BETTER BALANCED WORKING

BASELINE SURVEY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COMMON ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR THE WELFARE, PUBLIC HEALTH AND FAMILY DEPARTMENT OF THE FLEMISH AUTHORITY

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Belgium – a federal state

The constitutional system grants Flanders its own legislative and executive powers including broad and exclusive domestic and foreign responsibilities in the fields for which Flanders is competent.

The Flemish public administration is responsible for the preparation, execution and evaluation of the government policy.
Better Administrative Policy (BAP)

Broadening the scope of good governance by a root-and-branch reform for the Flemish public administration:

- more efficiency
- more transparency to the benefit for citizens, companies and foreign partners
- more consistency in organising the Flemish public administration’s tasks through 13 policy areas:

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Clear task-sharing within each policy area

- Each policy area comprises a department and autonomous agencies
- Departments lend support to and offer advice to the Flemish Government on policy-making
- The agencies:
  - apply the Flemish Government policy in the context of services provided to citizens, companies and organisations
  - invariably operate with a degree of autonomy tailored to their terms of reference
- Each policy area is matched by a policy council. This is the framework for the convergence of politicians and senior officials involved in a specific policy area.
Policy Area Welfare, Public Health and Family (WVG)

Minister

Strategic Advisory Council for Welfare, Public Health and Family

Policy Council

Management Committee

Flemish Ministry of Welfare, Public Health and Family

- Care and Health IAA without LP
- Youth Welfare IAA without LP
- Welfare and Public Health Inspectorate IAA without LP
- Department Welfare, Public Health and Family
- Child and Family IAA with LP
- Flemish Agency for the Disabled IAA with LP
- Psychiatric Care Centre Geel EAA with LP
- Psychiatric Care Centre Rekem EAA with LP

Policy Area Welfare, Public Health and Family (WVG)

IAA : Internal Autonomous Agency
EVA : External Autonomous Agency
LP : Legal Personality
Fund (without personnel)
Policy Area W PH F budget control 2007: 2,658,546 kEUR**

- Wf & PH: Inspectorate; 5,580 kEUR; 0%
- Child & Family; 328,918 kEUR; 12%
- FA Disabled; 978,678 kEUR; 38%
- PCC Geel; 11,303 kEUR; 0%
- PCC Rekem; 10,283 kEUR; 0%
- Care and Health; 735,025 kEUR; 28%
- Youth Welfare; 316,139 kEUR; 12%

** kEUR = 1,000 Euros
Policy Area W PH F - 4,423 employees

Number of employees in 2007

- Wf & PH Inspectorate: 113; 3%
- Child & Family: 1321; 30%
- FA Disabled: 320; 7%
- Youth Welfare: 1129; 26%
- Care and Health: 229; 5%
- Department W PH F: 196; 4%
- PCC Geel: 596; 13%
- PCC Rekem: 519; 12%
A Department coordinating three assignments

- Two key tasks – specific to each Department:
  - Policy elaboration and development: preparing and assessing the minister's policy
  - Administration monitoring and follow-up: lending support to the Minister as a result of coordinating the agencies' policy implementation process

  The Welfare, Public Health and Family Centre of Competence lending support in implementing these two key tasks

- Two divisions with policy enforcement assignments:
  - Welfare and Society
  - Flemish Infrastructure Fund for Personal Issues (VIPA)

- Two divisions providing management support to the Ministry of Welfare, Public Health and Family
  - Personnel division
  - Support for logistic, communication and ICT-activities

**Ministry W PH F = the Department itself and three internal autonomous agencies**
Department Welfare, Public Health and Family - Structure

Secretary-General from the Department W PH F
M. Morris

- Staff W PH F
- Division Policy Elaboration W PH F
- Division Administration Monitoring W PH F
- Knowledge Centre
- Division Welfare and Society
- Division Flemish Infrastructure Fund for Matters relating to Individuals
- Management Support Service Personnel W PH F Division
- Management Support Service Facility Management Division
The networking within the Department

• The Department is a network organisation
• Subentities should establish a solid coordination and should tune in to each other’s activities
• Need of investing in a structural, deliberative body: the Department’s directorate, consisting of the Secretary General and the division leaders
• Internal project groups

⇏ Not submitting to the temptation of implementing the CAF-self-assessment partially in the organisation, even if confronted with the hybrid organisational structure consisting of three different kinds of key processes: policy elaboration, policy enforcement and management supporting services
The management for the Welfare, Public Health and Family Department expressly called for a baseline survey to be undertaken of the entire intricate organisation. Hence the decision to call the planned baseline survey: ‘Better working in balance’. The management has to strike a balance between:

- The current management and the future assessment
- Seeking our objectives and taking account of our opportunities
- Taking on board the new and retaining what is valuable
Striking a balance

