



# Guidelines for implementing the CAF

# Table of contents

- Abbreviations.....3
- Foreword . why having guidelines for CAF implementation .....4
- The link between the CAF model and the European Public Administration Network .....5
- The Common Assessment Framework 2020 .....6
- CAF guidelines domains, measures and indicators.....8
  - Domain 1. To ensure CAF Correspondents leadership and resource centres.....10
  - Domain 2. To ease access to information and visibility on CAF .....11
  - Domain 3. To improve CAF Knowledge Management and Capacity Development.....12
  - Domain 4. To build and sustain CAF Networks/ Communities .....13
  - Domain 5. To increase effective CAF usage in public administration (sector) bodies .....14
  - Domain 6. To strengthen advocacy, cooperation and provision of resources.....15
  - Domain 7. To support monitoring, research and development on CAF .....16
- Implementation of this document.....18
- Acknowledgements.....19
- Endnotes.....20

## Abbreviations

BTI	Bertelsmann Transformation Index
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CAF NC	CAF National Correspondents
CAF RC	CAF Resource Centre
DGs	Directors General
DESI	The Digital Economy and Society Index
DISPA	(The Network of) Directors of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration
ECU	Effective CAF User
EFAC	External Feedback Actors
EFQM®	European Foundation for Quality Management
EGPA	The European Group for Public Administration
EIPA	European Institute for Public Administration
EU	European Union
EUPAC	European Union Public Administration Characteristics
EUPAN	European Public Administration Network
ISO	International Organisation for Standardization
KDZ	Zentrum für Verwaltungsforschung (eng. Centre for Public Administration Research)
MS	(European) Member States
NGOs	Non-profit Government Organisations
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PA	Public Administration
RESPA	Regional School for Public Administration
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIGMA	Support for Improvement in Governance and Management
SRSP	Structural Reform Support Programme
WB	World Bank
WEF	World Economic Forum
UN	United Nations

## Foreword – why having guidelines for CAF implementation

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF <https://www.eupan.eu/caf/>) has now been implemented for twenty years. 2019 was an important year for the CAF. We celebrated the 20th anniversary of the model, we updated and adopted the fifth version of CAF (CAF 2020) and the 4000th CAF user registered on our database.

Over the years, the CAF has evolved and grown to become the well-known quality model for the public sector that it is today.

The quality of public administration is important for economic competitiveness and societal wellbeing. In a context full of increasing demands and often diminishing resources, EU member states and their public sector organisations need to become more effective and efficient. Even in times of budgetary restrictions and austerity, the use of an excellence model such as the CAF constitutes a way to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation.

The holistic approach of organisational development contributes to strengthening the legitimacy of the public sector, taking into account all the stakeholders' needs, including the authorities, citizens/customers, partners and the people working in the organisation. Benjamin Franklin said, *“If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail”*. Each organisation, or in this case, each CAF Correspondent, has certain objectives to aim for. Planning helps to achieve these goals and it helps to prevent random activities.

This document will serve as a response to the emerging challenges and as a guideline to make the model stronger and more sustainable.

The main objectives for the development of this document are:

- to promote and measure the CAF effect/results/impacts on good governance in the EU and worldwide
- to facilitate further implementation of the CAF in line with the EUPAN Strategy papers and to have a framework for monitoring and informing EUPAN DGs and stakeholders on the added value of CAF
- to have a reference document for the development of public administration in line with the national development plans and strategies
- to foster bench learning between countries, CAF Correspondents and CAF users
- to determine target PA bodies and key stakeholders on the national, European and worldwide level
- to promote the added value of CAF to all interested stakeholders and parties

## The link between the CAF model and the European Public Administration Network

The European Public Administration Network (EUPAN) is a unique forum for Director Generals (DGs) and experts responsible for public administration in Europe. The EUPAN Network seeks to share experiences, to create a common understanding and to discuss solutions to common challenges.

