



Newsletter 2009/3



Special issue: The CAF External Feedback



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I. IN THE PICTURE: THE CAF EXTERNAL FEEDBACK – AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CAF USERS, FROM SELF-ASSESSMENT TO EXTERNAL FEEDBACK

Introduction

Since the launch of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in 2000, nearly 2000 public sector organisations in Europe have applied the model. During the past 10 years the CAF model has found its place between the many existing quality management tools. The CAF External Feedback Procedure – providing external feedback on the assessment that has taken place with CAF – aims to further support CAF users in their journey towards quality.

1. Self-assessment and improvement with the Common Assessment Framework

The CAF provides a self-assessment framework that is conceptually similar to the major Total Quality Management (TQM) models, but is specially conceived for public sector organisations. It aims to be a catalyst for a full improvement process within the organisation.

The process of applying the CAF has been described in 10 general steps (from the launch, through to the process of self-assessment, to the actual implementation of the improvements) which can be seen as the driving guidelines of a good CAF application. These steps are therefore an important element in the CAF External Feedback System.

As a tool of Total Quality Management, CAF subscribes to the fundamental concepts of excellence: results orientation, citizen/customer focus, leadership and constancy of purpose, management by processes and facts, involvement of people, continuous improvement and innovation, mutually beneficial partnerships and corporate social responsibility. The focus on these principles is another important aspect in the CAF External Feedback Procedure.

2. The CAF External Feedback Procedure

In order for public sector organisations applying CAF to see the results of their efforts and to obtain feedback, the CAF External Feedback provides external feedback on the introduction of total quality management with CAF. This feedback relates not only to the self-assessment process, but also to the way forward that organisations have chosen in order to reach for excellence in the long run, and based upon the fundamental concepts of excellence.

The objectives of the CAF External Feedback Procedure

In relation to the nature of the needs and the kind of demands expressed by many CAF users in different Member States, the CAF External Feedback aims at the following objectives:

1. Support the quality of the CAF implementation and its impact on the organisation.
2. Find out if the organisation is installing TQM values as the result of the CAF application.
3. Support and renew enthusiasm in the organisation for continuous improvement.
4. Promote peer review and bench-learning.
5. Reward organisations that started the journey for continuous improvement towards excellence in an effective way, without judging their obtained level of excellence.
6. Facilitate the participation of CAF users in the EFQM Levels of Excellence

To that end, the CAF External Feedback System is built upon three pillars.

Pillar 1: The process of self-assessment

The quality of the self-assessment is a basis of the success for the future improvements. In the first pillar of the CAF External Feedback the quality of the self-assessment process is in the focus. A questionnaire has been developed to assess the quality of the different steps in the self-assessment process. All these steps are translated in particular actions and evaluated by the CAF External Feedback Actors, recognising the ability to make an effective and well planned self-assessment and not with the aim of validating the scores given in the CAF self-assessment.

Pillar 2: The process of improvement actions

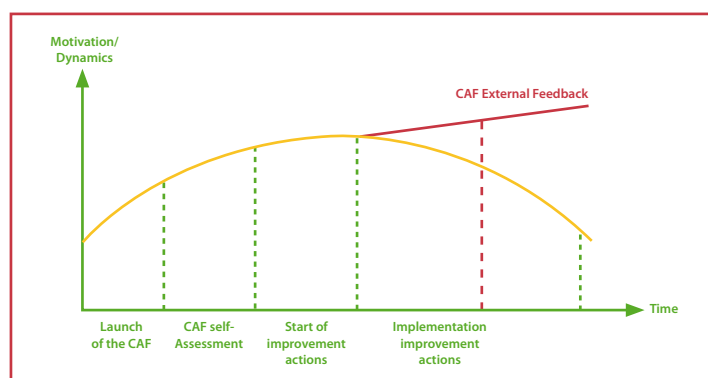
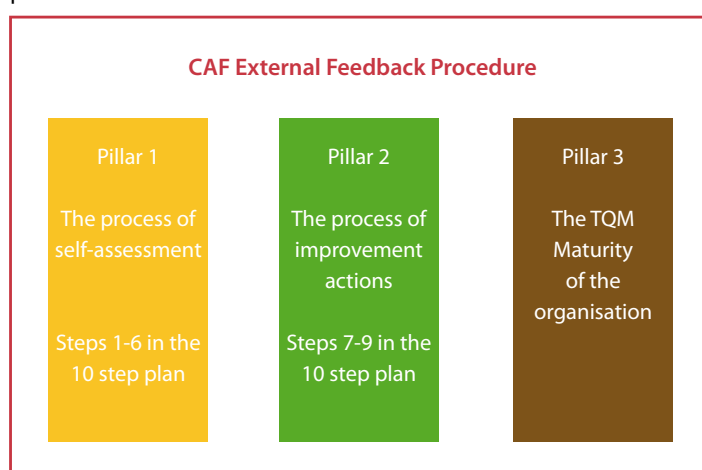
The next important element of an effective CAF implementation is acting upon the results coming out of the self-assessment. Suggestions for improvement have to be prioritised and translated into an improvement plan that will be carried out in a maximum timeframe of two years. The corresponding questionnaire in this second pillar of the CAF External Feedback Procedure covers the planning and the process of improvement and is not meant for assessing the results of the improvement actions. Like in pillar 1, all these steps are translated in particular actions and are evaluated against a simple evaluation scale.

