

Little steps ahead; evaluation of the implementation of the Quality Mark Safe Enterprises (KVO)

Summary

Reason and Objective of the Research

In the spring of 2003 the Ministry of Justice announced that they felt the need to implement an evaluation of the Quality Mark Safe Enterprises (KVO). The KVO is a certification scheme. The quality mark is granted to a shopping centre or an industrial estate when entrepreneurs co-operate with local government, police and fire brigade to increase safety in the area. Working together in order to obtain a KVO is a form of public-private co-operation. Two years have passed since the first KVO pilots started and various initiatives have been taken in other places since then, in order to co-operate in the maintenance or improvement of safety. At this stage, those commissioning the research, the Scientific and Documentation Centre of the Ministry of Justice (WODC), wish to gain insight into the concrete progress of the KVO's implementation in practice.

The objective of this research is the following:

Charting the manner in which KVO partnerships are established in practice and the manner in which co-operation takes place within these partnerships, so as to make recommendations on the basis thereof that can support and stimulate the implementation process (of both existing and future KVO partnerships).

Research Questions

The research questions for this research are as follows:

1. How is the implementation of the Quality Mark Safe Enterprises proceeding and what are the critical factors when establishing and maintaining this quality mark? Which success factors, bottlenecks, opportunities and threats can be identified within this framework?
2. What do individual entrepreneurs feel to be the drawbacks and advantages (costs and benefits) of participating in the KVO?
3. What recommendations can be formulated (based on the answers to the previous questions) to improve and stimulate existing and new KVO partnerships?
4. How do the local KVO partnerships measure and record the effects of the co-operation in terms of social and physical safety?

The answer to question 4 has not been included in this summary. Please refer to appendix 3 of this report.

Research Design

Within the framework of this research, the process of co-operation within eight KVO partnerships has been studied. The research focuses upon 4 industrial estates and 4 shopping centres, 6 existing estates and centres respectively and 2 new development projects. In total, 40 people who are involved in one of these KVO partnerships (an average of 5 per KVO partnership) have been interviewed. These persons were more or less equally divided between private and public parties. The available written material on KVO partnerships has also been used. A short inspection was held at all locations to get an impression of the site/centre. At two locations, meetings of the co-operating parties were attended too. As well as the people

involved in local collaborations, 15 other people have been interviewed who have involvement in the KVO at a national or regional level. KVO manuals have also been consulted, as well as literature on the KVO and public-private co-operation (PPC) in general. In order to answer research question 2, a separate partial investigation has been conducted, interviewing entrepreneurs by telephone who are based in an area where a KVO has been granted. In total, 41 interviews were held by telephone with entrepreneurs from 4 areas (an average of 10 entrepreneurs per area).

Findings

Below, the most important findings will be discussed per research question. At research question 1, a few fields of attention are discussed separately. The principal success factors, bottlenecks, opportunities and threats will be mentioned for each field of attention.

1. How is the implementation of the Quality Mark Safe Enterprises proceeding and what are the critical factors when establishing and maintaining this quality mark?

Establishing a KVO Collaboration

In practice, establishing a KVO partnership does not always meet with insurmountable problems. Obtaining the Quality Mark Safe Enterprises has been made relatively simple. In the first instance, nothing has to be actually done to improve the safety in the area in question. Bringing the relevant parties together, entering into a (fairly noncommittal) collaboration agreement and formulating an action plan is enough to obtain the quality mark. In practice, all parties are not always equally involved in, for example, drawing up the plan of action, but that has not resulted (yet) in problems at this stage.

Success factors and opportunities at this stage

- In areas with a high crime rate, the entrepreneurs are more prepared to work on collective safety measures together;
- The requirements to obtain a KVO are not high;
- A government that is quick to take concrete actions improves the level of involvement and participation of the entrepreneurs.

Bottlenecks and threats at this stage

- At the start, to what extent a KVO is feasible and desirable in the area in question is not always assessed. This may cause problems in the long term;
- Achieving a KVO is more difficult in (large-scale) shopping centres than on industrial estates - the number of interested parties is higher, the safety situation is more complex, and the entrepreneurs' interest in participating is not always equal. (The entrepreneurs' interest is lower if there is a lower crime rate, a strong government and police presence in the area);
- Entrepreneurs are often not aware or barely aware of matters involving security, so they do not feel much commitment to something like a KVO.

Collaboration between the parties (effective and durable)

After the quality mark has been obtained, the parties must make an effort to achieve the intended safety targets. This often proves to be very difficult in practice. It is not until this

stage that becomes clear how valuable the involvement of the various parties actually is and how the parties deal with the various problems they encounter. Many difficulties have to be overcome in order to create an effective and durable collaboration.

Success factors and opportunities at this stage

- In practice, many enthusiastic persons are active (people carrying the load, process supervisors, etc.) who can get a lot done through their efforts and qualities;
- Most participants are enthusiastic about the collaboration. They consider it to have more advantages to themselves than just increased safety in the area;
- The certification scheme to a certain extent guarantees collaboration; the parties involved do not wish to lose the quality mark once they have obtained it;
- In particular, with newly developed shopping centres and the allocation of new industrial estates, there are opportunities to give shape to the KVO in a positive sense. At this stage, it is possible to oblige entrepreneurs to become a member of an entrepreneur collective (or make a compulsory contribution thereto).

