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PARTICULARITIES OF QUALITY SYSTEM MANAGEMENT IN LOCAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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MARIA-CRISTINA BĂLĂNEASA[1]

Abstract

This paper aims to identify and describe the quality management system formulated by local government authorities, ISO international standards applicable in the field of public services and local government as well as documents that can be developed to achieve the quality of services provided to citizens. We consider it useful to present these aspects related to quality precisely in order to understand how the representatives of the local and central public administration authorities can achieve the stated goal of the state - that of building a transparent and citizen-oriented public administration.

Keywords:

Quality management; quality standard, local public administration, quality manual.

JEL Codes: H11, H80, H83.

I. Introduction

In order to achieve the goal proposed by the state but also by the representatives of local public administration authorities (that of building a transparent and citizen-oriented public administration), the development of quality management tools, in public administration, is currently intended to achieve this goal. One of these tools found in international quality standards is the Quality Manual - a valuable document in implementing the quality policy assumed not only in the private sector but also in the public sector, respectively in public administration.

Thus, this material aims to identify the theoretical elements of the concept of quality, management system in public administration, to present the international standards applicable in public administration, focusing on

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the content elements of the Quality Declaration and the Quality Manual that can be elaborated by the local public administration authorities following the example of Paşcani City Hall, Iaşi County and Satu Mare City Hall, respectively.

II. Quality–an integral part of the development of local public administration

II.1. The concept of quality, quality management system in local public administration and their importance

Quality represents an important appearance of the global management of any organization and society contemporary, also for public institutions and local public administration authorities.

The crystallization of the concept of quality at an international level dates back to the 1930s, quality was established as a strategy originally applied in the industrial field with roots in the United States and Japan. Recently, this concept is also found in the private services sector, but especially in the field of public services with the elaboration of international standards.

Referring the definition of quality, in structures of public administration, we find in the works of some authors the following explanations. As staded by the Foundation for Training in Technology, "quality means the provision of services in accordance with the requirements of the citizen" [2]. Quality consists in creating products or services that are *satisfactory* for the customer [3]. We appreciate that the client of public services is the citizen beneficiary of civil rights and administrative services.

Other authors define quality as follows: "Improving governance - the constitutional architecture and structure of government and society and the effectiveness of public action".[1].

The doctrine uses the concept of **total quality which is understood as a** „set of principles and methods that pursue the goal of satisfying the client, at the lowest cost. This concept wants to include the whole organization and all its activities [2].

The quality management system is defined by International Standards as a management system that guides and controls anything organization in terms of quality ."The quality management system means that part of the management system of the organization, oriented towards obtaining of results, in relation to quality objectives, to meet the interests, expectations and requirements of interested parties, as appropriate".[4]

A quality management system is "the set of managerial processes between which there are interferences, documents associated with them and structural elements of the organization, the purpose of which is the orientation and control of the organization in terms of quality" [5].

American Society for Quality explains this system as a formalized one that documents the structure, responsibilities and procedures needed to achieve quality management effectively.

Business Dictionary.com includes the following definition: "Collective policies, plans, practices and support infrastructure through which an organization seeks to reduce and possibly eliminate non-compliance with specifications, standards and customer expectations in the most cost-effective and efficient manner". [6]

The key concepts of QMS are the approach of activities as processes and the control of the organization in the field of quality.

A process-based QMS means an approach to activities as processes to manage and control how quality policy is implemented and how quality objectives are achieved. Approaching quality management as a process involves: input elements, analyzes, and issuing directives and quality decisions.

Public Administrations, that act according to the conditions of Total Quality, will be a true model, emphasizing cultural values, that stimulate the search for efficiency, for quality of public services. The quality of public services must be assessed by the citizen and thus reaffirms democratic values.

II.2. Standardization bodies

International Standard Organization (ISO) is an international, non-governmental organization established in 1947, which sets standards in all areas except electricity, electronics and telecommunications. They consist of a series of rules, characteristics and indicators, the observance of which is meant to raise the level of quality of products and services in various fields. In addition, ISO standards help reduce costs and increase the quality of services and products [7].

Among the objectives of ISO standards there are: quality assurance, environmental safety, safety, efficiency and effectiveness.

Standardization is organized at European (regional) level where operate **CEN**, **CENELEC** and **ETSI**, while in Romania operates **ASRO** .

II.3. Quality standards formulated and used in the sector of services and public administration

"The ISO 9000, series works with the certification tool by third parties (performed by certification structures) and allows organizations to formally obtain certificates for their activities. This standard is also the first international quality standard applicable in public administration"[10].

