



SIGMA

Support for Improvement in Governance and Management

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Executive Summary

The Common Assessment Framework CAF

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There has been increasing recognition at European level that public agencies have to improve and modernise their services through quality management in order to satisfy the needs of citizens and society. As a result, there are now a number of European initiatives, involving the Member States of the European Union in issues related to public service improvement.

Indeed, the Ministers responsible for public administration in EU agreed in 1998 (under the Austrian Presidency) the development of a Common Assessment Framework, later known as CAF, in order to promote benchmarking and benchlearning. The CAF has been developed under the successive European Presidencies since 1998. Its first version was approved under the Portuguese Presidency, in 2000. The second version of CAF was presented in 2002 and has been in use since then.

CAF (www.eipa.nl) is oriented to public services, easy to apply, and it is based on the EFQM Excellence Model (www.efqm.org). Its structure, like the EFQM Excellence Model, relies on nine criteria but it is much easier to use and the scoring is considerably simplified.

The CAF is increasingly applied in different public service sectors and its importance as a framework to promote quality management and benchmarking has been increasing steadily in Europe. One of the main advantages of CAF is that its application is based on self-assessment, so that it can be carried out by the staff of public agencies. It provides a comprehensive diagnosis of organizational performance and identifies strengths and improvement opportunities.

The application of CAF requires the commitment of the top management, involvement of the whole organization and a culture of continuous improvement. Ideally, it is used together with other quality management tools. The *Training Session on the Common Assessment Framework* will offer an introduction to the CAF and give you an idea you how to apply it in your own organisation.