



The LCA guide to the Safety Culture Ladder

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SAFETY CULTURE LADDER

NEN

Modifications

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| 13-03-2017 | 1.0 | Initial version |

Introduction

The document before you has been put together as a guide to the Safety Culture Ladder for certification bodies. Its title is The LCA Guide to the Safety Culture Guide. This guide is an NEN publication that has been designed to supplement the current [Safety Culture Ladder Manual and Certification Scheme](#). It contains practical information intended for certification bodies that have already been recognised by NEN or are due to be recognised by it at a later date.

This guide has primarily been produced for the purpose of consultation in a digital format and is freely available from the following website for anyone who wishes to view it for their own use: www.safetycultureladder.org. As such, anyone wishing to view the most up-to-date version of this document should always see the website referred to above.

This document elaborates on a number of practical requirements. In principle, it does not contain any requirements that are contrary to the requirements of the Certification Scheme or the Safety Culture Ladder Manual or the spirit of either. If anything is unclear, or you have any questions, please contact NEN via info@safetycultureladder.com.

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1. LCA authorisation-regulations in relation to the Safety Culture Ladder

1.1. LCA requirements in relation to the Safety Culture Ladder

NEN itself is not a certifying authority. Safety Culture Ladder assessments are carried out exclusively by independent certification authorities (CAs) that NEN has recognised to carry out assessments (audits) of this nature in relation to the Safety Culture Ladder. NEN will authorise a CB – a Ladder Certification Authority (LCA) – if it meets the conditions stipulated in the [Safety Culture Ladder Manual](#), which includes an (NEN-)EN-ISO/IEC 17021 accreditation for VCA and management systems like ISO9001, ISO14001 and OHSAS.

A licence agreement is entered into with all LCAs that have been authorised. LCAs bind themselves to the Safety Culture Ladder conditions stipulated by the Board of Stakeholders (BoS) and the Committee of Experts (CoE) and carry out assessments based on the requirements set out in normative documents and also on the additional decisions taken by the CoE and BoS. LCAs that have been granted a Safety Culture Ladder authorisation are specified on the [website](#) for the Safety Culture Ladder.

1.2. The Safety-Culture-Ladder Authorisation Procedure for LCAs

Registration

Each potential CB submits a request to NEN for authorisation to carry out Safety Culture Ladder assessments. All requests must be submitted to NEN in writing, for the attention of The Safety Ladder Team, P.O. Box 5059, 2600 GB, Delft, the Netherlands, or by e-mail to info@safetycultureladder.com. Requests must always clearly state the following:

- a) The name, address, place of business, telephone number and e-mail address of the CB,
- b) The name and telephone number of the contact person,
- c) Reasons for the authorisation request,
- d) The extent to which the requirements stipulated in the Safety Culture Ladder Manual are met.

NEN will send the CB a confirmation of receipt and arrange a meeting with it to explain the principle and intentions of the Safety Culture Ladder and gain an impression of the CB in question.

1.2.2. Initial visit to a CB

NEN will visit the CB and will have an initial meeting with the individuals responsible for entry to the Safety Culture Ladder. Questions like the following will be raised at this meeting:

- a) Why does the CB want to conduct Safety Culture Ladder audits?
- b) What are the CB's own views on safety?
- c) How has the CB been organised with this in mind (in terms of organisation, staffing and systems)?
- d) Which experience has the CB had in measuring safety conduct?
- e) On which specific sector(s) and country (or countries) does the CB wish to focus?

NEN will then explain what is expected of a CB, what the authorisation procedure entails, how long the procedure takes, what needs to be taken into consideration (an annual licence payment, payments per assessment, auditor training and regular attendances), which obligations a CB has (participation in

harmonisation consultations, the attendance of standard NEN training and the annual evaluation meeting, etc.). Afterwards, the CB will reconfirm to NEN its interest in and wish to be considered eligible for an authorisation. NEN will inform the CB whether or not it is eligible for an assessment, in principle.

