

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR THROUGH THE COMMON ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK (CAF)



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INTRODUCTION

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a European quality management instrument for the public sector. The implementation of the CAF model is aimed at introducing a performance system for the purposes of continuous improvement of the organizations' performance and processes, improved motivation of the employees and monitoring the overall performance outputs. The application of the CAF model will have a successful impact on the overall public administration system and will contribute to the achievement of modern, efficient and professional administration in service of its citizens.

This publication is aimed at facilitating the application of the CAF model in the institutions within the country by providing brief information on the content and structure of the CAF model, the benefits from its application and the process of its implementation. This document also provides practical examples of the application of the CAF model in two institutions.

Thousands of organizations throughout Europe and abroad apply the CAF model and have proven that it works and yields results. We therefore invite you to join them and become members of the community of CAF users!

Welcome to the world of total quality management in the public sector and good luck on your road to achieving performance excellence!



Benefits of the Implementation of the CAF Model

Improvement of services that the government institutions offer to their citizens is one of the priorities of the Government. Guided by these challenges, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration coordinates the process of introduction of one of the most significant standards for quality management of public administration performance – the CAF.

By introducing the CAF model, the country joins the European trends for introducing quality in the performance of the public administration and modernization of public services. Introduction and achievement of norms of excellence will ensure more successful implementation of the current reform initiatives, especially the EU integration process, which requires well developed capacities, modern and efficient governance and timely fulfilment of the goals that have been set.



Why implement the CAF model as a quality management instrument in the public sector?

1. The CAF is an easy-to-use and free self-assessment tool for public sector organizations.
2. The CAF model is designed in a manner that ensures improvement of the institutions' processes and performance while tracking the progress made in all areas of the institutions' performance.
3. The advantage of the CAF compared to other quality management tools is that it is specifically designed for the public sector.
4. What is specific about the CAF model is that it includes employees from all institutional levels, it contributes towards improved motivation of the employees, it facilitates the management of changes and it promotes a new organizational structure focused on continuous improvement.
5. The CAF model is compatible with other quality management models and tools and does not exclude the use of other organizational quality management models.

Based on past experiences, a number of benefits can be observed from the implementation of the CAF model in public sector institutions.



If properly implemented, the CAF model **can increase the quality of the services provided by state institutions**. The application of the CAF model helps institutions improve the quality of performance in every aspect by focusing on citizens and their needs.

The CAF contributes to **raised awareness and to the establishment of quality management culture** and continuous improvement of employees and the top management within the institutions.

The CAF model can **improve the organizational performance and outputs**. The CAF is useful for the development of improved processes within the institution, but also for the setting of priorities and strategic goals. The CAF model helps institutions identify the areas for improvement of their performance and thus encourages them to introduce changes, adjustments and innovations. The CAF model has proven to be a useful tool that encourages employees to think innovatively



and propose new ways of working within the institution.

Knowing that the CAF model **engages employees in the decision making processes regarding the key priorities and goals**, the introduction of the CAF contributes towards improved communication among employees and their increased participation and motivation. It also improves transparency within the institution, which can in turn lead to less resistance to change.



Legal Framework Governing the Implementation of the CAF Model

In order to improve the implementation of quality management standards in state institutions throughout the country, in 2013, the Parliament adopted the **Law on the Introduction of a Quality Management System and Common Assessment Framework for the Performance and Service Provision in Public Service**.

This Law, which came into force in 2014, imposes an obligation on the national public services to implement two quality standards, i.e. ISO 9001 and the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

For the purpose of ensuring adequate implementation of the CAF model within the institutions, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration drafted guidelines and instructions on the implementation of the CAF model. The following three types of guidelines and instructions were drafted:

- Guidelines on the introduction of the Common Assessment Framework, establishment and operation of an assessment team, assessment of the conditions and drafting a report on the conditions;
- Guidelines on the prioritization of the measures for improvement of the conditions and selection of measures;
- Guidelines on the drafting and adoption of a plan for improvement of the conditions in the procedure for the Common Assessment Framework.



The adopted guidelines detail all the steps of the process of implementation of the CAF model. The instructions and guidelines are aimed at:

- guiding the institutions through the overall CAF implementation process;
- protecting the institutions from abuse by inadequate consultants (who offer their services to facilitate the CAF implementation process);
- ensuring adequate and correct implementation of the CAF model.

The instructions and guidelines on the implementation of the CAF model are uploaded on the website of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration.¹

The law also requires institutions to open a **position that coordinates the process of implementation of quality management standards and instruments**. To that end, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration drafted Recommendations on the tasks and responsibilities of the coordinator of the process of introduction of quality management standards and instruments. These tasks and responsibilities were provided as guidelines for the purposes of the institutions and are not obligatory, so the institutions can freely amend and supplement them in line with their needs.

