

*TEXTOS EN INGLÉS*



## EFQM SELF-ASSESSMENT IN THE GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF CADASTRE

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### INITIATIVES IN QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Assessment of the results of any activity is unquestionably an essential component of sound activity planning. One can hardly expect to achieve effective performance of a process without first reflecting on the purpose of that process, on the tools necessary for execution, and on how to measure achievement of its goals.

Planning, involving the need to define problems, establish an operating model, and design solutions in the form of action and innovation plans; and also to articulate the expected results of the plan, the resources to be dedicated, the implementation procedures to be used, and the feedback and assessment mechanisms to be applied (1), has always been a characteristic of the Cadastre's corporate culture.

Nor is the concept of quality management new to the General Directorate of Cadastre, which has reflected deeply on the services it provides, its public image and the perception of these services held by citizens, the Administrations and other external clients; on the participation of its employees as internal clients; and also on the need to introduce permanent improvements to enable the provision of efficient and effective services which moreover meet the level of quality expected by the public (2), in accordance with Law 30/1992, of 26 November, on the Legal System of Public Administrations and Common Administrative Procedure, and Law 6/1997, of 14 April, on Organisation and Operation of the State General Administration.

Activities in this area began in 1997, with the preparation of the "Cadastre Quality Plan Presentation Document" which established several fundamental principles for action aimed at achieving the following objectives: to involve the organisation in the new

management model; to raise the awareness of Cadastre employees regarding the need to implement Total Quality; to consider the citizen as the Cadastre's key client; to establish a methodology for the preparation and implementation of Quality Projects in Territorial Offices; to select and test the European Model (EFQM) as quality assurance system of choice; and to introduce a system of progress monitoring of the Quality Projects based on feedback from internal and external clients, objective analysis of results, and self-assessment, seeking continuous improvement in service delivery.

Of the numerous specific actions that make up the Quality Plan, we will briefly mention the following: the survey of Cadastre personnel, which received 1,690 voluntary, anonymous responses, analysis of which provided knowledge of internal opinion on the level of quality in the organisation (3); permanent training in quality management for Cadastre personnel (4), and deployment of the training plan to Territorial Offices; regular benchmarking between Cadastral offices and with other organisations (5); participation in quality management forums; specific actions to improve service quality (6); continuous analysis of the needs

(3) Taking into account that quality management is based on the full involvement of all personnel in the organisation where it is applied, the survey process is considered vital. The Cadastre therefore used a 19-item questionnaire to survey employee opinion of the services provided, the location and condition of Cadastral offices, and their job functions, allowing an essential and minimum analysis with which to start the process.

(4) Within an ambitious training plan covering all subjects associated with the Cadastral service, in the area of quality management we can refer to the training in management techniques for Cadastre managers provided since 1998 through the School of the Ministry of Finance; and courses on the EFQM Quality Management Model delivered throughout 2003 and in March 2004 at the Institute of Financial Studies for Cadastre managers, and through the Annual Training Programme of the office of the Undersecretary of Finance conducted in April and May 2004, for other employee levels.

With regard to deployment of the training plan, the annual meetings of the Executive Council with Cadastre managers have dedicated several work sessions to the analysis of actions in this regard.

(5) As an example we can cite the first Public Administration Quality Seminar, held in Seville in October 2003, with participation of the State Agency of Tax Administration, the Social Security Treasury Department, several Regional Governments and Local Authorities.

An example of benchmarking is the implementation of PADECA, a help tool for presentation of cadastral statements, based on PADRE, which has represented electronic delivery of a large number of cadastral statements, in some cases of up to 60% of the total presented.

(6) The Cadastre's help line attended 532.118 calls in 2005 and scheduled more than 80.000 appointments – thus avoiding queues for service in the technical services departments of Cadastral Offices. The Virtual Land Registry Office, which allows free or restricted access to certain data residing in the Cadastral database, receives 26.690 consumer visits, nearly 27 million map consultations (2005) and issued 1 million certificates.

(1) On this subject, see Friedman, John, "Planning in the public sphere". Estudios collection, Ministry of Public Administrations, Madrid 2001, page 62 and following. Prof. Friedman defines planning as "an activity that precedes both decision and action" and that attempts to join scientific and technical knowledge to actions in the public sphere.

