

**MARKET CALLS
FOR CERTAINTY IN
CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**

**100-YEAR ATAB ON WAY TO
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**ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE,
FROM 'NICE TO HAVE'
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OF ACTIVITY WITH MERGER**

SGSINTRON BULLETIN

SGS

These are difficult times for the economy in general and for construction in particular. Some retreat is to be expected after a boom, but the ongoing turmoil in financial markets, especially in Europe, means the structural recovery keeps being delayed and there is even the risk of a second recession. Companies working in the construction industry have been very hard hit, as recent publications in Cobouw indicate. Many companies are being forced to reorganise (slim down), and the number of bankruptcies has increased substantially.

At SGS INTRON, too, we are noticing the effects of the continuing economic dip. Our sales growth is slowing, but happily there is still growth. The fact that we are doing relatively well is the result of the correct strategic choices we made in the past. Our ambition to occupy a leading position in our industry in the Netherlands has been achieved over the past decade. Some 5 years ago, we took that ambition a step further with an international component, and we are working hard now on achieving this as part of SGS.

With the steady growth of the company, which will accelerate in the SGS setting, it is also important to think about future management. Inspired by the personal desire of both directors to make their demanding work schedule a little less hectic after a period of more than 25 years, the past year has seen the management team expand for the future with Ron Leppers (Consultancy), Louis Grannetia (Laboratory) and Ton Jans (Certification). I can work part-time with a clear conscience in 2012, choosing between my role as manager and that of a "techie". I've followed my heart there - as a "techie" I can remain involved with (construction) materials, our services, customers and the market. On 1 January, I handed my part-time function as managing director of SGS INTRON over to Wim van Loon, Business Manager SGS Industrial Services Benelux, of which SGS INTRON is a part. It was Wim who saw in INTRON the added value of being a competence centre for construction within SGS. He has been very closely involved in the development of SGS INTRON over the past 2 years.

Rico van Selst, after more than 25 years at (SGS) INTRON, 12 of them as a director, is also working part-time as of 1 January. He will continue to steer the international ambitions of SGS INTRON (expanding the Construction Competence Center).

SGS INTRON is prepared for the future and is at your service to make a positive contribution to the future of your company.

GERT VAN DER WEGEN

SGS INTRON READY FOR THE FUTURE



The year 1911 saw the foundation of the "Antwerpsche Asphaltfabrieken" (Antwerp Asphalt Plants), the later Atab. One hundred years later, the European HQ still looks out from the same spot over the Schelde. It is the heart of an innovative and dynamic company of 550 employees, that manufactures complete roofing concepts and exports to a total of 60 countries. "Atab has always been progressive," says CEO Dirk Theuns. "Our performance has been due to a team of loyal employees with a high level of skill." The new ecological roofing membrane introduced during the anniversary celebrations is typical of the route the company has followed. "The future of Atab is sustainable."

ONE CENTURY, MANY ACHIEVEMENTS

First, a short look back. The ideal person for this is Dirk Theuns, who this year celebrates his 25th anniversary at Atab and since November has been head of the entire Atab Group, Nebiprofa and IKO Insulations (like Atab, part of the IKO Group). He has witnessed numerous achievements during the company's history. These include the development 12 years ago of a bituminous roofing membrane that is resistant to flying embers. "We were and still are unique in this. Thanks to our patented graphite technology, these membranes comply with all European fire standards." According to Theuns, an important event for the group as a whole was the start of production of PIR rigid foam boards in 2006. "This roof insulation material now makes us one of the top three in Europe," he says, not without pride. "And the start of a PVC roofing membrane factory in England was another milestone."

AIR-PURIFYING ROOF

The most recent achievement has also been one of the most sensational. The ecological roofing membrane

100-YEAR ATAB ON WAY TO SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

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Dirk Theuns

Polygum Carrara demonstrates that Atab has serious ambitions in the area of sustainability. "This bituminous membrane consists of a minimum of 25% recycled materials: polymers, polyesters and bitumen from manufacturing and cutting waste. The white top layer reflects sunlight so the product lasts longer. In addition, the roof covering purifies the air: titanium dioxide in the mineral finish neutralises and oxides of nitrogen and sulphur. To give you an idea, each 1000 m² of Polygum Carrara roofing neutralises the annual emissions of 12 Volkswagen Passats."

ROCK-SOLID FAITH IN FUTURE OF BITUMEN

A great piece of innovation. As ever, Atab aims to keep leading the way when it comes to ecology. "We are already strong in solar and green roofs. In addition, we remain rock-solid in believing in the future of bitumen. Through applied research, we can make our main product, flexible bituminous roofing membrane, last 30 to 40 years. We aim to bring products to the market which retain their functionality for a long time. That is the best way of achieving an eco-profile. If after 35 years you can overlay bituminous roof cladding for another 35 years service, and do it again in another 35 years, that is sustainability that no other product can meet. In coming years, we also want to increase the recycling process by reusing production waste, roofers' cutting waste and where possible demolition waste in our bitumen roof cladding. Waste does not exist for us anymore."

