

# Report on the State of Affairs of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) after Five Years



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## 1. Introduction

The public sector has to cope with a lot of challenges and has to respond to many new needs and demands in society. Due to these challenges and pressures, the public sector is subject to many reforms. *“Over the last two decades there appears to have been a huge amount of public management reform. Although there was also reform in earlier periods, the changes since 1980 have – in many countries – been distinguished by an international character and a degree of political salience which marks them out from the more parochial or technical changes of the preceding quarter-century.”*<sup>1</sup> These reforms introduce new principles. A growing focus on efficiency and effectiveness, attention to transparency and accountability, awareness of public service delivery. Together with these principles, methods and techniques were constructed, focusing on one of these principles or trying to combine them. Techniques like *‘management by objectives’, ‘cost benefit analysis’, ‘market testing’, ‘performance related pay’, ‘value for money’* were introduced.<sup>2</sup>

One of these techniques, Total Quality Management, became a feature of the public sector from the late 1980s and particularly the early 1990s.<sup>3</sup> In the late 1990s, many quality models and techniques (EFQM, ISO ...) and subsequently the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) found their way into the public sector. In recent times, public sector quality improvements have appeared on the agenda of Eastern European countries.<sup>4</sup> The new EU Member States in particular are very active in promoting quality tools.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. The construction of the CAF-model as a European quality tool<sup>6</sup>

Following years of informal consultations, there was an increasing need within the European Union for a more intensive and formal response in order to optimise cooperation with respect to the modernisation of government services. In 1997, this need was given substance by the formation of a steering committee at European level, which subsequently became the IPSG – the Innovative Public Services Group. In addition, the preparatory work that had been performed for several years at informal level by the

public service heads of the various EU Member States, led in November 1998 to a ministerial declaration containing *“the general principles concerning the improvement of the quality of services provided to citizens”*. The IPSG working group then developed a quality tool specifically intended for and adapted to the public sector. This resulted in 2000 in the Common Assessment Framework – a self-assessment framework based on the principles of TQM and derived from the EFQM model and the German Speyer model. In 2002, the model was simplified and improved.

The CAF has four main purposes:

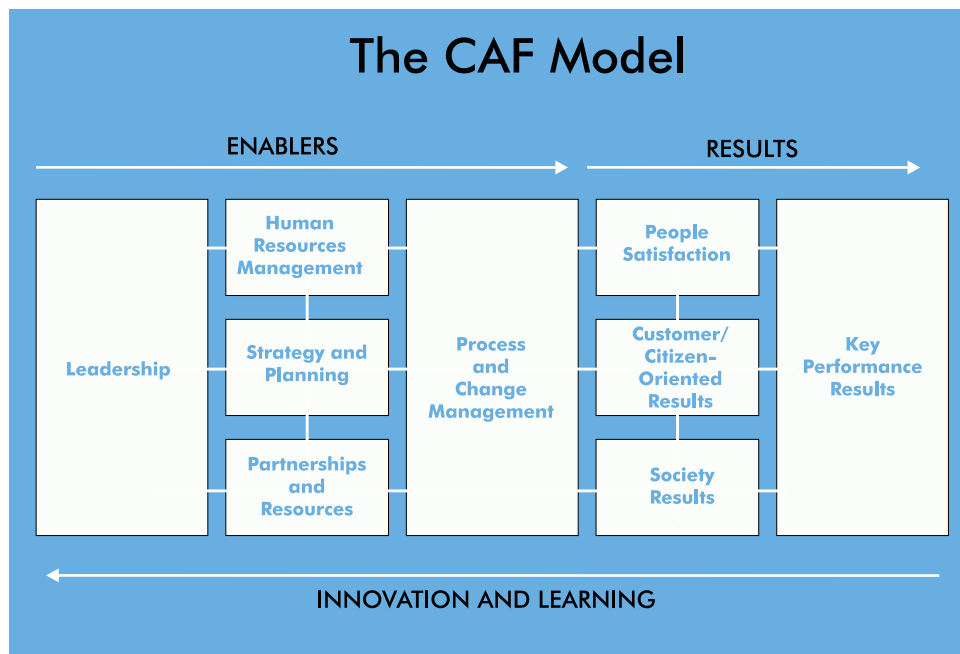
1. To reflect the unique features of public sector organisations.
2. To serve as a tool for public administrators who want to improve the performance of their organisation.
3. To act as a bridge between the various models in use in quality management.
4. To facilitate benchmarking between public sector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

The CAF has been designed for use in all parts of the public sector, applicable to public organisations at a 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 part of an organisation, e.g. a selected section or department.

