

Session 13 C: Quality management in resource centers

Key issues in quality management and implementation of the OECD Best Practice Guidelines

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Abstract:

A number of issues can be identified, which impact significantly the implementation and maintenance of quality management in culture collections. The issues reflect a variety of managerial operations and perspectives including continuous improvement, organizational behaviour, human resources management, customer relations and the core processes in the laboratories. In addition to these traditional key issues of quality management, mainly covered and endorsed by standards like ISO 9001 or ISO 17025, modern culture collection are faced with far-reaching issues in their shift towards a modern Biological Resource Center (BRC) according to the definition of the OECD. These are for example social and socio-economic tasks, sustainable financial management, balancing of commercial and scientific interests as equitable stakeholders, linkage to modern respective innovative information technologies and realisation of governmental and cross-national legislation in the fields of biotechnology and security interests. The transformational change from a national though networked repository for biological material towards a multi-task facility and part of a global infrastructure for the emerging knowledge-based bio-economy leads to a massive enlargement of managerial requirements and to a mutual standard in quality management. Thus the OECD Best Practice Guidelines took up the necessity to standardise and systematise the core activities of a BRC and offer a special tailored guideline covering most of the key issues. But although having a high coverage of all requirements in one single standard, the transition into the own organisation, the handling of increasing requirements coeval to diminishing financial support and the exposure to regulatory compliance is still a unsolved problem left to the individual BRCs and their quality managers. However, there has been no systematic attempt to organize and synthesize the various methods and prescriptions offered in theory, nor have measures of organizational quality management been proposed for modern culture collections respectively BRCs. A golden rule is difficult to set up as BRCs themselves mirror the diversity of organisational structures of small, large, complex, independent or dependent, profit or non-profit and state-run organisations or commercial enterprises. Nevertheless key issues, basic rules and critical factors for a successful implementation of an individual quality management or according to the OECD Best Practice Guideline can be established and synthesised in a chain of reasoning to gain a sustainable quality concept being manageable.

Key-words:

quality management, OECD Best Practice Guidelines, culture collection, BRC, standardisation, ISO 9001, ISO 17025,