SGS INTRON LINKS INTO THE QUALITY SYSTEM

For Atab, it is important to link quality to a certificate where possible, including in the area of sustainability. That is where Theuns sees a role for SGS INTRON. "SGS manages all our KOMO certificates and the CE marks of our products," explains technical consultant Luc van Audenhaege. "Atab is known for being a supplier of very high-quality products and systems. Clients and architects who prescribe our products ask for documentation that independently proves their quality. SGS INTRON provides it. They are part of our quality process. They check our processes and products several times a year. The collaboration works very well. Over the years, we have seen their expertise in the area of roofing materials and their testing grow - through the merger with SGS as well. SGS INTRON is a well-known name in the Netherlands, and that works in our favour. And it's nice to know that they can also support us internationally."

CERTIFICATE OF SUSTAINABILITY

It is only logical that Atab should want to demonstrate the sustainability of their products. That's why the company is looking for good sustainability labels. "There are many of these kinds of labels on the market," says Dirk Theuns. "I would like to argue for streamlining what's available so companies don't have to choose from 10 or 15 different labels. Cradle to Cradle, for example, is a very good initiative. However within this concept, products have been developed which are not feasible or sensible from a technical or economic point of view. Together with SGS INTRON, we're currently examining the possibility of providing our products with a strong and meaningful label - a certificate that proves their value."

ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE, FROM NICE TO HAVE TO MUST HAVE

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The National Environment Database is almost full. More than 850 environmental profiles of construction products will soon be included. Aim: sustainable construction based on better, harmonised environmental data. It is important for manufacturers to know whether their construction product is in the database, and if so, whether the reported environmental data are correct. The reason is that a favourable environmental profile, determined from a life cycle analysis (LCA) and specified as environmentally relevant product information (MRPI or Milieu Relevante Product Informatie), is more than an attractive profile. It has immediate value in the market. Registration discounts are granted and choices made on the basis of the environmental profile. As of next year.



ONE DATABASE AS INPUT FOR ALL CALCULATION TOOLS

The new building code which comes into effect on 1 April 2012, requires an environmental assessment for buildings. Reliable, harmonised environmental data on construction products are needed for this. Currently, the Building Quality Foundation - administrator of the National Environment Database - is working to fill it with the environmental profiles of virtually all construction products. All tools for calculating the environmental burden of buildings, such as GreenCalc, Breeam and GPR, will work with data from this national database. Including DuboCalc, the computer programme of the Ministry of Rijkswaterstaat (RWS), the executive term of the Ministry of infrastructure and the environment, which calculates the environmental effects of infrastructural work. This programme is now linked to a separate environmental database. Ultimately, however, these environmental profiles will also go into the National Environment Database so each sustainable builder will use the same data.

LOWER ENVIRONMENTAL COSTS = HIGHER REGISTRATION DISCOUNT

After a pilot phase, the RWS will require the use of DuboCalc for all major projects. The management of DuboCalc - not the database, which is managed by the Building Quality Foundation - is the responsibility of CROW, the national knowledge platform for infrastructure, traffic, transport and public space.

This is in line with the policy of the RWS to have the market do as much of the work as possible. Designers and contractors can work out different construction alternatives on the basis of the environmental profiles in the database. DuboCalc indicates the environmental burden of a project in the form of a number, an environmental cost indicator. The lower the indicator, the more environmentally friendly and the greater the advantage when tendering for RWS projects. A low indicator can yield a significant reduction in the tender price.

MAKE SURE YOUR CONSTRUCTION PRODUCT IS INCLUDED

Ulbert Hofstra from SGS INTRON advises manufacturers to check whether their construction product is in the National Environment Database: "Otherwise you'll miss out on projects simply because your product is not considered. While checking the DuboCalc database for the RWS, we saw that many civil engineering products used in the Netherlands are still missing from it." The environmental profiles in the National Environment Database can be viewed by going to the website of the Building Quality Foundation at www.milieudatabase.nl.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILES FOR 17 KINDS OF ASPHALT

On behalf of the RWS, SGS INTRON was engaged to review the DuboCalc database. Ulbert Hofstra: "There were, for example, products which we no longer use in the Netherlands. Under "Asphalt", we found the Swiss alternative to asphalt: a road surfacing made of reinforced concrete and asphalt. You can imagine the negative environmental profile that has! As a consequence, we've now been asked by Agentschap NL and the Dutch asphalt industry to carry out life cycle analyses of the 17 kinds of asphalt used here. That way, they'll have the correct environmental information in the database."

ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE: INDUSTRY-WIDE OR BY BRAND

There are three kinds of environmental profiles in the National Environment Database. First there are the tested, industry-wide profiles often provided

by industry associations. These profiles cover product categories and are based on life cycle analyses carried out and reviewed in accordance with the standards. Then there are the untested, industry-wide profiles in the database. The aim is ultimately to replace all of these with tested profiles. Until that happens, a supplement applied to the environmental score ensures that these products are not unfairly chosen instead of tested profiles. Finally, it is also possible to insert a brand-linked environmental profile. Ulbert Hofstra: "That is a smart move if you have a product with a low environmental profile. Separate inclusion in the National Environment Database increases your chance of being able to supply to sustainable projects."

