

## **A Decade of Quality Management System at the Maribor Public Library**

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**Abstract:** In 2005, the Maribor Public Library, the second largest public library in Slovenia, was the first Slovenian public library that introduced its library operations in accordance with the requirements of the international standard Quality Management System ISO 9001: 2000. The paper presents the findings of a ten-year research. Three evaluation methods of the quality management system according to ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 9001:2008 were applied in the library operations as recommended: internal audit, external audit and management review. The effects of adopted and fulfilled recommendations are presented. An overview of the results also highlights those recommendations that have not been included in the library operations and the reasons for such a decision. The data is presented qualitatively and quantitatively. On this basis, an analysis of the impact of library management is carried out in accordance with the requirements of the international standard Quality Management System ISO 9001:2008 and eight management principles that are the basis of that standard. In the last part of the article, the orientation of the Maribor Public Library by using the international standard Information and documentation -- Methods and procedures for assessing the impact of libraries SIST ISO 16439:2014(E) is suggested. The article also presents those recommendations of the evaluation method of quality management system in accordance with ISO 9001:2008 (internal audit, external audit and management review) which have guided the library in the past five years within the external assessment to demonstrate its impact on the environment.

**Keywords:** ISO 9001: 2000, ISO 9001:2008, Maribor Public Library, internal audit, external audit, management review, SIST ISO 16439:2014(E),

### **1. Introduction**

The Maribor Public Library is the second largest public library in Slovenia. As a central regional library, it provides public library service to more than 230.000 residents in 22 municipalities. In 2005, the Maribor Public Library received the quality certificate as the first public library in Slovenia. It certified that the Library operates a Quality Management System which complies with the

requirements of ISO 9001:2000. The International Standard includes two tools of evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of management, i. e. the audit and management review. The audits check the compliance of performed processes with documented procedures. The latter can be written or not, or they can be of external origin (e. g. legislation) or a part of internal organization of work. The paper will focus on the recommendations of internal and external audits, including a presentation of the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the internal audit recommendations.

## **2. The internal audit in the Maribor Public Library**

In the Maribor Public Library, the internal audits are conducted at planned intervals. The schedule provides information on the dates when the audit is carried out, whereas the programme outlines the audit scope. The International Standard requirements are to be met, therefore, the basic processes, including Management Responsibility, Resource Management, and Measurement, analysis and improvement of the Quality Management System are reviewed annually. During the period 2005 – 2009, the internal audits were carried out in the whole organization. Thus, all organizational units and libraries in the library network have been assessed. There are 20 libraries and units at 18 physical locations. On the basis of the external audit method, which is carried out on a sample, the internal auditing was conducted on a sample in the period 2009 – 2015. The process-based approach is essential for internal auditing. The sample includes services (e. g. bibliopedagogic activities for youth, reference services) and the libraries in the network. Which services and which libraries are included in the review is largely dependent on the performance in the past year and the results of previous audits. The guidance of the Standard to perform sampling of each organizational unit every two to three years has been followed. In this decade, the auditors discovered some nonconformities and obtained recommendations from library staff, however, they did not find any major divergences regarding the requirements of the Standard with respect to the management system. The internal audits have encouraged the Library to create its own, company-specific ISO 9001 documentation and they contributed to the employees' understanding of the purpose of document control and how to control the documents in accordance with ISO 9001.

## **3. Figures and content**

Throughout the research period, the internal audits were carried out by 17 trained internal auditors. From 2005 to 2013, there were 427 audits, and the largest number of audits per auditor was 38. On the average, each auditor carried out 25 audits, or 2.7 audits per year. The maximum number of audits per auditor in a year was 10 audits. Five employees have been in the team of internal auditors since 2004, and 13 are active internal auditors in 2015. During the whole period, there were 112 internal audit recommendations, and 75 were effectively implemented. 12 internal audit recommendations were partially implemented and 8 remained outstanding, for a number of reasons. Some are

external factors, including inadequate provision of funds to perform regular tasks (e. g. premises maintenance), and also internal factors. Among the latter, it is of vital importance to define the responsibilities, authorities and competences of the employees who are responsible for the recommendation implementation.

There were 73 external audit recommendations and 55 were implemented, 6 were partially implemented and 6 remained outstanding. The overview of the internal and external audit recommendations implementation shows that in some cases there was no follow up. Therefore, the data was checked in the relevant library documents. For 22 recommendations arising from audits, there was no monitoring and reporting process (16 from the internal audit and 6 from the external audit). An analysis of the audit findings included the content of recommendations and the conformity with the Standard. The maximum number of audit recommendations (46) refers to the documentation requirements, and the second highest number of recommendations (15) relates to the compliance with the requirements of Responsibility, Authority and Communication, followed by 13 recommendations regarding the requirement compliance on Analysis of Data, and the rest of recommendations are in all other Standard requirements. During the ten-year period of auditing library operation, all processes were audited to ensure compliance with the requirements. The vast majority of recommendations refer to the implementation of the documentation requirements; therefore, it is interesting that it is precisely this area which is recognized as one of the most visible effects of the establishment and maintenance of a Quality Management System. When setting up a Quality Management System, we revised and digitized 150 documents. Thus, a uniform review of all the documents used at work was established. In the following years, 15 new documents were created and 19 were revised according to the internal or external audit recommendations. All documents are now readily accessible in a digital format to employees via the internal network. Annual library reports and plans, and the internal audit records are not included in this set though. The documented quality management system provided that all documents are connected within topics and ensured a complete transparency of all valid documents in the library operation. An overview of the results over a longer period of time revealed the significance of the work done. It is presented by the numbers, but to an even greater extent, the content is an indicator hidden behind these numbers. Without establishing a quality management system, there would not be such a complete and clearly arranged documentation. However, this is still no guarantee that all employees are familiar with these documents and use them regularly at work. A methodological and substantive review of the recommendations proved that the majority of them are an evidence of conformity. But even when it is written there is no assurance that it will be executed in practice.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The auditor rotation is of great importance for the internal audit implementation. Within the framework of quality management system, the internal auditing is

one of the official means for senior management to communicate with employees and vice-versa. The meetings of employees and their participation is also essential. At the Maribor Public Library, the internal auditors are called motivators of quality work and they have been chosen at the beginning of the project. The selection of internal auditor was not based on the formal criteria (education, length of service, job category). Besides the personal attributes, knowledge and skills defined by the Standard, the criteria especially important to us included loyalty to the library, dedication to work and a positive attitude to work. An additional issue was the requirement of the standard (ISO 9001:2000, 2000, p. 28) that auditors do not audit their own work. This means that a librarian at circulation desk audits a colleague at circulation desk at another location, or a worker in the accounting office or in the acquisition department. If you do not know something, it is difficult to ask questions. However, one of the criteria for internal auditors is thus achieved: the independence. When you rely on the ISO requirements, you can address basic principles of business that have to be met. Thus, you discover if procedures are set simple or complex or if they are even necessary. In addition, you check if they conform to the planned and written arrangements. Doubt on the justification of auditing co-workers had an additional positive effect: an insight into the user that you encounter every day, in his/her attitude toward the library. How much does he/she know it, how much is he/she able to put the right questions, how much is he/she familiar with what he/she can demand and expect from the library?

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