



Benidorm Treasury Department CAF Good Practice: Accompanying the Taxpayer



Ideas by:

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Number of self assessments with CAF 2013 fine-tuned scoring: Two (May 2013 and July 2014).

External assessment by AEVAL (State Agency of Evaluation and Quality for Public Administrations): July 2015, awarded CAF 500+

Website: <http://portal.benidorm.org/nuevocidadano/panel-noticias/27>

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Short summary: Benidorm treasury department began using CAF in version 2013 focussing in the users' needs and a lot of improvements were reached in the area: for example, the facilities offered to citizens to make their payments provoked more reverse-charges and tax settlements paid. The citizens' and stakeholders' requirements were heard and the department underwent a holistic change which had an influence in all the Enablers: leadership, strategy, people, partnerships and resources and processes. Also it obtained great results in Results criteria: citizens, people, social responsibility and key performance.



Short description of the organization:

Benidorm is one of the major tourist destinations in Spain, with just a registered population of 69.010 inhabitants who bear the expense for public services provided for the 500.000 visitors on one summer day without the support of higher governments. There are a large number of property owners who don't live in Benidorm and sometimes they were very difficult to locate, get in touch with and make them pay their taxes.

The treasury department of the City Council of Benidorm is a management centre incardinated in the economic area of the Finance Department, which has its headquarters located on the ground floor in the main building of the City Hall and 14 deconcentrated management centres and 5 external administrative offices (outside the main building) in the various neighbourhoods of the city, also SUMA tax office and other units. Its range of services focuses on the issue of tax assessments and other public revenues which emerge from public services provided by the City Council in the fields of culture and youth, sports, education, social welfare, private driveways, capital gains, connections, open-air marketplace and issuing of different administrative documents, counting on a staff of just 15 people.

Description of the case:

The treasury department was an old-fashioned department which had not suffered many changes for many years. It has been only since 2006 when the new Treasurer arrived that a new system began to be implemented based on managerial and organisational techniques. A first strategic plan was implemented from 2010 to 2012 and many changes took place and it was in 2013 when the management team realized that the organisation was mature enough to take a further step.

We are dealing with a holistic case with good practices in almost all the fields. The overall and new approach to enhance the implementation of CAF led to great improvements for example:

Related to criterion 1 – a) A very committed management team that has driven and still drives multiple actions to achieve excellence with a high involvement of intermediate level officials and other staff in improving the organisation; b) A strategic framework and a management system based on processes has been developed where



responsibilities of the participants, objectives and strategies have been defined; c) Leading figures and structures have been introduced within the organisation to enable the development of management; d) Relations with other institutions and organisations are kept in order to strengthen their management and e) Renovated balanced scorecard.

Related to criterion 2 – a) Needs and expectations of stakeholders have been identified and met through different means and sources of information implemented in the organisation; b) Strategic plans have been developed that allow the expansion of the strategic framework of the organisation and its periodic reassessment and also decision-making; and c) The deployment monitoring of the strategic plan is done using indicators in a dashboard, allowing improvements and changes in management.

Related to criterion 3 – a) Job descriptions fully developed; b) Customized training for employees; and c) Internal communication channels have been created allowing a constructive dialogue and the participation of the entire organisation.

Related to criterion 4 – a) Channels of information flow with all stakeholders creating systematic approaches to communication and consultation; b) System available for the management of the relevant information that rely on IT applications acting in a scheme of interoperability and safety; c) Internal channels developed for the spreading of information throughout the whole council; and d) Technological systems that enable the management of administrative proceedings electronically and providing on-line services through different tools, some of which have made a significant and pioneering innovation in Local Administration.

Related to criterion 5 – a) Management proceedings are identified and classified into strategic, operational and support, with innovative platforms that allow for electronic processing, ensuring secure on-line services to the users; b) Complete Process mapping; c) The organisation has published its Charter of Services; d) Interconnection of the software of different programmes (7 in total) to achieve new coordinated processes in payment systems and e) Citizens receive information about the available online



services through the virtual branch of the City Council and through other channels.

Related to criterion 6 – a) Customer/citizen survey: increasing average high score of 8,30 points in 2013 to a still higher one of 8,92 in 2015; b) Highest scores of more than 9 points (either rather satisfied or very satisfied) obtained in: friendliness, fairness of treatment, openness, clarity of the provided information, the employees' willingness to help, accessibility with public transport, disabled access, payment methods, use of new technologies, respond to complaints and suggestions, opening and waiting times; c) Different needs of customers attended according to gender, age... d) More applications filled and more inquiries solved and e) No complaints in the last two years and no dispute lodged with the ombudsman.