LIFE CYCLE ANALYSIS

For this, the manufacturer needs to have a life cycle analysis (LCA) carried out and reviewed by an MRPI licensee (SGS INTRON, for example). "We often carry out an initial indicative life cycle analysis," explains Ulbert Hofstra. "For example, if it is not clear whether a product really is environmentally friendly or what the effect is of using different raw materials. This kind of analysis is only for internal use. If you want to have your product included in the National Environment Database, you need a full LCA, including review. We determine the environmental profile according to the Dutch standard (as MRPI) and the European standard (as European product declaration) at the same time, so companies don't have to start again from scratch if they want to see their product on the German market, for example."

LCA WITH CERTIFICATE?

At the present time, SGS INTRON, in collaboration with other certification authorities, the KOMO foundation and other market parties, is examining whether the tested environmental profiles can also be linked to a certificate. "Now that the environmental data are going to play an important role in procurement, there is an increased need to have them verified (annually) by an independent party," says Ulbert Hofstra. We'll keep you informed ...

NEW ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES COMING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

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Environmental information about products is becoming increasingly important in economic transactions between manufacturers, dealers and the buyers of construction products. This means there is also an increasing need for validated environmental information. Environmental information about construction products is provided in the Netherlands in the form of an MRPI certificate given by manufacturers to their buyers and other relevant parties. In Europe, we have the EPD, the Environmental Product Declaration. Both are based on a life cycle analysis (LCA). The European standard for preparing an EPD for construction products is now final. This means that more manufacturers will be wanting to bring their product to market with an EPD.

The assessment of the life cycle analysis which forms the basis of an MRPI certificate or an EPD has until now only been in the form of a review by colleagues certified to do so. However, this review focuses only on the question of whether the LCA was carried out using the correct system. This is a one-off event. It concentrates on the methodology of the LCA and not on the validity of the data provided by the manufacturer or whether the EPD really applied to the recommended product. Environmental information is nothing other than technical product information and it is then also logical to ensure its reliability through certification. All Dutch certification bodies active in the construction industry have therefore decided to set up an assessment guideline for EPDs. SGS INTRON Certification is taking the lead here.

The assessment guideline for EPDs will be formulated in close consultation with the manufacturers of construction products so as to ensure the best connection with current important activities such as the MRPI Foundation and the Building Quality Foundation's National Environment Database.

BITUMEN, SO MUCH MORE THAN JUST BLACK AND STICKY

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Bitumen is an almost non-volatile, bonding and waterproof material resulting from the fractional distillation of oil. It is very viscous or nearly solid at ambient temperature but becomes easily workable at high temperature. The main application for bitumen is in asphalt which consists of visco-elastic bitumen as a binder and mineral aggregate. Many of the properties of asphalt are determined by its individual components. Although asphalt consists of only a few percent bitumen, it is precisely this binder which characterises the mixture. In-depth knowledge of raw materials and the ability to apply this knowledge in construction products are the strengths of SGS INTRON.

Bitumen consists of four categories of materials known by the abbreviation SARA. The first group is the Saturates or paraffins or saturated hydrocarbons. The Aromatics and paraffins combine to soften the bitumen, with the aromatics



making a greater contribution as the temperature changes. A higher aromatic content also contributes to the UV resistance of bitumen. The Resins are sticky and solid. They bond with the aggregate due to their partly polar nature. The Asphaltenes are solid and give bitumen its glossy black colour. They form networks in the bitumen, which give it its elastic properties. Together with the resins, they also give bitumen its hardness.

Clearly, there is much more to say about these groups of substances and their effect on the properties of bitumen, and there are more secrets in this black material than can be characterised by penetration testing. This complex binder requires chemical and materials science knowledge, as well as suitable test equipment to investigate the properties of bitumen and relate these to practical behaviour in the mix.

The SGS INTRON laboratory has recently undertaken additional investments in order to provide a better service for customers in the road and roof construction industries by carrying out tests of the binder bitumen. You can now benefit from traditional tests such as penetration, processing point, Fraass breaking and flash points, as well as rheology, infrared spectrometry, temperature and/or UV ageing, etc. These allow us to provide answers to questions such as:

- Does the bitumen meet the specifications?
- Is the bitumen prone to ruts, falling apart, fatigue, cracking or ageing?

CONCRETE DAY



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Concrete day introduced the Platform for Concrete Maintenance (PBo – Platform voor Betononderhoud). SGS INTRON considers this to be a key initiative for highlighting the importance of maintaining the concrete built environment. The safety and availability of structures and buildings are issues which affect us all.

The Platform consists of the Concrete Association (secretariat), major clients such as Rijkswaterstaat, representatives from the corporate world, several provinces, water boards, large municipal clients and the Inspectorate for Transport, Public Works and Water Management. Also taking part are the industry associations VABOR (consultants), VBR (concrete repair companies) and VLB (suppliers of repair materials).

SGS INTRON is a member of the Association of Concrete Maintenance and Repair Consultants (VABOR), while the chairman of the association is Martin de Jonker from SGS INTRON.

The primary aims of the new platform are to align the wishes and requirements of all parties associated with the concrete repair industry and to discourage the fragmentation of activities. These efforts will substantially contribute to the further professionalisation of the industry. Twice a year, the Platform for Concrete Maintenance will organise (large-scale) meetings such as symposia or congresses. Both technical and policy-related issues will be discussed at these gatherings. The subjects on the agenda will be discussed from various points of view by clients, consultants, contractors, suppliers and others.

