



  
2ND QUALITY  
CONFERENCE FOR  
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS  
IN THE EU

IMPROVING AN ORGANISATION THROUGH SELF-ASSESSMENT

# THE COMMON ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK (CAF)

# **The Common Assessment Framework**

**Improving an organisation through  
self-assessment**

**October 2002**

## **The Common Assessment Framework CAF 2002**

This leaflet has been prepared in order to introduce the new version of the Common Assessment Framework at the Second Quality Conference for Public Administrations in the EU held in Copenhagen, Denmark on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of October 2002.

A PDF version may be downloaded at the conference web site at [www.2qconference.org](http://www.2qconference.org).

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Print: Nordsjællands Trykcenter  
Copies: 2000  
ISBN: 87-7856-532-4



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## Introduction

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a result of the co-operation among the EU Ministers responsible for Public Administration. On request from the Directors General of this field, the new version of the CAF has been developed by the Innovative Public Service Group.

A pilot version of the CAF was presented in May 2000 during the First European Quality Conference for Public Administrations held in Lisbon. The present version is based on experience gained in implementing and using the first version of the CAF.

The CAF is offered as a tool to assist public sector organisations across Europe to use quality\* management techniques to improve performance.<sup>1</sup> The CAF provides a simple, easy-to-use framework, which is suitable for a self-assessment of public sector organisations.

The CAF has four main purposes:

1. To capture the unique features of public sector organisations.
2. To serve as a tool for public administrators who want to improve the performance of their organisation.
3. To act as a "bridge" across the various models used in quality management.
4. To facilitate benchmarking\* between public sector organisations.

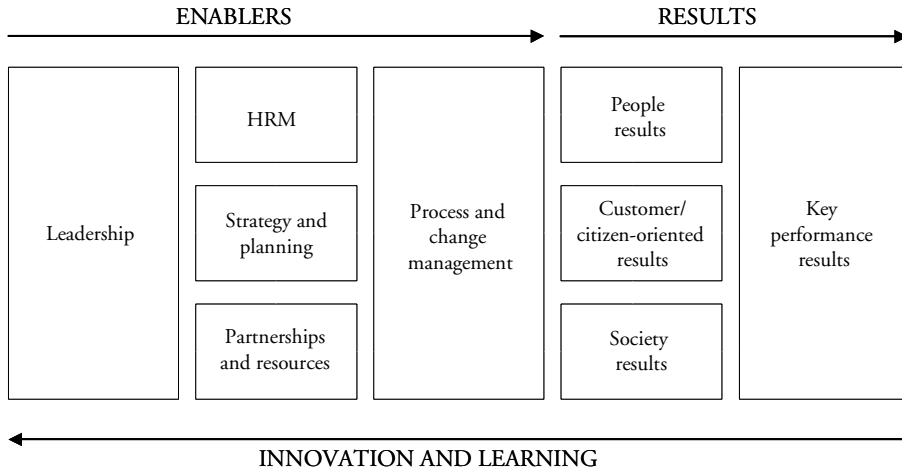
The CAF has been designed for use in all parts of the public sector, applicable to public organisations at the national/federal, regional and local level. It may also be used under a wide variety of circumstances e.g. as part of a systematic programme of reform or as a basis for targeting improvement efforts in public service organisations\*. In some cases, and especially in very large organisations, a self-assessment may also be undertaken in a part of an organisation e.g. a selected section or department.

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<sup>1</sup> A definition of words marked by an asterisk may be found in the glossary.

The structure of the CAF is illustrated below:<sup>2</sup>

# The CAF Model



The nine-box structure identifies the main aspects requiring consideration in any organisational analysis. Within each of these boxes a list of criteria is provided. The criteria identify the main issues that need to be considered when assessing an organisation.

Using the CAF provides an organisation with a powerful framework to initiate a process of continuous improvement\*.

The CAF provides:

- an assessment based on evidence.
- a means to achieve consistency of direction and consensus on what needs to be done to improve an organisation.
- an assessment against a set of criteria, which has become widely accepted across Europe.
- a means of measuring progress over time through periodic self-assessment.
- a link between goals and supportive strategies and processes.
- a means to focus improvement activity where it is most needed.

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<sup>2</sup> Inspired by the EFQM-model.

- opportunities to promote and share good practice within different areas of an organisation and with other organisations.
- a means to create enthusiasm among employees by involving them in the improvement process.
- opportunities to identify progress and outstanding levels of achievement.
- a means to integrate various quality initiatives into normal business operations.

To summarise, self-assessment against the CAF model offers the organisation an opportunity to learn more about itself.

Compared to a fully developed Total Quality Management model, the CAF is a "light" model, suitable especially to get an initial impression of how the organisation performs. It is assumed that any organisation that intends to go further will select one of the more detailed models (such as the Speyer or EFQM models). The CAF has the advantage of being compatible with these models and may therefore be a first step for an organisation wishing to go further with quality management.

The CAF is in public domain and free of charge. Organisations are free to use the model as they wish.



# Criterion 1: Leadership<sup>3</sup>

## **Definition**

How leaders and managers develop and facilitate the achievement of the mission\* and vision\* of a public sector organisation; develop values\* required for long-term success and implement these via appropriate actions and behaviours; and are personally involved in ensuring that the organisation's management system is developed and implemented.

## **Key implications**

A distinction needs to be drawn between the role of the political leadership\* and that of the leaders/managers of organisations within the public sector.

Self-assessment and organisational improvement should address the role of management and its interface with the political role. The CAF does not seek to assess the "quality" of public policies, but rather the management of an organisation and the way in which policies are formulated and policy\* advice given in terms of analysis, horizon-scanning and strategic planning.

The main features of a public sector organisation that will be important (in addition to relevant policy aspects) in the assessment of performance will include:

- excellence in service delivery.
- inspiring change.
- modernisation and change management\*.
- operating within the legislative, legal and regulatory framework.
- democratic responsiveness/accountability.
- involvement of stakeholders\* and balancing of stakeholder needs.
- value for money.
- skills in communicating with the political level.
- achievement of goals.

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<sup>3</sup> Criteria 1-5 deal with the Enabler features of an organisation; these determine how it performs. The assessment of actions relating to the Enablers should be based on the Enablers Panel.

Leaders/managers\* in a public service organisation typically have to work to achieve citizen-oriented goals, balanced with political or stakeholder targets\*.

A key element in the assessment of leadership is that leaders need to show a clear understanding of who their customers are, their requirements, and how these can be balanced with political imperatives, demonstrating clear commitment to customers/citizens, as well as to the other stakeholders.

