

## **CAF in the Czech Republic**

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On 17 March 2004 the Government of the Czech Republic adopted the resolution on “The progress and main directions of the reform and modernization of central state administration” whose vision is a “flexible and better functioning state administration, capable of well reacting to cross-sectoral and global problems”. One of the five main directions of the reform is “Quality improvement of central state administration” and within its framework also the application of the CAF model. Since then The Institute of State Administration which belongs to the Office of the Government has introduced CAF, TQM, benchmarking and sustainable improvement in its education system for the state administration officials.

To improve the quality and effectiveness of central state administration the Office of the Government jointly with the Czech Republic Council for Quality issued a handbook on self-assessment based particularly on the publication of EIPA Maastricht: The CAF – Improving an organisation through self-assessment (from October 2002).

The CAF Model was applied for the first time in the Czech Republic in two regional offices (in Liberec and in Olomouc) as a pilot project of the National Policy of Quality Support. Subsequently further projects of CAF implementation in territorial self-government were launched under the auspices of the Czech Republic Council for Quality every year. By way of example I shall introduce a project from the capital city Prague of the Czech Republic. Prague has 57 city parts organised in 22 administrative districts subordinated to the City Council Office of the Capital which is simultaneously one of the 14 regions of the Czech Republic. The territory of the whole city covers 49 586 hectares and the population numbers 1 169 150. A detailed publication on its participation in the CAF project was issued by the administrative district Prague 13 with an area of 2 310 hectares and over 55 000 inhabitants. This part of the city has the lowest average age in the whole Prague and it is simultaneously an area with the dynamic development of which also the management of its Self-government Office must keep abreast.

At the beginning of last year a CAF team was appointed in the Office of this city part. The team has nine members comprising the leading executives of the Office and headed by the lady-secretary of the Office. After a seminar on the CAF model, organized for the team in April 2005, the self-assessment by the team started, the results of which were published at the end of the year.

The reason for CAF implementation was the endeavour of the Office to improve the service provided to its customers, i.e. citizens, organizations and firms, in accordance with the latest trends relevant to the field of quality in the framework of the European Union. The Office management was convinced that effective state, effective office and effective public sector organization must be certainly the goal of any responsible political representation. And a higher effectiveness of public administration can be achieved only through the permanent improvement of quality in public administration. The citizens expect a continuous improvement of the quality of life in their community. At the same time, however, it is also necessary to cope with the productivity of labour, the reduction of risks, the reduction of costs, etc.

Having considered all circumstances the Council of Prague 13 approved, by its resolution of March 2005, its participation in the project of the National Policy of Quality Support 2005 “Implementation of the CAF Model in the Organizations of Territorial Public Administration” and undertook to apply the CAF Model to its Office in the next three years, i.e. until the end of 2007.

### Results

The results of the first year of the CAF Model application are summed up in the table below.

#### *General results of CAF assessment – First year (2005)*

Criterion	No. of subcriteria	No. of questions	Average score
1. Leadership	4	33	2.3
2. Strategy and planning	3	17	2.4
3. Human resources management	3	28	2.6
4. Partnerships and resources	6	46	2.6
5. Process and change management	3	23	2.5
ENABLERS CRITERIA - together	19	147	2.5

6. Customers/citizens – oriented results	2	7	1.8
7. Employees – results	2	9	1.1
8. Society results	2	18	1.8
9. Key performance results	2	3	2.1
<b>RESULTS CRITERIA - together</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>1.7</b>

### Discussion

Although it presents only partial results of the first (initial) year of the project in which its participants had to look at their work from definitely defined angles, the table gives a certain food for thought. It can be considered from the general (methodological) as well as from the specific (practical) points of view.

Generally speaking, the first thing that strikes the observer is the quantitative difference of attention afforded to the two groups of criteria. While the ENABLERS group with 5 criteria comprises 19 subcriteria with 147 questions (adopted from the CAF 2002 handbook), the RESULTS group with 4 criteria has only 8 subcriteria with 37 questions.

These figures seem to indicate that the ENABLERS criteria have been analysed methodologically more profoundly and in greater detail than the RESULTS criteria. This degree of detail may (and I underline: may) exercise favourable or unfavourable influence (as the case may be) on the score of assessment results. The result of averaging the rating of 30 replies is certainly more reliable than the result of averaging only three. For instance, in Criterion 7 in the above table the average very low score of 1.1 is due to the fact that the first Subcriterion 7.1 (Results of employees' satisfaction and motivation measurements) could not be assessed, as the Office did not make any survey of the employees' satisfaction the year before. Due to this absence the score of Criterion 7 dropped to 1.1, although the second Subcriterion (Indicators of employees' results) scored 2.2.

