INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF A Q-GOVERNMENT
(Rafael Pablo Molina Fernando)

Quality is not a myth in government nor institutionalizing a Quality Government (Q-Government) a far-fetched dream. Quality Governments (Q-Governments) now exist in advanced and developing countries. To better understand what a Q-Government is, a good understanding of **institutionalization** can give us a proper prospective.

Institutionalization is an on-going process in which a set of activities, structures, and values becomes an integral and sustainable part of an organization, society or nation. Quality Government (Q-government) defines institutionalization in the context of **total quality management** (**TQM**) as:

> *Quality Government(Q-Government) will be institutionalized when **total quality management** (**TQM**) practices, concepts and methodologies are formally and philosophically incorporated into the structure and functioning of all government mandate and public service structures, consistently implemented, and supported by a culture of quality, as reflected in organizational values, best business practices and policies that advocate efficient delivery of quality public service and ultimate protection of the citizenry.*

A government having the capacity to carry out technical quality activities such as defining quality standards, monitoring quality, conducting quality improvements, among others, does not ensure that total quality management is institutionalized. A government that enables the initiation, growth, and continuity of quality management activities must also incorporate supportive policies, quality leadership and structures that support performance excellence of a Q-government (based on the *criteria for performance excellence* outlined in the Malcolm Baldrige or Philippine Quality Awards quality system). There must also be evidence of full top management support of adequate resource allocation that emphasize the importance of quality and encourage government workers and managers to practice total quality management principles as part of their daily work. In short, every government agency and office must carry out this quality requirement as part and parcel of institutionalizing a Q-Government.

The desired outcome is always *quality* and this often require a change in attitude and sense of ownership for the quality of services provided by the Q-Government. If we honestly want a quality output, then it is imperative to have a sustained continuous improvement system that totally supports the quality management system. Many supporting factors are required to integrate *quality* into the structure and function of a government organization. But prior to institutionalizing a *Quality Government,* the mechanism of change (or you may call it *"the philosophy of change"*) has to be fully understood and accepted as the guiding principle. Change, per se, operate under two factors: **Principle** and **Process. Principle** is the source or cause from which a thing comes; settled rule of action or conduct. It is the fundamental or general truth upon which others are founded. **Process**, on the other hand, is action which continues and progresses; operation or succession of operations leading to some results, under a given *principle* from which it operates. A good example here is the flow of water which naturally moves downward because of gravity. Gravitation is the **"principle"** from which water flows downward and the inherent nature of water (i.e., its fluidity or liquidity) allows it or governs it to flow downward-- the **"process".** This is the so-called "philosophy of change", the *principle* and *process of change.* Change, per se, is governed by a principle and at the same time, a given process. The two elements of change cannot be separated, nor should it be analyzed separately. It is always integral by nature. Many modern day "quality practitioners" now call this the Yin and Yang of Change or the Yin and Yang of Management **(i.e., the principle and process).** Similarly, a Q-Government exists where the head of the nation, government officials, executives, managers and government workers (i.e., *as public servants)* want it to exist, and are willing to work together in creating it for themselves. Even the citizenry is included in the formation and institutionalization of a Q-Government. In short, the *Yin* and *Yang of Management* or the *principle* and *process of change* govern the *systems and people.* There is no other way but to understand and surrender to this governing

principle-and-process of change, before we (as a nation) can institutionalize a Q-Government, if we want it to be part of our culture or civilization. Q-Government and/or Total Quality Management (TQM) is not a programme, it is a "principle-and-process of change".

Total Quality Management or TQM requires the formulation of a *system* as a principle of order by which to achieve Quality Government (Q-Government). Governed by the principle-and-process of change, many supporting factors are required to integrate *quality* into the structure and function of a Q-government. These are the cornerstones which we call the essential elements of institutionalization. The cornerstones of institutionalizing a quality government (Q-government) are: *a) Internal Quality Environment, b) Quality Structure, c) Quality Support Services.* All complex organizations and nations are built up by recognizing and internalizing the "*principle-and-process of change"* and that no business or society can develop into large dimensions apart from *system,* and these cornerstones are preeminently the instrument of total quality management, sustainable growth, authentic development and modern management sciences.

The Internal Quality Environment

Total quality management calls for an internal enabling environment conducive to initiating, expanding, sustaining a continuous improvement of *quality* to institutionalize Q-Government. The enabling environment features quality elements interacting and integral to each other. These are:

> **Quality Policy:** Written policies that support quality throughout the entire organization through clear, explicit, and communicated directives and provision for resources, guidance, and reinforcement for Quality Management System as an integral part of the organization.

