

QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN SELECTED EUROPEAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS

Menedžment kakovosti v izbranih evropskih javnih upravah

1 Introduction

In Slovenia, quality management has been a systemic component of the reforms of the public sector or the core public administration since the middle 90s of the past century, while in the world this process started a decade earlier (Flynn 1993). Every current government is aware that an efficient and quality administration will play an important role in its success when the next elections come.

The government of the Republic of Slovenia, or more specifically the Ministry of Public Administration, which is responsible for systematic development of quality management within the public (or at least state) administration, established the following key goals for the 2004-2008 period: to make the administration user-oriented, to make its operation open and transparent, and to ensure efficiency and quality at all levels. The latter specifically includes the establishment of a quality system within public administration – this being also the objective of the Slovenian Development Strategy, which is the government's operation programme for the first ten years of membership in the EU, i.e. until 2013.

In general, the reforms of the public sector or public administration gradually shift from mainly legal and economic measures to the development of more "soft" approaches, such as quality management or the use of excellence tools, the development of e-government, and the introduction of flexible organization schemes. This is brought about by a change in the economy-centred understanding of the role of the state and administration in society, as it was formed within the framework of the doctrine of new public management, which constitutes the main basis of administrative reforms. Improving the quality of operation of public organisations is done in stages: by assessing customer satisfaction, by improving internal and external communication flows, by regular training of employees, by systematic problem monitoring and analysis, and by creating internal guidelines and quality standards. Changes are brought about mainly by the introduction of standards and measures, granting of prizes and awards, education and training, communication and the positive example set by management (Verbič, 1994). Quality is a process, not a product.

Experiences at home and abroad show that quality management within individual organizations must not depend solely on the goodwill of management; for the systematic development of quality, a central incentive and coordination are needed. This is the reason why in the EU various awards and competitions, as well as other manners of external quality and excellence assessment,

Abstract

UDC: 658.562:005.3:35(4)

National public administrations are forced to adapt to societal changes all over the world and through the use of quality and excellence tools they develop their operations especially by focusing on customers and all other stakeholders. In the EU there is no prescribed tool for quality development in public administrations, but the European Commission recommends self-assessment and external benchmarks as well as improvements according to the CAF model. The article is based on research about the situation and the perspectives of quality management in selected EU member states (Austria, Belgium, Denmark and Italy). On that basis, the authors present the directions for quality development in Slovenian public administration.

Key words: quality and excellence, public administration, CAF model, EU

Izvleček

UDK: 658.562:005.3:35(4)

Nacionalne javne uprave se povsod po svetu prilagajajo spremembam v družbi ter z uporabo orodij za kakovost in odličnost razvijajo svoje poslovanje. Pri tem upoštevajo vse udeležence v njem, predvsem pa se osredotočajo na svoje odjemalce. V EU ni enotnega predpisanega orodja za razvoj kakovosti v javnih upravah. Evropska komisija priporoča zlasti samocenjevanje in zunanje primerjave ter izboljšave po modelu CAF. Prispevek temelji na raziskavi o stanju in perspektivah menedžmenta kakovosti v izbranih državah EU (Avstrija, Belgija, Danska, Italija, Nizozemska). Na tej osnovi ponujata avtorici smernice za razvoj kakovosti v slovenski javni upravi.

Ključne besede: kakovost, odličnost, javna uprava, model CAF, EU

JEL: H83

* Polonca Kovač, PhD, Assist. Prof., University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Administration, Gosarjeva ulica 5, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia. E-mail: polona.kovac@fu.uni-lj.si.

** Nina Tomažević, M.Sc, Senior Lecturer, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Administration, Gosarjeva ulica 5, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia. E-mail: nina.tomazevic@fu.uni-lj.si

are being established slowly but irrepressibly. As a rule, global or European tools are used where the governments decide for an approach with regard to each separate area. In Slovenian public administration, analysis of the situation and setting-up of an external evaluation system are being implemented for the first time (in 2007) on the national level. The objective of the article is to present the development of quality management in selected EU public administrations, which can be compared to the same topics in the case of Slovenian public administration.

2 Quality in public administration

2.1 General review of the development of quality management in selected EU public administrations

For thirty years the essence of administrative reforms around the world was the reduction of labour costs or of the share of public expenditures in gross domestic product. For a long time the goal of quality management in public administration was to optimize input sources, reduce the number of employees, reduce the number of levels of organization structures, etc. Especially in the eyes of economic entities, public administration is nothing more than an obstacle standing in the way of better national and global competitiveness.

The reforms of public administration have been conducted in EU member states on the same strategic grounds, but on the other hand national administrations are developing rather differently in individual states on the operational level. Harmonization of the European administrative space remains an abstract pursuit of the effectiveness and efficiency principles (more in Kovač 2003). Here the convergence principle, developed by Pollitt (2004; similarly Bugarič 2004), needs to be taken into account by means of analyzing the goals and measures applied by separate states. Finding uniformity of public policies and systems goes through multiple phases. Starting from discursive convergence, the process follows through decision convergence and practical convergence to results convergence, where the results of the reforms are the same or very similar. Pollitt is of the opinion that where the alignment of administrations is concerned, only the first and second convergences apply (and only within the OECD states). However, in the case of Slovenia and some other countries, stronger convergence can be found in quality management as part of the reforms, especially in new EU member states.

