

Quality Action CASE STUDY

1. Name and country of the organisation

(Please state the name and the country of the organisation that implemented this practical application of a QA/QI tool as part of Quality Action. We do not publish this information unless you agree. You can remain anonymous by adjusting the settings at the end of this form.)

Hellenic Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (KEELPNO)- Ministry of Health
Greece

2. Authors of the case study and contact details

(Please provide then name of the author(s) of this case study and any contact names, Email address or websites where readers can access more information about this practical application of a QA/QI tool.)

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3. External support (facilitators/partners/technical assistance)

(Please list the names of other organisations and/or people who were involved in this practical application of a QA/QI tool, e.g. project partners, technical assistance, external stakeholders etc..)

Ursula von Rügen, for revision and coordination of external quality improvement recommendations and assessments

Stakeholder involvement was ensured by using the Succeed tool in all phases of the implementation of the Joint Action. The resulting quality improvement suggestions were taken into account when completing the QIP tool questionnaire.

4. Project/programme

(Please briefly describe the project/programme to which you applied the tool.)

KEELPNO was appointed by the Hellenic Ministry of Health (MoH) to implement the Joint Action 'Quality Action' in Greece. KEELPNO participates as associate partner in work packages 4,5,6,7 and 8. A scientific, multidisciplinary staff team of 5 HIV experts was appointed to work on the project, both for fulfilling European level tasks and for working on the implementation in Greece. Tools were applied to the part of our contribution that concerns the Quality Action Implementation in Greece. Major HIV implementing organizations were approached through the M&E process for Dublin Declaration/GARP reporting. A voluntary registration for training and tool application, supported by the KEELPNO team, and an open process for selection were established. The team used the effective process and communication model provided by Quality Action, duplicating and adjusting it to the country's needs.

Our overall goal was to increase the effectiveness of HIV prevention in Greece by using practical Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Improvement (QI) tools. What we aim to achieve is:

1. to build a Quality Action team at KEELPNO in order to provide capacity building and technical assistance to HIV implementers in Greece
2. to train at least 30 national HIV implementers in QA/QI tools, who will implement tools in their projects/programs
3. to support at least 15 tool applications in Greece
4. to collect and analyse data on the process and results
5. to create a network of HIV experts actively involved in incorporating QA/QI tools at the project/program and policy level.

5. Goals/aims of applying the QA/QI tool

(Please list the goals you wanted to achieve with the practical application of the tool.)

The aims of applying quality improvement tools in our national implementation of Quality Action are:

1. Assess what is working well, what improvement actions need to be taken, by whom and in what time frame
2. Enhance the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of our project
3. Increase the level of networking among national and European stakeholders
4. Build team spirit, enhance internal communication and work satisfaction
5. Collect evidence that documents the work accomplished through the project
6. Program next steps

Applying the Succeed tool is a self-assessment quality improvement procedure was used in order to assess and improve the Quality Action team work and stakeholder involvement in our efforts for national training and practical application. The QIP tool was used to help improve the quality of evaluation design so that the national program has a meaningful description of what has been done, what are the measurable results, outcomes, operating environment and activities that have been implemented. By involving external experts we can use their advice to better describe what we have achieved and include their suggestions in planning future steps.

6. Tool and methodology used

(Please indicate which of the five tools you used (Succeed, QIP, PQD, PIQA, Schiff) and briefly sketch out the steps and measures of how you applied it.)

QIP is a quality improvement tool that uses 7 quality assurance dimensions with 22 sub dimensions. The external QIP assessment offers a detailed profile of the project or programme against the quality dimensions and sub-dimensions.

Two members of the Quality Action team of KEELPNO used the tool in the three phases of the project implementation, in the beginning, in the middle and at the end.

In the 1st phase the team of two facilitators worked on completing the first 7 sections of QIP in order to identify gaps in the project and shortfalls in skills and knowledge, as well as identify the links between needs, objectives, methods and effects.

In the 2nd phase the team of two facilitators worked in reassessing the information completed in the questionnaire sections 1-7 and proceeded with completing sessions 8-11, in order to identify where operating environments need to change in order to improve the project and services. We used the information from SUCCEED tool application to take into account the opinion and suggestions of our stakeholders.

In the 3rd phase the final completion of QIP questionnaire took place. QIP will be sent for external assessment and recommendations will be used to improve the quality of evaluation design so that our project will have more meaningful descriptions of measurable results, outcomes and operating environments and also for future steps.

7. Results and benefits of applying the QA/QI tool

(Please describe what resulted from applying the tool and if and how your project/programme benefitted.)

The use of the tool helped us to:

- a. Critically think about the goals and process initially planned.
- b. QIP helped us to ensure that our work is implemented in a targeted, comprehensive, effective and sustainable way.
- c. It helped us, through its structured way of asking questions, to formulate our replies and create the technical report on the implementation of Quality Action on the national level.

We are expecting that the external QIP assessment will help us document that the project is quality-assured and based upon quality dimensions and up-to-date knowledge and to improve our evaluation design, as it offers the advantage of independent, external quality assessment.

8. Recommendations

(Please describe the lessons learnt from positive and negative experiences during the process of using the tool itself and about the quality of projects/programmes like yours.)

QIP requires in-depth knowledge of all aspects of the project, and very experienced facilitators in order to fill in the questionnaire. It is necessary and useful in case of the HIV project implementers who want recommendations for improvement from external objective experts according to standardized criteria.

-Tool Fit: QIP should be used for big projects and programs when there is a need for a high level of documentation and external assessment. It is not particularly useful for small projects and involvement of stakeholders in discussion, as it is not organized in a participatory way but rather an interaction between the facilitators and the external experts. The tool doesn't provide timely information for quality improvement changes derived from the team and stakeholders as it depends to external expert opinion. On the other hand, the external opinion is of high quality.

-Planning and Preparation: the implementation of the tool needs extensive planning and preparation concerning the gathering of the information requested in the form, as well as further assessments across the project time line and all implementation phases. A plan for the implementation of the tool should start early in the process of the project. A plan for involvement of stakeholders should be carefully designed. In our case we used information from applying the Succeed tool.

-Facilitation of the practical application. The practical application of the tool needs experienced personnel or else one should use an external facilitator. It is time consuming, more than the two weeks suggested.

-Available Resources. The tool has to be used in English as the external experts are not yet country based. In our case this wasn't a limitation as this project was part of the EU Quality Action. But for other projects this could be a limitation. The development of a pool of experts that can provide such an external expert opinion after the end of the EU Quality Action should be taken into account for sustainability purposes.

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Please send the filled in case study to carolin.vierneisel@dah.aidshilfe.de

Thank you!