EUPAN seeks to foster cooperation among European public administrations by raising its relevance and focus, by setting clear deliverables, by finding an effective way of selecting topics of interest for a common agenda in line with MS and EU level priorities and by taking into account current developments and debates.

The uniqueness of EUPAN lies in its role to facilitate its members in their exchange of views, experiences, tools and best practices on certain topics and areas of interest. Moreover, the EUPAN Network fosters the development of common tools, activities and/or **visions** that are utilized among all its members.

The network is organised around its main domains, which include human resource management, organisational development, service innovation and delivery. It is also open to further areas of public administration, such as public administration reform implementation, open governance, etc.

The EUPAN Strategy Paper<sup>1</sup> defines the strategic domains for EUPAN's work for the period of July 2019 . June 2022. To meet the current challenges of public administration in Europe, the EUPAN network will focus on ways to strengthen trust between different actors and to make effective and sustainable reforms in public administration. During the next three years it will pay specific attention to digitalization, innovation, **quality management**, ethics and future-oriented human resource management.

The relevance of EUPAN depends on how much it adds value to public administration challenges at the national and European levels. Collaboration, sharing innovative methods and approaches and learning from each other's experiences in relevant domains are the core strengths of the network and will be enhanced through the dissemination of the data gathered through surveys and online cooperation.

The network will strengthen communication and partnerships with relevant stakeholders such as European Union institutions, European / international professional networks of public administration, universities, relevant institutions from public administrations at the national level, etc. To increase the visibility and accessibility of its work and results the network will utilize the EUPAN website and other communication channels.

## The Common Assessment Framework 2020

CAF2020 is a common product of the EUPAN Network of National CAF Correspondents <https://www.eipa.eu/portfolio/european-caf-resource-centre/>.

The CAF dates back to 1998 when the EUPAN Ministers commissioned to design general principles concerning the improvement of the quality of services provided to citizens. Originally developed as a model of Total Quality Management inspired by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM<sup>®</sup>) CAF has constantly evolved. The ultimate goal of CAF is to contribute to good governance, public administration reform and better services for citizens.

CAF2020 is the fifth version of the Common Assessment Framework and has been developed independently from the new EFQM. It has been designed to be the European guideline for good governance and excellence for public sector organisations focusing on digitalisation, agility, sustainability, diversity and innovation. CAF2020 was developed in an interactive process by the Network of CAF-Correspondents and CAF Resource Centre (EIPA) since the September 2017 CAF-Correspondents Meeting in Tallinn.

The CAF is based on the premise that excellent results in organisational performance, citizens/customers, people and society are achieved through leadership, strategy and planning, people, partnerships, resources and processes. It looks at the organisation from different angles simultaneously: the holistic approach to performance analysis.

CAF2020 focuses on digitalisation, human resources management, agility and innovation, sustainability and SDGs<sup>ii</sup>, diversity and innovation.

The CAF helps to implement its core criteria within public organisations in order to orient them towards a culture of quality and performance. As a tool of TQM, the CAF subscribes to the fundamental principles of excellence as initially defined by the European Foundation for Quality Management. The CAF translates them to the public sector and aims to improve the performance of public organisations on that basis. The implementation of these concepts makes the difference between the traditional bureaucratic public organisation and the one oriented towards the culture of the quality of performance. Read more about the principles of excellence on page 8 the official CAF2020 document.



By Implementing CAF2020, public sector organisations have the opportunity to take an internal approach towards improvement by involving both managers and employees. Organisations are improved through self-assessment based on the common European principles in three phases. CAF-Users can later apply for the Label 'Effective CAF-User'.

The CAF is free of charge and available to assist public sector organisations to improve their performance. It can be used in all parts of the public sector, and it applies to national/federal, regional and local levels. Although the CAF has been developed in a European context, it can be used in any public organisation around the world.

