

The Importance of Implementing Quality Systems in the Economic Development of the Constanta Metropolitan Area

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Abstract

In the context of global economic development, the issue of convergence of actions at local communities, regional structures and national entities, targeting a sustainable development, is becoming crucial. This article highlights the contribution of citizens and local authorities to finding new and creative ways to cope with the pressures they face, given the climate of crisis in recent years. The paper also highlights the importance of implementing quality management systems in the activity of central and local public administration. Local communities need to identify new tools and strategies like quality management ones in order to determine collaboration between citizens, institutions and representatives of different sectors of activity, in order to plan the future of the community. All these elements change both the nature of the problems at the local level and the way in which they are fixed.

Key words: metropolitan area, sustainable development, local community, economic development strategies

J.E.L. classification: H11, M14, M20, M38, O11, O20.

1. Introduction

However, there are factors that limit the possibilities for economic growth, one of the most important being the degradation of the environment, having as a direct effect the decrease of natural resources and, implicitly, of the quality of life. Common successfully measures like gross domestic product or the consumer price index, encourage consumption or waste of resources to create new jobs. Producers and traders make the profit based on the prices, the profit thus resulting not reflecting the social, environmental or health costs that society has to bear.(Colas,2004)

The introduction of quality assurance in the public administration sector implies a greater degree of difficulty. First of all, in the private enterprise, the estimation of the yield is materialized according to the economic benefit obtained and the number of customers. However, this perspective is not valid in public institutions, which do not pursue economic benefit, but the satisfaction of citizens, the community or certain consumers of social services or public interest. Secondly, the concept of customer, as it is understood in the private domain, does not have the same

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Sustainable economic development and community

Sustainable development is one of the most widely used concepts in recent years. The phrase is used worldwide by politicians, scientists, business leaders, or nonprofits. However, the full significance of the concept escapes many of those who should contribute to its implementation.

Growth is the principle on which the states of the world have largely based their organization over the last hundred years. Human activity has expanded continuously, economic growth has become the goal of every society, be it rich or poor. People are struggling to raise their living standards, politicians promise faster growth, business performance is appreciated by their growth rate. However, there are factors that limit the possibilities for economic growth, one of the most important being the degradation of the environment, having as a direct effect the decrease of natural resources and, implicitly, of the quality of life.

Recognizing the existence of the limits of growth requires reorienting the manner of action, for all kind of activity, from a quantitative point of view to a qualitative one, described by sustainable development. In a sustainable society, development is based on human-induced qualitative improvement and the rational use of resources to the detriment of a quantitative increase in resource-intensive and energy-intensive activities.(Hossu et al,2004)

The concept of sustainable development is inextricably linked to that of life and includes the achievement of three goals: economic well-being, social stability and environmental protection. In this regard:

- economic well-being aims at generating a maximum income stream by maintaining over time the capital that produced these benefits;
- the stability of social and cultural systems ensures the condition of human capital necessary for any type of development, including by reducing destructive conflicts;
- from the point of view of environmental protection, sustainable development aims to preserve the biological and physical stability of natural systems.

For most community leaders, the idea of sustainable development is still a novelty, and many who have heard of the concept consider it abstract and theoretical, with no practical value. For sustainable development to achieve its goal, the concept will need to be integrated into community performance planning and measurement systems. Most of the time, when we refer to the term community, we think of spatial delimitations such as village - town or neighborhood or neighborhood. The community can be defined according to other criteria, other than the geographical-spatial ones. We can define communities based on linguistic, religious, or cultural distinctions. Each of us can be part of several communities at the same time. Also, we need to keep in mind that not everyone who populates a particular area automatically belongs to a community. The type of relationships that an individual has with others (emotional ties to places) define for each individual his or her membership or non-belonging to a community.

