



ИНСТИТУТ
ПО ПУБЛИЧНА
АДМИНИСТРАЦИЯ

РЪКОВОДСТВО
ЗА ПРОЦЕСА НА ПРИЛАГАНЕ
НА МОДЕЛ САФ
В БЪЛГАРСКАТА АДМИНИСТРАЦИЯ



COMMON ASSESSMENT
FRAMEWORK

Model CAF



MANUAL ON THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTING THE CAF MODEL IN THE BULGARIAN ADMINISTRATION

(based entirely on Bulgarian practice)

Contents

I. NATURE OF MODEL CAF

Model CAF	3
Basis of the CAF model	4
Structure of the CAF model	5
Benefits of applying the CAF model.....	6
Development of the CAF model	6

II. APPLICATION OF CAF MODEL

First phase: preparation for model implementation.....	8
Second phase: process of self-assessment	13
Third phase: improvement plan	18

III. NOTICE.....	24
------------------	----

IV. EXTERNAL FEEDBACK	26
-----------------------------	----

V. SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON THE CAF MODEL.....	28
---	----

I. NATURE OF MODEL CAF

Model CAF

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a **quality management tool developed specifically for the public sector by the public administration itself** - an initiative of the European Public Administration Network (EUPAN). The CAF is a performance management model and acts as a "compass" for managers to find their way to organisational improvement.

CAF can be used **in all areas of the public sector** and is applicable to public organisations at all levels - European, federal, national, regional and local. Since its inception in 2000, more 4000 public organisations in nearly 60 countries have officially registered as users of the model. In Bulgaria, CAF has already been implemented in 95 public administrations - 22 of them are central administration organisations (including IPA), 17 are regional/territorial administrations attached to ministries, 19 are regional administrations and 37 are municipalities. A total of 61 administrations have been awarded the "Effective CAF User" label, which is a very high percentage.

CAF is a **particularly suitable tool** for improving the management and performance of Bulgarian state organizations because it is:

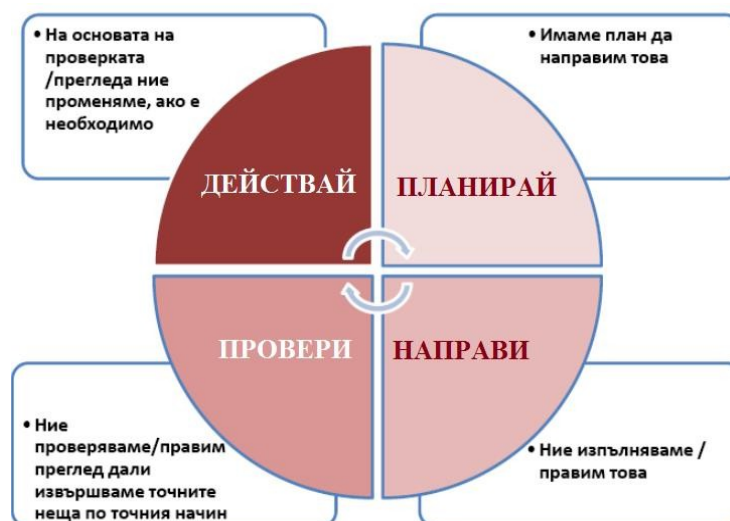
- a quality management tool **specifically designed for the needs of the public administration by the public administration itself**;
- **A common, accessible, free and easy-to-use model** that is **implemented by the organisation itself** (internal team(s)) without the need for dedicated financial resources to implement and maintain it;
- **a comprehensive tool** that covers and analyses all major aspects of organisational management and performance and contributes to the achievement of 'good governance' in public administration.

BASED ON MODEL CAF

As a total quality management tool, CAF is based on the fundamental eight principles of organizational excellence:

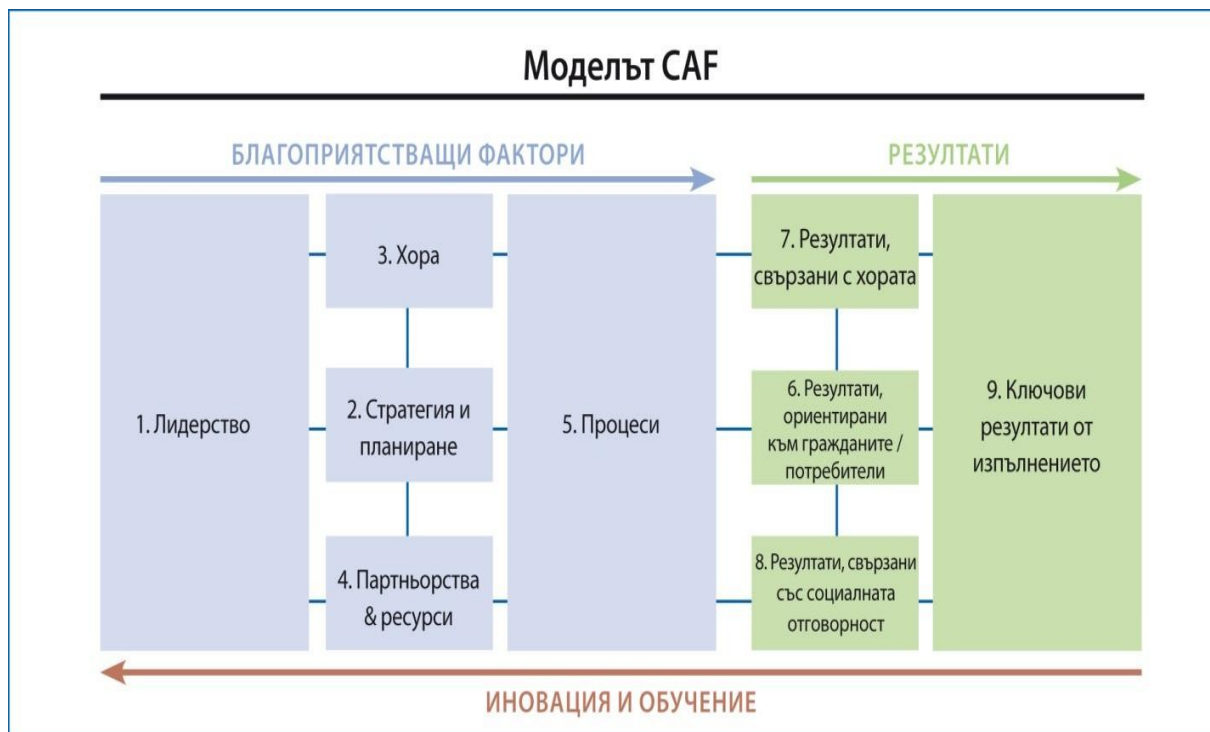


The CAF model is based on **the cycle of continuous improvement** - the so-called Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle. It focuses on the continuous improvement process in an organisation based on the following approach: careful planning should lead to effective actions, which need be checked/analysed whether they are being carried out correctly and possibly adapted/changed. The cycle is then re-applied - in a continuous process - to continue improving the organisation.



MODEL STRUCTURE CAF

The structure of the CAF model of **nine elements** called criteria. Based on their analysis, the organisation carries out its (self-)assessment in a systematic and methodical way. **Criteria 1 to 5**, the so-called **Enablers**, refer to the management practices of an organisation that define the key management areas of an organisation (what it does and how it does it) in order to achieve the desired results and objectives. **Criteria 6-9**, so-called **Outcomes**, refer to the results achieved by the organization in terms of citizens/consumers/community, employees, social responsibility and key performance and are measured based on perceptions and indicators. Each criterion, in turn, is further subdivided into sub-criteria - so the CAF model has a total of **9 criteria** and **28 sub-criteria** defining the main aspects to be considered when assessing and analysing an organisation.



The graphical representation of the model structure (above) shows the causal relationship between the Enablers and the Outcomes related to the performance of a public organization.

BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTING THE CAF MODEL

The use of the CAF model provides public with:

- Ability to carry out **an analysis/self-assessment of the organization** based on methodology provided by the model, based on a systematic set of criteria that comprehensively cover all major aspects of management and organization of work in an organization
- A methodology for **defining and measuring the progress** and achievements of the organisation and **identifying its areas for improvement**
- A means to improve **dialogue between management and employees**, as successful implementation of the model is a collaborative effort
- A means of **improving employee motivation** through their direct involvement in the evaluation of the organisation and in its development and improvement process
- Opportunity to promote and **share good practice** both between different structures within an organisation between different organisations
- A means of **improving the quality of management** in the organisation by implementing the improvement plan and the improvement measures contained therein
- Ability to ensure consistency and **continuity in the development of the organization** and adequate changes in its improvement process

MODEL DEVELOPMENT CAF

The CAF tool is constantly being developed and applied in more and more organisations and countries. In the course of this process, the model is periodically updated and its subsequent versions reflect the practical experience gained by public organizations in the implementation of CAF, as well as current trends in the development of public administration. Since its inception, a total of 5 versions of the model have been adopted: the first version was created in 2000, the second version/revision in , the third in , the fourth in , and the latest - the fifth version is embodied in the new CAF 2020 Handbook.

The latest version of the model - CAF 2020 is the result of the joint work of the international CAF group (national CAF correspondents and experts of the European Union member states) and the European CAF Resource Centre at the European Institute of Public Administration, Maastricht, the Netherlands. During the meeting of the international CAF group in October 2019 in Helsinki (in the framework of Finnish Presidency of the Council of the EU), the new version - CAF 2020 - was solemnly adopted and then officially endorsed by the European Public Administration Network (EUPAN) on 28 November 2019.

The principles of CAF 2020 are:

- CAF 2020 as a total quality tool continues to be based on the 8 principles of excellence and the cycle of continuous development and improvement that are at the core of the model;
- The structure of the CAF with its 9 criteria and 28 sub-criteria (from the 2013 version) has been retained in view of its high degree of recognition, but some of the sub-criteria have been updated and reformulated for clarity.
- More significant changes have been made in the examples to the respective sub-criteria - their content has been updated in view of the current state of public administration, and their number has been reduced - in view of their easier use and understanding in the application of the model.

The key changes in the model reflect the identified new trends in the development of public administration. The new version of CAF 2020 therefore focuses on these, in particular:

- Impact of digitalization on public organizations (including their human resource management)
- Applying flexibility and adaptability in public administration (especially important in times of crisis)
- Application of innovation in public administration (a clear trend for modern public administration)
- Ensuring resilience and sustainable development goals as guiding principles of public governance (particularly important in times of crisis)
- Diversity Management
- Cooperation with citizens and civil society

These key emphases have a horizontal scope in CAF 2020 and are reflected in the different criteria, sub-criteria and examples.

CAF 2020 was created as a European guide to good governance and excellence in public sector organisations. As the latest version of the model, CAF 2020 pays special attention to these important aspects of modern public administration. The ultimate goal of CAF 2020 is to contribute to "good governance" and the achievement of reforms in public administration, as well as better services for citizens/public.

II. APPLYING THE CAF MODEL

The process of implementing the CAF model covers the following key stages:



FIRST PHASE: PREPARATION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MODEL

The first stage of the process (the beginning) is the **preparation** for the implementation of the model. In summary, it involves senior management deciding on the implementation of the model in their organisation, planning and organising the overall activity for this purpose. More specifically, the following actions need to be carried out in this phase, and the instructions and recommendations given for them are on actual Bulgarian experience.

Familiarisation of senior management and management staff with the CAF model

The implementation of the SAF model in Bulgaria is a matter of strategic and legislative commitment for the Bulgarian public administration. Already in the Strategy for the Development of the Public Administration (2014-2020) and in the Roadmap to it, the defined need to introduce quality management systems in the Bulgarian public sector was clearly laid down. With the amendment of the Law on Administration (SG No. 85 of 2017), continuous quality improvement was established as a principle of the administration's activity (Article 2(1)(8)), and the new Article 64 regulated the administration's commitment to carry out a comprehensive quality management of its activity to effectively and efficiently achieve its strategic and annual objectives, including through management systems. In this respect, the application of the CAF model in particular is highly recommended, as it is the only tool created by the public administration itself specifically for public organisations. By applying the model, Bulgarian administrations are thus fulfilling their statutory obligations for total quality management.