The CAF constitutes a blueprint of the organisation. It is a representation of all aspects that must be present in the proper management of an organisation in order to achieve satisfactory results. All these elements are translated into nine criteria and further operationalised and given concrete form in subcriteria. On the basis of these subcriteria, a group from within the organisation evaluates the organisation.<sup>7</sup>

## 3. Quality management in Europe: a short term overview

In 2002 a study was carried out on behalf of the Spanish Presidency of the European Union to obtain an overview of



the most important quality programmes, major tendencies and the use of quality management techniques in the Member States.<sup>8</sup> The highlights of this study can be summarised in five points.

1. Almost all countries are conducting a number or even a large number of quality initiatives, relating to various forms of service provision.
2. Most Member States have specific organisation units (at central, regional and local level) which are responsible for the promotion of quality initiatives for the public sector.
3. The use of quality models and techniques to achieve improvements in the public sector has taken root in all Member States.
4. A growing use of quality awards and contests can be noticed. *"The organisation of quality awards or contests is one of the standard instruments used to promote quality, innovation and organisational learning in the public sector, to encourage public administrations to use instruments of quality management and also introduce an element of competition into the public sector."*<sup>9</sup>
5. Benchmarking remains a very difficult issue.

With the organisation of the European Conference on Quality, started in Lisbon in 2000, and the spread of national conferences, a growing dynamic in the quality movement could be noticed. In addition, the decision was taken to set up a CAF support centre within EIPA in Maastricht. Investments were made to design and promote the CAF model as a "light" model, especially suited to gaining an initial impression of how an 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).

During the Italian Presidency, the European Institute of Public Administration conducted a study on the use of the Common Assessment Framework within European public administrations.<sup>10</sup> The questionnaire-based study sought to identify the way in which CAF was promoted in the different Member States and how the tool helped public administrations to analyse themselves in an efficient way and to implement improvement actions in the context of a total quality approach. The conclusions of the 2003 study

on the use of the Common Assessment Framework can be summarised in the following points.<sup>11</sup>

The CAF model was applied in more than 500 organisations or organisation divisions in 19 countries. The organisations were spread across the various tiers of the government landscape (central, state, provincial, local ...). In addition, the organisations originated from sectors ranging from the police and judiciary, across welfare and social sector organisations and education, to living environment, economy and organisations charged with co-ordination or policy functions. The size of the organisations differed from very small (10 employees) to very large (more than 5000), although we must conclude that the middle group is the largest.

The most important reason to use the CAF was as a measuring device to subject the organisation to a quick scan in order to identify a number of strong and weak points, which will then serve as a launching pad for a number of improvement projects. This clear identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation is the most important added value of the self-assessment. This strength/weakness analysis can be further used as a basis to set up targeted improvement actions. In addition, matters such as an increased awareness of organisational problems, a better insight into the total functioning of the organisation and the exchange of ideas in this respect appeared to be important aspects.

We concluded that many of the initiatives launched in the various European countries relating to quality management may be labeled as individual, *ad hoc* initiatives of the countries themselves. However, we observed a growing tendency, both in Eastern and Western European countries, towards a common language and a common reference framework. Quality tools such as the CAF model may serve as a framework for this language. By offering such a framework as a guiding principle for organisation management, principles of proper management find their way into many administrations and many different countries.<sup>12</sup>

In 2004 the CAF support centre at EIPA was evaluated and a vision for the future was drawn up. The CAF support centre intends:

1. To offer a permanent basis for the further development of the CAF, for the promotion of the CAF and for stimulating good practices within the European public sector.
2. To become a reference point for the dissemination and collection of CAF information and expertise.
3. To become an expertise centre for supervising CAF applications.
4. To become a reference point in creating awareness and supporting quality management in the various European countries.