The community can be defined, more simply, as a group whose members have certain ties that associate or bring them together in a permanent way.(Colas,2004)

Community development must be transformed into a process in which a community can become more responsible, while being able to better organize and plan its resources. Community development is the process by which one tries to change the conditions and factors that act at the community level so that, as a result of these changes, the community registers high standards of living. (Hossu et al,2004)

By community development we will understand the planned evolution of all important aspects at the level of a community (economic, social, environmental and cultural), evolution in which collective actions can be recorded, situations in which members of a community act together to solve common problems. Local development initiatives may differ in scope, depending on the size of the initiative group or the objectives it proposes. (Hossu et al,2004)

Community development can be defined as the conscious process of social interaction and that technique specific to social assistance which have at least one of the following objectives:

- addressing basic needs and maintaining a balance between the needs and resources of a community;
- helping people to deal more effectively with their problems and goals, by supporting them to develop, strengthen and maintain their qualities of participation, self-control and cooperation;
- obtaining changes in community and group relations as well as at the level of community decision-making centers.(Alexiu et al,2001)

Community development is done by people. Community development practitioners are involved in organizing meetings and conducting community-level research to identify problems, identify urban endowments, locate resources, analyze local power structures, assess population needs, and investigate other issues. Community development must take place in practice as a cyclical iterative process that includes research, reflection and action.

Given the above, we can say that the practice of community development can be described as a process of solving problems with clear steps and necessary to achieve a desired goal in preventing or ameliorating community problems.

2.2. The need for quality management systems

The role and main importance of quality and quality management for public administration stems from the link between these concepts and the satisfaction of citizens or consumers of public services. If in the past the purpose of public administration was to provide a number of services of public interest to citizens, being considered the main provider of services of public interest, now the purpose of public institutions is to provide quality public services, services that through the high level of quality lead to a high degree of satisfaction of the needs of citizens or consumers of public services.

Therefore, quality, respectively quality management, can be considered the basis for ensuring or increasing the satisfaction of citizens or consumers of public services. Growth is the principle on which the states of the world have largely based their organization over the last hundred years. Human activity has expanded continuously, economic growth has become the goal of every society, be it rich or poor. People are struggling to raise their living standards, politicians promise faster growth, business performance is appreciated by their growth rate.

3. Research methodology

The approach we chose in writing this paper is basically an analysis and an overview as well in what concerns the role of public administration in starting and supporting actions at the level of local communities in order to ensure a sustainable development. Our research is mainly a qualitative one and uses data concerning the Integrated Development Plan for the Constanța Metropolitan Area. This study tends also to fill the gap in understanding the challenges of staged implementation of quality assurance systems in public authorities and institutions and methods of observation and description were used to identify the opportunities related to this objective. The documentary research allowed the collection of information and represented both a theoretical support and a basis for investigation.

4. Findings

4.1. Economic development strategy of the growth pole of the Constanța Metropolitan Area analysis

Born from the need to evolve at the level of similar European settlements, the Constanța Metropolitan Area is established following a partnership concluded between 14 localities.

Located in southeastern Romania, in Dobrogea, on the Romanian Black Sea strip, the Constanta Metropolitan Area has a population of about 500,000 inhabitants, being the second largest urban agglomeration in the country, after the capital Bucharest and the second largest contributor to the National Budget. The localities affiliated to the Constanța Metropolitan Area are concentrated around the nucleus that determines the interdependence processes, respectively the municipality of Constanța, the most important tourist city of the country. With a history of 2500 years, Constanța has developed as a commercial hub between east and west. A large part of the city's industrial and commercial activities are served by the Port of Constanta, the most important harbour on the Black Sea and the fourth most important in Europe.

Also, the Constanța Metropolitan Area has a multitude of tourist objectives combining historical vestiges with the creations of the contemporary world. Benefiting from the advantage of settling on the Black Sea Coast, the tourism activity is an important orientation inside the Metropolitan Area. Within the Metropolitan Area of Constanța there are 5 resorts: Năvodari, Mamaia, Eforie Nord, Eforie Sud and Techirghiol that cater to all age groups and the most demanding tastes, providing

extensive beaches, fine sand, leisure areas, amusement parks, clubs, restaurants and ample accommodation in treatment facilities and hotels. The development vision of the National Growth Pole - Constanța considers the imposition of the Constanța Metropolitan Area as a competitive multifunctional center of Romania and the main economic polarizer in the Black Sea region, taking into account the sustainable development of the entire area and reducing disparities between emerging localities.