In past decades the development of society has required conceptual changes, first in the private sector, and soon after also in public administration. Therefore, in order to achieve better (best) results, various tools and approaches were developed. The first were separate (mostly economic) indicators, then, by definition of minimum criteria, the *Quality Assurance* standards followed, among which the ISO 9000 are the most common. After World War II, upgrading followed for different quality models, which

were formed in contrast to the standards, striving to initiate constant improvement (*Quality Management*). The most visible among these models are those which were adopted for use by different organizations through the procedure of choosing the best practices. In the entire EU the models that are the most valued are undoubtedly the excellence model EFQM - also known in Slovenia as the Business Excellence Award competition – and CAF (*Common Assessment Framework*).

2.2 Development and use of the EFQM and CAF models in public administration

Already in the 1950s, Japan had developed its own systemic approach to total quality management (TQM). This development was realized in 1951, when Deming's Award for quality was awarded to the best companies for the first time. In the USA, the first standards were formed in the early 1960s for the automobile and arms industries, while in the 1980s they supplemented the Japanese model TQM, and in 1988 they awarded the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award for the first time. Western Europe developed the quality assurance standards ISO 9000. In 1990 fourteen European companies founded the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) in order to develop a model for quality improvement in Europe. With the support of the European Organization for Quality (EOQ) and the European Commission, the EFQM developed the Excellence Model on which the European Quality Award is based. In 1992 this award was awarded for the first time. Today some 25 national awards based on the European Excellence Model exist in Europe, the Slovenian award being one of them.

In the TQM concept the notion of quality is defined in different ways, while all the models, including the EFQM, apply the notions effectiveness, efficiency, customer satisfaction and continuous improvement. The EFQM model was developed in a general version, with details adapted to three competition categories: big companies, small and middle-sized companies, and the public sector. The model from 1999 introduces an exacting evaluation matrix RADAR, which demands of the assessors to evaluate the following aspects: Results, Approach, Deployment, Assessment and Review. We use the EFQM excellence model also in Slovenia – for introductory pilot and regular competitive external evaluations in the public and the private sector, and within the frame of annual awards for business excellence (PRSP0, Business Excellence Award of the Republic of Slovenia) - in accordance with legislation since 1998, and for the public sector since 2004. Since 1996 seven pilot PRSP0 projects have been successfully implemented, organized by the Metrology Institute of the Republic of Slovenia in cooperation and with the support of relevant Ministries (of Health and of Tourism). In the first assessment the best organizations in separate fields got 300 points. Public administration was the exception: in 2004, in the pilot project in which 14 applicants took part, the number of point awarded ranged

from 301 to 350. Here we need to emphasize the past systematic efforts put forth by individual organizations in order to introduce the ISO standards, as well as the inter-coordinated work of the above organizations on the national level, especially in relation to the CAF model (Kern Pipan & Leon 2006). Between 1996 and 2006 169 assessments were performed within the PRSPO framework. Of these, 122 were for private sector organizations and 47 for public sector organizations. By 2006 71 Slovenian organizations participated in the assessment procedures. Of these, 39 were from the private and 32 from the public sector. Slovenian companies have received the European Quality Award (EQA) twice since 1998, and twice they were among the finalists in the EQA competition (Kern Pipan 2006).

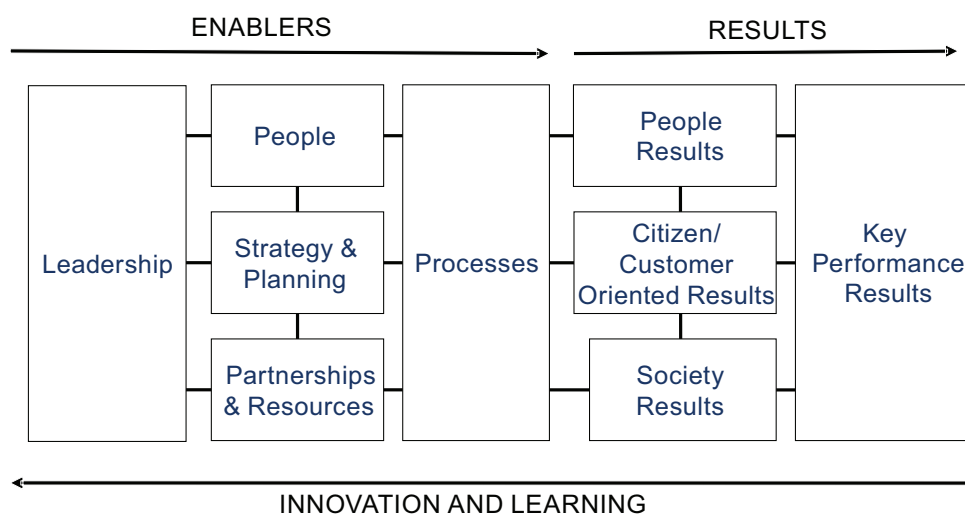
On the basis of the EFQM and the criteria of the Speyer Award, the European Commission issued a decision that the CAF (*Common Assessment Framework*) model was to be formed as a common framework for public sector organizations, the pilot version in 1998 and the official version in 2000 (for more details, see: <http://www.eipa.nl/en/home/>). The CAF model gives consideration to particularities of the public sector, such as the impact of politics on professional work, orientation towards customers, non-financial results, etc. It is also methodologically simple to use. Since 2002 about 100 Slovene administrative organizations have been assessed by application of the CAF model, part of a group of 800 CAF model users from all over Europe and some from Asia. The European Commission has set the objective that by 2010 the number of participating organizations or (self)assessments should reach 2010. The optimum effects of the model, including the development of organizational culture, are reached if the assessment by the CAF model is performed as a self-assessment based on the principle “*the employees are the ones that know the most about their organization.*” However,

