

# Dominican Republic – Opportunities for Strengthening Evaluation Capacities through the Common Assessment Framework

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## INTRODUCTION

In the Dominican Republic, the basis for implementing results-based management (RBM) was set in late 2006 with the approval of a series of laws related to planning, public investment and State financial administration. Among them, the following stand out:

- Law 496-06 which created the existing Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development (MEPyD)
- Law 498-06 on the National System of Planning and Public Investment (SNPIP).

In 2007, the initial phase of implementing RBM in the country saw the application of the Inter-American Development Bank's (IDB) Prodev Evaluation System (PES). This measures progress by the Bank's member countries in the five pillars of RBM: planning, budget, public financial management, programme and project management, and monitoring and evaluation system.

PES is based on a scoring scale with points going from a minimum of 0 to 5, the optimal situation. The results from the first evaluation showed a limited progress of RBM in the country, with an overall mark of 1.8 (see Table 1).

Since the 2007 evaluation using PES coincided with the advent of RBM in the country, it was considered the starting point, or the baseline, for measuring progress in this management strategy.

The second evaluation using PES took place in 2012 and showed significant progress regarding the situation in 2007, thanks to improvements in two pillars of RBM: planning (77 percent) and budget (70 percent).

On the other hand, there was a decline of 7 percent in the score for programme and project management, while progress in monitoring and evaluation registered an advance of merely 14 percent, from 1.4 to 1.6.

**TABLE 1. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC EVALUATION SYSTEM RESULTS PRODEV**

RBM PILLARS	2007	2012
Planning for results	1.8	3.1
Budget for results	1.0	1.7
Finance management, auditing and acquisitions	2.0	2.6
Programme and project management	2.7	2.5
Monitoring and evaluation	1.4	1.6
RBM index	1.8	2.3

Therefore, these two pillars represent the greatest challenges as well as the best opportunities for improvement.

Despite the lack of progress in RBM, principally in the latter pillars, the Dominican Republic has been recognized for its progress in implementing a model of excellence or total public sector quality which shares the same philosophy and principles of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

The Dominican Ministry of Public Administration (MPA) has adopted the CAF model as an instrument of self-evaluation for public organizations to diagnose and define actions for improvement. This has been the case since 2005 and especially since 2010, when it was made obligatory by Presidential Decree 211-10. Since then, some 205 organizations have carried out self-evaluations using this model.

The CAF is also used in the National Prize for Public Sector Quality and Recognition of Promising Practices, which has been awarded 11 times.

Thanks to this progress, the Dominican experience has been brought to other countries, such as Guatemala, El Salvador, Bolivia, Costa Rica and Ecuador, where MPA experts have provided support and cooperation.

In this sense, it is helpful to explore ways of applying the country's knowledge and experience towards using the CAF to strengthen capacity-building in the formulation, execution, monitoring and evaluation of public policies and thereby to enhance their efficacy, efficiency and sustainability in pursuit of the SDGs.

This work aims to analyse the principles and fundamentals of the CAF model and how these total quality instruments can complement the development of management and evaluation capacities.

## THE USE OF TOTAL QUALITY MODELS IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS

Models of excellence or total quality, such as the CAF, have been used as a key tool in monitoring and evaluation systems in different countries. For example, the Spanish State Agency

for the Evaluation of Public Policies and Quality of Services (AEVAL) evaluates not only public policies and programmes, but also the quality of services provided by organizations, their management and their relationships with citizens, users and interest groups.

The following excerpt from AEVAL's Guidelines describes these evaluations, their importance and their complementarity.

*"These two kinds of evaluation are related. The evaluation of service quality is especially useful for assessing the organizational aspect of the implementation of programmes and policies."*

*"Similarly, data about users' perception of the services they receive can help to understand the social impact of a policy. The evaluation of public policy, for its part, adds a higher dimension, related to strategic decision-making, and the social legitimization and governance of political action. The agency has a comprehensive conception of evaluation in which the two kinds of evaluation are complementary; they constitute different ways of approaching a problem, but they share the same philosophy and some tools."*

AEVAL GUIDELINES: THE EVALUATION FUNCTION. GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

As noted above, the MPA has accumulated considerable experience in using the CAF model and has the skills required to conduct the quality assessment of services.

Given the country's capacity in the CAF model, all that would be required for the implementation of this kind of evaluation is that experts working for the MEPyD's National System of Monitoring and Evaluation and CAF experts in the MPA coordinate and combine efforts towards defining the necessary norms and procedures.