The importance of CAF has been shown in the EUPACK project<sup>iii</sup> and the 'Toolkit for Quality of Public Administration'<sup>iv</sup> both carried out by the European Commission with the support of EIPA. These researches prove that the use of CAF contributes to Public Administration Reforms and improves the performance of public sector organisations. Furthermore, studies of CAF-users show the impact of CAF on the improvement of services and the increasing of customer satisfaction.

## CAF guidelines domains, measures and indicators

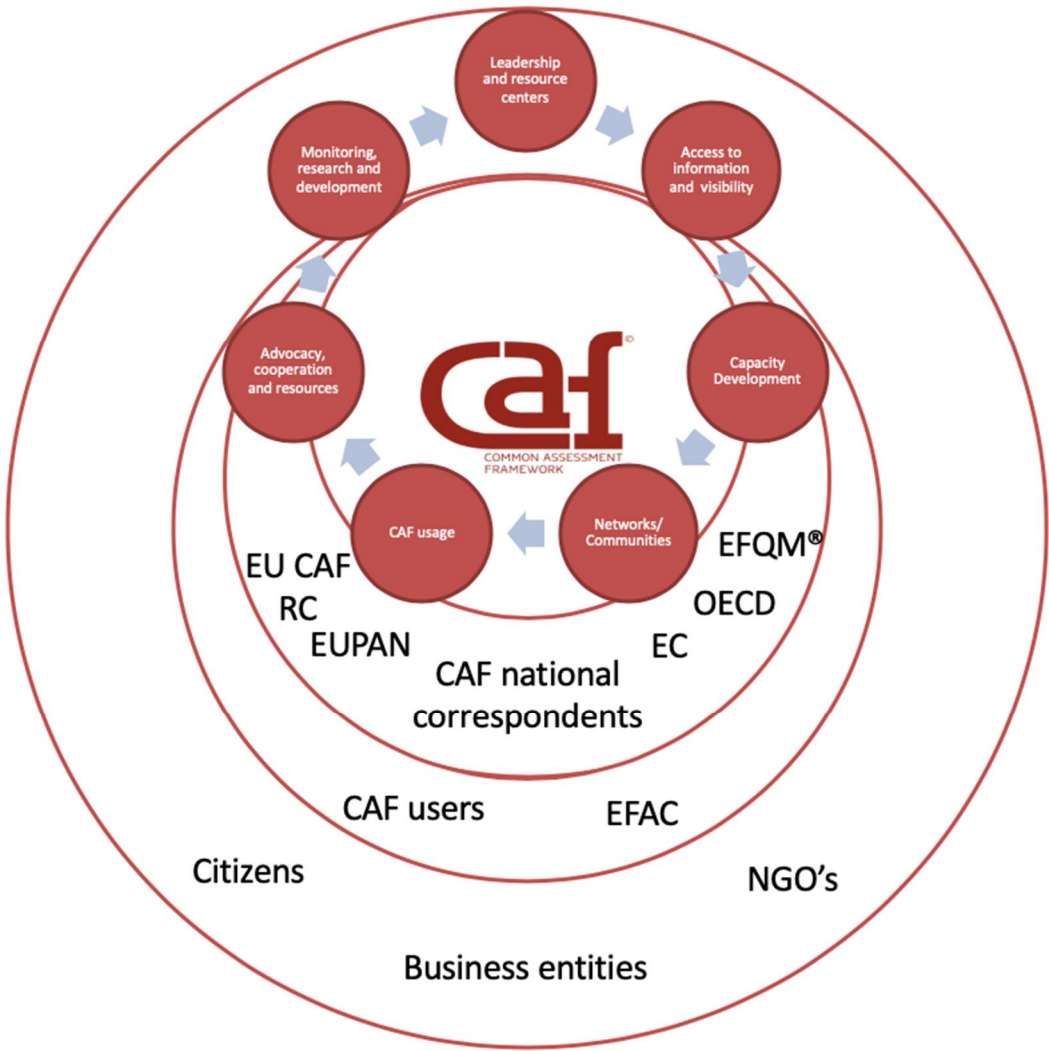
When organisations seek to improve, internal changes need to be made. These changes require the support of all the stakeholders, internal as well as external.