for a reliable result of self-assessment, trained and self-critical assessors are needed. Therefore, organizations that were striving for improvement tried to perform the assessment (also) through experienced external advisors. This happened both in Slovenia and in other EU countries. On the other hand, there are no registered external schemes, certification offices or assessors (as of yet), despite the special guardianship role of the European Institute for Public Administration (EIPA) from Maastricht. The EIPA is developing new versions of the model, the latest of which was published in the fall of 2006. It keeps a common database of users which are brought together mostly through seminars and conferences. The CAF 2006 model encompasses nine basic criteria, five enablers and four results, as shown in Figure 1.

2.3 The Speyer Quality Award competition

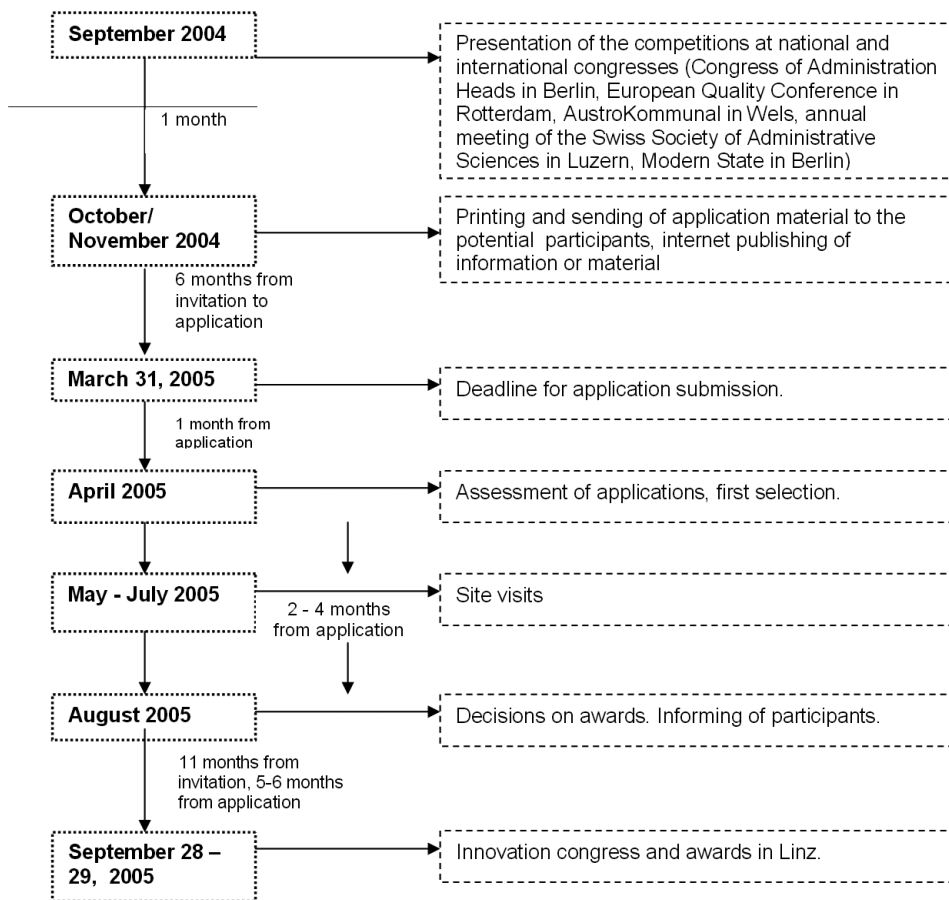
Among regional external assessments, the Speyer Quality Award for innovative administrations needs to be pointed out due to the pioneering it did and its impact and range. It is usually biennial (to date it was held in 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002 and 2005). The Speyer Quality Award was formed in 1992 by Hermann Hill, D.Sc. and Helmut Klages, D.Sc. of the German Faculty of Administrative Sciences in Speyer. The international Speyer competition makes it possible for good organizational solutions or good administrative improvements to be presented. The administrations from Germany, Austria and the German-speaking part of Switzerland take part in this competition. In 1996, 48 organizations participated. The next event was attended by 69, the next by 50 and the last one by as many as 100, grouped in different categories. In this manner, the award covers administration, including public companies and public/private companies (schools, universities, museums, courts of justice, religious, social and health

Figure 1: CAF 2006 Model



Source: CAF 2006 Brochure (2006).

Figure 2: Timetable and procedure of the Speyer Quality Award 2005 competition.



Source: Information on the 7th Speyer Quality Award competition (2005).

institutions, insurance institutions, ministries, customs institutions, police, etc). The sole condition for application is that the institution should have a certain degree of independence of operation. Since 2002, the award has been co-financed by the German, Austrian and Swiss governments, even though a part of the competition costs is covered by the applicants.