It seems that greater attention and more detailed analysis of the RESULTS criteria in the course of further development and refinement of CAF methodology would not be amiss.

Speaking specifically of practical assessment results the table shows similar disproportion of assessment results of the ENABLERS and the RESULTS criteria.

The scores of ENABLERS criteria (which themselves average 2.5 out of the possible 5 of the assessment panel) are visibly better than those of the RESULTS group averaging merely 1.7. This may be due to several causes.

In the first place it shows that in the field of management the employees are more at home and better capable of improving their performance. This is enhanced e.g. by the fact that the field of Human Resources Management (Criterion 3) in the Czech Republic is governed by the Act No.312/2002 Coll. on Officials of Territorial Self-governing Units which determines the HRM policy in this part of public administration and its fulfilment by the unit under review in some cases exceeds the scope of programmes of educational institutions. That is probably why the Subcriterion 3.1 (Planning, management and improvement of human resources with regard to strategy and planning) scored 3.1. Also the management subcriteria of Criterion 4 – Partnerships and resources - viz. Subcriteria 4.3: Knowledge management, 4.4: Management of finances, 4.5: Management of technology and 4.6: Management of buildings and assets, scored above average, viz 2.5, 2.6, 3 and 3 respectively, and both “management” criteria 3 and 4 scored 2.6 each. Also Criterion 5 – Process and change management – did not score badly, either, but the rating of Subcriterion 5.1 (Identification, design, management and improvement of processes): 2.7 – and Subcriterion 5.2 (Development and delivery of services and products by involving customers/citizens): 2.9 – was spoiled by the low rating of Subcriterion 5.3 ( Planning and management of modernization and innovation) amounting merely to 2.0, which resulted in a merely average score of the whole Criterion 5 at 2.5.

In the field of RESULTS, concerned with the interface of the organization with the public, the employees seem to be treading uncertain ground. With the exception of the “tone of media coverage”, rated 3 and “ethical behaviour”, rated 2.5, which are only two questions of Subcriterion 8.1 (Results of societal performance), the score of Criterion 8 (Society results) – is rather poor: 1.8, the same as the score of Criterion 6 (Customers/citizens – oriented results): 1.8. The high rating of “ethical behaviour” is probably due to the existence of a “Code of ethics of Office employees”, the drafting and approval of which, however, belongs to the field of office management creating the

prerequisites for good Office/citizens interface. The reason for the low score of Criterion 7 (Employees – results) was mentioned in the preceding general part.

The scores of the RESULTS criteria seem to suggest that it is in this field that the improvement efforts should concentrate in the future.

#### Action Plan

Although the results of the first (initial) year of the CAF application project yielded only partial and preliminary results, they provided sufficient ground for the proposal of some improvement measures to be applied in the nearest future, drafted in the form of an Action Plan.

As could be expected the Action Plan addresses the issues assessed in the RESULTS criteria, concerning both the employees and the public. Primary attention is afforded to the improvement of contacts with and services to the citizens both in the town hall and through information terminals, the acceleration of office procedure, information in case of emergency, etc.

In the field of employees the Action Plan concentrates on the closer contact of the staff with the management through the improvement of their knowledge of future management plans, feedback on employment satisfaction and training courses, improvement of adaptation of new employees as well as the introduction of employees' "personal portfolios" and the redefinition of their duties to conform with the official "Catalogue" in force.

To exchange experience the Office will establish partnership relations with other towns both in the Czech Republic and abroad.

Although the Action Plan does not show the links to individual assessment criteria, in its sum it addresses clearly the most obvious problems ascertained in the course of the first year's assessment which so provides guidance for its further development.

#### Conclusion

It would be premature and perhaps erroneous to draw any definite conclusions from the first initial year of the three years' project in which its participants are trying to find their way in the previously not much explored territory. Nevertheless, the previously mentioned considerations seem to indicate that attention in the future will

have to concentrate particularly on the improvement of the RESULTS criteria and their scores.

The Office of Prague 13 continues the CAF assessment until 2007. It will be interesting to see the final results of the project which I have introduced as a specific example of CAF implementation in the Czech Republic on local self-government level. On the level of central state administration CAF is currently implemented in the Office of the Government and at the Ministry of Finance.