1.2.3. The assessment request

If a certification request is submitted, the CB in question will be asked to submit a file (by e-mail) containing the CVs of auditors and assessors, and other relevant information. NEN will confirm receipt of the above and assess the file. Assessment of the request received will consist of the assessment of whether the documents submitted by the applicant are complete and sufficiently clear and also whether the applicant falls within the scope of the quality declaration requested (requirements set out in the Safety Culture Ladder Manual) based on the documents submitted. Any questions will be sent and responded to by e-mail.

Authorisation

NEN will notify the CB of whether or not authorisation will be granted. Once recognised, a CB becomes a Ladder Certification Authority (LCA) and receives a draft licence agreement, a draft authorisation and an invitation to attend a final meeting with NEN. Any questions about the documents submitted will be sent and responded to by e-mail.

Authorisation will enter into force once both parties have signed the licence agreement.

Publication of authorisation

The name of the LCA will be added to the website for the Safety Culture Ladder. The authorisation granted (license to operate) will relate to the organisation (LCA) in question.

NEN will maintain an overview of LCAs that meet the requirements set out in the manual. This overview is published on the following website: www.safetycultureladder.org.

NEN registers authorities for an indefinite period of time and is able to terminate registrations:

- further to an LCA's removal from the register at its own request,
- further to deletion from the register by NEN if an authorisation is suspended or withdrawn,
- if an organisation ceases to exist.

The (lead) auditors and assessors put forward are able to gain authorisation in accordance with the standard authorisation procedure for auditors, which is described in Section 2.

1.3. Retention of authorisation

Changes

An LCA will notify NEN immediately of any changes relevant to its authorisation. New (prospective) auditors and/or assessors will be put forward to NEN in writing or by e-mail for the purpose of authorisation.

NEN reserves the right to reverse authorisations and also to suspend LCAs and/or auditors/assessors. This could happen for the following reasons: non-performance (whether or not further to complaints), an insufficient number of audit hours, the observation of poor assessments during attendances and at its own request, etc. This will always happen after prior consultation with the LCA and/or auditors/assessors. Once authorisation has been withdrawn or suspended, the relevant entry on the Safety Culture Ladder website will be reversed. Agreements will be made with the LCA about the handling of current commitments (from an operational, financial and legal point of view).

Attendance

NEN will be given the opportunity to attend ladder assessments. The LCI will notify NEN of these assessments at least 10 working days in advance (info@safetycultureladder.com). NEN will inform the LCA of whether or not it will utilise an attendance opportunity at least three working days in advance and, if yes, who will attend. The above applies for both certification audits and experience audits.

NEN may decide to replace attendance at the company with attendance at the LCA once the ladder assessment has been completed (review of the ladder assessment process).

2. Auditor authorisation

2.1. Knowledge and experience

NEN issues ladder-assessment authorisations to competent auditors and assessors. Qualified individuals will comply with the requirements set out in the Safety Culture Ladder Manual and be employed by an LCA that has been authorised by NEN. NEN auditor training

Auditor training

Auditors and assessors for the Safety Culture Ladder are required to attend the two-day NEN auditor training. After completing their standard-related training, participants receive a certificate of participation. NEN will not grant an authorisation to anyone who has not completed this two-day training. With this in mind, NEN keeps records of all participants who have attended the auditor training.

NEN organises its auditor training centrally, aided by partners selected specifically for this purpose. If it is not possible to attend a standard-related training before the first audit (as a result of personal circumstances or because no places are immediately available on the training in question), authorisation may be issued subject to two conditions, being that the standard-related training is attended within three months and that a joint kick-off will take place with the NEN Safety Culture Ladder Team shortly before the first audit starts. NEN will always attend the first audit.

2.2. The authorisation procedure

To achieve authorisation for a particular auditor and/or assessor, an LCA will submit a request to info@safetycultureladder.com by e-mail. The LCA will also include a CV and other documents designed to substantiate the competencies of the auditor in question.

NEN will assess the completeness of the information received and, if complete, the request will be assessed.

If approved, the authorisation will be sent to the LCA. If necessary, this will include a comment on points for attention in relation to the authorisation granted. NEN will attend the first audit that the auditor carries out.

2.3. Accreditations issued outside the Netherlands

Country-specific

An authorisation will be issued for one or more countries. The countries in question will be indicated explicitly on the authorisation itself.