In 2005 the CAF Resource Centre at the European Institute of Public Administration in Maastricht carried out a survey on the use of the CAF on behalf of the Luxembourg Presidency of the EU.<sup>13</sup>

#### 4. The CAF in Europe: State of affairs anno 2005

##### 4.1 Context of the 2005 study

Nearly a year and a half after the first study on the use of the CAF, the Luxembourg Presidency asked EIPA, in accordance with the Mid-Term Programme of the European Public Administration Network, to conduct a follow up study. As was the case in 2003, a questionnaire, prepared in collaboration with the CAF correspondents, was sent to the CAF correspondents and members of the IPSG to acquire information on the status of CAF in their country (the Member States, candidate members and Norway). Slight adaptations were designed to collect information related to the evolution since 2003. All 27 correspondents answered the questionnaire.

For organisations that have used the CAF since then, a questionnaire was put on line on the EIPA CAF website. 131 questionnaires have been returned to EIPA by individual organisations from 22 different countries.

##### 4.2 Policy and support in the Member States

The different national correspondents were asked about the political support for CAF and other TQM tools in their country, to give an idea as to the overall position adopted by governments on TQM in general.

Table 1 indicates that TQM tools and CAF have found their place in most of the European countries. As in 2003, EFQM, ISO, BSC and CAF are the most extensively used TQM tools in Europe in general, not counting specific national tools like VIC (Italy), INK (the Netherlands) and the Swedish Quality model. Most of the conferences on 'Quality Management' or 'Quality in the Public Sector', both national (e.g. Germany, Belgium) and European, support the relationships between these different models. In Austria,

EFQM is mostly used by schools and labour market services and ISO 9000 by specific organisations. CAF is implemented at all levels of government. Belgium has built up significant experience with Business Process Reengineering (BPR), trying to integrate self assessment as a preliminary diagnosis before starting a BPR. The introduction of Balance Score Cards aims at developing indicators together with satisfaction surveys for people and citizens/customers. To support vision and missions, codes of values have been introduced in some public organisations. The Czech Republic is also encouraging the use of CAF to initiate BSC and satisfaction surveys as well as for project management, internal audits, process management and reengineering. It also has some ISO and EFQM applications. Denmark is currently encouraging users of the Excellence Model to use CAF as an additional tool to increase the dissemination of TQM in their organisations. The tools that have been developed in relation to CAF make it easier to ensure a high degree of dissemination with a low use of resources. At local level, the KVIK/CAF is currently a better established brand than the EFQM Excellence Model. Finland is suggesting to users that EFQM and CAF can be used alternately: detailed analysis by EFQM every second year and a midway check by CAF in the year in between the EFQM analysis. The Slovenian annual national EFQM reward is linked to CAF. In Luxembourg, a few public administrations are implementing ISO 9000.

The stability of the political support for TQM tools and CAF is evident in countries with some history in this field – such as the Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon countries – and in the UK political support is even increasing. In these countries, choices of management tools are basically made at management level. In several other countries the political awareness of CAF and TQM is growing and is expressed in central government initiatives.

In most of the countries, the political support mentioned translates into the recommended use of these tools.

CAF is only obligatory in two new and one candidate Member State: they want all three to make a special effort to encourage quality management in their central administrations. On the basis of the received information, it is impossible to describe the intensity or impact of the recommendations in the other countries. Looking at the activities and actions put into place (see *infra*), even where CAF is applied on a voluntary basis, it is obvious that these activities and actions organised at the central state level provide a very strong impetus.

The organisations responsible for the dissemination and promotion of CAF remain located centrally, meaning close to the central government and its Ministry in charge of public administration. Belgium, Germany and Spain maintain their specific way of involving regional and local levels of government.

