CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT OF AN INSTRUMENT
FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND GUIDANCE
FOR LOCAL ROAD SAFETY POLICYMAKING IN FLANDERS, BELGIUM

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This paper describes the context for and the development of an instrument that enables Flemish local (road safety) policymakers to raise their organization and performances to a higher level of quality management. The tool is developed in response to recent Flemish legislation that emphasizes the need for more sustainability, a reduction in the level of road-casualties and that calls on more assistance, guidance and support for local mobility policymaking. Starting from the widespread Total Quality Management-philosophy, from an analysis of widely applied instruments and models in the domain of quality management and from international best practices and authoritative road safety policy plans; the conceptual model of an innovative guiding instrument has been developed. Based on general management theory, local road safety policymaking has been thoroughly analysed and key components (both managerial and technical) have been identified. Using standardized questionnaires, the tool enables officials to position their performance with regard to a ‘ladder of development’ and to pinpoint where their future points of attention lay. Based on this self-assessment procedure, local officials receive recommendations and examples of good practices, allowing them to hype up their level of performance. When compared to its predecessors and the instruments currently in use, this tool constitutes a significant added value due to its well-underpinned, process-oriented and objective character. Although the instrument is generated for use in local Flemish administrations, it can easily be adjusted to other regions thanks to its generic nature. The tool is in its final stage of development and is rigorously being tested.
INTRODUCTION

Policymakers operate in a very stringent and delicate environment. Not only is the nature of policymaking very volatile and subject to an extended range of regulations and legislation, actors working in this domain are increasingly being confronted with diverse and ever more stakeholders, opinions, special interests, lobbyists, emerging technologies and ideologies. This tendency brings along a growing call for support and guidance, which – up to now – cannot always be provided by the supervising administration. At the same time, a trend towards professionalization in the public sector is distending. More than ever, public administrations are adapting concepts stemming from business economics and private management. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines this trend (generally referred to as ‘New Public Management’) as “a new paradigm shift for public management” and it stresses the importance of its doctrines of public accountability (“accountingization”) and organizational best practices. (1-3)

This paper describes the development of an instrument that aims at assisting local mobility policymakers in enhancing the quality level of their performance. The objective is to build a tool that supports them in bringing their difficult mission to a favourable conclusion. The objective is to assist them in delineating a strategy and policy that is well-founded, has a high level of sustainability and is acceptable for all parties involved and to do so in a structured and more uniform manner. To achieve this goal, the road safety policy domain has been thoroughly analysed for good practices and major concepts of general quality management theory have been introduced into this policy domain.

Background

In the Belgian and Flemish administration, the demand for more sustainability, more soundness and more attention for quality management in policymaking has been around for several decades. Especially in the field of mobility management - a crucial policy domain in Flanders (northern half of Belgium) due to its favourable geographical position in the heart of Western Europe and its economically important sector of transport and logistics - a number of initiatives have been undertaken to upgrade the policymaking processes (4). An important step forward was taken by the launch of a plan to preserve the sustainability of Flemish mobility in 2001 [Mobiliteitsplan Vlaanderen, cf. (5)], in which the Government of the Flemish Community drew up a framework to support local administrations in setting up a mature mobility and transportation policy. In this covering plan, five domains of action were identified: accessibility, road safety, liveability, attainability and nature and environment. According to the Flemish Mobility Plan, local administrations are now required to draw up their own local policy plans (Dutch: ‘Gemeentelijk Mobiliteitsplan’), in which they have to describe the current status of their municipality for each of the domains indicated. Additionally, they have plot their ambitions and the future actions they want to undertake. This approach of exploration, data collection, background analysis and the elaboration of aspirations in local mobility plans is heavily encouraged and subsidized (6).