In order to build an understanding of the nature of the model and on this basis make a sound decision to implement CAF, it is necessary for the senior management of the organization to be familiar with the model and to have clarity on the parameters of their commitment to the whole process. For this purpose, it is highly recommended that the management approach the national resource centre on CAF at IPA and clarify how to effectively inform themselves about the model (in Bulgarian practice, a meeting or a briefing is usually organized in the senior management is provided with advice

on the nature, objectives and beneficial effect of the model, the key role of the leadership itself in its successful implementation and the process itself with the necessary organisation).

Senior management decision to implement CAF

This is the most important and fundamental step for the implementation of the model. CAF can only be successfully implemented with a visionary and ambitious leadership team motivated to develop and improve the organisation. The second key factor is the effective performance of the employees involved in the CAF team. In practice, the success of a CAF project depends on good collaboration between an organisation's leadership and its employees. Therefore, the most key to the process of implementing the model is a high level of commitment from senior management and the responsible work of CAF employees. Bulgarian and foreign practice prove that the decision to implement the CAF model should be based on the readiness of the management to actively support the process and the efforts of the designated CAF team, realizing the significant benefits of implementing the model. Top management should respect the results of the CAF group's work and accept its Organisational (Self-)Assessment Report as a useful analysis of the organisation's current state and subsequently as a basis for improvement processes.

It is recommended the discussion and adoption of the decision to implement the model takes place at a management meeting (in a narrower or broader composition - for example, also with the unit directors) and is documented/recorded in writing. In view of a possible external evaluation, the minutes should record the purpose, importance and scope of the implementation of the model - e.g. in full (whole organisation) or in part (part of it). It is also possible to include the choice of scoring system in the management decision, but this can also be noted at a later stage - in the CAF team order or even in the minutes of an operational meeting. Two scoring systems are in the CAF (Handbook) - classical and precision scoring. Almost all Bulgarian organisations use the classic scoring, which is generally recommended when first implementing the model, as the precise scoring is considerably more complex and requires a certain amount of experience and maturity.

In this meeting (maybe also in an additional meeting) it is desirable that the person responsible for monitoring and control of the whole process (most often in Bulgarian practice this is the Secretary General), well as the chairman of the internal CAF team, who will work directly on the implementation of the model, be identified by the management. The composition of the CAF working group itself may be further defined after discussions of the management. The selection of CAF Team Leader/Chairperson is key in view of his/her important role and functions: planning and organising the whole process, communication and coordination with senior management, with team members and all other ,

organising training of the CAF team, participation in the preparation of the portfolio of documents required as evidence for the self-assessment, active participation in the self-assessment itself and support of the work of the whole team, facilitation of consensus, participation in the process of preparing the Report on the results of the (self-)assessment, support of the work on the preparation and implementation of the Improvement Plan, informing and reporting on the progress of the CAF implementation process, etc. The competency requirements of the team leader are therefore high. The incumbent must have a high level of knowledge of the organisation and of the CAF model in particular, as well as excellent organisational, communication and negotiation skills. Appointing the right CAF team chair who has the right knowledge and skills and has the confidence of senior management, team members and employees in the organisation is one of the key management decisions that affects the quality of the whole process of implementing the model.

Identify and train/prepare an internal team to implement CAF

The management of the organization must provide the necessary human resources for the work of implementing the model. The approach for selection of the team by management may vary: for example, it may be on the basis of discussion/suggestions by the heads of the relevant business units, on a voluntary basis - with the Chief Secretary informing staff of their opportunity to participate in the CAF team, or both approaches may be combined.

The final decision on the human resources for the implementation of the model rests with senior management (in Bulgarian practice, the role of the General is usually essential in this activity). For this purpose, it must also take into account certain criteria such as: representativeness of the different units and representativeness of the different positions (which ensure diversity of opinion and objectivity of the organization's assessment); analytical skills; teamwork skills - very essential due to the team nature of CAF work; motivation, responsibility and willingness of the respective employees to work hard on this important task for the entire organization; personal characteristics (e.g. not to be conflicted, to respect the opinion of others, to ob It is advisable to have representatives of different generations in the group as this ensures a different perspective when carrying out the evaluation of the administration. In terms of representation of the different positions, it is desirable to have both managerial staff member(s) on the team (he/she can also be the head of the whole team) and different expert positions.

In Bulgarian practice, the team leader is often either the secretary general/secretary of the municipality or the director of the general administration unit/other director. In view of

CAF criteria and their evaluation, it is highly recommended to have a human resources officer, a lawyer to assist with the portfolio of evidence, a strategic planning officer, and at least one senior staff member (in the case of a smaller staff, more in the case of a larger staff). In some Bulgarian organisations an interesting approach has been applied - a member of the CAF group is also designated as "quality officer" (not only for the process of implementing the model, but also afterwards) - with a view to sustainability of quality work in the organisation.

According to the Bulgarian practice, the decision on the team is objectified in an order of the management, which defines the person responsible for the whole process (if it is different from the team chairman - for example the secretary general), the composition of the team - chairman and members (by name), the selection criteria, the role and tasks of the team. The order shall specify whether there should be one team or two - according to the size of the organisation. In Bulgarian practice, one team is nominated (e.g. 5-7-9-11 people for organisations of 30 to 1000 people). The choice of the responsible persons and the composition of the team is an extremely important factor for the successful implementation of the model - therefore they should be very carefully selected. In line with the positive Bulgarian experience, it is desirable to have a statement in the order itself that all staff in the organisation should support the work of the designated team. For example, for the CAF assessment and communication, the team can be supported by other staff - a strategic planning officer, a public relations officer, a finance or accounting officer, an IT specialist, etc. - who can provide more information or explain specific aspects of the organisation's activities to the team.