Related to criterion 7 – a) Employment climate survey: increasing average score of 7,71 points in 2013 to 8,18 in 2015; b) Highest scores of more than 9 points of satisfaction (either rather satisfied or very satisfied) obtained in: layout of working conditions, work-life balance, health protection, systematic career and competency development, encouragement and empowerment, people's involvement in the decision-making process and improvement activities, use of new ITs in the everyday tasks, ability of management to steer the organisation, communication of important subjects, positive work climate and friendship/fellowship, effort to improve the environment; c) Creation of the Employee Handbook; d) Increasing number of voluntary participation in activities of social responsibility; e) Resource optimization through online courses and f) No complaints, no staff strike and no staff absenteeism.

Related to criterion 8 – a) Increasing support of specific actions towards disadvantaged people (tax exemptions, free support to compile tax returns); b) Special care of ecological footprint, energy management, waste management; c) Stimulating mobility by public transport and creating alternative environmental friendly modes of transport; d) Producing renewable energy and using recycled materials; d) Communication in the media of all SR activities; e) Providers with a socially responsible profile; f) Productive exchange of knowledge; g) Presence of trainees, e) Encouraging the creation of stable jobs through the establishment of a space to



interchange experiences among Universities, companies, banks, social partners and the third sector and f) Exchange of knowledge through 6 postgraduate courses (showing specific results achieved by the treasury department).

Related to criterion 9 – a) Higher income as a result of the increase in the number of tax settlements and reverse-charges paid; b) More economic transparency; c) Interdepartmental coordination; d) Better accessibility of facilities; e) More partners involvement; f) Less number of complaints filed; g) Shorter payment average period; h) Lower indebtedness level and local debt amount; i) Creation of two professional social communities; j) Simplified processes; k) All procedures accessible by electronic means; l) Development of new electronic payment systems; m) Less paperwork and reduced costs and n) Payment systems already replicated in 10 Town Councils, 3 water suppliers and 1 tow truck company and being studied by other 3 Town Councils.

How CAF assisted the whole change process

After the management team studied different models of excellence and made some inquiries with AEVAL, they made a proposal to the Mayor's Office: the project to certify the treasury department with the CAF 2013 model as the most appropriate and best suited as it was tailored for public sector organizations taking into account its peculiarities and it was also compatible with the other models of European quality growing implantation.

It was decided by a resolution of the Mayor's Office -dated February 6, 2013- to appoint the Project Director and the Project Coordinator and writer of the Improvement Plan and to create the Quality Committee. By resolution of 7 February, the Mayor decided to issue the proper instructions to communicate the project to all stakeholders for the purpose of updating them on steps being followed with self-assessment: objectives sought, purpose and activities to be executed. Fifty-seven communications were made to collect contributions and suggestions from all stakeholders involved, with the aim of offering a better service to citizens. A complete consensus had been achieved.



AEVAL had agreed to support the project and training for the staff and the self assessment team on CAF was provided by the end of April 2013 and in May evidence was collected by the Project Coordinator.

The self assessment team for CAF 2013 first met at the end of May 2013 with a result of a fine-tuned scoring of 214,4 points. Target areas for improvement were set, the enhancement plan was designed and improvement teams with participation of stakeholders, politicians, staff and partners began working. One year later the second meeting of the self assessment team was held in July 2014 obtaining 408 points. The report was prepared to be sent to AEVAL for the external feedback and once read, it was proposed by AEVAL to carry out some more steps in the same framework of self-assessment and continuous improvement process to apply for the level of excellence. So, improvement teams continued working (and they still do so today) and finally, the external assessment Agency has awarded the CAF 500+ certification of excellence with 550 points.

Specific sub-criteria of the CAF affected

As it can be easily deduced from the previous paragraphs all the sub-criteria are affected, because it was considered a holistic aim: to renew the organisation bearing in mind the taxpayers' needs.

The idea was to reorganize the administration focussing on the stakeholders' and citizens' highlighted requirements: deepening in the innovation of the systems of payment. The holistic project took place thanks to the concerns of the management team and thanks to CAF improvement teams.

Reasons & aims:

The main reason was the fact that a change had begun in the treasury department and it was felt by all the members of staff there was still a lot to be done and it was the right moment to go on.

The goals were all fixed in a renewed balanced scorecard where all quantitative and qualitative results can be checked, as it has been done using the abovementioned updated scorecard.

Implementation:



The **main stakeholders** involved:

SUMA – Tax collecting Body (public organisation).