The supervision of the adequate implementation of the Law on the Introduction of a Quality Management System and Common Assessment Framework for the Performance and Service Provision in Public Service is conducted by the State Administrative Inspectorate.

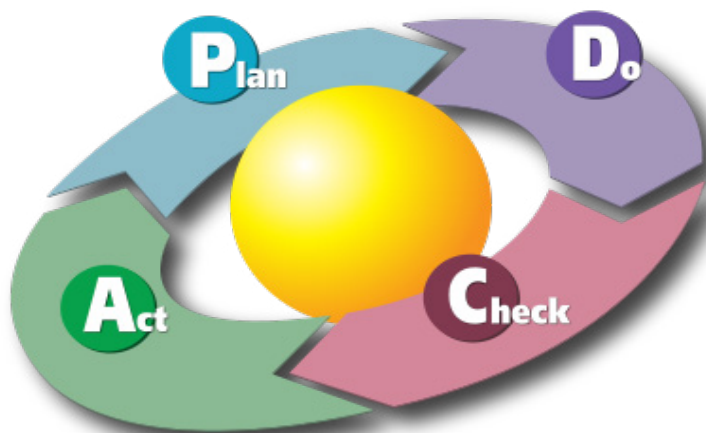
¹ <http://www.mioa.gov.mk/?q=node/3699>



Content of the CAF Model

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a European instrument for quality management in the public sector. The model is based on self-assessment undertaken by the employees in the institution itself and on drafting an improvement plan in multiple areas.

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a **total quality management** tool inspired by the Excellence Model of the European Foundation for Quality Management.



The CAF is based on the premise that excellent results are achieved in organizations through leadership based on quality strategy and planning with the support of the employees as the most valuable capital through building partnerships, rational use of resources and promotion of performance processes.



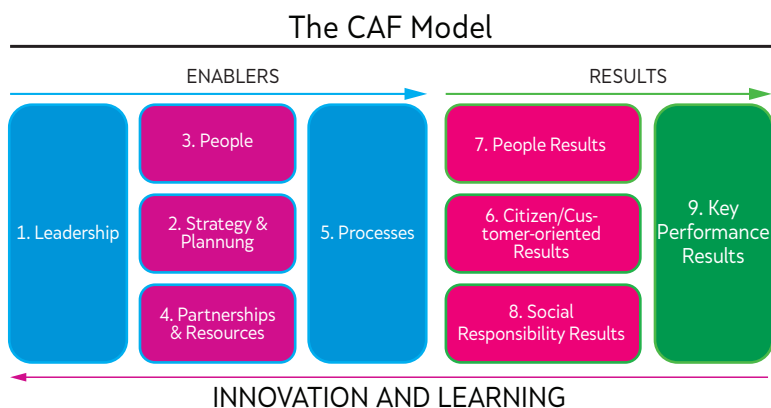
At the same time, the application of the CAF enables the organization to initiate a process of continuous improvement of its performance; to conduct performance assessments based on quality management evidence in line with the criteria widely adopted by the public sector all over Europe; to identify both the progress and the weaknesses in the performance output; to find a way to achieve consistency and consensus on what needs to be done to improve the organization; to ensure links between the desired outputs and good practices, provide guidelines on how it can be done and to measure progress through employees' periodic self-assessments.

The CAF is a free of charge and easy-to-use tool to assist public sector organizations in employing **quality management techniques to improve performance**. The CAF can be customized and used in all parts of the public sector and is applicable to public organizations at both the national and local level. Organizations that have started applying the CAF strive for excellence in their performance and want to introduce such culture use of excellence in their organization.



The CAF Model Structure

According to the CAF, organizational performance can be analysed through nine key segments i.e. criteria that are further broken down into 28 sub-sections or sub-criteria. The nine criteria refer to the main aspects that need to be considered in terms of the organizational performance. The self-assessment process, which is at the heart of the CAF model, requires employees to analyse performance through these nine aspects.



Criteria 1-5 reflect the internal manner of organizational performance and they are the so-called **ENABLERS**. They reflect what the organization does and how it functions in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

Criteria 6-9 refer to the **RESULTS** achieved by the organization in terms of citizens/customers, employees, social



responsibility and key performance aspects (main results that are the purpose of that organization).

Each of these criteria is further broken down into sub-criteria. All 29 sub-criteria refer to the main issues that need to be considered during the organizational assessment.

Organizations can tailor the implementation of the CAF to their specific needs and circumstances; however, it is strongly advised to maintain the structure of the model with its 9 criteria and 28 sub-criteria, and to use one of the assessment panels presented in the **Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Guidelines 2013**, which will facilitate the implementation of the **process** following the given guidelines.



How to Use the CAF Model

The CAF model can be implemented in different ways.

The size of the organization, the performance culture and previous experience with the total quality management tools are just some of the parameters that are used to determine the most appropriate manner of implementation of the CAF model.