Language

LCAs are required to have an NEN-EN-ISO/IEC 17021 accreditation. With regards to language proficiency, this standard stipulates that auditors must have the language proficiency necessary at

every level of the organisation operated by a client. This means that auditors must be able to communicate effectively with individuals at every level in an organisation, using appropriate terminology, expressions and speech.

2.4. Publication of the names of authorized auditors

NEN keeps an overview of auditors or assessors that meet the professional and professional-conduct requirements set out in the manual. This overview is published on the following website: www.safetycultureladder.org. Besides the name of the individual registered and the organisation by which he/she is employed, the overview of auditors and assessors also states the countries to which the authorisation applies.

NEN registers authorities for an indefinite period of time and is able to terminate registrations:

- further to an LCA's removal from the register at its own request,
- further to deletion from the register by NEN if an authorisation is suspended or withdrawn,
- further to the death of the individual registered.

If an LCA ceases to exist as an organisation, auditors and/or assessors will retain their authorisations if they affiliate themselves to another recognised LCA within three months of the date on which the original LCA ceases its business activities and promptly notifies NEN of this fact.

2.6. Freelancers and self-employed workers without employees

An auditor or assessor may be hired in, provided demonstrably qualified to carry out Safety Culture Ladder assessments. In this situation, the LCA will have bound the hired-in worker (whether a freelancer or a self-employed worker without employees) to it by entering into a contract with him/her. The LCA is responsible for ensuring that the hired-in worker is and continues to be suitably qualified.

3. Carrying out audits

3.1. The prior announcement of audits

LCAs will notify NEN of ladder assessments at least 10 working day in advance (info@safetycultureladder.com). The following information will be provided at the very least:

- Company name,
- Audit type,
- Audit team (including the name of the lead auditor),
- Audit scope (organisational limits),
- An outline audit plan,
- Company size and number of audit days.

This applies for new clients, but also for audits of existing certificate holders.

3.2. Manual and scheme

When carrying out audits, the Certification Scheme and the Safety Culture Ladder Manual will apply in full. The current versions of both are available from the Safety Culture Ladder website.

Both are reviewed on a regular basis and are updated to reflect any new developments. New versions are adopted by the CoE. If interim developments prompt changes to documents, additional decisions are published. These are published in the Manual and Certification Scheme for the Safety Culture Ladder. See the website (under [Documents](#)).

3.3. The audit team

A minimum of two auditors will carry out a ladder assessment. One of the two auditors will have been appointed to act as the lead auditor.

3.4. Attendances

At least one audit carried out by each newly accredited auditor will be attended by a representative of the NEN scheme manager. Attendance gives NEN an impression of the competencies of the auditor in question. Each auditor will be accompanied by a representative of NEN at least once every two years. Attendance is also geared towards the harmonisation of audit performance by the various LCAs. The extent to which (all or part of) an auditor's audits are attended will be decided on at the discretion of NEN. Extra attendances may be necessary if an auditor has completed an insufficient number of audit hours.

3.5. Man days

Subsection 5.4 of the Safety Culture Ladder Manual contains the certification man-day table. This table indicates the minimum number of man days to be spent on a ladder assessment. This is an absolute minimum. The number of man days applicable will depend on the total number of individual employees involved in the certification assessment and the certification step involved.

The table relates to the certification assessment for Step 2 of the Safety Culture Ladder. The time spent on the certification assessment in man days (see the table above) will increase as indicated below for each subsequent step:

Step 3, Factor 1.5;

Step 4, Factor 2.0;

Step 5, Factor 2.5.

4. Certificate issuance

4.1. Registration

When an LCA issues a certificate, it will register a copy of it with NEN via info@safetycultureladder.com for inclusion in the register of certificate holders, which NEN publishes on www.veiligheidsladder.org.

Once issued to a certificate holder, a certificate will only be valid if it has been added to the central register kept by NEN.

When registering certificates, the LCA will also indicate the compulsory certificate payment charged to the certificate holder based on the man days applicable, in accordance with the man-day table prescribed, as included in the Safety Culture Ladder Manual.

4.2. Certificate templates

Certificates will be prepared in the standard NEN format (template), utilising the NEN Safety Culture Ladder word and pictorial marks.

