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UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA | PORTO
Faculdade de Economia e Gestão

Centro de Estudos de Gestão
e Economia Aplicada

4th Quality Conference Impact Assessment Study

November 2007

**Study conducted by the Catholic University of Portugal
(Porto) for the Directorate General of the Administration
and Public Employment (DGAEP), under the Portuguese
Presidency of the EU**

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Report

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Executive Summary

This report presents the results of a survey of the participants in the 4th Quality Conference (4QC). The survey assessed the extent to which the participation in the conference contributed to inspiring change/improvement and to the implementation of best practices in Public Services.

Main Survey Results

- The typical Public sector 4QC participant is predominantly a Manager, belonging to a medium-large organisation of the Central Administration, having a reasonably long length of employment in the organisation, exhibiting a balanced spread of age and gender, and being a first-time participant in a QC.
- Within the Public sector, the most frequently cited reasons for participation in the 4QC, by decreasing order, were: to learn about best practices (cited by 83% of respondents), get inspiration for change (64%), build networks (43%), seek professional development (40%), represent the organisation (35%), get advice to implement a project (30%) and active involvement in the conference (23%).
- Within this sector, the reasons for participating in the 4QC are similar for Managers and Employees as well as for respondents from Central, Regional and Local administration levels. As we move from the Central to the Local and European administration levels participants display more focused motives for participating.
- Public sector participants appear to have a moderately favourable assessment of the conference's contribution to creating an environment conducive to change, with a global average rating of 3.6 (1-5 scale). Providing Increased Knowledge seems to receive the most favourable rating, followed by providing Motivation for change/improvement and Implementation advice. The perceptions of Managers and Employees are virtually identical.
- Public sector participants appear to have a moderately favourable assessment of the conference's contribution to the increase in the use of quality practices, with an overall impact rating of 3.2 (1-5 scale). This impact is fairly well spread across the several practices associated with the European Foundation for Quality Management Excellence Model. The perceived 4QC impact on the use of quality practices is consistently higher for Managers than for Employees, across all practices.
- The reason for participating in the 4QC affects the perceived impact. Most notably, the impact is perceived to be the greatest

for those respondents who cited as a reason to participate in the 4QC getting advice and knowledge to support the implementation of a specific project in the organisation.

- 56% of the Public sector participants visited the CAF Centre. The impact of this initiative on increasing the knowledge of CAF and the implementation of CAF was 3.7 and 3.0, respectively (1-5 scale).
- The most frequently cited organisational barriers to action, by decreasing order, were: lack of resources (cited by 51% of respondents), lack of top management commitment (41%), fear and resistance to change (37%), political changes (25%), projects already under way that would not be modified (19%), “not invented here” syndrome (15%), and organisation too far behind (12%).
- The mostly frequently cited barriers to action related to the conference were: the perception that the presented practices might not be applicable in the participant’s organisation (25%), the adaptation of the presented practices to the context of the participant’s organisation (20%), and uncertainty about the merits of practices (19%).
- Participants from Private and Non-Profit organisations show a moderately favourable assessment of the conference’s contribution to these organisations providing improved support for Public sector organisations, with an overall rating of 3.7 for the Non-Profit sector and 3.4 for the Private sector (1-5 scale).

Implications

- Although the 4QC does not seem to have a strong direct effect on action, it does have a more significant indirect effect through the creation of an environment conducive to change. Therefore, QCs should continue, although their effectiveness needs to be improved.
- A key area to address in future QCs is to find effective ways, within the realm of the conferences, to bridge the gap between the presented practices and an organisation’s specific context. Examples could include:
 - organising post-conference consulting support for the implementation of best practices.
 - the creation of special interest groups that keep meeting after the conferences.
 - the planning of follow-up visits of participants to the organisations that have presented successful cases or visits from the case presenters to interested organisations (thus allowing more time for in-depth knowledge transfer).

- the planning of in-conference forums that allow for longer exchange of views between case presenters and interested participants.
- focussing the conferences on fewer themes with more time for discussion about context and specific difficulties, solutions, failures, etc.
- organising sessions focussed on specific sectors (e.g., social services, culture, environment, etc.)
- carefully selecting the best practices to be presented and including contextual aspects in the presentations.
- The organisation of future QCs should systematically analyse the organisational barriers to action reported in this study and include specific sessions in the QC program that try to address those barriers.
- Future QCs might benefit from investing effort in the pre-conference period, in particular in assisting participant organisations to make the most of the QCs. This may include:
 - advise organisations to prepare their participation in advance. Ideally, organisations should undertake prior planning work for improvement/change and use the QC to boost that initial work, e.g., by using it to address pre-identified issues and concerns.
 - motivate organisations to carefully select the right people to attend the QCs.
 - devise ways of increasing the loyalty of participating organisations and/or attendees to QCs. This will create a stronger community, facilitating in-depth exchange of knowledge and experiences in-between conferences, especially related to the implementation of best practices.
 - assist organisations in creating organisational structures that may absorb in an organised fashion the benefits gained from the individual participation of their staff.
- The results of this study should be discussed in detail by the Directorates General of Public Administrations, the IPSG and organisers of future conferences in order to derive further recommendations to improve the effectiveness of future QCs.

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Presentation of the Study

Introduction

In order to improve the quality of the Public services offered to citizens, EU Public service Ministers agreed in 1998 to hold bi-annual Quality Conferences (QCs) with the main goal of spreading best practice and share experiences in EU's Public sector. These conferences are overseen by the Directorates General of Public Administrations of the EU and the development of the conference programs is conducted jointly by the Innovative Public Service Group (IPSG) and the member state which holds the EU Presidency at the time of each conference. The first conference (1QC) was held in Lisbon in the Spring of 2000, and was followed by conferences in Copenhagen (2QC, October 2002), Rotterdam (3QC, September 2004) and Tampere (4QC, September 2006).

At a meeting in Hague in 2004, Ministers commissioned an evaluation of QCs to help determine the future strategy for conferences beyond the 4QC. Under the UK Presidency of the EU, this study resulted in an Evaluation of Quality Conferences Report in the second semester of 2005. This report concluded that the quality conferences had done much to achieve the objective of spreading best practice. In addition, it concluded that there was great support for these conferences across Europe and that, therefore, they should continue. However, although the main goal of the QCs is to improve the quality of Public services, the report also found that it was difficult to give examples of improvements to service delivery made as a result of attending the QCs. In addition, it suggested that there should be a greater emphasis on evaluating the QCs and a greater, more structured follow-up of the impact on: i) Direct or indirect inspiration for action; and ii) Participants work activities as practitioners and decision makers.

In this context, the IPSG recommended that the impact of the 4QC should be assessed, beyond the immediate results. In particular, it was recommended that a survey of the 4QC participants should be conducted focusing on the extent to which the 4QC contributed to inspiring change and to the implementation of best practices in Public services. It was decided that such evaluation should take place one year after the conference in order to allow time for the conference to produce observable effects; and to inform the preparation of the 5QC to be held in Paris in the second half of 2008. As a consequence, in 2007 under the Portuguese Presidency of the EU, the Directorate General of Administration and Public Employment (DGAEP, Portugal) commissioned such study to the Catholic University of Portugal (Porto).

The objective of the study is to provide detailed information about the 4QC and its impact, based on the perceptions of 4QC participants. Being a survey study covering a large sample of 4QC participants, this study is able to provide an objective assessment of the 4QC and its impact, complementing existing studies based on interviews and qualitative field work. As such, this “quantitative” survey aims to provide a fruitful basis for interpretation and analysis by the QC

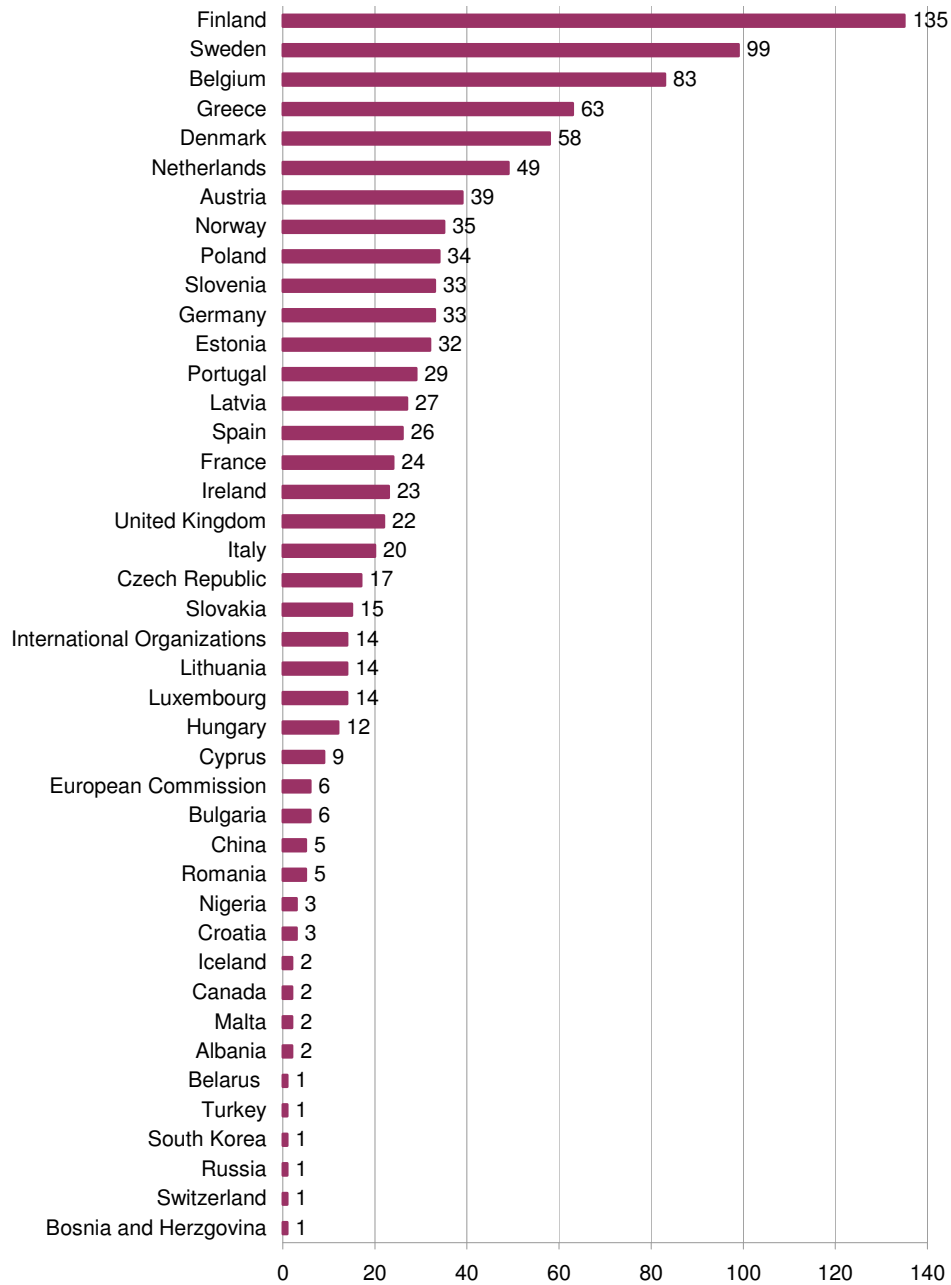
stakeholders, including the Directorates General of Public Administrations, the IPSG and organisers of future conferences.

