

## Title of your case or article

CAF Snowball Effect

## Subtitle

CAF Snowball Effect on Organizational Improvements

## Name of the organisation

Republic of Slovenia Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MESS)

## Country of the organization

Slovenia

## Contact person in the organisation

Ksenja Hauptman

## Year (of the CAF implementation)

2017

## Background information (Max. 600 words)

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MESS) is responsible for pre-school, primary, secondary, short-cycle higher, higher and adult education, as well as science and research, sports and youth.

Bodies within MESS are Office of the RS for Youth and Inspectorate of the RS for Education and Sport.

The VISION of MESS is to develop a responsible, knowledge-based society and to create conditions for the development of happy and socially responsible generations.

The MISSION of MESS is:

**Together with our stakeholders, we create an inclusive, equitable, sustainable, and creative society of lifelong learning, strengthen the participation of young people and encourage sporting activities. We are committed to the equal participation of all stakeholders in an accessible, flexible and future-oriented education system. We seek new teaching and learning strategies, enabling individuals to mature into responsible and independent members of the community.**

Pre-school and elementary education constitute **the foundation of a learning society**.

In secondary education, we implement approaches that **integrate the education system with the economy**. Higher-education study programmes derive from **the human resource needs of the private sector** and enable students to acquire vocational competences.

Aiming at **innovation and excellence in higher education**, we create the conditions for a competitive and internationally recognized higher education system.

Adult education programmes follow the needs of the economy and the trends of changes in society, providing better living and working conditions for adults. **There is always a good time for learning and gaining new knowledge.**

The Slovenian education system ensures the equal inclusion of people with special needs. By **developing science and research** at home and abroad we are strengthening the global research area. The programmes for sports in the public interest are in line with the principle of **“a sound mind in a sound body”**.

We promote and take care of the development of the youth sector and youth work, strengthening the participation of young people in the management of public affairs and the creation of youth policies.

The VALUES of MESS are:

#### EXPERTISE

In line with the educational concepts we take a flexible and cost-effective approach to an inclusive education system and to forming the proper conditions for the development of science, research and sports.

#### COOPERATION

Mutual cooperation and respect among employees aim at achieving excellent results. Great emphasis is laid on our stakeholders and inter-ministerial cooperation.

#### RESPONSIBILITY AND LIABILITY

We perform our work excellently and in a reliable manner. The results of our work are transparent, so our colleagues, partners and the citizens of Slovenia can rely on us.

#### SATISFACTION OF CITIZENS AND EMPLOYEES

As satisfied employees, we are constantly seeking improvements for both our work and our citizens.

#### CREATIVITY

We foster our own creativity as well as that of all our stakeholders.

## The launching of CAF

In the Development Strategy of the Public Administration of the Republic of Slovenia 2015 - 2020, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia included a measure: implementation of systematic quality management in public administration bodies, therefore we decided to carry out the first self-assessment according to the CAF model.

In the year 2017 the representative of quality management was appointed and authorized for setting up and coordinating the implementation of the first self-assessment according to the CAF model at MESS.

MESS demonstrates its commitment to quality in the document "Vision, challenges, mission and values" which includes "Constant improvement of the quality of the MESS's functioning." among the three (3) challenges to be addressed and nurtured in the future.

## Working with CAF

MESS conducted first self-evaluation in the year 2017. For best self-evaluation members at different levels at MESS were appointed: from the heads of internal units to the employees at the operational level. Also, both heads of bodies under the responsibility of MESS requested to participate in the project group which enabled us to achieve a holistic view to MESS operations.

Initially, all project members were included in training for quality management and the use of the CAF model which was organised by the Administration Academy, further on short

workshops were conducted before entering into a new phase of the self-evaluating process. In this way trainings overlapped with the operational work of the group, thus ensuring optimal work of the group – refreshing the knowledge before the actual implementation of each phase.

Most of the group's project members who participated in the first self-assessment also participated in the second assessment.

The self-assessment phase (evidence gathering, self-assessment report, proposals for measures and future actions) was carried out in smaller self-assessment groups. According to 9 criteria, some group members were assigned and responsible for completing the work on individual criteria.

The project began with the preparation of the project documentation, as well as an application for the informatization of the whole process was set up, which was carried out with our own human resources. The documentation was collected in application. During the implementation of the project, the project team leader and its deputy were made available to individual sub-groups - the members assigned to prepare each criterion.

The calibration of the self-assessment took place at a joint meeting of the project members. An analysis of individual assessments of all members was previously carried out. If the individual rating deviated higher from the average value, the word was given to the member of the group to explain his or her rating. All members were able to explain or comment. The final assessment on each sub-measure and the overall final assessment, as in the other phases of the project, was reached unanimously by consensus.

The members of the project group also individually completed a common table of potential actions for the CAF 2020 Action Plan. Each member selected 20 measures that he or she assessed in order of the importance and urgency of the measure and the possibility of implementing the measure. On separate meeting the members of the project group reviewed the individual actions that we individually prepared and approved the actions to be forwarded to management for further consideration.

Action plan clearly determines who is responsible for the implementation of each measure. Ownership of the CAF action plan and its measures is clearly defined, and the implementation of the measures is regularly monitored. The reporting of the action plan execution to the minister is conducted on regular basis.

