

# **From a Traditional to a Flexible Office Concept**

The Ministry of Agriculture, Nature & Food Quality



**agriculture, nature  
and food quality**



Mireya T. Klumpers  
0134783  
Utrecht University  
Interdisciplinary Social Science  
Social Issues: Policy & Intervention

Supervisors:  
Dr. P. Liem  
Ing. A. Westerhuis  
Dr. J.T. Thijs

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## **Abstract**

The flexible office concept gains popularity, in national as well as international context. Despite of its popularity, the implementation of a flexible office in organizations involves difficulties and discomfort among employees. This study investigates the implementation of the flexible working environment in the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. Specifically, this research aims at gaining insight in employees' expectations, investigates employees' evaluation of the transitional process towards the new office and the influence of the expectations on the evaluation of the process. Data are collected from interviews with 23 respondents, taken along in the last weeks of the transitional process. Results indicate that employees have fairly negative expectations of the new office. Furthermore, the respondents generally evaluated the transitional process as rather good. The influence of employees' expectations on their evaluation of the transitional process remains indefinable and needs further research. Recommendations for later phases of the transitional process, limitations of the study and implications for future research are discussed.

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## **Preface**

With this thesis, I high-spiritedly draw my college-days and student-like life to a final end. Through graduating in Social Sciences (BA) at University College Utrecht, in Psychology (BSc) and in Interdisciplinary Social Science (MSc) at Utrecht University, I paved my way towards a working career.

Generally, the theme of this research is Human Resource Management (HRM). This theme is increasingly popular, as the realized significance of individual employees for organizations is expanding. Since my father covers a position at the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature & Food Quality (henceforth the Ministry of AN&FQ) in The Hague, it came to my attention that a fascinating HRM related process is going on there. The transitional process from a traditional working environment to a flexible working environment within the Ministry of AN&FQ is the central focus of this Masters thesis.

Before describing the research in detail, I want to thank several people who enabled me to succeed in this research. First of all, I want to thank the Ministry of AN&FQ; through my internship at the Department of Information Management, Facilities and Services and the interviews with the research respondents, I obtained a great deal of information and knowledge. Furthermore, I want to thank the Centre for People and Buildings for their cooperation and information. A special acknowledgement goes to my dad, for his help and support. Last but not least, I want to aim a word of thanks to Ing. A Westerhuis; my supervisor at the ministry, Dr. P. Liem and Dr. J.T. Thijs; my first and second supervisor at the University and my fellow-students Rianne Ulrich, Marlieke Elfrink and Fayrouz El-Hadji. I could not have realized this thesis without your contributions!

## **1. Introduction**

This introductory chapter consists of six parts. Paragraph 1.1 concerns the motives for this research, paragraph 1.2 describes the research objectives and paragraph 1.3 puts forward the research questions for empirical research. Paragraph 1.4 reports an operationalization of the used concepts, paragraph 1.5 concerns the research justification and paragraph 1.6 describes the reading instructions for this research thesis.

### **1.1 Motives for Research**

Where the traditional working environment, with fixed workplaces, is increasingly considered old-fashioned, the flexible office concept is gaining popularity in both Dutch and international context. The number of organizations with flexible working environments is rapidly augmenting, even though literature and employees' reactions are not undividedly positive.

Since the 1950's main building of the Ministry of AN&FQ has worn with age and does not meet the modern office standards, the building needed renovations. To optimize the efforts of the building renovations, it was decided that the office concept had to change simultaneously from a traditional to a flexible concept. The Ministry of AN&FQ is considered quite a conservative ministry (De Bruyne, 2007) and is therefore an intriguing location to investigate the way people handle change.

### **1.2 Research Objectives**

The implementation of a new office concept at the Ministry of AN&FQ needs many preparations in order to convince the employees of the benefits of the new working concept and to inform the employees about the practicalities of the new working environment. This transitional process includes the provision of informational sources and workshops and training for employees. Part of this research concerns an evaluation of the different elements of the transitional process, in order to determine which information-sources, e.g. workshops, employees consider useful in preparing them for the new working environment. Before actually moving to the flexible working environment, employees already have expectations about what working in the new office concept will be like. This research furthermore investigates what people expect from working in the new working environment and how these expectations influence their evaluation of the transitional process.

In short, the objective of this research is *'gaining insight in the expectations of the Ministry of AN&FQs' employees for working in a new working environment, their evaluation*

*of appropriateness of the transitional process and the influence of expectations on the evaluation of the transitional process, in order to make recommendations to the policy-makers of the ministry for improvement of the transitional process in subsequent phases’.*

### **1.3 Research Questions for Empirical Research**

The central question this research addresses is:

*‘What are the expectations of the Ministry of AN&FQs’ employees for working in a new flexible working environment, how appropriate do they evaluate the transitional process and to what extent are the employees’ expectations of influence on their evaluation of the transitional process?’*

I will attempt to answer this central research question by means of the following sub-questions:

- 1. What do the employees expect of the new, flexible working environment?*
- 2. To what extent do the expectations of employees of the new office concept differ in accordance with gender and age?*
- 3. To what extent are the attitudes of colleagues concerning the new office concept of influence on peoples’ expectations and behaviour?*
- 4. How appropriate do the employees evaluate the several segments of the transitional process?*
- 5. To what extent do employees’ expectations of the new working environment influence their evaluation of the transitional process?*

### **1.4 Operationalization**

To be concrete, the *Ministry of AN&FQ* is one of the 13 Dutch ministries and works on sustainable and innovative entrepreneurship in agriculture and fishing, on food safety and quality, on vital nature and a familial countryside (Maarleveld & Groot, 2006; Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, 2008). The ministry has many offices all over the country; its head office is situated in the main building at the Bezuidenhoutseweg in The Hague. This research focuses solely on the employees working in the ministries’ head office, included in the first phase of the office innovations. Of these approximately 450 employees, the majority is staff-member (medewerker), some are managers (leidinggevenden) and some are secretaries.

A *flexible working environment* is an office concept in which employees do not have their own fixed office, work place or desk. Within this flexible working environment, employees can choose a place to work and switch work places at any moment, depending on

the kind of working activities they planned on doing (Brennan, Chugh & Kline, 2002). Chapter 2 contains elaborate information on the concept of a flexible working environment and its advantages and disadvantages.

The *transitional process* is the total of all informational sources and activities to inform, prepare, convince and inspire people for the new working environment. This process started in the beginning of 2006, intending to prepare employees of the Ministry of AN&FQ for relocation to the new working environment within a year. Because of delay in reconstruction activities, the actual relocation date is frequently postponed until May 2008. All in all, the transitional process for the first phase (around 450 employees) took almost two and a half years. The Department of Information Management, Facilities and Services (Appendix II) is in charge of the transitional process, in cooperation with an external consultant.

Peoples' *expectations* are very influential in the outcome of interventions (De Bruyne, 2007). When employees have more positive expectations of the new working environment, they will probably appear to be more willing to cooperate in turning the implementation of a new office concept into a success. A lack of knowledge may cause negative expectation, because people are often afraid of the unknown. By providing adequate information on the new office concept, the transitional process may change employees' expectations into more positive ones. Chapter 2 contains more elaborate information on this matter.

## **1.5 Justification:**

- Scientific Relevance

A great deal of research is concerned with investigating employee reactions to their working environment in general, and reactions to a flexible working concept in particular. In those researches, many advantages and disadvantages of a flexible working environment are discovered. Furthermore, research is concerned with the benefits of educational media like workshops, training and other informational sources. Research on the combination of the usefulness of the educational media for working in a flexible working environment is, according to my records, not done yet. That is why this research will contribute substantially to the existing body of knowledge. Because the flexible working environment is a very popular concept, which is implemented in an ever-increasing number of organizations (Brennan, Chugh & Kline, 2002), this research is very recent and relevant. The results of this study can not only be used for improvement of the transitional process in later phases at the

Ministry of AN&FQ, but also by other organizations that want to organize a transitional process to implement a flexible office concept.

- Societal Relevance

The increasing popularity of the flexible working concept is not limited to the office environment, but represents a changing societal trend (Van Meel, 2000). Traditional office design reflects the individualistic nature of Dutch people, in which people attach great value to privacy and autonomy. Furthermore, Dutch offices were traditionally very bureaucratic and hierarchically structured. Because of the trend towards internationalization, Dutch offices are influenced by other cultural views of office design and organizational structuring. The internationalization influences office designs to become more transparent and egalitarian, leading to a flexible working environment.

People that can make use of the results of this research are for example managers of organizations that consider implementing a flexible working concept. This research could enable them to take employee reactions and practical difficulties into account, so that they can learn from other peoples' experiences instead of re-inventing the wheel. Secondly, employees of organizations that plan on implementing a flexible working concept can also use the results of this research as a source of information about what is in store for them. Lastly, researchers can use the results of this investigation since it adds results to the existing body of research.

- Interdisciplinary Social Scientific Justification

This research is not only describing and prescribing what a transitional process to a new office concept looks like, as in facility management research, but also takes an psychological/sociological approach to the matter, looks at the process from an organization-scientific point of view and investigates learning processes. Ajzens (1985) theory of planned behaviour is of major influence in this research, but the stages of change model by Prochaska and Diclemente (1984), organizational science by Mintzberg (1980) and Van der Bans (1974) educational science also founded this research extensively.

This research shows the interaction between the changing societal trend (macro), the changes that take place within the Ministry of AN&FQ (meso) and the way individual employees react to changes (micro), showing the interdisciplinarity of the process.

## **1.6 Reading instructions**

The next chapter contains the theoretical framework, founding the research questions. As the central research question is divided into three parts, the theoretical framework is structured accordingly, preceded by a general introductory part. The important theories of

Mintzberg (1980), Ajzen (1985), Prochaska and Diclemente (1984) and Van der Ban, that are interwoven in this thesis are elaborately elucidated. Chapter 3 encompasses the research methodology of this research: justification of qualitative research, a description of the research population, a part on evaluation research and the research methods used. In this chapter, also the data analysis, validity and reliability of the research are described. Chapter 4 comprises the analyzed research results, offering answers to the sub-questions. Chapter 5 consists of the conclusions of this research, looping back to the theoretical framework and finally proposing an answer to the central research question. Recommendations for improvement of the transitional process in later phases for the policy-makers of the Ministry of AN&FQ are put forward in chapter 6. Chapter 7 comprises a discussion of the strengths and limitations of the research.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

This chapter involves the scientific theory and research that is concerned with the research questions of this thesis. The first part of this chapter deals with working environment in general and elaborates on the organization of the Ministry of AN&FQ. Paragraph 2.1 elaborates on the working environment in a national context, paragraph 2.2 describes the traditional and the flexible working environment and paragraph 2.3 reports on the Dutch Ministry of AN&FQ. Consequently, a part on employees' expectation follows; paragraph 2.4 deals with the advantages and disadvantages of a flexible office concept and paragraph 2.5 elaborates in the way people handle change in general. Paragraph 2.6 concerns behavioural and attitudinal change, connected to the transitional process from the traditional to the flexible office concept. Lastly, paragraph 2.7 concerns the influence of employees' expectations on their evaluation of the transitional process.

### **GENERAL**

#### **2.1 Working Environment in a National Context**

Every country has different views on what an optimal working environment is, because the term efficiency has different meaning in different countries; interpretation depends on the national context. Van Meel (2000) researched the relationship between the office design and the national context in several countries.

On a floor plan level, Dutch offices generally comprise much office space with desks close to a window, providing employees with an outside view, natural daylight and the possibility to control the climate (Van Meel, 2000). According to Yildirim, Akalin-Baskaya and Celebi (2007), access to a window, enough daylight and an outside view seem to be beneficial to occupants, which would in turn affect their satisfaction with the workspace. Lee and Brand (2005) found in their international study, which also included the Netherlands, that more personal control over the physical workspace led to higher perceived job satisfaction. People feel more autonomous and independent when they have the opportunity to change things when they want to, which they experience as something positive. Hedge (1982) argued that people who feel more autonomous consequently feel more responsible in their work and would take more effort in ensuring a good quality of their work. Furthermore, Dutch psychologist Vroon (1980) wrote that 'individual control is crucial for the well-being of employees', arguing that employees feel better at the office, when they are able to have some control over the lighting, temperature, and the flow of fresh air and opening of windows. That

is probably one of the reasons why in the Netherlands, 80% of the offices has openable windows and the possibility for individual climate control.

Because of the relatively low rents in the Netherlands, office innovation hardly saves any costs. Office innovations are therefore mostly implemented to increase productivity (Van Meel, 2000). Brennan, Chugh and Kline (2002) found that Dutch companies implement a flexible working environment because they believe that the absence of internal physical barriers would facilitate communication between individuals, groups, and even whole departments, which consequently would improve morale and productivity. Because of the improved communication, employees would be better aware of the tasks of other employees, cooperation between employees would improve, which would lead to better and quicker results and in turn higher productivity. A change in culture of an organization can also be a motive for the implementation of office innovations. Van Meel (2000) argues that the working culture changes under international influences from an individualistic environment to a more cooperative culture, because people work closer to each other, are more aware of what other people are doing and have easier access to communication with their colleagues.