A certificate will provide the following information about certificate holders:

- a. The company name, with a link to the company website,
- b. The certificate number, with a link to a copy of the certificate,
- c. The place of business for the company,
- d. The chamber of commerce number for the company,
- e. The certificate step,
- f. The certificate issue date.
- g. Date valid until

Certificates that are issued in line with Version 4.0 of the scheme will be valid for a maximum of one year. As such, a new certificate will be submitted to NEN on an annual basis

5. Quality control

5.1. Licence agreement

Only LCAs that have entered into a licence agreement with NEN are permitted to carry out ladder assessments. This ensures that LCAs comply with the quality requirements stipulated by NEN. The following will be set out in the licence agreement at the very least:

- a. The nature of the services to be provided by NEN and an LCA,
- b. The current standard applicable (Manual and Certification Scheme), on which certification is based,
- c. The payment due to NEN,
- d. The term of the licence agreement.

5.2. The harmonisation consultation

The LCA harmonisation platform consists of representatives of the LCAs with which NEN has entered into licence agreements. Representatives (a maximum of two per CB) must be involved in the certification process, either as (lead) auditors or as the individuals that make the certification decision (assessors). Participation by the LCA is compulsory. The harmonisation platform meets twice a year (in the spring and autumn) and is country-specific. A report on each consultation will be prepared by the secretary put forward by NEN.

5.3. Internal feedback to CBs

Representatives that attend the harmonisation consultation will provide everyone they are representing with feedback on the consultation.

5.4. Auditor days

Added to the above, an auditor/harmonisation day will be organised once a year for all auditors (country-specific). Participation is compulsory and attendance is registered. Part of the day is used for the purpose of further training (on new developments, new emphases and interpretations, etc.).

5.5. ISO/IEC 17021 accreditation

Each CB is accredited by the Dutch Accreditation Council (DAC) or by a member of the IAF, in accordance with NEN-EN-ISO/IEC 17021 *Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems*. To achieve this accreditation, the CB will send NEN a copy of the attachment to the accreditation certificate, which states the scopes that have been recognised.

5.6. Incident handling

NEN will register details of situations in which it is observed that an LCA is deviating from procedures. In the event of more serious incidents, in which the integrity or quality of the system may be at stake, a written notification will be issued to the LCA in question (by e-mail). This notification will request a written response and/or explanation from the LCA. If the notification is deemed to be well-founded, a representative from the LCA will then be invited to attend a meeting with NEN. This meeting will examine the incident in more detail and involve a discussion of how the incident could be avoided in the future and whether any remedial action is necessary. A report on the meeting will be prepared and then sent to the LCA. A sanction may be imposed on the LCA if the (type of) incident in question happens again.

5.7. The evaluation meeting

Each year, an evaluation meeting will be organised with LCAs to assess the past year. The procedure-deviations registered will be discussed in particular and also events and prospects for the year ahead in general.

6. Use of the NEN name and pictorial marks

The word and pictorial marks for the NEN Safety Culture Ladder are owned by the NEN foundation and have been registered as such both nationally and internationally.

A authorised LCA that has entered into an agreement with NEN may use the Safety Culture Ladder word and pictorial marks in (printed or digital) communications that pertain directly to activities relating to the Safety Culture Ladder. For example:

- a. on *Veilig Bewust* certificates (safety awareness certificates) that have been issued, in accordance with the format specified,
- b. in letters, quotes, audit reports and suchlike, provided they relate to certification in accordance with the NEN Safety Culture Ladder,
- c. in documentation and brochures, provided they relate to certification in accordance with the NEN Safety Culture Ladder,
- d. in communications for conferences and seminars, etc.,
- e. on websites and digital applications.

6.1. Use of the pictorial mark by Ladder-certified organisations

Ladder-certified organisations may use the Safety Culture Ladder pictorial mark in (printed or digital) communications that relate directly to their certified status. The above is subject to the condition that the name of the LCA and the step achieved (as stated on the certificate) are stated near the logo.

6.2. Use of the pictorial mark by other parties

The Safety Culture Ladder pictorial mark may be used by third parties in presentations etc. that relate to the system. The pictorial mark may not be used in a manner that could wrongly imply that the third party in question is affiliated to the Safety Culture Ladder as an LCA, Expert Partner, Ladder-certified organisation or scheme manager.