This report presents the 4QC impact assessment study and its results, and is organised as follows. First, we briefly describe the 4QC. Second, we explain how the questionnaire was developed. Third, we present the methodology of the study. Fourth, we characterise the sample and the reasons reported by participants for attending the 4QC. Then, we analyse the responses of the Public sector participants, including the perceived contribution of the 4QC for creating an environment conducive to change, the perceived contribution of the 4QC for increasing the use of best practices and the perceived barriers to action. This is followed by the analysis of the responses from the participants of the Private and Non-Profit sectors, namely, the extent to which the 4QC has contributed to these organisations providing improved support for Public sector organisations. Finally, we summarise the suggestions that 4QC participants provided in order to increase the effectiveness of QCs and present the overall conclusions and recommendations for the organisation of future QCs.

The 4th Quality Conference (4QC)

The 4QC took place in Tampere, Finland, from the 27th to the 29th of September of 2006, under the Finish Presidency of the EU. The main theme of this conference was “Building Sustainable Quality”, and included four sub-themes: Strategy, Performance, Citizens and Knowledge. The conference comprised 64 sessions in total, including 7 plenary sessions, 15 agoras and 42 workshops. The event was attended by around 1,000 participants, excluding conference assistants and special guests. Figure 1 shows the distribution of these participants by country and international organisations.

Figure 1. Number of participants in the 4QC by country and international organisations.



Questionnaire Development

The research team followed a structured process for developing the study's questionnaire, comprising the following activities:

- The review of the past QCs documents.
- The review of the literature on Quality Management and Public Services.
- Exploratory interviews with 4QC participants in Portugal to capture the specific context of 4QC.
- Discussions with DGAEP.

As a result of this process, it was decided that the study should target participants in the 4QC from different types of organisations:

- Public sector: an organisation providing Public services.
- Non-Profit: a not-for-profit organization with public interest goals but which does not belong to the Public sector.
- Private sector: an organization which provides services to Public sector organisations (e.g., information technology, software applications, consulting), but which does not itself provide public services to citizens.

It was considered that a single questionnaire would be adequate for the Private and Non-Profit sectors, but that a different questionnaire would be required for the Public sector. In this connection, two different questionnaires were developed: one for the Public sector and one for the Non-Profit and Private sectors.

Preliminary online versions of these questionnaires were developed and pilot-tested as follows. In June 2007 the research team asked IPSP members to select participants from their respective countries to test the questionnaires and provide feedback on their content and format. Each IPSP member was asked to, whenever possible, select two participants from the Public sector (ideally, a manager and an employee) and one participant from the Private/Non-Profit sector. In many cases, the IPSP member acted as a representative of the Public sector profile. All the selected participants were then sent an invitation email from the respective IPSP member asking them to visit the questionnaire's web site, fill in the questionnaire online, and provide feedback in an online form presented after the questionnaire was filled in.

The questionnaire was tested by 32 participants from 15 different countries: 29 participants from the Public sector, including managers and employees from different levels of administration (central, regional and local); two participants from the Private sector; and one participant from the Non-Profit sector.

The respondents' feedback was analysed and improved versions of the questionnaires were produced.

Appendices 1 and 2 present the final versions of the two questionnaires. Figures 2 and 3 show the conceptual models underlying these two questionnaires.

The Public sector questionnaire assessed the extent to which participation in the 4QC led to the creation of an environment conducive to change and to the increase in the use of quality practices. It comprised the following groups of questions:

- A. Respondent profile (demographic attributes, characteristics of the organisation, job specification and participation in quality conferences).
- B. Extent to which the 4QC contributed to the creation of an environment conducive to change, including imparting increased knowledge, motivation for change/improvement and implementation advice.
- C. Extent to which the 4QC contributed to the increase in the use of a set of practices associated with the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence model, including Top Management Commitment, Citizen Focus, Employee Involvement, Process Improvement and Information Management, Formal Organization for Quality and Social Responsibility.
- D. Extent to which participants faced different types of difficulties (if any) in transferring the knowledge and skills that they learned about in the 4QC into action.
- E. Suggestions for improving the effectiveness of future conferences.

The questionnaire for the other sectors had a similar structure except that the focus of the main section (B) was on assessing the extent to which the 4QC contributed to these organisations improving the support given to Public sector organisations. This included the extent to which the conference contributed to providing participants with increased knowledge of Public sector needs, to fostering relationships with Public sector organisations and to the development of new services to Public sector organisations.

Figure 2. Model underlying the questionnaire for the Public sector.

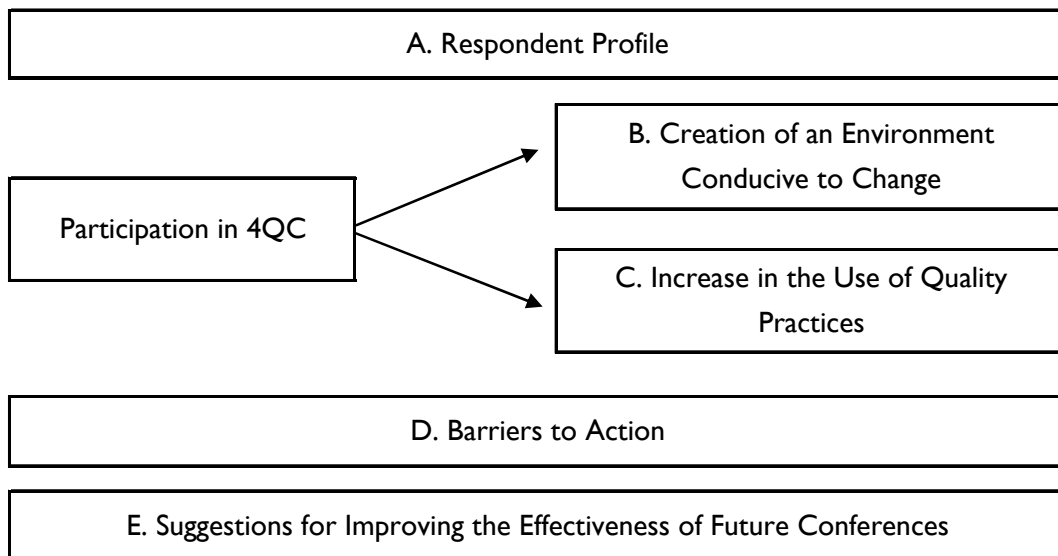
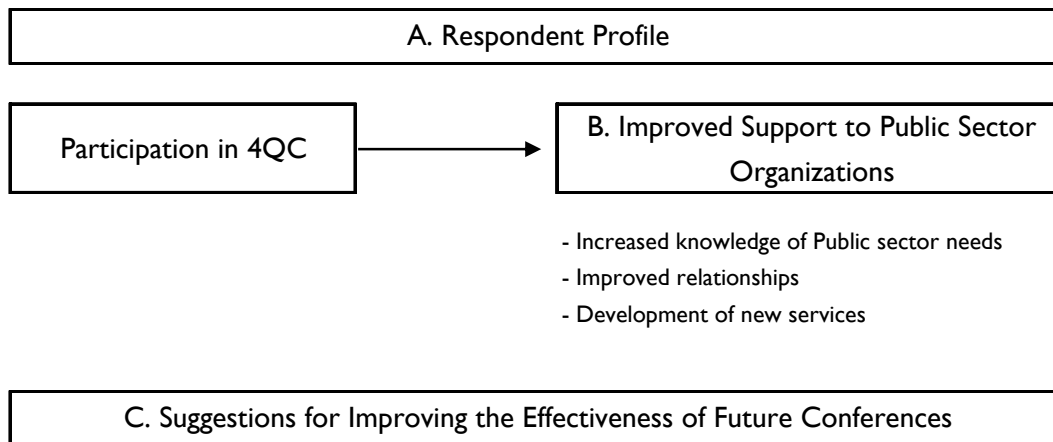


Figure 3. Model underlying the questionnaire for the Private and Non-Profit sectors.



Methodology

The questionnaires were administered online in the period 3-26 September 2007, by e-mail invitation. This required the prior validation of the email database of the 4QC participants. This task was performed by sending a test email and seeking the assistance of IPSG members to obtain the missing or invalid email addresses.

On the 3rd of September, the 1,000 participants of the 4QC were sent an email inviting them to fill in the questionnaires. The emails included a link to the questionnaires' web site and a personal access code, ensuring that each participant responded only once. During this period, two automated reminders were sent to non-respondents. In addition, IPSG members performed personal follow-up contacts in their respective countries, motivating non-respondents to fill in the questionnaire.

This resulted in a total of 453 responses, representing a response rate of 45.3%. The large sample size that was obtained provides confidence that it adequately represents the overall population of 4QC participants. The average completion time of the questionnaires, as recorded by the questionnaire administration system, was about 12 minutes.