Caixabank – Bank (private company) that acts as only manager of all bank activities which have to do with Benidorm Town Council, then this bank is the one in charge to contact other banks and collect all the revenue, so as to unify all the banking operations.

Hidraqua – Water supplier in Benidorm (private company).

Deporwin, Reserweb and TPVwin – Software to book cultural and sport activities and facilities.

IVAL informática and TAO systems – Software for public accountancy and tax management.

TANGRAM – Master data management software.

Neighbourhood Council – Advisory board which promotes citizen participation in local government and makes this government more responsible to local requirements.

The **management team** in the treasury department has been in charge of the project: The Treasurer (Mr. Antonio Cholbi), the two technicians of general administration working as heads of the executive branches of Tax management and Inspection and Treasury and Tax Collection (Mr. Francisco Manuel López Ocaña and Jorge Pérez Company).

The **tools used**, apart from CAF, have been: agreements with politicians and public organisations and contracts with private companies, competence management, benchmarking, merit based and individual performance staff policies, people management, staff ownership, citizen involvement (co-analysis, co-evaluation and co-decision), flowcharts, process mapping and business process reengineering.

The CAF project to improve the services offered in the treasury department was **supported** from the very first moment by all the participants in the project, be they public or private.

Fortunately, all **the staff** felt eager to change after a lot of years of paralysis and the arrival of the new team plus the illusion and the sense of being involved in a project made them undergo the change without offering hindrance to the progress. In fact, it was rather the contrary: when they met problems they tried to find a solution before talking about the obstacle to superiors, being then proactive.



The *obstacles encountered* have been very different: from the difficulty to coordinate the software of seven different programmes to meet the needs of a new payment system (that is to say interoperability), to the resistance to change by some employees and the resistance to use IT by some citizens, or also to local budget limits.

The *successes met* are: less people is coming to Town Hall to the processing of their payments (as now they can do them using the internet), processes have been reengineered (using the internet and the intranet), technological hindrances have been minimized and resistance by employees has been mainly overtaken by training.

What have been the most important results of the case/good practice?

We can group the outstanding results in different groups:

- **Increasing of:** tax settlements and reverse-charges paid, tax collection during the voluntary and the enforcement period, economic transparency, interdepartmental coordination, scores in surveys, accessibility of facilities and partners' involvement.
- **Decreasing of:** complaints filed, payment average period, indebtedness level and local debt amount.
- **Creating:** two professional social communities in a social network (INAP), established regular meetings with employees and politicians, simplified processes, all procedures accessible by electronic means and new electronic payment systems.
- **Replicability** in other public and private organizations and **exchange of knowledge** in postgraduate courses.

The results are all *measured* in the balanced scorecard where once a year data are collected. Once the annual management report is drawn up, all data are put together with the suggestions and complaints collected through surveys, then meetings are carried out with employees to contrast all the information and finally all the subjects are included as items for the improvement teams' agenda.



According to the experiences and testimonies the main factors to contribute to success have been employees' goodwill and proactiveness, forward-looking managers and supporting stakeholders.

Innovate nature and transferability of the case/good practice

The holistic project in itself is not innovative, as it has followed the steps driven by CAF to improve the organization but some of the aspects which have been enhanced during the process have become innovative in their particular field, as for example the new electronic payment systems (coordinating 7 software of different companies which allow the treasury department to intercommunicate the data of requests for a local facility or a course -either from home using the internet or in person in the Town Hall-, the reverse-charges and tax settlements with the virtual payment system or the corporate payment system that better fits the taxpayer, the accountability software and the final booking).

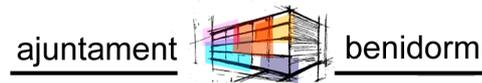
The overall project and also the innovative payment system are being taught in 6 different postgraduate courses with students from Spain and Latin America.

The most important thing in our case is the fact that the change has affected all the sub-criteria and it has been awarded the certificate 500+ in very short period of time without previous experience in quality systems, thanks to the effort of all the participants.

The payment system is already working (as a whole or divided into modules: another advantage of the project) in other local entities or private companies.

Our main learning experience is the one learnt during the development of the collaboration project between the public administration and the private world.

And as a result of the previous studies prepared we have, without any doubt, a clear recommendation for anyone who is interested in a similar implementation: the elaboration of a detailed analysis of the requirements of the local entity bearing in mind the organisational structure with which



you really work and, in our particular case, the payment systems as they are very important in a Treasury Department.

Don't hesitate to contact us in case you need any kind of clarification or you have any doubt about how our experience was carried out.