**Table 1: TQM tools and CAF and the political support**

No formal policy (1)	Decreasing (2)	Constant (9)	Increasing (12)
Ireland	Estonia, Latvia	Germany, Denmark, Finland, France, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Slovakia, Norway	Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Spain, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Romania, UK

**Table 2: The implementation of CAF: voluntary, recommended or obligatory**

Voluntary (9)	Recommended (15)	Obligatory (3)
Austria, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Portugal, UK	Belgium, Czech Republic (highly), Czech Republic (local level), Germany, Denmark, Greece, Spain (for starters), France, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Sweden (TQM), Slovenia, Slovakia, Norway	Czech Republic (central level), Slovakia (central level), Romania

### 4.3 The use of CAF in the different countries

It remains difficult to centralise information on the number of CAF applications at national and European level. This is due to the nature of the tool itself – a stimulus for individual organisational development via self-assessment – as well as the European context in which it was created – an open coordination or voluntary cooperation between countries. As in the 2003 study, the national correspondents were asked to estimate the use of CAF in their country. In the autumn of 2003, 22 countries estimated roughly having generated 500 applications. In 2005, 20 countries estimated having generated around 885 applications in their countries.

To provide an idea of the spread of CAF, two groups are distinguished. Countries with more than 30 applications can be considered to have already established a sound basis for the further use of the CAF. Countries with fewer than 30 applications can be credited with having gained initial experience with the model. Maybe they are on their way to joining the first group.

**Table 3: The use of CAF in different countries**

More than 30 applications	Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden
Fewer than 30 applications	Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovakia, UK, Romania

### 4.4 Implementation and use of CAF in public administrations: lessons learned from practice

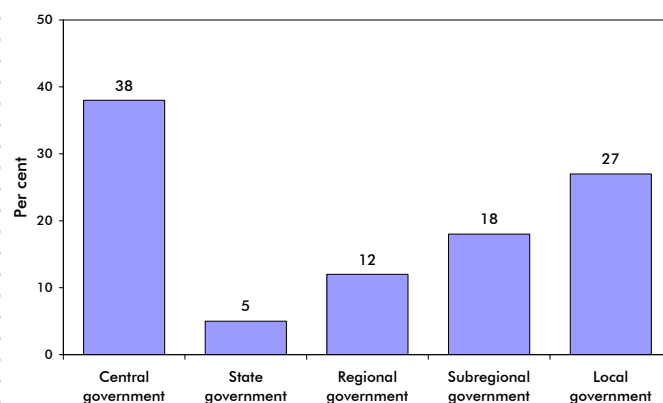
Based on the information gathered from the 131 questionnaires returned to EIPA by individual organisations from 22 different countries, the first observation confirms that the CAF model is used in all tiers of government as shown in previous surveys.

The organisations from the central and state governments (43%) are the best represented in this survey at the expense of the local governments. This gives at least an indication that CAF is finding its way also into the central levels of government.

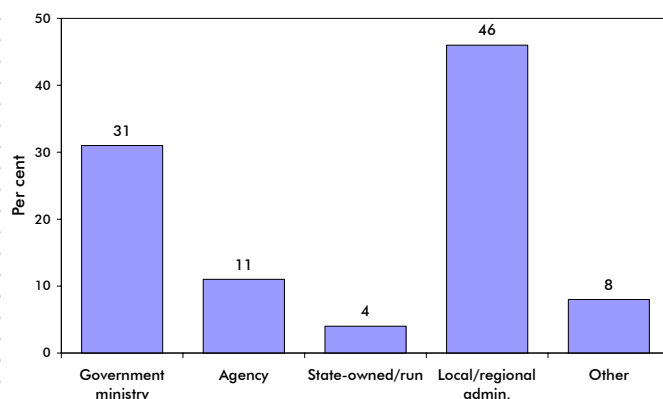
The model is not only used in the different tiers of government, but organisations from different types of administrations are also users

Besides the tier and the type of administration, the size of the organisation is another interesting characteristic to look at.

