



strengths and weaknesses of Boskalis, they also compare those results, for each topic, with the situation in numerous other companies. BST has an extensive database for this purpose containing similar data from surveys in thousands of companies throughout the world.

'The graphs show that Boskalis scores 3.7 on average on a five-point scale and that we do particularly well in the areas of teamwork and organizational factors', explains Wilfred. 'Of course, there is always room for improvement. Compared to, for example, potential clients from the top end of the market, we found that we have a relatively low score for "organizational value for safety" (the perceived priority of safety in the organization) and "bottom-up" communications. There are major opportunities here to push safety to a higher standard. Furthermore, this is an important observation because Boskalis actually wants to concentrate more on this segment.'

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SURVEY**

'One of the main recommendations emerging from the BST Survey is that more attention needs to be paid to the crucial role played by middle management as the



link between the workforce and senior management', says Wilfred. 'Middle management is an indispensable "information channel" in the organization and it is a "two-way street" for the passage of insights and ideas up and down about safety and for the related discussions. So it could be a good idea to adapt training programs like BMD, BODP and MANSafe accordingly.'

Frank Verhoeven continues: 'Something else that emerged from the survey is that we can work safer if people are more prepared to call each other to account when it comes to unsafe behavior. The survey showed that thinking about safety is different in various locations and at different levels. There is a world to be won with an approach that goes beyond factors like rank or job title. And it will also be a good idea to develop structures within the company for recognizing and rewarding employees who work safely.'

'It's also important, during projects involving work with third parties such as subcontractors, for all the people involved to have the same "values and rules". In that way, everybody aims for the same safety standard everywhere and at all times.'

**CONTINUATION OF THE SAFETY PROGRAM**

On the basis of a previous survey, the Steering Committee broke down the current safety situation at Boskalis into three recognizable categories, summarizing them as follows:

- > Policy: The current safety policy at Boskalis has been set out in a quality and safety system that works well (Q-Aid, for example). It is characterized by a single important objective: pushing back the Lost Time Injury Factor (the number of accidents that result in absence from work). At present, this is effectively the only key performance indicator (see box) that has been formulated in the area of safety.
- > Equipment: Fleet safety complies with the relevant legislation. However, there is no generally applicable Boskalis safety standard for equipment.

- > Workforce: Communications and training are of a high standard. However, the identification of recommended behavior is lacking or inadequate. The safety standards in place vary from individual to individual and depend on the circumstances and the project.
- On the basis of this analysis and the result of the survey, the Steering Committee has described the desired situation as follows:
- > the introduction of a uniform Boskalis safety standard
  - > the same values and rules apply throughout the company
  - > there are a number of preventive uniform key performance indicators (see box) in the area of safety.

'An essential component of the Safety Standard consists of summing up the desired safe conduct in the form of a number of values and rules. The interviews with our workforce were needed to establish a clear picture of what is going on at the moment in our organization', according to Frank Verhoeven, 'so that those values and rules really will be accepted by the workforce and by everyone who supports the substance of the Safety Program.'

**VALUES AND RULES**

A lot of work is going into the formulation of the values and rules at present. 'Without anticipating the ultimate content of the "Safety Program" I think the essence of the "values and rules" could be that every employee promises to take steps or even stop work if an operation is unsafe, and that all our staff should be prepared to accept feedback about their own safety conduct regardless of rank or position', concludes Wilfred.

Frank Verhoeven continues: 'We are now working on the elaboration of the Safety Program. The new Safety Standard and the "values and rules" are at the root of this process. In the next few months, we will be returning to this, and that will also include publications in Cohesion.'

Photo left: Frank Verhoeven  
Photo right: Wilfred Haaijer

**'Key Performance Indicators'**

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are management instruments for analyzing how companies perform. Management uses KPIs to quantify objectives so that the effectiveness of a strategy can be assessed.

KPIs generate important information for an organization: they can be used to monitor the development of the company in comparison with the past and in comparison with the competition. Furthermore, KPIs are useful for making predictions. KPIs can be used to translate long-term strategies straightforwardly into measurable short-term performance. KPIs usually comply with the SMART principle: Specific, Measurable, Acceptable, Realizable, Time-bound.

By formulating more KPIs in the safety area, Boskalis is hoping that it can adapt better and faster in the future to client requirements.