After a five-year period, the legitimacy of the communal plan ends. Local officials and stakeholders then have to assess the topicality of the plan and decide on the future focus of the local mobility policy. Using an administrative tool provided by the Flemish Government (‘Quick Check’; Dutch: Sneltoets) (7,8), the local administration can evaluate the accurateness of its plan. By applying this tool, policymakers end up in one of three possible tracks: complete renewal
Although this Quick Check-procedure constitutes major improvements with respect to prior methodologies and local officials consider it to be very helpful and user-friendly, a number of critiques can be formulated. For one, the procedure is of a very qualitative nature and despite the involvement of a commission of independent experts (Provinciale Auditcommissie), an objective verification of the conclusions is hard to achieve. Furthermore, some points of attention and topics are formulated rather vaguely, which leads to conflicting interpretations and heterogeneous implementations. To local officials, the test has a firm administrative and compulsory undertone, which may harm the integrity of the outcome. The most important drawback of the ‘Sneltoets’ is its inability to generate an accurate image of the level of quality and sustainability of the policymaking process itself. The procedure only judges the façade of the policymaking, being the administration’s plans and ambitions and the extent to which this is in line with the current situation. It does not consider any processes and modes of operation ‘behind-the-scenes’. (9)

Scope

This research aims at enhancing the methods and instruments that are available to local officials in the field of mobility policymaking and at facilitating the process of drawing up a sustainable and high-quality local mobility policy (plan). The ultimate objective is to provide a tool that allows policymakers to self-assess their achievements from an integral perspective and that guides them towards a higher level of performance quality. International experience and the Flemish Mobility Plan indicate that attempting to include all aspects that arise when setting up an integral mobility policy, is a massive challenge. At every step in the decision-making process, side domains such as spatial planning, economics, demographics, technology, environment and socio-cultural evolutions come into play. To limit the scope of this project at this stage, only one of the five domains of action identified in the Flemish Mobility Plan will be addressed for now, i.e. road safety. When the framework of this tool is finalized, the other policy domains will be dealt with. This allows for a step-by-step generation of a well-founded framework, which can fairly easily be adjusted and translated to diverse domains of interest and to other regions.

Road Safety Policy

The Flemish Government stated in its Mobility Plan that “public road infrastructure and the way it is used do not always comply with the safety level that can be assumed to be socially acceptable: road un-safety implications beyond doubt constitute a significant social issue” (5). Moreover, on an international and supranational level, road safety is a major priority in policymaking. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 1.2 million human beings are killed in road incidents and another 50 million persons get injured annually. Projections indicate that these figures will swell by about 45% over the next 20 years unless there is new and more commitment to prevention (10). SafetyNet points out that “road traffic accidents in the Member States of the European Union annually claim about 43,000 lives and leave more than 1.8 million people injured” (11). Leonard Evans states that in a typical month, more Americans die in traffic than were killed by the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York! (12)
Numerous plans and targets have been drawn up to reduce this number of casualties. In its White Paper on the Future of the European Transport Strategy (2001), the European Commission set the ambitious target of halving the number of deadly casualties by 2010 (13,14). As we rapidly approach this time horizon, it is clear that this goal will not be met and that there are significant variations in the progress made by Member States (15). Certain countries significantly outperform others, but the ultimate goal of zero casualties (“It can never be ethically acceptable that people are killed or seriously injured when moving within the road system”, dixit Claes Tingvall, architect of the Swedish Vision Zero approach) has not been achieved anywhere so far (16,17).

In Belgium, equally ambitious targets have been set. For the country, the objective is to reduce the number of traffic-related deaths to 500 per year by 2015 (18). The Flemish Regional Government aims at a maximum of 250 victims on its roads by 2015 (19). The most recent data show a number of 1.067 fatalities in 2007 for Belgium and 527 for Flanders (20). When compared to other European Member States, it shows that Belgium has a rather bad report on traffic safety. Independent from the methodology used, Belgium is not ranked as one of the ten best performing EU-countries (21,22).

Road safety may seem to be an issue with global dimensions and with a vast number of major actors in various domains involved; one has to bear in mind that any initiative in tackling this immense challenge stands or falls by the very last link in the chain of policymaking and its implementation: the realization of strategies and measures by the lowest level of authority (city council). Local officials are aware of this responsibility and most of them undertake efforts to improve the level of road safety. Nevertheless, only few of them succeed in deploying an efficient, effective and sustainable policy. No precise definition of good traffic safety (policymaking) exists, but there is a common sense of what the concept denotes; the remainder is filled in by each body or official itself. This leads to a mishmash of interpretations and initiatives, one being more successful than another (12). The objective of this research is to contribute to a more harmonized approach and to an increased level of road safety in Flanders by offering local administrations the instrument at hand.

