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Assessing service quality – the benefits and limits of different assessment methods

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Which assessment tool to choose?

Inputs **A**ctivities **O**utputs **O**utcomes



Models

ISO

CAF

EFQM

Charters

**Balanced
Scorecard**

GI Test of

Good

Governance

Which quality assessment approach to choose? (1)

- **Self-assessment by public agencies**
 - Gets ownership but can be myopic and self-deluding
 - Unlikely to be trusted by other stakeholders
- **External assessment by ‘auditors/inspectors’**
 - Independent but not always trusted by the agency
 - Asks ‘hard questions’ but little understanding of context?
 - Either superficial or expensive

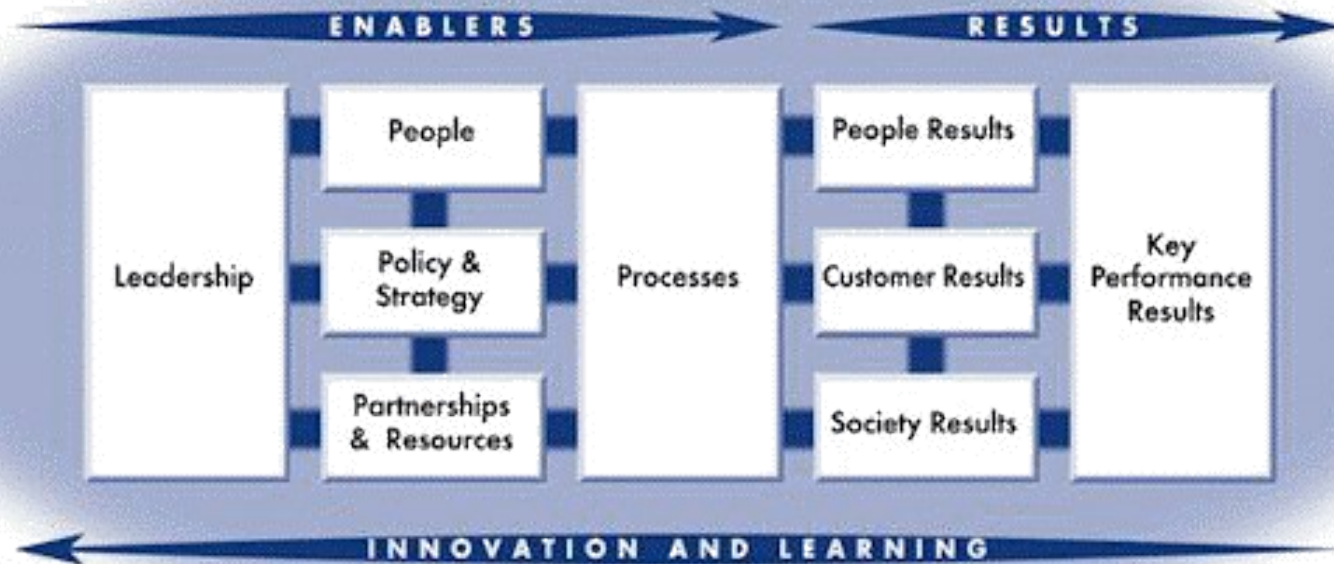
Which quality assessment approach to choose? (2)

- **Peer review by similar organisations**
 - Independent but “critical friends” may want to be polite rather than too critical
 - Well-informed judgements by experts working in similar contexts
 - Comments likely to be taken seriously by the agency
 - Effectiveness of benchmarking clubs etc. depends on how structured their approach is (see peer review process of Improvement and Development Agency in the UK)
 - Can be embedded into ongoing learning relationship between the agency and its partner agencies
- **360° appraisal by relevant stakeholders**
 - Independent
 - Diversity of judgements
 - Results likely to be seen as important by the agency
 - Varying levels of understanding of the context
 - Can be embedded into ongoing learning relationship between the agency and its stakeholders

Success factors

- ♥ Do not rely solely on repeat self-assessments
- ♥ Bring in a **professional** external auditor from time to time (e.g. certified EFQM assessor)
- ♥ Ask your stakeholders (actual and potential clients, politicians, business, etc.) about their perceptions of service quality
- ♥ Form a team with colleagues from other organisations to carry out peer reviews and to discuss solutions to identified problems

The EFQM – CAF Model as an assessment framework



Exercise: Get started with a focused self-assessment

- ☐ Evaluate the customer-orientation of your organisation against the criteria of the Charter Mark Self-Assessment Tool
- ☐ Invite some colleagues of the charter project team to come to your organisation to have their views on the way you deliver services and the results they produce
- ☐ Start collecting data so that you can assess how your organisation performance against the defined targets