The aim is to transform Constanța into a European metropolis, an expanding tourist area, with a rapidly growing economy and a high standard of living for all inhabitants.

The strategic objectives of the Constanța National Growth Pole were established in accordance with: increasing the economic and social role by adopting a polycentric approach, which would stimulate the balanced development of Constanța and 14 localities in the Metropolitan Area; improving accessibility inside and outside Constanța and its area of influence; a more important contribution of tourism to the development of the National Growth Pole Constanta, increasing the quality of social infrastructure, increasing competitiveness in order to stimulate the local business environment.

During this period, sustainable territorial development and consolidation of zonal structures is a priority, being absolutely necessary a sustainable approach to all development processes, intense cooperation between administrative-territorial units at the metropolitan level to meet the multiple challenges of the transition period. decentralization.

The balanced development of the Metropolitan Area requires a joint planning, an active collaboration and the initiation of a common decision-making process within the local councils in order to: strengthening the roles of the administrative-territorial units; responsible management of natural resources and environmental protection; balancing and increasing the pace of economic development; structuring and developing communities; developing the cultural identity of communities; developing the integrated accessibility of localities; ensuring a high-performance and competitive public administration and related public services; improving the living conditions of people and human communities; promoting information and communication technology; protection and enhancement of the built and natural cultural heritage; controlled expansion of built-up areas; protecting localities against natural disasters; increasing access to resources, namely government funds, European funds and international funds.

The Integrated Development Plan of the National Growth Pole Constanța represents the beginning of the cooperation of the metropolitan partners, in order to integrate the projects and sectorial approaches at the level of the whole area, in order to maximize the impact of the invested public funds, for the benefit of the partner communities.

4.2. The structure of the Integrated Development Plan of the Constanța National Growth Pole

The Integrated Development Plan of the Constanta National Growth Pole was structured according to a clear and logical flow of information starting from the existing situation in the county, geographically relevant, and reaching the implementation and monitoring measures.

The planning process is structured in five main parts as follows: ([http://old.fonduri-ue.ro/res/filepicker_users/cd25a597fd-62/Doc_prog/CSNR/1_CSNR_2007-2013_\(eng.\).pdf](http://old.fonduri-ue.ro/res/filepicker_users/cd25a597fd-62/Doc_prog/CSNR/1_CSNR_2007-2013_(eng.).pdf))

- auditing or evaluating the existing socio-economic situation, the environment and the level of technical and social equipment;
- development strategy that includes elements of vision, objectives, strategic, policies and programs and priorities;
- spatial profile and areas of intervention;
- action plan;
- the management of the implementation of the integrated plan.

The main objectives of the Integrated Development Plan of the National Growth Pole Constanța are as follows:

- Strategic objective 1: The constance of the residents and its goals are: improving the living conditions of the inhabitants and increasing the attractiveness of the area, so that it becomes a pleasant place to work, study, live; access of all inhabitants to a quality infrastructure (urban, basic public services, transport infrastructure, communications, etc.); access to decent, safe housing, access

to health services, education and culture services and quality social services in a sustainable environment.

- Strategic objective 2: The constance of tourists and aims to create a maritime tourist area, attractive and competitive for Romanian and foreign tourists by:its geographical position with a great tourist potential;the status of the most important tourist center of the country;the possibility of practicing different forms of tourism: seaside, spa and leisure, cultural, religious, ethnic, ecotourism, business tourism and congresses, etc.,exploiting the favorable natural potential of the city of Constanța and its area of influence;capitalizing on the cultural, historical and archaeological heritage;launching new tourist products meant to perpetuate the interest on the area throughout the year;sustainable development of tourism.All this will lead to the raising of the coastal tourist offer to western standards, to the revitalization of all the resorts that are part of the Constanța Metropolitan Area and in particular to the recovery of the status of Mamaia resort as pearl of the Romanian river.