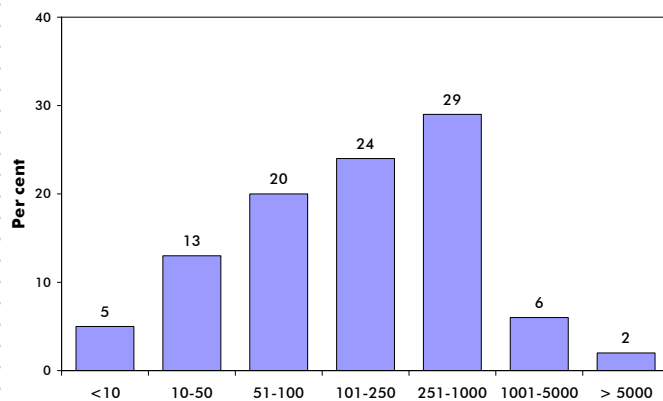
#### Level of government of the organisation



#### Type of administration



#### Size of the organisation



The size of the organisations is comparable with those which took part in the survey of 2003. The model is applied in all size of public organisations but more than 50% have between 101 and 1000 employees. The very small (<10) and the very big (>1000) organisations remain the exception. This indicates that the model suits all sizes.



As described above, organisations can use the model for the whole of the organisation or just for one part of the organisation. Table 4 shows the application of the CAF model in the whole or a part of the organisation and makes a distinction between the years 2003 and 2005.

**Table 4: Application in the whole or a part of the organisation**

2005		2003	
No.	%		%
95	73%	In the whole organisation	72%
36	27%	In part of the organisation	28%

As so many big administrations indicated they have applied the CAF, it should not be surprising that 36 did so in only a part of the organisation.

Much more relevant of course is the question of why organisations went for the CAF. On the basis of the closed questions in the previous questionnaire and the answers to the open questions, a number of possible reasons that could be decisive for using the CAF were presented to the organisations. They were both internal and external. In table 5 the top 10 most chosen reasons are shown.

**Table 5: Why do organisations choose the CAF – Top 10**

Reasons	Average	Type
The organisation wanted to identify strengths and areas for improvement	4.20	Internal
To develop sensitivity to quality issues	3.63	Internal
Intention to involve staff in managing the organisation and to motivate them	3.57	Internal
As an input into ongoing improvement activities, restructuring etc.	3.54	Internal
The CAF was used as a first diagnosis in the start of a strategic planning process	3.53	Internal
To promote the exchange of views in the organisation	3.51	Internal
Because the top management wanted it	3.43	Internal
To prove that the organisation is willing to change	3.17	Internal
To promote cultural change in the organisation	3.14	Internal
To embed a new system of performance management/ measurement	3.09	Internal

These 10 reasons considered to be the most important are all internal reasons. There is a clear emphasis on wishing to identify strengths and areas for improvement, which is exactly the purpose of a self-assessment tool. Organisations want to use CAF in the first place for themselves, so ownership is very high. On the other hand, external reasons can also be valuable in case the application of CAF responds to a demand from stakeholders. The benefits from involving stakeholders apparently still have to be discovered.

Self-assessment may have a number of possible benefits. Again a list of typical benefits was provided and in order of importance the following were identified:

**Table 6: Benefits of self-assessment**

Main benefits	Average
Identification of the need to share information and improve communication	4.12
A clear identification of strengths and areas for improvement	3.97
We were able to identify a number of important actions to be undertaken	3.92
People developed a better understanding of the organisational issues/problems	3.89
Self-assessment gave rise to new ideas and a new way of thinking	3.67
The ability to contribute and to share views was felt positively	3.65
We realised how previous improvement activities could be taken forward	3.28
People started to become aware and interested in quality issues	3.22
We developed an understanding of how different initiatives in place fit together	3.21
People started to develop a stronger interest in the organisation	3.15
We did not see any benefits at all	1.25

The most appreciated benefits fit perfectly with the most important reasons for using the CAF as registered in table 5. Unlike the survey of 2003, the relationship between the reasons given for undertaking the CAF and the results achieved is obvious. One could say that the organisations have found what they were looking for. Probably they were better informed this time and knew better what they could expect.

Using the CAF should lead to a structured improvement process addressing the areas for improvement identified through self-assessment. However, ensuring an adequate and structured follow-up is not always easy. Nevertheless table 7 shows that, in 87% of the cases, the CAF resulted in sustainable improvement activities.

