

QMS – from basic form to continual development

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To ensure viability of the QMS of an organisation from long-term point of view it is important right from the beginning to set up the system in such a way that it has enough potential for further development, i.e. potential to meet requirements of stakeholders and enhance their satisfaction in the continuously changing internal and external environment of the organisation.

This approach was used in the implementation of the QMS in the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (SOSR).

The SOSR decision to implement QMS was based on the need to provide value to its stakeholders in a very demanding environment. Since the system had to be simple, process oriented, and had to ensure repeatability regarding meeting stakeholders' requirements, the SOSR decided to implement the QMS according to ISO 9001 standards. The system is based on the principles necessary to achieve the objective incl. the most important one – the principle of process approach. Different approach to this principle in various systems played one of the most important roles in the decision making: while the QMS according to ISO standards obligatory introduces the process approach, other (higher) systems assume the organisation has already implemented it.

Within the first phase of the QMS implementation the main processes were identified and specified: the value-adding processes (here statistical processes) that create the core of the system and supporting managerial and resource processes that ensure the necessary managerial support and resources for all processes. In next phase the processes were described by items necessary for managing them, incl. managerial tools: performance indicators, process parameters, and the way of monitoring, measuring and improvements. Descriptions of processes, especially their managerial part, reflect the development direction of the organisation defined by strategic statements, quality policy and strategic / quality objectives. Monitoring and measuring of the system effectiveness is performed by satisfaction surveys, self-assessments, internal and external audits and by management review.

Continual improvement and development of the QMS is ensured on several levels: on system, tactical and operational level. On system level it is ensured through enhancement of existing pillars of the implemented system or through implementation of new ones - as it is required by the challenging environment reflected in the long-term development strategy of the organisation. On operational and tactical level through good established and managed processes – i.e. by continual improvement of the process composition and process performance. The main approach used here is the optimisation of processes in the way which ensures creation of value to stakeholders without corrections and repeated activities. It means processes (or activities within them) that create value have to be kept and developed; processes / activities that do not create value, however are an important support to the creation of value have to be optimised. Unplanned activities that consume costs and often erode creation of value should be eliminated.

As the world-wide experience shows, an optimal QMS is the tailor-made QMS. The tailor-made QMS thus may consist of both - pillars taken as inspiration from existing QMS / TQM models and pillars already integrated in the system. The resulting integrated QMS best meets requirements regarding the long-term development, set by the organisation.