The organization that wishes to participate in the competition can choose one or more areas/categories. In the year 2005, the following areas were chosen:

- Partner concern over public services - 31 applications;
- Quality in administration - 22 applications;
- E- government - 22 applications;
- Innovative forms of budget and financial management - 11 applications;
- Human resources management - 8 applications;
- Fight against corruption - 6 applications.

Each organization submits the application based on a self-assessment questionnaire. For the 'quality in admini-

stration' category, the use of a quality model (usually the CAF model) is required. The questionnaire encompasses eight chapters: the quality of the concept, integration with the general modernization process, transfer or the degree of maturity, innovativeness, the quality of process and project management, equal chances, benefits and transferability to other organizations. The procedure was designed with regard to the time period and content, as shown in Figure 2.

Some interesting practices can be found among the recently awarded organizations (by country, Table 1):

- The Town of Hagen in Germany: setting up an internet office (*Virtual City Hall of Hagen*), which provided the citizens with insight, via internet, into certain public records, for instance land registry and car registry;
- Town administration of *Reihen*: in only two and a half years the awarded town has managed to develop contemporary control methods. Since 2004 new structures of internal quality tests have been established;
- Higher Tax Office in Austria: modernization of work procedures;

Table 1: Allocation of applicants, awards and prizes - Speyer Quality Award 2005

	Applicants	Awards	Prizes	Total achievements (awards and prizes)	Achievements in % of 43 total achievements
Austria	32	13	6	19	44 %
Germany	59	11	8	19	44 %
Switzerland	9	4	1	5	12 %
Total	100	28	15	43	

Source: *International Speyer Quality Competition (2007)*.

- Police Administration of Berlin: successful transition from bureaucratic to modern, customer-oriented organization;
- The Linz Town Hall: establishment of an information-technology department
- German Air and Space Flight Centre: decentralization with inclusion of the private sector;
- Province Audit/Financial Control of Upper Austria: reduction of bureaucratization.

3 Review of characteristics of quality tool use in the public administrations of selected EU member states

3.1 Austria

Austria is a federal state consisting of 9 independent provinces. Each province is divided into municipalities, with the exception of Vienna. In the sectors within which federal administrative tasks are implemented, a hierarchic organization of administrative bodies exists (Neuhofer in Dachs et al. 1998). In the area of quality in administration, the use of the CAF self-assessment model and participation in the Speyer competition must be pointed out. In Austria the Federal Office of the Prime Minister, operating through the Centre for Administrative Development as the performer of education and counselling, is responsible for coordinating and informing CAF users and candidate users of the CAF model. In Austria 42 CAF users were registered in 2007.

In March 2006, a national CAF conference was held at which the CAF was introduced as a key tool for modernization of administration (CAF Works 2006). As part of the Austrian EU presidency they published a booklet featuring the most effective cases of use of the CAF, such as:

- *Austrian Student Support Office (Study Affairs Office)*: When reforming the office the main focus was on the customers and the employees, on the development of the staff and organization, calculation of costs and services, controlling, and quality management through certification by standard ISO 9001 and self-assessment by the CAF model.
- *Vienna Town Administration*: Improvements in 19 district offices of the town administration are based on self-assessment performed by applying the CAF model

in 2002 and 2005. The system of balanced indicators is also used. When CAF assessments were performed, 5-member teams were formed, hosting also an external assessor. The 15th District employs 30 employees and has introduced new pilot standards. The Town Hall director and the head of the district concluded a one-year contract in which they defined measurable goals. The services were grouped by space, with customer admittance in the front and administrative work in the background. Customer satisfaction arised to 97%, time spent dealing with procedures was significantly shortened (85% of the procedures were dealt with within the deadline) and the number of complaints was also significantly lower.

In October 2004 the EIPA launched an incentive for implementation of a local project concerning comparative study, into which selected public administration organizations from Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia were included. The project was completed in 2006. The goals and the purposes of the project (*CAF Regional Benchmarking Project*) were the following: exchange of current modernization processes within the public administration, establishment of a network of innovative public administrations in the border regions of four neighbouring states, comparison of manners of use of the CAF, comparison of results, comparison of CAF strategies, review of the possibilities for implementation of international comparative study, and promotion of the CAF. Those involved were divided into four groups: capital cities, regions, towns and public administration bodies. The goals of the project were achieved and they plan to extend the project to other European countries: southern Germany, northern Italy, Poland and Romania.

3.2 Belgium

Belgium is a federal state comprised of three communities or three populations speaking three different languages. The country is divided into three regions: Flemish, Walloon and the Brussels Region. The regions are further divided into municipalities. The country currently has 15 ministries. In Belgium, the use of the CAF model is increasing. For some years now Belgium has been the leader among EU states in number of users, especially due to the CAF model assessment being a condition for attendance at the national best practice conference.