The CAF Correspondents need to work closely with key stakeholders (see below: Picture 1.) that are providing both visibility and resources, especially with:

- EIPA, in charge of running the European CAF Resource Centre and supporting the National CAF Correspondents
- The European Commission in relation with:
  - o EU Semester<sup>v</sup> that has objectives to ensure sound public finances (avoiding excessive government debt), prevent excessive macroeconomic imbalances in the EU supporting, structural reforms - to create more jobs and growth and to boost investments.
  - o The Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP)<sup>vi</sup> - an EU program that provides tailor-made support to all EU countries for their institutional, administrative and growth-enhancing reforms.
  - o Comparative overview of the key characteristics and performance of the national administrations in the EU . EUPACK<sup>vii</sup> by DG for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion
- The European Foundation for Quality Management<sup>viii</sup> (EFQM<sup>®</sup>) that has the purpose to improve the performance of organisations and their ability to manage change and transformation.
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as an international organisation that works to build better policies for better lives, especially with the Public Governance Committee.



Picture 1. Overview of CAF domains and main stakeholders



## Domain 1. To ensure CAF Correspondents leadership and resource centres

The CAF makes a clear distinction between the role of the political leadership and that of the leaders/managers of public organisations, while emphasizing the importance of good collaboration between both actors to achieve the policy results.

The Network of National CAF Correspondents supported by the European Resource Centre, managed by EIPA on behalf of EUPAN, highlights the importance of substantial support by the EUPAN Directors General on the further implementation and development of the CAF2020 and asks all represented countries to ensure contribution to the promotion of CAF2020 and its implementation. The 2020 version of the CAF is the result of an active collaboration of the National Correspondents of the CAF network and the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA), which are in charge of the promotion, implementation and periodic revision of the CAF at the European and the national levels.

The European CAF RC <https://www.eipa.eu/portfolio/european-caf-resource-centre/> was established in 2001 at EIPA's headquarters in Maastricht. Its mission is:

- to be a Centre of expertise in CAF implementation promoting the CAF and its use in public administrations in Europe;
- to act as a complement to, and in coordination with, the existing CAF National Centres, with a focus on countries without a National Resource Centre;
- to be a training and consultancy centre;
- to research the use of the model and further develop it;
- to support and stimulate the European network of National CAF Correspondents and the community of CAF users;
- To maintain and ensures constant updating of the CAF website, including among the others CAF database for registered users and good practices

The network of CAF Correspondents which is composed by the CAF NCs nominated by EUPAN MSs and by hosted observers is in charge of accomplishing, with EIPA's technical support,<sup>ix</sup> the following tasks:

- to improve and regularly update the CAF;
- to define tasks, mandate, placement, financing in collaboration with the role of EIPA's European CAF Resource Centre
- to develop CAF support tools (e.g. CAF website);
- to assist and promote the exchange of CAF users' good practices
- to support the organization of a CAF Users' Event (content papers and programs) collaborating with the organising MS
- to report back to the EUPAN DG level annually
- to support monitoring, research and developments in CAF
- to organize CAF trainings at national levels
- to improve and develop the capacity of the national CAF resource centres

The most common reasons for the stagnation of CAF implementation are other priorities of the government and of the single organization resulted from the change of political leaders and the change of the organizational leadership (respectively). Change may, and often results in, lack of knowledge and understanding among leaders of what the CAF is, how it works, and how beneficial its use would be within an organization.

That is why they are sometimes reluctant to use the CAF. Other reasons may be the lack of a legal foundation for quality management, the promotion of other quality tools, general lack of resources (both financial and human), lack of feedback for further improvement and lack of communication. In some member states, it is not clear which organization / institution should take up the role to be the national CAF resource centre.