(2) See Ferrari Márquez, J. and Pérez Pérez, J., "Customer Service Improvement Plan of the Seville Cadastral Management Offices". Revista CT/Catastro n. 44, May 2002. The authors, Regional Managers of this office, offer a detailed description of the customer service improvement process.

of external clients, through questionnaires completed by visitors to Cadastral offices which also enable verification of the fulfillment of the service promises contained in the Service Charter; improvements in territorial office buildings; participation in the awards organised by the Administration through the Ministry of Public Administrations or the Ministry of Finance, and other organisations; approval by the Executive Council of 48 Quality Projects proposed and executed by various departments of the Management Centre; modification of the syllabus for access to management positions in the Ministry of Finance, to include subjects related with quality management; and Quality workshops for new interns and the necessary training in quality management as part of their process of introduction to Public Administration.

The service charter merits specific attention. Following the system established by Royal Decree 1259/99, of 16 July, regulating service charters and quality awards, the cadastre's service charter was authorised by Resolution of the office of the Undersecretary of Finance on 22 February 2000 (published by the B.O.E. on 3 March). The charter informs citizens of the services provided by the Cadastre, their general and specific rights, and the commitment to quality assumed by the organisation over and above legal requirements (7). Likewise, the e-service charter was approved by Resolution of the office of the Undersecretary of Finance on 8 January 2004.

To achieve full compliance with the commitments acquired at the time of the first charter, a new edition of the service charter is now being prepared. The new charter will include improvements to existing services, and new services provided through e-Cadastre or Cadastral Information Points. The charter will also include, where possible, commitments relative to services provided jointly by the Cadastre with Local Authorities (8). The study of these commitments and their materialisation is the task of the Quality Group, formed under the Technical Committee for Cadastral Cooperation, whose mission and structure are regulated in Article 5 of Royal Legislative Decree

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Cadastral Information Points, installed in the offices of numerous Local Authorities, are the newest formula to make Cadastral information available to the public, and a good example of the materialisation of the wide-reaching system of partnerships used by the General Directorate of Cadastre. However, in spite of this initiative, visitors to Cadastral offices still total 1.400.000 YTD.

(7) The service charter is also a clear result of the participation of all the organisation's employees, since the commitments included in the charter were agreed in various work sessions between management and personnel in different functional areas of the Cadastre, both at specific events and in Regional and Territorial Management meetings. An annual report is submitted to the General Inspector's Office of the Ministry of Finance on the degree of compliance with charter commitments. Results to date have been satisfactory, and in several cases have exceeded objectives.

(8) This is a long-standing aspiration of the cadastral organisation and of the Spanish Federation of Local and Provincial Authorities, whose materialisation in the short term will depend to a certain extent on future legislation, since the regulation of inter-administrative charters has appeared only recently, in Royal Decree 951/2005 of 29 July, establishing the general framework for the improvement of quality in the State General Administration, in article 8.3.

1/2004, of 5 March, approving the merged text of the Law of Real Estate Cadastre.

As stated previously, the Cadastre's Quality Plan chose to base itself on the EFQM quality assurance model (9), and has applied the fundamental concepts of this model, beginning with Management ownership for implementation and deployment of the plan.

Certainly, these initiatives would not have been possible without the evident existence in the organisation of one of the fundamental concepts of the EFQM model, that of Management ownership. The Cadastre's management has implemented and deployed the quality management system, maintaining a constancy of purpose to overcome the initial resistance to change that arises in any organisation. This ownership was extended to other principles, such as the importance of people, client focus, recognition, the preference for work well done, management by processes and facts, and the constant development of partnerships; all imbued with ethics as an additional sustaining element of quality management. An additional accomplishment was to achieve the participation of Management Centre personnel in the new quality management system.

Management ownership enabled approval by the Executive Council on 28 December 2004 of the "Cadastre Quality Plan Document" (10). The document states the organisation's mission, vision and values, policy and strategy within the framework of Total Quality, the assessment of progress towards excellence, and the implementation, revision and adaptation of the quality system. It also establishes specific entities responsible for driving and controlling quality management, both in the national structure and in the Regional Offices.

The Quality Plan states (11) that "assessment allows organisations to measure where they are on the road to excellence, analysing gaps or barriers to achievement and stimulating the search for solutions". The plan also specifies the different types of assessment available.

The afore-mentioned activities, and cadastral management as a whole, have been subject to continuous assessment in the form of regular audits of the Cadastre's Central Services and Territorial Offices, performed by the General Service Inspection department of the Ministry of Finance for presentation to Awards organised by different Administrations (12). Another assessment tool are the questionnaires, mentioned previously, used by Cadastral offices to verify the level of compliance with the service

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(9) Only the Regional Office of Cadastre in Cataluña has obtained ISO certification, due to the fact that, in matters of cadastral management, it shares some processes with the Barcelona Local Authority, therefore requiring that said processes be certified by the same quality system.