This section provides an overview of the **ten-step plan for the implementation of the CAF model**, which is considered relevant for most organizations.

TEN STEPS TO IMPROVE ORGANISATIONS WITH CAF

PHASE 1: THE START OF THE CAF JOURNEY

Step 1.
Decide how to organise and plan the self-assessment

Step 2.
Communicate the self-assessment project

PHASE 2: SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Step 3.
Compose one or more self-assessment groups

Step 4.
Organise training

Step 5.
Undertake the self-assessment

Step 6.
Draw up a report describing the results of self-assessment

PHASE 3: IMPROVEMENT PLAN/PRIORITISATION

Step 7.
Draft an improvement plan, based on the accepted self-assessment report

Step 8.
Communicate the improvement plan

Step 9.
Implement the improvement plan

Step 10.
Plan next self-assessment



The following steps are recommended to ensure that organizations apply the CAF model in the most efficient and effective manner:



Decide on the method of implementation of the CAF model in your institution

Communicate the process of implementation of the CAF model in your institution (adopt a Communication Plan)



Compose one or more self-assessment groups

Organize training for the employees



Undertake the self-assessment

Draw up a report describing the results of the self-assessment



Draft an improvement plan based on the accepted self-assessment report



Communicate the improvement plan

Step
8:

Implement the improvement plan

Step
9:

Plan the next process of implementation of the CAF model in your institution

Step
10:



National CAF Resource Centre

The Ministry of Information Society and Administration is the national contact point and resource centre for the implementation of the CAF model.

Being the contact point that coordinates the activities for the implementation of the CAF model in the country, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration:

- represents a centre with expertise on the implementation of the CAF model in the public sector;
- takes care of the proper implementation of the CAF model;
- promotes good practices in the application of the CAF model;
- maintains a registry of institutions that have implemented the CAF;
- provides support to institutions in the country in relation to the application of the CAF;
- maintains a registry of certified facilitators for implementation of the CAF.

According to the information provided by the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, there are 29 institutions throughout the country that have introduced the CAF model; 17 of them are institutions at the central level, whereas the remaining 12 are at the local level.

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL CAF IMPLEMENTATION



Implementation of the CAF model at the Customs Administration



General Information

The Customs Administration is an authority that is part of the Ministry of Finance with the status of a legal entity that implements laws and other relevant regulations in the sphere of customs.

The Customs Administration has a strategic commitment to introduce an effective customs policy that supports the economic measures of the Government, but also to maintain the balance between the business interests and its responsibilities related to customs control in order to ensure support for the legal trade and improved collection of customs duties.



VISION

To remain the role model of contemporary and best service for the citizens, economic operators and the state, in accordance with the national and internationally recognized best practices and to remain the foremost institution in the process of accession to the European Customs Union.



MISSION

To preserve the financial interests of the country, to protect the health and life of people, to sustain competitive economic environment, to realize the economic policies of the Government and to support the activities for initiating pre-accession negotiations for membership to the European Union.

Process of Implementation of the CAF Model

The CAF model is implemented at the Customs Administration at the level of the entire organization. The role of the CAF in the organizational performance of the Customs Administration is to introduce a method of continuous improvement of the organization in correlation with the already introduced quality management policies and practices.

The assessment team was established with the Decision for the commencement of the process of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and consists of seventeen members, one of whom is the coordinator and one the deputy coordinator. The self-assessment team also includes representatives of all organizational units, including representatives of customs offices.

The self-assessment team conducted the analysis and defined the strengths and the improvement areas and proposed activities for the improvement of the conditions in the Customs Administration.



Following a two-day training session, the self-assessment team conducted the self-assessment over the period of two months, i.e. in September and October 2016.

Then, in November, a report on the implementation of the Common Assessment Framework at the Customs Administration was drawn up, along with the communication plan for the implementation of the Common Assessment Framework at the CORM, and in the first week of December, a two-day workshop was organized on the prioritization of CAF measures for the top management of the Customs Authority (the Collegium Group) and the self-assessment team.

Out of a total of 132 measures that were proposed by the working team, 36 measures were prioritized.

Based on the prioritized improvement measures, at the end of December, a Plan for Improvement of the Customs Administration in accordance with the Common Assessment Framework was drawn up, which included the detailed matrix of the action plan for the improvement measures, as well as the methodology for monitoring of the improvement plan. This plan contains 18 measures that can immediately be applied (quick wins), and 18 improvement measures to be implemented within 24 months, which are also included in the adopted Customs Administration Action Plan for the period 2017-2019.

Results Achieved

The realization of the quick wins and the improvement measures is monitored at quarterly level.

During the first quarter of 2017 (January-March), a total of 13 measures i.e. 36.1% were implemented; during the second quarter (April-June 2017), a total of 16 measures or 44.44% were implemented, whereas during the third quarter (July-September 2017), 50% of the measures were implemented.