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<b>To support CAF commitment at the European level</b>	No. of CAF network meetings per year No. of CAF projects/initiatives per year No. of CAF network on-line meetings organised with CAF RC support No. of CAF event (CAF users' event/ quality conference, etc.) organised with support if CAF RC support/ expertise
<b>To ensure commitment at the National and European level</b>	No. of EU countries with a CAF resource centre or a designated office working on CAF No. of EU countries using the CAF even

## **Domain 2. To ease access to information and visibility on CAF**

The CAF is a general, accessible, and free of charge model for public sector organisations. One of the most important ways to increase the use of CAF is to translate it into the local language.

Online services are also very useful to disseminate the CAF. A CAF website for instance, helps to gain new users and to improve the use of the model for current users. Each CAF Correspondent should aim to disseminate the model online. The adopted online service should contain all the information about the network both at the European and national levels, as well as some FAQs or free additional tools to aid in the implementation of the model.

Some CAF Correspondents send the EIPA CAF newsletters to their CAF users on a regular basis and produce disseminate their own newsletter.

There is always room for innovation and for other types of publications used to for disseminate and promote the CAF. For instance, the CAF can be used in the academia as a basis for academic research and data collection on the public sector. It is also important to

identify the most appropriate social media channels to represent the CAF by maintaining its characteristics and the types of organisations that will be using it.

Measure	Indicators
<b>Websites or web pages dedicated to CAF</b>	Website established <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- at the European level</li> <li>- at national level</li> </ul> Number of news <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- at the European level</li> <li>- at national level</li> </ul>
<b>Translate CAF 2020 in all EU languages</b>	No. of EU languages covered
<b>Manage and follow social media mix at the national and EU level (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, etc.)</b>	Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of followers/subscribers</li> <li>No. of videos/articles</li> <li>No. of likes</li> <li>No. of newsletters published by EIPA</li> <li>No. of impressions</li> <li>Percentage of traffic in terms of visits to the website</li> <li>No. of engaged followers that are actually using the model</li> <li>No. of acquired customers</li> </ul>

### Domain 3. To improve CAF Knowledge Management and Capacity Development

Top management support is a crucial factor for the successful dissemination of the CAF. This is fundamental. Furthermore, the lack of trainers and experts in public institutions creates a shortage of project leaders. Public sector leaders should have certain competencies and skills to deliver effective leadership and organisational management. Although leadership varies by situation and context, there are still some indicators that remain the same and can always be measured. These are; number of events and participants, number of active trainers, training events, people who are trained, etc.

Training and/or seminars are another important asset delivered by CAF Correspondents. Different approaches are possible. Some Member states organise trainings alongside their national partners, others provide information seminars and training based on the individual needs of the agencies or via e-learning. Whilst some CAF NC have the resources to provide free training, others try to keep it as financial accessible as possible for both their organisation and the CAF user.

Besides training, some CAF Correspondents also provide advice and coaching during the journey of the self-assessment and the development of the improvement plan (individual coaching for the management and the project leaders; support by email or phone; meetings with the organisations to explain the process and answer questions).

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<b>Provide PA Leadership/management development in CAF</b>	National no. of events per year National no. of participants of the events dedicated to CAF/ referring to CAF at the national level per year National no. of training events delivered per year
<b>Enable sustainability of the CAF trainers' network</b>	National no. of trainers (trained in coordination with the National CAF RC or the dedicated CAF Correspondent) CAF trainings integrated into quality programs in national training organisations
<b>Continuous capacity development of CAF Professionals</b>	National no. of CAF trained persons National no. of Platforms, tutorials, e-tools Number of videos, social media posts and other online inputs No. of training events at the national level
<b>Ensure online/digital accessibility for knowledge management</b>	No. of countries delivering CAF e-learning (webinars, online training) No. of trained people via e-learning courses
<b>Establish and maintain Regional/Transnational CAF-Exchange</b>	No. of international initiatives/programs (e.g. RESPA <sup>x</sup> ) International no. of study visits organised (multiple countries study visits) No. Of bilateral meetings, visits between countries, organisations

## **Domain 4. To build and sustain CAF Networks/ Communities**

The important task of the CAF NC is to support networking between CAF users. Many Member States organise events for networking and exchange of experience between CAF users (i.e. national CAF days, CAF national conferences, national seminars, quality conferences, CAF user meetings, CAF info days, video conferences and workshops for CAF users). Furthermore, a more individual approach of supporting networking is possible (e.g. visiting those managers of organisations who plan to use CAF and connect them with more experienced CAF users).