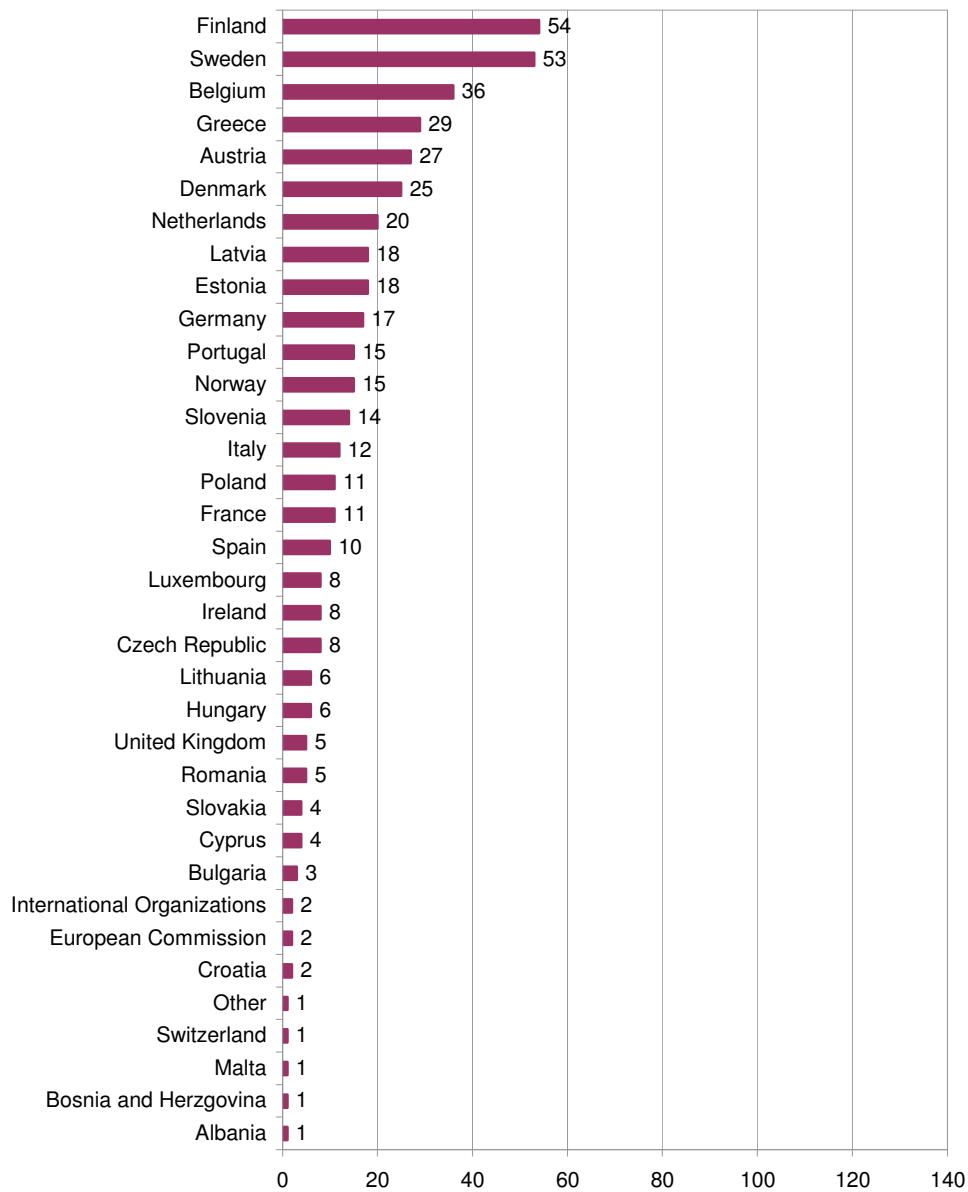
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Results: Overall Sample

Sample Characterization

Figure 4 shows the number of respondents (all sectors) by country and international organisations. The sample's distribution by country is broadly in line with the population of 4QC participants (Figure 1). The sample includes respondents from 32 out of the 40 countries represented in the 4QC, as well as from the European Commission (two) and International Organizations (two). The six countries which are not represented in the sample are mostly non-European and include Belarus, Canada, China, Iceland, Nigeria, Russia, South Korea and Turkey. Six countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Sweden) account for close to 50% of responses. Not surprisingly, the host country Finland and its neighbour Sweden have the highest number of responses.

Figure 4. Number of respondents by country and international organisations.



The sample comprises 413 respondents from the Public Sector (91% of the overall sample), 27 from Non-Profit organisations (6%) and 13 from Private organisations (3%). We now describe each of these samples.

The description of the Public Sector sample is presented in Table 1. The majority of respondents work in the Central Administration (69%), followed by Regional (14%) and Local Administration (14%), and a residual number from European Institutions (3%). The majority of respondents tend to work in medium-large organisations, and most have been employed in their organisation for 6-10 years (18%) or longer (49%). Almost two thirds are Managers and over one third are Employees. In terms of demographics, the respondents are fairly well spread in terms of age and gender. 32% of the respondents have participated in the 3QC, 16% in the 2QC and only 8% in the 1QC. Most of the respondents plan to attend the 5QC (59%), with only 5% definitely saying

they will not participate. The sample includes respondents from 31 different countries, the European Commission (two respondents) and International Organisations (two respondents).

Table 1. Sample description – Public sector (N=413).

Variable	%	N
Type of Organisation		
Central Administration	69 %	285
Regional Administration	14 %	58
Local Administration	14 %	59
European Institution	3 %	11
No. of Employees of Organisation		
Less than of equal to 50	8 %	34
51-250	30 %	122
251-500	21 %	88
501-2500	24 %	98
More than 2500	17 %	71
Length of Employment with Organisation		
Under 3 years	15 %	60
3-5 years	18 %	76
6-10 years	18 %	75
Over 10 years	49 %	202
Position		
Manager	63 %	261
Employee	37 %	152
Age		
Under 36	16 %	67
36-45	32 %	131
46-55	31 %	130
Over 55	21 %	85
Gender		
Male	55 %	229
Female	45 %	184
Participation in Past Quality Conferences		
1QC - Lisbon 2000	8 %	35
2QC – Copenhagen 2002	16 %	67
3QC – Rotterdam 2004	32 %	132
Intention to Participate in 5QC		
Yes	59 %	245
No	5 %	21
Don't Know	36 %	147
Country Coverage	31 different countries (*), European Commission, International Organisations	

(*) All countries attending the 4QC, except Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, China, Iceland, Nigeria, Russia, South Korea and Turkey.

The description of the Non-Profit sector sample is presented in Table 2. The majority of respondents tend to work in small-medium organisations, and most have been employed in their organisation for 6-10 years (19%) or longer (59%). In terms of demographics, the respondents are fairly well spread in terms of age and tend to be predominantly male. 26% of the respondents

have participated in the 3QC, 22% in the 2QC and only 7% in the 1QC. Most of the respondents plan to attend the 5QC (56%), with only 4% definitely saying they will not participate. The sample includes respondents from 13 different countries.

Table 2. Sample description – Non-Profit sector (N=27).

Variable	%	N
No. of Employees of Organisation		
Less than or equal to 50	33 %	9
51-250	30 %	8
251-500	26 %	7
501-2500	4 %	1
More than 2500	7 %	2
Length of Employment with Organisation		
Under 3 years	15 %	4
3-5 years	7 %	2
6-10 years	19 %	5
Over 10 years	59 %	16
Age		
Under 36	11 %	3
36-45	33 %	9
46-55	37 %	10
Over 55	19 %	5
Gender		
Male	81 %	22
Female	19 %	5
Participation in Past Quality Conferences		
1QC - Lisbon 2000	7 %	2
2QC – Copenhagen 2002	22 %	6
3QC – Rotterdam 2004	26 %	7
Intention to Participate in 5QC		
Yes	56 %	15
No	4 %	1
Don't Know	40 %	11
Country Coverage	13 different countries (*)	

(*) Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden.

The description of the Private sector sample is presented in Table 3. The majority of respondents tend to work in small-medium organisations, and compared to the other sectors have been employed in their organisation for shorter periods of time (46% have been with their organisation for a period shorter than or equal to 5 years). In terms of demographics, the respondents are younger than the respondents of the other sectors (only 16% are over 46 years old) and tend to be predominantly male. None of the respondents have participated in the first two QCs, although five of them have participated in the 3QC. Most of the respondents plan to attend the 5QC (62%), with only 15% definitely saying they will not participate. The sample includes respondents from 13 different countries.

Table 3. Sample description – Private sector (N=13).

Variable	%	N
No. of Employees of Organisation		
Less than or equal to 50	53 %	7
51-250	23 %	3
251-500	8 %	1
501-2500	8 %	1
More than 2500	8 %	1
Length of Employment with Organisation		
Under 3 years	15 %	2
3-5 years	31 %	4
6-10 years	31 %	4
Over 10 years	23 %	3
Age		
Under 36	38 %	5
36-45	46 %	6
46-55	8 %	1
Over 55	8 %	1
Gender		
Male	77 %	10
Female	23 %	3
Participation in Past Quality Conferences		
1QC - Lisbon 2000	0 %	0
2QC – Copenhagen 2002	0 %	0
3QC – Rotterdam 2004	38 %	5
Intention to Participate in 5QC		
Yes	62 %	8
No	15 %	2
Don't Know	23 %	3
Country Coverage	13 different countries (*)	

(*) Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia.

Summary:

The profile of the typical Public sector participant is:

- predominantly a Manager
- belonging to a medium-large organisation of the Central Administration.
- having a reasonably long length of employment in the organisation
- balanced spread of age and gender
- a first-time participant in a QC

Reasons for Participating in the 4QC

Figure 5 shows the percentage of respondents from the Public sector – total sample, managers and employees – who cited the different reasons for participating in the 4QC. The reasons for participating can be classified in three groups. A first group of reasons is directly related to taking advantage of the 4QC to assist change/improvement: *to learn about best practices* (83%), *get inspiration for change* (64%) and *get advice or knowledge to implement a project* (30%). Interestingly, although the first two reasons are very highly cited, only 30% of respondents cited *getting advice and knowledge to implement a project* as a reason for participation. This seems to indicate that participants do consider the 4QC as a means to initiate change in their organisations, but not necessarily to provide practical support for ongoing projects. A second group of reasons is related to the insertion in the professional medium, and include *to build networks* (43%), *further professional development* (40%) and *to represent the participant’s organisation* (35%). Finally, about 23% of the respondents cited the *active involvement in the conference* (e.g., as a speaker, facilitator, etc.) as a reason to participate in the conference.

Overall, Figure 5 shows that the pattern of cited reasons is similar for managers and employees. This suggests that these two groups are looking for similar things in the QCs.

Figure 5. Reasons for participating in the 4QC – Public sector.