6.3. Inclusion of name in LCI logos

Authorised LCAs are permitted to use the Safety Culture Ladder name in their logos. This enables their clients to communicate the standards uniformly to their contacts. The above is permitted in communications issued on (letter head) paper and in brochures and advertising, for example, issued by the LCA itself and by certified clients of the LCA in question. However, the impression may not be created that the scope of the logo is broader than that for which the certificate has been issued. LCA establishes a procedure for its own use and for use by certified clients, in which procedure the conditions for use, checks and sanctions are set out.

Approval of own logo

The logo may only be used once approval has been obtained further to an assessment of the logo envisaged and the corresponding procedure by the CoE.

6.4. Other use

In all other cases, use of the NEN Safety Culture Ladder word and pictorial marks will not be permitted, unless the written consent of NEN has been obtained.

7. Contributions and payments

7.1. Financing structure for the Safety Culture Ladder

The Safety Culture Ladder is a market initiative. It is not subsidised or supported by government. Organisations that actively use the Safety Culture Ladder are asked to pay a contribution towards the further development, roll-out and management of the Safety Culture Ladder.

The contribution requested from an individual LCA will consist of the following:

- a) An annual licence payment to NEN.
- b) A payment to NEN for each certificate issued. The CB is responsible for collecting payments from certificate holders/audited organisations for NEN.

7.2. The tariff sheet

The licence payment amounts are indicated in the tariff sheet. NEN determines the level of the payments required before 1 October of each year, on the basis of a pay-as-you-go system. These payments are then announced in a new version of the tariff sheet. The new versions of the tariff sheet are distributed among the LCAs.

7.3. Licence payments from LCAs

NEN invoices the licence payment due for the first year as soon as the parties have signed the licence agreement and subsequently at the beginning of each new calendar year. The licence payment is a fixed amount per year.

7.4. Certificate payments

NEN invoices LCAs for certificate-related payments twice per year (in June and December) on the basis of reports from LCAs about the experience or certification audits carried out. These payments are proportionate to the audit term in man days.

The audit term in man days will depend on the number of workers and the step for which certification is carried out. Once the number of man days for an audit has been determined, including the factor for the step in question (see Subsection 3.5 of this Guide), the table in the tariff sheet is used to determine the payment due given the audit term in man days.

Example calculation

Example: Step 3 certification for an organisation with 200 workers

Audit term in man days

The audit term in man days is determined first. According to the example below of the certification man-day table from the manual, this organisation falls in the 176-275 number-of-workers category.

An audit term of eight man days applies here for Step 2.

Factor 1.5 applies for Step 3 here. So: $1.5 * 8 = \underline{12 \text{ audit days for a Step-3 audit.}}$

| Number of workers | Audit term in man days | Number of workers | Audit term in man days |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1-10 | 3 | 1176-1550 | 13 |
| 11-25 | 4 | 1551-2025 | 14 |
| 26-65 | 5 | 2026-2675 | 15 |
| 66-125 | 6 | 2676-3450 | 16 |
| 126-175 | 7 | 3451-4350 | 17 |
| 176-275 | 8 | 4351-5450 | 18 |
| 276-425 | 9 | 5451-6800 | 19 |
| 426-625 | 10 | 6801-8500 | 20 |
| 626-875 | 11 | 8501-10700 | 21 |

Illustrative table for audit term in man days

Please note: this is an informative example! See the actual table in the current version of the manual.

Certificate payment

The annual certificate payment is determined on the basis of the number of man days for an audit on the step in question (including the factor applicable) and the table in the tariff sheet. According to the illustrative certificate-payment table below, an annual certificate payment of € 1,500 applies in the event of an audit term of 12 days.

| Audit term in man days | Annual certificate payment |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
|------------------------|----------------------------|

| | |
|-------|---------|
| 3-9 | €1,000 |
| 10-14 | € 1,500 |
| 15-19 | € 2,000 |
| 20-24 | € 2,500 |

Illustrative table for certification payments

Please note: this is an informative example! See the actual table in the current version of the tariff sheet.