Pillar 3: The TQM maturity of the organisation

(the broader scope of excellence)

One of the aims of the CAF model is to guide public sector organisations closer to the important values of Total Quality Management. By working with the CAF model these values should – over time – become part of the culture of the organisation. The questionnaire for TQM Assessment Maturity is therefore based on the 8 Fundamental Concepts of Excellence. The evaluation concerns the maturity level achieved by the organisation as a result of the self-assessment and the improvement process.

CAF External Feedback Procedure



3. The functioning of the CAF External Feedback Procedure

3.1. The implementation of CAF External Feedback at national level

The CAF "National Organiser" is appointed at national level to be in charge of the implementation of the CAF External Feedback in the country. The National Organiser selects a core group of CAF External Feedback Actors (the evaluators). The underlying principle of the CAF External Feedback is that organisations can make use of it at minimum costs.

Guiding principles in elaborating the CAF External Feedback were simplicity, transparency and subsidiarity. Whilst the implementation of the CAF External Feedback in the different EU Member States is in their own hands, Member States have to guarantee the same understanding and quality of the CAF External Feedback Procedure.

3.2. The Role of the European CAF Resource Centre

Besides managing the CAF database, the European CAF Resource Centre in EIPA Maastricht, supports the Member States in the implementation of the CAF External Feedback Procedure by a number of initiatives: promoting the CAF External Feedback at European level, introducing the National CAF Correspondents in this procedure, offering a common European training scheme for CAF External Feedback Actors, and coordinating support for Member States that do not have a National Organiser.

3.3. The application by CAF users

Every public organisation using CAF can apply for the CAF External Feedback, on the following two preconditions:

- 1) The application should be made between 6 and 12 months after the CAF self-assessment took place and the self-assessment report was concluded and delivered.
- 2) The organisation registers/is registered as a CAF user in the online European database of CAF users, hosted by EIPA.

The applicant organisation will then go through the different phases of the CAF External Feedback system:

1. Phase 1: the application
2. Phase 2: the process of providing feedback
3. Phase 3: the final decision and receiving of the Effective CAF User label

4. Roles, Tasks and Profile of the CAF External Feedback Actors

The CAF External Feedback Actors play a crucial role in the CAF External Feedback Procedure. The main task of the CAF External Feedback Actors is to:

1. analyse the implementation of CAF through the process of self-assessment and improvement actions and whether the organisation is installing TQM values;
2. give feedback and suggestions on strengths and areas of improvement on the process of implementation of the CAF;
3. support and renew enthusiasm in the organisation to work with holistic quality development and self-assessment with the CAF Model.

Being a CAF External Feedback Actor requires a balance of personal and professional skills, coupled with a commitment to timely and appropriate conduct. It is a requirement that the CAF External Feedback Actor has participated in the European or national training course required to become CAF External Feedback Actor.

Conclusion

The CAF model has proven its success in the past 10 years, but also has to take the next steps to be prepared for the future. In this respect the "Effective CAF User" label brings a truly added value to the use of the CAF and to its users. Public sector organisations want to see the results of all their efforts and look for feedback. This External Feedback by peers and experts will help organisations taking the next steps on their quality management journey to make their efforts visible internally and externally.

For more info on this event please consult our website: www.eipa.eu/caf



II. INITIATIVES WITH CAF – IQUAL (IMPROVING QUALITY OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF THE CAF MODEL)



“Improving quality of public management through application of the CAF model (IQUAL)” is one of multi-country activities (MCA) funded by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) Regional Centre for Public Administration Reform (RCPAR).