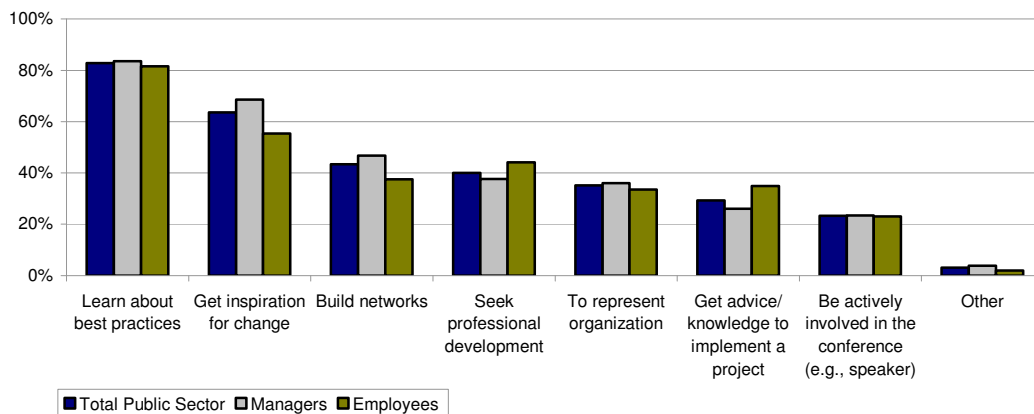
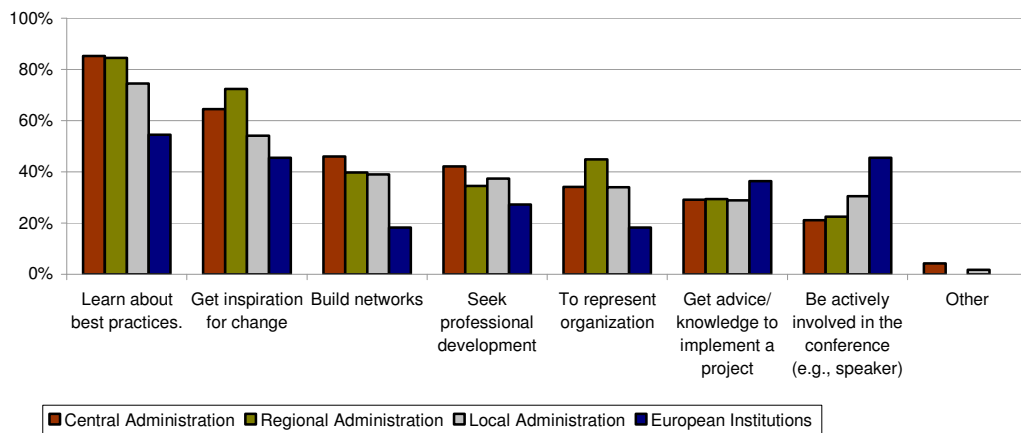


Figure 6 shows the reasons for participating for different types of Public sector organisations (Central, Regional, Local and European Institutions).

Figure 6. Reasons for participating in the 4QC by type of Public sector organisation.



Participants from the Central, Regional and Local administration levels appear to have the same pattern of reasons to participate (i.e., if we order the bars in Figure 6 from the highest to the lowest, the sequence is similar across the three administration levels, indicating that the relative importance of the different reasons is similar). This pattern is in line with the pattern observed for the overall sample discussed above. The eleven participants from European Institutions exhibit a slightly different pattern in that being actively involved in the conference is a relatively more important reason for participation than in the other levels.

Additional analyses of the survey data also showed that the average number of different reasons reported by a respondent was 3.3 in the Central and Regional levels, 3.0 in the Local level and 2.5 for European Institutions. This shows that participants from the Central and Regional levels have a wider variety of reasons to participate, while participants from the other sectors appear to have more focused motives to participate.

Figure 7 shows the reasons for participating for the Non-Profit and Private sectors. These sectors exhibit a similar pattern to the Public sector in what concerns the reasons associated with assisting change/improvement, i.e., *to learn about best practices, inspiration for change and implementation advice*. The main differences are that in the Non-Profit sector an increased importance is attributed to *building networks*, while in the Private sector there is a reduced role of *getting implementation advice* and an increased role of *representing the organisation*.

These slightly differentiated needs should be taken into account for the organisation of future QCs (e.g., creating networking opportunities targeted at Non-Profit organisations).

Figure 7. Reasons for participating in the 4QC – Non-Profit and Private sectors.

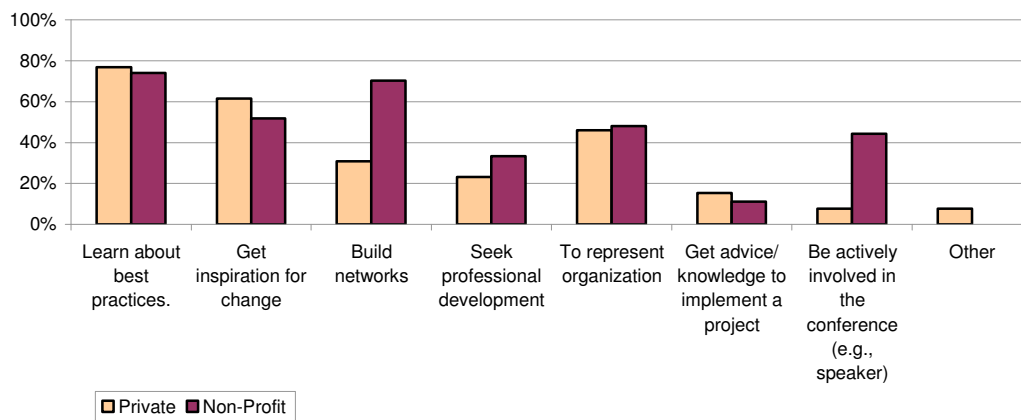


Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents (overall sample and individual sectors) according to whether they participated only in the 4QC, 4QC and one other QC, 4QC and two other QCs and all QCs.

Table 4. Participation in QCs.

Quality Conferences attended	4QC only	4QC and another	4QC and 2 other	All QCs
Overall sample	64%	21%	9%	6%
Public Sector	64%	21%	9%	6%
Non-Profit Sector	70%	11%	11%	7%
Private Sector	62%	38%	0%	0%

According to the table, the majority of 4QC participants in the overall sample (64%) were attending a QC for the first time. Only 21% of 4QC participants had attended one other conference, 9% two other conferences and only 6% had attended all conferences. This pattern is similar across the individual sectors (Public, Non-Profit and Private). The number of participants in individual QCs has been 900 for the 1QC, 1078 for the 2QC, 1305 for the 3QC and 1000 for the 4QC. Hence, with the exception of a moderate surge in the 3QC, the participation level has hovered around 1000 and has actually decreased from the 3QC to the 4QC. Collectively, these results mean that the level of repeat participations is low. Therefore, future QC organisations should be prepared to receive a large number of first-time participants.

Summary:

- Within the Public sector, the most frequently cited reasons for participation in the 4QC, by decreasing order, were: to learn about best practices (83%), get inspiration for change (64%), build networks (43%), seek professional development (40%), represent the organisation (35%), get advice to implement a project (30%) and active involvement in the conference (23%).
- Within this sector, the reasons for participating in the 4QC are similar for managers and employees as well as for respondents from Central, Regional and Local administration levels. As we move from the Central to the Local and European administration levels participants display more focused motives for participating.
- Participants from the Private and Non-Profit sectors exhibit a similar pattern to the Public sector in what concerns the reasons associated with assisting change/improvement. The main differences are that in the Non-Profit sector an increased importance is attributed to *building networks*, while in the Private sector there is a reduced role of *getting implementation advice* and an increased role of *representing the organisation*.
- The majority of 4QC participants participated in a QC for the first time.

3

Results: Public Sector Participants

In this section we analyse the responses to the Public sector questionnaire, including the perceived contribution of the 4QC for creating an environment conducive to change, the perceived contribution of the 4QC for increasing the use of quality management practices and the perceived barriers to action.

Environment Conducive to Change

Figure 8 shows the extent (1-Strongly Disagree; 5-Strongly Agree) to which respondents agreed with several statements concerning the 4QC contribution towards creating an environment conducive to change. Overall, the respondents appear to have a moderately favourable assessment of the conference's contribution, with a global average rating of 3.6 across all areas. There are only small differences across the areas. *Increased knowledge about best practices* and *inspiration for change* received the highest ratings, while *instilling the realization of the need for change*, *motivating people to become personally involved in quality* and *providing advice for transferring knowledge* received the lowest ratings. The perceptions of managers and employees are virtually identical.

Figure 9 groups the individual statements across three main areas: Knowledge, Motivation for change/improvement and Implementation advice. Knowledge seems to receive the most favourable rating (subgroup average of 3.9), followed by Motivation for change/improvement (subgroup average of 3.5) and Implementation advice (subgroup average of 3.4).

Figure 8. Environment conducive to change – average scores of individual statements.

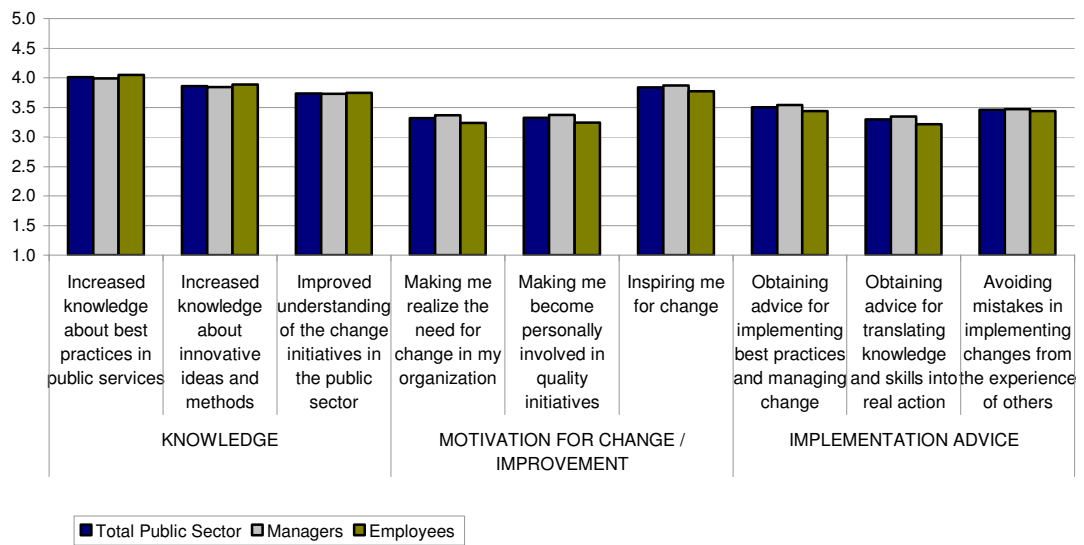
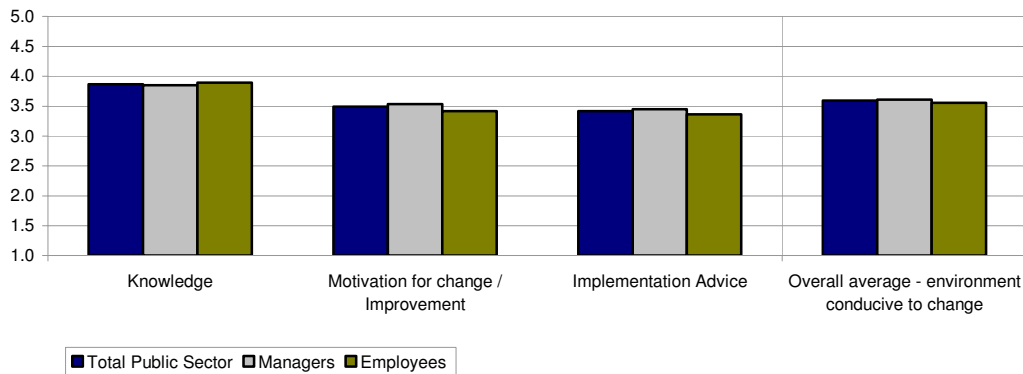


Figure 9. Environment conducive to change – average scores of groups of statements.