Example: Step 2 certification for an organisation with 200 workers

If a Step 2 certification were to be carried out for an organisation of the same size, the audit term would be eight man days. An annual certificate payment of € 1,500 would be due too, in accordance with the illustrative tables above.

The experience audit

An experience audit involves 40% of the number of man days required for a full certification audit. Experience audits are always carried out at Step 3 level.

So, the minimum audit term in man days for a Step 3 certification of the organisation in question will be determined first. Forty percent of this number of days will then be calculated. This is the minimum number of days required for the experience audit.

The rate schedule/sheet will be consulted to establish which payment applies given the minimum number of days required for the experience audit.

7.5. Terms of payment

The term of payment is 14 calendar days after the invoice date, except where agreed otherwise in writing. If an LCA has any comments or remarks about an invoice that it has received from NEN, it must submit a complaint to NEN in writing within seven calendar days of the invoice date. If a complaint is not submitted within the period of time referred to above, the LCA will be deemed to be in agreement with the invoice in question. Objections to the amounts invoiced will not suspend the payment obligation of an LCA.

Once the term of payment has expired, the LCA will be in default by operation of law; from this time, statutory interest and commercial interest will be due on the amount outstanding.

The LCA will bear all costs that NEN is forced to incur in order to achieve payment of the amount outstanding, at law and otherwise. Extrajudicial costs will be calculated in accordance with the Extrajudicial Collection Costs (Fees) Decree (*Besluit vergoeding voor buitengerechtelijke incassokosten*), which is applicable by virtue of Section 6:96(5) of the Dutch Civil Code (*Burgerlijk Wetboek*) or the *Voorwerk II* report applied by the courts in the Netherlands, subject to a minimum of € 350.00.

The LCA is not permitted to set off any payment.

9. Questions and interpretation issues

All questions must be submitted by e-mail via info@safetycultureladder.com. Once received, these questions will be dealt with in accordance with the issue at hand.

The Safety Culture Ladder will respond to all procedural, practical and substantive questions. Interpretation issues that cannot be answered on the basis of the texts of the Certification Scheme and the Safety Culture Ladder Manual will be submitted to the CoE and the Harmonisation Consultation.

10. Final stipulation

The Safety Culture Ladder Manual will be binding where interpretation differences are the case. The CoE will decide on all cases not provided for by the Safety Culture Ladder Manual.

If subjects are not described in this LCA Guide, the NEN General Terms and Conditions and the scheme management manual will apply, as described and posted on the NEN website.

11. Colophon

Title: LCA Guide Version 1.0

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12. NEN copyright

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13. Appendix A NEN and the Safety Culture Ladder

The Safety Culture Ladder is a measure that is designed to encourage safety awareness and conscious safe behaviour amongst companies and their suppliers and contractors. NEN owns and manages the Safety Culture Ladder and aims to continue to develop the system with the sector(s): both nationally and internationally.

NEN is an independent foundation and, as an internationally recognised scheme manager, has access to a worldwide network. NEN works in line with the international ISO requirements for scheme management that are applied by the Dutch Accreditation Council (*Raad van Accreditatie*). The Accreditation Council regularly assesses NEN on the basis of these ISO standards. Over the last 15 years, NEN has developed and become responsible for managing more than 35 schemes in collaboration with market parties, knowledge institutes and authorities in various sectors (Construction, Industry, Agriculture, Care and the Environment) and has issued more than 4,500 certificates in collaboration with 20 certification bodies.

NEN is responsible for the use, further development and management of the Safety Culture Ladder and the expansion of its scope to new clients and sectors. It has created an administrative Board of Stakeholders (BoS) and a technical Committee of Experts (CoE). NEN provides the secretariat for both the Board and the Committee and undertakes project management for the Safety Culture Ladder.

Figure 1 show how the Safety Culture Ladder is organised. The specifics of the scheme vary from one country to another.

As a foundation, NEN has a broadly constituted Board, which supervises performance of the NEN foundation as a whole. The Board at NEN is responsible for ensuring the achievement of both standardisation and scheme management.