The European CAF database needs to be continuously monitored and updated in order for it to display the correct information about the number of CAF users, uploaded documents and best practices. This should avoid having registered users that do not correspond to real CAF users. The CAF RC might facilitate the exchange of national tools, solutions and ideas between the different CAF NC. Maintaining an up to date CAF database will require cooperation and commitment from both the European CAF Resource Centre and the CAF national correspondents.

Strengthening the exchange of good practices about the use of CAF is crucial. Additionally, building an effective database of CAF users and good practices as a source of information can help manage data more efficiently and allows users easy access to the relevant information. It also helps to maintain and build data over successive years, which enables comparison and improvement.

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
<b>Ensure the European CAF network meetings</b>	No. of meetings per year (online or face to face) at the European level between the Nation
<b>Organise CAF user events on EU level</b>	No. of events No. of participants No. of cases/presentations Customer satisfaction level with satisfaction rate written in the after-event report
<b>Maintain the CAF Databases and information sources</b>	Updated the database containing the number of CAF users and good practices supported by EIPA
<b>Build and sustain CAF Networks/ Communities on the Regional level</b>	No. of initiatives No. of meetings/events/conferences (online or face to face)
<b>Build and sustain CAF Networks/ Communities on the national level</b>	No. National CAF network exists No. of meetings/events/conferences (online or face-to-face)

## **Domain 5. To increase effective CAF usage in public administration (sector) bodies**

Rewarding the CAF users and stimulating bench learning is the support delivered by the CAF NC. Organisations can be rewarded through a National Quality Award or with a certification as recognition for CAF application. Bench learning also has many forms. Some CAF NCs

developed a methodology to allow public institutions to exchange experiences on CAF implementation, whilst some use peer evaluation and learning labs.

Rewarding CAF users through certification and peer evaluation is expected to become more widespread when countries invest in the promotion of the CAF External Feedback to deliver the Effective CAF User Label.

Measure	Indicator
<b>Increase CAF usage in public administration (sector) bodies</b>	No. of CAF users at the national level Distinction between new CAF users and users that have already done the self-assessment No. of EFACs at the national level No. of CAF applications at the national level in the previous year No of national registered CAF users

## Domain 6. To strengthen advocacy, cooperation and provision of resources

The network should strengthen communication and partnerships with relevant stakeholders such as European Union institutions, European / international professional networks of public administration, universities, relevant institutions from public administrations at the national level, etc. To increase the visibility and accessibility of its work and results, the network will utilise the opportunities of the new EUPAN website and other communication channels, as well as invite relevant representatives to CAF activities or represent CAF on stakeholder activities. Other relevant resources and partnerships should also be taken into consideration, such as SRSP<sup>xi</sup>, IIAS<sup>xii</sup>, CBC<sup>xiii</sup> etc.

Innovation and quality management in public administration must have a more central role in national PA reform strategies. It is very important to gain the attention of high-level public officials on CAF and as a result to keep the CAF in public sector policies, as well to include it in the national PA strategies. It is crucial to use all the opportunities to motivate the top management in the Member States to familiarize with benefits that using CAF can bring to the public sector organization and its stakeholders.

The most important requirement and condition to disseminate the CAF is the continuity of the supporting policy aimed at spreading the knowledge of the model. The support of EU structural funds for the implementation of quality management models must remain within the future financial perspective, in order to have a positive impact on the sustainability and development of the model.

The involvement of public and private stakeholders, the partnership with national and regional actors, the contribution of many experienced organisations are also important factors. As well as this, initiatives for people empowerment involving the organisations using the CAF are also pivotal.