Respondents were also asked to provide free-form comments about other ways in which the 4QC has contributed to creating an environment conducive to change. The comments that were received can be synthesized in three main themes: (i) networking; (ii) living an environment of enthusiasm and motivation; (iii) and specific learning. Table 5 summarises the comments and includes a selection of quotes that support each of the themes.

The creation and strengthening of networks is claimed by several respondents to be an important aspect that supports change initiatives, as it allows people to share problems, difficulties and solutions. Another idea pointed out by the respondents was the enthusiasm felt by other people, which motivated change. Some participants mentioned the learning of specific issues to their problems or contexts as inspiring for change.

Table 5. Summary of free-form comments related to ways in which the 4QC contributed to creating an environment conducive to change.

Theme	Examples (quotes)
Networking	<p>“Networks are very important..”</p> <p>“I met people from abroad with whom I continue to meet and discuss change management and share knowledge with.”</p> <p>“Strengthening national and international networks between change agents”.</p> <p>“Q-management = change management, and I learned that other colleagues in other countries are dealing with the same problem.”</p>
Environment of enthusiasm	<p>“I have met real and honest dedication to the case in some (...) presented examples which inspired me very much.”</p> <p>“I was also encouraged by the enthusiasm of countries who have recently become members of the EU over the last three years.”</p> <p>“The atmosphere of innovative thinking creates a motivation and inspiration that is very special to the quality conferences.”</p> <p>“Meeting people whose motivation and will for improvement were as strong as mine were encouraging and inspiring. By simply assembling people who are all enthusiastic about change and ambitious to improve quality works infectiously, gives you moral support.”</p>
Specific learning	<p>“I learned a lot about e-government.”</p> <p>“It helped me realize the factors opposing quality changes within a given structure and the need for constant awareness and personal reassessment..”</p> <p>“To know how some local governments implement improvement initiatives.”</p> <p>“Knowledge about tools available to support change efforts.”</p> <p>“I obtained experience on how to organize selection of best practices (...), how to prompt organizations to take place in this selection, how to show their achievements.”</p>

Summary:

- Participants appear to have a moderately favourable assessment of the conference’s contribution to creating an environment conducive to change, with a global average rating of 3.6 across all areas (1-5 scale).
- Increased Knowledge seems to receive the most favourable rating, followed by Motivation for change/improvement and Implementation advice.
- The perceptions of Managers and Employees are virtually identical.

Use of Quality Management Practices

Figure 10 shows, by decreasing order, the extent (1-Strongly Disagree; 5-Strongly Agree) to which respondents perceived that the 4QC has contributed to an increase in the degree of use of several quality practices in their organization, relative to the situation at the time of the conference.

The figure shows that respondents appear to have a moderately favourable assessment of the conference's contribution, with an overall impact rating of 3.2. This impact is fairly well spread across the several practices associated with the EFQM Excellence Model. This suggests that, although the 4QC impact on the actual implementation of practices is only moderate, it is felt across a wide range of areas. The highest impact has been on increasing the *focus on citizen needs*. However, interestingly, the *conduction of citizen satisfaction surveys* is only half-way in the list and the *involvement of citizens in the design and improvement of services* appears towards the end of the list. This seems to suggest that the 4QC has raised awareness for the importance of focusing on citizen needs, but has been less successful in leading to the adoption of some of the associated practices. Citizen focus is followed by the *proposal of improvements in working processes* and the *proposal of improvement projects*. Somewhat worryingly, one of the lowest impacts has been on the *allocation of resources for quality improvement initiatives*, which may mean that organisations are still reluctant to actually invest in these initiatives. The lowest rated impact has been on the *consideration to social responsibility issues*.

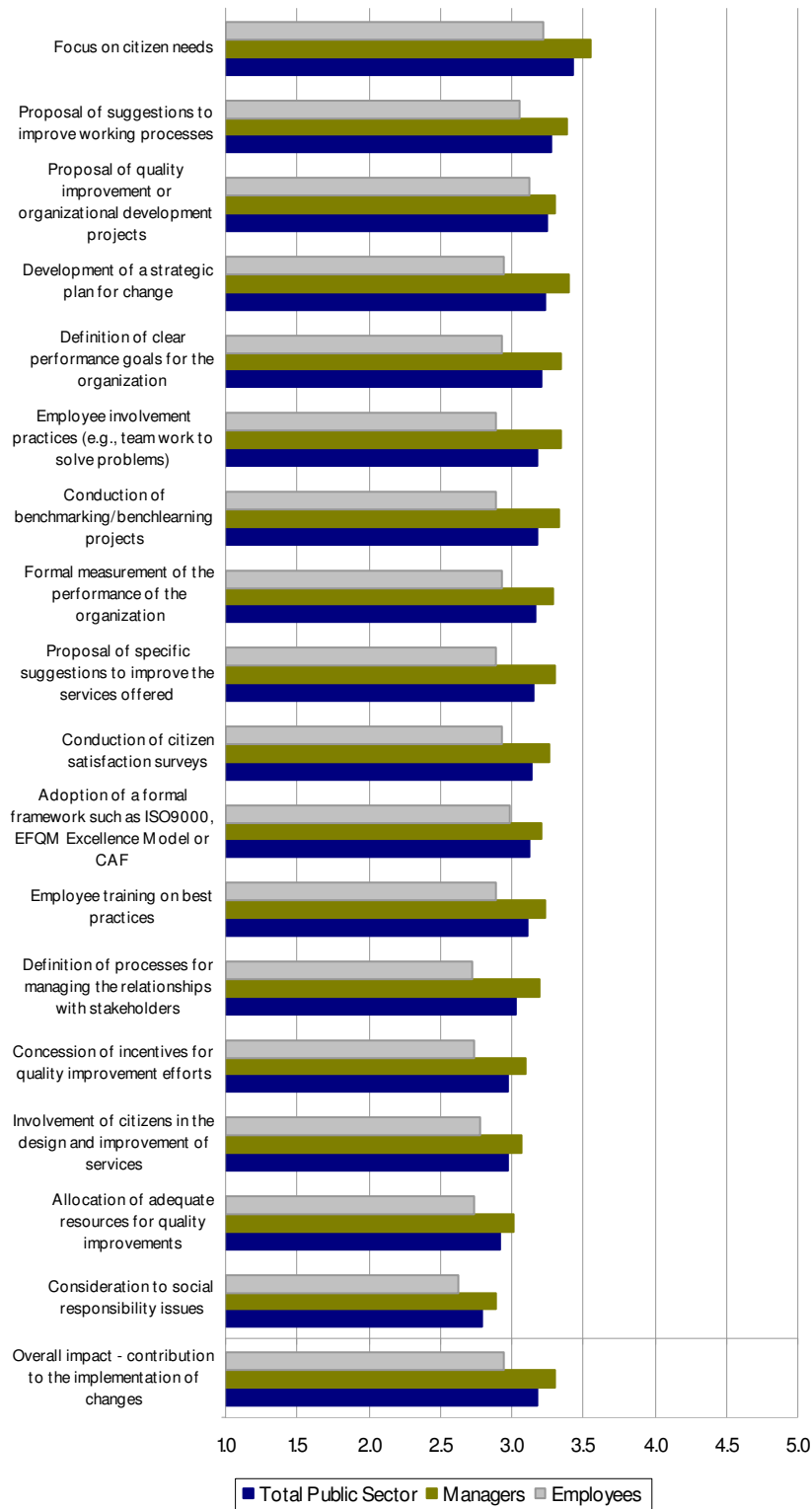
Although managers and employees have not scored much differently on the assessment of whether the 4QC has facilitated the creation of an environment conducive to change (see previous section), the perceived 4QC impact on the use of quality practices is consistently higher for managers than for employees, across all practices. This may have two possible explanations. One explanation may be that when an organisation is represented by an employee, rather than a manager, the impact is reduced. Another possible explanation, is that managers may overestimate the 4QC impact, compared to employees.

We have explored whether the following factors affected the overall impact of the 4QC on the implementation of changes: reasons for participating in the 4QC, level of administration, organisational size and length of employment with the organisation. In this connection, Table 6 shows the average rating of the different respondent profiles to the question: "Overall, to what extent has the participation in the conference contributed to and/or facilitated the implementation of any changes in your organization?"

The table shows that the reason for participating in the 4QC affects the perceived impact. Most notably, the impact is perceived to be the greatest for those respondents who cited as a reason to participate in the 4QC *getting advice and knowledge to support the implementation of a specific project in the organisation*. This suggests that organisations which have a clear goal of implementing a specific project get the most benefits from participating in a QC. Therefore, in order to maximise the impact of conference participation on change, organisations should undertake prior planning work and use the QC to boost that initial work, e.g., by using it to address pre-identified issues and concerns. Unfortunately, only 30% of respondents cited this as a reason for participating (see Figure 5).

Organisations at different levels of administration exhibit slightly different impacts. Most notably, participants from European institutions report the lowest impact. This may be partially explained by the fact that many of these organisations participated in the 4QC to be actively involved in the conference (e.g., as a speaker) (Figure 6) and perhaps not necessarily to drive change. However, because of the reduced number of these organisations in our sample, this result must be interpreted with caution.

Figure 10. Impact of the 4QC on the use of quality practices.



The perceived impact of the conference seems to decrease as organisational size increases. Larger organisations may be more bureaucratic and the impact of one person participating in the 4QC may be lost against the complexity of these organisations. A possible recommendation for these organisations is creating organisational structures that may absorb in an organised fashion the benefits gained from individual participations.

Participants who have been employed for less than three years in their organisations appear to report higher impacts. This may mean that, if the primary objective of participation in a QC is to drive change, it may be beneficial for organisations to promote the participation of staff who are relatively new to the organisation (and thus, may be more open to change and less ingrained in routine ways of doing things). Our data also showed that length of employment had virtually no correlation with age and that the reported impact of the 4QC did not change much according to the age of the respondent.

Finally, there is no clear difference of impact across respondents who have participated in a different number of QCs. Specifically, participation in more QCs has not led to an increase of the impact of the 4QC. This does not necessarily mean that participating in more QCs is not beneficial; it simply means that the individual impact of the 4QC – relative to the baseline situation at the time of the conference - does not seem to be higher for regular QC attendants (it may well be that the baseline situation is higher for this group).

Table 6. Impact of the 4QC on the implementation of changes according to the respondent profile.

