32) 24 76 56 00

AWQ
 Rue Puissant 15
 B-6000 Charleroi
 Tel: (32) 71 32 57 11

KCGB-CQRB
 Lakenweverstraat 21
 B-1050 Brussels
 Tel: (32) 25 10 24 35

Provincial:

CKZ Antwerp
Commandant Weynsstraat 85
B-2710 Hoboken
Tel: (32) 32 22 12 80

CKZ West-Vlaanderen
Doorniksesteenweg 220
B-8500 Kortrijk
Tel: (32) 56 20 36 23

CKZ Oost-Vlaanderen
Martelaarslaan 49
B-9000 Gent
Tel: (32) 91 35 88 53

CKZ Limburg
Kunstlaan 18
B- 3500 Hasselt
Tel: (32) 11 22 79 09

CQ Brabant
Lakenweverstraat 21
B-1050 Brussels
Tel: (32) 25 10 24 35

CQ Liège-Luxembourg
Boulevard E. de Laveleye 191
B-4020 Luik
Tel: (32) 41 41 04 54

CQ Hainaut/Namur
Chaussée de Jolimont 263
B-7100 Haine-St-Pierre
Tel: (32) 64 27 54 11

Sectoral quality centres:

EOQ, Belgian Department Building
 c/o WTCB
 Aarlenstraat 53
 B-1040 Brussels
 Tel: (32) 22 30 62 82

Qualichem
 Leuvensesteenweg 613
 B-1930 Zaventem-Zuid 7
 Tel: (32) 27 59 46 13

PRACK
 Washingtonstraat 44
 B-1050 Brussels
 Tel: (32) 26 48 04 89

Accredited Certification Bodies

AIB-Vinçotte VZW
 Koningslaan 157
 B-1060 Brussels
 Tel: (32) 25 36 82 11

BQA
 Monoyerstraat 24
 B-1040 Brussels
 Tel: (32) 22 30 93 30

Bureau Secco
 Aarlenstraat 53 bus 2
 B-1040 Brussels
 Tel: (32) 22 38 22 11

Bureau Veritas Quality international
 Mchelsesteenweg 128-136
 B-2018 Antwerpen
 Tel: (32) 32 47 95 50

Det Norkse Veritas
c/o Buro & Design Center
Heizel Esplanda PB 78
Tel: (32) 24 75 23 40

Eurosym VZW
President Kennedypark 23 D
B-8500 Kortrijk
Tel: (32) 56 76 67 07

SGS EQCI
Noorderlaan 87
B-2030 Antwerpen
Tel: (32) 35 42 46 00

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Appendix 1: Interviews

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