The minister and the management board are presented with Self-Assessment Report and informed regarding the realization of the Action Plan, which is published on the intranet and thus available to all employees.

**2017**

**First CAF Self-Assessment Report (15. 11. 2017)**

**CAF Action Plan (30. 11. 2017)**

**2020**

**Second CAF Self-Assessment Report (24. 2. 2020)**

**CAF Action Plan (6. 7. 2020)**

**2021**

**CAF External Feedback Procedure**

**Effective CAF User - ECU Label**

## Benefits of CAF

Since the introduction of CAF at MESS our improvements journey started rapidly and it created a kind of snowball effect of implementing new approaches which were not in place beforehand. Below we describe some achievements/outcomes that were implemented directly or indirectly with the adoption of CAF self-evaluation.

Even in the process of the first self-evaluation we prepared **the map of MESS' relevant stakeholders**.

The **document of vision, challenges, mission and values of MESS** was identified as first and most urgent action in the first action plan and was prepared right after the adoption of the action plan. The process of creating the brochure took us several months, for it was our aim to include all and each employee in the process of preparation:

- First draft was prepared in cooperation of the Cabinet and the Secretariat
- Survey among MESS employees was conducted
- Second draft was prepared in cooperation of the Cabinet and the Secretariat
- All employees were invited to participate in 2 workshops led by the minister
- Final proposal was circulated to all organizational units for final corrections
- Brochure was published online ([MIZS\\_Vrednote\\_Zlozenka\\_pop.pdf \(gov.si\)](#)) and in paper

The **MESS' Identification Card** was prepared shortly after.

In our first CAF self-assessment, we identified that a survey among employees was not carried out in terms of determining employee satisfaction or determining the organizational climate and culture, values, knowledge of the mission, and the MESS strategy. The opportunity to create a uniform methodology in cooperation with other relevant public bodies which would enable comparison with other relevant bodies was also identified.

We presented the initiative to the Ministry of Public Administration which forwarded our request for the **participation in designing the Working Environment Questionnaire** to the representatives of quality management in public sector bodies. Seven organizations responded to the call. All participants shared a strong sense of professionalism, a great desire to introduce improvements, and a considerable measure of enthusiasm.

Our partnership accelerated rapidly, which can be attributed to the fact that cooperation was completely voluntarily. A modular work environment questionnaire called the "EMPLOYEES EYE" was prepared as a result of the rich experiences of the participants working in an honest, trustworthy, and relaxed environment.

Appointing a **recognition co-worker of the year 2017 for diligent volunteer work** was followed by awarding recognitions to deserving employees in 2021 and 2022. Recognitions to civil servants were awarded for outstanding achievements for work within MESS, successfully completing a most demanding project, the best colleague and most important for life's work.

Among others „Signpost“ for the new employees, Health protection program and humanitarian activities were implemented, research on the areas of training that employees would like to attend was conducted thus employees' knowledge, skills and abilities were improved, some internal trainings were executed (employees for employees - e.g.: Training on the importance of the administrative loop in the preparation of normative acts).

## Conclusions and recommendations

### 1 Using a hybrid criterion to identify CAF project group members

To ensure exchanging of members' experiences and incorporating them into a self-evaluation process we used hybrid criteria to identify CAF project group members. This way we were able to cover all major areas of MESS fields of responsibility as well as put into action the rich knowledge and experiences of employees according to all CAF criteria. Members at different levels at MESS were appointed: from the heads of internal units to the employees at the operational level.

We spoke to every potential member of the project group beforehand explaining them CAF and their role in the project.

Additionally, both heads of bodies under the responsibility of MESS requested to participate in the project group which enable us to achieve a holistic view to MESS operations.

### 2 Setting up CAF full informatisation support - Creating CAF Project Site (SharePoint 2016)

Within the MESS's intranet pages, a website was created, which enables interactive work between project team members and contains project documentation.

The application is set on Microsoft Share Point 2016, which allows you to design intranet pages without codes, using the "out of the box" features. The application enables the collection of all the information from project team members at one point, through an intranet page as an entry point. Only project team members who sign in through a user-friendly intranet page have access to this intranet page.



The application enables aggregation of the final docx document using the mailmerge function. All project team members can work on one docx document at the same time, as well the history of any changes in the document are documented. It also enables collecting all individual assessments at one point.

### **3 Substituting the lack of experiences and knowledge of project group members with regular short educational events**

We conduct short workshops before entering a new phase of self-evaluating process. In first round we were substituting the lack of experiences and knowledge of the project group members with regular short educational events, which now became a practice.

### **4 Exchanging of best practice with other ministries**

### **5 Conducting a satisfaction survey on CAF project group members after finalizing the project**

### **6 Introducing of strategic topics**

In the second self-assessment in the year 2019 we introduced strategic topics in the process of self-evaluation. The Minister and the Secretary General agreed upon three strategic topics for the CAF self-assessment: 1. Ensuring quality in education; 2. Ensuring scientific excellence and 3. Effective communication at MESS.

During the self-assessment, the members of the project group paid particular attention to the content related to the mentioned strategic topics.

## **Contact details**

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**Sources:** MESS Share Point portal, MESS internal data and publications