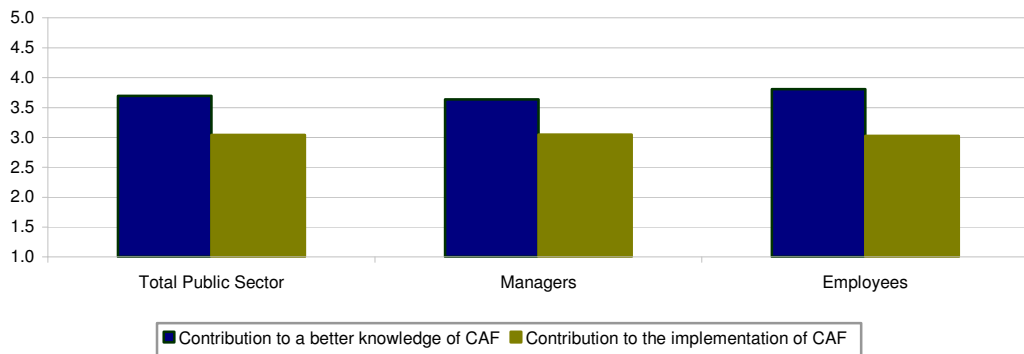
Respondent profile	Average impact rating
Reasons for participating	
Learn about best practices	3.2
Get inspiration for change	3.2
Further professional development	3.3
Get advice and knowledge to support the implementation of a specific project in my organization	3.4
Build networks	3.3
Be actively involved in the conference	3.1
To represent my organization	3.1
Level of administration	
Central	3.2
Regional	3.1
Local	3.3
European	2.6
Organisational size	
Less than or equal to 50	3.3
51-250	3.2
251-500	3.2
501-2500	3.2
More than 2500	3.1
Length of employment	
Under 3 years	3.4
3-5 years	3.1
6-10 years	3.2
Over 10 years	3.1
Quality Conferences attended	
4QC only	3.2
4QC and another	3.2
4QC and two other	3.2
All QCs	3.0

Respondents were also asked to provide free-form comments about other practices that might have become more widely used as a result of the participation in the 4QC. The analysis of these answers revealed few relevant comments and no clear pattern. This seems to indicate that the moderate change that was induced by the 4QC was adequately captured by the standard questions on practices analysed above (Figure 10).

We now address the impact of the CAF Centre initiative. The survey revealed that 56% of the Public sector participants visited the CAF Centre. Figure 11 shows how these respondents (overall Public sector sample, managers and employees) assessed the contribution of the CAF Centre to a better knowledge and implementation of CAF (1-Very Little; 5-Very Much). This contribution seems to be moderately favourable and is in line with the ratings observed for the impact of the 4QC on the use of the quality practices (Figure 10). The perceptions of managers and employees are virtually identical. The impact of this initiative seems to be clearly higher on providing a better knowledge of CAF (3.7) than on the actual implementation of CAF (3.0).

Future conferences may dedicate special attention to making a bridge between knowledge and practice and perhaps dedicate special attention to implementation advice.

Figure 11. Impact of the CAF Centre.



Summary:

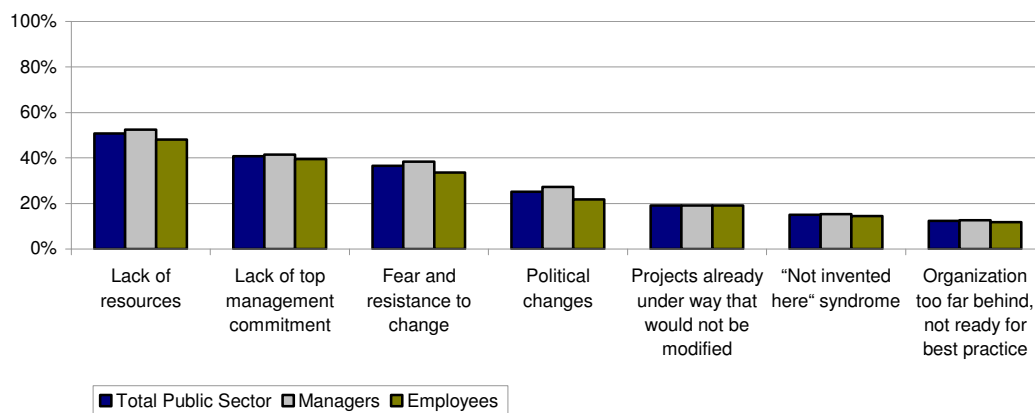
- Respondents appear to have a moderately favourable assessment of the conference’s contribution to the increase in the use of quality practices, with an overall impact rating of 3.2 (1-5 scale). This impact is fairly well spread across the several practices associated with the EFQM Excellence Model.
- The perceived 4QC impact on the use of quality practices is consistently higher for Managers than for Employees, across all practices.
- The reason for participating in the 4QC affects the perceived impact. Most notably, the impact is perceived to be the greatest for those respondents who cited as a reason to participate in the 4QC *getting advice and knowledge to support the implementation of a specific project in the organisation*.
- The perceived impact of the conference seems to decrease with the increase of organisational size.
- Participants who have been employed for less than three years in their organisations appear to report higher impacts.
- 56% of the Public sector participants visited the CAF Centre. The impact of this initiative on increasing the knowledge of CAF and the implementation of CAF was 3.7 and 3.0, respectively (1-5 scale).

Barriers to Action

Figures 12 and 13 show the distribution of responses from the Public sector – total sample, managers and employees – across the different barriers to action (or difficulties).

Figure 12 shows the reasons specific to a participant’s organisation. The most cited reasons were *lack of resources* (cited by 51% of respondents) and *lack of top management commitment* (41%). This is consistent with the previously discussed limited impact of the 4QC on the allocation of adequate resources for quality improvement initiatives (Figure 10). Hence, there seems to be a leadership deficit that is preventing a more widespread adoption of best practices in the Public sector. *Fear and resistance to change* (37%) also surfaced as an important barrier. This suggests that management should invest effort in allaying those fears and resistances, e.g., by carefully explaining changes, making assurances to potentially threatened organisational levels, etc. Interestingly, the *not invented here syndrome* (15%) and *an organisation being too far behind* (12%) were not perceived as significant barriers, which seems to indicate that there is a willingness of organisations to import external best practices regardless of their starting point. The perceptions of managers and employees are similar.

Figure 12. Barriers to action specific to the organisation.



We have compared the relative frequency with which respondents cited each barrier across different levels of administration. Table 7 shows the results in terms of the percentage of respondents in each administration level who reported a particular barrier. The main differences between administration levels are as follows:

- Lack of resources seems especially important at the Local and European levels.
- Lack of top management commitment seems especially important at the European level.
- Political changes seem less important at the Regional and European levels.
- Fear and resistance to change appears critical to the Regional level and less important at the European level.

- An organisation being too far behind appears more important at the Regional and European levels.

Table 7. Reported barriers to action by level of administration.

Barrier		Level of Administration			
		Central	Regional	Local	European
Lack of resources (money, time, people)	Count	138	31	35	6
	% within level	57%	56%	66%	67%
Lack of top management commitment	Count	116	23	24	5
	% within level	48%	42%	45%	56%
Political changes	Count	77	11	15	1
	% within level	32%	20%	28%	11%
Fear and resistance to change	Count	96	31	22	2
	% within level	39%	56%	42%	22%
Not invented here syndrome	Count	41	9	11	1
	% within level	17%	16%	21%	11%
Projects already under way that would not be modified	Count	60	8	10	1
	% within level	25%	15%	19%	11%
Organization too far behind, not ready for best practice	Count	33	11	5	2
	% within level	14%	20%	9%	22%
Total	Count	244	55	53	9

We have also compared the relative frequency with which respondents cited each barrier across different organisation sizes. Table 8 shows the results in terms of the percentage of respondents from each organisation size who reported a particular barrier. The differences across organisational sizes are not large. The main differences are as follows:

- Lack of resources and lack of top management commitment seem to be less important for small organisations (equal to or less than 50 employees).
- Fear and resistance to change seems to be less important for medium-small organisations (51-250 employees) and quite important for large organisations (501-2500 employees).

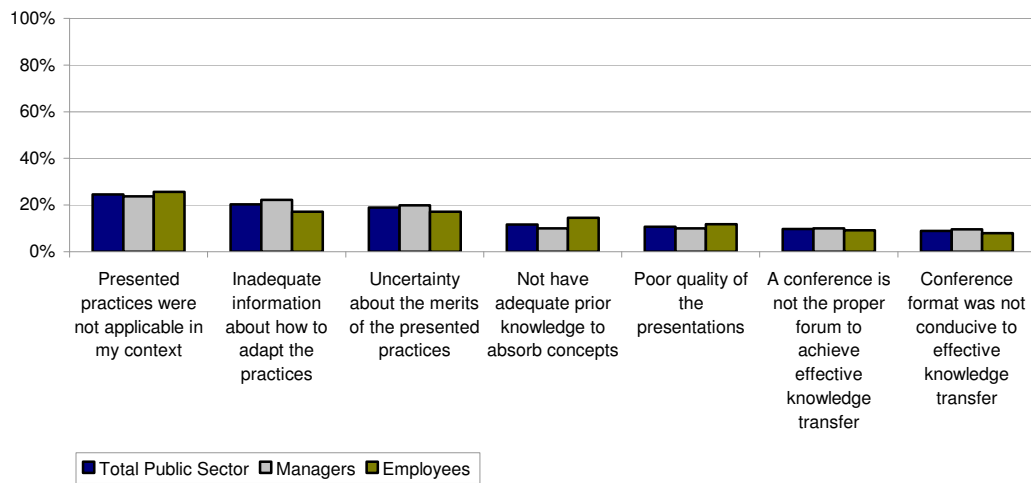
Table 8. Reported barriers to action by size of organisation.

Barrier		Size of Organisation (number of employees)			
		Less than or equal to 50	51 to 250	251 to 500	501 to 2500
Lack of resources (money, time, people)	Count	12	67	50	52
	% within size	39%	66%	65%	60%
Lack of top management commitment	Count	10	47	36	39
	% within size	32%	46%	47%	45%
Political changes	Count	11	26	21	25
	% within size	36%	26%	27%	29%
Fear and resistance to change	Count	13	32	35	48
	% within size	42%	31%	46%	55%
Not invented here syndrome	Count	5	15	12	18
	% within size	16%	15%	16%	21%
Projects already under way that would not be modified	Count	7	23	11	21
	% within size	23%	23%	14%	24%
Organization too far behind, not ready for best practice	Count	6	13	5	14
	% within size	19%	13%	7%	16%
Total	Count	31	102	77	87

Overall, the reported differences between types of organisations suggest that different courses of action need to be undertaken in each type of organisation in order to enhance the impact of the participation in QCs.