Bottlenecks and threats at this stage

- Parties hardly contribute to the collaboration, creating an imbalance in the division of roles and tasks. In many shopping centres, it is the local government that must press the entrepreneurs, whereas, on many industrial estates, it is the entrepreneurs that press the government;
- The manuals written for the KVO are not considered to be a tool when collaborating in practice. There is a lack of concrete tools and ready-made products;
- Internal communication is often faulty. The parties are poorly informed about each other's activities and it often not clear what can be mutually expected;
- The financial resources are often (too) limited in many KVO partnerships. Incidental and temporary funds are frequently used, such as subsidies, etc.
- The KVO process costs (time, money and the effort involved in collaborating) are very high.

The interests and contributions of separate parties

Effective and durable collaboration requires that all parties have a tangible interest in participation, and that they also have sufficient opportunity to contribute to the collaboration. After all, the contribution of one party defines the interest, to a large extent, that other parties may have in the collaboration. If the interests and contributions of the various parties are not balanced, this may damage the collaboration's efficiency and continuity. In practice, we see widely divergent interests and contributions from the various parties.

Success factors and opportunities within this partnership

- Local government and the police usually have a sufficient to great interest in the KVO. Their opportunities to contribute are ample and sufficient respectively;
- Entrepreneurs sometimes have an interest in the KVO, particularly when they experience a lot of crime and the government is not fighting this crime adequately. If the area is large enough and the entrepreneurs' degree of organisation is good (for example, through compulsory membership of the collective, etc.), this party can, in principle, contribute generously to the KVO.

Bottlenecks and threats within this partnership

- The local government shows little interest in safety on industrial estates;
- Conflicts of interest between the government departments can hinder collaboration within the KVO partnership;
- The role of the fire brigade in the KVO is limited;
- The interests of the entrepreneurs in the KVO and their opportunities to contribute are sometimes limited;
- The advantages of participating in the KVO are not very clear to the entrepreneurs;
- Entrepreneurs consider safety an additional matter. This means that all efforts within the KVO partnership constitute an extra burden for them.

The role of the environment/general factors

The development of the KVO is based on the idea that all parties can benefit from public-private collaboration. The KVO is poorly developed in this respect, as the advantages thereof are not equally clear to the individual parties in all cases.

With regard to the KVO and its national organisation, we can indicate success factors as well as bottlenecks:

Success factors and opportunities within this partnership

- The national government (in its various capacities) is keen to give further shape to the KVO;
- Nationally operating private parties that can be of importance locally, show circumspect interest in the KVO (such as the property owner CORIO);
- Regional institutions, such as the police and the Regional Platforms for Crime Control (RPCs) play an important and positive role in stimulating and supporting local KVO initiatives. In particular the RPCs offer opportunities in the future to guarantee the KVO regionally.

Bottlenecks and threats within this partnership

- The policy's quantitative emphasis (achieving as many KVOs as possible) can be harmful to the KVO in the long run;
- The KVO lacks a national 'face';
- The KVO lacks a supporting organisation at national level.

2. What do individual entrepreneurs feel to be the drawbacks and advantages (costs and benefits) of participating in the KVO?

Most entrepreneurs are barely aware of the KVO in their area. The individual entrepreneur's interest regarding the KVO is therefore difficult to assess. Most entrepreneurs have probably never or hardly ever thought about it. This is not beneficial to the support and implementation of the KVO. However, one positive point is that entrepreneurs are largely satisfied with the collective safety arrangements to which they contribute, even if this contribution is compulsory.

An explanation for this result could be that the entrepreneurs themselves are not at the table with the KVO, but rather the entrepreneur collective or the shopkeepers' association.

Many entrepreneurs' involvement in the collective (if involved at all!) does not go beyond paying the contribution. This attitude only changes if there are issues within the area that directly affect their business interests. In that case, entrepreneurs show more commitment to their association.

3. Which recommendations can be formulated (based on the answers to the previous questions) to improve and stimulate existing and new KVO partnerships?

The recommendations are addressed to parties who are involved nationally or supra-locally in the KVO, such as the Ministry of Justice and the National Platform of Crime Control, and to locally involved parties such as process supervisors and local initiators.

Recommendation to national and supra-local parties

1. Develop a simple tool for process supervisors and potential initiators of KVO partnerships to assess the desirability and feasibility of the collaboration;
2. Replace the manual with different products that are geared to a specific purpose and a specific target group;
3. Lower the KVO process costs;
4. Leave the idea of product certification and steer towards output certification;
5. Review the role of the fire brigade in the KVO;
6. Look for new opportunities to compile a new 'profit package' for entrepreneurs;
7. Research the desirability and feasibility of securing individual companies collectively within a KVO partnership;
8. For the time being, when implementing the KVO give priority to new development projects and areas with a high (subjective) crime rate;
9. Create a support organisation for the KVO at national level;
10. Try to involve parties that can be important locally in the KVO 'along the top' (at national level);
11. Give priority to activities that make the membership or contribution of entrepreneurs to an entrepreneurs or shopkeepers' association compulsory.

Recommendations to local parties (such as process supervisors and initiators)

12. Make sure that the private-public collaboration (between government parties and within the local government area) is functioning properly before starting a KVO partnership;
13. Process supervisors should first try to find an entrepreneur who is prepared to take the regional role upon himself (provided that the entrepreneur meets the outlined profile to a certain extent);
14. Provide realistic targets within the collaboration;
15. Try to link the KVO locally to existing networks, structures and activities;
16. Make the roles and tasks of the parties participating in the KVO more clear;
17. Create more room within the KVO for making entrepreneurs more aware of matters involving security.