The following results, achieved in the period between 2003 and 2006, show how much emphasis is given to the

use of the CAF model in Belgium: the publication of a national booklet on the CAF model, the design of a case study and CAF model version for specific sectors, the design of an application in e-form and special assessment tools, special training for CAF model users, separate councils and workshops, extensive exchange of experiences through the Internet and through partners, annual competitions and awards, the design of a database and identification of good practice examples. At the national competition, every application of an administrative organization, complete with a self-assessment report on best practice, is reviewed by external assessors (more details can be found at www.publi-quality.be). An international jury collects the presentations and chooses the best example from among them. So far, more than 2500 participants have taken part in the conferences, and 50 examples of best practice have been presented. The following award winners are among them:

- *Birth and Child Support Office*: By using a new organizational scheme and new e-tools, a team of six persons – social workers, nurses and medical technicians – introduced counselling out of the home. Costs were reduced drastically.
- *Belgian National Employment Office*: By means of the CAF model, they designed strategic planning, including risk management; and they developed the practice of determination and improvement of employee satisfaction with various aspects of work conditions at the local level.
- *Financial Department of the French-speaking Community in Belgium*: The CAF model was used as a starting point for the review and elimination of critical points in work processes and for determination of responsible persons.

3.3 Denmark

Denmark is divided into 14 regions, which are further divided into almost three hundred municipalities. The public sector is the most de-centralized of all the public sectors in the EU. On the national level the Ministry of Finance (MF) plays a key role in the development of quality in administration. The use of quality tools is left to individual organizations, but the MF strongly supports self-assessment and improvements by application of the CAF and EFQM models. All the operational coordination concerning the use of the CAF and EFQM models (state award) is headed by the Danish Centre for Management under Authorization of the MF (The modernization of the public sector, 2007).

In Danish institutions the propagation of the CAF model began in 2002. It was included in the then existing government program for the Human Resources Management Sector and the Quality Management Sector. In Denmark they even developed a version of the CAF model that was slightly adapted to their use, i.e. KVIK (KVIK Manual, 2006), which in Danish means “quickly” or “promptly”. The name itself has a positive connotation, which means

that this is a tool which makes possible quick and effective assessment of results. Today in Denmark approximately 200 organizations intensively explore the area of excellence assessment and improvement and are supported by government. The tools used are very user-friendly and they are technologically supported (a DVD is available, taking the users step-by-step and guiding them how to use the CAF tools and methods and how to adjust them to the needs of their own organization). The KVIK model consists of multiple elements, for instance the self-assessment instructions were designed in cooperation with 11 pilot organizations, and the user’s manual features all the frequently posed questions relating to quality management. In 2003, special training for the CAF model was introduced. The users of the KVIK/CAF model shared their experiences via user forums. They came to the conclusion that the KVIK assessment could not ensure control over organizations. It remained unknown why some organizations could find the motivation and means to perform self-assessment and implement improvements while other could not. Training is of key importance. Self-assessment is a unique chance which provides overall insight into the scope and areas of the organization which need improvement. Such a project should serve as a platform for all organizations (for more, see www.managingquality.lv/i/KVIK_model%20Denmark.doc). There are no CAF model external assessments, but there are procedures for awarding a state award for quality based on the EFQM model. Among those that received the award was the Danish Postal Service (in 2004) (75% state-owned, 22% private capital, 3% inside owners).

The KVIK tool developed in Denmark represents a step towards propagation of a culture of excellence, but the emphasis is still on self-assessment, for no external assessment exists there as of yet. In the case that existing systems prove efficient enough for improvement of excellence, no external assessment is needed in Denmark. The most important thing is that based on self-assessment organizations introduce necessary improvements. Whether or not they win an award for this is not so important.

3.4 Italy

According to its constitution, Italy is a republic. With regard to administrative structure, it is divided into 20 regions (It. *regione*), which are further divided into provinces (It. *provincia*). The provinces are further divided into thousands of municipalities. The Italian public administration (Bellini 2006) uses the same standards used by other EU administrations for assessment and development of quality and excellence, i.e. the CAF and EFQM models, the ISO standards, and the system of balanced indicators; and special tools, for instance the so-called VIC model - the model for integral assessment of changes (It. *Valutazione Integrata del Cambiamento*).

The use of the CAF model is encouraged systemically on the national level and by a special program which was launched in 2004. At first, conferences were organized all

over Italy; after this, for almost a year, so-called training labs for training at work were organized (action studies of criteria and self-assessment procedures). In the spring of 2005 the first competition and award winner selection procedure was completed. At the same time support materials were developed.

In Italy external assessment and consequent improvements are performed mostly through awarding the prize for quality of public administrations ("*Premio qualità delle Amministrazioni pubbliche*"), which uses the reference CAF model. This award, which is a biennial event, was given for the first time in 2005. The whole procedure is headed and coordinated by the Ministry of Public Administration in cooperation with the Formez Institute, which takes care of the external organization, and other associations such as the National Consumer Council. In 2005 the assessment procedure was performed in multiple phases; the same was the case when the call was repeated in 2007. First, the organizations submit their applications based on a public invitation published on the Internet and in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Italy. The constituent part of the application is a prescribed questionnaire on the activities performed by the administrative sector, a description of the performed studies with assessment of users' satisfaction and the organizational climate of previous years, a description of the planned and implemented forms of administration and process management, a determination of existing information systems, and so on. The organizations that can take part in the competition are state or public administration institutions, health institutions, hospitals and all related administrations; municipalities, municipality associations, mountain communities and other forms of community associations; education institutions; regions, provinces and capital cities; universities; chambers of commerce, trade and economy; and other public entities involved in non-profit activities. Formez (The Scoring System, Internal material) also prepared the rules and a detailed guide for completing the application, and it established a record exclusively designed for the assessors. In the second phase, the chosen organizations submit an application report in accordance with the CAF model consisting of 50 pages. This report is assessed by external assessors who, in 2005, chose 40 administrations that were given the chance of an additional external assessment. After this, the final selection is made and the solemn prize awarding is held. All participants in the final phase, as well as all the others, who were not selected, receive an assessment report including all the key subjects, therefore providing advantages and chances for organizational improvements.