### **Assessment: Consider the evidence of what the organisation's leadership is doing to<sup>4</sup>**

#### **1.1. Give a direction to the organisation: develop and communicate vision, mission and values**

*Examples:*

- a. Developing and formulating a vision (where we want to go) and a mission (what are our goals) of the organisation.
- b. Establishing a value framework and codes of conduct\*.
- c. Translating the vision and mission into strategic (medium term\*) and operational (concrete and short term) objectives and actions.
- d. Involving relevant stakeholders in developing the vision, mission, value framework, strategic and operational objectives\* (e.g. employees, citizens-clients, elected representatives and suppliers).
- e. Adjusting the vision, mission and values to changes in the external environment.
- f. Communicating the vision, mission, values, strategic and operational objectives to all employees in the organisation and to other stakeholders.

**Award a score using the Enablers Panel**

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<sup>4</sup> The paragraphs, which follow, are described as sub-criteria. Each sub-criterion contains a statement of a practice, which would demonstrate the achievement of best practice in one aspect of the organisation's performance. The actions listed following the statement are offered as concrete examples of actions, which might illustrate success in the achievement of the sub-criterion.

## **1.2. Develop and implement a system for managing the organisation**

*Examples:*

- a. Developing organisational structures and processes in accordance with the tasks of the organisation and the needs and expectations of the stakeholders.
- b. Defining appropriate management levels, functions, responsibilities and autonomy.
- c. Developing and agreeing on measurable objectives and goals for all levels of the organisation.
- d. Giving direction on output\* and outcome\* targets balancing the needs and expectations of different stakeholders.
- e. Establishing a management information system with internal audits\* and checks.
- f. Establishing appropriate frameworks for projects and teamwork.
- g. Long-term use of a TQM-system\* such as EFQM or CAF.
- h. Developing a system of operational targeting or performance measuring in the organisation (e.g. Balanced Score Card, ISO 9001-2000).

**Award a score using the Enablers Panel**

## **1.3. Motivate and support the people in the organisation and act as a role model**

*Examples:*

- a. Leading by example.
- b. Demonstrating personal willingness to change by accepting constructive feedback and suggestions for improving the personal leadership style.
- c. Acting in accordance with established objectives and values.
- d. Keeping employees informed about significant issues.
- e. Supporting employees to help them attain their plans and objectives in support of organisational objectives.
- f. Stimulating and encouraging the delegation of responsibilities (empowerment\*).

- g. Encouraging and supporting employees to make suggestions for innovation and improvement and to be proactive in their daily work.
- h. Encouraging mutual trust and respect.
- i. Ensuring that a culture of stimulating, identifying, planning and implementing innovation is developed.
- j. Stimulating and financing training and improvement activities.
- k. Giving feedback and discussing performance with employees.
- l. Recognizing and rewarding the efforts of teams and individuals.
- m. Addressing individual needs and situations of employee adequately.

**Award a score using the Enablers Panel**

### **1.4. Manage the relations with politicians and other stakeholders**

*Examples:*

- a. Maintaining proactive and regular relations with the political authorities of the appropriate executive and legislative areas.
- b. Developing partnerships\* and networks\* with important stakeholders (citizens, NGOs, interest groups, industry, other public authorities, etc.).
- c. Involving political and other stakeholders in the setting of output and outcome targets and the development of the organisation's management system.
- d. Seeking public awareness, reputation and recognition of the organisation (e.g. image building).
- e. Developing a concept of marketing (product and service targeted) and spreading it internally and externally.
- f. Taking part in the activities of professional associations, representative organisations and interest groups.

**Award a score using the Enablers Panel**

## Criterion 2: Strategy and planning

### Definition

How the organisation implements its mission and vision via a clear stakeholder-focused strategy\*, supported by relevant policies, plans, objectives, targets and processes.

### Key implications

Policy and strategy must address internal culture, structure and operations (in both the short and the long term\*) taking account of the priorities, direction and needs of the various stakeholders. They should reflect the CAF principles of the organisation and how it will achieve its aims through these principles. Organisations should constantly and critically monitor their policy and strategy, including their processes and plans, and show how they are appropriate, as a cohesive whole, to their own circumstances.

Policy and strategy must reflect the organisation's approach to implementing modernisation and change management processes.

### Assessment: Consider evidence of what the organisation is doing to

#### 2.1. Gather information relating to present and future needs of stakeholders

##### *Examples:*

- a. Identifying all relevant stakeholders.
- b. Systematically gathering information about stakeholders and their needs and expectations by organising appropriate surveys\* of customers/citizens, employees, society and government.
- c. Regularly gathering information about important variables such as social, ecological, economic, legal and demographic developments.

- d. Regularly evaluating the quality of information and the way it is gathered.

**Award a score using the Enablers Panel**

## **2.2. Develop, review and update strategy and planning**

*Examples:*

- a. Involving stakeholders in the process of developing, reviewing and updating strategy and planning and prioritising their expectations and needs.
- b. Analysing risks and opportunities and identifying critical success factors\* by regularly assessing factors in the organisation's environment (including political changes).
- c. Establishing strategic and operational objectives on the basis of the vision, mission and values of the organisation and linking them to operational plans and processes.
- d. Evaluating the quality of the strategic and operational plans.
- e. Balancing tasks and resources, long and short term pressures and stakeholder requirements.
- f. Evaluating existing tasks in terms of outputs (results) and outcomes (impacts) and verifying the degree of goal-reaching at all levels and if necessary, adjusting strategy and planning.
- g. Assessing the need to reorganise and improve strategies and methods.
- h. Systematically analysing internal strengths and weaknesses (e.g. TQM-diagnosis or SWOT analysis\*).

**Award a score using the Enablers Panel**

## **2.3. Implement strategy and planning in the whole organisation**

*Examples:*

- a. Implementing strategy and planning by reaching agreement and setting priorities, establishing time frames and an appropriate organisational structure.
- b. Translating strategic and operational objectives of an organisation into plans and tasks in the organisation and linking these to key processes.

## **Criterion 2: Strategy and planning**

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- c. Developing internal communication channels to spread objectives, plans and tasks in the organisation.
- d. Developing and applying methods to measure the performance of the organisation at all levels.
- e. Establishing and following-up management bodies (e.g. Policy Council, Executive Board committee and steering-groups).

**Award a score using the Enablers Panel**



## Criterion 3: HRM

### Definition

How the organisation manages, develops and releases the knowledge and full potential of its people at individual, team-based and organisation-wide levels; and plans these activities in order to support its policy and strategy and the effective operation of its people.

### Key implications

The people of the organisation include all the employees and others who directly or indirectly serve customers/citizens. This include all employee groups and volunteers, some of whom may need particular help in order for them to achieve their full potential.

Organisations may, in assessing their performance, take account of any restrictions on their freedom of action resulting from general public personnel policies, pay policies, etc., and indicate how they work within these restrictions to optimise their people's potential. Where appropriate they should also consider how they seek to widen their scope for people management to the advantage of the organisation and its people.