SGS INTRON TO INVEST MORE IN 2012 IN ITS SPORTING ACTIVITIES

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If we want to promote sport, we want the players to show the best they can do. This is possible thanks to the beautiful artificial turf we have in the Netherlands. It allows both amateurs and professionals to enjoy practising their sport on a daily basis.

In recent years, SGS INTRON has tested many sports facilities to ensure that sports men and women can deliver their best performance on the field in a safe manner.

Since 2006, SGS INTRON has gained experience in researching, consulting and testing sporting structures and materials. "In the last few years, there has been an enormous increase in requests for our services.

Currently more than 300 sports grounds/surfaces have been tested by SGS INTRON Certification, and contractors continue to build sports surfaces examined by SGS INTRON," says Oscar Terheijden, Account Manager Certification. "There has been a strong increase in the demand for this service not only in the Netherlands but in the entire SGS network throughout the world."

The quality and speed of the service, the efficiency and expertise of SGS INTRON are highly valued by our clients. This fits in nicely with our ambition: "In coming years, SGS INTRON wants to improve its services even further and expand its capacity. We will continue to invest in our organisation and our clients," says Terheijden.



We realise that because we have laboratory facilities, top-quality technical expertise and test apparatus, our commitment can be of value to many more clients. In addition to our existing FIFA accreditation for inspection and RvA accreditation for the laboratory, in 2012 SGS INTRON will concentrate on obtaining laboratory accreditation from FIFA so we can offer a complete service, both on the national and the international level.

ESD MEASUREMENTS

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ESD stands for ElectroStatic Discharge and is an important issue for companies and institutions which have to deal with the effects of electrostatic discharges, especially at a personal level. Companies or institutions having to deal with ESD include those that manufacture electrical components, hospitals with operating theatres, offices containing lots of electrical equipment, storage spaces for potentially explosive materials, chemical plants, aircraft hangars and areas where there is electrical (switching) gear (switching stations). "SGS INTRON carries out measurements on floor claddings meant to prevent ESD or to reduce it to a minimum. Measurements are made in accordance with the applicable standards in this area, such as NEN-EN 1081 and NEN-EN-IEC 61340," explains Ingmar Richartz, Consultant.

Electrical charging of people occurs when there is a build up of static electricity from the friction of clothing or footwear, and this charge is not conducted away by an electrically-conducting floor. Electrical discharge then occurs when the person comes into contact with a conductive object. This discharge can result in damage to the conductive object (such as an electrical appliance) or to personal injury (from a shock reaction or worse). In addition to ESD-safe clothing and footwear, the floor covering must also be electrically conducting. The extent to which a material can conduct electricity is determined by the surface and internal electrical resistance to earth of the covering. Conductive floor coverings meet minimum and maximum electrical resistance values. The minimum electrical resistance value for conductive floor covering is set at 50 kOhm (50,000 Ohm). This figure is accepted in different standards worldwide as the minimum value. The situation is different for the maximum electrical resistance of floor coverings. It is still based on national regulations, though international regulations in this area are gradually being accepted in addition to national figures. SGS INTRON can carry out an objective assessment of these floor coverings (e.g. carpet, tiles, industrial flooring, floor coatings and synthetic floors) according to application and use.

"SGS INTRON has the expertise and measuring equipment to be able to make these assessments of floor coverings independently and professionally," reports Richartz.



René Arisz

The construction industry is experiencing tough economic times. However, the board of the BK Group of all-round engineers and consultants has dared to try a merger and doubling of turnover. Consultants ProCensus and UDM have recently joined the BK Group.

AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES

Board member René Arisz has every confidence in the expanded BK Group's success: "The three companies complement each other very well, both in terms of services and customer bases, and in corporate culture. Each sees ample opportunities. I anticipate that there will again be shortages in the market, in both civil engineering and in the area of the environment. By investing in this now, we will become a strong player in the market. And there is the fact that we are now bigger. We have noticed there is a need for companies with a wide scope and range of services. The new BK Group can offer customers 'one-stop shopping'."

NEW MARKETS

The merger comes as a result of a vision drawn up by BK in 2008 focussed on growth. "One of our aims was to expand our network and achieve country-wide coverage," explains René Arisz. "Joining up with UDM and ProCensus fits in with our vision. The three companies complement each other. The result of the merger has meant also that as the BK Group we can enter new markets such as Sport, Recreation and Green, areas where ProCensus is active."

ONE-STOP SHOPPING

ProCensus is a nationally operating consulting and engineering firm

BK GROUP EXPANDS SPHERE OF ACTIVITY WITH MERGER

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with considerable knowledge in the development and management of public space. UDM is an independent environmental consultant mainly concerned with carrying out environmental soil studies, batch tests according to the Soil Quality Decree, environmental engineering advice, and the supervision of soil decontamination work. The BK Group offers a wide range of services, from design to supervising the work. Arisz: "We can also take on (risk) projects and direct the work to be performed. We take the burden off the customer by offering one major advantage: there is only one contact person for the entire job."

NATIONAL COMPANY WITH REGIONAL BRANCHES

The new company will go further under the name BK Group, with 15 branches throughout the Netherlands and a total of around 300 employees. As integration manager, René Arisz is involved in shaping the new BK: "Previously, we were a regional company with country-wide coverage. Now we're a national company with regional branches. Depending on market demand, our customers can turn to these branches for our complete service or a part of it. We want to stay close to the market and ensure synergy between different teams at any location."

