

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## CAF IMPACT STUDY 2025

### CAF works!

#### Key findings of the CAF Impact Study 2025

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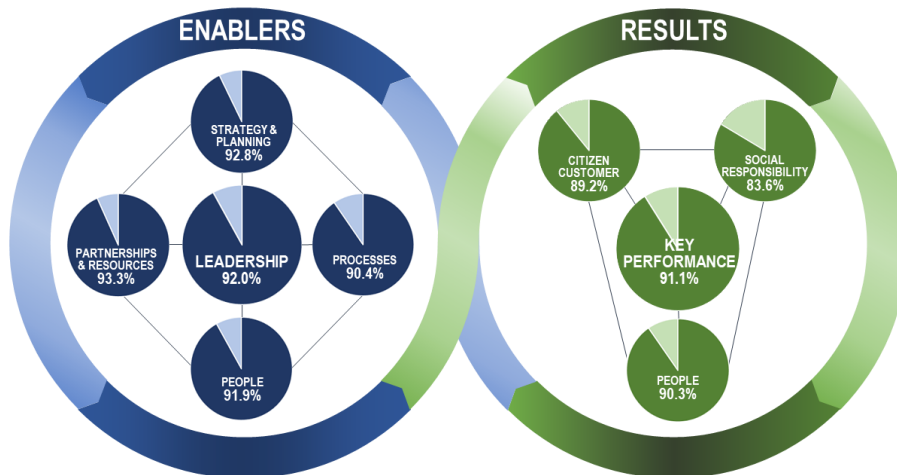
CAF stands for Common Assessment Framework and is the European guideline for good governance and excellence in public sector organizations. The aim of the CAF is to support public administrations in implementing a quality management system while fostering close collaboration between managers and employees to continuously improve their organization.

Since 2000, CAF has been widely adopted across many European countries and now boasts a network of 2000 users. Public administrations of different sectors at the federal, state, and municipal level—as well as their affiliated companies and non-profit organizations—are successfully utilizing CAF to drive **targeted and continuous quality and organizational development**.

The CAF Impact Study 2025 presents a comprehensive, evidence-based analysis of the effectiveness of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the specific improvements its implementation generates within public administrations.

Based on survey data from 197 respondents from public sector organization across 24 countries, complemented by in-depth expert interviews, the study underscores CAF's significant impact on key areas of contemporary administrative reforms.


The results indicate a consistently positive effect across almost all CAF criteria, with over 90% of respondents reporting improvements. Slightly lower, yet still substantial, values were observed in the areas of citizen- and customer-oriented as well as social responsibility outcomes, ranging between 80% and 90%. Notably, 92.8% of the surveyed organizations stated that the implementation of CAF had a positive or very positive impact on their strategy and planning.



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A deeper analysis of the feedback from the surveyed organizations reveals the **particular impact of CAF, especially in the following areas:**



Over 90% of the surveyed public administrations report that CAF has contributed to **defining strategic goals, enhancing employee motivation and innovation, optimizing administrative processes, further developing leadership structures and aligning organizations with the diverse needs of public sector stakeholders**—including policymakers, citizens, customers, and different administrative levels.




CAF fosters a **collaborative and inclusive organizational culture**, strengthening **employee engagement and satisfaction**.




It also helps identify and address optimization opportunities in both internal and cross-departmental processes, with a strong focus on **customer satisfaction and reducing administrative burdens**.



The structured assessment process of CAF enables organizations to **systematically identify areas for improvement, prioritize actions and embed a culture of continuous quality enhancement**.



Moreover, integrating CAF into broader societal objectives—including the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—supports the development of sustainable governance structures. **By making the impact of public administrations on the environment, society, and other key areas measurable, CAF also enhances their capacity to actively shape these outcomes.**



The findings further indicate that continuous CAF implementations drive organizational development. **The greatest improvement potential is realized after the first and second implementation cycle, reinforcing the long-term benefits of CAF.**

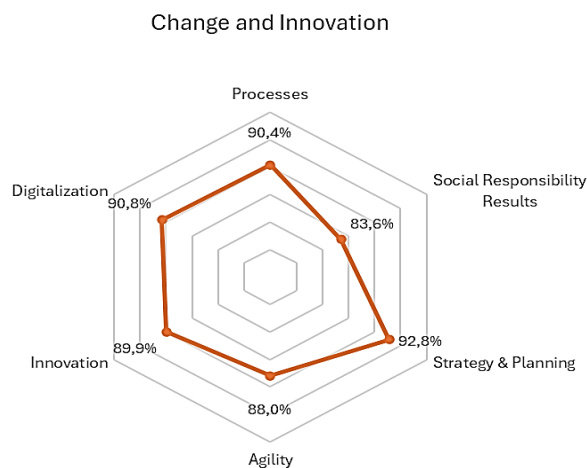
To effectively embed a culture and mindset of continuous improvement within the organization and among employees, it is essential to integrate CAF results into the strategic planning, leadership, and management practices of public administrations. Furthermore, clear responsibilities for CAF implementation should be established within the organization.

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In addition to the positive effects of CAF, certain challenges emerge in the areas of sustainability, social responsibility, diversity, financial management and IT management. While the use of CAF fosters a fundamental understanding of the relevance of these topics for public administrations, additional efforts are required to translate this awareness into concrete improvement measures.

A deeper analysis of the study results reveals the **following impacts of CAF on key public sector reform areas:**



### Change and Innovation (90.1% positive impact):

- CAF encourages employees to take responsibility and develop creative problem-solving skills, laying the foundation for a culture of innovation and change. This is reflected in active employee engagement in improvement initiatives, enhanced training and development of digital skills, and the use of innovation platforms and communities of practice.

### Internal Collaboration (92.6% positive impact):

- CAF strengthens team cohesion, fosters a sense of unity, and helps overcome silo thinking. It also enhances communication structures, promoting cross-departmental collaboration and an open, supportive organizational culture.

### Digitalization (89.6% positive impact):

- Organizations use CAF to reflect on key digitalization opportunities and identify ways to enhance internal and external service processes through digital tools. This includes advancing employees' digital competencies and implementing new digital services.

### Agility (88.4% positive impact): 0,8

- CAF promotes agile administrative cultures and encourages "out-of-the-box" thinking. This is evident in the adaptation of strategies in response to changing environments, employees' ability to adjust to new challenges, and the development of innovative problem-solving approaches.

### Sustainability (82.8% positive impact):

- CAF integrates sustainability considerations into strategic planning and various public service areas. However, there remains room for improvement, as only 48% of surveyed organizations have planned or implemented sustainability measures through CAF.

***In summary, it can be stated: CAF works! Efficient, effective, and service-oriented management of public administrations—guided by a clear focus on the diverse needs of citizens, customers and stakeholders—is ensured, continuously developed, and further improved through CAF. Click [here](#) for the detailed study results.***



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