**Assessment: Consider evidence on what the organisation is doing to**

### 3.1. Plan, manage and improve human resources\* with regard to strategy and planning

*Examples:*

- a. Developing and communicating a HRM policy based on the strategy and planning of the organisation.
- b. Regularly analysing current and future human resources needs, taking into account needs and expectations of stakeholders.
- c. Developing and agreeing on a clear policy containing objective criteria with regard to recruitment, promotion, rewards and the assignment of managerial functions.

- d. Aligning tasks, authorities and responsibilities (e.g. through job descriptions).
- e. Aligning job descriptions to staff recruitment and development plans.
- f. Aligning the planning of tasks with the allocation and development of human resources.
- g. Defining the managerial and leadership skills required of managers (for use when recruiting).
- h. Ensuring good working conditions throughout the organisation.
- i. Managing recruitment and career development with regard to fairness of employment and equal opportunities (e.g. gender, disability, race and religion).
- j. Paying attention to the personal and equipment needs of disabled people.
- k. Taking into account the work-life balance of employees.

**Award a score using the Enablers Panel**

### **3.2. Identify, develop and use competencies of the employees aligning individual, team and organisational targets and goals**

*Examples:*

- a. Identifying the current competencies at the individual and the organisational level in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- b. Establishing and communicating a training plan based on current and future organisational and personal needs (with for example mandatory and voluntary training).
- c. Developing and agreeing on personal training and development plans for all employees.
- d. Developing leadership skills throughout the organisation.
- e. Supporting and assisting new employees (e.g. by means of coaching, tutoring).
- f. Promoting internal and external mobility of employees.
- g. Developing and promoting modern training methods (e.g. multimedia approach, on the job training, e-learning).
- h. Managing and following up the global and individual training plans.

- i. Developing and promoting inter-personal skills and abilities to deal with customers/citizens.
- j. Monitoring the proportion of the total payroll spent on training.

**Award a score using the Enablers Panel**

### **3.3. Involve employees by developing dialogue and empowerment**

*Examples:*

- a. Promoting a culture of open, not hierarchical, communication and dialogue.
- b. Proactively asking employees for their ideas and suggestions and developing appropriate mechanisms (suggestion schemes, etc.).
- c. Involving employees in the development of plans and strategies, the design of processes and in the identification and implementation of improvement activities.
- d. Seeking agreement between managers and employees on goals and on ways of measuring goal achievement.
- e. Regularly organising and conducting staff surveys.
- f. Inviting employees to evaluate their superiors (for example through 360° appraisals).
- g. Consulting with the representatives of employees (e.g. Trade Unions).

**Award a score using the Enablers Panel**



## **Criterion 4: Partnerships and resources**

### **Definition**

How the organisation plans and manages its partnerships and internal resources in order to support its policy and strategy and the effective operation of its processes.

### **Key implications**

Public organisations are often subject to constraints and pressures when managing their financial resources over and above those encountered in the private sector. The ability of public organisations to generate additional financial resources may be limited as may its freedom to allocate, or reallocate, its funds to the services it wishes to deliver.

Public organisations are required to manage complex relationships with other organisations in public and private sectors as well as customers/ citizens considered as partners. The successful management of these relationships may be crucial to success in achieving organisational goals.

Organisations should consider in their assessments the impact of any restrictions on their use of financial resources and also any restrictions that may affect their use of the other resources covered in this criterion.

Organisations may have limited control of their resources. They should not measure the rights or wrongs of resource levels or allocations, but how, within the organisation's degrees of freedom, resources are managed to support policy and strategy.

**Assessment: Consider what measures are in place to ensure that the organisation**

**4.1. Develops and implements key partnership relations**

*Examples:*

- a. Identifying strategic partners and the nature of the relationship (e.g. purchaser-provider, co-production, hierarchy and control, co-operation).
- b. Establishing appropriate partnership agreements taking into account the nature of the relationship.
- c. Defining the responsibilities in managing the partnerships.
- d. Regularly monitoring and evaluating the processes, the results and the nature of partnerships.
- e. Stimulating and organising task-specific partnerships and developing and implementing joint projects with other public sector organisations.
- f. Training employees to allow them to work effectively with partners.
- g. Exchanging staff with partners.

**Award a score using the Enablers Panel**

**4.2. Develops and implements partnerships with the customers/citizens\***

*Examples:*

- a. Encouraging the involvement of customers/citizens in matters, which concerns the community.
- b. Involving customers/citizens in political decision-making processes (e.g. consultation groups, surveys, opinion polls).
- c. Being open to ideas, suggestions and complaints of customers/citizens and developing and using appropriate mechanisms (e.g. by means of surveys, consultation groups, questionnaires, complaints boxes, opinion polls, etc.).
- d. Actively encouraging citizens/customers to organize themselves and supporting citizen groups.
- e. Ensuring a proactive information policy (e.g. about the competencies of the several public authorities, about their processes, etc.).

- f. Ensuring that customers/citizens are treated individually (e.g. by identifying the civil servant they are dealing with).
- g. Ensuring transparency of the organisation as well as its decisions and development (e.g. by publishing annual reports, holding press conferences and posting information on the Internet).

**Award a score using the Enablers Panel**

### **4.3. Manages knowledge**

*Examples:*

- a. Developing systems for managing, keeping and assessing knowledge in the organisation.
- b. Ensuring that knowledge and information are shared with partners.
- c. Constantly monitoring the knowledge available in the organisation and aligning it with strategic planning and the current and future needs of all stakeholders.
- d. Ensuring that all employees have access to the knowledge relevant to their tasks and objectives.
- e. Ensuring access to relevant information for all stakeholders.
- f. Ensuring the correctness, reliability and security of information.
- g. Developing internal channels to spread information throughout the whole organisation (intranet, newsletters, illustrated magazines, etc.).
- h. Stimulating the mutual internal exchange of information within the organisation and with all relevant stakeholders.
- i. Ensuring that externally available information is processed and used effectively.
- j. Presenting information in a user-friendly manner.
- k. Ensuring that knowledge of employees leaving the organisation is retained.

**Award a score using the Enablers Panel**

## **4.4. Manages finances**

*Examples:*

- a. Aligning financial management with the strategic objectives.
- b. Ensuring financial and budgetary transparency.
- c. Introducing innovative systems of budgetary planning (e.g. multi-annual budgets, programme of project budgets).
- d. Permanently monitoring the costs of delivery of standard services or products.
- e. Ensuring a cost efficient\* management of financial resources.
- f. Delegating and decentralising financial responsibilities and balancing them with central controlling.
- g. Basing financial control on cost/benefit-analysis.
- h. Analysing the risks and potentials of financial decisions.
- i. Developing and introducing modern financial controlling (e.g. through internal financial audits, etc.).
- j. Promoting transparency of the financial control for all employees.
- k. Using capital assets effectively to support the strategic objectives of the organisation.