## **2.2 The Traditional and the Flexible Working Environment**

In the Netherlands, the majority of offices has had a traditional working environment for centuries. The traditional working environment originally looks like a corridor with private offices in it. In those offices, there are rooms with one or more workers, desks and a door that closes the room off from the corridor (Brennan et al., 2002). This office design was especially popular in the Netherlands, because of its individualistic culture. Van Meel (2000) argues that Dutch employees prefer their own private workspace, because Holland is such a densely populated country and people want a place for themselves. Concentration and privacy are other frequently mentioned reasons for preferring the traditional working environment (Van Meel, 2000).

The flexible working environment is different from the traditional working environment in several ways. The flexible office is designed in a way that no one has a personal desk, but there are standard workplaces in which everyone can work (Brennan et al., 2002). Furthermore, in the flexible working environment, there are different locations within the office for different office activities (Hedge, 1982). More elaborate information on the standard workplace and the different categories of workplaces is available in Appendix I.

The flexible office concept becoming increasingly popular, mostly because of communication and efficient use of money, space and facilities (Van der Voordt, 2004). The

advantages and disadvantages of the flexible working environment will be elaborately discussed in paragraph 2.4.

## **2.3 The Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality**

### General

The Ministry of AN&FQ of the Netherlands is located in The Hague. The majority of its employees', around 1400 people, is stationed in the six-storey main building at the Bezuidenhoutseweg 73. The ministry is subdivided in many different departments. Up until now, all departments work in traditional working environments. However, one department already experimented with a flexible working environment as a pilot study. The other departments will switch to a flexible working environment somewhere between 2008 and 2011.

### Typification of the Organization

When researching an organization, it is important to take organizational characteristics into account when analyzing the results. That is because these characteristics can be of influence on employees' reactions. Therefore, this paragraph contains a description of the Ministry of AN&FQ, in terms of structure and organization.

The Ministry of AN&FQ aims at sustainable and innovative entrepreneurship in agriculture and fishing, at food safety and quality, at vital nature and a familial countryside (Maarleveld & Groot, 2006). The ministry exists since 1935 as an independent government organisation.

The political conduit of affairs is in the hands of the Ministry of AN&FQ, recently minister G. Verburg. Mrs. Verburg is supported by the Executive Board (Bestuursraad), which is the official direction of the ministry. Under the Executive Board, there are ten policy-making departments, six staff departments and six executive departments. The six executive departments are not stationed in the main building of the Ministry of AN&FQ in The Hague and are not taking part in the transitional process towards the new office concept and are therefore not included in this research. The organizational structure of the Ministry of AN&FQ can be found in Appendix II (Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, 2008).

Mintzberg (1980) described in his 'Structure in Fives' five types of organizations: (1) the simple structure, (2) the machine bureaucracy, (3) the professional bureaucracy, (4) the divisionalized form, and (5) the adhocracy. The Ministry of AN&FQ fits best in the divisionalized form because this ministry has many departments working independently in

separate fields (Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, 2008). As can be seen in Figure 3.1, this structure can be described as a superimposition of one structure on smaller structures; a central headquarters overseeing a set of departments, each charged with pursuing their own goals and each with their own organizational structure.

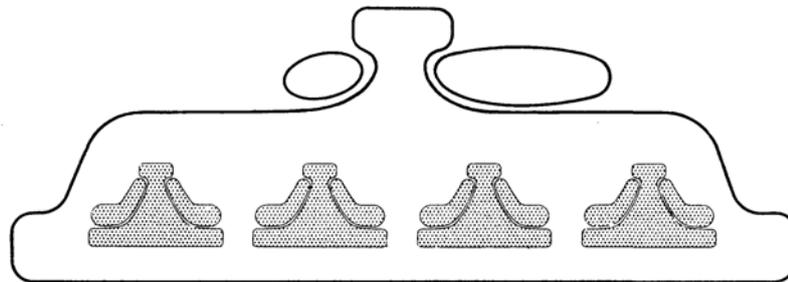


Figure 1: The divisionalized form of organization. (Mintzberg, 1980: 335)

The largest part of figure 1 represents the operating core (the layers between the board of directors and the external executive departments, who are doing the actual job of the ministry, which is policy-making) that is of largest importance in the divisional form of organization. The reason for that is that there is a small management top (the Board of Directors at the top of figure 1), a medium-sized number of staff departments (the right circle in figure 1), a small techno-structure (the left circle of figure 1) and a very large operating core (the lower part of figure 1): the policy making departments, that are separately doing the actual job of the organization. The policies are executed by executive departments, which are not located in the main building in The Hague but in offices all over the country. The executive departments are not part of the core Ministry of AN&FQ and therefore not included in this typification of the organizational structure.

Since the Ministry of AN&FQ consists of many independent departments, it can be classified as a divisionalized form of organization (Mintzberg, 1980). In divisionalized organizations, there is more communication within departments than between departments. One of the intended advantages of the flexible working environment is increasing communication between different departments. To make the transitional process to the new working environment succeed, communication between the management, the policy makers and the employees from different departments about the transitional process needs to be thorough. Because of the divisionalized structure, extra effort is needed to get everybody involved.

In 1962, Blau and Scott attempted to make a classification in which all sorts of organizations could be grouped according to the prime beneficiary of the organization. In

their model, Blau and Scott (1962) divided possible beneficiaries into four categories: (1) direct participants/members, (2) owners or managers of an organization, (3) clients or public in direct contact, and (4) the public at large. In their classification, the Ministry of AN&FQ can be typified as a 'commonweal organization', because the public at large is the main beneficiary of this governmental organization (Mills & Margulies, 1980).

### The Introduction of a New Office Concept

The reason for the introduction of a flexible office concept at the Ministry of AN&FQ is twofold. Firstly, many offices were frequently empty because of employees working part-time or working at an external location. The new office concept intends to reduce costs. Furthermore, the traditional office concept became outdated and not consistent with today's working method of the Ministry of AN&FQ. To facilitate team-work, communication and transparency, the flexible office concept is introduced.

The past few years, the Ministry of AN&FQ has actively planned and executed renovations in the main building at the Bezuidenhoutseweg, which dates from the fifties. As the renovations take place wing by wing, only 450 employees had to be relocated to different buildings of the Ministry of AN&FQ during the renovations. Consequently, a phasing of implementation will take place. All employees of the Ministry of AN&FQ will move to the renovated, flexible working environment wings in four phases; the first phase started in May 2008 and the last phase is supposed to end in 2011. In the first phase, around 450 employees from eight departments will move to the new working environment. This research is focussed on this first phase.

Quite some other ministries have already implemented the flexible office concept, among others the Ministry of Economic Affairs (EZ) and the Ministry of Housing (VROM). As I mentioned in the previous paragraph, it depends on the organizational structure and culture whether a concept works. Therefore, this research focuses solely on the Ministry of AN&FQ.

The Ministry of AN&FQ introduces some new house rules with the introduction of the new office concept; people have to work clean-desk, so leaving nothing on the desk when you go home, a limited filing space per employee, no eating behind the desks, adapting workplace to work activities and a restriction of noise pollution. Consequently, employees have to get used to the new working environment as well as to the new house rules.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF THE NEW OFFICE CONCEPT**

### **2.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of a Flexible Working Environment**

Many researchers and scientific articles review the advantages and disadvantages of flexible workspaces, compared to the traditional office design. A distinction can be made between (dis)advantages on a facility level and (dis)advantages on an employee level.

#### (Dis) advantages on a facility level

On a facility level, according to Van der Voordt (2004) flexible working environments realize a more efficient use of space and facilities and also increased flexibility, allowing layout to be more sensitive and adaptable to changes in organizational size and structure (e.g. growth, downsizing or changes in personnel). These advantages would save costs in the future.

Another advantage of the flexible working environment is positive image to the employees and clients, due to higher judgement of aesthetic value (Van der Voordt, 2004; Brookes & Kaplan, 1972; Riland, 1970). It is important for an organization to make a good impression on clients and guests, because an organizations' image partly determines its success (Van der Voordt, 2004).

On a facility level, a disadvantage is that for the furnishing of the new working environment, a lot of new, adjustable furniture needs to be bought, which is expensive. However, companies consider these costs a good investment, which will pay itself back in later advantages, such as increased productivity.

#### (Dis) advantages on an employee level

On an employee level, better work performance of employees (for example higher productivity by working more effectively and efficiently) is an often-mentioned advantage of the flexible working environment (Brennan, Chugh & Kline, 2002). This is probably because employees in a flexible working environment have a greater freedom of choice of workplace, so that they can work more purposeful and consequently faster by doing specific activities in therefore intended workplaces. On the other hand, Brennan, Chugh and Kline (2002) also found that the search for a suitable workplace everyday and the moving from one place to another when switching activities can also lead to a decrease in performance because it takes time and employees might be reluctant to switch workplaces every time they switch work activity.

Another advantage of the flexible working environment on the employee level is that the absence of internal physical barriers would facilitate communication between individuals, groups and even whole departments, which consequently would improve productivity (Hedge, 1982; Brookes & Kaplan, 1972). Boje (1971) and Pile (1978) both support this by stating that increased contact and communication is facilitating greater productivity. This belief is based on the social facilitation hypothesis (Zajonc, 1965): the presence of others serves as a source of arousal, which would stimulate people in their work. Allport (1924) did early research in social facilitation in the presence of others and found that the presence of colleagues facilitated simple tasks and hindered difficult tasks. In 1965, Zajonc confirmed Allports' findings (1924), after a lot of research on animals and humans. Among others, Platania and Moran (2001) found that people were actually stimulated in routine work activities by the presence of others. It is likely that people feel guiltier when they are not working when other people are and that people who find their jobs boring may find that contact with other people provides a source of stimulation. However, when the work activities become more complicated, Platania and Moran (2001) found that the presence of others becomes distractive instead of stimulating.

A further advantage of the flexible working environment on the employee level is a higher working satisfaction. When a company makes the transition from a traditional to a flexible working environment, most often many renovations take place in the office building. Veitch, Charles, Farley and Newsham (2007) found that people are more satisfied with a stylish, modern working environment than with the previous working environment. Veitch et al. (2007) also found that people who are more satisfied with their working environment were also more satisfied with their jobs, suggesting a role for the physical environment in organizational well-being and effectiveness. Further, Veitch et al. (2007) wrote that employees feel better about themselves and their work in a good-looking environment, because they feel they are part of it. Nevertheless, Veitch et al. (2007) also found that people get attached to the traditional working environment, and need some time to get used to the new flexible environment in order to get stimulated by it. Additionally they discovered that appearance of the office building is not the only determinant for working satisfaction but one of many.

The flexible working environment can also have disadvantageous effect on peoples' working satisfaction. Becker, Gield, Gaylin and Sayer (1983) and Oldham and Brass (1979) found that the performance of employees decreased in the flexible working environment due to increased noise and other disturbances and distractions. Because their decrease in

performance, people feel worse about their work performance and consequently they feel worse about themselves. In other words, the flexible working environment would lead to decreased performance and consequently to decreases working satisfaction. Hedge (1982) found that the increase of noise would negatively affect the employee productivity at first, but that there might be a process of habituation to the disturbing noises, which would cause productivity to return to its original levels following an adjustment period. Banburry and Berry (2005), Brookes and Kaplan (1972) and Sundstrom, Burt and Kamp (1980) however found that such a habituation process does not take place, and most people remain distracted by noise in the working environment.

The advantage of facilitated communication in the flexible working environment on the employee level can also become a disadvantage. In a flexible working environment, people can very easily communicate on work-related things, but also talk about other things. Social contact and communication can be very useful in the working environment, but only when it remains certain boundaries. Sundstrom (1978) found that social contact and communication in the working environment could exceed an optimum level, causing a worker to feel crowded, especially in areas with minimal privacy. As a result of crowding, discomfort may occur, which in turn causes decreased job performance and job satisfaction.

Research findings have shown a high correlation between architectural privacy (the visual and acoustic isolation supplied by an environment) and psychological privacy (a sense of control over access to oneself or one's group) (Sundstrom et al., 1980). In a flexible working environment, people feel that they have little privacy. Many people mention the decreased level of privacy as a disadvantage of the flexible working environment, because people do not like the fact that other people could overhear their telephone conversations and look into their work (Brookes & Kaplan, 1972; Hedge, 1982; Sundstrom, Town, Brown, Forman & McGee, 1982). In the Netherlands, privacy is a highly valued good, which is deeply embedded in the Dutch culture (Van der Voordt, 2004). However, Sundstrom et al. (1980) also found that people who have always worked in a flexible working environment complain less about privacy issues than people who recently moved from a traditional to a flexible working environment. This would mean that adaptation and settling down would solve part of the privacy problem.

There is discussion on whether employees have fewer opportunities to make friendships in the working environment or not. Hedge (1980) found that employees in a flexible office concept could make more friends, because they have contact with more people, compared to the situation in the traditional working environment. According to Oldham and

Brass (1979) on the other hand, people can make friends easier in an environment in which they have some privacy. They argue that the flexible working environment is too open for people to tell private things to their colleagues, because then everyone can hear it. According to this theory, people would interact with more colleagues on a superficial level in the flexible working environment, but the relations between colleagues would go less in depth, because of the lack of privacy.

Another disadvantage of the implementation of a flexible working environment is that employees can decide not to cooperate with the new office concept; instead of changing work place when switching working activity, employees can claim the same work place every day. When many employees would do that, the implementation of a flexible working concept will not be successful (Hedge, 1980).