The IQUAL project was initiated by RCPAR Focal Point in Russian Federation – the Scientific Centre for Benchmarking and Excellence (SCBE) of Ivanovo State Power University (ISPU).

The IQUAL intended wider outcome is to enhance the capacities of partner countries to deploy quality management in public administration through better understanding of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) model. Specific objectives of the project include the following:

1. Giving opportunities to senior CAF practitioners from partner countries to share knowledge and grow together;
2. Introduce the CAF model to CIS countries;
3. Building a basis for further CAF development through trainings, networking and bench-learning.

The context of IQUAL

The CAF model was introduced in Latvia and Slovenia in early 2000; CAF was incorporated in ongoing public administration reforms in Slovenia and its development is supported by various governmental structures. The CAF model is not widely known in Russia, and was officially introduced for the first time in 2008 at the EIPA CAF Seminar in Moscow. However, since 2006 regional CAF related activities have been taking place. Since 2008, CAF has a national partner in Russia – the Russian Organisation for Quality (ROQ), but does not yet have official governmental support. CAF has not been introduced in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, but there is a strong interest in quality management by the governmental bodies there. Therefore the CAF has had a successful start in Eastern Europe and Russia, and will now be promoted further in this region.

IQUAL scope

- 1) Three study visits to EU partners: firstly to Latvia, where Latvian partners will present their CAF implementation process and results achieved; secondly to Slovenia; and lastly to Greece, where IQUAL partners will meet with the RCPAR team and have the chance to see the country's practice of CAF implementation;

- 2) Three CAF trainings: the first in Latvia (combined with a study visit mentioned above – the first two days are for “CAF in action” training, then a day or sharing experience and good practices (also sharing pit falls and mistakes in the primary stage of CAF implementation)), the second is in Kyrgyzstan, which focus on civil servants from Central Asia and are delivered by the EIPA expert; the third is participation in the CAF external evaluation training in the EIPA CAF Resource Centre (Maastricht, NL).
- 3) Participation in two CAF related conferences: the first is the ninth Slovene national quality conference “Good Practices in Slovene Public Administration”, which will be held on 21 October 2009 (Brdo, Slovenia); and the second is a conference in Russia (in the city of Ivanovo) with a presentation of the final results and the “CAF good practice book”, round table discussion on project outcomes, dissemination of knowledge and further development.

First IQUAL event in Riga

“The CAF Model in action” became the first IQUAL event. The training was organised by the Department of Finance and Development of the Ministry of Welfare of Latvia and took place in Riga on 22-24 September 2009. The training was given by the EIPA CAF Resource centre, in the person of Patrick Staes.

More than 20 experts and civil servants took part in the CAF training. Participants represented various public sector organisations from four countries. Kyrgyzstan: Organisation work and policy state management Department of the Administration of the President of the Kyrgyzstan; Slovenia: Ministry of Public Administration, Administrative Unit Jesenice, Police Directorate Maribor; Russian Federation: Government of Ivanovo Region, Regional Chamber of Accounts, Centre for Benchmarking and Excellence of Ivanovo State Power University, North-West Academy of State Service. Latvia: State Chancellery, State Police, Bank of Latvia, Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economic, Ministry of Justice.

For more information please consult the website: www.rcpar.org or contact the IQUAL Coordinator Dmitry Maslov: maslow@bk.ru

III. QUALITY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES IN EUROPE IN 2009/2010

- 5th Belgian Quality Conference
Brussels (BE), 26 November 2009
<http://www.publicquality.be/pubqual/>
- International Quality Congress for Local Authorities
Ghent (BE), 23-24 February 2010
<http://www.ghentqualitycongress.be/>
- 4th European CAF Event
Bucharest (RO), 23-24 September 2010
More details will follow in the next edition of our Newsletter

IV. EIPA AGENDA FOR 2009/2010

Make a note in your diary of the following dates of CAF-related activities and training at EIPA:

- CAF External Feedback and Label: Training on the Delivery of External Feedback
Maastricht (NL), 1-2 March 2010 & 12-13 April 2010
- The CAF and the Balanced Scorecard
Maastricht (NL), 16-18 June 2010
- CAF Training Event: The CAF in Action
Barcelona (ES), 7-8 October 2010
- More information on the seminars can be found at:
<http://www.eipa.eu/en/topics/show/&tid=191>

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CONTACT THE CAF RESOURCE CENTRE AT EIPA

Patrick Staes, Nick Thijs, Ann Stoffels and Lena Heidler
Tel.: + 31-43 3296 328/317, Fax: + 31-43 3296 296,
E-mail: caf@eipa.eu