**METHODOLOGY**

The backbone of the underlying research is shown in figure 1. Starting from an extensive literature research in three diverse domains, conclusions converged and were reflected to the domain of local road safety policymaking.
The starting point of this research is the Flemish Mobility Plan (5). The goal of the underlying project (entitled: ‘Sustainable Mobility in Flanders’) was to control emerging mobility issues, to force back environmental pollution and nuisance and to guarantee the accessibility and liveability of cities and villages. The spearheads of the plan were the optimization of infrastructural works and a continued development of public transport in order to provide a valuable alternative to car-usage. The idea was to come up with an outline that indicated the way in which the mobility in Flanders should evolve during the next decade (2001-2010). Key challenges of the Mobility Plan were the necessity of a more integrated approach towards policymaking, the development of (monitoring) instruments to support local policymakers, an improved communication and a more thorough consultation of stakeholders. The development of the Quick Check-procedure can be considered to be a direct outcome of these recommendations (6).

Furthermore, the Flemish Mobility Plan contained a large number of policy recommendations for each of the five policy domains identified. For the sake of the first stage of this research project, policy measures concerning road safety planning were thoroughly examined and have been used to build up the instrument under consideration.

International Benchmark of Road Safety Measures

The second perspective, from which this project is approached, has an explicit international background. Starting from a meta-analysis conducted by Elvik and Vaa (23) and policy plans of a selected number of authoritative countries and organizations (Mobility Plan and Road Safety Plan in Flanders, Staten-Generaal voor de Verkeersveiligheid in Belgium, Duurzaam Veilig in The Netherlands, Vision Zero in Sweden, Tomorrow’s Roads Safer for Everyone in the United Kingdom, Road Safety Strategy 2010 in New Zealand, the Transportation Plan in Norway, the European Union’s White Paper on Road Safety and its Mid-Term Review and the WHO Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention), a benchmark analysis has been carried out in order to identify measures that significantly contribute to road safety. This led to an overview of international best practices in road safety management. Subsequently, the selected actions were
classified into a number of summarizing categories: ‘traffic regulation and control’, ‘infrastructure’, ‘education’, ‘sensitization and behaviour’, ‘enforcement’, ‘collaboration’ and ‘flanking measures’. Policy measures that are not feasible for the level of local road safety policymaking were ignored.

**Quality Management**

The ultimate objective of the instrument at hand is to enhance the level of quality in decision-making in local mobility policy. This implies that the idea of quality management has to be introduced in this specific policy domain. To gain insight in the theory and practice of quality management, a state-of-the-art review has been made up (cf. (24)).

“What is quality?” Formulating an answer to this question is not as straightforward as it may seem. A number of scientists in the field of operations management (e.g. Joseph M. Juran, Philip Crosby and W.E. Deming) have formulated their interpretations over the years, letting the orientation of quality management evolve from a product-approach to a consumer-approach. Each of these ‘quality-gurus’ has contributed to the meaning that the concept ‘quality’ has today. Nevertheless, the judgment of what ‘quality’ denotes still is a very subjective and personal matter and the concept is very hard to quantify (cf. the meaning of the concept ‘qualitative (research)’ as an antonym to quantitative) (25-27).

**Private sector**

The idea of contemplating quality as an essential part of organizational management stems from the private sector. Initially, ‘quality’ had a strong output-related connotation: when the final product met the producer’s expectations, a high level of quality was considered to be met. Later on, the (financial) importance of avoiding scrap, rework and loss of products in the production process became more prominent. The focus of quality management was put on controlling the underlying (production) processes, rather than the output. Nowadays, quality is regarded from a more integral, organizational and consumer perspective. The desired level of quality is considered to be met if products comply with consumers’ expectations, if the highest standards are attained and if an explicit quality focus is present in every single layer and cog in the organization. This interpretation constitutes the foundation of the Total Quality Management-philosophy (TQM) and was first introduced by W.E. Deming (27). Cohen and Eimicke define the different components of TQM: “Total means applying to every aspect of work, from identifying customer needs to aggressively evaluating whether the customer is satisfied. Quality means meeting and exceeding customer expectations. Management means developing and maintaining the organizational capacity to constantly improve quality.” Carr and Littman describe TQM as “a fundamentally different approach from traditional management characterized by: a customer focus; elimination of errors and steps that do not add value to products and services; prevention of problems; long-term planning; teamwork; fact-based decision making; continuous improvement; horizontal and decentralized organizational structures; and external partnering arrangement.” (28-30)