(10) This document is available to all Cadastre employee on the organisation's Intranet, and to the public on the Cadastre's website . [www.catastro@meh.es](http://www.catastro@meh.es).

(11) Page 41 of the Quality Plan.

(12) The General Directorate of Cadastre has earned a Distinction for Best Management Practice, awarded by the Ministry of Finance in 2001. In 2002 and 2003, it earned two Honourable Mentions for the Regional Offices of Andalucía and Castilla y León. Lastly, it won the Best Practice Award for the Cadastre Help Line, in the 4th edition of the Award held in 2003, organised by the Ministry of Public Administrations.

promises contained in the service charter and which enable the Cadastre to monitor consumer opinion of some of the organisation's services and the installations where these services are provided (13).

It is worth mentioning that, since the introduction of the quality management system in 1997, the General Directorate of Cadastre performs a monthly review of fulfillment of the objectives assigned annually to the Regional and Territorial Offices.

## PRINCIPLES INSPIRING EFQM SELF-ASSESSMENT

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned assessments, we should not lose sight of the choice of the European Model of quality management and the goal of the General Directorate of Cadastre to achieve excellence in this field. Despite this, a global, systematic and regular examination of the activities mentioned previously, and of the results of the General Directorate of Cadastre in comparison with EFQM, had never been performed. Nor did the organisation have accurate knowledge of the opinion of internal clients regarding application of the criteria of the Model (14).

Action plans had been designed based on several analyses: of the service quality considered necessary in accordance with the mission and vision of the General Directorate of Cadastre; of the different client segments, and the level of quality it was estimated that these clients expected; of the questionnaires submitted by the Cadastral offices, completed by service users; of the feedback obtained in meetings held with other Administrations (15), Notaries and Property Registrars; and lastly, the continuous analysis of complaints and suggestions presented to the Council for the Defence of the Taxpayer (16).

(13) The surveys basically ask the opinion of customers visiting Cadastral offices regarding the time they wait for service, the service received or the quality of data. Analysis of their answers is a fundamental tool in the goal of continuous improvement.

(14) Some cadastral offices in Andalusia had already implemented this process internally. Their initiatives received an Honourable Mention for Best Practice in the Awards organised by the Ministry of Finance.

(15) As stated previously, Royal Decree 1/2004, of 5 March, approving the merged text of the Law of Real Estate Cadastre, regulates in Article 5 the Technical Committee for Cadastral Cooperation, headed by the General Director of Cadastre and formed by six representatives of the General Directorate and six representatives from the largest national association of Local Entities. Since constitution, the Committee has held ten meetings to date, which have served not only to keep the Spanish Federation of Local and Provincial Authorities informed of Cadastral activities and regulatory projects, but also to listen to their opinions and to the expectations of Local Entities, which represent the majority of Cadastral clients.

(16) The Council for the Defence of the Taxpayer, regulated by Royal Decree 2548/1996 and by Decision and Instruction of the Secretary of State for Tax on 14 February 1997, issues an Annual Report that includes the complaints and suggestions presented to this Entity related with the departments of said Secretary of State. The Cadastre performs a systematic analysis of the complaints presented and has adopted all possible measures to improve the services receiving the largest number of complaints.

For this reason, the self-assessment was carried out in the following phases:

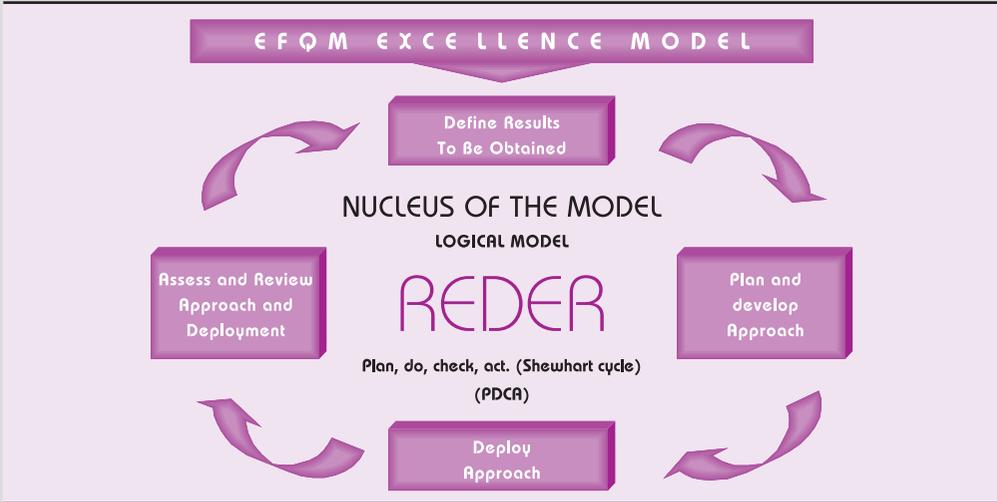
1. Training in EFQM and self-assessment for the organisation's employees, particularly the members of the self-assessment groups in the 52 Territorial Offices and in central services who, obviously, were already familiar with cadastral management.
2. Constitution of a facilitator team, tasked, among other things, to analyse and adapt the EFQM questionnaire –consisting of 120 questions– to the characteristics of the Cadastre, to perform tests with the material, and to prepare a glossary of the terms used in the questionnaire to ensure their understanding by the organisation's employees.
3. Constitution of the self-assessment groups.
4. Completion of the questionnaire, documentation of the meetings held for this purpose, and collection of results.
5. Reception by the Cadastre's central services of the self-assessment results obtained in each of the 52 Territorial Offices and in central services itself, and compilation of the global results of the organisation.
6. Analysis of the scores obtained in each dimension of the questionnaire, and communication of results throughout the organisation.
7. Identification of strengths and areas for improvement.
8. Constitution of improvement and action planning groups, and communication throughout the organisation.
9. Implementation of improvement actions and progress monitoring.
10. Process review and new self-assessment.

The entire process has been carried out in accordance with a series of principles, chief among which are the uniformity of criteria across the entire General Directorate of Cadastre, affecting all Cadastral offices simultaneously; the voluntary participation of the assessment team; scoring by consensus; transparency for the entire organisation regarding the results obtained in each Cadastral office; the goal of continuous improvement and the revision and regularity of self-assessment (17).

It is not the goal of this brief reflection to refer to the system described in the EFQM self-assessment model and its implementation in the Spanish Public Administration system, but rather to refer to the initiatives taken by the General Directorate of Cadastre in quality management, and their adaptation to the REDAR logical model, up to the assessment phase. Consequently, only development of the model is described here.

(17) The process described briefly in this paper is available on the Cadastre's Intranet site, accessible to all employees of the Management Centre, and containing, among other data, the score obtained in each EFQM criterion by the self-assessed Cadastral offices, the number of people participating in the groups, global scores, and average scores for the organisation.

Figure 1  
REDAR logical model



The following describes development of the process described in Figure 1.

**METHODOLOGY FOR EFQM SELF-ASSESSMENT**

**Constitution of the Facilitator Team**

Formed by Cadastre employees in central services and Territorial offices, to perform a preliminary analysis of the EFQM questionnaire and to prepare a glossary of the terms included in the model, adapting them to the organisation’s own terminology. The members of this team have continued to participate in the various groups formed to develop the process.

**Training**

As mentioned previously, after completion of the first phase of ownership and leadership culminating in the approval of the Quality Plan by the Cadastre’s Executive Council, training in EFQM self-assessment began, with a series of courses aimed initially at Deputy Directors General, Advisory Council members, and the Cadastre’s Regional and Territorial managers. Through the programme provided by the Institute of Tax Studies, these senior managers attended specific seminars and workshops in March 2004.

The next step in this phase was a Train the Trainer course in the EFQM system, organised by the office of the Undersecretary of Finance for 35 employees (two from each of the 16 Regional Offices and three from central services). These in turn trained Cadastre employees –including those who would later form the self-assessment groups– in the EFQM model and self-assessment system. This phase was completed in May 2004.

**Process development**

In order to achieve the goal of uniformity of criteria per the EFQM self-assessment model, the Quality Area of the General Directorate of Cadastre issued instructions to all branches regarding the size of the work groups, timescales for response to questionnaires and templates to document the process.

Of the Cadastre’s 2.850 employees, 24% –646 people– participated in this process, representing all groups and levels of Administration and the different functional areas of the Cadastre (18).

In order to document the process across the organisation, the Quality Area of central services collected the names of participants, the names of the coordinators of the self-assessment groups –appointed by group members– and the proposed calendar of meetings considered necessary to answer the questionnaire. The minutes of group meetings were prepared at the respective offices, for submittal to central services for inclusion in the process documentation described.