**Award a score using the Enablers Panel**

## **4.5. Manages technology**

*Examples:*

- a. Implementing an integrated policy of technologies in accordance with the strategic and operational objectives.
- b. Efficiently applying the appropriate technology to:
  - the management of tasks.
  - the management of knowledge.
  - learning and improvement activities.
  - the interaction with stakeholders and partners.
  - the development and maintenance of internal and external networks.

- c. Monitoring technological progress and implementing relevant innovations.

**Award a score using the Enablers Panel**

#### **4.6. Manages buildings and assets**

*Examples:*

- a. Balancing cost efficiency\* of physical locations with the needs and expectations of users (e.g. centralisation versus decentralisation of buildings).
- b. Ensuring a cost efficient and effective use of office facilities (e.g. open plan offices vs. individual offices, mobile offices) and technical equipment (e.g. number of PCs and copy-machines by service) taking into account the strategic and operational objectives of the organisation, the personal needs of the employees, the local culture and any physical constraints.
- c. Ensuring an efficient and cost effective maintenance of buildings, offices and equipment.
- d. Ensuring an efficient, cost effective and sustainable use of transport and energy resources.
- e. Ensuring appropriate physical accessibility of buildings in line with the needs and expectations of employees and customers/citizens (e.g. access to parking or public transport).
- f. Developing an integrated policy for managing physical assets e.g. by direct management or subcontracting.

**Award a score using the Enablers Panel**



## **Criterion 5: Process and change management**

### **Definition**

How the organisation manages, improves and develops its processes\* in order to innovate and support its policy and strategy and fully satisfy and generate increasing value for its customers and other stakeholders.

### **Key implications**

Critical processes in the public sector relate to the delivery of key services and the support processes essential to the running of the organisation. A key to the identification, evaluation\* and improvement of processes should be their contribution and effectiveness\* in relation to the mission of the organisation.

The nature of process in public service organisations may vary greatly, from relatively abstract activities such as support for policy development or regulation of economic activities, to very concrete activities of service provision. In all cases, an organisation should be able to identify the key processes, which it performs in order to deliver its expected outputs and outcomes.

Examples of processes are:

- core service provision (related to the type and functions of the organisation).
- dealing with the political interface.
- decision-making processes.
- formulation and implementation of legislative policy.
- formulation and implementation of regulatory policy.
- liaison/consultation with suppliers and partners, and outsourcing.
- budgeting and planning.
- resource allocation.
- purchasing and procurement.
- processes for human resource management: staff recruitment, training, development and appraisal.
- processes for physical resource management: assets, information systems and technology.

- communication with employees and citizens.
- providing customer service through enquiry handling.
- procedures for dealing with environmental issues.

### **Assessment: Consider the evidence of how the organisation**

#### **5.1. Identifies, designs, manages and improves processes**

*Examples:*

- a. Identifying, describing and documenting key processes.
- b. Analysing and evaluating key processes taking the objectives of the organisation and its changing environment into consideration.
- c. Identifying and giving responsibility to process owners.
- d. Involving employees and external stakeholders in the design and development of key processes.
- e. Ensuring that core processes support the strategic objectives.
- f. Allocating resources to processes based on the relative importance of their contribution to the strategic aims of the organisation.
- g. Continually optimise and adjust processes on the basis of their measured efficiency and effectiveness.

**Award a score using the Enablers Panel**

#### **5.2. Develops and delivers services and products by involving the customers/citizens**

*Examples:*

- a. Involving customers/citizens in the design and improvement of services and products (e.g. by means of inquiries concerning which services or products are wished and useful).
- b. Involving customers/citizens and other stakeholders in the development of quality standards for services, products and information.
- c. Develop clear and simple legislation using simple language.
- d. Involving customers/citizens in the design and development of information sources and channels.
- e. Ensuring appropriate and reliable information, assistance and support to customers/citizens.

- f. Promoting accessibility of the organisation (e.g. flexible opening hours and documents in both paper and electronic versions).
- g. Promoting electronic communication and interaction with customers/citizens.
- h. Developing sound response and complaint management systems and procedures.

**Award a score using the Enablers Panel**

### **5.3. Plans and manages modernisation and innovation**

*Examples:*

- a. Ongoing monitoring of internal signs for change (e.g. adverse error trends, rising levels of complaints) and external pressures towards modernisation and innovation.
- b. Carrying out benchmarking to drive improvement.
- c. Creating a balance between a top-down\* and a bottom-up\* approach when dealing with changes in the organisation.
- d. Analysing risks and identifying critical success factors.
- e. Steering the change process efficiently (e.g. using milestones, benchmarks, steering groups, follow-up\* reporting).
- f. Discussing with all partners concerning planned changes and changes in execution such as with representative associations.
- g. Providing the resources necessary to complete the process of change.
- h. Evaluating and steering the change processes.

**Award a score using the Enablers Panel**



## **Criterion 6: Customer/citizen-oriented results<sup>5</sup>**

### **Definition**

What results the organisation is achieving in relation to the satisfaction of its internal and external customers.

### **Key implications**

Public sector organisations have a complex relationship with the public, which in some cases can be characterised as a customer relationship (especially in the case of direct service delivery by public sector organisations) and in other cases must be described as a citizen relationship, where the organisation is involved in determining and enforcing the environment in which economic and social life is conducted. Since the two cases are not always clearly separable, this complex relationship will be described as a customer/citizen relationship. Customers/citizens are the recipients or beneficiaries of the activity, products or services of the public sector organisations. Customers/citizens need to be defined but not necessarily restricted to only the primary users of the services provided.

Public organisations deliver services according to local and/or central government policy and are held accountable for their performance to political stakeholders. Performance against statutory requirements is covered under organisational results (Criterion 9). Political targets are those set by national government rather than customer/citizen driven. Customer/citizen satisfaction measures are normally based on areas that have been identified as important by customer groups and based on what the organisation can improve within its specific area of service.

It is important for all kinds of public sector organisations to directly measure the satisfaction of their customers/citizens with regard to the overall image of the organisation, the products and services the

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<sup>5</sup> From Criterion 6 onwards, the focus of the assessment shifts from Enablers (The features of an organisation which determine how it performs) to Results (The results or outputs which the organisation achieves). The assessment of results requires a different set of responses, so the responses from this point are based on the Results Assessment Panel.

organisation provides, the openness of the organisation and the involvement of customers/citizens. Organisations typically use customer/citizen surveys to record satisfaction, but they may also use other or complementary tools (like focus groups, user panels, etc.).