It cannot happen that the assessment produces no award, for even in the first phase the administrations that obtain the required number of points to meet minimum quality requirements are chosen (for instance, at least 20%). Italy is the only state in the EU where, in contrast to the original CAF model, the weightings applicable to individual criteria were developed, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: CAF weights for the Italian Award

ENABLERS		
1	Leadership	12
2	Strategy and Planning	8
3	People	9
4	Partnership and Resources	8
5	Processes	13
	Total	50
RESULTS		
6	Citizen/Customer Oriented Results	17
7	People Results	10
8	Society Results	8
9	Key Performance Results	15
	Total	50

Source: *The Scoring System, Formez (2005)*.

The procedure allows for a special award to be given to an organization which was not among the winning ones, but managed to obtain the most points for one of the criteria (for instance, in 2005 the hospital Azienda Ospedaliera San Martino di Genova received such an award for customer results). The awards are given every year in Rome (<http://www.forumpa.it/forumpa2007/home/home.html>).

4 Development of quality management in Slovenian public administration

In Slovenian public administration - more specifically in state administration on the territorial level or within specialized bodies of the ministries and government offices - the ISO standards were first introduced about a decade ago. Simultaneously, since the year 2000, some administrative organizations have been awarding their own quality management, also applying self-assessment by means of the excellence models CAF and EFQM (Kovač 2002, Kovač and Kern-Pipan 2005). In 2004 and again in 2006, national talks or conferences were organized with regard to a few dozen CAF model users, where the development of quality management applying the CAF model was discussed.

What is also characteristic of the Slovenian public administration is that recently it has been subjected to several systemic and narrow solutions, an example of which is the adoption of a civil document in the form of a regulation on the manner of the public administration's transactions with customers. It was first passed in 2001 and was later absorbed in the Decree on Administrative Operation, which became effective in March 2005. The regulation was constantly amended, especially with regard to the quality of transactions with customers. For instance, it was amended in 2006 and 2007 with regard to monthly Quality Barometer measurement and the extension of business hours.

It is also characteristic of the Slovenian administration that the development of quality management has always been implemented bottom-up rather than top-down. Indi-

Table 3: *TQM tools and CAF and political support*

No formal policy (1)	Decreasing (2)	Constant (9)	Increasing (14)
Ireland	Estonia, Latvia	Germany, Denmark, Finland, France, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Slovakia, Norway	Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Spain, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovenia, Romania, UK

Source: Staes & Thijs (2005a).

Table 4: *The use of CAF in different countries*

More than 30 applications	Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden
Fewer than 30 applications	Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovakia, UK, Romania

Source: Staes & Thijs (2005a).

vidual organizations have introduced their good practices and the central government has adopted some. But the government itself (or ministries for that matter) has not been the promoter of those measures, merely supporter. This is evident also from the analysis of the use of quality management tools, performed in 2005 within the framework of EIPA for the entire EU (see Tables 3-4 and Figure 3).

Because in Slovenia development is left in the hands of individual institutions, it can be noticed that the development of quality management differs significantly depending on each individual public administration institution. Therefore, progress is distinctive in administrative units (local-level state administration), while there are very few projects and processes at the level of ministries or social institutes, and even fewer in the municipal administration. Of course such disharmony negatively affects those organi-

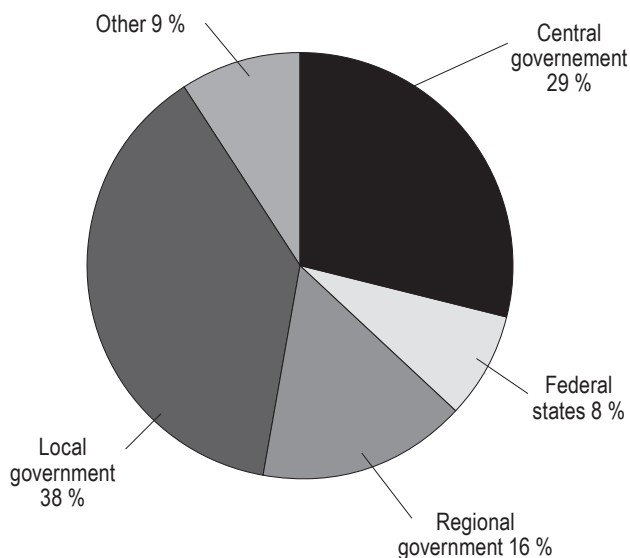
zations that can show good results. The problem of inertia applies especially to the ministries which should take care not only of their own quality management, but also of the quality management in dozens or even hundreds of (administrative) organizations under their authority (education, health, culture, justice).