#### (Dis) advantageous Employee Characteristics

After researching the advantages and disadvantages of the flexible working environment, this section concerns certain characteristics of employees that are advantageous or disadvantageous for adapting to the new working environment. The most influential characteristics, gender and age, are elaborated on below. Many researchers investigated these characteristics, in order to make suggestions to policy makers how to help employees with certain characteristics adapt to the new working environment.

- Gender

Yildirim, Akalin-Baskaya and Celebi (2007) studied the effects of gender in working environmental change. By examining male and female reactions to their working environment, they found that males responded more positively to the flexible office concept than females did. Since they did a quantitative research, they were not able to investigate the reasons for that gender difference in depth.

Anjum, Paul and Ashcroft (2005) researched responses to the working environment of different groups of employees. They found that male employees cared more about the appearance of their working environment and were on average less satisfied with it than female employees. However, female employees appeared to care more about individual privacy in the working environment. In open-plan working environments, female employees complained more about feeling self-conscious, because everybody could see what they were working on and when they were going to the toilet. Because flexible working environments frequently are more modern and better looking than traditional ones and because male

employees care less about privacy, Anjum et al. (2005) concluded that male employees would function better in a flexible working environment than female employees.

- Age

Hin (2007) found in her research that the older the employee, the more he/she is discouraged by reorganizations, for several reasons. First, she argues that older people feel forced into organizational changes because they have less alternative options in the labour market to fall back on. When younger people do not like certain organizational changes, they could just choose to go work somewhere else, but older people have a harder time finding a new occupation because young and cheap mostly wins over old and expensive. Secondly, Hin (2007) discovered that older employees are less familiar with modern information and communication technology, which leads to less efficient work and stress. Where young employees are used to cope with new technologies with plug-and-play and trial-and-error working strategies, older employees in general are less flexible and experience more hindrance in adapting to new technologies. However, Hin (2007) also found that when the organizations provide good modern ICT and communication training for its employees, this does not have to be a problem. Lastly, Hin (2007) concluded from her research findings that older employees in lower salary scales are even more discouraged by organisational changes than older employees in higher salary scales. Employees in the lower salary scales who, for financial reasons, have to keep working until the age of 65 will feel more frustrated, compared to people in higher salary scales who have in general more financial freedom to stop working at an earlier age.

## **2.5 Implementation of Office Innovation**

This paragraph concerns the specific mechanisms at work in process of the transition from a traditional to a flexible working environment. The transitional process, in which employees become informed and prepared for the new working environment, comes across intensive changes, failure and success factors and resistance.

### Change; Cause and Effect of Office Innovation

There are several technological, societal, organizational and economic developments that form the changing context of companies and organizations. These changing factors give way to flexible working environments. Technological developments make ICT more wireless, portable, faster and more accessible, which makes it easier to implement a flexible working environment. Societal factors, like the increase in part-time workers, ageing of the population

and flexibilization of workhours also have contributed to the development of office innovations. Further, organizational influences, like outsourcing and less hierarchical structures and economic developments like increasing building rents influence the working environments (De Bruyne, 2007).

As a consequence of the above-mentioned contextual changes, the working environment has to adapt to the new situation. To survive in a continuously changing context, organizations have to keep changing and innovating (Kreitner, Kinicki & Buelens, 2002). Frequently, there are several changes in progress simultaneously on different levels of an organization, resulting in a continuous process of change (Cozijnsen, 2004). In a changing organization, employees have to acquire new information, new circumstances and new skills. The 'theory of the learning organization' is based on the assumption that organisations that support learning behaviour, develop through the development of their employees (Gijs, 2002). Therefore, a changed policy is not enough to implement change in an organization. An organization can only change effectively through changing and developing its employees. That is why it appears to be very useful to provide employees with all sorts of information gatherings, workshops, symposia and training, enabling them to adapt to the new situation. When employees are adapted and are able to operate well in the changed situation, the organization itself is further developed. Since the Ministry of AN&FQ has a divisionalized organization, care must be taken in order to include employees from all departments in the transitional process.

According to the 'planned-change model' (Lewin, 1958), the process of change consists of three stages: (1.) unfreezing, (2.) changing and (3.) refreezing. The first stage is concerned with making people aware of the fact that the recent situation is unsatisfactory and that change is needed. In this stage of 'unfreezing', people are being motivated to replace their old habits by new ones. In the 'changing' stage, practical information and new insights are presented to the employees, teaching them the new ways of working. This is what happens during the transitional process towards the new office concept. In the last stage of the model of planned change, the 'refreezing' stage, the changes are to be stabilized (De Bruyne, 2007). The new attitudes and behaviours are integrated in the normal procedure, so that today's innovative office in tomorrow's traditional office (Kreitner et al., 2002).

The way policy-makers and employees handle change determines whether the implementation of change either fails or succeeds. This also involves the type of organization. Since the Ministry of AN&FQ has a divisionalized form of organization, the way people

handle change may differ per department as they operate quite independently. In the transitional process, this should be taken into account.

### The Transitional Process; Failure or Success?

A transitional process can be described as 'the transition period during which individuals ideally become increasingly skilful, consistent and committed in their use of an innovation' (Klein & Sorra, 1996 as cited in Klein & Knight, 2005: 58). This phase is one of the most difficult and most important ones in the process of change, because the way of implementation determines the success or failure of the change. An innovation can be very sensible in theory, but when the transitional process is not effective, the innovation will not work in that organization. It appears that many change-managers assume that when they change the structure of an organization, the employees will automatically change accordingly. However, it is likely for resistance to arise when the human side of the implementation of change is not taken into account (De Bruyne, 2007).

### Resistance

'Everyone wants changes, but no one wants to change' (De Bruyne, 2007: 44). Office innovations often disturb existing values, habits, behaviours and relationships. The reason for resistance against these innovations is often the uncertainty that the changes involve. To avoid resistance, it is important to be as clear about the changes as possible to employees, so that there are little uncertainties. Information and communication are key terms in avoiding and handling resistance (De Bruyne, 2007).

Another reason for resistance to office innovation is the fact that the people that make the new policy on office innovation are generally not the ones that have to work with it in practice. This discrepancy between the management and the employees can be a rich source of resistance as well. Involving employees in the developmental process of the office innovation plans (participation) can solve this discrepancy, because it gives employees a feeling of control over the changes (De Bruyne, 2007).

Resistance can be useful in the implementation process of change, for example resistance could expose possible problems and mistakes of the new plans, because people look at it very critically. Further, resistance can give energy, because it prevents people from passively watching the process (De Bruyne, 2007). Gijs (2002) postulates that no one believes in change in an organization when there is no resistance.

## EVALUATION OF THE TRANSITIONAL PROCESS

### 2.6 Behavioural Change

#### Theories on Attitudinal and Behavioural Change

The goal of the transitional process from the traditional to the flexible working environment is to tune the attitudes of employees of the Ministry of AN&FQ regarding the new office concept and to teach them how to work and behave in the new working environment. Many theories address changes in attitude and behaviour. This paragraph addresses two very important theories in this field: the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985) and the stages of change model (Prochaska & Diclemente, 1984).

The *theory of planned behaviour* (Ajzen, 1985) is an influential, widely applied theoretical approach to understanding and predicting human behaviour. This theory predicts and explains well-thought out behaviour, presuming that people can plan their own behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour is a successor of the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). As can be seen in figure 2, the theory of planned behaviour argues that human behavioural intentions and their actual behaviour is lead by three directives: (1.) attitudes to the behaviour, (2.) subjective norms, and (3.) perceived behavioural control.

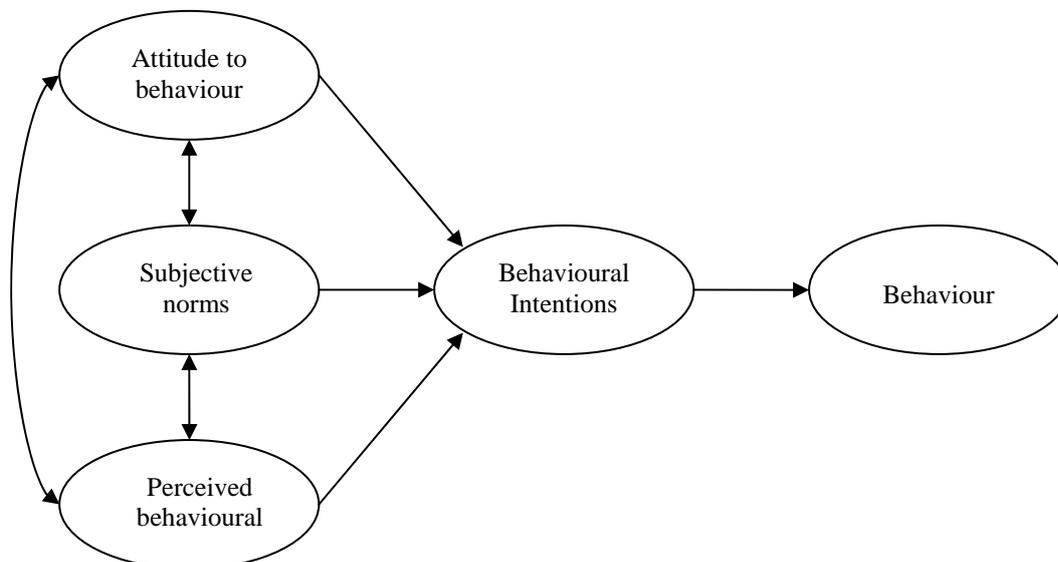


Figure 2: Schematic representation of the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991: 182).

This general theory can be applied to predict and explain human behaviour in many areas, e.g. in psychology and sociology. In the specific case of the transitional process to the new office concept, the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985) can be helpful in explaining the behaviour of the employees of the Ministry of AN&FQ, even though the general theory comprises more than that. In general, the *attitudes to the behaviour* are the

beliefs about the effects of specific behaviour. When employees of the Ministry of AN&FQ believe the effects would be favourable, then they are likely to adopt the new behaviour. This research operationalizes this directive as employees' positive and negative expectation of the new office concept and their preference for the traditional and the flexible office environment. In general, the *subjective norms* are the beliefs employees have about what others expect of them. In the transitional process at the Ministry of AN&FQ, the employees can perceive social pressure from the expectations of management and other employees. Employees become discouraged to move to the new working environment when the pressure becomes too high. This research operationalizes this directive as the influence of colleagues' expectation and social pressure. In general, *perceived behavioural control* is the belief of the presence of factors that could facilitate or obstruct the behaviour. When employees of the Ministry of AN&FQ notice that there are many arrangements made in order to facilitate the transition to the new office concept, they will be more willing to make the transition to the new working environment. This research operationalizes this directive as employees' reactions to the transitional process.

The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985) is often used when explaining people's reactions to advertising campaigns and the effectiveness of the implementation of new rules and policies. The theory explains that the increase in knowledge alone will not be very effective in changing behaviour. Therefore, deducted from the theory of planned behaviour, when transferring to a new office concept, not only information on the new working environment should be provided but also the educational projects should be aimed at addressing and altering employees' attitudes in favour of the new working environment (Ajzen, 1985). Campaigns or information that address all three directives: attitudes, perceived norms and perceived control on the accomplishment of change are more effective (Ajzen, 1985). Accordingly, Bledsoe (2006) found that a smoking cessation campaign was more effective when the different segments of the theory of planned behaviour were addressed compared to the sole provision of information on the risks of smoking.

Many researchers have investigated the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985). The theory appears to predict human behaviour in several domains rather well. Kaiser and Gutscher (2003) investigated predictability of ecology conscientious behaviour and found that the three directives of the theory of planned behaviour; attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control together account for 81% of variance for behavioural intention. Further, they found that those intentions explained 51% of variance for the actual behaviour.

However, there are also quite some researcher that question the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985). Three general arguments that challenge the theory are presented hereunder. First, not all behaviour is consciously planned because people can not retrieve and process all available information. Simon (1991) called the fact that people are not able to use all available information to make rational, well-thought-out decisions ‘bounded rationality’. Similarly, human beings do not consciously plan most of their behaviour (Kaiser & Gutscher, 2003). Secondly, the theory of planned behaviour does not take differences in situations, personality and culture into account (Epstein, 1980). Some situations are easier to consciously plan, or allow for more time to make a conscious planning. Similarly, personality and culture influence planning behaviour. Lastly, it is the case that only half of the behavioural intentions lead to actual behaviour, suggesting that the theory does not always apply (Sheeran, Orbell & Trafimow, 1999). The theory does not explain why the connection between behavioural intentions and actual behaviour is not always applicable.

In the research on the transition to a new office concept especially the second point of critique is influential. Applying the theory of planned behaviour to the situation seems to be a bit too simple, since situations, personalities and cultures might be of influence too, however these effects are ignored. On the other hand, it would be very complicated to control for all these influences. The third critique has something to do with this research as well: since this research is focused on the behavioural intentions in preparation for the new office and not on the actual behaviour in the new office, the results of this research will not necessarily correspond to employees’ behaviour when they are actually in the new office. These critiques shall be taken into account in this research. Despite the abovementioned critiques, the theory applies quite well in this research, and it is the best applicable alternative.

