

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS OF QUALITY-RISK MANAGEMENT IN THE ROMANIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract

The paper is part of the doctoral research and aims to analyze the current state of implementation of quality-risk management, as well as how to use the tools used in the process, ISO 9001: 2015 and CAF, at public administration. The impact of the implementation of these quality standards on public entities will be analyzed. The objectives of the research are to analyze the current state of implementation of SR ISO 9001: 2015 and CAF in public administration. An analysis is made of the current state of implementation of quality-risk management at the level of public entity, the relationship between SR ISO 9001: 2015 and CAF, managing to define the main features of the action plan on implementing quality-risk management in public administration.

Keywords: quality-risk management, SR ISO 9001:2015, CAF, actions plan

1. INTRODUCTION

The quality of public administration services in the current context is very important. Given the dynamics of society's needs and especially the speed with which society is changing, we must recognize that public administration reform is in full swing and is a very long process.

Public administration is a mirror of how all states and governments are governed. The way of organization and functioning of the public administration influences the economy, the social life and why not the living standard of the citizens. Public entities, as a component part of public administration, have the role, among others, to adequately stimulate society and reduce the uncertainty of citizens.

At European level, public administration is still changing as a result of the sustained efforts of Member States to stimulate the performance of civil servants. The fast pace of change determines the state and implicitly the public administration to adapt to the reality of the times we live in.

Under the auspices of all public administrations of the member countries, the European Union has developed and published a series of standards, analyzes, guidance and at the same time offered financing and technical assistance and technical tools. Moldoveanu et al. (2003)

In the last 20 years, the European Union has carried out a phased and assiduous reform of the administrations of the member states, which have managed to increase their effectiveness and efficiency at the same time as reducing the costs. Member States' public bodies have managed to become more open and transparent to the population during these years of reform. Citizens have easier access to high quality services (fig.1).



FIGURE 1 - QUALITY MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

2. IMPLEMENTING QUALITY-RISK MANAGEMENT

The quality of public services is the best indicator of the good functioning of the state and the government, these exercising their role through the public administration. Increasing the quality of services requires good coordination of public institutions at any level as well as increasing the performance of these entities. An increased degree of public service quality means increasing citizens' trust in public administration (Raboca 2008).

In the current context, the implementation of quality management involves a series of regulations and the implementation of the new standard SR ISO 9001: 2015. The management team must draw up an action plan in the first phase. The implementation of quality and risk management requires special attention to detail being a large-scale process whose actions aim to streamline public administration.

Quality-risk management and its implementation according to SR ISO 9001: 2015 involves complex actions in the sense of achieving a strategic action plan aimed at quality in the central and local public administration sector. The tools used in quality-risk management at the level of public administration in Romania were the ISO and CAF systems. ISO standards are used more often in our country than the CAF tool.

Following the implementation process so far, the complexity and the large number of resources involved can be observed, which makes the implementation cumbersome. In other words, the process of implementing quality-risk management in public administration involves the use of consistent financial and technological resources and last but not least human resources. It is known that specialized human resources are expensive and quite difficult to find. The use of tools specific to quality-risk management at the level of public entities encounters inconveniences at European level and in Romania, such as the difficulty of motivating employees or the lack of access to information. Raboca et al. (2007)

At the level of public administration, the implementation and / or use, depending on the stage at which the implementation process is, of the ISO and CAF systems is monitored and supported. These tools are especially recommended because over the last decades it has been shown that ISO can be used in any type of organization, while CAF was created precisely to be used in public administration in the Member States of the

European Union. This instrument is regularly updated in order to permanently respond to the needs of the European public authorities and institutions in the process of providing services to citizens.

The implementation process of quality-risk management in public administration must be promoted by the Government, which will implement a strategy at national level. Regarding the government's strategy regarding the implementation of quality-risk management, it is necessary to take into account the need to set up a central structure that will coordinate the whole process, emphasizing the national recruitment of all employees involved.