**Assessment: Consider what results the organisation has achieved in its efforts to meet the needs and expectations of customers and citizens, through**

### **6.1. Results of customer/citizen satisfaction measurements**

Depending on the nature of the organisation and its tasks, direct measures of customer/citizen satisfaction may include:

*Examples:*

Results regarding the overall image of the organisation

- a. Overall level of satisfaction with the performance of the organisation.
- b. Friendliness and fairness of treatment.
- c. Responsiveness and pro-active behaviour.
- d. Flexibility and ability to address individual situations.
- e. Openness to change.
- f. Seeking suggestions and collecting ideas for improvement.
- g. Impact of the organisation on the quality of life of customers/citizens.

Results regarding involvement

- a. Efforts to involve customers/citizens in the design of services or products and in decision-making processes.

Results regarding accessibility

- a. Opening and waiting times.
- b. Amount and quality of information available, accessible and transparent.
- c. Efforts aimed at administrative simplification and the use of simple language.
- d. Building location (closeness to public transport, parking facilities, etc.).

Results relating to products and services

- a. Quality, reliability, compliance with quality standards, user or citizens' charters.
- b. Processing time.
- c. Quality of the advice given to the customer/citizen.

**Award a score using the Results Panel**

## **6.2. Indicators\* of customer/citizen-oriented measurements**

Organisations also have a range of internal indicators they can use to measure the results they achieve among customers/citizens. Depending on the nature of the organisation, such internal indicators may include:

### *Examples:*

Results regarding the overall image of the organisation

- a. Number of complaints.
- b. Extent of efforts to improve public trust in the organisation and its services or products.
- c. Handling time of complaints.
- d. Number of interventions from an ombudsman.
- e. Processing time.
- f. Extent of staff training in relation to effective and friendly communication with and treatment of customers/citizens.

Results regarding involvement

- a. Extent of involvement of stakeholders in the design and the delivery of services and products and/or the design of decision-making processes.
- b. Suggestions received and recorded.
- c. Implementation and extent of use of new and innovative ways in dealing with customers/citizens.

Results regarding products and services

- a. Adherence to published service standards (e.g. citizens' charters).

## **Common Assessment Framework**

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- b. Number of files coming back with errors and/or cases requiring compensation.
- c. Extent of efforts to improve availability, accuracy and transparency of information.

**Award a score using the Results Panel**

## **Criterion 7: People results**

### **Definition**

The results the organisation is achieving in relation to the satisfaction of its people.

### **Key implications**

The people of the organisation are all the employees and others who directly or indirectly serve customers/citizens.

This criterion should address the satisfaction of all the people in the organisation and should link to the human resource management criterion.

External constraints will often limit the organisation's freedom in this area. The constraints and the organisation's efforts to influence constraints should therefore be clearly presented. Measurement should focus on the areas over which the organisation has freedom to act.

It is important for all kinds of public sector organisations to directly record the people results concerning the employees' image of the organisation and its mission, the working environment, the organisation's management and management systems, career development, the development of personal skills and the products and services the organisation provides.

Organisations typically use people (employee) surveys to record satisfaction, but they may also use other or complementary tools (like focus groups).

Organisations also have a range of possible internal indicators through which they can measure the results they achieve with the people of the organisation (the employees) in relation to their satisfaction, their performance, the development of skills, their motivation and their involvement in the organisation.

## **Assessment: Consider evidence of results relating to**

### **7.1. Results of people satisfaction and motivation measurements**

Direct measures of people (employee) satisfaction and motivation may include:

*Examples:*

Results regarding overall satisfaction with:

- a. The overall image of the organisation.
- b. The overall performance of the organisation.
- c. The relevance of the organisation's contribution to society.
- d. The organisation's relations with citizens and society.
- e. The level of involvement in the organisation and its mission.

Results regarding satisfaction with management and management systems:

- a. The organisation's top management and middle management (e.g. their ability to steer the organisation and communicate).
- b. Task agreements, systems of staff evaluation, appraisal, goal setting and performance evaluation, rewarding of individual and team efforts.
- c. The design of the organisation's processes.
- d. The organisation's approach to change and modernisation.

Results regarding satisfaction with working conditions:

- a. The work place design.
- b. The working atmosphere and the organisation's culture.
- c. Recreational facilities.
- d. The approach to social and environmental issues.
- e. The handling of equal opportunities and fairness of treatment in the organisation.
- f. The flexibility of working hours and the possibility to balance work with family life and personal matters.
- g. The way that the organisation deals with personnel problems.

Results regarding motivation and satisfaction with career and skills development:

- a. The management of human resources (e.g. training and career opportunities).
- b. Employee motivation.
- c. Employee knowledge the organisation's goals.
- d. Willingness to accept changes.
- e. Willingness to make an extra effort under special circumstances.

Results regarding satisfaction with:

- a. The involvement in decision-making processes.
- b. The involvement in improvement activities.
- c. Consultation and dialogue mechanisms.

**Award a score using the Results Panel**

## **7.2. Indicators of people results**

Depending on the nature of the organisation internal indicators may include:

*Examples:*

Results regarding satisfaction:

- a. Levels of absenteeism or sickness.
- b. Rates of staff turnover.
- c. Number of complaints, strikes, etc.

Results regarding performance:

- a. Measures of productivity.
- b. Results of evaluations and/or appraisals.
- c. Link between individual performance and the quality of services or products.
- d. Results of the use of individual performance indicators.

Results regarding skills development:

- a. Participation and success rates in training activities.
- b. Use of training budgets.
- c. Use of information technology by employees.
- d. Evidence on the ability to deal with customers/citizens and to respond to their needs.
- e. Staff rotation inside the organisation (mobility).

Results regarding motivation and involvement:

- a. Response rates for staff surveys.
- b. Participation in improvement activities and schemes (like suggestion schemes).
- c. Participation in social events.
- d. Participation in internal discussion groups, meetings with senior management or all-staff meetings, etc.
- e. Willingness to accept changes.
- f. Willingness to make an extra effort under special circumstances.

**Award a score using the Results Panel**

## Criterion 8: Society results

### Definition

What the organisation is achieving in satisfying the needs and the expectations of the local, national and international community at large (as appropriate). This includes the perception of the organisation's approach to quality of life, the environment and the preservation of global resources, and the organisation's own internal measures of effectiveness. It will include its relations with authorities and bodies, which affect and regulate its business.

### Key implications

Many public sector organisations have an impact on society through the very nature of their primary business or statutory mandate and the results of these core activities will be presented in the customer satisfaction and business results criteria.

This criterion will measure the impact on society of the organisation outside its primary business or statutory mandate.

The measures cover both measures of perception and – where available – quantitative indicators.

**Assessment: Consider what the organisation is achieving in respect of impact on society, with reference to**

### 8.1. Results of societal performance

Depending on the nature of the organisation and its mission, indicators may include:

*Examples:*

- a. The impact on the local, national and international economy and society.
- b. Quality and frequency of the relations with the local and societal partners.
- c. Ethical behaviour of the organisation.