SYNERGY BETWEEN TEAMS

Synergy was also important at the old BK. "Through regular consultation, we ensure that each consultant is fully aware of the activities belonging to each team. We strive to serve our customers as well as possible by listening closely to their explanation of the problem and by asking questions about the process until it is perfectly clear which teams can provide help."



ONE COMPANY, ONE CERTIFICATION STRUCTURE

The BK Group is a customer of SGS INTRON Certification, just like UDM and ProCensus. "We have a whole range of certificates from SGS INTRON: ISO 9001 (quality management), ISO 14000 (environmental care), VCA (occupational health and safety), SC540 for asbestos inventarisation in buildings, plus various SIKB regulations (assessment guidelines focussed on quality in soil). The merger has meant changes to structures and responsibilities. This also has repercussions for the certification structure and regulations. SGS INTRON is currently very involved in helping us make the necessary changes."

PROCESS OWNERS

Here, Arisz is sticking to the line of the old BK Group: "There we had the quality system well sorted out. Each team has a process owner who is responsible for meeting the obligations associated with the different certification regulations. In addition, we have an external QHSE coordinator who comes along once every fortnight to coordinate and monitor the processes with me. We have increased the support base enormously by ranking responsibilities. Every month, there is consultation between the process owners. If things are going well in one team, we try to implement them in other teams too. For UDM and ProCensus, this means they are boarding a moving train. We are expanding our process owner team with representatives from both companies. That way we can continue to fine-tune things directly."

SGS INTRON FOR ALL CERTIFICATION REGULATIONS

The fact that SGS INTRON is familiar with UDM and ProCensus makes it easier, Arisz finds. "We don't have to start from scratch. The auditors from SGS INTRON see potential differences very quickly. And because they know us, we probably get a bit more time to dot the 'i's and cross the 't's. Besides a positive critical attitude, we also expect SGS INTRON to look with a pragmatic eye. Certification systems are very expensive, especially as your organisation grows. You then look for ways to do things well but with minimal effort and cost. We expect SGS INTRON to help us find the most efficient way of working. New account manager Martin van der Linden is really on the ball. In consultation with him, we're now working intently on the further integration of the three companies."

SGS INTRON FURTHER EXPANDS CE MARKING ACTIVITIES

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More and more construction products need CE marking when they are introduced on the European market. This is the result of the availability of new, harmonised European standards containing regulations for CE marking. Although CE marking is based on the manufacturer's own declarations, in most cases a notified body has to be brought in for certification and/or laboratory testing. SGS INTRON has been a notified body since the introduction of the Construction Product Directive. These activities are carried out by the laboratory and/or the certification department, depending on the provisions of the applicable standard.

CONSTRUCTION PRODUCT REGULATION

As of 1 July 2013, the construction product directive (CPD) will be superseded by the construction product regulation (CPR). One important difference is that the CPR involves direct European law, whereas the CPD has to be implemented in the law of the member state (the Building Code in the Netherlands). "SGS INTRON expects the impact of CE marking will increase substantially after the introduction of the CPR," says Rob Woonink, Certification Manager. "This will also mean a greater call for the services of SGS INTRON. In order to meet this demand, we are working continuously on expanding the range of European standards for which the lab and the certification department can operate as notified bodies." An up-to-date summary can be found at: <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newapproach/nando> (registration numbers 0958 and 1939).

INSULATION MATERIALS TESTING

An example of the extent of the services offered by the laboratory is the testing of insulation materials. In many cases, the manufacturer needs to have initial type tests carried out by a notified laboratory as part of the CE marking procedure. The SGS INTRON laboratory has been recently accredited by the Accreditation Council for a number of insulation material tests according to EN standards (see: http://www.rva.nl/uri/?uri=AMGATE_10218_1_TICH_R8632874893631). We are currently working hard on further expanding accreditation and notification based on other relevant European standards.

FACTORY CONTROL CERTIFICATION FOR STEEL AND ALUMINIUM STRUCTURAL PARTS

Steel and aluminium structural products used in construction will have to bear CE marking from 1 July 2012. This is a direct result of the European harmonisation of standard EN1090-1 for the manufacture of metal constructions. SGS INTRON Certification can provide factory control certification to enable CE marking to be placed on products. SGS INTRON Certification works closely here with SGS Nederland B.V. to bundle expertise in the area of certification and technical know-how.



STEP BY STEP

"The certification process requires thorough preparation, and SGS INTRON has a step-by-step plan to handle this. Ten easy steps cover the whole procedure involved in implementing certification and the changes and improvements needed for this in the organisation," says Woonink. The plan includes creating a support base, preparing a quality manual, initial testing, and continuous monitoring. A leaflet is available on the 10-step plan.

Standard EN1090-1 relates to the new building code which comes into force in early 2012.

To find out more, contact Louis Grannetia from the laboratory (louis.grannetia@sgs.com), Rob Woonink from SGS INTRON Certification (rob.woonink@sgs.com) or John Verduijn (john.verduijn@sgs.com) or go to www.nl.sgs.com or www.intron.nl.

