



COMPETITIVENESS

➤ ASSISTANCE WITH CONSULTANCY AND QUALITY INITIATIVES

Companies based in the Wallonia Region, whether with Belgian or foreign capital, enjoy an excellent reputation at an international level. This high level of quality and competitiveness in products and services is clearly linked to a tradition of excellence and competitiveness. It is also the result of applying both skills and expertise, and of public and private efforts to improve company procedures, management, organization, and marketing – and to go on doing so.

The Wallonia authorities have taken a number of specific measures designed to help companies to develop in the fields that are relevant to productivity. With substantial financial investment, these forms of “consultancy assistance” enable companies to bring in external consultants

when examining various aspects of their management and development. These consultants are approved by the Wallonia Region on the basis of their experience and professional skills.

So firms that wish in particular to optimize their development, improve their processes or even solve specific problems can obtain appropriate, expert advice on a wide range of issues.

In the same spirit, a complete tool has been developed enabling Wallonia companies involved in implementing a quality procedure – and in particular a certification procedure – to obtain assistance, both financial and otherwise.

GOOD
TO
KNOW

“...QUALITY MAKES LIFE BETTER FOR US ALL”.

“The Wallonia Region is a land of quality. Thus was true in the past, and it is just as true today. For several years the Wallonia government has been helping the “quality” concept to proliferate with the MWQ (Wallonia Quality Movement). Companies large and small, businesses, public authorities, associations, all sectors of society have come to adopt the quality reflex, which often makes all the difference. An indispensable element for strengthening competitiveness, quality is now seen more and more as something

to which employees are entitled, no less than users and customers. Behind the sometimes abstract terminology, quality is now clearly a matter of social concern, an idea that – more than ever before – concerns us all. It’s up to us to harness it to progress in all its forms.”

The Prime Minister of the Wallonia Government
(Extract from the Preface to the QualiGuide 2006)

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Assistance with consultancy

To be eligible for these forms of assistance, the company must:

- have at least one business unit (perhaps an administrative office, a center of activity, a branch) in the Wallonia Region
- employ a maximum of 100 people
- generate a maximum turnover of €50 million or have a maximum balance-sheet total of €43 million
- be independent: the proportion of the equity held by another company that does not meet these conditions, or by a consortium of such companies, must be less than 25%.

If you meet these conditions:

- you can arrange for a global analysis (maximum 3 days' consultancy)
- on the basis of this analysis, you can engage consultants to advise on one or more of the following areas:
 - financial management, with particular reference to profitability, financial equilibrium, costs, prices, forecasting, establishing performance indicators, relationships with suppliers, stock management;
 - commercial management, with particular reference to policies on products, distribution, the commercial environment and sales organization
 - industrial policy, with particular reference to investment and production policies
 - product quality management
 - environmental management, sustainable-development strategy, excluding impact studies
 - organization and management, with particular reference to the optimization of internal organization, management consistency and human resources management;
 - information technology, with particular reference to the development or improvement of IT infrastructure
 - succession planning
 - peripheral problems such as business plans, mergers, acquisitions, absorptions, succession planning.

The Wallonia Region meets 50% of total consultancy fees.

- The consultant's daily rate is limited to €620 excluding VAT. Any excess amount is borne entirely by the company.
- The total amount of this grant is capped at €12,500 per application for all forms of assistance (global analysis, specialist assignments).

Grants and assistance for quality initiatives

The quality grant is awarded to companies that undertake to implement a quality assurance system. It is fixed at 25% of allowable costs, and it may not exceed €5,000.

It covers all or part of the costs of:

- obtaining studies
- certification initiatives, including the production of amended manuals
- staff involvement in the initiative up to the total amount of costs associated with obtaining studies or with certification initiatives.

The Wallonia Region may also meet part of the costs of the services of an approved consultant. It may also assist in the recruitment of unemployed persons receiving unemployment benefit for the purpose

of introducing a quality system. It encourages the recruitment of staff assigned to overall quality management by means of a tax exemption. The Wallonia Region provides training checks for the training of freelance workers, company directors and their staff. Lastly, the region helps with employment and training when companies are established, expanding or restructuring by covering part of the payroll costs of employees while they are being trained.

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