To support private companies in raising their organizational level of quality (and evolve to the level of TQM), a number of methodologies and instruments have been developed and are frequently applied in practice worldwide. The best known instrument is the model of the International Standards Organization (ISO). This methodology implies that the organization
under consideration is evaluated according to the ISO-standards. The goal of this tool is not to rate the business’s performance, but to develop a quality system within the organization. It strives towards a standardization of every aspect of the organization according to the highest level of quality. (31)

Another popular instrument is the Balanced Scorecard, developed by Kaplan and Norton in 1992. The concept of this approach is to generate an instrument that resembles the cockpit of an airplane: an overview of the organization’s performance is presented by making the policy vision operational by means of concrete and measurable indicators, allowing the management to have a clear view on the organization’s condition at all times. The Balanced Scorecard manages to summarize the organization’s performance, based on monetary and non-monetary data (32).

A third widely applied methodology is a model generated by the European Foundation for Quality Management and is known as the EFQM Excellence Model 2000. This model presents a self-assessment methodology that allows managers to pinpoint those policy fields on which they are performing well and which require more attention. The major contribution of the EFQM-approach is that it considers both organizational aspects (‘enablers’) and results. Completing this self-assessment, critical issues in the organization are revealed and programs for improvement can be started up. (31-33)

Apart from the tools described above, numerous sector-specific instruments have been introduced. Most of them share their background with one of the models mentioned above.

Public sector

In recent years, public sector organizations are trying to get rid of their traditional, caricatural, input-oriented and funds-dissipating image. Carried by the wings of the New Public Management-movement, ever more aspects and concepts stemming from the private sector are being introduced in public management. Along with this shift, attention for quality management in public administrations has significantly grown (34). Nevertheless, due to the specific characteristics of the public sector, a concept like TQM cannot be translated into the public sector without major adjustments. As Swiss states, “the use of TQM in government has several major problems: insufficient modification for services; insensitivity to the problems of defining governmental customers; inappropriate emphasis on inputs and processes; and demands for top-level intensity that can rarely be met by the governmental culture.” Nevertheless, the philosophy on which TQM is based, undoubtedly offers great opportunities to enhance public sector quality management. (35)

As in the private sector, a number of instruments have been developed to assist public sector policymakers in increasing the quality level of their work. Most of the tools used in the public sector today stem from the instruments used in private organizations. As suggested by Swiss, these tools have been adjusted for the specific characteristics of public administrations.

For ISO-standardization and the Balanced Scorecard, only minor justifications had to be made to make them compatible with the public sector. For the EFQM-approach, completely new tools have been developed. The major advantages of applying the EFQM-approach in public administrations are the fact that the information paucity is reduced and that it clamps down on the initiative overload of individual officials. A popular EFQM-based model for public administrations is the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), which resulted from a European attempt to coordinate the modernization of public services within the Member States and constitutes a simplified version of the EFQM-approach. (31,32,36)
CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Management Cycle

Taking into account that road safety is a major social issue, that the Flemish regional government urges on an increased support for local policymakers and the idea that (total) quality management can significantly improve the achievements of an administration; a conceptual model for a guiding instrument has been drawn up (see figure 2).

FIGURE 2 Conceptual model.

At the core of the tool is the management-cycle as defined by Deming (27), which is esteemed to be the point of departure for a quest towards TQM. Deming thoroughly analyzed business processes and managed to define four consecutive steps that are continuously repeated when managing an organization: a planning-phase in which is considered how to implement a certain (aspect of a) policy plan, a doing-phase in which it is implemented, a check-phase in which the output or outcome is evaluated and an act-phase to adjust the policy. After this act-phase, a new management loop starts with the plan-phase. This management cycle is also known as the Plan-Do-Check-Act-cycle (PDCA-cycle) and is applied widely in modern Quality Control Management. This approach, which is complementary to the Eastern Kaizen philosophy, is based on the belief that our knowledge and skills are limited, but continuously improving, because we tend to ‘learn-on-the-job’. ‘Learning-by-doing’ occurs when a problem solver associates plans
and actions with results. The PDCA-cycle should repeatedly be implemented in spirals of increasing, incrementing knowledge, letting the system converge on the ultimate goal: Total Quality Management. (37,38)