According to the CAF Guidelines, training is required for the team, which is done through training/consultation. Specific training on CAF is very important, as the Bulgarian administration lacks an organisational culture and tradition of quality, and the internal team designated to implement the model is not a professional quality team (although the model itself provides the methodology for its possible implementation by the all). In this regard, it is particularly advisable for the organisation to approach the national CAF resource centre for support in this area, which has extensive experience in this area and has an established network of speakers/consultants.

Communicating CAF

The CAF model attaches great importance communication and informing employees and stakeholders about the model, the process of its implementation in the respective organization and the key achievements in this process - the Self-Assessment Report and the Improvement Plan. The purpose of the required extensive CAF communication is to create employee and other stakeholder engagement and ownership of the process, and an understanding of the beneficial effects of implementing the model. Not coincidentally,

in the eventual external evaluation of whether CAF is properly and qualitatively , the communication (internal and external) is assessed - about the model and the process of its implementation in the organisation.

In this regard, in accordance with good Bulgarian and foreign practice, it is necessary to prepare a Communication Plan at the beginning of the process (the National CAF Resource Centre provides a template). Its purpose is to ensure awareness among to create a clear picture of the model, purpose, the process its implementation, and the benefits of changes in the organization through CAF. The Communication Plan should clearly state the targeted messages, plan specific communication activities for all phases of the model implementation process (from preparation through self-assessment to the Improvement Plan), set deadlines for their implementation, identify precisely the target groups and persons responsible for the relevant activities, as well as the possible communication channels and communication tools to be used. It is also advisable to designate a person to monitor and control the implementation of this plan (usually a person from the CAF group). In some Bulgarian organisations there is a good example - the inclusion of a public relations officer either in the CAF team itself or at least in the preparation and implementation of the Communication Plan.

With a view to transparency and publicity of the organization's efforts to improve and develop through CAF, the best practice of Bulgarian organizations is the creation of a special section on CAF on their website. In it, they consistently publish for stakeholders and the general public information about the model, about the purpose and the start of its implementation in the organisation and about all significant activities, documents and results in the progress of its implementation. Some Bulgarian organisations show a positive example in using a variety of different public information channels - the administration's website, their social media profile, media space - preparing press releases to central/regional/local media, providing brochures about CAF at administrative service points, or other creative ways to raise wider awareness.

Organizations should also pay special attention to direct communication with all employees (through different channels and means - meetings, internal networks, emails, special CAF folders, etc.) - about the model, its useful effect and the process of its implementation. In this way, the CAF project will not remain confined to a small group of people, but will be known throughout the organisation. In practice, extensive communication on CAF aims to achieve understanding, ownership and involvement of employees and managers in the project, which would ensure the successful implementation of the model and support in the process of improving the organization through CAF.

Planning and overall organisation for the implementation of the model

To be successful, the process of implementing the CAF model must be planned, well organised and coordinated from the outset. In this regard, in line with good Bulgarian and foreign practice, the CAF project team prepares a Plan-Schedule for the whole process from the very (the national CAF Resource Centre provides a template for such a plan), which must be followed and implemented.

The most important thing in organizing the process is that the management of the organization provides the necessary conditions, time and resources for CAF work (human, technical, place for team meetings, communication channels, etc.). The designation of an employee(s) monitor and control the whole process is essential - this can be the secretary general and/or the team chair (in many Bulgarian organisations). The role of the team chair on overall organisation and coordination (with management, with members, and with other staff) is key. For the smooth running and development of the process, it is also to regularly report on the progress of the CAF work to the management and employees of the organisation.

SECOND PHASE: PROCESS OF SELF-ASSESSMENT

This is a key stage in the overall implementation work of the model The designated internal CAF team/group is actively and intensively involved. This is why the term used is (self-)evaluation, i.e. the organisation evaluates itself through the work of an internal team rather than external consultants. In practice, this phase comprises the following main steps: preparing the team for the work of evaluating the organisation, carrying out the (self-)evaluation itself and producing an analytical Report on the results of the evaluation. The process of (self-)assessment itself goes through two interrelated sub-phases: individual and consensus assessment of the state of the organisation. The self-assessment process is difficult and requires time both to prepare for it and to carry out. In , the whole process takes about 2 - 2.5 months (with all its steps).

In particular, the following actions need to be carried out in this phase, and the guidance and recommendations given for them are on the Bulgarian experience.

Preparation of the team for the (self-)evaluation

The designated CAF team must prepare, plan and organise its operational work on the (self-)assessment. During this period, it is necessary prepare CAF documents, organise and hold several operational meetings of the team itself, in which the decisions necessary for the evaluation are made and the concrete actions, tasks, roles and deadlines for the are identified. Particularly important for the evaluation

of the organisation is to decide on the approach/method of evaluation (see below). On this basis, it is advisable for the team to draw up a detailed plan-schedule for the self-evaluation process itself. Within the operational meetings the team should: specify the roles and tasks of the team members (e.g. who will contribute to the preparation of the Communication Plan, which members will work more on the preparation of the evidence list), decide on its approach to the self-assessment, choose the scoring system, discuss and adopt the Communication Plan prepared, adopt the overall plan-schedule of the whole CAF implementation process, adopt the specific plan-schedule for the self-assessment, adopt the portfolio of documents needed for the (self-)assessment, identify the organisation's stakeholders and key partners, identify the organisation's key processes and its key products/services, etc. - all actions needed for the self-assessment and the whole process of implementing the model.

At the preparatory stage, a list and portfolio with all supporting documents should be prepared at the organisation, which to serve For justification at evaluation the CAF criteria/sub-criteria. The Secretary General/Secretary of the municipality, the heads of the structural units of the organisation, the legal advisor/legal counsel and of course the chairperson and the members of the CAF team can provide support in this task. It is the team that will use its adopted portfolio of documents, selecting only those that are relevant to the CAF criteria/sub-criteria.

