

CAF assessments as part of the performance management of administrative branches

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The CAF model

The Common Assessment Framework (hereinafter the "CAF") is a quality management model for public sector organisations, which has been developed based on co-operation between EU member states. The CAF is a total quality management tool encompassing the assessment not only of performance areas but also of organisational methods that enable excellent results. The CAF's nine assessment criteria represent all the main aspects of organisational analysis.

The first five criteria cover the organisation's methods, which enable the achievement of the set targets and desired performance. The following four criteria are used to assess the results achieved through the enablers and to examine those results from various angles. The CAF is free tool available for anybody, and organisations can apply it according to their needs.

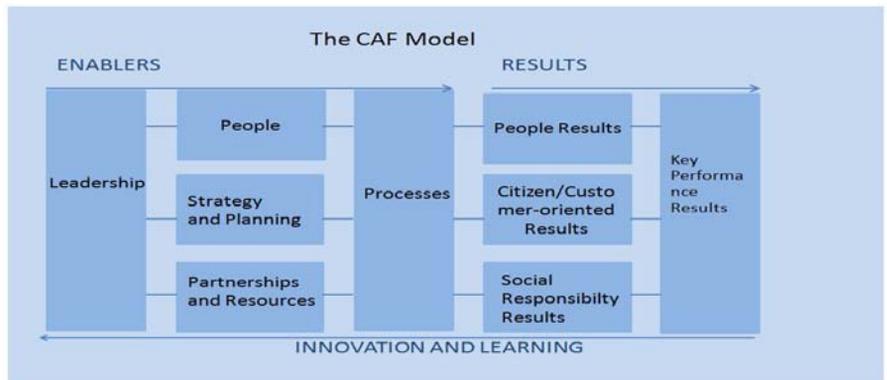
CASE: Quality management in the Ministry of the Interior's administrative branch

Ministries are charged with steering and monitoring the agencies within their administrative branches and developing the respective sectors. For several years, steering in the administrative branch of the Ministry of the Interior has been largely based on the CAF, following the guided self-assessment model.

The basic premise of this approach lies in steering the administrative branch in such a manner that the ministry takes active ownership of the operational quality criteria. Steering ensures that, at a minimum, the key quality criteria governing operations are analysed systematically and coherently across the administrative branch.

In CAF assessments of the Ministry of the Interior's administrative branch, the focus should not only be on applying the full range of CAF criteria and making proposals for operational development on that basis, but also on increasing interaction between the agency and steering ministry at a more interpersonal level. This process includes a discussion with the management regarding the assessment objectives, CAF user training for the assessment group and management (arranged by the ministry), and discussion meetings around set themes (held at the beginning of the self-assessment process).

A self-assessment reporting model with a common structure, designed for the recording of organisational strengths and areas in need of improvement, has been drawn up for the administrative branch. The performance targets for the performance agreement (what will be done?) are drawn up on the basis of identified strengths and desired improvements. In this way, key areas for development and the corresponding resources can be prioritised and their effective implementation ensured. Based on this assessment, organisation-specific development targets, for which the director will be accountable, will be recorded in the management agreement, monitored and form the basis of rewards (how will this be done?).



For more information on the CAF criteria, visit the Ministry of Finance website:

http://www.vm.fi/vm/fi/13_hallinnon_kehittaminen/o3_palvelujen_laatu/o3_caf/index.jsp

The website provides the new version of the CAF criteria (CAF 2013, in English), the CAF 2006 and the appendices to the CAF model.