**Modules**

The next step consisted of identifying which facets the process of policymaking in local road safety embraces. Bearing the EFQM-approach in mind, two major aspects were considered: organizational (‘behind-the-scenes’) and concrete (‘on-the-field’) aspects. For the former, the different aspects and processes that come into play when an administration stipulates and bring into practice its ambitions. The conceptual model of the EFQM-approach and Deming’s PDCA-cycle were used as a reference here. Four crucial stages (called ‘modules’) in the local road safety planning process were identified: ‘user needs’, ‘leadership’, ‘policy on paper’ and ‘people and resources’. Of these modules, the last three stem directly from the EFQM-model, whereas the ‘user needs’-module was added to account for this specific need in public services.

For the lower part of the conceptual model (the actions-phase), the benchmark of international road safety policy plans and best practices was used to define six more modules: ‘traffic regulations and control’, ‘infrastructure’, ‘education, behaviour and sensitization’, ‘enforcement’, ‘cooperation’ and ‘self-evaluation, monitoring and follow-up’. These modules result from the categorization with respect to road safety enhancing measures that was carried out in the preparatory phase of this research. Since all identified measures were enclosed and categorized in this analysis, it can be assumed that these modules comprise virtually all elements that road safety policy strategies can embrace.

Each of the modules that were identified, was projected on Deming’s PDCA-framework. This led to the identification of three major phases: a planning-phase in which a policy strategy is prepared, an action-phase in which the different specific road safety domains are addressed and an effect-phase in which the results of the implemented policy making and the corresponding measures are monitored and evaluated. Subsequently, the planning-phase is picked up again, taking into account the results of the evaluation in the former run of the cycle. Note that in this conceptual model, Deming’s act-phase is comprised at the beginning of the planning-phase and that the sequence of the modules within the different phases is not binding. (39)

**Aspects**

For every module, underlying aspects were identified. This allows for covering the complete road safety and policymaking domain. As before, organizational aspects were analysed according to the theoretical EFQM-background, whereas the content-oriented aspects were based upon the international benchmark of road safety measures and the selection of best practices. The underlying aspects per module are listed in table 1 and discussed hereunder.

To gain insight in the extent to which user needs are taken into account, the method and nature of the collection and the processing of the required data are considered. Furthermore, the frequency and the way in which users (citizens) are consulted are contemplated. Concerning the module ‘leadership’, the model considers the different types of external consultation and internal communication that are present in the organization (e.g. top-down vs. bottom-up). The level of managerial commitment, the management’s motivational capacities and the efforts undertaken to coordinate diverse parties involved are also examined in this module. The ‘policy on paper’-
module investigates how well policy plans are underpinned, to what extend they are documented
and in which respect they take considerations on sustainability into account. In the fourth
module, three resource management domains that are adapted from the private sector are
considered: financial management, human resource management and responsibility management.

Modules 5 to 9 address specific road safety issues. In module 5, the accurateness and
background of traffic regulations and techniques for traffic control are evaluated, herby focusing
on recent local initiatives. For infrastructural matters, it is verified why and how certain measures
have been implemented and which flanking actions are undertaken to support them. The seventh
and eighth module take a look at the way citizens are encouraged to respect traffic regulations:
by education, by behavioural change, by sensitization and by enforcement. For each of these
aspects, their specific implementation is looked at. Module 9 concerns the cooperation of the
local administration with actors in other policy domains, the private sector and supporting
services (e.g. prevention, medical workers, etc.). Finally, the tenth module focuses on the
administration’s openness towards self-assessment, the application of monitoring techniques and
the adaptation of the policy and strategy to the outcome of these evaluations.