For the effective work of the self-assessment team it is necessary to create a common internal folder/space where all CAF documents for the team are collected - training materials, team/team orders, plan schedules, Communication Plan, CAF manuals, the portfolio of documents, the self-assessment table/form, and subsequently the surveys, the completed individual and consensus overall assessment tables, the Assessment Results Report, the Improvement Plan, the Improvement Plan Implementation Reports, etc.i.e. the entire archive of CAF work. All team members should have continuous access to it in order complete the tasks - individual and general. It is recommended that a member of staff within the team is designated to create (perhaps with the support of another IT staff member) and maintain this folder/space for the CAF group. In line with good communication practice, it is also advisable to create another separate common folder with information about the model and its implementation process in the organisation - for all employees. The documentation and archiving of CAF activities is of great importance in the event of an external evaluation, in order to provide evidence of the correct implementation of each key step of the implementation process.

Carrying out the (self-)assessment

The main task of the designated CAF team is the (self-)assessment itself. The accepted Bulgarian practice is that the evaluation of the organisation should cover the last three (3) years of its operation. In practice, the (self-)assessment is an identification of the organisation's strengths and , which CAF calls the

"areas for improvement". It is the identification of the areas for improvement that is the essential part, as they provide a clear picture of the direction in which the organisation needs to work to improve. So the assessment includes 4 main elements for each CAF sub-criterion: 1) findings on the organisation's strengths, 2) findings on the organisation's areas for improvement - 3) with specific ideas/measures for improvement proposed for them and 4) scoring (explained in the European CAF Handbook).

A prerequisite and the most important condition for carrying out the assessment is the knowledge, understanding and comprehension of the CAF 2020 European Handbook and how to work with it.

- from each of the team members. The CAF model, with its structure of 9 criteria with 28 sub-criteria in total, actually represents for the CAF group a supporting methodology for the (self-)evaluation. Based on the interpretation of each criterion (with sub-criteria) and the indicative examples given from European public administration, the internal CAF team determines the state of its organisation by assessing it against all CAF criteria/sub-criteria. In this way, a comprehensive analysis of the organisation (of all its main areas of management and work, which are in fact the CAF criteria) is in fact carried out and the full "picture" of the organisation is revealed at the time of the assessment.

The work on (self-)assessment, in turn, comprises two interrelated stages - individual and consensus assessment, respectively. This means that initially each member of the CAF group, based on the methodology, the defined portfolio and his/her experience and knowledge of the organisation, carries out his/her own self-assessment by giving his/her personal opinion/findings about the organisation on all CAF criteria/sub-criteria (i.e. strengths, areas of improvement - with suggestions for improvement measures and scoring). Following the collection and review of all individual team member evaluations (captured in all members' completed evaluation table/form provided by the national CAF Resource Centre), an overall consensus evaluation is also conducted. In fact, the individual evaluations serve as a brainstorming technique for generating useful ideas for the consensus evaluation and also lead to objectivity in the overall team evaluation. For example, if in a 7-member CAF team - 5 employees have similar opinions/findings - this already leads to the possibility of reaching an objective common opinion. In order to have the above mentioned beneficial effect and with a view to the proper implementation of CAF, the individual assessment of all team members must necessarily be completely independently (no influence of other colleagues, including the chairperson

of the group). It is necessary to bear in mind that the final result achieved in evaluating the organisation is more than the sum of individual opinions and goes beyond their subjectivism because it reflects the overall vision of a representative group of employees.

The consensus assessment should cover all the CAF criteria/sub-criteria (with the 4 elements of findings mentioned), but now based on the unanimously agreed findings of the whole group for the organisation. According to the Bulgarian and international best practice, the consensus assessment is achieved in specially organized meetings of the whole team (so-called consensus meetings), which like all other CAF meetings should be documented/recorded. The CAF group chairperson has the main role in organising, coordinating and leading them. For these meetings to be effective, preparation is also important. In this regard, it is highly that the individual evaluations are collected and read by all team members prior to the consensus meeting, and that team chair carefully reviews them to summarize and draw conclusions about similar and divergent views. The purpose of the consensus meetings themselves is, in the process of discussion and open dialogue, based on the individual assessments, further information и discussion at relevant evidence documents/practices, to agree on a group-wide assessment of the organisation (, areas for improvement, suggestions for improvement measures and scoring) - on all CAF criteria/sub-criteria.

As mentioned above, already in the preparatory phase the CAF team has to make the important decision on the evaluation approach. In Bulgarian practice, two approaches are applied. In the first (older approach), each member of the team independently carries out his/her individual assessment on all criteria/sub-criteria (28 in total) within a planned period (e.g. one month) and then all come together in one general meeting (usually 2-3 days) where they have to reach a consensus agreement on the whole assessment of the organisation - on all criteria/sub-criteria. This is in practice a strenuous and tiring exercise. The second approach (newer) is that of partial evaluation. In this, a detailed plan-schedule of the self-evaluation process is made, with both an individual and immediately afterwards a consensus evaluation taking place within the planned timeframe, but only on 2 - maximum 3 interrelated criteria defined in advance. For : in the first week on its first 3 days (Monday-Wednesday) each member of the group makes his/her own individual evaluation criteria 1 and 2 only, then all individual evaluations are collected and people are introduced to them (Thursday), and on the last day (Friday) the consensus evaluation of these two criteria (with their sub-criteria) is conducted. The following week the same is done with criteria 3, 7 and for example 8, in the third week the organisation is evaluated by consensus on criteria 4 and 6, and in the fourth week on criteria 5 and 9. In this way, the CAF team can carry out a comprehensive (individual and consensus) evaluation of the organisation on the

all criteria/sub-criteria. This approach greatly facilitates the work of the team as it is more efficient - consensus meetings for only a few criteria are shorter (about 2 hours maximum), members are more focused on the criteria because they have been evaluating them the same week. But most importantly, with this approach, team members gradually gain more confidence and understanding of how the process works and hence do work more correctly and more calmly. In this approach, it is advisable to have an additional consensus meeting at the end in which the consensus evaluation is finally reviewed by also looking at the links between the criteria.

