Photo 5.1. ‘SNVer Pierre de Kock is having a conversation with staff of the city hall in Gedaref’, Sudan 1989.

Source: SNV photo archives, Red, SNV, Voorbereiding.

Expertise expected:  
The professionalisation of SNV  

SNV started out as a voluntary service and during its first decades there was considerable debate about the meaning and conceptualisation of ‘the volunteer’. While the term was positively associated with youth and enthusiasm in the 1960s and early 1970s, the notion ‘volunteer’ came, over time, to be negatively associated with amateurism. This had consequences within SNV: more people were calling for a professional approach that would be accompanied by an adequate salary and social-insurance package. In the course of the 1980s this process of professionalisation was implemented, both in terms of a salary for SNV workers and an increased emphasis on technical and managerial expertise. The formal start of salary payments in 1988 marked the end of a long road towards professionalisation and the start of a complex set of changes stemming from this process.