Memos on the implementation of the CAF model were submitted to the MISA, the Government and the Ministry



of Finance, whereas the Annual Report of the Customs Administration, which is published and available on their website, also contains information about the application of this instrument. The report on the implementation of the CAF measures at quarterly level is submitted to the Collegium Group and the self-assessment team.



Recommendations/Lessons learnt

Generally speaking, the participants in the procedure for the implementation of the CAF model hold the opinion that, if implemented correctly and consistently, this tool can truly contribute to improved management processes within our institution.

We believe that one of the factors for successful implementation is the top management support, familiarization of a larger number of employees with this model but also proper selection of the self-assessment team which is required to conduct an objective and impartial voluntary self-assessment.

This model also helps the adequate projection of the goals of our institution, alongside the needs for human, technical and financial resources for their implementation.

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Implementation of the CAF model at the City of Skopje



General Information

Local self-government is in charge of regulating and handling issues of public interest and of local importance. Being the main administrative, business, cultural and education centre, the City of Skopje strives to provide proper conditions for good quality life of citizens and business entities through professional performance of its competences.



MISSION

Being a separate unit of local self-government, the City of Skopje has a clearly defined mission to fulfil the public interest that is of local importance to the City of Skopje, particularly in relation to special planning and management, provision of improved infrastructure, environmental protection and promotion, local economic development, nurturing the cultural and historic heritage etc.



VISION

The City of Skopje has a vision to strengthen the capacities for the application of global practices and financial support for the purpose of creating conditions for a good quality life, long-term success, prosperity and promotion of the city as a desired destination for investors and favourable business environment. Ensuring life and work for citizens in a safe and healthy environment with better quality of life.

Process of Implementation of the CAF Model

The City of Skopje makes continuous efforts to improve the quality of its performance by striving for excellence through modern, professional and efficient administration that serves its citizens, improved staff motivation and continuous improvement of its performance.

To that end, the City of Skopje responded to the public call published by the Ministry of Information Society and Administration and applied for the implementation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in its organization. The timeframe for the implementation of the self-assessment

process was the period from February to July 2013. For those reasons, two representatives of the City of Skopje (the coordinator and deputy coordinator) were trained. To our great satisfaction, the MISA trained experts provided support for the overall process of implementation of this standard and presented the model in front of the Secretary of the City of Skopje and the management team of the institution. Then the self-assessment team was established and trained by MISA trainers. The team was required to conduct the analysis and identify the strengths and improvement areas, but also to propose improvement measures. For each of the criteria, the methodology applied by the team consisted of two sections, including:

- Individual assessment conducted by each team member in order to provide an individual assessment of the strengths and improvement areas and to propose one or more measures for the improvement areas;
- Team assessment by conducting meetings and reaching consensus when determining the strengths, improvement areas and the formulation of jointly proposed measures.

The self-assessment team was established with employees from the City of Skopje applying on a voluntary basis, whereby representation was ensured by inclusion of employees of different professional titles, education levels, gender, age but most of all, hard-working and diligent employees who observe deadlines and want to be part of the team.

The self-assessment process was conducted and a situation report was drawn up and submitted to the top management so that they would become familiar with it. In May, a workshop was organized for the coordinator and deputy coordinator to become familiar with the method of selection of measures that would further be developed into action plans. In June, a workshop was held for the self-assessment team and the



management structure during which the proposed activities were prioritized. Out of a total of 146 activities proposed by the team, 25 quick wins (activities that can be implemented fast) and 10 priority activities were selected which were part of the Plan for the Improvement of the City of Skopje in accordance with the Common Assessment Framework.

Results Achieved

The Plan for the Improvement of the City of Skopje in accordance with the Common Assessment Framework was adopted by the Mayor of the City of Skopje. The implementation of the measures listed in the Improvement Plan was monitored every two months.

Even though the adoption of the proposed measures required major changes in the institutional performance, these changes were deemed indispensable for efficient public administration and improvement of services offered to its end users.

During the implementation period, nearly 90% of the quick wins and the improvement measures were implemented.

The Ministry of Information Society and Administration was notified of the implementation of the CAF model. Report on the implementation of CAF measures was submitted to the top management and all employees every two months.



Recommendations/Lessons learnt

Generally speaking, the experience of the City of Skopje with the implementation of the process is a positive one with great efforts and selfless enthusiasm exhibited by the employees who recognized the opportunity for themselves to be the drivers of positive changes and trends within the institution.

In future, it would be desirable to work on the method of implementation of the model so that the employees would be fully committed without feeling any pressure from the ongoing activities, but also to provide the adequate budget for the introduction of the model. It is also desirable to encourage the initiative to establish a quality management department so that the implementation of the plan would not be a task of only one employee.

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More information on the
CAF model available at:

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