**TABLE 1 Underlying Aspects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M1 - User needs</th>
<th>M2 - Leadership</th>
<th>M3 - Policy on paper</th>
<th>M4 - People and resources</th>
<th>M5 - Traffic regulation and control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>(Internal) communication</td>
<td>Substantiation</td>
<td>Financial management</td>
<td>Contemporaneity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User consultation</td>
<td>Management devotion</td>
<td>Elaboration</td>
<td>Human resource management</td>
<td>Background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>Responsibility management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M6 - Infrastructure</th>
<th>M7 - Education, behaviour and sensitization</th>
<th>M8 - Enforcement</th>
<th>M9 - Cooperation</th>
<th>M10 - Self-evaluation, monitoring and follow-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of modifications</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Nature</td>
<td>Policy domains</td>
<td>Self-assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trigger for modifications</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Framework</td>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>Monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flanking measures</td>
<td>Sensitization</td>
<td>Supporting services</td>
<td>Policy and strategy adaptation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ladder of development**

A crucial aspect of the TQM-approach lies in its pursuit of continuous improvement or staged
development. A metaphor frequently used to describe this concept is one of mounting a ladder of
which the diverse rungs represent different quality levels that the organization or administration
can attain. Previous research and policy-evaluation tools in which a comparable methodology
was applied [cf. (40-42)], suggested using a ladder with four or five rungs. For the specific case
of local road safety management, four rungs have been defined: ‘ad-hoc oriented’, ‘isolated’,
‘system-oriented’ and ‘integral’ policymaking. Note that the ultimate level of TQM is not
included in this hierarchy, since this is considered to be a purely theoretical aspiration level.

The main distinctions between the different rungs or quality ranks are based on the level
of integrality in policymaking that is attained by the local administration. The characteristics of
each of the four quality standards are summarized in table 2.
TABLE 2  Quality Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>scope</th>
<th>ad hoc</th>
<th>isolated</th>
<th>system-oriented</th>
<th>integral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>focus</td>
<td>ex post</td>
<td>short term (1-2 y)</td>
<td>medium term (5-10 y)</td>
<td>long term (10-20 y)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>data use</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>budget</td>
<td>irregular</td>
<td>fixed but low</td>
<td>fixed and designated</td>
<td>variable but guaranteed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>staff - number</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>sufficient</td>
<td>sufficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>staff - skills</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>general knowledge</td>
<td>specialized (by experience)</td>
<td>highly educated and specialized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internal communication</td>
<td>limited</td>
<td>top down</td>
<td>top down</td>
<td>multidirectional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>external communication</td>
<td>limited</td>
<td>limited</td>
<td>contact with stakeholders</td>
<td>intense external relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structure</td>
<td>informal</td>
<td>vaguely structured</td>
<td>well structured</td>
<td>well structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approach</td>
<td>individual projects</td>
<td>road safety domain</td>
<td>mobility domain</td>
<td>complete local policy domain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The instrument at hand allows to audit and rate the (process of) local road safety policymaking using this ladder of development. This gives the local administration the opportunity to gain insight into its overall achievements with respect to quality management. The asset and added-value of this tool is not only its capability of providing insight into the general level of quality management of the administration; it also allows for positioning its performance on each of the predefined domains (modules) individually. This gives policymakers the chance to conduct a thorough diagnosis of their performances and allows them to (re)orient their focus in order to improve their performances.

OPERATIONALIZATION

The assessment of the administration’s performances will be put into practice by means of standardized questionnaires. Statements have been formulated with respect to the modules and the underlying aspects defined in table 1. For every aspect, a statement is set up for each of the four quality levels (using sub-criteria). This procedure is illustrated below.

The local authority and its related stakeholders will be asked to indicate to what respect the different statements suit to the current policymaking activities. Using the Likert-methodology [cf. (43)] and the standardized questionnaire, local officials, politicians, police department, civilians and other stakeholders will be asked to individually judge the local road safety policymaking on the different themes defined. Afterwards, the results are analysed by a supervising moderator and a meeting will be held in which the outcome of the inquiry is discussed with all parties. The goal of this meeting is to open up the debate, to give stakeholders the opportunity to ventilate their opinions and make nuances where necessary. The ultimate objective of this meeting is to reach a consensus on the quality level achieved by the local policymakers. The presence of an objective and neutral moderator should keep the meeting from drifting away from the core of the matter and avoid the dominance of a certain party and thus prevent biased results.
Simultaneously, a situational sketch of the city and the local administration will be drawn up. This is achieved by means of a questionnaire containing standardized indicators on general situational and specific road-safety related issues. This second questionnaire, combined with the results of the stakeholders’ consultation, allows the coordinating team to suggest immediate and longer term points of action. Additionally, policymakers’ attention can be drawn towards best practices in which comparable situations or challenges have been addressed. The identification of these ‘best practices’ may result from the application of this tool by other administrations. Policy recommendations can then be formulated both for general road safety management and for specific action fields (modules).