The CAF model can also contribute to strengthening the capacities of other kinds of evaluation and, in general, of development results management, since it includes principles, concepts and tools common to all.

The following section outlines the origins and the fundamentals of the CAF model to enable better understanding of the model and its potential as a complementary tool to strengthen evaluation capacities and results-oriented management in the country.

## ORIGIN AND FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CAF<sup>53</sup> AND ITS RELATION WITH BETTER-KNOWN RBM MODELS

The CAF is a total quality management tool that was developed by and for the public sector and inspired by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). It was created by the European Public Administration Network (EUPAN) in response to challenges faced by public administrations throughout Europe "in order to demonstrate and improve the value that is added by sustaining and developing the Welfare State".

EUPAN was aware of the 'missing link' in the numerous efforts undertaken to implement new techniques and methods to improve public organizations' efficiency, effectiveness, and

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53 This section is chiefly based on the 2013 CAF Guidelines.

economic and social responsibility. It invited experts to develop ‘a holistic tool’ to help public administrations in their quest for continuous improvement. In May 2000, the CAF was launched as the first European quality management instrument specially tailored for and developed by the public sector.

*“It is a general, simple, accessible and easy-to-use model for all public sector organizations across Europe, and deals with all aspects of organizational excellence.”<sup>54</sup>*

Like other better-known and more widely used models for monitoring and assessing RBM, the CAF relies on the broad participation of stakeholders. It starts from the premise that the purpose of organizations of excellence is to identify and meet the needs and expectations of customers and other stakeholders.

This point can be better comprehended from the following notes on models of quality management (ISO 9004) and excellence related to the CAF, such as the EFQM model which inspired it.

*“The purpose of the organization is to identify and meet the needs and expectations of its customers and other stakeholders (employees, suppliers, owners and society) to achieve competitive advantages and to do this effectively and efficiently.”<sup>55</sup>*

*“Organizations of excellence achieve and maintain, in the time required, outstanding results that meet or exceed the needs and expectations of their customers, individuals, relevant stakeholders of society and interest groups that provide the funding.”*

Like the EFQM model, the CAF incorporates in its evaluation and self-evaluation system four performance criteria, each associated with different actors or stakeholder groups: citizens/customer oriented results; people results; social responsibility results; key performance results. The CAF also relies on a broad participation of stakeholders in the processes of diagnosis, planning, implementation and follow-up of plans, programmes and projects.

In this respect, the CAF agrees with other RBM models such as the one explained in the 2009 UNDP Handbook, which states that “High levels of commitment from users, customers and stakeholders in programmes and projects are crucial to its success” (UNDP Handbook 2009).

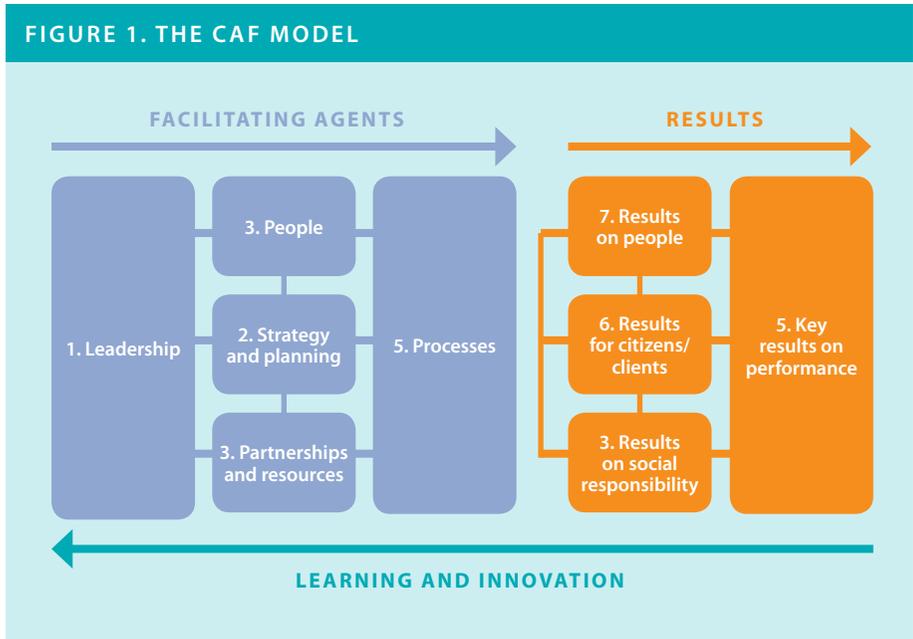
In addition to looking at the achievements of organizations of excellence, the EFQM and CAF models also analyse how they attain their results and the means to do it, the so-called enablers: leadership, strategy and planning, people, partnerships and resources, and processes.