- d. The involvement with the community in which the organisation is based through support (financial or other) for local and societal (social, environmental, etc.) activities.
- e. Support for the socially disadvantaged (e.g. provision of work experience and work placements).
- f. Extent of support to third world development projects.
- g. People awareness of the impact of the organisation on the quality of life of citizens.
- h. Extent of support for societal engagement of both citizens and staff.
- i. The tone of media coverage.
- j. Extent to which the organisation integrates societal changes in its own functioning.
- k. Programmes to prevent health risks and accidents.

**Award a score using the Results Panel**

## **8.2. Results of environmental performance**

Indicators may include:

*Examples:*

- a. Integration of the principles of the sustainable development in the decision making process (energy saving, use of renewable energy sources, total energy use, etc.).
- b. The reduction of waste and packaging.
- c. The use of recycled material.
- d. Promoting the use of environmentally friendly modes of transport (e.g. public transport, car sharing and bicycles).
- e. The degree of compliance with environmental standards.
- f. Efforts to reduce nuisance or harm from the organisation's activities and to ensure protection and safety of citizens
- g. Measures for noise reduction.
- h. Taking into account environment and nature protection in the decision making process (e.g. building construction).

**Award a score using the Results Panel**

## Criterion 9: Key performance results

### Definition

What the organisation is achieving in relation to its mandate and specified objectives and in satisfying the needs and expectations of everyone with a financial interest or other stake in the organisation.

### Key implications

Key performance results relate to whatever the organisation has determined is essential, measurable achievements for the success of the organisation in the short and longer term. Key performance results are measures of the effectiveness and efficiency or delivery of services/products, goals and objectives including specific targets, which are politically driven. These measures will be both financial and non-financial and many will be closely linked to policy and strategy (criterion 2) and the critical processes (criterion 5).

The results relate to measurement of the organisation's performance with regard to achievement of goals and the outcomes of key activities (effectiveness) as well as the internal functioning of the organisation. Furthermore they involve measurements of the performance of the organisation in making a rational and economic use of their financial resources (economy\*) and in making an efficient use of financial resources.

### Assessment: Consider the evidence of trends in results being achieved for the organisation, in relation to

#### 9.1. Goal achievement

Depending on the nature of the organisation results of goal achievement may include:

#### *Examples:*

External results:

- a. The extent to which the goals are achieved in terms of output (delivery of products or services) and outcome (impact on the society).

- b. Improved quality of service or product delivery.
- c. Cost effectiveness (outcomes achieved at the lowest possible cost).
- d. Efficiency.
- e. Results of inspections and audits.
- f. Results of participation in competitions and quality awards.
- g. Results of benchmarking activities.

Internal results:

- a. Evidence of involvement of all stakeholders in the organisation.
- b. Evidence of ability to satisfy and balance the needs of all the stakeholders.
- c. Evidence of success in improving and innovating organisational strategies, structures and/or processes.
- d. Evidence of improved use of information technology (in managing internal knowledge and/or in internal and external communication and networking).
- e. Evidence of (increased) compliance with quality standards, user or citizen charters.

**Award a score using the Results Panel**

### **9.2. Financial performance**

Depending on the nature of the organisation, indicators to measure the financial performance of the organisation may include:

*Examples:*

Measures of economy (saving money):

- a. Extent to which budgets are met.
- b. Extent to which financial targets are met.
- c. Evidence of ability to satisfy and balance the financial interests of all stakeholders.
- d. Measures of effective use of operating funds (to avoid exceeding any credit limit or under-exploiting resources).
- e. Extent of income generating activities.

## **Criterion 9: Key performance results**

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- f. Frequency and results of financial audits and inspections (internal and external).
- g. Measures of prudent and risk-conscious financial management.

**Award a score using the Results Panel**



## Assessment panels

### Enablers panel

Score	
0	No evidence or only anecdotal evidence of an approach.
1	An approach is planned <b>P</b> (plan).
2	An approach is planned and implemented <b>D</b> (do).
3	An approach is planned, implemented and reviewed <b>C</b> (check).
4	An approach is planned, implemented and reviewed on the basis of benchmarking data and adjusted accordingly <b>A</b> (act).
5	An approach is planned, implemented, reviewed on the basis of benchmarking data, adjusted and fully integrated into the organisation.

### Results panel

Score	
0	No results are measured.
1	Key results are measured and show negative or stable trends.
2	Results show modest progress.
3	Results show substantial progress.
4	Excellent results are achieved and positive comparisons to own targets are made.
5	Excellent results are achieved, positive comparisons to own targets are made and positive benchmarks against relevant organisations are made.



## **Guidelines for the use of the CAF**

The guidelines have been prepared to help public organisation planning to conduct a self-assessment exercise using the CAF. Based on the experiences of previous CAF users, it is recommended that the stages described are taken into account when planning a self-assessment in order to maximise the value of the process. The application of these guidelines also helps ensure a certain degree of standardisation of the assessment-process itself.

### **How to organize the process of assessment**

#### *Gain commitment of the senior management and communicate CAF self-assessment process*

Before a self-assessment project is launched, the senior management of the organisation should discuss and agree on the arrangements for conducting the assessment. It should also discuss the perceived purpose of the assessment and the intended actions following completion of the assessment.

#### *Appoint a CAF project leader*

The responsibility of the CAF project leader includes ensuring that all necessary information and documentation is provided to the self-assessment group, supporting contacts and information distribution within the self-assessment group, arranging meetings, accommodation for meetings, reporting, etc.

#### *Establish the assessment group*

The usual arrangements for a self-assessment team involve an ad hoc group, which is as representative of the organisation as possible. It would be usual to include members from different sectors/levels within the organisation. The objective is to establish a group as small and effective as possible, but at the same time a group, which provides the most accurate and detailed internal perspective of the organisation. It is important to select participants on the basis of their personal (e.g. analytical and communicative skills) rather than professional skills.

The chair could be also the project leader. The chairperson is responsible for the proper conduct of all group proceedings, in co-operation with the project leader.

### *Inform the team about what/how is to be done*

The CAF should be introduced and the purposes and nature of the self-assessment procedure explained (the CAF evaluation panel, need to support scoring by evidence, etc.). The Group should be assured that nobody will suffer for expressing an honest opinion. A list with all relevant documents and information needed to assess the organisation in an effective way should be available for the group. To give the group a better understanding of how the CAF is operating one question from the enablers criteria and one from the results criteria could be assessed in common. A consensus has to be reached on how to evaluate evidence and how to assign scores.

## **The assessment process**

### *Undertake individual assessment*

The chair must be available to handle questions from the members of the self-assessment group during the individual assessment. Each member of the self-assessment group is being asked to give an accurate assessment of the organisation, under each sub-criterion, based on their own knowledge and experience of working in the organisation. Besides the actual score it is important that individuals within the group write down key words and evidence about strengths and weaknesses to support their scores.