The meetings of the self-assessment groups were held between June and October 2004.

Systematic documentation of the working sessions, the scores obtained for each EFQM criteria, and the global results of each office, allowed the Quality Area of the Cadastre’s central services to

(18) Following EFQM guidelines on the number of participants in the self-assessment process, the Cadastre’s central services recommended that the groups comprise between 15% and 20% of personnel in each office. However, the number of people interested in participating exceeded this percentage, and the organisation considered that it was more important to encourage this interest than to strictly comply with recommendations.

perform a detailed analysis of the process, carried out in November 2004, and later communicate findings to the organisation, beginning with the annual Management meeting held in January 2005 (see Figure 2: *Self-assessment in the General Directorate of Cadastre. Central Services* [p. 14-16]).

The analysis of results generated several findings, including the following:

1. The difficulty of adapting the terminology of the EFQM self-assessment questionnaire to the cadastral organisation.
2. Verification of the evolution for the definition of scores in the assessment meetings, from the initial median or mode of all responses, through to a consensus score following the exchange of information among group members.
3. Significant differences were observed in the scores obtained by some offices.
4. Identification of the organisation's strengths and areas of improvement (19).
5. The coincidence among the different cadastral offices regarding which of the EFQM model criteria they valued most and least, and (20) the fact that these valuations also confirmed, to a large degree, the expectations of the Management Centre regarding strengths and areas of improvement.

### Areas of improvement

The Quality area of central services merged the proposals for improvement submitted by the self-assessment groups and established an operating strategy to take the process forward.

Firstly, twelve areas of improvement were identified, listed below:

1. Internal and external communication plan.
2. General Directorate of Cadastre Strategic Plan.
3. Performance appraisal.
4. Processes and innovations in methodology.
5. Training plan.
6. Customer surveys and satisfaction indicators.
7. New Employee Orientation protocol and manual.
8. Organisation charts and codes of responsibility.
9. People and the re-distribution of work.
10. Register: improvements in the reception and registration of dossiers.
11. Actions aimed at increasing society's knowledge of the cadastral organisation.
12. Environmental awareness programme.

Taking into account that several of these improvements were proposed by the majority of self-assessed cadastral offices, the Secretary General's area established a procedure designed to optimise the efficiency of the work to be undertaken. Thus, a same improvement area was assigned to several cadastral offices, and each of these form a work group headed by a coordinator.

In turn, the group coordinators together form a coordination team per area of improvement, whose leader is selected from among its members (see Figure 3).

Overall coordination is the responsibility of the Secretary General's area, which has established the procedure for documenting the process, prioritised improvement areas, and established timescales for delivery (21). On the other hand, the scheduling and organisation of working sessions of the cadastral office groups and of the improvement area coordination team are the responsibility of each.

The objective of each improvement area is described below:

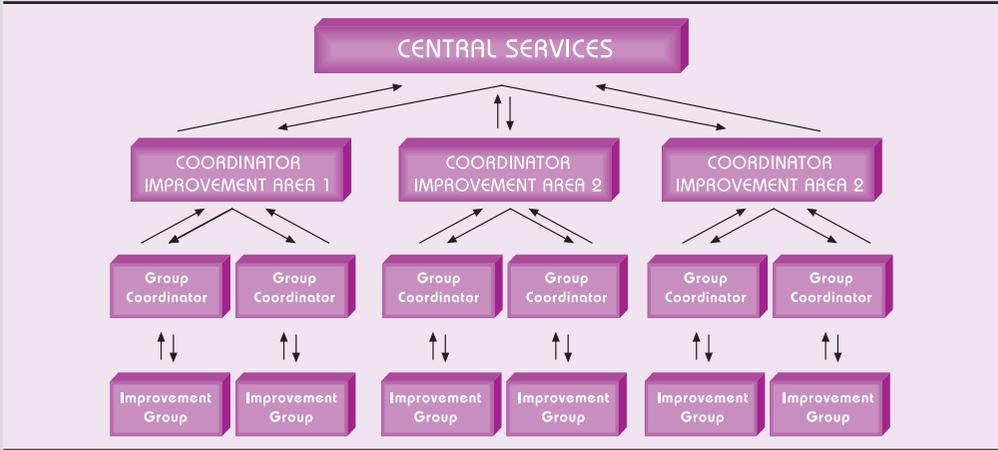
1. Increase and improve the organisation's internal and external communication channels, design a formal communication plan and distribute its contents throughout the General Directorate of Cadastre.
2. Plan strategic actions, and define key processes, development plans and tools to achieve the policies identified by the Management Centre. Communicate throughout the organisation.
3. Perform a functional analysis of job positions and determine workload in each. Where necessary, re-adjust workload to achieve balance. Performance measurement and definition of recognition criteria.
4. Prepare manuals of all processes (legal, technical, and systems-related) used in the General Directorate, defining process owners in each phase as well as a system to maintain and update the manuals.
5. Design an integrated training plan for the entire organisation, that addresses both job-related training needs and the personal expectations of promotion and professional development of Cadastre employees.
6. Improve the existing customer satisfaction indicator system and define systems that will provide an understanding of the demands, needs and expectations of citizens regarding the Cadastre and to assess their level of satisfaction with products and services.
7. Establish a New Employee Orientation process (protocol) to achieve uniform incorporation of