This is a remarkable increase compared to 2003. The fact that nearly nine organisations in 10 that applied CAF started improvement actions does not prove that CAF

**Table 7: Sustainable improvement activities as result of the CAF**

2005		2003	
No.	%		%
105	87%	Yes	62%
16	13%	No	26%

guarantees the improvement of the organisation, but it clearly indicates that it is at least a powerful incentive to start such improvements. This evolution is probably explained by a combination of reasons: improved tools, more training, etc. Table 8 shows the nature of the improvement activity.

**Table 8: The nature of the improvement activity**

Improvement activity	No.
Input into the strategic planning process of the organisation	51
A full action plan (directly linked to the results of the CAF self assessment)	38
Implementation of surveys for the staff	32
Improvement of the process	30
Improvement of the quality of leadership	26
Improvement of knowledge management	25
Implementation of surveys for the customers/citizens (needs and satisfaction)	22
Some individual improvement activities (but no full action plan)	19
Implementation of result measurement (targets)	18
Input into running improvement programme(s)	18
A consolidated report handed to the management (leaving implementation to the latter)	16
Implementation of HRM tools (please specify)	14
Improvement of technology	14
Better management of buildings and assets	6
Implementation of new financial management tools	6
Other	1

The fact that the results of self assessment are integrated into the strategic planning process of the organisation and/or that full action plans are developed shows that self assessment is better integrated into the overall management of the organisation than before.

#### 4.5. Promotion and supporting tools

Since the launch of the CAF in 2000, a lot of activities have been undertaken in many European countries to promote and support the use of this common European tool for the improvement of public administrations. A first comprehensive overview was provided in the Italian survey. Apparently, this study and the first European CAF Users Event in Italy that followed it, inspired a lot of European organisations. Many new countries have become active since then in more fields. In Table 9 we compare the activities and initiatives recorded in 2003 with those recorded at the end of April 2005. The table is divided into six sections:

1. Information on the CAF Model
2. Additional tools to help implementation of CAF
3. Training
4. Interactive support
5. Exchange of experiences
6. Information on application

For each section we have listed the tools or activities involved, the countries that were active in this field in 2003 and those active between 2003 and 2005. To highlight the evolution in each area, countries that have undertaken new activities since 2003 are shown in italic in the last column.

#### 4.6. Plans for the future

##### A. at organisational level.

Organisations were asked if they intended to use the CAF model again in the future. Table 10 shows the results.

**Table 10: The intention to use the CAF again**

2005		2003	
No.	%		%
118	95%	Yes	82%
6	5%	No	12%

The fact that 95% intends to use the CAF again is the best confirmation of the value of this tool. As the test of the pudding is in the eating, 117 of 123 organisations must have had a very satisfying experience with the CAF. We notice also a remarkable increase of this satisfaction compared to 2003, when 'only' 82% were ready to use it again. It is also interesting to see that this readiness is well spread over all 22 European countries that were represented, even those with only one application.

##### B. at country level.

What are the plans for supporting and promoting the CAF model and quality management in general in the Member States? 24 countries transmitted information on the actions they plan for the future. We give a short summary.

In some countries actions are not planned (Estonia) or not finalised (France) due to political or administrative changes. In France, the government will probably recommend the use of CAF in the future. Luxembourg hopes that the inclusion of CAF in the national quality programme will give new impetus to the model. Ireland foresees the use of CAF only as part of a tool set in