Another theory that addresses changes in attitude and behaviour is the *stages of change model* (or *trans-theoretical model*) by Prochaska and Diclemente (1984), which specifically approaches the implementation of behavioural change. It is worth noting that there are a number of other stage models, although they tend to be less widely applied than the stages of change model. The model is based on the assumption that there are different stages that people go through, and different processes that play a role during specific stages of change. Consequently, the model assumes that interventions aimed at changing behaviour should be adapted to the different stages of change people are in, their needs and the situation, in order to help people move to the next stage. Because people are in different stages of change, there should be different interventions, according to the stages people are in. In the

transitional process to the new working environment this means that the interventions need to be adapted to the progression of the different employees. By researching how adequate the employees value the transitional process, I will find out whether this is properly done.

In the stages of change model (Prochaska & Diclemente, 1984), six subsequent phases can be defined: (1.) pre-contemplation, (2.) contemplation, (3.) preparation, (4.) action, (5.) maintenance, and (6.) relapse/termination. The pre-contemplation phase is the phase in which people are not yet aware of the necessity to change and they are not considering to change their behaviour. In the contemplation phase, people consider changing their behaviour by calculating the pros' and cons. During the preparation phase, people intent changing their behaviour, taking up information they need for the new behaviour. The action phase is the phase in which people implement and execute the changed behaviour. In the maintenance phase, the new behaviour is continued, and in the relapse phase old behaviour is resumed.

The evaluation of the appropriateness of the transitional process from the old to the new working environment at the Ministry of AN&FQ mostly concerns the contemplation and the preparation phases. For employees in the contemplation phase, educational projects should encourage the evaluation of the pros and cons of the new office concept and promote new, positive outcome expectations. For employees in the preparation phase, educational projects should be aimed at assisting with overcoming obstacles, help verifying skills for changing of behaviour and encourage small initial steps towards the actual change. Paragraph 6.3 will address the elements of the transitional process from a traditional to a flexible working environment, and will arrange the several elements into the different stages of this model.

The stages of change model (Prochaska & Diclemente, 1984) gives rise to a great deal of discussion, even though the model is widely applied. The four main issues of the model, put forward by Adams and White (2004) are elaborated on below. First, it is difficult to classify individuals appropriately into the stages. Often, stages overlap or people display contradictory behaviour, putting the validity of stage in the model up for discussion. Secondly, Adams and White (2004) question the long-term effectiveness of the model, since there is no evidence that people will remain a certain behaviour. Thirdly, the relationship between peoples' mental constructs and how they behave is supposedly undervalued in the stages of change model: a stage progression does not necessarily cause a change in behaviour. A positive attitude towards a particular behaviour is certainly favourable, but does not invariable lead to the adoption of the behaviour, as is also put forward in the theory of planned behaviour (1985). Lastly, the stages of change model is frequently tested on changing

health behaviour, for example smoking cessation, but its value for changing other behaviours should be tested more.

In the research on the transition to a new office concept, especially the questionability of the long-term effectiveness of the model causes a problem. The results of this research might show the transitional process effective, but then it will still be unclear whether the respondents will display the learned behaviour in the future or that it is only a short term learning effect. Also the validity of the model in this research is questionable since this research does not concern health behaviour. In spite of these critiques, the stages of change model (Prochaska & Diclemente, 1984) is very helpful in analyzing the transitional process at the Ministry of AN&FQ.

#### Criteria for Successful Education (towards the new office concept)

Van der Ban (1974: 14) defines education (voorlichting) as ‘on the one hand providing objective information with regard to new developments and on the other hand stimulating mutual understanding on the value of the new development’. Much research concerns the circulation and acceptance of innovation. Research findings suggest that frequently some years pass between taking notice of innovations and actually applying the innovations (Van der Ban, 1974). People he found to be applying innovation relatively fast are people characterized by many social contacts, intensive use of mass media, relatively high income and standard of living, a positive attitude towards change in general and a high urge for performance.

During the first introductory phase of an innovation, mass media play the most important role in convincing people of the value of the innovation. Later in the process, personal contacts with colleagues, trustworthy educators and key figures within the organization have a more important role (Van der Ban, 1974). According to this, the introduction of the new office concept within the Ministry of AN&FQ firstly gains most from newsletter items and the intranet and later on more from small group meetings, workshops and playing educational games with their colleagues. The advantage of the use of mass media is that many people can be reached at the same time and that it is relatively cheap. The advantage of the more personal methods is that it has a better feedback loop, facilitating miscommunication to be cleared. Another advantage of the personal contacts is the greater interaction between the employees, during which their attitudes and opinions can be influenced and changed. Compared to mass media, personal methods are relatively expensive.

Solely introducing a new policy or rule will not change a situation or organization. In order to successfully change a situation, peoples' attitudes and behaviour should be changed (De Bruyne, 2007). Education on the intentions and benefits of the new policy and promotion of the new behaviour should make *people aware of its value*. This idea corresponds to the contemplation phase in the stages of change model (Prochaska & Diclemente, 1984). In case of transition to a new office concept, employees should know what the main idea behind the new working environment is, the reasons why this is better than the traditional working environment and what the benefits for individual employees are. Additionally, *education on the practice* of the new behaviour should teach people what life with the new policy would look like. This idea corresponds to the preparation phase of the stages of change model (Prochaska & Diclemente, 1984). In case of a new office concept, employees should be taught what they can and cannot do and how everything works in the new working environment.

Education can take many forms, for examples the form of workshops, symposia, informative lectures, information booklets and informative websites. These educational projects serve the same goal of educating and informing people, all in a slightly different way. For these educational projects to be successful, they have to meet certain requirements. Derwood Baker (1951) researched the criteria for a workshop to be effective and found that a workshop needs to have a clear purpose, a well-qualified staff, clear leadership and group members on a similar level of pré-knowledge. Further, he concluded that a suitable physical setting is needed, which is quiet, sufficiently large and provides the facilities needed. Also, Derwood Baker (1951) found that variation in contents of a workshop, altering general sessions, discussion and working in smaller groups, is favourable for the learning process. Considering the fact that Derwood Baker (1951) is the only, and quite old, source I could find on this matter, one should question its strength.

### Preparations at the Ministry of AN&FQ

The transitional process at the Ministry of AN&FQ prepares people to move from a traditional working environment to a flexible one, by means of workshops, lectures etc. The educational projects together have four ultimate goals: (1.) knowledge, (2.) attitude, (3.) behaviour, and (4.) integration (Meijers, 2007), which are elaborated on below.

The first goal aims at informing people what the new working environment is and what preparations they have to make in order to be able to make optimal use of the new working environment. In the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985), this corresponds with the first directive of human behaviour: attitude to the behaviour, in the sense that when

people have more knowledge, they are better capable of consciously formulating their attitude.

The second goal aims at making sure that the employees have a neutral or positive attitude towards the implementation of the new office concept. In the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985), this also corresponds with the first directive of human behaviour: attitude to the behaviour, stating that when employees believe the effects would be favourable, then they are likely to adopt the new behaviour.

The third goal aims at getting people to contribute actively to the implementation of the new office concept. In the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985), this partly corresponds to the third directive of human behaviour: perceived behavioural control, stating that people function better when they know how to operate and have the feeling they get help when needed.

The last goal aims at carrying out an integrated message, by sharing knowledge within the organization on the new office concept. This last goal does not really correspond with the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985), since it is more of a practical goal for the transitional process.

To serve the four above-mentioned goals, the Ministry of AN&FQ organized many informational and educational projects:

- Userguide
- Target group meetings:
- Lunch-meetings per department
- Newsletter Bezuidehout 73
- Training 'Personal Efficiency Training' (PEP)
- Intranet
- Visual aids (pictures, sketches, architectural models)
- Introduction drink in the new working environment (per department)
- Cartoon: Flex-it (PR & new rules on the workfloor)
- Workplace Game (developed by the Centre for People and Buildings)

These different elements of the transitional process can be categorized in the stages of change model (Prochaska & Diclemente, 1984):

In the contemplation phase, people consider changing their behaviour by calculating the pros and cons, so what is needed in this phase is general information in order to enable people to make these calculations. Van der Ban (1987) argues that this phase profits most from mass media. Accordingly, information from the newsletter Bezuidehout 73, visual aids like pictures, sketches and architectural models and the Intranet can be classified in the contemplation phase. The Cartoon Flex-it serves here as a promoter of the new office concept

in general, showing on writing paper and as a large cardboard dummy in the background of informative meetings. A picture of the cartoon Flex-it can be found in Appendix III.

In the preparation phase, people intent changing their behaviour, taking up information they need for the new behaviour. Van der Ban (1974) furthermore argues that in this later stage of the process people profit more from small group meetings, workshops and playing educational games with their colleagues. That is why the 'Personal Efficiency Program', which is a practical training for employees to improve work efficiency mostly in flexible working environments, is one of the parts of the preparation part of the transitional process. Other elements of the preparation part are the target group meetings, which are workshop specifically organized for certain groups of employees (e.g. secretaries), the workplace game, which is a game with which employees of the Ministry of AN&FQ can practice practical situations in the new working environment, the lunch-meetings per department, during which information is given on the new office concept and the introduction tour and drink in the new working environment, during which employees can view the new office concept and come up with practical questions. The cartoon Flex-it presents the new house-rules (clean-desk, filing etc.) on posters, making employees familiar with them in a playful way.

In the action phase, people implement and execute the new behaviour. In the new working environment at the Ministry of AN&FQ, the userguide in which employees can look up practical information helps people to implement the learned behaviour. The cartoon Flex-it, which will hang around the new office environment on posters, will inform the employees once again of the workfloor rules so that people can put them into action.

In the maintenance phase, the new behaviour is continued. The cartoon Flex-it will remind them of the workfloor rules and in case of uncertainty, people can look up practical information in the userguide.

In the imaginable relapse phase, the old behaviour is resumed. Likely, some employees will remain their old working habits and not adapt to the new office concept. It is feared that some employees will claim their own workplace and not cooperate with the flexible working concept. When this would happen a lot, the office concept will probably relapse.

## **INFLUENCE OF EXPECTATIONS**

### **2.7 Influence of Expectations on Evaluation of Transitional Process**

Much research is done on the influence of peoples' expectations of something on the actual outcome. Especially in medical science, this is a frequently researched subject, e.g. in placebo effect research. In (social) psychology, this subject becomes increasingly popular.

Crison, Seta and Seta (1995) examined the effects of expectations and the importance of the task on the actual task performance. They determined importance based on the amount of influence a task or situation has on a person and his/her daily routine. They found that people with low expectancy performed best on fairly unimportant task, whereas people with high expectancies performed best on a quite important task. From this we can derive that in case of the transitional process to the new working environment, which is quite influential on the daily routine of individuals, people would perform best when they expect that the implementation of a flexible working environment is something positive.

Roch and Poister (2006) researched how customers' evaluations of public services are influenced by their expectations. They found that people with positive expectations evaluate public services positively more often. However, they also found that positive expectations can sometimes result in false positive evaluations, and negative expectations could result in false-negative evaluations. In general, this means that people have a tendency to conclude according to what they expected beforehand. For the case of the transitional process to the new office concept this would mean that we should be aware of employees with negative expectations, because they could subjectively evaluate the transitional process as excessively negative, even though the quality would objectively be good. On the other hand, employees with positive expectations of the new office concept could value the transitional process overly positive, because they were already convinced of its value beforehand.

The research findings by Roch and Poister (2006) can be explained by the theory of the self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1968). Merton (1968) defines the self-fulfilling prophecy as 'a false definition of the situation evoking a new behaviour which makes the original false conception come true' (1968: 25). Merton (1968) explains that because of the primary false assumption, a course of false proofs and believes is set in motion: people assume they will fail at something, then they will act with that thought in the back of their heads, causing them to be more negative, resulting in a probable failure, which confirms their primary assumption. This self-fulfilling prophecy can also work in a positive way: when people feel confident to succeed, they will act very self-confident and have a good change for actual success. This failure/success will be considered proof of their being right from the beginning. Accordingly,

during the transitional process from the traditional to the flexible working environment, peoples' primary expectation in the beginning will be important determinants for their evaluation of the transitional process.

Strecher, McEvoy, Becker & Rosenstock (1986) found a persons expectations about the outcome and a person's beliefs about his or her capabilities to reach a success (self-efficacy) are very influential on the extent to which people achieve certain health behaviour. According to these findings, employees moving to a new office concept need to have the impression that they are capable to adapt to the new working environment. However, achieving health behaviour and achieving new working environment skills are only comparable to a certain extent, so it is questionable whether these results can be generalized.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This chapter provides a description of the methodology used in this research. Paragraph 3.1 elaborates on qualitative research, paragraph 3.2 describes the respondent selection, paragraph 3.3 concerns evaluation research and paragraph 3.4 reports on the actual methods used. Paragraph 3.5 describes the data analysis, and paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7 consequently describe validity and reliability of the research.