The CEN standardisation institute has been engaged by the European Commission to develop new leaching tests for construction products. These tests are intended for use with the CE marking of construction products in response to the environment, hygiene and safety requirements of the construction product directive. The tests are meant for all construction products and will soon be included in the European standards for all types of construction products.

Aside from the leaching tests for determining release to the soil, ground and surface water, tests have been developed for determining the release to indoor air. In the Netherlands, virtually the only standards we know in this area are for the formaldehyde content of particle board, but in other European countries there is an extensive classification system for determining release from construction products into indoor air," says Ulbert Hofstra, Senior Consultant. Not coincidentally, this has developed mainly in Scandinavia, where people spend a lot of time indoors.

SGS INTRON READY FOR EUROPEAN LEACHING TESTS

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The leaching tests came about as a result of the harmonisation of existing leaching tests in European countries. The existing Dutch tests were used as a basis, and as a result the new tests closely resemble the Dutch versions. "SGS INTRON contributed content in the Dutch mirror group for the CEN technical commission and as a member of the Dutch delegation," says Hofstra. As with the Dutch tests, the European tests are also divided into a percolation test for granular construction products and a tank for monolithic construction products.

The tests do not yet have EN numbers because interlaboratory validation has not yet taken place. The so-called technical specifications (TS) are:

- TS2: Draft Generic horizontal dynamic surface leaching test (DLST) for determination of surface dependent release of substances from monolithic or plate-like or sheet-like construction products (cf diffusion test);
- TS3: Draft Generic horizontal up-flow percolation test for determination of the release of substances from granular construction products (cf column test).

The new European leaching tests are not limited to stony construction products, as is the case with the Dutch tests, but also cover plastics and wood. They are also not limited to determining the leaching of inorganic components but extend to organic components such as the leaching of plasticisers from plastics and concrete. In the Netherlands, the new leaching tests will replace the Dutch tests. When the leaching tests become EN tests, the Netherlands will have to withdraw the NEN tests (for column and diffusion testing), and accept the new tests. A number of manufacturers of construction products have had tests carried out on how their products perform in the new tests compared to the results of the known tests under the Soil Quality Regulation. If you also want to do this, you can contact your account manager from the laboratory, or Huub Creuwels or Ulbert Hofstra.

DELFT V SYMPOSIUM ON 18 APRIL IN DEN BOSCH

Learn at first hand about the progress of the work on European leaching tests - about the tests themselves and the rules governing them. The Delft V symposium, organised by CEN TC 351 and NEN, will be held on 18 April 2012 at noon in the Cement and Concrete Centre in Den Bosch (and not in Delft, like previous symposia).



HENRI MEIJDAM, CHAIRMAN, KOMO FOUNDATION: “THE MARKET IS CALLING FOR CERTAINTY AT BUILDING LEVEL”

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LOOK FOR QUALITY IN CONTEXT

What makes the assessment of the quality of a building or structure so complex? “A building consists of all kinds of separate components whose quality must be certified alone and in combination with other components,” explains Meijdam. “To give you an example: if the tiles are KOMO certified but you don’t relate that to the quality of the timber the tiles are resting on, that doesn’t say much about the quality of the roof as a whole, let alone the quality of the complete building. It’s a question of unravelling a building into components so you can then look at how they relate to each other and how we can guarantee the quality of the whole. What also plays a role is the skill of the people who work on the structure. I can well imagine that certification of building procedures (skills) is going to become more important. We have the KOMO process certificate for that purpose. The development process will certainly take a few years to complete.”

LABEL FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Meanwhile, Henri Meijdam is following with great interest developments in the area of sustainability. “In the context of social responsibility, both end-users and manufacturers are placing increasing importance on sustainability. It’s only logical that you want to demonstrate that your products comply with certain sustainability standards. This can be done through KOMO certification. At present, we don not have any certificates exclusively for performance in the area of sustainability. We are investigating where we can actually provide added value. It is important for us that every certificate we issue

The KOMO mark makes the performance and quality of products, services, systems and processes transparent. It is a guarantee that the building regulations have been complied with; a valued and much-sought quality mark. There is no reason then for the KOMO Foundation to stand still. Chairman Henry Meijdam is working on a new, ground-breaking mission: the development of an assessment guideline – and ultimately certification – at building level. “The KOMO Foundation is a living organisation. We work in response to demand and move with the market. There is an increasing requirement among end-users for certainty about quality at the level of a complete building. We consider it important to tackle this.”

CERTIFICATE FOR A COMPLETE BUILDING

Currently, the KOMO Foundation can only certify components of a building. Meijdam: “It is difficult for end-users to judge the quality of a complete building. They just have to believe that they are getting what was promised. A building certificate provides certainty. It guarantees that the specified requirements have been met. But establishing the requirements is not so simple. Working together with strategic partners, we are now taking the first steps towards the development of an assessment guideline for buildings. It is not our ambition to regulate everything in one go. I can imagine that in the first instance we will have a combination of part certificates. But ultimately, the aim is to have one certificate for a complete building. The government has also indicated it wants to achieve this. That gives us a tremendous boost to get on with the job.”



Henry Meijdam

meets the requirements of consumers and manufacturers. If consumers value limiting CO2 emissions, for example, it makes sense to have a certificate that guarantees a product is manufactured in a CO2-neutral way. On the other hand, we find clarity is also very important for the market - there mustn't be too many quality labels. Otherwise, companies can't see the forest for the trees. That is why we endeavour to achieve a structure where KOMO serves as an umbrella for all quality aspects and activities relevant for the construction sector.”