(19) The EFQM model criteria most valued in the largest number of assessed branches were Partnerships and Resources; Key Results; Leadership; and Processes. The least valued include Results in People or Results in Society, which demonstrates the absence of sufficiently applied indicators in the organisation.

(20) One of the permanent objectives of the General Directorate of Cadastre is to drive a policy of partnerships, therefore satisfactory results in this area had already been obtained and were well known to Cadastre employees before the self-assessment exercise. The 718 cadastral management agreements in existence today are sufficient illustration.

(21) The numbering of the improvement areas remains unchanged to facilitate their identification throughout the process, and is reproduced here. Documented proposals for solutions in areas 1, 2, 5, 7 and 10 are scheduled for completion in November 2005, independently of their revision following verification of the self-assessment process. The remaining areas, and the documents reflecting the improvement proposals, can remain open to suggestions throughout 2006, notwithstanding the fact that partial improvements approved may be implemented in the organisation.

Figure 3  
Work process in the Areas of Improvement



new employees in all work centres. This measure includes the preparation of a manual describing the organisation and containing all necessary information for the performance by the new employee of his/her tasks.

8. Analyse the functional organisation charts of cadastral offices and central services.
9. Prepare a Human Resources Plan, starting with a definition of the initial situation in each aspect (e.g. motivation, adaption of people to their job positions, training) on which to base action plans.
10. Design a process for the reception and registration of dossier documentation, seeking to improve the existing procedure and to process, in a consistent and efficient manner across all cadastral offices, all documents entering their registers. Short-term results of this process should include a reduction in processing times and increased satisfaction of internal and external clients.
11. Prepare a document establishing channels and actions in the area of communication, with the goal of increasing public awareness and knowledge of the Cadastre, its functions and its relevance, and to improve its corporate image.
12. Establish and document guidelines for environmental awareness, transmitting to the organisation the importance of preserving the environment and establishing rules of respectful conduct. Design specific measures to eliminate physical barriers in Cadastral offices.

Analysis of the process allows us to confirm that if participation in the EFQM self-assessment phase involved 24% of the organisation's employees, the process of proposing solutions for each improvement area now involves 403 people, i.e. 14% of the organisation, and both central services and the territorial

offices of the Cadastre are involved in the organisation's improvement projects.

**Future perspectives**

With the goal of continuous improvement and of maintaining the process of quality measurement as a fundamental component of quality management, the most immediate projects are the communication of the solutions proposed for each area of improvement, the implementation of these solutions, and their verification by means of a new EFQM self-assessment.

Of the twelve improvement areas proposed, five are scheduled for completion in November 2005, at which time their contents must be distributed immediately to all Cadastre employees and the measures adopted for each must be implemented. Following implementation, a new self-assessment will be performed in order to achieve continuous improvement and the optimum adaptation of the quality management applied by the General Directorate of Cadastre to the model adopted by the Spanish Public Administration system in the pursuit of excellence.

Further actions to continue the process of quality management will include the improved systemisation in the analysis of demand and of evaluation of service user satisfaction; the approval of a new service charter, improving upon existing conditions of service delivery; and the ongoing analysis of complaints and suggestions presented to the Council for the Defence of the Taxpayer, all of these, tools necessary to improve the organisation; internal and external recognition; and monitoring of the initiatives developed by the Quality Observatory of the Ministry of Public Administrations. It is a source of satisfaction to confirm that the steps already taken in this direction will be protected by the provisions of Royal Decree 951/2005, of 29 July, regulating the general framework for quality management in the State General Administration. ■