#### **3.1 Qualitative Research**

This research investigates three different matters: (1.) employees' expectations of the new, flexible working environment, (2.) their evaluation of the transitional process towards the new working environment, and (3.) the influence of employees' expectation on their evaluation of the transitional process. To get a clear image of these three matters, the use of qualitative research is most appropriate since it enables getting detailed insight in the processes going on and the reasons behind those processes. Where quantitative research focuses on the questions 'what' and 'how many', qualitative research focuses on the 'how' and 'why' questions, and is diagnostic and explorative in nature (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The ultimate goal of the research is getting to know employees' evaluation of the transitional process and their attitudes and expectations that are influential in detail in order to be able to make well-thought-out recommendations to the policy-makers of the Ministry of AN&FQ for improvement of the transitional process in subsequent phases. By means of qualitative research strategies, this research can dig deeply in the (un)conscious notions, underlying conceptions and emotions of employees, explaining what moves the employees and the course of events with regard to the transitional process (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

#### **3.2 Respondents**

The research population consists of the employees in the first phase of the transition to the new office concept. The first phase comes round for eight departments within the Ministry of AN&FQ, which in total holds 450 people. In this qualitative research, there was one moment of data collection which was a few weeks before relocation to the flexible working environment, when 23 respondents were interviewed. In consultation with my supervisor at the Ministry of AN&FQ, I took into account employees' age and gender when selecting respondents, in order to make an accurate reflection of those employees of the Ministry of AN&FQ, as those variables seem to have theoretical relevance. Of these respondents, twelve were male and eleven female and twelve were under the age of 50 and eleven over 50 years old.

To optimize representativeness, I aimed at interviewing at least two persons per included department. From every department, I randomly selected two or more respondents, dependent on the size of the department. All respondents were approached by email, in which I explained the aim of the research and stressed anonymity of the answers. The majority of approached employees accepted the interview invitation. The people that turned down the invitation said they were busy with other things. A second round of interview invitations provided me for enough respondents.

### **3.3 Evaluation research**

Investigating how employees experience and evaluate the transitional process from a traditional working environment to a flexible one is a form of evaluation research. In general, evaluation research has three main goals: (1.) the improvement of situations and policies, (2.) rendering an account of the use of public funds, and (3.) knowledge acquisition. The direct goal of the evaluation of the transitional process to a new office concept is knowledge acquisition. The indirect goal of the evaluation is improving situation/policy. In this research, determining the extent to which the transitional process is successful in preparing employees of the Ministry of AN&FQ for the flexible working environment is the ultimate goal of the evaluative part of the research (Swanborn, 1999).

Within evaluation research, there are three kinds of evaluation. The first kind is plan-evaluation, the evaluation of an intervention that is planned for the near future. Process-evaluation is the second kind: the evaluation of a running intervention. The third kind of evaluation research is product-evaluation, which concerns the evaluation of a finished intervention. Product-evaluation is the most common form of evaluation research. This research on the evaluation of the successfulness of the transitional process towards the flexible working environment is an example of a process-evaluation. Process-evaluation aims at the timely obtainment of knowledge and insight about the possible difficulties of the interventions and possibilities for adjustment. The goal of process-evaluation is to prevent trouble and save costs in later phases of the intervention. Process-evaluation can also be done retrospectively, for the purpose of similar processes (Swanborn, 1999).

### **3.4 Methods**

After investigating what the new office concept and the transitional process actually include by means of document-analysis, this research aims at investigating what employees expect from the new working environment and how they evaluate the transitional process towards the implementation of the new office concept. In order to get to these results, I used

semi-structured interviews (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The questions and answers of the interviews were not fixed beforehand, but structured by a clear topic-list (See Appendix IV). During the interviews, a number of fixed topics is explored in depth by means of an open (fixed) starting question and talking about the answers more in depth. The advantage of semi-structured interviews is that only the topic-list is fixed. This offered the respondents space for conversation, in which they could talk about what they think is important. The topic-list contained questions about the positive and negative expectations of the new office concept and about their preference of working environments. Further, the topic-list contained questions on whether employees think the goals of the transitional process are obtained, about how employees of the Ministry of AN&FQ evaluate the effectiveness of several aspects of the transitional process and about whether they have suggestions for improvement for the transitional process to the new working environment. Prior to the interviews, I indicated that the interviews are treated confidentially and anonymously, trying to create an atmosphere in which the respondents feel free to talk. The use of a tape recorder during the interview was in consultation with the respondent. The results of the interviews are taped and written-out.

Complementary to the interviews, I made use of participant observation. From December 2007 until June 2008, I actively participated in the work process of the Ministry of AN&FQ at the department of Information Management, Facilities and Services in the form of an internship. This enabled me to see and hear peoples' reactions to the new office concept.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

The data from the semi-structured interviews are coded, labelled and analyzed with the digital programme WinMAX. As the main structure of the research, the interviews were structured in three parts. A schematic overview of the separate labels according to which the data are analyzed can be found in appendix V. For the first part of the interview on employees' expectation of the new office, positive and negative expectations and employees' preference for the traditional or flexible office were labelled separately. These labels are analyzed by hand of the directive 'attitude towards behaviour' from the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985). Further in this part of the interview, the expectations of respondents' colleagues and social pressure were labelled separately and analyzed by means of the directive 'subjective norms' of the theory of planned behaviour. For the second part of the interview, on the evaluation of the transitional process, the several elements of the process, the four goals of the process and suggestions for improvement were separately labelled. These labels are analyzed with help of, among other things, the directive 'perceived behavioural control' of the theory of planned behaviour and with the stages of change model (Prochaska

& Diclemente, 1984). The last part of the interview consists of only one label: the influence of expectations on their evaluation of the transitional process.

### **3.6 Validity**

Carmines and Zeller (1979) define research validity as ‘the extent the research measures what it purports to measure’ (1979, 12). A distinction can be made between internal and external validity. Internal validity is the extent to which interpretations of results are reliable, mostly dependent on correct and concrete interview and research questions. In this research, the internal validity seems to be good, since respondents’ answers are concrete and useable in the analysis and correspond to the theory. Only the last part of the research, on the influence of expectations on evaluation of the transitional process, seems misunderstood by many respondents. Therefore, the results of the last section do not provide helpful information. External validity refers to the extent the empirical results are generalizable to a larger population or different circumstances. The sample of respondents in this research is carefully chosen, according to the influential characteristics age and gender. This enlarges the external validity, enabling the results to be generalized to the total population of the Ministry of AN&FQ. Since the research is done in very specific circumstances, it is hard to generalize the results to other organizations for example. However, the results can well be used in subsequent phases of the transitional process at the Ministry of AN&FQ.

### **3.7 Reliability**

Carmines and Zeller (1979) define research reliability as ‘the extent to which an experiment, test, or any measuring procedure yields the same results on repeated trials’ (1979, 11). In this research, several attempts to guarantee reliability are made. First, triangulation, the combination of methodologies to study the same phenomenon (Jick, 1979), is applied in order to cross-reference the obtained outcomes. The document research data, the interview data and the observations investigate the same phenomenon in a different way. Furthermore, I made notes and used a tape recorder during the interviews, in order to enlarge accuracy and objectivity of the results. Additionally, a sufficiently large respondent-sample is approached. Lastly, emphasizing neutrality of the researcher and anonymity of the respondents carefully approaches the role of the researcher. This most likely stimulates respondents to be open and talkative. Through this approach, I attempted to obtain reliable results.

## **4. Results**

### **Introduction**

This chapter contains the output and the analysis of the 23 interviews I conducted in the weeks before the relocation to the flexible working environment at the Ministry of AN&FQ. I tried not to present solely plain results, but tried to search for general patterns and similarities as well. When present, age and gender patterns are described. Furthermore, other striking patterns like differences between managers and staff-members are also reported when present. The results are grounded by quotes of the respondents, which are anonymously presented with corresponding interview numbers. The five paragraphs correspond to the five sub-questions of this research. Paragraph 4.1 concerns the expectations the respondents have of the new working environment. Paragraph 4.2 describes the respondent characteristics that are of influence on the results. In paragraph 4.3, the influence of colleagues' attitudes is elaborated on. Paragraph 4.4 reports on respondents' evaluation of the transitional process. Lastly, paragraph 4.5 elaborates on the influence of expectations on the evaluation of the transitional process.

### **4.1 EXPECTATIONS OF THE NEW WORKING ENVIRONMENT**

#### **Positive Expectations**

Almost all respondents expect that the new working environment will bring aesthetic improvement. Since the old working environment is really outdated and worn out, it is easy to provide for improvement. I noticed that when aesthetic value was concerned, people were really looking forward to the new office.

*'Eindelijk wat minder oude zoi, ik heb hier het idee dat ik in een Oostblok gebouw zit'*

Translation: Finally less old junk, this building feels like in an Eastern bloc country.  
(respondent 2)

Veitch et al. (2007) found that employees feel better about themselves and their work in a good-looking environment, because they feel they are part of it. Many employees of the Ministry of AN&FQ indeed responded that they expected to be more satisfied with their job and themselves in a better looking environment. The fact that everything is clean and new seems to stimulate people to work. Better facilities in the new office are also stimulating factors for the work process and in turn working satisfaction.

Another often mentioned expected advantage of the flexible working environment is the openness, which is expected to facilitate communication between individuals, groups and even whole departments. However, some respondents note that the facilitated communication will not be there automatically; they realize that they will have to practice that themselves.

People expect to be better able to reach colleagues and expect it to be easier to work together on projects in teams. Someone also mentioned that the new office concept will inspire people to work more creatively, although she could not explain why.

It struck me that only very few respondents mentioned a more efficient work-process, because of the different workplaces for the different work-activities. This could either mean that employees do not realize this advantage yet or it could mean that employees do not intend to switch workplaces. In the research population, I guess the opinions were divided.

Strikingly, no respondents mentioned the benefit of making optimal use of the building, even though this is one of the two motives for the change in office concept. Even managers did not explicitly mention that. This might suggest that the people in this non-profit organization are not aware of the money spend and/or wasted, however more research is needed to conclude this.

### **Negative Expectations**

A frequently mentioned negative expectation of the new office concept is that employees are afraid that the concept will not work:

*'Ik denk dat veel mensen toch één werkplek zullen claimen, zo van Rot op, da's mijn flex-plek'*

Translation: I think that many people will claim a specific workplace, like Get lost, this is my flexible spot. (Respondent 2)

When many employees decide not to cooperate with the new office concept, the implementation of a flexible working concept will not be successful (Hedge, 1980). A respondent who worked at the department in which they experimented with the flexible office concept as a pilot study said that employees would agree to sit together every day, sabotaging the concept. People told me that they value their own workplace, since they are attached to their personal space, since it provides a little certainty and since they think it is useless and time-consuming to clear your desk every night and to search for a new workplace every morning. According to Brennan, Chugh and Kline (2002), the reluctance of switching of workplaces in a flexible working environment can lead to a less than optimal performance because people do not use the concept to the fullest.

Further, respondents are generally quite displeased about the available amount of filing space. On average, people will have 1,5 meters per person to file their documents, which is not much compared to the situation in the traditional office concept in which people sometimes have whole cabinets at their disposal. Some respondents complain that that the amount of filing space should be matched to peoples' positions, since some positions need to

store much more than others. Moreover, respondents wondered why the opportunities for digitalization were not better developed at the Ministry of AN&FQ, because they considered that a prerequisite for reducing the filing space. There are considerable age differences in the findings on filing space, which will be discussed in the paragraph on influential characteristics.

Many respondents feared noise pollution in the new office concept; distraction by the sounds of colleagues. Some were more explicit than others:

*'Ik kan me niet concentreren en dus niet efficiënt werken als ik last heb van geluidsoverlast'*

Translation: I can not concentrate and work efficiently when I am disturbed by others.

(Respondent 4)

*'Misschien dat je wel wat last hebt van de geluiden van anderen, maar ik heb al een Ipod gekocht, dus dat komt vast wel goed!'*

Translation: Maybe the sounds of colleagues will distract me somewhat, but I already bought an Ipod, so I will be alright. (Respondent 11)

The fear of disturbance is mentioned by almost all staff-members. Managers did not mention this as a fear, probably since they are assigned a private room. However, managers did mention that they feared their staff-members to have problems with that. The fact that managers preach a concept they will not practice themselves is problematic as well. Staff-members find it hard to accept and get rebellious since they do not see the managers as a supportive role model, but as authoritarian, top-down enforcer of a concept. Since the Ministry of AN&FQ is defined as a divisionalized organization (Mintzberg, 1980), it frequently differs per department whether the manager chose to work according to the flexible office concept or not. Staff-members seem to accept the flexible office concept more in departments where managers sympathize and equalize with the employees. Since the Ministry of AN&FQ in total is quite a hierarchical, top down organization, I expected employees in general to accept this mode of operation. However, during the interviews I noticed that the several departments are quite different; some flat, some hierarchical. When it comes to the acceptance of the new office concept, the flat departments were in my experience better at convincing and supporting employees.

### **Preference Traditional or Flexible Office Concept**

All in all, many employees are pretty sceptical about the new office concept. The majority of the respondents prefers the traditional office concept, since they are very much attached to their own workplace and the fact that they want to close a door sometimes to

enhance concentration and privacy. It is a common human reaction to fear and resist changes (De Bruyne, 2007). Some respondents recognize that:

*'Het is een reflex van de mens vast te houden aan wat ie heeft.'*

Translation: It is a human reflex to hold on to familiar things. (Respondent 6)

Many respondents liked the fact that the building is renovated very much, because the building is worn out and is not representative anymore. People have a natural tendency to like new material (Veitch et al., 2007), which can explain the fact that many respondents prefer the traditional office concept but within a beautifully renovated building.