Measure	Indicator
<b>Strengthen advocacy and cooperation on the international level by national correspondence</b>	OECD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SIGMA<sup>xiv</sup></li> <li>- Directorate for Public Governance<sup>xv</sup></li> </ul> UN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development Programme</li> <li>- Department of Economic and Social Affairs</li> <li>- The Sustainable Development Goals</li> </ul>
<b>Strengthen advocacy and cooperation on the EU level by national correspondence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- European Commission and other EU-institutions</li> <li>- EGPA<sup>xvi</sup></li> <li>- DISPA<sup>xvii</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Ensure adequate provision of resources for CAF implementation</b>	No. of CAF projects, implemented at the national and international level No. of people (human resources) directed to manage and implement CAF projects at national and international level (both from the leading authority and beneficiary) No. of organisation covered with support in CAF implementation at national and international level
<b>Strengthen advocacy and cooperation for CAF at the national level</b>	No. of countries having CAF strategy/plan as part of PA strategy/policy/law

## Domain 7. To support monitoring, research and development on CAF

CAF stimulates a change of culture with an increased focus being given to the assessment of the performance and the process of continuous improvement. As well as this, the CAF has contributed to spreading the culture and practice of self-assessment among an always increasing number of CAF users. There is a growing need to monitor the growing trend of the use of the model on a regular basis at the national level and at the EU level.

Also, there is a need to continue with the CAF studies to collect and present information on the use of CAF, that should be disseminated among all the member states. It would support



the analyses on the need of improving the CAF model itself and looking for new opportunities to further spread its use.

In order to have an integrated system of governance and management in public institutions, CAF NCs would benefit from other instruments such as EFQM, ISO<sup>xviii</sup>, Balanced Scorecard, bench learning/benchmarking, etc. CAF NCs should also support more research projects on CAF and quality in public administration.

There is also a need to prepare an annual report by all member states following the strategic domains and indicators presented in this document and submit it to the EUPAN DGs, as well as to publish on the EUPAN website.

Measure	Indicator
<b>Ensure a yearly review of the status of the CAF (by measures/indicators/countries)</b>	- An annual report prepared by the EU CAF RC and the CAF NCs
<b>Support research projects of Academia</b>	- National and EU level no. of citations of CAF - National and EU level no. of research studies of CAF in the publication (including CAF good practices publications)
<b>Develop and share new (innovative) tools for CAF implementation</b>	- No. of tools (e.g. guidelines) development at the national and European level - No. of digital tools development at the national and European level - No. of sectoral versions (education, health) of CAF at the European level
<b>Measure and inform on CAF impact at EU level</b>	- EU DESI <sup>xxix</sup> index - EUPAC <sup>xx</sup> - Eurobarometer <sup>xxi</sup> - public opinion on the quality of services
<b>Measure and inform on CAF impact at the international level</b>	- Worldwide governance <sup>xxii</sup> - WB Digital dividend <sup>xxiii</sup> - OECD - Government at glance <sup>xxiv</sup> - UN-SDG <sup>xxv</sup> - Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) <sup>xxvi</sup> - WEF-Global Competitiveness Report <sup>xxvii</sup>

## **Implementation of this document**

For supporting the implementation of the CAF guidelines all the CAF Correspondents network together with the EU CAF RC should strive to:

- the EU CAF RC should monitor and support the implementation activities and yearly report results, in collaboration with the Network, to the EUPAN DG level
- the CAF Network members should exchange good practices and tools and cooperate to organize common CAF initiatives / projects;

## Acknowledgements

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The editing of Guidelines has been conducted by:

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Also Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey have been piloting CAF-programmes.

## Non-European countries piloting CAF

Brazil, Cape Verde, China, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Morocco and Namibia.

## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.eupan.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/EUPAN-Strategy-Paper-2019-2022.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8123&furtherPubs=yes>

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- iv <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8055&type=2&furtherPubs=no>
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