Report on the results of the evaluation

The self(evaluation) results report is the first key output/product in the model implementation process. It is produced by the CAF team with major input from its chair. In accordance with the Bulgarian practice and the National CAF Resource Model developed by the National CAF Resource Model, the Report has the following contents. With regard to the CAF team's consensus assessment table, it itself contains, for each sub-criterion, columns with the consensus-defined: strengths, areas of improvement, scoring and specific suggestions for improvement measures for the organization. An important part of the Report is not the elements of the overall assessment of the administration, but also its analytical part. It is on the basis of the analysis and findings that the team arrives at identifying and suggesting key areas for improvement that can be incorporated into a specific Organizational Improvement Plan.

The report must be submitted senior management in accordance with the administrative practice of the administration concerned (e.g. Self-Evaluation Team Report with signatures). In the context the essence of the CAF model, this document is a 'gift' to management which reflects the overall 'picture' of the organisation

- based on the objective analysis of the team through the CAF. Management should accept it as such and endorse it, thereby demonstrating their understanding of the importance of the Report in the overall CAF process and their commitment to the organisation's further improvement actions.

As part of this step, it is very important to carry out communication and dissemination activities after the employees and other on the result achieved. In practice, in many Bulgarian organisations (smaller size) meetings are held with all employees to inform them about the results of the

self-assessment of the administration, the Report itself is made available to all staff to read - through various channels. Often, when employees are made aware of the entire Report, they gain an overall view of their organisation and realise the importance of CAF work. With regard to the general public, partners and other stakeholders, it is also necessary to publish information about the Report in the CAF section of the website (most often general information about the Report - as a key step in the progress of CAF project, or a summary of the Report or the whole Report - at the discretion of management).

THIRD PHASE: IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This is the final and very important stage in the overall implementation of the model. It covers the following main steps: preparation and drafting of the Improvement Plan, communication and implementation of the Plan.

In particular, the following actions need to be carried out in this phase. The instructions given are based on the successful Bulgarian experience.

Preparation and preparation of the Improvement Plan

The point and importance of the organization's self-assessment is to create a grounded view of the organization's improvement and development path. For this purpose, it is to prepare and implement an Improvement Plan, which is the practical means for the development and improvement of an administration.

In summary, the Improvement Plan (also referred to as the Organization's Overall Performance Improvement Action Plan) is:

- Main objective of the CAF model
- Result of the *Self-Assessment Report*, which contains the analysis of the organization's strengths and weaknesses (areas of improvement) and proposed improvement measures
- An integrated mechanism aimed at improving the management and performance of the public organisation by implementing the envisaged improvement measures (which lead overcoming and strengthening).
- A tool to support the strategic and operational planning and performance management process in the organisation

In order to begin the work of developing the Improvement Plan, it is important to identify a team for this task. There are several possible options that are in Bulgarian public administrations. The same team (full or smaller) that carried out the (self-)assessment of the organisation continues its work on the development of the Plan,

as he is familiar in depth with the assessment and its conclusions and recommendations for the Plan. However, in view of the need for senior management to become more involved and to ensure the implementation of the Improvement Plan, the following approach is also recommended: the Self-Evaluation team should be reduced by adding staff in more senior management positions (for example, from a team of 7 staff for the Self-Evaluation, the new team would be made up of three - the Chair of the group and two of the most active and analytical staff in the evaluation, and would include the Secretary-General and the Director of the Directorate). It is good Bulgarian practice to include the Secretary-General in the process of developing the Plan, because he/she expresses management's vision for improvement and ensures a realistic Plan is produced and successfully implemented. If this approach is used, it is advisable to issue a new order with the designated composition - tasked with developing and communicating the Improvement Plan. In principle, it is desirable to have a smaller team for the Plan in order to work more efficiently.

The improvement plan is based on the analytical Self-Assessment Results Report. Therefore, the designated team for the Plan should very thoroughly review and analyze the entire Report, and especially the scorecard with its identified areas for improvement with suggested specific ideas for improvement measures for each CAF criterion/sub-criterion, as well as the conclusions and recommendations made in the Report for the highest priority areas for improvement. On this basis, the team should discuss and decide the key areas for improvement to include in the Plan and the appropriate improvement measures for them - in line with the organisation's strategic objectives. In Bulgarian practice, organisations usually identify 3 or 4 key/strategic areas for improvement for the Improvement Plan. In almost all Bulgarian organisations one area for improvement is human resource management, also often identified is the social responsibility policy or the strategic management area.

In order to facilitate the development of the Plan, it is important that the team prioritise the improvement measures - using the specific ideas/suggestions for improvement measures given in the Self-Assessment Report as a basis for this. The prioritisation process means selecting specific measures that are essential for the identified area for improvement - in view of their relevance to the organisation's improvement process, as well as their feasibility. In its work on prioritisation, the team may base itself on certain criteria, namely: the possible impact of the measure (low, medium, high) for the improvement area concerned; its strategic importance (combination of impact on stakeholders, on employees, on the organisation's internal performance, on society); the difficulty, resources required and speed of implementation of the measure, etc. Based on the prioritisation process, the number of

the measures originally proposed in the self-assessment. For example, if a total of 60-80 measures are proposed across all criteria/sub-criteria in an organisation's self-assessment, the prioritisation and grouping of these measures in the Improvement Plan could result in, for example, around 10-15 measures of significant importance and around 10-15 measures of quick impact being included. In fact, this is also the indicative recommended number for the specific measures in the Plan to make it realistic to implement. For the convenience of organisations, the European CAF Resource Centre has prepared a specific methodology for improvement measures, which be consulted by the national CAF Resource Centre - upon request from the organisation - for the Plan team.