It is interesting to see that managers more frequently prefer the new office concept and staff-members and secretaries often prefer the old situation. This can be explained by the fact that managers mostly remain their own office so the changes will not be that radical for them. It also occurred to me that managers are more aware of the benefits of the changes for the organization as a whole, where staff-members were more concerned with their own daily practice. It is probable that managers generally are more interested in the organization as a whole than staff-members.

## **4.2 INFLUENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS**

### **Gender**

In order to investigate gender differences in respondents' reactions to the new office concept, I attempted to interview an equal amount of men and women. I came across quite some gender differences during the interviews. It appeared to me that women react very enthusiastic about the fact that the new working environment is clean, well-groomed and new.

*'Alles is er mooi, schoon en nieuw, heerlijk gewoon!'*

Translation: Everything looks beautiful, clean and new, just wonderful!

(Respondents 12, female)

Women appear to value this more than men did. Men on the other hand care more about the modern gadgets and techniques like flat screen TV's and automatic temperature panels.

It occurred to me that in general, women are more worried about the new office concept. As the female respondents display all their worries of the concept to me, the males often solely say that they will have to get used to it. In general, women tend to worry more and are less confident of their own abilities (Oldham & Brass, 1979) so this might explain the fact that the female respondents display more worries to me. However, females are more communicative as well, so it could also be that men worry too but do not display it as much as

the female respondents. As I tried to question them more thoroughly, it appeared that most males have similar worries as the female respondents.

The females respondents generally dislike the fact that in the flexible office concept, everybody can see and hear what they are doing. This can also reflect the idea that women are less self-confident (Oldham & Brass, 1979). This applies mostly for secretaries and female staff-members and not for female managers, which implies either that female managers are more confident or that this does not so much apply for female managers since managers often get their own office. I think both options are of influence here.

Lastly, female respondents seem to value personal things like pictures and posters in their office more than men, probably because women strive for a cosy and pleasurable environment more. Since personal things do not belong in the flexible working environment, women have most problems with that.

### **Age**

Generally, the older the respondents, the more problems they seem to have with the flexible office concept. Especially the large amount of open space and the fact that people do not have their own office anymore bothers older staff-members a great deal. Older respondents claim that they have always worked in a traditional office, that they are used to the way of working and it is really hard for them to change that after such a long time. *'Ik voel me gewoon te oud om me voor die twee jaar dat ik nog moet werken nog aan te passen aan een nieuw kantoor concept'*

Translation: I just feel too old to adjust to a new office concept, for only two more working-years. (Respondent 4, age 62)

Older people claim that it is easier to adapt when you are younger since you have less fixed habits then and younger respondents confirm that. Recently, the flexible concept is already integrated in schools and universities, preparing children and students for a modern and flexible market.

It seems that older people in higher positions have less trouble with adapting to the new system. As with gender, it could either be that the new office concept does not so much apply to older people in higher positions since they mostly keep their own office or it could be that older people in higher positions are better able to adapt than old employees. Again, I think both explanations partly apply here. Moreover, Hin (2007) suggested that old employees in lower positions will feel more frustrated than those in higher positions, since for financial reasons they have to keep working until age 65, compared to people in higher salary scales who have in general more financial freedom to stop working at an earlier age.

Older respondents experience more problems with the restricted filing space. On the one hand, they are less familiar with modern technology such as digital filing which forces them store everything on paper. On the other hand, older employees generally work longer at the Ministry of AN&FQ and in the course of years they have collected a huge archive. Respondents that work there only a few years do not have the problem of getting rid of their valuable archive. Both issues make older respondents uncomfortable with the restricted filing space.

### **4.3 INFLUENCE OF COLLEAGUES' ATTITUDES**

#### **Expectations of Colleagues**

Interestingly, the majority of respondents thought that their colleagues had the same expectations of the new office concept as they have. Accordingly, respondents who are very negative about the new concept think that their colleagues are very negative as well and respondents that are quite neutral think that their colleagues are also neutral in the case. Even very close colleagues contradict each other sometimes. Because of these outcomes, I conclude that the validity of these answers is not high, probably because of the social aspect that plays a role here. From these data I can not conclude how people in general think of the new office concept, however what I can conclude is that the respondents seem to make a stronger case of their answers by stating that they are not the only ones thinking like that.

The only other useable result in this section is that many respondents expected older colleagues to have adaptation-problems in the new working environment. Moreover, there seems to be a difference between staff departments and policy-making departments (Appendix II); respondents expect policy-making departments to have more difficulties with the new office concept. The most frequently mentioned reason for that is the fact that people think that policy-making needs more concentration, which they fear is rare in the flexible working environment. In conclusion, respondents generally think that some positions lend themselves better for the new office concept than others.

#### **Social Pressure**

When I asked respondents whether they experience social pressure in the process towards the new office, the majority of the respondents answered negatively. This strikes me, since social pressure is almost unavoidable in large processes like these. Probably, people are not always aware of the social processes that are going on. After questioning people more

thoroughly, some respondents came around, stating that obviously people are influenced by other peoples' opinions:

*'Natuurlijk, als veel mensen er negatief over praten hebben anderen ook eerder de neiging om het wat zwarter te zien allemaal'*

Translation: Of course, when many people are openly negative about it, others get more negative as well. (Respondent 6)

### **Potential Influence of Colleagues' Attitudes**

No respondents said that they are influenced by the attitudes of their colleagues, which seems to be a socially desired answer. It seems to me that many respondents feel ashamed to admit that the formulation of their opinion is influenced by that of others, even though sociologically speaking that is quite normal. When asking more questions on the subject, some respondents said they are influenced by external experts and books on the subject and stories of organizations that recently switched to a flexible working environment, for example the Ministry of Economic Affairs. It seems contradictory that respondents first say that they think that their colleagues have the same expectations of the new office as they have, but then later on state that their colleagues' attitudes were not of influence on their attitudes.

Managers frequently say that they are not influenced by others, but that they are the ones influencing their staff-members in a positive and motivating way. One manager describes herself even as an ambassador for the flexible office concept. When I asked them whether they tend to convince people in daily life as well, or that they act like that because of their managers position they all thought they act from their position as a manager. Probably, people with leading and dominant personalities are more inclined to opt for managerial positions.

## **4.4 EVALUATION OF THE TRANSITIONAL PROCESS**

Repeating, the transitional process is the total of all informational sources and activities to inform, prepare, convince and inspire people for the new working environment. This chapter, on the analysis of respondents' evaluation of this process is generally split up in three parts. The first part concerns the evaluation of the several elements of the process, grouped according to the stages of change model (Prochaska & Diclemente, 1984). The second part deals with the primary goals of the transitional process and the extent respondents considered these goals satisfactory seized. The last part includes an analysis of respondents' suggestions for improvement of the transitional process.

## **I Elements**

In this paragraph, the different stages of the transitional process will be evaluated. Since at the time of data collection only the contemplation phase and the preparation phase occurred, most emphasis is on those phases of the stages of change model (Prochaska & Diclemente, 1984).

### **The Contemplation Phase**

In the contemplation phase, people consider changing their behaviour by calculating the pros and cons, so what is needed in this phase is general information in order to enable people to make these calculations, best provided by mass media (Van der Ban, 1974).

Respondents evaluate the Newsletter Bezuidenhout 73, which is published every six weeks generally as informative. Nearly all respondents frequently read the newsletter to keep up to date with the progress of the renovations. The newsletter is considered good background information, informing people of facts. However, what respondents miss in the newsletter is more practical information on the softer side of the new office concept. A common complaint is that the information in the newsletter is excessively technical. Another complaint is about the fact that the newsletter is printed:

*'Ik vind het echt zonde van het papier, als we dan bezig zijn met een digitaliseringproces, waarom wordt zo'n krantje dan nog gedrukt?'*

Translation: What a waste of paper, why should this newsletter be printed while we are so into the process of digitalization? (Respondent 2)

The reactions to Intranet were quite similar to those to the newsletter: informative but very technical. Also, many respondents say that they only read messages on the front-page and do not actively search for more information. However, they state that they know that information is there and if they would need it they would know where to look for it. As a consequence, people in fact do not know what is on the Intranet and complain about the lack of information on the human aspects of the new office that was actually available at a certain moment. The problem is that people want information, but they do not seem to want to take the trouble searching for it. Especially people that are negative towards the flexible office concept appear to expect the information to come to them, and even when it does it seems not sufficient.

A clear pattern is that older respondents read the newsletter more frequently and younger respondents use the information on the Intranet more, which can be explained by the fact that younger generations are more raised with digital facilities. Moreover, managers point out that they use neither the newsletter nor the Intranet, because they come across the

information in other sources, like board meetings. Nearly all respondents claim they only scan information in both mass media quickly, because of the fact they are occupied with their daily activities.

Visual aids are generally judged more positive. Respondents find it helpful for the image-forming of their new working environment, especially females that are probably more visually oriented. Since the new office looks very nice, people told me they get stimulated by seeing pictures. Some respondents, however say they would have liked to see the pictures earlier in the process. Generally, respondents are most enthusiastic about the virtual tour: pictures of a tour through the new working environment. By not only showing one standard workplace, but also the restaurant, the service unit, meeting rooms and more, people get the broad picture and feel well-informed.

In the contemplation phase, most respondents are not yet aware of the existence of the Flex-it cartoon. People only rarely know Flex-it from his appearance in pictures and on writing paper; his role as a promoter of the new office concept in general is not clear to people and is not serving its purpose. I showed respondents a picture of Flex-it and explained what message he stands for and asked them what they think of the use of a cartoon in the transitional process. The majority of the respondents does not feel triggered by the cartoon, and they figure the use not lucrative in communicating a message. Most respondents, however, also say that even though the cartoon has no effect on themselves, they think that it might have an effect on other people within the Ministry of AN&FQ. The divisionalized structure of the organization might play a role here, since every department operates differently and may profit from different things. Where most staff-members and secretaries suffice telling me that they are not affected by the cartoon, managers tend to dwell on the reasons for that. According to those managers, Flex-it will be more convincing when he and his purpose are properly introduced from the beginning. Most respondents find the use of a cartoon childish and effecting suspicion about the transition to the new office only being fun. One optimist respondent figures the cartoon helpful:

*'Je zou het kunnen zien als een stoere, jonge man die ons door het proces heen helpt, met een houding van we gaan ervoor!'*

Translation: You can see Flex-it as a tough, young guy who takes us through the process with an active attitude. (Respondent 23)

### **The Preparation Phase**

In the preparation phase, people intent changing their behaviour, taking up information they need for the new behaviour, according to Van der Ban (1974) profiting most from small group meetings, workshops and playing educational games with their colleagues.

Nearly all respondents participated in the 'Personal Efficiency Program' (PEP), which is a practical training for employees to improve work efficiency mostly in flexible working environments. Most of them say they learned some useful things there, older respondents apparently learned more than younger ones because the younger ones probably had more foreknowledge when it comes to modern technology. Some respondents find the training redundant:

*'Ik weet al hoe ik mijn bureau moet opruimen!'*

Translation: I already know how to clear my desk! (Respondent 16)

Staff-members are a bit upset that managers most often do not participate in the training, afraid that the managers will implement the rules of the flexible office concept in which they will not participate themselves. When I asked the managers why they did not participate in the PEP training, it appeared that more often than not they already did the training in the past, leading the staff-members to wrongfully conclude that they get a different treatment than managers.

Respondents consider the target group meetings, which are workshops specifically organized for certain groups of employees (e.g. secretaries) useful. Managers find it helpful when the Project Team, which is in charge of the organization of the transitional process towards the new office concept, comes to management meetings to explain about the new office concept and the transitional process. Moreover, managers responded that they profit from the manager workshops as it is informative and they hear more about how other departments handle things. Here, again the divisionalized structure of the Ministry of AN&FQ comes into play, with the management workshop as a lucrative bridge between the departments. Even though the managers find the management workshop fruitful, they generally find a visit of the Project Team in management meetings more lucrative since more specific and practical information is provided. Secretaries find the workshop for secretaries very useful, since a lot of daily, practical things are discussed and become clear for them there. As the managers, the secretaries value the fact that they could discuss the matter with colleague secretaries from other departments. Just as well, the respondents appreciate the lunch meetings per department, during which information is given on the new office concept for that reason.

The respondents that are neutral to positive about the flexible office concept became even more positive by attending the introduction tour and drink in the new working environment, during which employees can view the new office concept and come up with practical questions. Their fairly positive expectations are confirmed by what they see in the new office. Respondents with a negative attitude on the other hand found a confirmation of their negative expectations in what they see in the new working environment, for example about the openness and the noise. Quite some respondents say they would have liked to visit the new office in an earlier stage of the transitional process, so that it becomes less abstract. People appear to be afraid of the unknown, and as soon as they know more details this fear decreases.

During the data collection, only one respondent knows the workplace game, which is a game with which employees of the Ministry of AN&FQ can practice practical situations in the new working environment. After my explanation of what it is, most respondents find it useful and a good practice for the real thing. More promotion of this game seems to be a good investment.

The cartoon Flex-it should be much better promoted in the preparation phase. Only a few respondents know it exists, and often do not even know what his purpose is. The cartoon could in this phase be very useful in presenting the new work floor rules, making employees familiar with them in a playful way.