In Romania, the coordination, promotion and monitoring of the implementation process of quality-risk management was established by the Strategy for Consolidating the Public Administration 2014-2020. The implementation of the quality-risk system is based on the following four standards (<https://sgg.gov.ro>):

- **ISO 9000** : Quality Management Systems - Fundamental Principles and Vocabulary and defines the terminology used in all ISO 9000 series standards;
- **ISO 9001**: Quality management systems - Requirements, standard that is used for the certification of quality management systems and is the reference basis for assessing the ability of the organization to meet customer requirements;
- **ISO 9004**: Quality management systems - Guidelines for improving performance; aims to provide guidelines for the continuous improvement of the quality management system for the benefit of all stakeholders by increasing customer satisfaction;
- **ISO 19011** : Guidelines for auditing quality and environmental management systems - Guide to auditing quality systems; (which replaced the ISO 10011 standard).

ISO standards in the ISO 9000 class are the best known, they being generic standards, with applicability in any field of activity. As advantages of implementing these standards at the level of public administration we mention:

- It is an international standard;
- Improves quality-risk management at activity and process level;
- Increases transparency at the level of public entity;
- It offers the possibility of certification and external validation.
- However, the use of these standards also has certain disadvantages, such as:
 - The ISO standards system is rigid and very strict;
 - Involves some high costs in terms of implementation and maintenance at the level of public entity;
 - It presents a rather high risk in terms of the volume of documents.

The last important modification of the ISO standards, as form and content, is the one made by SR ISO 9001: 2015, its implementation aiming at obtaining a significant improvement but also a strategic integration of all the processes of providing the entity's services. The mentioned standards do not propose creativity but have an inclination towards conformity. The new SR ISO 9001: 2015 standard keeps in the center of attention the continuous improvement and the procedural approach. These are treated from another angle, namely that of risk management. SR ISO 9001: 2015 brings to the fore the risk generating opportunities or "positive uncertainties".

We conclude that SR ISO 9001: 2015 makes risk and risk management the main components of the quality management system, thus creating quality-risk management. ISO recognizing the vital importance of risk-based thinking. The processes in the public entity include, after the implementation of the new quality standard, the preventive action, in other words, it is easier to prevent the occurrence of risks than to repair the damages. Eliminating risks is impossible, for this reason the management team wants to minimize the impact of risks on activities and processes. However, the operationalization of risk prevention leads to the identification of appointment opportunities and positive risks.

3. TOOLS USED IN QUALITY-RISK MANAGEMENT

In the public sector, performing means continuously evaluating the current state of the entity of all processes and identifying all the possibilities to improve the quality of services provided to citizens. From this point started the building of evaluation systems for the way public institutions work. In this way, the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) appears, a tool used at European level, developed and used in order to continuously promote the process of modernization of the public administration system in Europe. The first version appears in 2000 and is presented in Lisbon during a quality conference in the public administration of the member states of the European Union. As a result of the experiences gained after the implementation of these versions, in 2013 another CAF version appears, improved. (<https://ec.europa.eu>)

CAF = Common Assessment Framework, that is, the Common Framework for self-assessment of the functioning of public institutions, is the tool created especially for public administration. It is used in the process of self-assessment of the activities of public entities by their employees and is applied at any level. This tool is used in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the processes and activities carried out at the level of public entity. It proposes a plan of measures aimed at maintaining strengths and improving weaknesses. CAF is the tool that performs a continuous analysis of all activities in public administration and their results in order to continuously improve them. For this tool to be effective, it is necessary for each employee to be seriously involved in the self-evaluation process.

Why is the CAF model important? Because it is easy to use and offers a simple framework in which self-assessment can be performed to public administration entities. CAF aims to obtain excellent results in terms of performance, customers, company but also its own employees, the latter being the main resource used by CAF.

The main risks that may occur in the use of CAF and therefore in the self-assessment process are:

1. Employees involved to be subjective in self-assessment;
2. The measures included in the elaborated plan of measures should not be successfully implemented.

Regarding the Romanian public administration, the quality-risk management system has not been fully implemented, some local entities do not yet have specific tools for quality management, this is largely due to the reluctance of employees both in management and from the executive level. In order to eliminate the reluctance of the public administration staff and specially to implement as soon as possible the quality-risk management at the level of all public institutions in Romania, the aim is to organize sessions / workshops in which public administration employees are trained in concerns the basic principles of quality management, as well as the tools used by it. In the full development of the process of implementing the quality - risk management at the level of public administration, a series of obstacles and challenges intervened, which are based on the specificity of the quality concept but also on its continuous evolution. These undesirable events led to the reorganization of the organizational charts of the mentioned institutions, in order to include in them new positions with attributions in quality management. The number of positions is directly proportional to the size of the public entity (<https://gov.ro/>).