### *Undertake consensus*

As soon as possible after the individual assessment, the group should meet and agree on how to score the organisation on each sub-criterion. A process of «negotiation» and agreement may be necessary to reach agreement. Alternatively a calculation of the statistical mean of the group can be applied.

In the process of arriving at consensus, a four-step method may be used:

1. Presenting the range of individual scores under each sub-criterion, as well as the statistical mean of the individual assessments.
2. Identifying the significant points of consensus and difference.
3. Discussing the background to any significant cases of difference.
4. Attempting to reach consensus, possibly on the basis of a second assessment-round for selected criteria.

The chair has a key role in conducting this process and arriving at a group consensus. In all cases, the discussion should be based on concrete evidence of efforts made and results achieved. In the CAF, a list of relevant examples is included, to provide assistance in identifying evidence. It is not necessary to meet all the possible indicators, only those relevant to the organisation. However, the group is free to find additional examples relevant to the organisation.

### How to use the results

#### *Prioritise improvements*

The record of the self-assessment should be communicated to the organisation and carefully examined by senior management with a view to identifying the main findings of the self-assessment, the areas in which action is most needed, and the kind of action, which is called for. In preparing such a plan, the management might wish to consider the use of a structured approach, including the questions:

- Where do we want to be in 5 years (goal setting)?
- What actions need to be taken to reach these goals (strategy/task definition)?

The senior management may find it helpful to group the areas for improvement under common themes before deciding relative priorities.

#### *Develop and implement an improvement plan*

While a CAF self-assessment is a start to a long-term improvement strategy, the assessment will inevitably throw up a few areas that can be addressed relatively quickly and easily. Acting on them will help with the credibility of the improvement programme and represent an immediate return on time and training investment.

It is a good idea to involve the people who carried out the self-assessment in the improvement activities.

#### *Monitor progress and repeat the assessment*

Once the improvement action plan is formulated and the implementation of changes has begun it is important to make sure that the changes have a positive effect and are not adversely affecting things the organisation was doing well to begin with. Some organisations have built regular self-assessment into their business planning process – their assessments are

## **Common Assessment Framework**

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timed to inform the annual setting of objectives and bids for financial resources.

The evaluation panels of the CAF are simple but powerful tools to use when assessing the on-going progress of the improvement action plan.

## **Benchmarking and beyond self-assessment**

### **Share experience and benchmark**

The purpose of establishing benchmarking activities is to find better ways of doing things, based on better results achieved in other organisations. The CAF, and other relevant organisational analysis tools, can be used to support benchmarking.

At its simplest, benchmarking is a process by which an organisation finds relevant organisations with which it can compare, or benchmark, its own organisation and performance. The technique can be a powerful and effective tool for organisational development, as it exploits sound basic principles such as “not re-inventing the wheel” and “learning from others”.

Using the CAF from website of the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) – [www.eipa.nl](http://www.eipa.nl) – allows an organisation to fill in the evaluation form on-line after the self-assessment has been conducted. The achieved results will remain anonymous, but the organisation will get feed-back on its scoring against the average of other organisations that have used the CAF in the same country or the same sector of activity.

The self-assessment results will be part of the European CAF database, which contains information with regard to the organisations that have used the CAF, their sector of activity, the size of the organisations in terms of personnel and contact persons. By offering key information the database can help public sector organisations identify suitable benchmarking partners.

### **Beyond self-assessment**

In seeking to strengthen the depth and accuracy of an organisational assessment using the CAF, it should be remembered that the framework was developed as a relatively “light”, introductory tool, which would permit public organisations to test self-assessment with little cost. An organisation planning to apply Total Quality Management principles in depth might be advised to use one of the more developed and detailed models, which are available from other sources.

Using CAF as an analytical framework, a number of alternative assessment procedures could be employed adding to the self-assessment elements of external verification and certification.

### *External assessors in the assessment team*

One possible approach, to improve the accuracy and reliability of the assessment procedure, would involve the addition of one or more external assessors to the assessment team. These could be external consultants trained in organisational assessment and the use of evaluation techniques, or they might be employees of other public sector organisations or representatives of stakeholders, invited to join the assessment process in order to add an element of external perspective and critical judgement.

### *Involving external stakeholders in the assessment group*

The organisation may choose to involve one or more stakeholders in the assessment group. Stakeholders may take part in the entire assessment process or just part of the assessment related to their area of interest. Depending on the situation stakeholders may include supervisory authorities and/or customers/citizens.

### *External assessment*

This assessment, taking place on the basis of the full results of the internal self-assessment, would either confirm the validity and accuracy of the self-assessment, adjust the results if this were justified by the examination, or reject the self-assessment for external use (e.g. some form of quality certification).

### *Award schemes*

An organisation wishing to benefit from the more intensive application of Quality Management might also consider participation in one of the national or international award schemes, which used increasingly by public service organisations. There is also the possibility of contacting some of the organisations, which are specialised in Quality Management, such as the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) or the Speyer Quality Award, for consultancy support in developing deeper application of Quality Management, and/or for participation in their award schemes.

## Glossary

### *Audit*

Auditing is an independent appraisal function to examine and evaluate the activities of an organisation and its results. The most common audits are: financial audit, operational audit, ICT audit, compliance audit and management audit. Three levels of auditing control activity can be distinguished:

- Internal control done by the management.
- Internal auditing done by an independent unit of the organisation. Among other things it has to control the effectiveness of the organisations internal management.
- External auditing done by an independent body outside of the organisation.

### *Balanced Scorecard*

Balanced Scorecard is a technique to assess, by the use of indicators, an organisation from several strategic points of view. The model stresses the importance of establishing a balance between short- and long-term goals, stability and change, as well as internal processes and relations to external stakeholders.

### *Best practice*

Superior performance or methods or approaches that lead to exceptional performance. Best practice is a relative term and sometimes indicates innovative or interesting business practices, which have been identified through benchmarking. Sometimes, it is preferable to talk about “good practice” since one cannot be sure that there is not a better one.

### *Business process re-engineering*

Systematic mapping and rethinking of production, distribution, marketing and other business processes throughout an organisation in order to improve performance.

### *Benchmarking*

Two or more participants making systematic comparisons of processes and/or results in their respective organisations in order to learn about best practices and implement them in ways suited to their own organisation.

### ***Bottom-up***

Direction of the flow of for instance information or decisions from the lower levels of an organisation to the higher levels. The opposite is top-down.

### ***Brainstorming***

Team working tool to generate ideas without constraints in a short period of time. The most important rule is to avoid any kind of criticism during the ideas production phase.

### ***Change management***

Change management involves both generating the needed changes in an organisation and mastering the dynamics of change by organizing, implementing and supporting the change.