The CAF model uses nine criteria, further broken down into 28 sub-criteria, and based on a cause-effect relationship between the left part of the model (the enablers-causes) and the right part (the results-effects). Figure 1 shows the structure of the CAF model and the corresponding cause-effect relationship between its components.

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54 CAF 2013, p. 7.

55 Norma ISO 9004: 2000. Sistemas de gestión de la calidad – Directrices para la mejora del desempeño.



Source: European CAF Resource Centre (2013)

The allocation of scores to each of the enablers' criteria and sub-criteria is based on a fundamental tool of quality or excellence management systems: the PDCA Management Cycle – plan, do, check, act, also known as the Deming or Continuous Improvement Cycle.

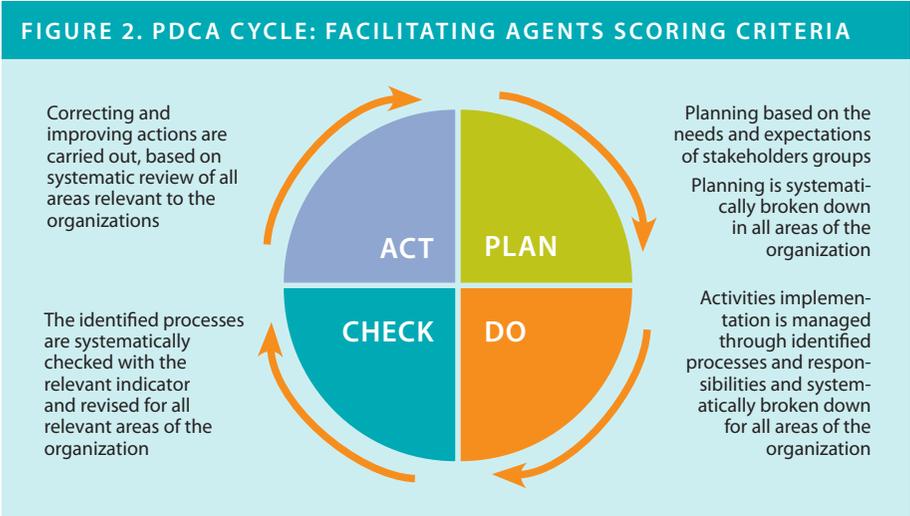
The PDCA cycle emphasizes that, like any strategy, programme, project or process, good management involves appropriate planning, doing (the implementation of decided actions) checking (verification of results, monitoring and evaluation), acting (adjusting actions on the basis of review, documentation and standardization results).

Figure 2 summarizes the scoring system for the CAF model's five enablers based on the PDCA cycle, and for the four results criteria.

This way of seeing management as the integration of planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation matches the approach of the RBM life cycle as expressed in the 2009 UNDP Handbook.

Putting Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Together: Results-Based Management (RBM):

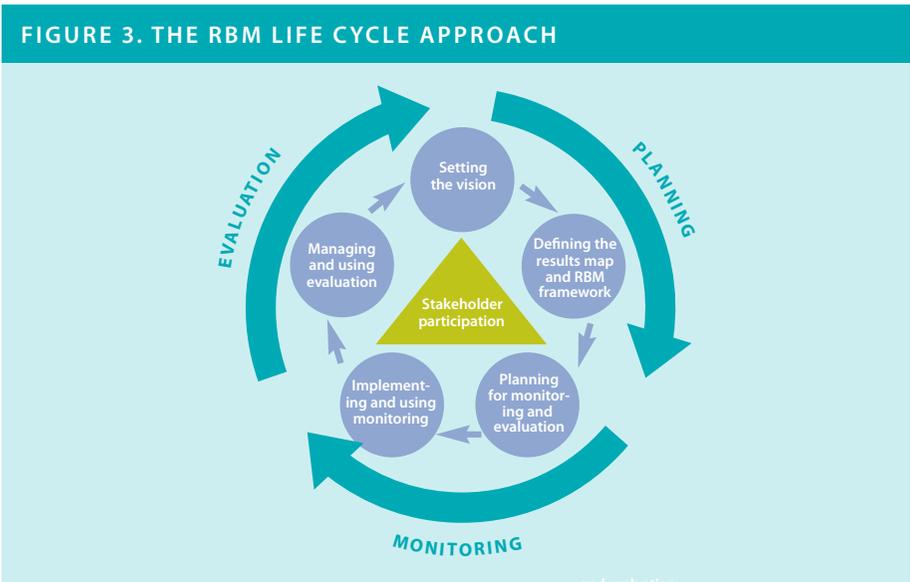
*"Planning, monitoring and evaluation come together as RBM. RBM is defined as 'a broad management strategy aimed at achieving improved performance and demonstrable results,' and has been adopted by many multilateral development organizations, bilateral development agencies and public administrations throughout the world (as noted earlier, some of these organizations now refer to RBM as MfDR to place the emphasis on development rather than organizational results)."*