In order to gain insight into the current situation, the Ministry of Public Administration conducted a study in 2007 on the use of different tools/projects for the development of quality management in public administration. The study was indirectly related to the project ‘Development and Establishment of the System for Assessment of Excellence in Public Administration’. The analysis refers to the following entities:

- Within the state administration: ministries (15), bodies within these ministries (approx. 50), administrative units (58), government offices (16);
- Local municipal administrations (210);
- Major state social institutes performing mostly administrative tasks, i.e. social work centres (62), the Pension and Disability Insurance Institute, the Health Insurance Institute, the Employment Institute, and the Institute of Education.

The focus of the research was on a review of activities related to quality and business excellence in separate organizations, on the use of tools and indicators of effectiveness and efficiency in monitoring and improving performance, and on concrete projects in progress and planned activities. Different endeavours were reported by: 9 ministries (of 15, i.e. 60%) and 19 bodies within the ministries (approximately one third of all bodies); 9 government offices (of 16, i.e. 56%); 47 administrative units (of 58, i.e. 81%); 19 municipalities (of 210, i.e. only 9%, the majority of which (11) emphasized that there are no activities going on in this area); 18 social work centres (of 62, i.e. only 29%, the majority of which are still in the phase of planning to perform the CAF self-assessment); and all four major institutes. The responses show that administrative organizations rely mostly on tools verified elsewhere:

Figure 3: *Division of respondents by level of authority*



Source: Staes & Thijs (2005).

- Self-assessment using the CAF model (approximately 80 self-assessments since 2002 planned by the organizations themselves, and approximately the same number by 2008, implemented for the first time or repeated. Some of the existing CAF model users intend to switch to other tools);
- The ISO standards (apart from current owners maintaining the standard, and those that plan to obtain it by 2009);
- Inclusion into the PRSPO procedures (approximately 10-15 administrative organizations, including police administrations or the Health Insurance Institute in addition to administrative units);
- Assessment of customer or user satisfaction, but mostly only on the basis of the government decree prescribing an annual poll and monthly quality barometer (some institutions do not even comply with this decree). Some organizations (mostly administrative units) also analyze employee satisfaction;
- Participation in the annual "Dobre prakse" (Good Practice) competition or the "Zlata lastovka" (Golden Swallow) award competition, (co)financed by the Ministry of Public Administration;
- Individual projects for identification of the effectiveness and efficiency of operation of certain very specialized organizations;
- Among especially interesting projects that need to be pointed out is one featuring the development of indicators of effectiveness, efficiency and quality of inspection services through the inter-sector Inspection Council (in its initial, pilot phase in 2007);
- Very few organization have formed their own strategy - based on the national strategy - such as the Quality Management Strategy of the Statistical Office of the RS 2006-2008;
- Several organizations stated that they wanted to take part in the national administrative external assessment of quality or excellence using the CAF model in combination with standards of transaction with customers prescribed by the Decree on Administrative Operation. In 2007 more than 25 organizations applied for pilot assessment, but only 8 were selected due to limited resources;
- More than half of the administrative organizations have no special quality manager, although this does not apply to administrative units. There are contact persons who are in charge of separate projects.

5 Conclusions

On the basis of the situation in the Slovenian public sector, assessed through various analyses and by comparison with the situation in selected EU states, we can say that the Slovenian public administration still has to face many challenges despite following European trends. The unused

potential for the development of quality management is especially evident in the municipalities.

In 2007, about 80 users of the CAF model were registered in Slovenia. With regard to the number of public sector organizations and with regard to the size of the state, this is a relatively high number - much higher than in Austria, for instance. With regard to the effectiveness of the regional project and with the purpose of gaining international experience, it would be useful if the Slovenian public administration organization participated in projects of regional cooperation and comparison. In the area of excellence assessment in the public sector, as of 2007 Slovenia had not developed a system of external assessment such as Belgium's or Italy's, which was the goal of the 2007 project 'Development and Establishment of the System for Assessment of Excellence in Public Administration'. Usually the assessments taking place every two years are the most effective. Belgium is a role model for Slovenia with respect to the formation of the best practice database, as well as in case of the CAF model assessment in e-form, which is also known in Denmark. The experiences acquired by Belgium and other countries showed Slovenia that after CAF model self-assessment is established, it is possible to take further steps and create basic conditions for external assessments and comparisons through confirmation of the results, taking into account a detailed system of assessment measurement and methods. This applies first to the national, and later to the European level.

From the methodological point of view, it needs to be emphasized that optimum results for improving the performance of public organizations can be achieved through the use of different, integral quality development tools. For the mid-term time horizon, both self-assessment and internal assessments must be combined with external ones. When designing external assessment it would be sensible - due to Slovenia's integration into the EU administration space - to design a system compatible with those existing in the EU. In any case, the systematic development of quality management cannot be expected at the level of separate administrative organizations. Here the declarative and the executive support of national institutions is needed. In Slovenia, this means primarily the support of the Ministry of Public Administration and of the representative municipalities associations.