- Strategic Objective 3: Investor constance, meaning increasing the long-term competitiveness of the local economy aims at sustainable economic development, achieving a stable and predictable business environment and creating new jobs by: increasing of foreign direct investments, but also domestic ones, especially in the branches with high economic growth potential;encouraging the tertiary sector and those economic activities that generate high added value;the development of high-performance interconnection infrastructures at regional, national and European level, coherently ranked (maritime / river / air);the development of cross-border cooperation within the Black Sea Euroregion and the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border cooperation, the development of human resources, the increase of the employment rate in highly specialized trades and professions and the use of human resources as a factor of economic development.

4.3. The implementation of quality management in the public administration

The implementation of quality management is an expected result of the Strategy for consolidating public administration 2014-2020 (SCAP 2014 - 2020) and included actions for the development and sustainable use of quality management in public administration in Romania.

Topics on quality management addressed in assessing the needs of stakeholders in the use of quality management systems and tools, public authorities and institutions in Romania addressed issues related to: the inclusion of quality management systems and tools by public authorities and institutions; identifying ways to consolidate quality management in the organizational culture of public institutions.

Other recommendations in the analysis that can support the efficient use and management of quality management systems and tools were:

-Establishment of a central structure, for example within the Government working structures, with attributions regarding the organization of the process of promoting the quality management systems and tools in Romania and the coordination of the training activities at national level;

-Implementation of actions to promote the systems of quality management tools, with emphasis on the value of the addition that they can generate within the authorities and public institutions;

-Training and organization of the staff of the authorities and public institutions for the use of quality management;

-Providing support for all categories of authorities and public institutions for the implementation of quality management systems.

In order to ensure and strengthen the quality management of public administration, were included in the strategic documents that were issued certain coherent measures, especially regarding the improvement of the level of quality in public services,as follows:

-Monitoring and evaluation of services and professional activity of officials based on quality standards;

-Rationalization of the number of civil servants by categories in accordance with the established quality standards;

- Introduction of strategic planning for each public authority depending on the services provided;

- Motivating employees to increase quality and stimulate innovation;

-Introduction of the Citizens' Quality Charter, in order to introduce and evaluate quality standards for public services;

- Institutional self-assessment based on an assessment guide;

-Public interventions for the development and increase of the efficiency of electronic public services;

-Development of an integrated system for issuing documents and renewing marital status.

Thus, it can be stated that the most important objectives regarding quality management in public administration are in this context: reducing bureaucracy, professionalizing the civil service for introducing quality in public services, providing highly professional public services, modernizing institutional structures, developing an oriented administration. to the citizen. (Matei et al., 2011)

4.4. Analysis

The management of the Consultative Process of the Integrated Development Plan of the Constanța Metropolitan Area, aimed at the following elements:

(<https://www.ziuaconstanta.ro/english/latest/public-debate-on-environment-report-for-metropolitan-area-72141-266717.html>)

- Representativeness: the consultation involved the interaction in a legal and institutional framework between decision-makers and stakeholders - stakeholders. The consultation was carried out at administrative level, with the main stakeholders, professional associations, employers' and trade unions, decentralized services, regional development agency, non-governmental organizations, representatives of academia and scientific research and business; at the political level, by consulting and informing the 14 mayors of the Constanța Metropolitan Area and the local councils; at the civic level, with the citizens of the city and with the representatives of the civil society, in some public debates.

- Ensuring the representation of diversity (socio-demographic, residential, political orientation, gender) In order to represent all those potentially affected by the proposed public policy). The identification and analysis of all groups and organizations interested in the process of elaboration and implementation of the Integrated Development Plan of the National Growth Pole Constanta was considered; any risks to those concerned as a result of the implementation of the newly proposed policy; as well as their active involvement in the process of elaboration and implementation of the Integrated Development Plan of the National Growth Pole Constanța¹⁰.

- Transparency - decisional transparency was a key ingredient in the consultative process, including in the process of identifying problem areas within metropolitan areas, solving problems and formulating the vision for the development of the National Growth Pole Constanta and its area of influence. .

- Communication or information - was a basic tool for ensuring a quality consultative process and took into account the good information of all those potentially affected by the proposed new public policy.

- Facilitation and moderation - the consultation process included a series of actions that materialized through an organized public dialogue.