As a result of that preparation, the team developed the Improvement Plan. In accordance with the national CAF Resource Centre template, the Plan is a table with the following content: priority areas for improvement and specific improvement measures for each of them, types of measures, results/outputs achieved, values/indicators of results, timeframe for implementation of the respective measures and responsible unit/persons for implementation. The process for developing the Improvement Plan is much easier and shorter than the self-assessment. With a quality Self-Assessment Report and intensive team work, the Plan can be two to three weeks at most.

The Improvement Plan must be formally submitted to senior management through the appropriate administrative process (e.g. Team Report). Unlike the Self-Assessment Report, is the finished product of CAF internal team trainings, and should not be modified by anyone, the Plan in draft form can eventually be shared with both management and staff, as it will be implemented with their support. The comments and recommendations received can be taken into account by the team in preparing the final Plan, which is submitted to senior management for approval.

To ensure effective implementation of the Plan, it is advisable to integrate it into the strategic planning process and make it part of the overall management of an administration. As a tool for organizational improvement, many Bulgarian organizations successfully use it to develop sound strategic objectives and an annual action plan for the following year. This practice is highly recommended and is also contained in the CAF Guidelines.

Communication of the Improvement Plan

As highlighted, communication is one of the key success factors in the implementation of the CAF model and it needs to be consistent throughout the process, including when implementing improvement actions. In any external evaluation of how the model has been implemented, particular attention will be paid to this issue. Insufficient communication on CAF has been identified as a weakness in the implementation of the model in some Bulgarian organisations.

In this area, the good practices of Bulgarian organisations show the following concrete actions:

- Preparation of an announcement to the Communication Plan (created at the beginning of the process) specifying the communication activities specifically for the Improvement Plan and their subsequent implementation.
- Sharing the Improvement Plan with all employees - in a variety of ways and channels. In smaller organizations, it is particularly effective to hold a meeting with all employees to present the improvement plan and motivate them to participate in its implementation. Familiarising all employees with the Plan helps them to better understand the meaning of the efforts made to implement the model and to realise the useful effect of CAF reflected in the Improvement Plan - as a means to support the change process and improve the organisation.
- Publication of the entire Plan on the organisation's website (CAF) and other possible channels. This contributes to making the general public aware of the organisation's will and actions for continuous development, which benefits all stakeholders. Publication of information about the Plan as an achievement in the process of implementing the model and in various media.
- Provide regular information (and at the organization's discretion implementation reports) on the progress of Plan implementation - to stakeholders, including management and employees.
- Providing information on the overall implementation of the Plan (the final report) and the resulting beneficial effect for the organisation - to stakeholders, and especially important - to all employees. This contributes both to the image of the organisation and its development achievements, and to greater employee ownership and satisfaction for their participation in the organisation's improvement process.
- All communication and awareness activities should be documented/archived because they are part of the evidence of how CAF is applied when an external evaluation is requested.

Implementation of the Improvement Plan

In practice, the implementation of the Improvement Plan is the meaning of the application of the CAF model, because through the implemented improvement measures the process of change and development of the organization takes place. After the approval of the Plan by the management, its implementation starts. The Plan itself sets out the deadlines for the implementation specific measures and identifies the persons/units responsible for them. Administrations should bear in mind that, unlike the Self-Assessment Report, the Improvement Plan is a flexible instrument. They can, at their discretion, update it - both in terms of the improvement measures and the deadlines set (this can be done by a short announcement, with a brief justification for the update). The average implementation period of the Plan in Bulgarian administrations is usually 1 year (maximum 1.5-2 years).

To ensure the successful and effective implementation of the Improvement Plan, the most important thing is to define a mechanism for consistent and systematic monitoring, control and accountability in the organisation (the lack of which has been identified as a in some organisations in external evaluations). In this respect, Bulgarian practice shows different options - according to the organisational culture of the administrations. For example, a good practice is the issuance of an order/document by the management, or a minuted decision in a management meeting (after the approval of the Plan), or a minuted decision of the CAF team with the participation of the Secretary General, which defines the way of monitoring and control, the periodicity of reporting (every month, every two or three months or more), as well as the person responsible for the whole process. The responsible persons are usually the Secretary-General and/or the Chairperson of CAF team, to whom the implementation of the specific measures is reported to the relevant units/persons identified in the Plan. The management should be regularly informed about the progress of the Plan - this is also done in different ways in Bulgarian administrations. In some written reports are prepared to the management - at a certain period of time (in case of a one-year period for the implementation of the Plan it is recommended to have at least 1-2-3 months reporting, not longer), in others the chairman of the CAF team(s) of the directorate reports on the implementation of the Plan, in others - the chairman of the CAF team reports to the Secretary General the summary of the implementation of the Plan for the given period. In all cases, it is recommended that administrations may use the PDCA ("plan-do-check-act") cycle for the successful implementation of the Plan. In view of a possible external evaluation, it is important to have a written record of relevant actions and reports that serve as evidence of the monitoring, control and accountability mechanism/system adopted.

When the organization works on the implementation of the Plan, it is necessary to involve different staff/units according to the area of the planned measures. That is why it is so important that employees are regularly informed about the progress of the Plan - this way they feel ownership and recognition for their work on the development of the organisation. It is also advisable to publish information on the implementation of the Plan on the s website - for the general public, in the context communication and transparency.

When the Improvement Plan has been fully implemented, a summary report (usually by the CAF team) is required. It is recommended that, in addition to reporting on the improvement measures implemented and summarizing statistical and other data (such as % of overall implementation, number of measures implemented, results/outputs achieved, etc.), an analysis of the beneficial effect of the implementation of the Plan on the overall development and improvement of the organization should be made. It is the analytical part that can in the future be the basis for a well-founded decision on a possible new implementation of CAF. The said final report should be made available to the management and shared with all employees as well as at the discretion of other stakeholders (in summary, or as information about it), in order to increase their understanding of the beneficial effect of the model and ownership of the efforts made by the management, team and employees to implement the CAF model. It is also good practice to make the final report on the implementation of the Plan available to the national CAF resource centre at IPA.