Figure 13 shows the barriers to action specific to the conference. Overall, respondents do not seem to consider that a conference cannot be an effective way of transferring knowledge. Equally, the format of the 4QC and the quality of presentations do not seem to be significant barriers. On the contrary, the main cited difficulties are related to the perception that presented practices might not be applicable in the participant's organisation, the adaptation of the presented practices to the context of the participant's organisation, and uncertainty about the merits of practices. These results send a very clear message in that a key area to address in future QCs is to find effective ways, within the realm of the conferences, to bridge the gap between the presented practices and an organisation's specific context. Examples could include follow-up consulting support, the creation of special interest groups that keep meeting after the conferences, the planning of follow-up visits of participants to the organisations that have presented successful cases or visits from the case presenters to interested organisations (thus allowing more time for in-depth knowledge transfer), the planning of in-conference forums that allow for longer exchange of views between case presenters and interested participants, etc. The perceptions of managers and employees are similar.

Figure 13. Barriers to action specific to the conference.



Summary:

- The most frequently cited organisational barriers to action, by decreasing order, were: lack of resources (cited by 51% of respondents), lack of top management commitment (41%), fear and resistance to change (37%), political changes (25%), projects already under way that would not be modified (19%), “not invented here” syndrome (15%), and organisation too far behind (12%).
- There are some differences in the frequency with which the several barriers are cited across organisations of different levels of administration and different sizes.
- The mostly frequently cited barriers to action related to the conference were: the perception that the presented practices might not be applicable in the participant’s organisation (25%), the adaptation of the presented practices to the context of the participant’s organisation (20%), and uncertainty about the merits of practices (19%).

4

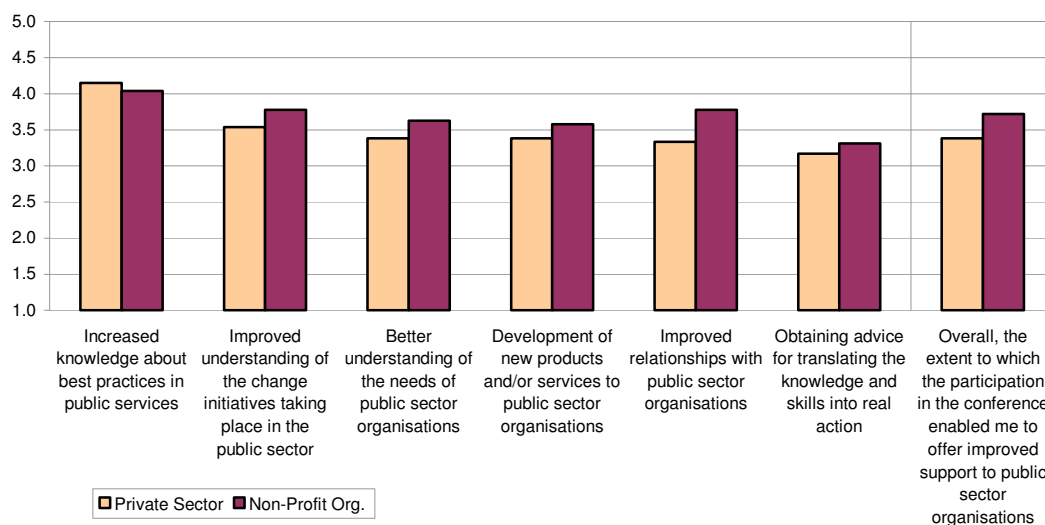
Results: Non-Profit and Private Sector Participants

In this section we analyse the responses from the participants of the Private and Non-Profit sectors, namely, the extent to which the 4QC has contributed to these organisations providing improved support for Public sector organisations.

Figure 14 shows the extent (1-Strongly Disagree; 5-Strongly Agree) to which respondents agreed with several statements concerning the 4QC contribution towards enabling Non-Profit and Private sector organisations to offer improved support for Public sector organisations.

The patterns of responses in the Non-Profit and Private sectors appear similar. Overall, the respondents seem to have a moderately favourable assessment of the conference’s contribution, with an overall rating of 3.7 for the Non-Profit sector and 3.4 for the Private sector. There are only small differences across the statements. The most important contributions appear to be the *increased knowledge about best practices* and the *improved understanding of the rationale for some of the change initiatives taking place in the Public sector*.

Figure 14. Contribution of the 4QC for enabling Non-Profit and Private sector organisations to offer improved support to Public sector organisations.



5

Results: Participants' Suggestions for Future Conferences

Towards the end of the questionnaire, respondents from all the sectors were asked to provide free-form comments on barriers to action specific to the 4QC as well as suggestions for improving the organisation of future QCs.

Some of the cited difficulties and suggestions given by participants were:

- Language barriers - It would help:
 - to have written information on the cases presented beforehand (a kind of proceedings)
 - to have only one official language (English) and then simultaneous translation of presentations to some other languages
 - to check the language skills of the presenters
- Format of the conference:
 - too many parallel presentations
 - too little time for discussion within best practices presentations (people learn a lot from interaction and there isn't enough time for discussion during presentation sessions).
 - conference should be focused on a few themes with more time for discussion about context and specific difficulties, solutions, failures, etc (less subjects but with more detail).
 - there should be more opportunities (moments) for networking (e.g., small meetings, longer presentation and discussion sessions).
 - organise conference by different sectors (e.g., social services, culture, environment).
- Quality of some presentations:
 - check presentation skills of the presenters (and usage of English).
 - carefully select best practices to be presented.
 - check quality of the presentation (significance of the best practice and the detail of the context characterization – not just a fine story).
 - teach moderators to facilitate the sessions and drive them smoothly in terms of time management.

6

Conclusions

In this section, we offer a preliminary overall discussion of the results, as well as some recommendations for future QCs.

Regarding the creation of an environment conducive to change in the Public sector, the survey results suggest that the 4QC has been moderately successful (3.6 overall rating). The extent to which the 4QC has actually led to an increase in the use of best practices has been also moderately successful (3.2) and is fairly well spread across the several practices associated with the EFQM Excellence Model. However, it lags behind the generated enthusiasm, and leaves scope for improvement. Somewhat worryingly, one of the lowest impacts has been on the allocation of resources for quality improvement initiatives, which may mean that organisations are still reluctant to actually invest in these initiatives.

A survey of 4QC participants conducted right after the conference by the organisers of the conference reported a rating of 4.0 concerning the usefulness of the 4QC for participants and their future work. One year later, our results are less optimistic and show that this initial enthusiasm has not corresponded to a similar degree of actual change/improvement. Therefore, it seems that the 4QC did open a window of opportunity for change, but needs to be followed-up for significant change to occur.

This finding raises the question of whether QCs can fulfil the role of driving change/improvement. Overall, 4QC participants did not seem to consider that a conference cannot be an effective way of transferring knowledge. Equally, the format of the 4QC and the quality of presentations did not seem to be major barriers to action. This is consistent with the survey conducted right after the conference which reported moderately high levels of satisfaction across the different components of the conference (overall average of 4.1). Furthermore, although the 4QC does not have a strong direct effect on action, it does have a more significant indirect effect through the creation of an environment conducive to change. Therefore, QCs should continue, although their effectiveness needs to be improved.

A second question worthy of discussion is: what barriers are impeding organisations of driving improvement more strongly? We have divided these into two categories: barriers specific to the conference and barriers specific to the organisations.

The main barriers to action specific to the 4QC that were identified in our study were related to the perception that presented practices might not be applicable to the participant's organisation, the adaptation of the presented practices to the context of the participant's organisation, and uncertainty about the merits of practices. Consistent with this, in the evaluation performed right after the 4QC the lowest rated conference components were the best practice workshops and the agoras (3.8 rating). These results send a very clear message in that a key area to address in future QCs is to find effective ways, within the realm of the conferences, to bridge the gap between the presented practices and an organisation's specific context. Examples could include:

- Organising post-conference consulting support for the implementation of best practices. A closer liaison with participants from the Private sector might be a possible way forward.
- The creation of special interest groups that keep meeting after the conferences.
- The planning of follow-up visits of participants to the organisations that have presented successful cases or visits from the case presenters to interested organisations (thus allowing more time for in-depth knowledge transfer).
- The planning of in-conference forums that allow for longer exchange of views between case presenters and interested participants.
- Focussing the conferences on fewer themes with more time for discussion about context and specific difficulties, solutions, failures, etc.
- Organising sessions focussed on specific sectors (e.g., social services, culture, environment, etc.)
- Carefully selecting the best practices to be presented and including contextual aspects in the presentations.

Our study also found a number of significant barriers specifically related to the participating organisations. The relative importance of these varied with the profile of the organisation (level of administration and size). The organisation of future QCs might benefit from systematically analysing the barriers reported in this study and include specific sessions in the QC program that try to address those barriers. As an example, the *lack of top management commitment* surfaced as a key organisational barrier. As such, the programs of future QCs might address ways of involving top management in quality initiatives. As another example, *fear and resistance to change* also surfaced as an important barrier. As such, future QCs might consider providing managerial advice in allaying those fears and resistances. Future programs might also benefit from sessions dedicated to the implementation and the management of change. Interestingly, the *not invented here syndrome* and *an organisation being too far behind* were not perceived as significant barriers, which seems to indicate that there is a willingness of organisations to import external best practices regardless of their starting point.

Our study also suggests that another avenue for improving the effectiveness of future QCs may be to invest effort in the pre-conference period, in particular in assisting participant organisations to make the most of the QCs. This may include:

- Advise organisations to prepare their participation in advance. Ideally, organisations should undertake prior planning work for improvement/change and use the QC to boost that initial work, e.g., by using it to address pre-identified issues and concerns. Unfortunately, only 30% of respondents cited getting support for ongoing projects as a reason for participating.
- Motivate organisations to carefully select the right people to attend the QCs. The study found that participants who were relatively new to the organisation (and thus, may be more open to change and less ingrained in routine ways of doing things) reported higher impacts. Whenever possible, sending a mix of Manager and Employees may be desirable.
- Devise ways of increasing the loyalty of participating organisations and/or attendees to QCs. This will create a stronger community, facilitating in-depth exchange of knowledge and experiences in-between conferences, especially related to the implementation of best practices.

- Assist organisations in creating organisational structures that may absorb in an organised fashion the benefits gained from the individual participation of their staff.

Finally, our study results in several additional piece-meal suggestions for future QCs:

- No customisation seems necessary for managers vs. employees, as they seem to look for the same things in QCs.
- Private and Non-Profit participants exhibit slightly differentiated needs that should be taken into account in the organisation of future QCs (e.g., creating networking opportunities targeted at Non-Profit organisations).
- As it stands, conference organisers should be prepared to receive a large number of first-time participants.

The results for the Private and Non-Profit organisations show a moderately favourable assessment of the conference's contribution to these organisations providing improved support for Public sector organisations, with an overall rating of 3.7 for the Non-Profit sector and 3.4 for the Private sector.