Source: based on CAF Resource Centre (2013)

Figure 3 illustrates the life cycle approach of RBM and makes clear the convergence with the PDCA approach used by the CAF, as well as with other management systems of quality or excellence.

Among the objectives of CA 2013 are to: i) Introduce a culture of excellence and the principles of total quality to public administration, and ii) Guide them progressively towards an authentic PDCA cycle: “plan, do, check and act”.



Source: UNDP IEO (2009, p. 10)

In this way, the CAF model makes it possible to incorporate or to enhance the use of different quality tools in public management, such as problem analysis or cause and effect diagrams, "imported by the GTZ from the business world where it originated, into the area of development cooperation".<sup>56</sup>

This approach emphasizes the optimization of organizational processes and the improvement of the baseline or pre-project situation; the aim is to better identify the costs and benefits and their relevance to the project before committing large investments to it. The CAF model, like the EFQM model, uses two types of measures to evaluate results: a) measures of stakeholders' perceptions and b) objective measures based on indicators established within the organization (See Figure 4).

FIGURE 4. RESULTS SCORING CRITERIA

RESULTS PANEL – FINE-TUNED SCORING SYSTEM						
	0-10	11-30	31-50	51-70	71-90	91-100
<b>Trends</b>	No measurement	Negative trends	Flat trend or modest progress	Sustained progress	Substantial progress	Positive comparison with relevant organizations for all results
<b>Score</b>						
<b>Targets</b>	No or anecdotal information	Results do not meet targets	Few targets are met	Some relevant targets are met	Most of the relevant targets are met	All the targets are met
<b>Score</b>						

Source: CAF Resource Centre (2013)

These criteria for evaluating results can be complemented with those frequently used by better-known monitoring and evaluation models.

The 2013 CAF Guidelines provide a complete description of each of these criteria and sub-criteria, together with references and concrete examples; this makes it easier for institutions and other parties involved to use the model as a tool for self-assessment and evaluation.

56 Camacho, Hugo, Luis Cámara, Rafael Cascante y Héctor Sainz. *El Enfoque de Marco Lógico: 10 casos prácticos*.

## CONCLUSIONS

The greatest challenges to RBM in the Dominican Republic are in the fields of programme and project management and monitoring and evaluation. Nevertheless, the country has acquired considerable knowledge and experience of the CAF, a model of excellence or total quality in the public sector that shares the same philosophy, principles and tools as better known monitoring and evaluation approaches for policies, programmes and projects and, in general, with RBM.

The CAF is now widely used in the country, principally as a self-evaluation tool by public institutions and by the Ministry of Public Administration in awarding its National Prize for Public Sector Quality and Recognition of Promising Practices.

For its part, the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development is making major efforts to consolidate monitoring and evaluation systems in the country as part of the National System of Planning and Public Investment.

However, while the CAF model is an important tool for self-assessment and for the evaluation of public entities, including their programmes and projects, these efforts are being made in isolation, with little or no coordination and cooperation between the MEPyD and MPA.

Given the knowledge and experience which the country has acquired in the use of this important model, added to the fact that public sector organizations are now obliged, by decree, to use the CAF as a self-assessment instrument to obtain diagnosis and to define actions for improvement, the CAF offers a great opportunity for capacity-building in the formulation, management, monitoring and evaluation of public policies in the country, through close cooperation and coordination of different institutions, notably the MPA and the MEPyD.

This, in turn, could contribute significantly to the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of public policies and thus to achieving the SDGs in the country.

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