KOMO AS WELL AS CE MARKING

From mid-2013, the Construction Product Regulation (CPR) will set a clear definition and communication of product characteristics within Europe. CE marking will be obligatory in EU countries, and national interpretations will no longer be possible. However, Meijdam sees no competition in this for the KOMO certificate: “CE is usually a manufacturer declaration: the manufacturer declares particular product characteristics.

He approves, so to speak, his own meat on the basis of product requirements specified in European legislation. In 95 percent of cases, KOMO certificates provide clear added value. With the KOMO certificate, the market decides which performance requirements the product must meet. An independent party, the certification body, assesses whether all aspects relevant for the Dutch construction chain have been included. These include the quality with regard to processing and sustainability. KOMO does not focus (like CE) on just the characteristics of the supplied product but also on the performance of the product in its area of application. Moreover, there are on-going checks to make sure a product still complies. In other words, a KOMO certificate gives customers considerably more relevant information and therefore confidence. In addition, at KOMO there is a policy of not doing the same thing twice. That is why we will concentrate on further increasing our added value within the various certification regulations.”

THE FUTURE OF CERTIFICATION SUBJECT OF THE ANNUAL VOC MEETING AT SGS IN SPIJKENISSE

The Consulting Association of Certification Organisations (VOC) organised its annual meeting for members and associates on 15 November last year. The main topic of the afternoon was “The future of certification”. Prof. Philip Eijlander, Rector of the University of Tilburg gave a stimulating introduction to the opportunities for certification, especially in the public domain. These opportunities arise on the one hand from a hands-off government and on the other from an increasing social need for quality, safety and risk management. The subtitle of his presentation – Certification as a panacea for the enforcement deficit – made it clear that certification is indeed a good instrument for a “systematic, impartial assessment by experts” and fits in with a cycle

of continuous improvement, but that it is not the job of a public authority. Compliance monitoring, and of course enforcement through rules and sanctions, those are the responsibilities of public authority. These always occur, he said, in the form of decisions by officials in public office. Eijlander underlined the importance of not lumping these different supervisory activities together and confusing them with each other. In fact, this differentiation from each other can see them providing mutual reinforcement. Professor Eijlander used four statements to give his views on the aspects and general conditions for certification in the public domain:

- Certification cannot take the place of compliance monitoring and enforcement by the government.

- To maintain the value of certification (and accreditation), their typical characteristics must be respected.
- Certification is a good instrument for self-regulation.
- A ZBO status does not fit in with a certification institution.

After Mr Jan van de Poel, Director of the Accreditation Council and Mr Otto Hegeman, Case Manager of EZ gave an initial response to the introduction, there was a lively discussion with the public. As the initiator, Professor Eijlander concluded with a positive future perspective for certification. He said: “In our polarised society, we lack the space and appreciation for professionalism, impartiality and a systematic approach to quality. That is what the VOC, your industry, must continue to stand for.”

SENIOR CONSULTANT AND WORKS COUNCIL CHAIRMAN MICHEL BOUTZ: "CONTENT, APPEALING PROJECTS AND HELPING PEOPLE, THAT'S WHAT MOTIVATES ME"

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WHAT DO CUSTOMERS KNOW YOU FOR AT SGS INTRON?

I specialise in concrete structures throughout their entire lifecycle, from the approval of new cements and the design of special concrete admixtures to advice on the development of sustainable structures, damage investigation and repair, and the recycling of concrete structures. The focus of my work is on the sustainability of concrete structures and concrete technology. Over the years, service life predictions have become increasingly important. Today, contractors must demonstrate that new work will last at least 100 years. I'm also often asked to determine the remaining life of existing buildings and to give advice on the options for extending it."

YOU EXAMINE MANY LARGE CONSTRUCTIONS. BUT YOU ACTUALLY STARTED AT CRYSTAL LEVEL.

"Yes, that's right. I trained in chemical geology, specialising in crystallography. That's very much in the direction of materials science: you study the mechanical, rheological, mineralogical and geochemical properties of rocks. My thesis was on the crystal growth of granite."

HAVE YOU GONE FURTHER INTO MATERIALS SCIENCE SINCE THEN?

"I even got my doctorate, in 1993, from Twente University. I worked on technical ceramics for my dissertation. I prepared specimens of ceramic zircon with an ultra-fine grain and high density, and investigated their superplastic deformation at high temperatures. Because of its chemical inertness, wear resistance and toughness, this material is ideal for demanding applications such as cylinder liners in engines."

FROM GRAMMES IN TECHNICAL CERAMICS TO TONNES IN CONSTRUCTION - HOW DID THAT HAPPEN?

"It seems like a giant step, but it's worked out amazingly well. In 1996, I started as Manager Cement Research at cement manufacturer ENCI in Maastricht. I was in charge of two laboratories and worked among other things on product development and solving problems relating to cement applications in the market. Cement is made from natural raw materials using a high-temperature process. I knew a lot about both areas from my undergraduate and graduate studies. In addition, I could always fall back on my research experience. I could even use my knowledge of ceramic materials to select the correct material for the refractory lining the clinker oven."