This survey study has provided detailed information about the 4QC and its impact. By having covered a large sample of 4QC participants, we can be confident of the validity of the findings. We have offered some preliminary implications of the results that may assist the organisation of future QCs. Some of the findings are in line with the recommendations offered by the Evaluation of Quality Conferences Report, published in 2005. We suggest that the conclusions of both these studies be further built upon to derive additional recommendations to improve the effectiveness of future QCs. Specifically, the results of these studies should be discussed in detail by the stakeholders who are more directly associated with QCs, namely, the Directorates General of Public Administrations, the IPSPG and organisers of future conferences.

Limitations

The study was designed to assess the *perceptions* of 4QC participants. In particular, the measurement of the extent to which the 4QC contributed to an increase in the use of best practices was based on participants' perceptions; these may be different from the actual reality of the participants' organisations.

The results for the Private and Non-Profit sectors should be interpreted with caution, given the small sample sizes.

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own countries – this was surely a great contribution for the excellent response rate that was achieved.

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The Catholic University of Portugal (CUP) has been a pioneer in the teaching of Business Administration in Portugal. With over 30 years of experience, it has established an undeniable reputation of excellence and aims to further establish itself as a leading innovator in the teaching and research of Economics and Management.

Through its Centre for Applied Studies in Economics and Management, the CUP in Porto regularly provides consulting services to companies, trade associations, public sector organisations and international organisations. Among other areas of intervention, the centre has strong expertise in Operations and Quality Management. In this area, the mission of the centre is to be a centre of excellence in the provision of services in the key sub-areas of Quality Management, Service Management, E-Services, Benchmarking and Supply Chain Management

Among other organisations, the centre has undertaken projects for Rank Xerox, Siemens, TAP-Air Portugal, Portugália, STCP, and several Portuguese banks.

Appendix I

Questionnaire for participants of the Public sector.



Following your participation in the 4th Quality Conference (4QC) for Public Administrations in the EU (Tampere), we cordially invite you to take part in a survey that assesses the impact of the conference.

Your participation is very important and your contribution will help the organization of future events.

While we will keep your answers for statistical purposes, these will not be associated with your identification, thus ensuring absolute confidentiality.

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

This research is being conducted by the Directorate General for Administration and Public Employment (DGAEP) and the Catholic University of Portugal on behalf of the Portuguese Presidency of EU Council

A. Please provide us with some information about the organization you work for, about your job and about the Quality Conferences you have attended.

1. My organization

1.1. Location (country / international organization / other)

[dropdown list]

(Albania, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, European Commission, International Organizations, Other)

1.2. Number of employees

- Less than or equal to 50
- 51 to 250
- 251 to 500
- 501 to 2500
- More than 2500

1.3. Length of employment with my organization

- Under 3 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- Over 10 years

2. My Job specification:

2.1. I work in the

- Public Sector
- Non-Profit Organization
- Private Sector

2.2

- Central Administration
- Local Administration
- Regional Administration
- European Institutions

2.3 I am a

Manager

Employee

3. My participation in quality conferences

3.1. I have participated in the following Quality Conferences

(Please select all that apply)

1QC - 1st Quality Conference (Lisbon 2000)

2QC - 2nd Quality Conference (Copenhagen 2002)

3QC - 3rd Quality Conference (Rotterdam 2004)

4QC - 4th Quality Conference (Tampere 2006)

3.2. In particular, I have participated in the 4th Quality Conference in order to:

(Please select all that apply)

Learn about best practices

Get inspiration for change

Seek further professional development

Get advice and knowledge to support the implementation of a specific project in my organization

Build networks

Be actively involved in the conference (e.g., as a speaker, facilitator, etc.)

Represent my organization

Other

3.3. Do you plan to attend the next Quality Conference?

Yes

No

Don't know yet

B. Environment conducive to change

Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

(1-Strongly Disagree; 5-Strongly Agree; NA – Not Applicable).

“The participation in the 4th Quality Conference has contributed to:”

	1	2	3	4	5	NA
B.1 Increased knowledge about best practices in public services						
B.2 Increased knowledge about innovative ideas, methods and improvement tools						
B.3 Improved understanding of the rationale for some of the change initiatives that are taking place in the public sector in general						
B.4 Making me realize the need for change in the way my organization is managed						
B.5 Making me become personally involved in quality initiatives (e.g., training, improvement projects, etc.)						
B.6 Inspiring me for change						
B.7 Obtaining advice for implementing best practices and managing change						
B.8 Obtaining advice for translating the knowledge and skills that I learned about into real action						
B.9 Avoiding mistakes in implementing changes, by learning from the experience of others						

In this section you may state other ways in which the 4QC has contributed to creating an environment conducive to change

C. Practices

Please rate the extent to which the 4th Quality Conference has contributed to an increase in the degree of use of the following practices in your organization, relative to the situation at the time of the conference:

(1-Very Little; 5-Very Much; NA - Not Applicable)

	1	2	3	4	5	NA
C.1 Allocation of adequate resources for quality improvement initiatives						
C.2 Definition of clear performance goals for the organization						
C.3 Development of a strategic plan for change						
C.4 Focus on citizen needs						
C.5 Conduction of citizen satisfaction surveys						
C.6 Involvement of citizens in the design and improvement of services						
C.7 Employee training on best practices						
C.8 Employee involvement practices (e.g., suggestion schemes, team work to solve problems)						
C.9 Concession of incentives for quality improvement efforts						
C.10 Proposal of specific suggestions to improve the services offered to citizens						
C.11 Proposal of specific suggestions to improve working processes						
C.12 Conduction of benchmarking/benchlearning projects						
C.13 Definition of processes for managing the relationships with stakeholders (e.g., suppliers, public service partners, governments,						
C.14 Formal measurement of the performance of the organization (e.g., number of complaints, waiting times, etc.)						
C.15 Adoption of a formal framework for managing quality (e.g., ISO9000, EFQM Excellence Model, CAF, national certification scheme,						
C.16 Proposal of quality improvement or organizational development projects						
C.17 Consideration to social responsibility issues						

In this section you may indicate other practices which have become more widely used as a result of your participation in the 4th Quality Conference:

C.18. Overall Impact

	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Overall, to what extent has the participation in the conference contributed to and/or facilitated the implementation of any changes in your organization?						

(1-Very Little; 5-Very Much; NA – Not Applicable)

CAF Centre

C.19 Did you visit the “CAF Centre” at the 4QC?

- Yes
- No

If Yes:

CAF Centre	1	2	3	4	5	NA
C.20 To what extent has this initiative contributed to a better knowledge of CAF?						
C.21 To what extent has this initiative contributed to the implementation of CAF in your organization?						

(1-Very Little; 5-Very Much; NA – Not Applicable)

D. Barriers to action

What difficulties, if any, did you come across in transferring the knowledge and skills that you learned about in the 4QC into action? (e.g., what barriers did you find in proposing and/or implementing some of the practices considered above?)

(please select all that apply in a) and b))

a) Difficulties specific to my organization

- Lack of resources (money, time, people)
- Lack of top management commitment
- Political changes
- Fear and resistance to change
- “Not invented here” syndrome
- Projects already under way that would not be modified
- Organization too far behind, not ready for best practice

b) Difficulties specific to the conference

- A conference is not the proper forum to achieve effective knowledge transfer, regardless of how it is formatted and organized
- The conference format was not conducive to effective knowledge transfer
- The presented practices were not applicable in the context of my organization
- Inadequate information about how to adapt the practices and make them work
- Uncertainty about the merits of the presented practices and their likelihood of success
- Poor quality of the presentations
- Did not have enough prior knowledge to adequately absorb the concepts discussed in the conference

In this section you may indicate other difficulties related to the conference:

E. In this section you may provide any comments that may help improve the effectiveness of future quality Conferences:

A. (cont.)

4. I am
- Female
 - Male
5. My age
- Under 36
 - 36-45
 - 46-55
 - Over 55

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

*The Directorate General for Administration and Public Employment (DGAEP)
and the Catholic University of Portugal, on behalf of the Portuguese
Presidency of EU Council*



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Appendix 2

Questionnaire for participants from the Private and Non-Profit sectors.



Following your participation in the 4th Quality Conference (4QC) for Public Administrations in the EU (Tampere), we cordially invite you to take part in a survey that assesses the impact of the conference.

Your participation is very important and your contribution will help the organization of future events.

While we will keep your answers for statistical purposes, these will not be associated with your identification, thus ensuring absolute confidentiality.

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A. Please provide us with some information about the organization you work for, about your job and about the Quality Conferences you have attended.

1. My organization

1.1. Location (country / international organization / other)

[dropdown list]

(Albania, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, European Commission, International Organizations, Other)

1.2. Number of employees

- Less than or equal to 50
- 51 to 250
- 251 to 500
- 501 to 2500
- More than 2500

1.3. Length of employment with my organization

- Under 3 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- Over 10 years

2. My Job specification:

2.1. I work in the

- Public Sector
- Non-Profit Organization
- Private Sector

2.2

- Central Administration
- Local Administration
- Regional Administration
- European Institutions

2.3 I am a

Manager

Employee

3. My participation in quality conferences

3.1. I have participated in the following Quality Conferences

(Please select all that apply)

1QC - 1st Quality Conference (Lisbon 2000)

2QC – 2nd Quality Conference (Copenhagen 2002)

3QC – 3rd Quality Conference (Rotterdam 2004)

4QC – 4th Quality Conference (Tampere 2006)

3.2. In particular, I have participated in the 4th Quality Conference in order to:

(Please select all that apply)

Learn about best practices

Get inspiration for change

Seek further professional development

Get advice and knowledge to support the implementation of a specific project in my organization

Build networks

Be actively involved in the conference (e.g., as a speaker, facilitator, etc.)

Represent my organization

Other

3.3. Do you plan to attend the next Quality Conference?

Yes

No

Don't know yet

B. Please state the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements

(1-Strongly Disagree; 5-Strongly Agree; NA – Not Applicable)

“The participation in the conference has contributed to:”

	1	2	3	4	5	NA
B.1 Increased knowledge about best practices in public services						
B.2 Better understanding of the needs of public sector organizations						
B.3 Improved understanding of the rationale for some of the change initiatives that are taking place in the public sector in general						
B.4 Obtaining advice for translating the knowledge and skills that I learned about into real action						
B.5 Development of new products and/or services to public sector organizations						
B.6 Improved relationships with public sector organizations						

B7. Overall Impact

	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Overall, to what extent has the participation in the conference enabled you to offer improved support to Public Sector organizations?						

(1-Very Little; 5-Very Much; NA – Not Applicable)

C. In this section you may provide any comments that may help improve the effectiveness of future quality Conferences:

A. (cont.)

4. I am
- Female
 - Male

5. My age
- Under 36
 - 36-45
 - 46-55
 - Over 55

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

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