Table 9: CAF-related activities and initiatives

Tool or activity	2003	2005
<b>1. Information on the CAF Model</b>		
Publications of CAF (e.g. brochures) and on CAF (e.g. articles)	Belgium, Germany, Poland	Belgium, Germany <i>Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Finland, France, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia</i>
Introductory conference or meeting		<i>Cyprus, Slovenia</i>
DVD on self-assessment		<i>Denmark</i>
Provision of information on the website		<i>Austria, Germany, Estonia, Norway, Latvia</i>
Leaflets	Finland	Finland <i>Cyprus</i>
<b>2. Additional tools to help implement CAF</b>		
Special guidelines	Hungary, Portugal	Hungary, Portugal <i>Cyprus, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Slovakia, Norway</i>
Worksheets	Austria, Germany, Portugal, Ireland	Austria, Germany, Portugal <i>Cyprus</i>
Case studies	Spain	Spain <i>Belgium, Estonia, Hungary, Portugal, Slovakia</i>
Pilot projects	Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia	Czech Republic, Hungary, Portugal <i>Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Lithuania, Romania</i>
CAF-based projects	<i>Denmark</i>	Denmark <i>Austria, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Poland</i>
CAF versions for specific sectors		<i>Belgium, Germany, Denmark, France, Hungary, Norway</i>
Electronic application and evaluation tools	Austria, Germany	Austria <i>Belgium, Germany (easy CAF), Denmark, Spain, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia</i>
<b>3. Training</b>		
Special training on CAF	Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Poland, Sweden	Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Spain <i>Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Slovakia</i>
Seminars, workshops		<i>Austria, Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia</i>
Learning labs		Italy
E-learning	Austria, Germany, Portugal	Germany, Portugal, Poland
<b>4. Individual advice and coaching</b>		
	Austria, Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Italy, Norway	Austria, Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Italy, Norway <i>Cyprus, Lithuania, Poland</i>
<b>5. Exchange of experiences</b>		
User conferences	Germany, Hungary, Italy	Germany, Hungary <i>Portugal</i>
Networks and partnerships	Austria, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia	Austria, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Italy <i>Finland, Hungary</i>
International Partnerships		<i>Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary</i>
National Quality programmes		<i>Czech Republic</i>
Quality conferences	Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Slovakia	Estonia, Hungary <i>Czech Republic, Germany, Finland, Lithuania, Poland</i>
Quality awards / contests	Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Portugal	Austria (Speyer), Belgium, Germany, Italy, Portugal <i>Hungary, Poland</i>
<b>6. Information on application</b>		
Methodological validation		<i>Austria, Hungary</i>
Database / good practice	Austria, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Hungary	Austria, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Hungary <i>Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Poland</i>
Questionnaires	Portugal	<i>Austria, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Poland</i>
Evaluation of the effort to disseminate CAF		<i>Denmark</i>

organisation development projects. The same applies to Latvia where CAF is one of the suggested quality management tools alongside the Latvian Quality Award, ISO, citizens' charters and recommendations by the government. The UK will continue to support the use of CAF in Europe and to act as the conduit for information/communications about CAF to the UK public sector. It will not actively promote CAF in the UK as it will continue to promote the wider adoption and use of the EFQM Excellence Model, but when approached it will provide information and support to those organisations that request it.

Other countries like Austria, Finland, Italy, Lithuania and Spain will continue to execute their current strategy. Italy will decide whether to extend the learning labs and the prize for quality in public services after an evaluation of the results achieved by the current project. It will certainly continue to work on the promotion of the network involving the administrations that have applied the CAF, raise the profile of the administrations that receive prizes for quality and to disseminate their experiences across the wider public sector.

In many countries training is top of the CAF agenda. Belgium plans to organise regular CAF training twice a year in the official training office. Cyprus intends to prepare an action plan on behalf of the Council of Ministers by examining the possibilities for further training on CAF-related matters and the preparation of a quality conference. Greece also seeks to promote the further dissemination of CAF by means of training programmes. Poland plans to hold training sessions for the Directors-General. Portugal will continue with its CAF training courses, focused on the implementation of the tool. Romania envisages training by EIPA for four or six members of the Central Unit for Public Administration Reform to become trainers of the members of the national modernisation network. Slovenia will also further invest in training.

The Czech Republic plans to continue the pilot project of implementing the CAF model at regional and local administration level, to train civil servants as 'regional experts and assessors' for neighbouring public administrations and to develop a CAF manual for organisations at local and regional level. At central state administration level, the activities of the reform project 'Introduction and development of quality management in central state administration' will continue and a CAF manual for central state administration will be updated.

Germany wants to expand the 'easy CAF' to a knowledge database and to continue organising CAF user conferences and producing CAF publications. Denmark aims to increase the number of users of CAF and CAF tools, stressing that CAF is a tool for dialogue that is relevant in a period of transformation and can be used in combination with the Excellence Model.