### **The Action Phase & The Maintenance Phase**

Concerning the action and maintenance phases, respondents are worried about who will have the role of addressing people that do not obey the new work-floor rules like the clean-desk policy or eating behind the desk. In response to the question who they think should be responsible for that, most staff-members say that the managers should be the role models and the ones who should keep order. However, they immediately recognize that managers that keep their own office would not be good role models and probably not good order keepers either since it is not very credible to preach something you do not practice yourself. Managers are mostly of the opinion that they indeed have some role model function but that the addressing of people breaking the work-floor rules should be the responsibility of some special team. The most important reason for that is that they claim to lack time:

*'Ik heb echt geen tijd om een beetje politie agentje te spelen'*

Translation: I do not have time to act like a policeman. (Respondent 7)

### **The Relapse Phase**

Already during the transitional process, quite some respondents predict that the new office concept will not succeed at the Ministry of AN&FQ since many people beforehand say that they will not cooperate with the concept. Many others are very sceptical during the transitional process but predict that when they are in the new office they will get used to it and they will be fine. The future will show whether a relapse phase will take place.

## **II Goals of the Transitional Process**

### **Knowledge**

The first goal aims at informing people of what the new working environment is and what preparations they have to make in order to be able to make optimal use of the new working environment. The majority of respondents answers that they feel they have sufficient knowledge, mostly thanks to the target group meetings and the introduction-tour in the new working environment where people received specific information and had the opportunity to ask questions. Most respondents indicate that the more specific the more useful the information is to them. In a more personal setting, people dare to ask more questions and consequently learn more. Especially staff-members indicate that they are not interested in the general ideas behind the new office concept, but more in the practical details so that they know how to act in it. Managers seem to be more interested in the benefits for the organization as a whole, and consequently in the general lines of reasoning behind the concept. However, this could be influenced by the fact that most managers only cooperate with the new office concept to a certain extent and therefore feel that they do not need practical details on the implementation.

### **Attitude**

The second goal aims at making sure that the employees have a neutral or positive attitude towards the implementation of the new office concept. Many respondents say that their attitudes towards the new office concept did not change substantively as consequence of the transitional process. They say that they formulated their attitudes very carefully beforehand and that their expectations are confirmed by the information in the process. The only sources that seem to be influential in changing peoples' opinions are the introduction tour in the new office and the secretary and managers workshops. Especially female respondents seem to feel comforted by seeing the new office, since women are visually orientated, according to some of the women themselves. However, an older, male respondent says his concerns about the new office were confirmed during the introduction tour:

*'Toen ik zag hoe dicht we op elkaar in een open ruimte moeten gaan werken werd ik nog negatiever.'*

Translation: When I saw how close together the desks are in the open space, I even grew more negative. (Respondent 4)

The secretary and managers workshop appear to be effective because a certain group of people is addressed personally, which makes people feel better at ease and allows them to ask more specific questions.

### **Behaviour**

The third goal aims at getting people to contribute actively to the implementation of the new office concept. Since respondents are still situated in the traditional office at the time of the interviews, the new behaviour can only be implemented to a certain extent. However, most respondents say that they already try to work according to the clean-desk policy and are already shrinking their paper archive. The PEP training and the organized archiving days are said to be the most important stimulants for that. Even though many people say they find it difficult and inconvenient to work that way, most want to practice with it anyway.

### **Integration**

The last goal aims at carrying out an integrated message, by sharing knowledge within the organization on the new office concept. Most respondents say that they experience an integrated and consistent message concerning the new office concept. The majority of people know who belongs to the Project Team that organizes the transitional process and to whom they can address questions and suggestions. People that claim not to know what to do and who to address also admit that they are not actively involved in the transitional process by their own choice.

## **III Suggestions for Improvement of the Transitional Process**

Most respondents found the transitional process pretty satisfactory, however still quite some suggestions for improvement of the transitional process arose when I asked respondents about it. Only the suggestions that were made by a considerable amount of respondents are presented in this paragraph. These suggestions are also processed in chapter 6, which contains recommendations to the policy-makers of the Ministry of AN&FQ for improvement of the transitional process in subsequent stages.

First, quite some respondents suggested that the organizers and the architects should listen more closely to the wishes of the users of the new office. It came to my attention that some years ago a research agency investigated peoples' wishes concerning the office space,

which are ignored in the architects plans according to some. Moreover, one department of the Ministry of AN&FQ already experimented with a flexible office in a pilot study. It seems that this experiment failed and that people kept their own offices, walls and fences were build to close off open space and the clean-desk policy did not work properly either. Quite some respondents are surprised and offended by the fact that a flexible office concept is introduced, regardless of the previous findings in this pilot-study.

Secondly, some respondents suggested that the ultimate goals and benefits of the implementation of the flexible office concept should be better communicated, since many people do not know what the actual reasons for the change in office concept are. I often hear that people think or fear that the changes are only implemented for financial reasons, which does not stimulate people. Especially staff-members, who are not very much concerned with the development of the organization as a whole, do not feel motivated to change their work-routines for financial reasons only. When they would be more aware of the personal gains in their working process, they would feel more intrinsically motivated to change working behaviour. Managers seem to know better what the ultimate goals of the change in office concept are, which they should communicate more clearly to their staff-members in order to improve the transitional process.

Furthermore, what many respondents miss is sort of a calendar or time-line of what is happening at what moment in the process. This was hard to realize in this phase of the process since the renovations took longer than planned and the relocation date is postponed several times. Still, people would have liked to see an overview of planned activities before, during and after the relocation to the new office to know where they are. As De Bruyne (2007) suggested, people do not like change since it brings uncertainty. Good communication can solve a large part of that problem. When there would be a clear, publicly available time-line, which clearly maps the process, there would be less uncertainty.

Lastly, many respondents feel the need for practical information about a work day. I often heard the suggestion for a video or photo series of the process of a workday at the Ministry of AN&FQ. Because quite some small things change, a clear description of the process from walking into the building, searching a desk, logging in, getting work material, printing documents, getting coffee, going into a meeting, having lunch to logging out and walking out of the building would clarify a lot. Such a video is in the end developed and shown to the people on the day they move into the new office, however many respondents would have wanted to see that much earlier in the process.

#### **4.5 INFLUENCE OF EXPECTATIONS ON EVALUATION**

Interestingly, in the question whether peoples' expectations beforehand influence their evaluation of the transitional process a sex difference became clear; males denied and females confirmed the influence of their expectations on their evaluation. Almost all male respondents claimed that they were very neutral in their evaluation and perfectly capable of separating their expectation from the evaluation. Most females, on the other hand, acknowledged that humans are influenced by prejudice and expectation, either conscious or unconscious. According to the results of Crisson, Seta and Seta (1995), Roch and Poister (2006) and the theory of the self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1968), the female response seem to be more prone. Males seem to be less self-reflective and self-aware but this could also be explained by the fact that men generally are more self-confident. Of course, this is a difficult question, which could have influenced the quality of the answers. Further research on this issue is needed.

## 5. Conclusion

This thesis is structured according to the central research question that consists of three parts.

*‘What are the expectations of the Ministry of AN&FQs’ employees for working in a new flexible working environment, how appropriate do they evaluate the transitional process and to what extent are the employees’ expectations of influence on their evaluation of the transitional process?’* This concluding chapter will provide an answer to this central research question.

Generally, employees of the Ministry of AN&FQ are fairly negative on the new office concept. Respondents have several reasons for their negativity, which correspond to the existing body of theory. These attitudes are most likely of influence on the success or failure of the transitional process to the new office concept, matching with the directive ‘attitude to behaviour’ in the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985). Since the respondents are not really convinced of the benefits, they are not likely to try their very best to adopt all aspects of the expected new behaviour in the new office. Therefore, people will linger on in their old habits, which is not inspiring the new office concept.

As expected beforehand and descending from the theory, age differences are present in the research sample. Strikingly, no extra arrangements are made for older employees, exemplifying the fact that very few individualized measures are developed for different groups of employees. Target groups meetings for specific positions within the organization are the only elements that are exclusively for certain groups of employees. As the target group meeting are very well received, elements of the transitional process that take into account employees’ age might append to the quality and effect of the process.

Ostensibly, managers can easily say that they support the new office concept, since most of them will not participate in the flexible concept to the fullest. As the managers do not set a good example, they do not convince staff-members to cooperate with the concept, but create the opposite effect. The staff-members are antagonized because it does not seem right that they have to change their behaviour, which they do not like in the first place, and that the managers do not.

Furthermore, the respondents are not at all keen about the fact that the results of the pilot study seem to be ignored. In that pilot study with a flexible office in one department of the Ministry of AN&FQ, it appeared that people stayed in the same workplace every day and built fences and walls in the open office to close off their workplaces. Many respondents

question the use of a pilot study when the results are ignored and the primary plan is pushed through anyway. From the theoretical framework, it appears that when people feel that their opinions are not taken seriously and that they do not have influence in the process, they are not motivated to change their behaviour. In a large governmental organization, policy frequently needs to be implemented top-down, however performing a pilot study and ignoring the results feels for the employees as keeping up appearances.

Many of the respondents expect dilution of the concept, with subsiding strength of the work-floor rules. Since it is not clear who should uphold and check upon the rules, social control among colleagues is the only direction. But in departments where many people are negative about the concept, people will not correct each other but stimulate each other to ignore the rules. One would expect that adults could take responsibility for the execution of new rules themselves, but it appears that when they do not agree with the new concept, some will not accept it and can act quite infantile. Also, social influences of colleagues with a negative attitudes can fortify this. The beliefs of other people can partly determine human behaviour according to the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985). However, in case of the transition to the flexible working environment, the 'subjective norms' are hard to pin down since most respondents say that others share their expectations. As most respondents have different expectations, it is quite impossible for all other people to have the same expectations and people not being influenced by others at all is not likely either. This could either mean that respondents misinterpreted this item or they unconsciously conformed to what they perceived as the subjective norms.

On average, the respondents evaluated the transitional process as fairly good, as is elaborately described in the results-section. Respondents notice that many different arrangements are made to facilitate the transition to the new office, which probably makes them more willing to make the transition. Even respondents who are, for several reasons, not involved in the transitional process say that they have the impression that the process is well-organized and that they know where to get information when they would need it in the future. This means that the 'perceived behavioural control' (Ajzen, 1985) in the transitional process to the new office concept is quite high. Again, more could have been organized in order to addresses specific groups of people. Next to the target-group meetings, special meetings for older employees could have helped them to adapt to the new office concept in their situation. Of course it is difficult to adapt the transitional process to individuals when so many people should be involved and resources are limited.

It is hard to establish the different stages of the transitional process according to the stages of change model (Prochaska & Diclemente, 1984), since the participants go through the process at a different pace. Generally, managers hear information earlier in the process, since they have more contacts and are informed earlier because they have to bring the message to their staff-members. However, as mentioned before, these staff-members do not seem to take the managers seriously since they will not be working according to the flexible work-floor rules, as they keep their own office. Further, some people just do not want to participate in the transitional process, so it is hard to establish the stages of the process for everybody. In spite of these difficulties, the transitional process could well be mapped by means of the stages of change model (Prochaska & Diclemente, 1984).

The gender differences in the section on the influence of expectations of the new office on their evaluation of the transitional process is an unexpected results that can not easily be explained by the existing body of knowledge on the subject. Probably, a slight sex difference on this matter might exist, however the underlying reasons are debateable and possibly not as clear-cut as it shows from these data.

## **6. Recommendations**

In this chapter, I put forward recommendations to the policy-makers of the Ministry of AN&FQ for improvement of the transitional process in later phases.

First, I want to raise the issue of the pilot study and the opinion poll. Most respondents protest about the fact that the results of the pilot study, that introduced a flexible office concept in one department of the Ministry of AN&FQ, and the opinion poll on the new office concept, seem to be ignored. My suggestion would be to clearly present the results of a opinion poll and a pilot study to the employees, also when the results are different than expected. Employees of the Ministry of AN&FQ appear to really appreciate participation in the decision-making process, but when the new concept is pushed through to the whole organization regardless of the results of the pilot study and the opinion of the employees, the pilot study and opinion poll could just as well be left out. Concrete, one should publicly announce ideas like pilot studies, clearly communicate the course of events and tangibly present the results to the employees. Also, one should seriously think about what the organization does when the results are negative or different than expected beforehand.

Secondly, I advise to provide for more practical information earlier in the process; to advance some elements of the preparation phase. When employees have more practical knowledge, they have less uncertainties about what they are up against; the less insecurity, the less people fear the changes. The calendar/time-line on which people can see where they are in the process and the presented example-day, both suggested by the respondents of this research are good examples for presenting practical information. As respondents indicate this as convincing, these elements should be presented quite early in the process instead of just before the implementation.

Furthermore, I recommend the goals and benefits to be better communicated, so that employees know that the renovations and change in office concept are not only implemented for financial benefits for the organization at large, but also for improvement of the work-process and job-satisfaction of individual employees. Naturally, the benefits are mentioned in the recent transitional process, however respondents do apparently not really absorb the information. When the message is brought clearer and repetitively, people would know better how the changes benefit them personally, consequently they will be more motivated to cooperate in the transitional process. Concrete, one should clearly entwine the goals and benefits of the new office concept in the transitional process from day one.