Illustration

Table 3 illustrates the process of constructing the statements that will be used. Here, the aspect ‘data collection’ within the module ‘user needs’ is discussed. The aspect ‘data collection’ consists of four sub-criteria which are directly connected to the different levels of quality: the frequency and regularity of the data collection, the source that is addressed, the body that executes the data collection and the background of the collected data. These sub-criteria have been identified based on the benchmark of quality instruments mentioned before. For each of these sub-criteria, it has been defined which activities and initiatives the administration must undertake in order to attain a certain level of development (indicated values 1-4 refer to quality levels as described in table 2; a baseline level has been introduced with value ‘0’). E.g. if a data collection is organized on a regular basis, quality level 3 is assigned; if data collection is only held in case of a critical situation, the quality ladder is only mounted to the first rung. Based on these interpretations, actual statements have been built up.

**TABLE 3 Illustration Generation Statements**

*Module 1: User needs*

"Data collection"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency and Regularity</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 continuously</td>
<td>4 locally adjusted scientific methods or indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 regularly</td>
<td>3 self-composed databases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 if potentially useful</td>
<td>2 from nearby or similar entities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 if necessary</td>
<td>1 from higher administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 never/seldom</td>
<td>0 none</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executor</th>
<th>Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 specialized or scientific organization</td>
<td>4 general policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 local authority, assisted by specialized organization</td>
<td>3 mobility policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 local authority, autonomous</td>
<td>2 road safety policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 civil notification</td>
<td>1 individual projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0 none</td>
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VALIDATION

In order to make sure this instrument is applicable and acceptable for practitioners, a thorough validation check is carried out. This embraces two major issues: a validation of the methodology and a content-oriented validation.

Methodology

The instrument presented in this paper bridges a gap in Flemish mobility policy aspirations. It not only ties in with the Flemish Mobility Plan (2001), moreover it covers the needs expressed in a recent regional decree issued by the Flemish Government (March 11, 2009), stating the necessity of the development of a monitoring system that allows for collecting, managing and analyzing data on the state of local mobility policymaking and that permits to verify whether the operational goals in mobility policy plans are being met in a cost-efficient manner. The conceptual model of this instrument was presented to and approved by the administration of the Flemish Minister of Mobility. Furthermore, the instrument covers up for the drawbacks of the Quick Check-methodology which is currently used. On top, the instrument is designed keeping the methodology of the widely recognized EFQM-approach closely in mind and it takes the specific background of public (mobility) management into account. In addition, several practitioners and experts in the domain of mobility management have been consulted. The necessity and potential for this instrument was generally agreed upon, on condition that the workload for local officials is not significantly increased and the necessary budgets (incentives) for implementing the tool are foreseen.

Content

With respect to a content-oriented validation, local policymakers and other stakeholders are being addressed in a consultation programme. To ensure that the statements are appropriate, relevant and capable of assigning an administration to a corresponding and preset quality-level, several researchers and practitioners in the field of local policymaking are being approached. For this programme, a Delphi-procedure is applied. Respecting this methodology, several consultation rounds are organized in which the approached persons express their opinion on the accurateness of the statements. In between two consultation rounds, the statements are adjusted to the remarks that are made and thereupon, a new consultation is started. This procedure is carried out repeatedly, eventually resulting in a shortlist of statements that is acceptable to all experts. (44)

FUTURE RESEARCH

Weighting

It is clear that not every sub-criterion within an aspect, an aspect within a module or a module within the policymaking process is as important as another. Therefore, a suitable weighting methodology has to be applied. The Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) will be applied for this sake. In this case, experts will compare modules and aspects in pairs on a scale representing resemblance. This results in a matrix out of which accurate weights can be derived. (45)
Miscellaneous

Other points of attention that are worked upon consist of identifying a suitable technique to model local mobility management (Business Process Modelling), deciding on a workable visualization methodology, fine-tuning the statements and background questionnaire and implementing test cases of the instrument in cooperation with volunteering administrations. A major challenge consists of incorporating this tool into the Flemish regional mobility policy framework and relating it to ongoing research in the domain of indicator development for road safety management practices.
REFERENCES