Like Germany, Hungary will promote its new online CAF system and disseminate CAF further. It wants to increase the efficiency of CAF and is participating in the pilot project of regional bench-learning.

The Norwegian Agency in charge of CAF, Statskonsult, will continue to disseminate the CAF in its daily work and to offer assistance with CAF applications. It will improve its website and conduct a survey to gather more information.

In Poland, the Office of Civil Service plans to continue implementing the information actions in the form of CAF conferences and seminars, and by taking part in similar events in other countries, particularly in EU Member States.

To support the CAF users' community, Portugal decided to create the 'CAF post' on the site of the Directorate-General for Public Administration and to create an electronic worksheet for the self-assessment process to be used by CAF users. The development of a survey of CAF users, of pilot projects or case studies on CAF implementation and on CAF versus other TQM models is also planned.

Slovenia wants to set up a national database on best practices in 2005-2006 and to develop indicators for measuring performance of ministries based on CAF criteria.

## 5. Conclusions

The objective of this questionnaire-based study was twofold. It wanted to identify the further development of the CAF model in Europe since the end of 2003 and to analyse how the use of CAF and the conditions under which it has been used have or have not changed since then. From February to April 2005, 27 countries completed the questionnaire for the national correspondents and 131 CAF users from 22 countries filled in the questionnaire online.

Most countries have continued their political as well as organisational support. A lot of supporting tools have been created, from brochures and information letters, through e-tools and handbooks, to training and individual advice and coaching. It will be very important for the future to organise the sharing of these supporting tools across Europe, so that organisations or countries are not constantly re-inventing the wheel. Conferences like the European CAF users events and relevant networks can play a major role in this. EIPA will maintain its role as the junction of this network and enforce its role as expertise centre on quality management in the public sector.

The CAF is finding its way into the central levels of government and into different sectors of activity besides local administration. Of course, the model has to be adjusted to the proper context of each organisation. The model suits all sizes and helps organisations with little experience on quality management to find their way into Total Quality Management and public management.

On the basis of the estimates of the national CAF correspondents it can be concluded that the use of the CAF has undeniably further increased: from 500 applications in late 2003 to nearly 900 in mid-2005. Furthermore, expectations are that by the end of 2006 the milestone figure of 1900 applications may well be exceeded, i.e. another doubling. All tables indicate that the difference between 'old' and 'new' Member States is fading, the CAF model is growing in its role to present one common language.

As nearly nine users in 10 started improvement actions as a result of the CAF and 95% want to use the CAF again, the value of the CAF is clear. Using it in benchmarking/learning projects is the great challenge for the future.

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## NOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Pollitt, C., & Bouckaert, G. (2000). *Public management reform*, London, Oxford University Press, p.24.
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- <sup>6</sup> This part is largely based upon Staes, P., & Thijs, N. (2005). *Quality Management on the European Agenda. Eipascope*, 2005(1), pp.33-42.
- <sup>7</sup> For more and detailed information on the CAF see [www.eipa.nl](http://www.eipa.nl) and the CAF brochure, recently re-edited by EIPA. Please contact the CAF Resource Centre at EIPA: Ann Stoffels +31 43 329 63 17 or Patrick Staes +31 43 329 63 28
- <sup>8</sup> EIPA (2002), *Survey regarding quality activities in the public administrations of the European Union Member States*, Maastricht, 95 p.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>11</sup> Staes, P., & Thijs, N., *Quality Management on the European Agenda. Eipascope*, 2005(1), pp. 33-42.
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- <sup>13</sup> EIPA (2005), *Study on the use of the Common Assessment Framework in European public services*, Maastricht, 89 p. This complete study can be found on [www.eipa.nl](http://www.eipa.nl)

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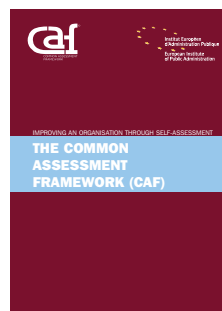
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