> **Quality Leadership:** Leaders, particularly top management, who work directly and openly to improve quality by setting priorities, modeling core values, promoting a continuous learning and improvement atmosphere, acting on recommendations, advocating for supportive quality policies, and allocating resources for Quality.

> **Quality Core Values:** Organizational values are articulated, promoted, and practiced. It is not just "walk your talk", but *"walk and talk at the same time".* These values and virtues, if you may call it that way, emphasize quality of product/service, ongoing learning, workforce care, customer intimacy, continuous improvement of processes, services and systems, innovation and public accountability of service through clear metrics and measurement of performance, both individual and organizational.

> **Adequate Resources:** Top management must show evidence of adequate resource allocation that emphasize the importance of quality and encourage government workers and managers to practice total quality management principles as part of their daily work.

Quality Structure to Support Implementation of TQM

Quality structures requires a clear delineation of oversight duties and responsibilities and accountability for the implementation of the total quality management systems. There is no "best" structure, nor a correct one. Whatever forms the quality structure takes, institutionalization of a quality government needs mechanism to ensure oversight, coordination, delegation of duties and responsibilities, accountability, qualitative and quantitative measurement of performance.

> **Oversight:** Quality structure address where the responsibility for oversight of quality activities lies. This oversight includes quality leadership and support in developing quality strategic direction, setting priorities, follow-up, monitoring of progress, alignment of department objectives with corporate goals and technical support of the quality management system.

Coordination: The nature of TQM calls for coordination of efforts and integration of functions from (almost) everyone in the organization. Quality is everyone's responsibility, as such, TQM is a closely integrated, coordinated, measured, monitored and communicated initiative.

Duties & responsibilities: The quality structure for TQM is manifested in how roles and responsibilities for performing quality activities are divided and delegated within the organization. All Job Descriptions (JDs) clearly express one's duties and responsibilities in delivering, directly or indirectly, the quality product/service of the organization.

Accountability: Everyone is accountable to quality and the results of one's job. Measurable outputs are clearly defined (quality and quantity). Quality Leadership is highly critical in boosting the quality awareness and accountability, as evidenced by the availability of proper and adequate resources.

Quality Support Services

In addition to creating an internal quality environment conducive to a culture of quality, the day-to-day implementation of the TQM initiatives require more specific types of support, particularly capacity building, communication of quality initiatives, logistics, financial management and rewarding quality work.

Capacity Building: Capacity building refers to the ongoing process of ensuring that the workforce have the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitude to carry out their quality duties and responsibilities as outlined in the TQM initiatives and functions. Capacity building is essential for the sustainable development and growth of the quality government (q-government). Institutionalization of a Q-Government requires that all workforce and managers receive initial and continuing knowledge and skill development in TQM practices, methodologies and concepts.

On-going Mentoring & Coaching: Coaching and mentoring provide ongoing technical and qualitative support to facilitate the behavior changes needed to institute a Q-Government.

Supervision: Supportive supervision requires enhancing the facilitating role of the supervisor, assuring that they have a foundation of Quality-expertise, as well as teaching supervisors how to observe, give feedback, and assess a situation.

Communication of TQM initiatives: Communication is never a one-way street. It is a two-way interaction, with information imparted from various parts of the organization to staff within the organization, to the communities being served, and to other stakeholders, including policy makers, and then received back from these sources. Quality communication shall allow for the identification of priority areas for quality improvement efforts, reinforcement of core values, and demonstration of results for advocacy, benchmarking, and change management. Compliance management is part and parcel of communication of TQM initiatives, so are the recording, sharing and using the results of the TQM initiatives.

Logistics & financial management: These two are major parts of the quality support services to be adequately provided by top management. Infrastructures in various forms are also very critical in instituting a quality government, e.g., IS-ICT, MIS, buildings, roads & bridges, schools, etc.

Rewarding Quality Work: Institutionalizing a Q-Government requires developing incentives that can stimulate and reward workers for participating in establishing and sustaining a quality government. Incentives can be material or non-material, such as public recognition of staff to foster employee self-esteem and encourage their continual efforts. Even giving awards and incentives to the public citizenry or private companies to gain their support is also a critical aspect of institutionalization of a Q-Government.
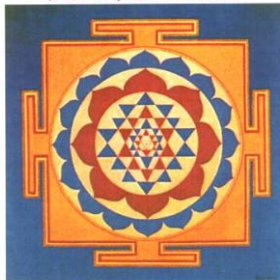
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