- The moderators of this dialogue were professionals with expertise in this field (Executive Director of the Programs and Development Department of Constanta City Hall, Coordinator of Strategies and Programs of the Constanta Metropolitan Area, project team involved in developing the Integrated Development Plan of the Constanta Metropolitan Area)⁹ .

- Post-consultation - included post-consultation reports / questionnaires that led to increased confidence in the usefulness of the proposed public policy and in public administration.

The implementation of quality management systems in public administration has become in the current economic and social context an undisputed necessity and involves the use of significant financial, technological and human resources and the promotion of quality management systems / tools within organizations, along with motivation staff for involvement in this endeavor, in the conditions of a wide access to information and an efficient communication.(Matei et all, 2011)

5. Conclusions

The recent adoption of the Integrated Development Plan of the Constanța Metropolitan Area, as a result of the designation of Constanța as a national growth pole, has generated the opportunity to finance important infrastructure and local development projects through the Structural Funds.

The development vision of the National Growth Pole - Constanța considers the imposition of the Constanța metropolitan area as a competitive multifunctional center of Romania and the main economic polarizer in the Black Sea region, from the sustainable development point of view of the entire area and reducing current development disparities among the 14 localities that make up the metropolitan area.

Constanta has all the arguments to become a European metropolis, an expanding tourist area, with a rapidly growing economy and a high standard of living for all its inhabitants.

The traditional economic profile of the Constanța Growth Pole focuses both on the specific economic activities of the port and the tertiary sector, as well as on tourism. At the same time, its geostrategic position gives the Constanța Growth Pole important economic opportunities in terms of the exploitation of hydrocarbon resources in the Black Sea basin, as well as the wind energy potential of the area. Another economic side with an important growth potential in the next period is the agri-food industry, encouraged by the fact that the Constanța Metropolitan Area, located in an important agricultural basin, is a significant market, especially during the summer season, as well as a gateway for the export of these products to other markets.

In this context, the unitary development of public infrastructure in the Constanta Metropolitan Area is an important goal in order to reduce development disparities between the 14 localities of the Growth Pole and also aims to send message to potential investors in this region. in the sense that the development of the area will be carried out in an integrated way, based on common strategies, objectives and action plans. Also, the delimitation of the main functional areas at the level of the metropolitan area will stimulate an unprecedented investment influx in this area and will distribute in a balanced way, at the level of the entire metropolitan territory, the current investment pressure currently existing in Constanța.

Analyzing the list of projects proposed by the Constanța Metropolitan Area within the Integrated Development Plan, we find that a significant part of them is addressed to the tourism field. We also note that private investment in tourism continues to exist, despite the economic crisis.

In the context in which, during the peak period of the summer season, the occupancy rate in Mamaia resort approaches 100%, the real stake for the development of tourism and, implicitly, of the local economy is the extension of the season and the increase of occupancy and number of tourists visiting the resort and the city in the off-season.

In order to achieve this goal, new tourist products are needed, regardless of the weather situation. Leisure and leisure activities during the day should be developed, especially sports and water activities. Another important sub-domain is the cultural and historical tourism, and the peninsular area of the municipality has in this sense an important potential, still untapped.

Also, considering the economic scope of Constanta and the Constanta Metropolitan Area, another insufficiently exploited niche is represented by business tourism. In this sense, in addition to the recently developed private facilities, there is an acute need to develop public infrastructure for conference and congress halls, as is the case in most European metropolises.

Most of these ideas are reflected in the list of projects in the Integrated Development Plan, and the medium-term development of the Constanța Metropolitan Area depends on the success of the absorption of European funds.

The first set of quality standards applied in public administration was ISO 9000 series, followed by ISO 14000 series environmental standards and technical regulations in the field of public administration, ISO 17020 and 17025. The application of ISO standards is extremely useful to organizations where there is a lack of transparency in written rules, structures and procedures.

The first important steps in introducing quality management systems in the Romanian public administration were made in 2004, when CAF was applied in a pilot phase within two directorates of the Ministry of Administration and Interior and the National Agency of Civil Servants. has been extended to all ministries, prefectures, county councils, etc. from Romania.

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