III. NOTICE

With the implementation of the CAF model, Bulgarian state organizations meet strategic priorities and legal obligations, and introduce/develop an organizational culture of quality in public administration. The process is challenging, especially when first introducing the model, but is the most accessible and easy to implement quality tool designed specifically for public organisations. As a long-term outcome, the implementation of the model in public administrations significantly supports good governance and public sector reforms. It is highly recommended to implement CAF again and again (a good practice is 2-3 years after the previous implementation) in order to ensure continuity in the organisation's development process.

The most important success factors for a CAF project are:

- Ambitious visionary leadership and a motivated, effective and representative team/teams
- High level of commitment and support from senior management - CAF is a joint project of management and employees
- Planned, structured and communicated process
- Understanding the model - adopting it as a comprehensive platform for organizational development, not just another project
- Compliance with the model methodology through the correct application of the European CAF manual.
- Support (trainings, consultations, materials, templates) from the national CAF resource centre at IPA - for this purpose organisations should contact the centre and request assistance.

Many organisations are interested in the implementation period of the model. Bulgarian practice shows that for the whole process (from preparation through self-assessment and preparation of Improvement Plan) an effective period is 3 - possibly maximum 4 months. Within this timeframe, maximum concentration can be ensured. A longer period increases the risk of reduced motivation, loss of rhythm and hence effectiveness. It should also be borne in mind that between the beginning and the end of the self-assessment process the situation may change in view of the dynamic and frequent changes in the civil service. Then follows the implementation period of the Plan (1 to 2 years according to Bulgarian practice).

Useful information on the process of applying the model can be found in the European guides - the CAF Handbook 2013 and the CAF Handbook 2020, especially in the section entitled "Guidelines for improving the organisation through CAF". They are also important in the context of a requested external evaluation, as the external evaluator examines and assesses precisely whether the required steps in the process - according to the Guidelines - have been correctly and qualitatively implemented.

Flowchart of the process of applying the model in the CAF Handbook

ДЕСЕТ СЪПКИ НА САФ ЗА ПОДОБРЯВАНЕТО НА ОРГАНИЗАЦИТЕ

ФАЗА 1 – НАЧАЛО НА ПРОЦЕСА НА ПРИЛАГАНЕ НА САФ

Стъпка 1 Решете как да планирате и организирате процеса на самооценка (SA)

Стъпка 2
Дайте публичност на проекта за самооценка

ФАЗА 2 – ПРОЦЕСЪТ НА САМООЦЕНКА

Стъпка 3
Съставете една или повече групи за самооценка

Стъпка 4
Организирайте обучение

Стъпка 5
Извършете самооценката

Стъпка 6
Съставете доклад за резултатите от самооценката

ФАЗА 3 – ПЛАН ЗА ПОДОБРЕНИЯ/ПРИОРИТИЗИРАНЕ

Стъпка 7
Съставете план за подобрения

Стъпка 8
Дайте публичност на плана за подобрения

Стъпка 9
Приложете плана за подобрения

Стъпка 10
Планирайте следващата самооценка

IV. EXTERNAL FEEDBACK

The External Feedback Procedure (PEF) was created by the European CAF Resource Centre in response to requests from European users of the model (it was drafted in , updated in , and a new revision was launched in 2023). The decision and responsibility for the implementation of the PEF at national level lies with the country concerned, with a national procedure/rules developed and a national promoter appointed. In this respect, based on the European procedure, the IPA has drafted and published (under CAF on its website) National Rules for External Feedback. The National CAF Resource Centre is the organiser of the procedure in Bulgaria. Therefore, if organisations want this procedure to be carried out for them, they have to make a special request to the IPA/National CAF Resource Centre to organise it and to identify their external evaluator(s).

The external feedback procedure is designed to further support public organisations - is at the qualitative implementation of the CAF model and at continuing the organisation's development and improvement efforts.

Specifically, its objectives are:

- To support the quality of the implementation of the CAF model and its impact on the organisation
- To clarify whether and to what extent the organisation is implementing the principles of total quality management - as a result of the introduction of CAF and to indicate the way forward
- To support and renew motivation within the organisation for continuous improvement and improvement. To recognize the successful efforts made by management and employees to implement the model qualitatively by awarding the "Effective CAF User" label.
- Encourage the sharing of good practices and experiences CAF with other organisations and mutual learning between organisations implementing the model.

In , the procedure constitutes:

- an objective assessment by external expert(s) (specifically trained for it) on whether the organisation has correctly and qualitatively implemented the CAF by following the Model Guidelines (the specified phases and steps of the process, including the application of the principles of excellence) and
- providing this analytical evaluation information back to the organisation with recommendations for improvements to the model implementation process and for its further development and refinement.

The assessment of Bulgarian PEF organisations is based on the National External Feedback Rules and the methodology in them to ensure the validity and objectivity of the assessment. The external evaluator shall objectify the results of his/her survey and analysis of the way the organisation has implemented the CAF model in a specific Report to the IPA/National CAF Resource Centre. As the national PEF organiser, the centre makes the final decision on whether the organisation merits the label of 'Effective CAF User' - due to its qualitative and effective implementation of the model. The certificate is currently valid for 2 years.

V. SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE MODEL CAF

<https://www.ipa.government.bg/>

IPA page, menu "CAF". There you can search for contacts and useful information about the national CAF resource centre, about the IPA projects on CAF, about materials, presentations, studies, publications on the CAF model, about events and trainings related to the CAF model and quality management issues in public administration, about the Bulgarian experience in the introduction and implementation of the model in administrative structures. Particularly useful for organisations are the CAF handbooks, the National Rules for External Evaluation, the CAF Good Practices compendiums and the IPA studies, including the most recent one.

<https://www.eipa.eu/caf-resource-centre/>

Page of the European CAF Resource Centre at the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) in Maastricht, the Netherlands. It is a point to find useful information about the European CAF tool, to register CAF users, for training, research, shared experiences and CAF events.

INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTRE ON CAF MIMI

YOTOVA, HEAD OF THE CENTRE