References:

1. Bugarič, B. (2004). O prenosu pristojnosti z države na paradržavne in nedržavne organizacije: 'razdržavljanje' države? *Podjetje in delo* 34 (6-7): 1394-1402.
2. Dachs, H., Gerlich, P., Gottweiss, H., Horner, F., Kramer, H., Lauber, V., Müller, W.C., Talos, E. (1998). *Priročnik o političnem sistemu Avstrije*. Ljubljana: DZS.
3. Engel, C. (2003). *Quality Management Tools in CEE Candidate Countries - Current Practice, Needs and Expectations* Maastricht: EIPA.

4. Ferfila, B. (ed.) (2007). *Ekonomski vidiki javnega sektorja*, Fakulteta za družbene vede, Ljubljana.
 5. Flynn, N. (1993). *Public Sector Management*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
 6. Kern Pipan, K., Krebs, A., Leon, L. (2006a). *Priznanje RS za poslovno odličnost, državna nagrada za kakovost*. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za visoko šolstvo, znanost in tehnologijo, Urad RS za meroslovje.
 7. Kern Pipan, K., Leon, L. (2006). Slovenska nagrada za kakovost (PRSP) in izbrani primeri evropskih (nacionalnih) nagrad za kakovost. *Management sprememb*. Portorož, 15-17 March.
 8. Kovač, P. (2002). Zakaj in kako uvesti Evropski model kakovosti Common Assessment Framework - CAF in tudi v slovensko upravo. V: *Zbornik referatov konference Od ideje o kakovosti do dobrih praks v javni upravi*. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za notranje zadeve.
 9. Kovač, P. (2003). Evropski upravni prostor - realnost ali mit. *Uprava* (2): 16-33.
 10. Kovač, P., Kern Pipan, K. (2005). Celovito izboljševanje javne uprave z integracijo različnih pristopov na temelju modela odličnosti EFQM. V: *Zbornik povzetkov Sodobna javna uprava - Konferenca Ministrstva za javno upravo*. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za javno upravo.
 11. Pollitt, C., Talbot, C. (2004). *Unbundled Government, A critical analysis of the global trend to agencies, quangos and contractualisation*. London: Routledge.
 12. Verbič, B. (1994). *Dobrodošli med najboljšimi*. Ljubljana: Gospodarski vestnik.
- Internet and other Sources:**
1. Bellini, G. (2006). Direttiva sulla qualità nella pubblica amministrazione, Ministero Funzione Pubblica. Available at: <http://www.altalex.com/index.php?idstr=33&idnot=35826> (retrieved in March 2007).
 2. CAF 2006 Brochure. Available at: http://www.eipa.eu/files/File/CAF/Brochure2006/English_2006.pdf (retrieved in July 2007).
 3. CAF Regional Benchmarking Project. Available at: http://www.4qconference.org/liitetiedostot/caf_presentations/CAF2.2_Kallinger.pdf (retrieved in June 2007).
 4. <http://eipa.nl> (16.8.2007).
 5. CAF works (2006). Available at: http://www.eipa.eu/files/repository/product/CAFworks_EN.pdf (retrieved in May 2007).
 6. http://europa.eu.int/comm/economy_finance/epc/epc_countryexaminations_en.htm (retrieved in August 2007).
 7. European Foundation for Quality Management – EFQM. Available at: <http://www.efqm.org> (retrieved in August 2007).
 8. <http://www.mju.si> (retrieved in August 2007).
 9. Info on 7th Speyer Quality Competition. Available at: <http://www.hfv-speyer.de/Qualitaetswettbewerb/Materialien/Bewerberinformation%202005.pdf> (retrieved in March 2007).
 10. International Speyer Quality Competition. Available at: http://www.bundeskanzleramt.at/site/cob__23840/5729/default.aspx (30.7.2007).
 11. KVIK Manual (2006). Available at: http://www.eipa.eu/CAF/CAF_2006/Brochures/Danish_2006.pdf (retrieved in July 2007).
 12. Služba Vlade RS za zakonodajo, Register predpisov Republike Slovenije. Available at: <http://zakonodaja.gov.si> (retrieved in August 2007).
 13. Staes, Patrick, Thijs, Nick (2005). Quality Management on the European Agenda. Available at: http://www.eipa.nl/CAF/Articles/scop05_1_6.pdf (retrieved in July 2007).
 14. Staes, Patrick, Thijs, Nick (2005a). Report on the State of Affairs of the CAF after Five Years. Available at: http://www.eipa.nl/CAF/Articles/Scope2005_3_6.pdf (retrieved in July 2007).
 15. Strategija obvladovanja kakovosti Statističnega urada RS 2006-2008. Available at: http://www.stat.si/doc/drzstat/kakovost/Strategija_2006-2008.doc (30.7.2007).
 16. Strategija razvoja Slovenije 2006 do 2013. Available at: http://www.slovenijajutri.gov.si/fileadmin/urednik/dokumenti/strategija_razvoja_slovenije.pdf (retrieved in August 2007).
 17. The modernization of the public sector, Ministry of Finance. Available at: <http://www.fm.dk/1024/visArtikel.asp?artikelID=3716> (retrieved in July 2007).
 18. The Scoring System, Formez - Internal material.
 19. Urad RS za meroslovje. *Priznanje Republike Slovenije za poslovno odličnost*. Available at: www.mirs.si/PRSP/prspo.htm (retrieved in August 2007).