### ***Code of conduct***

Rules and recommendations for behaviour for a professional group or organisation. Codes of conduct may also apply to specific activities, such as auditing or benchmarking.

### ***Continuous improvement process***

The involvement of all members of an organisation in the ongoing improvement of business processes in terms of quality, economy or cycle time.

### ***Cost effectiveness***

The relationship between the effects that are implied by the goals of the organisation and the costs – possibly including the full social cost – of achieving them. See also effectiveness.

### ***Critical success factor***

Key activities or results where satisfactory performance is essential in order for a business to succeed.

### ***Customer/citizen***

The term customer/citizen is used to emphasize the dual relationship between the public administration and, on the one hand, the users of public services and, on the other hand, all the members of the public, who as citizens and taxpayers have a stake in the services and their outputs.

*Customers/citizens results*

What the organisation is achieving in relation to its customers, such as covering needs or meeting demands. Evidence may include satisfaction of customers/citizens or willingness to pay.

*Economy*

Economy and economizing refer to saving money, buying more cheaply etc. without reference to outputs or objectives.

*Efficiency*

Outputs in relation to inputs or costs. Productivity may be regarded as one and the same. Productivity may be measured in ways that capture either the input of all factors of production (total factor productivity) or a specific factor (labour productivity or capital productivity).

*Effectiveness*

Effectiveness is the relation between the set goal and the impact, effect or outcome achieved.

*Empowerment*

A process by which more influence is given to a group of people (e.g. citizens or employees) by involving the group in the decision making process, by granting autonomy, etc.

*Evaluation*

Examining whether actions undertaken have given desired effects and whether other actions could have achieved a better result at a lower cost.

*Follow-up*

Subsequent to a self-assessment process and changes to an organisation, a follow-up aims at measuring goal achievement and on that basis launching new initiatives and possibly adjusting strategy and planning in accordance with new circumstances.

*Human resources management*

Managing, developing and making use of the knowledge and full potential of the employees of an organisation in order to support policy and business planning and the effective operation of its processes.

### *Indicator*

Measure that is indicative of some phenomenon, i.e. it does not measure the phenomenon as such but measures it indirectly.

### *Input*

Any kind of resources used for production.

### *Leadership*

How leaders develop and facilitate the achievement of the mission and vision, develop values required for long-term success and implement these via appropriate actions and behaviours, and are personally involved in ensuring that the management system is developed and implemented.

### *Long term*

Refers usually to periods five to ten years or more ahead.

### *Mission*

The ultimate reason to exist for an organisation.

### *Medium term*

Refers usually to periods two to five years ahead.

### *Network*

An informal organisation connecting people or organisations that has no formal line of command. Members of the network often share values and interests.

### *Operational objective*

The most concrete formulation of an objective at a unit level. An operational objective can be immediately transformed into a set of activities.

### *Output*

The immediate result of production, which may be either goods or services. There is a distinction between intermediate and final outputs, the former being products delivered from one department to another within an organisation, the latter outputs delivered to someone outside the organisation.

***Outcome***

The impact (or effect) that the outputs have on society.

***Partnership***

Collaboration with another party on a commercial or a non-commercial basis in order to reach a common goal.

***Perception indicator***

Subjective measure about a phenomenon, e.g. the customer's perception of the quality of a product or service.

***Policy***

A policy is the combination of a goal and the means to reach it.

***Principal***

Politicians and superior government bodies that set up, mandate and control public administration organisations are principals.

***Process***

A process is defined as a set of activities, which transforms a set of inputs into outputs or outcomes, thereby adding value. The nature of processes in public service organisations may vary greatly, from relatively abstract activities such as support for policy development or regulation of economic activities, to very concrete activities of service provision.

***Process and results benchmarking***

Process benchmarking compares activities and processes. Results benchmarking compares outputs, outcomes and other indicators of result such as quality, efficiency and cost effectiveness. In both cases the aim is to improve specific critical processes and operations. Process and results benchmarking complement each other and are normally both needed in order to reach conclusions about best practice.

***Process map***

A graphical representation of the series of actions taking place within a process.

### *Public service organisation*

A public service organisation is any institution, service organisation or system, which is under the policy direction of and controlled by an elected government (national, federal, regional or local). It includes organisations that deal with development of policy and enforcement of law, i.e. matters that could not be regarded strictly as services.

### *Quality*

Quality is a characteristic of a product (good or service). It may be measured directly as compliance to some standard or indirectly by customer/citizen appreciation or impact. TQM focuses on procedures and processes that are deemed instrumental in promoting quality.

### *Short term goal*

Goals, which may be accomplished within a short time, usually less than one year.

### *Stakeholders*

Stakeholders are all those who have an interest, whether financial or not, in the activities of the organisation, for example, customers/citizens, clients, employees, the general public, inspection agencies, the media, suppliers, etc. Principals, such as the Government, represented by elected (or appointed) leaders, and superior government organisations, are also stakeholders. All stakeholders are not on an equal footing.

### *Strategy*

A plan of action to achieve the objectives of an organisation.

### *Strategic benchmarking*

Strategic Benchmarking is used where organisations seek to improve their overall performance by examining the long-term strategies and general approaches that have enabled high-performers to succeed. It involves comparisons of high-level aspects, such as core competencies; the development of new products and services; a change in the balance of activities or an improvement in capabilities for dealing with changes in the background environment.

*Survey*

To collect data on opinions, attitudes or knowledge from individuals and groups. Frequently only a cross-section of the whole population is asked to participate.

*SWOT analysis*

Analysis of the Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities (potential advantages) and Threats (potential difficulties) of an organisation.

*Target*

Level of results (output, outcome, quality, efficiency, etc.) to be achieved. Targets may be set for goals and objectives by principals or by the organisation itself.

*Top-down*

Flow of information and decisions from the upper levels to the lower levels of an organisation. The opposite is bottom-up.

*TQM (Total Quality Management)*

A customer focused management philosophy that seeks to continuously improve business processes using analytical tools and teamwork involving all employees. There are several TQM models, the EFQM, the Speyer, the Malcom Baldrige, ISO 9000 being the most commonly used.

*Value*

Value refers to monetary, welfare, cultural and moral values. Moral values are more or less universal, whereas cultural values may shift between organisations as well as between countries. Cultural values within an organisation should be related to the mission of the organisation. They may be quite different between non-profit organisations and private businesses.

*Vision*

The (maybe) achievable dream of what an organisation wants to do and where it wants to go.

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a result of the co-operation among the EU Ministers responsible for Public Administration. The Directors General of this field are proud to present the new version of the CAF at the 2nd Quality Conference.

The CAF is offered as a tool to assist public sector organisations across Europe to use quality management techniques in public administration. CAF provides a simple, easy-to-use framework, which is suitable for a self-assessment of public sector organisations.