YOU'VE BEEN WORKING AT SGS INTRON FOR 10 YEARS NOW. HAS YOUR AFFINITY WITH YOUR SPECIAL FIELD CONTINUED TO GROW?

"Certainly! What I really like about construction are the major projects and the objects that get made. There's much more knowledge and technique to it than you might think at first glance. There is a great need for knowledge in the area of materials science. I can really apply my expertise here. Together with colleagues who bring other kinds of expertise to the table, I can offer the customer the very best."

CAN YOU NAME SOME PROJECTS WHERE YOU WERE PROUD BECAUSE THEY WERE SUCH A CHALLENGE?

"A good example is the project on the collapsed balconies in Maastricht. We investigated the cause on behalf of the project developer and contractor under great time pressure and interest from professionals and the press. Finally we were able to give a clear picture of the problem and advise on restoring everything safely. Also worth mentioning was the 'Forest and Lommerplein' project in Amsterdam. The apartment complex there was evacuated as a result of a report I wrote on the divergent design of

the reinforcement at several risk locations in the garage. The fact that construction errors could occur on a major scale in a Dutch project had a great impact on the profession. Under enormous time pressure, we examined the existing reinforcing of the entire complex, largely using non-destructive measurements. It provided a great deal of experience in that area."

AS WELL AS BEING A CONSULTANT, YOU'RE ALSO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE WORKS COUNCIL. WHY DO YOU FIND THAT IMPORTANT?

"Unions don't play a role at SGS INTRON. The works council is the partner for discussions with management. I think it's good not just to work with content but also to help represent the interests of the employees. In the works council, I have the opportunity to look at and think about the whole breadth of the organisation. Towards the end of 2009, we had the important task of ensuring that the take-over by SGS would not have any negative repercussions for the staff. We negotiated directly with SGS about a social covenant. It was an exciting time. But ultimately we achieved a very good result for the employees, I think."

PART OF SGS, FURTHER INTERNATIONAL GROWTH - WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR THE WORKS COUNCIL?

"I think the acquisition is very good for INTRON. As part of SGS, we have a strong position and a huge network to make our international ambitions come true. SGS INTRON has managed to keep its works council. We will continue to monitor the integration process closely and make adjustments where necessary, in close cooperation with management."

SGS INTRON INTRODUCES

ON 1 JANUARY 2012, BAS VAN OOSTEN JOINED US AS SENIOR ACCOUNT MANAGER AT SGS INTRON CERTIFICATION. After his laboratory studies concentrating on bioprocess technology, Bas studied environmental science at Delft Polytechnic. His career began with consultants Cauberg-Huygen Raadgevende Ingenieurs B.V. in Rotterdam where, as soil project manager, he advised on soil studies and the preparation/implementation of soil decontamination. In 2008, Bas went to work for the federal government. In recent years, he has worked as a senior consultant at Agentschap NL, Bodem+ sector. Much attention was paid during that period to the implementation of the Soil Quality Decree (Bbk) that had just come into force. The quality of the execution of the work in the soil field has a prominent place in the Bbk. Bas started at Bodem+ as KWALIBO (quality assurance in soil management) Project Manager, working closely with knowledge institutions, government partners and the people carrying out the work. Bas has also been active in the Government and Soil Management Quality Platform (POKB), where as lead auditor and supervisor, among other things, he took part in audits of quality management systems for local authorities and provinces. Bas's third key role at Bodem+ was that of account manager for the southern region, maintaining first-line contact with the central governments in the provinces of North Brabant and Limburg. Bas worked at Bodem+ until 1 January 2012 and is looking forward with enthusiasm to his new job as Senior Account Manager of the Soil and Ground Cluster with SGS INTRON Certification.



ON 1 JANUARY 2012, ERIK-JAN DE BONT JOINED US AT SGS INTRON CERTIFICATION AS SENIOR ACCOUNT MANAGER. In this role, Erik-Jan will focus on the certification of granular materials. The core product will be recycled granulates, a field for which he was responsible for close to nine years at another certification institution. Most of the assessment guidelines used by SGS INTRON but not created by them within the granular materials product group were written by Erik-Jan. He also has considerable knowledge of related products: concrete, mortar and their raw materials, such as cement and additives. Before he made the change to certification, Erik-Jan worked for a number of years at a research and consultation organisation. The combination of service activities within SGS INTRON, that is research, consultation and certification, is what tempted him to make the current move. At SGS INTRON, in addition to managing the existing customer base, he also wants to make a contribution to the further expansion of these activities.



ON 1 APRIL 2011, RUTGER BROEKHUIZEN JOINED SGS INTRON AS AN AUDITOR AT THE CULEMBORG SITE. He will work mainly on system audits for various quality, environment and safety management and administration systems. He will also carry out audits and inspections for different BRL certified processes. Rutger Broekhuizen has held a number of executive and management positions in the metal and infrastructure sectors, and over the past seven years has been full-time QHSE manager looking after 12 certified systems and processes. In order to perform these functions well, he undertook various courses, including steel industry management, civil engineering contracting, intermediate safety and higher business administration studies, quality and process management. He is a practical man with comprehensive experience and theoretical knowledge which he will apply in his auditing role for SGS INTRON and his clients.



COLOFON

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WHEN YOU NEED TO BE SURE