Of vital importance for our organisational structure as a department is striking a balance between:

- our key tasks, i.e. what we as a department have to do as the very minimum to lend support to our Minister: policy elaboration and administration monitoring

- all of our key processes, i.e. extending the aforementioned key tasks with management support and policy enforcement-related activities
Quality of the self-assessment in our Departement

- Ask it (also) to the people on the job
- Participants contribute starting from their position within the organisation. Individually different contexts create added value
- Rather a first review of the control framework of the organisation, than exact determination of the baseline
- Explicit commitment of the management:
  - not to intervene in the processes in the self-assessment group (SAG)
  - to provide people and resources
- Members of the directorate don’t participate in the SAG
- Alternative approaches are possible, e.g. ‘capability review’ in the UK
Management’s commitment to the self-assessment process

- Personal appeal of the Secretary General to all personnel: invitation by mail to each individual employee to engage in the SAG
- Open internal communication on all endproducts of the SA
- Strict anonymity on all personal contributions in the SAG
- Explicit and public articulation of the management’s commitment:
  - to all personnel at the start of the SA-proceedings
  - to all personnel on the occasion of the presentation of the improvement actions (IA)
Communicating comprehensively to all levels of the workforce

- Your colleague at the next workstation is your first customer
- Striving for ‘better’ is a permanent assignment for everybody
- What we all can deliver:
  - Promoting good examples of fresh, new views
  - Sharing knowledge, ideas and experiences on successful and inspiring developments within the organisation and among our stakeholders
  - Across teams, divisions and entities
- We all can have a discerning mind, a critical vision on:
  - The efficiency of our own dealing with problems
  - The quality of products and services we deliver
  - The results of our efforts
- ’Deadly sins’ that hinder innovation and renewal: denial, nostalgia and arrogance
‘Good’ depends on the assignment and on the performers...

- Exact plans, predefined roles
- Common notes and accents, well aligned
- Clear management

Or:

- Innovative and receptive, improvising a common piece of work
- Disciplined with agreed ground rules and processes
- Goal oriented, sensitive management

Or:

- Piloting and building new ventures
- Risk taking, courage, acceptance of mistakes
- With a sense of diversity
- Informality, let’s go for it

Sari Baldauf, former head of Nokia Networks
Processing the self-assessment (SA)

- ‘Organisation-wide’: requires fitting ressources:
  - 2 full days of training for the SAG training
  - Writing out individual contributions: strengths, areas for improvement, actions of improvement and scoring
  - The chair: formulates a consensus based on the individual contributions of the participants – not concealing considerable differences in opinion
  - 6 sessions for the SA of the 9 CAF-criteria to reach a consensus
  - 1 session: to check on the coherence of the consensus report

- Handling different attitudes in scoring:
  - Literal interpretation or more along the lines
  - Evidence based or perceptions
  - In the range of the own team or considering the organisation as a whole

- Accepting the pronouncement of distinct points of view in the consensus report
External consultancy

- Importance of external consultancy:
  - Enforcing respect for the CAF-orthodoxy
  - Detecting premature or strained consensus
  - Validating consensus
  - Rigid approach of the prioritising of actions of improvement
  - Critically reflecting on proposed actions of improvement (cf. external contribution in ‘capability review’ UK)

- The organisation should remain in charge of the use CAF-tools:
  - Availability of the information
  - Viewing individual contributions in the proper on-the-job context
  - Guaranteeing absolute anonymity on content of individual contributions
Presenting SA-results to directorate

- Degrees of ‘evidence based’ working:
  - Determines the output and expectations
  - Importance of making an explicit choice in advance between:
    - Each individual contribution must be substantiated during the SA: with concrete data, facts and findings
    - Each individual contribution should be justifiable, in principle: with concrete data, facts and findings
Drawing up of the improvement action (IA) plan

- Establishing a solid consensus on the improvement action plan is of extreme importance. It takes time!
- The actions of improvement should be planned by the management in full dialogue with the SAG (two days’ seminar)
- The draft improvement action plan should be presented as a common task for each member of the directorate
- Each division evaluates the feasibility of the IA:
  - Sponsorship, essential operational targets, timing
  - On or own strength or supported by external consultancy?
  - How to make the most of every action throughout the whole organisation?
Carrying out the improvement action plan

- Each employee is entitled to receiving a (paper) copy of the consensus report
- Proceedings will be communicated on the intranet
- Trade unions were informed on the global project approach and the IA were discussed with them
- Converting IA to annual based objectives for divisions, teams and individual employees
- Using the CAF as one of the means for testing out the opportunity and accountability - in terms of efficiency and effectiveness - of:
  - strategic and operational objectives concerning the own functional policy of the Minister
  - projects applying generic principles of the Flemish Authority as stated in the agreement concerning management with the Minister