Considering the results obtained following the implementation of ISO and CAF at the level of local public administration, it is recommended to use these tools in the future and moreover, these tools will be used at the level of central and county public administration. Trying to conclude the above, we summarize everything in an action plan. The main activities of the action plan are:

- The human resources will be organized so as to be sufficient in number but also to be very well prepared in the field of quality-risk management, with clearly defined attributions regarding the implementation of quality management at the level of the department where it carries out its activity;
- Establishment of new departments with specialized personnel in the implementation of quality-risk management;
- Implementation of ISO and CAF at the level of both local and central public administration;
- Evaluation and self-assessment of the impact caused by the implementation of risk quality management.

As it appears from the previous theft, the SR ISO 9001: 2015 system was implemented at the level of the entire public administration in Romania from the very beginning. At the same time, we highlighted the first localities where the public administration started to use CAF, as a tool of quality management. However, it should be mentioned that in time the entire Romanian public administration will use the tools mentioned in the implementation of quality-risk management.

Regarding the Romanian public administration, we can observe important changes in the direction of implementing quality-risk management and its use since 2004. In a pilot phase, the use of CAF began in several departments of Romanian public institutions, following in 2005 expansion at the level of central and local administration. The government does not require the use of CAF, self-assessment was done voluntarily by employees of public entities (fig. 2)

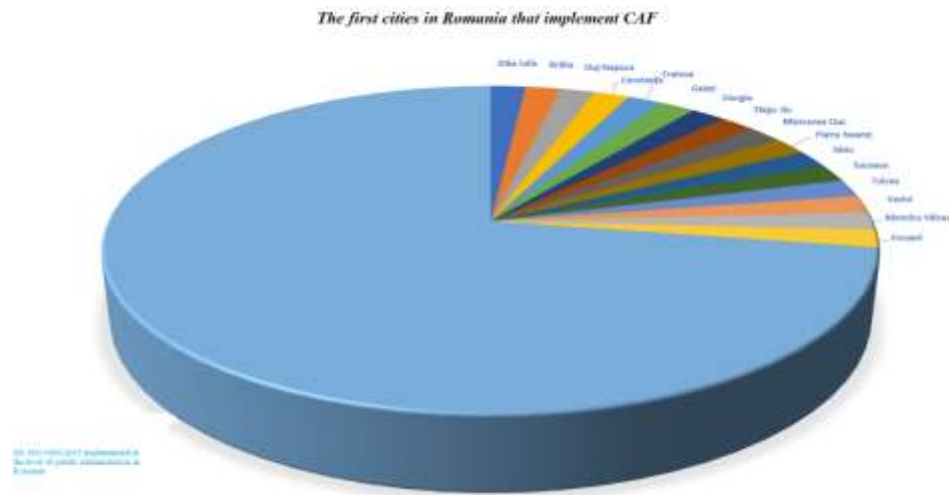


FIGURE 2 - IMPLEMENTATION OF SR ISO 9001: 2015 AND CAF AT THE LEVEL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN ROMANIA - THE INITIAL STAGE

The implementation of quality-risk management at the level of public administration in Romania has the following objectives; minimizing bureaucracy, maximizing the performance of civil servants, maximizing the level of quality of public administration services, modernizing the entire system and especially the realization of a public administration system oriented to the needs of citizens.

Currently in Romania, SR ISO 9001: 2015 has been implemented and CAF is used to a large extent.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The use of SR ISO 9001: 2015 and CAF has as main objectives the increase of the quality of the services offered by the public entities to the citizens, as well as the efficiency and the organizational capacity of all the processes from the public institution. Using CAF can achieve the main objective of the quality-risk management strategy, namely to provide the highest quality services to citizens, so that their confidence and satisfaction to increase, while maintaining the efficiency and effectiveness of public institution processes.

Following the use of the CAF instrument at the level of local public institutions, the quality-risk management will become more and more efficient and will manage to align with the European quality policies. These policies are updated according to the current extremely dynamic and complex context.

In conclusion, in order to use quality management at the maximum level of efficiency, it is necessary for it to be in full accordance with the expectations and needs of the citizens, these being the main beneficiaries of the services provided by the public entities. From this reason, the implementation of CAF plays an extremely important role in optimizing all processes and activities in public administration, oriented towards citizens.

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