THE ROLE OF LNEC IN THE PROMOTION OF QUALITY IN CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Álvaro Vale e Azevedo(*) , António Cabaço, Maria João Falcão Silva
Buildings Department, LNEC, Lisbon, Portugal
(*)Email: ava@lnec.pt

ABSTRACT
This paper presents the methodology of the Marca de Qualidade LNEC (MQ / LNEC) [LNEC Quality Mark], which is a methodology to certify construction projects. It identifies the entities involved in the process, describes the relationship between them, and presents some reflections about the experience and the results achieved so far. Additionally, it is also it is also described the methodology of the Selo de Qualidade LNEC (SQ / LNEC) [LNEC Quality Seal] which is applied to elements, components and installations of buildings. the differences between both methodologies are also highlighted.

Keywords: quality management, quality in construction, construction projects, certification.

INTRODUCTION
The grant by LNEC of the Marca de Qualidade LNEC (MQ / LNEC) to construction projects culminates a quality certification process which has been regulated since 1990 by the Decree-Law nr. 310/90, of 1 of October (Decreto-Lei n.º 310/90, 1990). This certification process involves the intervention of a General Quality Manager (GQM) selected by each construction Owner among the entities qualified by LNEC to perform the functions of Quality Management. MQ / LNEC thus comprises two distinct activities: i) the qualification of GQM and ii) the application of the Quality Management methodology to Construction Projects, under a global perspective for all the construction process.

In the scope of Quality in Construction, LNEC has received several requests to apply MQ / LNEC similar methodologies to elements, installations and components of building construction, whether in new works or, in particular, in reconstruction, refurbishment, conservation or rehabilitation of existing buildings. With this purpose, the SQ / LNEC was created in January 2016, as a quality certification methodology to be applied to those elements, components and installations of buildings. This SQ/LNEC corresponds to a distinct process, independent of the certification of construction projects with MQ / LNEC, but can be attributed in an articulated way with MQ / LNEC.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS
The application, over more than two decades, of the MQ / LNEC methodology to construction projects is considered as very positive, since it has led to achieve higher levels of quality in construction, less anomalies and non-conformities at the end of the works and,
simultaneously, to the dissemination and generalization of quality procedures of recognized utility for the construction sector in general.

Currently, the MQ / LNEC methodology is being reviewed and updated. In this context, there may occur changes resulting from the evolution of the quality management concept itself, in order to address, among others: i) the aspects that are currently most valued by the Owners and the market; ii) the interest and motivations for the adoption of this type of methodologies; iii) the procedures adopted by the majority of stakeholders; iv) the legal provisions in force; v) the contracting and implementation models; vi) the focus on the use, maintenance and rehabilitation phases; and vii) the construction and of the economy framing (Azevedo et. al, 2014a) (Azevedo et. al., 2014b).

Recent progress has been made in the certification of products, components and construction equipment. Currently, the vast majority of products applied in construction already have a certification, in particular CE marking, which states in a simplified way that the use of construction products in new buildings or in different interventions is conditioned by CE marking or, failing that, to the certification in compliance with the technical specifications in force in Portugal (Azevedo, 2010).

A first step associated with the response to such certification requests - as it is the MQ / LNEC revision under course - it is related with the SQ/LNEC. This new certification methodology, now available, can speed up the adoption of quality procedures and give a specific response to problems that may arise in small interventions, not requiring the application of a generalized methodology, such as the MQ / LNEC (Azevedo et. al, 2016).

It is thus expected that the owners can request the application of SQ/LNEC and benefit from solutions that throughout their design, development and application process are framed by processes and by quality management criteria, with the proper follow-up of the LNEC.

REFERENCES

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