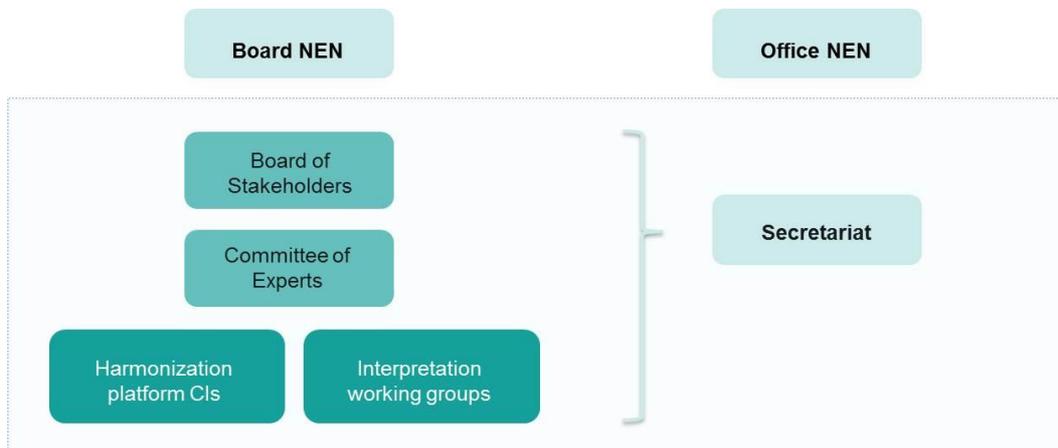


Figure 1 - Organisation underlying the Safety Culture Ladder

The BoS functions as an administrative Board and is responsible for ensuring the independence, qualitative further development, management, organisation, use and promotion of the Safety Culture Ladder and also the broadening of its scope to new clients and sectors. The Board is broadly

constituted, consisting of representatives of contracting authorities, the business sector, science and social organisations and is headed by an independent chairman at Board level.

The BoS discusses developments with (interested) clients, contractors and other relevant (collective industrial) organisations. The starting point is that all users of the ladder have an interest in the continued existence of just one Safety Culture Ladder. The BoS is supported in and advised on the management and development of the Safety Culture Ladder by the CoEs and NEN.

The CoE is the operational manager of the Safety Culture Ladder and is primarily responsible for keeping the certification scheme up-to-date and acts as the contact for the CBs. The CoE consists of experts provided by or representing clients, contractors and CBs. Members of the CoE are appointed in a personal capacity. If changes happen in an organisation, an interested party may nominate another individual to act as its representative.

The CB harmonisation platform consists of representatives of CBs with which NEN has entered into licence agreements. The representatives must be involved in the certification process as (lead) auditors or as the individuals that make the certification decision (assessors). The CB harmonisation platform meets regularly to discuss the verifiability of standards requirements and the practicability of the certification scheme. The aim is for standards requirements and the certification scheme to be applied uniformly. Real-life cases are discussed in harmonisation consultations and may be submitted by CBs (via their auditors) or by the CoE (via its members). The CBs may submit assessment problems to the harmonisation consultation, possibly together with the company in question (as the client of the CBs).

The CB harmonisation platform reports to the CoE. The reports produced will include the case studies discussed (without providing any company-sensitive information) and information about the areas in which action is to be taken to improve the scheme and promote its uniform application. The CoE must either approve reports of this nature or respond with additional comments. It will provide the platform with feedback on the action taken.

Where necessary, an interpretation work-group will be created, the members of which are technical experts put forward by clients, contractors and CBs. The CoE must agree to the composition of the work group. Work-group members may be members of the CoE.

The interpretation work-group focuses on interpretation issues raised for discussion. Members of this group may be members of the CB harmonisation platform, the CoE or may be external to any of the aforementioned. The work group formulates an interpretation proposal, which is then submitted to the CoE for decision-making.

Based on its expertise, the interpretation work-group may issue solicited and unsolicited advice to the CoE on market developments and the alignment of the certification scheme with these developments. The CoE provides the work group with feedback on the action it has undertaken in relation to its proposals and advice.

Interpretations adopted by the CoE are incorporated into interpretation documents, which are then published on the Safety Culture Ladder website ([link](#)). CBs are required to observe the interpretations adopted in all future assessments. The Safety Culture Ladder scheme will be updated where necessary.