For the public administration sector was developed in 2019 SR ISO 18091 – Local administration that aims to help public administration authorities to improve their services, to align them with local needs, for healthier and for happier communities. Thus, it is not surprising for authorities that citizens have high expectations from local governments.

SR ISO 18091 – Local administration is meant to manage the transport service, sewerage, public lighting, civil protection.

At the moment, with difficult economic, the administration authorities need to efficiently manage available resources and processes, and work together, as a system. Thus it has an important role "*ISO 18091, Quality Management Systems. Guidelines for the application of ISO 9001 in local government*" wich makes a real difference compared to the others regulations.

The recently introduced standard aims to help local and central authorities, to maintain and ensure a high level of service. This it provides models and diagnostic tools for the implementation of a completely quality management system, which will lead to the efficiency and reliability of local authorities.

ISO 18091 is the first addressed to the public authorities.

Given that the standard is recent, it is logical that the local public authorities could not be certified, some of them being in the certification phase.

III. Quality policy statement – a document prepared by local public administration in the field of quality

We can say that many representatives of local administrative authorities are aware of the possibility and the need to improve and make more efficient their public services. In this respect, the local administrative authorities have empowered a quality management officer.

In order to provide quality public services, the public administration authorities elaborate and publish on the institution's

website a *Commitment / Declaration of the manager regarding the quality policy*. For the purpose of ISO certification, they can elaborate and publish *The Quality Management System Manual*. Where such a quality manual is elaborated, the mayor's declaration regarding the quality policy will be found in it.

The commitment to quality is mentioned by the European Quality Organization by the adoption of a directive providing that quality policy is developed from top to bottom, based on the general policy established by its management. The policy statement must be in writing and must be concise; to define what is expected of employees and to refer to all fundamental aspects of quality.

Therefore, the statement includes the commitment of the manager (authorizing officer) to his full involvement in the application of the quality system, including the ensuring of the necessary resources.

For example, on the website of Pașcani City Hall, Iași County [8], is posted *The Quality Policy Statement*, adopted by the mayor in 2018, which clarifies aspects such as: the people on whom the quality policy is addressed, the objectives of the system quality management formulated by the mayor's office, the mayor's commitment, the obligation of each mayor's office employee to pursue the provision of a quality service.

Among the objectives of the quality management system within the Pașcani City Hall are: the provision of services in accordance with the law and with the deadlines established in order to satisfy the citizen; identification and treatment of risks that may influence the quality of services provided; prevention of non-conformities of public services in all phases of service provision which will give citizens confidence; training and motivating staff for continuous improvement.

The mayor of Pașcani City Hall, himself, within this quality policy, undertook that: the quality management system, policy and objectives be developed according to legal standards and be analyzed periodically in order to provide quality services; to ensure the communication / publication, understanding, analysis of the quality policy at all levels of the institution; ensure the human and material resources necessary for the development of quality services; periodically review quality policy and objectives and continuously improve them.

As for "*The Manual of the Quality Management System in local public administration*", it is intended for both civil servants (internal) and the citizen (external).

Such a manual shall be reviewed periodically and shall contain the following elements [9]:

-the statement of the mayor of public policy,signed and dated by the mayor;

- presentation of the City Hall;

- the scope of the quality management system with normative references;

- definitions and abbreviations used in the manual;

- the management system processes and the applicable ISO standard, the documents used and their control;

- management responsability, communication and authority;

- the person in charge of the quality management should be appointed by order of the mayor;

-resource managemen;

- carrying out the public service;

- measuring, analyzing and improving the quality management system such as analyzing citizen satisfaction;

- the annexes of the manual, various documents such as: the map of the Quality Management System, the Internal Regulations, the organizational chart, the monitoring program for the quality objectives, the stages of accomplishing the process of monitoring the citizens' satisfaction.

IV. Conclusion and proposals

If at the beginning the ISO standards were addressed to the production sector, so to the industry, with the development of society and the increase of citizens' requirements for quality and transparent local public services, these standards were diversified and updated so that the ISO 9000 standard appeared. I have noticed that in addition to Community and national measures to reform local public administration legislation, they aim to provide quality services to the satisfaction of the citizen. These objectives of local public administration management can be achieved by formulating a quality management system in quality policy documents such as the quality policy statement or the Quality Manual, the latter leads to the certification of the quality of local public services by the International Organization of Standardization. We believe that this certification would lead many local authorities to reach the maximum level of quality of public services provided to citizens and we recommend more authorities to pursue compliance with these quality standards for effective and efficient administration.

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