Further, I would suggest that the Flex-it cartoon should be handled differently. In the last weeks of the preparation phase, most respondents indicated that they did not know Flex-it

at all. After my explanation, the majority of respondents said that the use of a cartoon did not affect them and some of them even indicated that they found it childish and a waste of money. In order to make the use of the cartoon fruitful, Flex-it should be better introduced so that employees know of his existence. Furthermore, the message Flex-it represents should be clearly formulated and carried out to its public. Considering the large amount of negative reactions to Flex-it, one should wonder whether the use of a cartoon is lucrative at all in this organization. Concrete, one should take a close look at an organization before introducing something like a cartoon and maybe ask employees whether they consider it useful. When reactions appear to be negative, one should adjust or drop the idea.

Lastly, I recommend for the workplace-game to be promoted more thoroughly. Just as with the Flex-it cartoon, most respondents did not know the workplace-game in the last weeks of the preparation phase. Contrary to the cartoon, respondents were very enthusiastic about this game after my explanation. Concrete, increased promotion of this game seems to be a good investment.

## 7. Discussion

This chapter contains the limitations of this research. Future research on the transitional process in later phases should take these limitations into account in order to improve the research quality. The repeating of this research in later phases enables the researcher to compare results and point out differences between departments.

When looking at the results of evaluation of the transitional process, one should take into account that I did not measure the quality of the several elements of the process according to official criteria. This evaluation is totally based on subjective experiences of the respondents. The external validity is therefore low since the results can only be compared to results in other organizations to a certain extent. The value of this research for the Ministry of AN&FQ is high, since the results can contribute extensively to the improvement of the transitional process at the Ministry of AN&FQ.

Furthermore, I did not attend to all elements of the transitional process so when respondents said that they missed some information in the process, I could not always check whether that piece of information was indeed not included or that the respondents accidentally missed that part. In future research I would recommend the researcher to attend to all elements of the process so that the researcher exactly knows what respondents refer to. Since I started this research when the transitional process was already in process, this was not possible in this research.

Additionally, it is possible that in the eyes of the respondents, my position as a researcher was not totally objective since I was stationed at the Department of Information Management, Facilities and Services, which is the department in charge of the transitional process. It might be that respondents were afraid to be totally honest with me in the interviews because they considered me part of that department, even though I tried to be clear that I am an independent researcher. Also, it could be that I am unconsciously influenced by my position within the ministry.

The internal validity of this research is debateable. For qualitative research 23 respondents is sufficient to research a general point of view. However, in this research I compared males to females, managers to staff-members and older to younger employees. The divisionalized structure of the organization also made it more difficult to draw general conclusions. To make valid comparisons, optimally the research population should be larger.

Further, the interview questions on the influence of colleagues' attitudes and the questions on the influence of respondents' expectations on their evaluation of the transitional process appeared not to work out as planned. These parts of the interviewed should be

rephrased and maybe also embedded more subtle in the interview instead of isolated interview questions. This will probably improve the quality of respondents' answers.

The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985) appears to be quite a useful theory in the research. The first directive of human behaviour, 'attitude to behaviour', seems to have a moderately negative influence on employees' behavioural intentions that concern the new office concept. The influence of the second directive, 'subjective norms', seems to have a moderately negative effect as well, as many respondents feel that their colleagues share their expectations, however this might be a misconception since the validity of respondents answers on this matter are debatable. The third directive, 'perceived behavioural control', appears to have quite a positive influence on employees' behavioural intentions that concern the new office concept, since respondents feel that very much is organized to help and prepare them for the new working environment. Since this research focuses solely on the transitional process and not on the actual implementation of the flexible office concept, the step from behavioural intentions to actual behaviour in the theory of planned behaviour was not tested. This would be a good starting point for follow-up research.

The stages of change model (Prochaska & Diclemente, 1984) is very useful in organizing the several elements of the transitional process towards the new office concept, and pinning down which stages need more attention in the future. However, it appeared difficult to establish the different phases, since some groups go through the process faster than others. This made it hard to investigate whether everyone got the right information at the right time. The stages in the transitional process towards the new office concept turn out not to be as clear-cut as in the model.

Despite of the abovementioned limitations, this research produced quite some useable information to improve the transitional process to the flexible working environment. Furthermore, this research also contributed extensively to the existing body of knowledge on this subject.

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## **Appendix I: Elaborate Information on the Flexible Working Environment.**

A standard workplace in a flexible working environment usually exists of a (mostly adjustable) desk and office chair, a desktop computer and a telephone on which all employees can log in. In some flexible working environments, standard office supplies like pens and staplers are available on every desk.



Figure 1: A standard workplace in a flexible working environment. (Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, 2007)

Open workstations are ‘islands’ of open workplaces, grouped together in different numbers of desks, meant for working in teams or individually. A stand-sit workstation equally is an example of an open workstation. In a stand-sit workplace, an employee can choose whether he/she wants to work standing up or sitting down. This specific workplace is designed for, among others, people with back problems.

Closed workstations are locations in which people can work fully concentrated and/or in private setting. Examples of closed workstations are the cockpit (a small closed-off space in which people can work individually and concentrated) and the team room (a small closed room in which people can collaborate and discuss on a project).

Formal gathering places are areas where formal meetings can take place. These rooms can vary in size and frequently these rooms need to be booked before use.

Informal gathering places are areas where employees take a break, chat with colleagues, read a report or newspaper. These informal gathering places can consist of a large reading table, some easy chairs or a lounge corner.

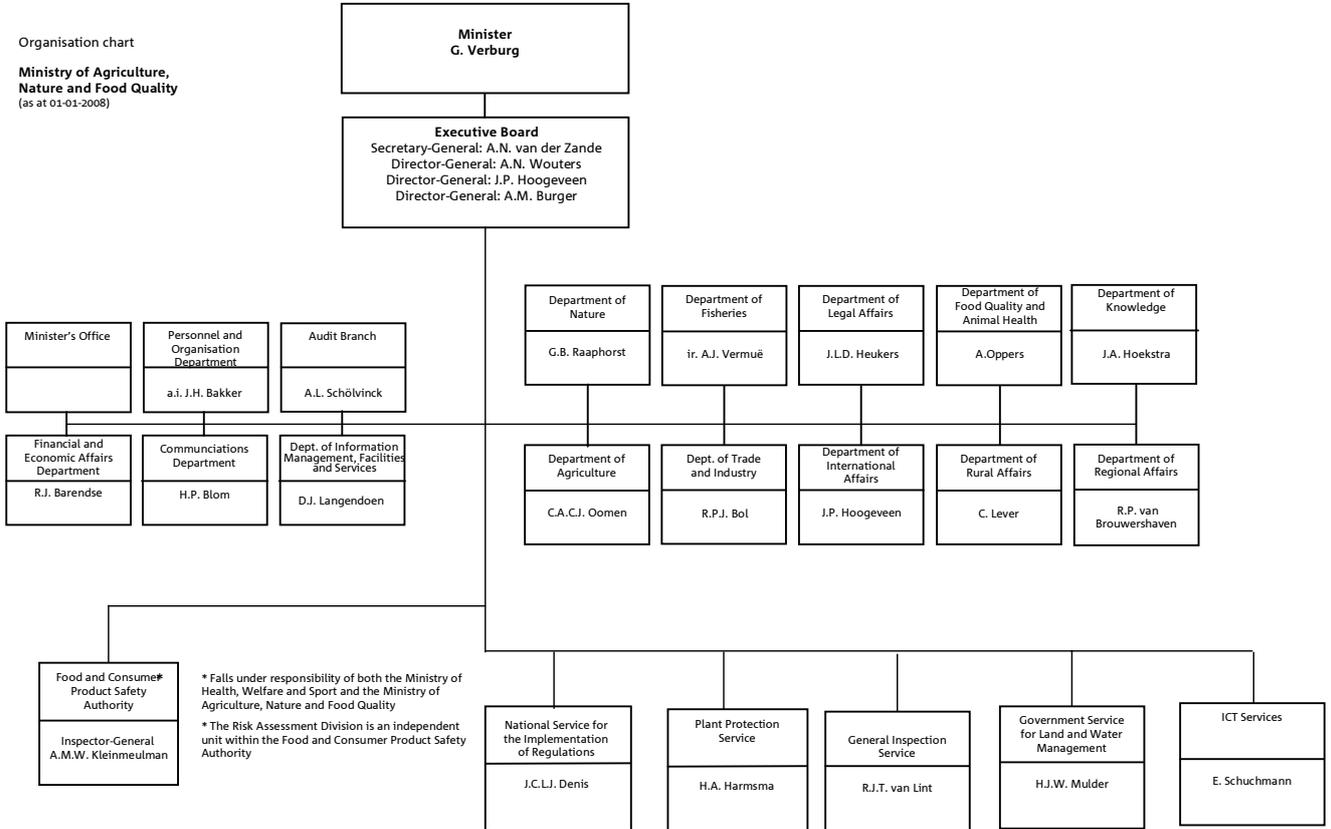
The flexible working environment is a mixture of the four above-mentioned settings. Figure 2 shows what a flexible working environment looks like.



Figure 2: Workplaces in a flexible working environment (Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, 2007)

Flexible working environments can vary in the overall openness of the office, the amount of useable space per employee and number of dividing walls surrounding employees' workspaces. (Hedge, 1982)

## Appendix II: Organizational Structure of the Ministry of AN&FQ (Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, 2008).



### **Appendix III: The Flex-it Cartoon.**



## Appendix IV: Interview Topic List

### General:

- 1.) Age
- 2.) Gender
- 3.) Position within the Ministry of AN&FQ
- 4.) Time at Ministry of AN&FQ

### Expectation new working environment:

- 1.) What positive outcomes do you expect in practice from the transition to the new flexible working environment? Why?
- 2.) What negative outcomes do you expect in practice from the transition to the new flexible working environment? Why?
- 3.) If you could choose, would you rather stay in the current working environment or move to the new working environment? Why?
- 4.) How do you perceive expectations of people in your department? Do you feel social pressure when working in the new office concept is concerned? To what extent are the attitudes of colleagues concerning the new office concept of influence on peoples' expectations and behaviour?

### Evaluation different aspects of the transitional process:

- 1.) Effectivity of several aspects of the transitional process.
  - a. Lunch meetings per department
  - b. Newsletter Bezuidenhout 73
  - c. Website & Intranet (Veranderportaal Renovatie en Anders werken)
  - d. Visual aids (pictures, sketches, architectural models)
  - e. Usersguide
  - f. Target group meetings:
    - i. Project Team gives information at meetings Management Team
    - ii. Workshop for executives (Symposium André?)
    - iii. Secretary Workshop
    - iv. Informing service desk employees
    - v. Optional informative presentations per department
  - g. Introduction drink in the new working environment (per department)
  - h. Cartoon Flex-it (PR & new rules on the workflow)
  - i. Training 'Personal Efficiency Training' (PEP)
  - j. Workplace Game (CfPB)
- 2.) Goals obtained?
  - a. Knowledge: Do you feel that you have sufficient knowledge of what working in the new working environment comes down to and the preparations you have to make before you actually move there?
  - b. Attitude: Please describe your attitude in relation the introduction of the new working environment.
  - c. Behaviour: Do you think you know well enough how to behave and work in the new working environment?
  - d. Integration: During the transitional process, did you feel that there was one integrated informational source on the new working environment, or did you feel that different messages come from several different parties?
- 3.) Which elements of the transitional process contributed to what goals? (list of elements presented)

- 4.) Do you have suggestions for improvement for the transitional process to the new working environment?

**Influence of expectation on evaluation of transitional process:**

- 1.) Do you think that your evaluation of the transitional process towards the new working environment is influenced by the expectations you had of the new working environment beforehand?

## **Appendix V: Schematic overview of interview labels.**

### **I Expectation new working environment:**

- 1.) Positive expectations
- 2.) Negative expectations
- 3.) Preference traditional working environment or new working environment
  
- 4.) Perceived expectations of colleagues
- 5.) Social pressure
- 6.) Influence of attitudes of colleagues
  
- 7.) Age
  
- 8.) Gender

### **II Evaluation different aspects of the transitional process:**

- 1.) Elements of the transitional process.
  - a. Lunch meetings per department
  - b. Newsletter Bezuidenhout 73
  - c. Website & Intranet (Veranderportaal Renovatie en Anders werken)
  - d. Visual aids (pictures, sketches, architectural models)
  - e. Userguide
  - f. Target group meetings:
    - i. Project Team gives information at meetings Management Team
    - ii. Workshop for executives (Symposium André?)
    - iii. Workshop secretaries
    - iv. Informing service desk employees
    - v. Optional informative presentations per department
  - g. Introduction drink in the new working environment (per department)
  - h. Cartoon Flex-it (PR & new rules on the workflow)
  - i. Training 'Personal Efficiency Training' (PEP)
  - j. Workplace Game (CfPB)
- 5.) Goals
  - a. Knowledge
  - b. Attitude
  - c. Behaviour
  - d. Integration
- 6.) What elements of the transitional process contributed to what goals?
- 7.) Suggestions for improvement of the transitional process

### **III Influence of expectations:**

Influence of expectations on evaluation of transitional process