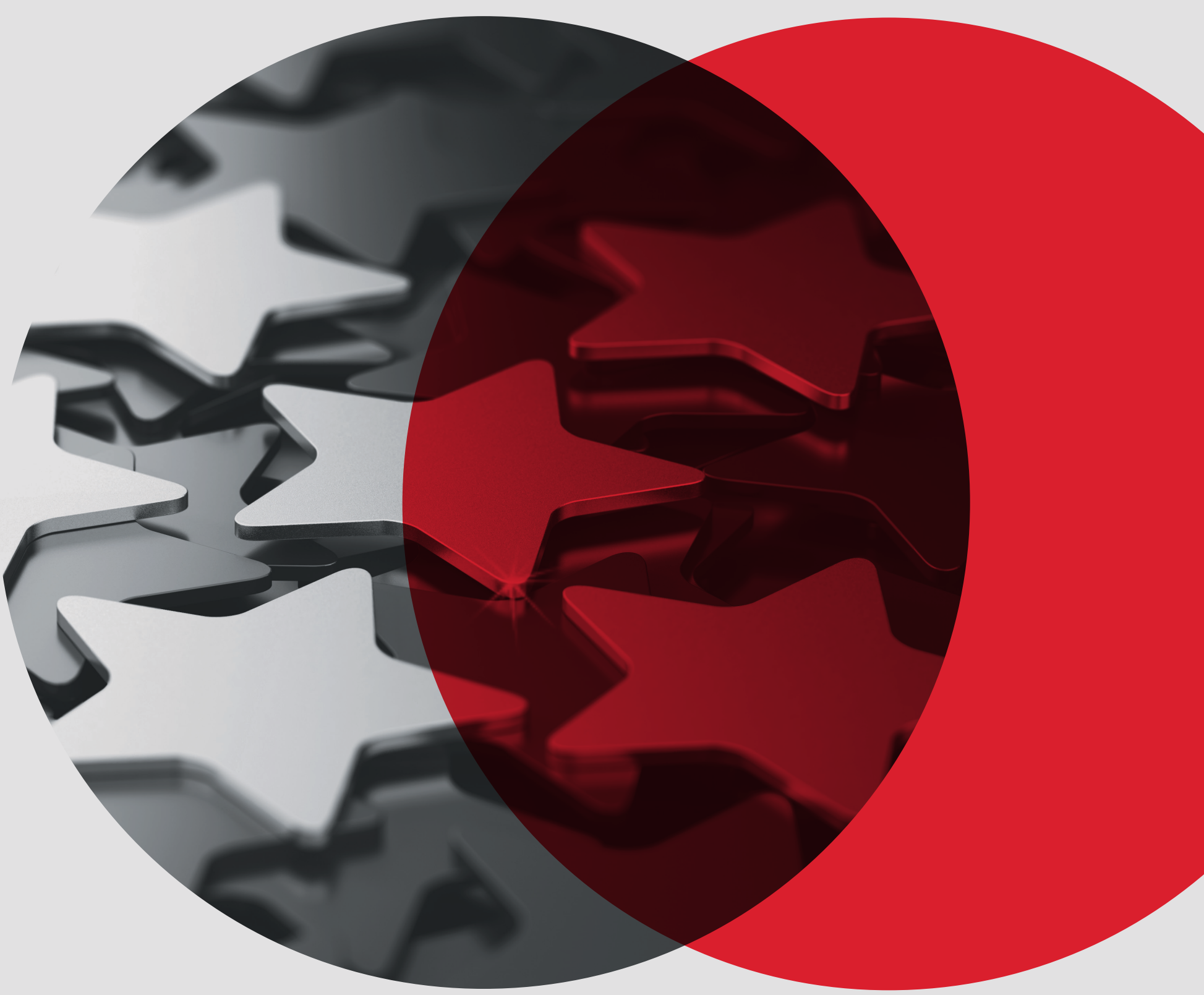


From Compliance to Excellence – the RCPAQAP and the Australian Business Excellence Framework (ABEF)

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Background

In August, 2018, RCPAQAP were awarded with a ‘Recognition in Excellence’ from Business Excellence Australia who are well recognised as hosting Australia’s premier business awards and have been celebrating business success in Australia for nearly 20 years. They present an opportunity for a broad range of businesses and organisations from across Australia to celebrate and showcase their excellence against internationally recognised business principles.

Method

The Australian Business Excellence Framework (ABEF) has been built on a set of proven Principles of Business Excellence (Table 1) and its structure is based on seven distinct categories (Figure 1). These facilitate review and analysis of an organisation’s leadership and management systems and form the basis of the ABEF. The RCPAQAP undertook a formal external Business Excellence Evaluation (BEE) in 2018 after 2 years of preparation. This evaluation comprised an in advance desktop review and a site visit conducted by the ABEF evaluation team. The desktop review included examination of the approach of the organisation is taking to each item in the ABEF, to assess how the approach was deployed across the organisation, what results were gathered to test the effectiveness of the approach and deployment, and how this information was used to review and improve the approach taken. The site visit plan covered the seven categories of the ABEF and included meetings with the leadership team, as well as one on one interviews and focus group discussions with both internal and key external stakeholders.

Table 1. ABEF Principles of Business Excellence

Clear direction and mutually agreed plans enable organisational alignment and a focus on the achievement of goals.
Understanding what customers and other stakeholders value, now and in the future, enables organisational direction, strategy and action.
All people work <i>in</i> a system. Outcomes are improved when people work on the system and its associated processes.
Engaging people’s enthusiasm, resourcefulness and participation improves organisational performance.
Innovation and learning influence the agility and responsiveness of the organisation.
Effective use of facts, data and knowledge leads to improved decisions.
Variation impacts predictability, profitability and performance.
Sustainable performance is determined by an organisation’s ability to deliver value for all stakeholders in an ethically, socially and environmentally responsive manner.
Leaders determine the culture and value system of the organisation through their decisions and behaviour.

Figure 2. BEE Score – from a possible 1,000 points

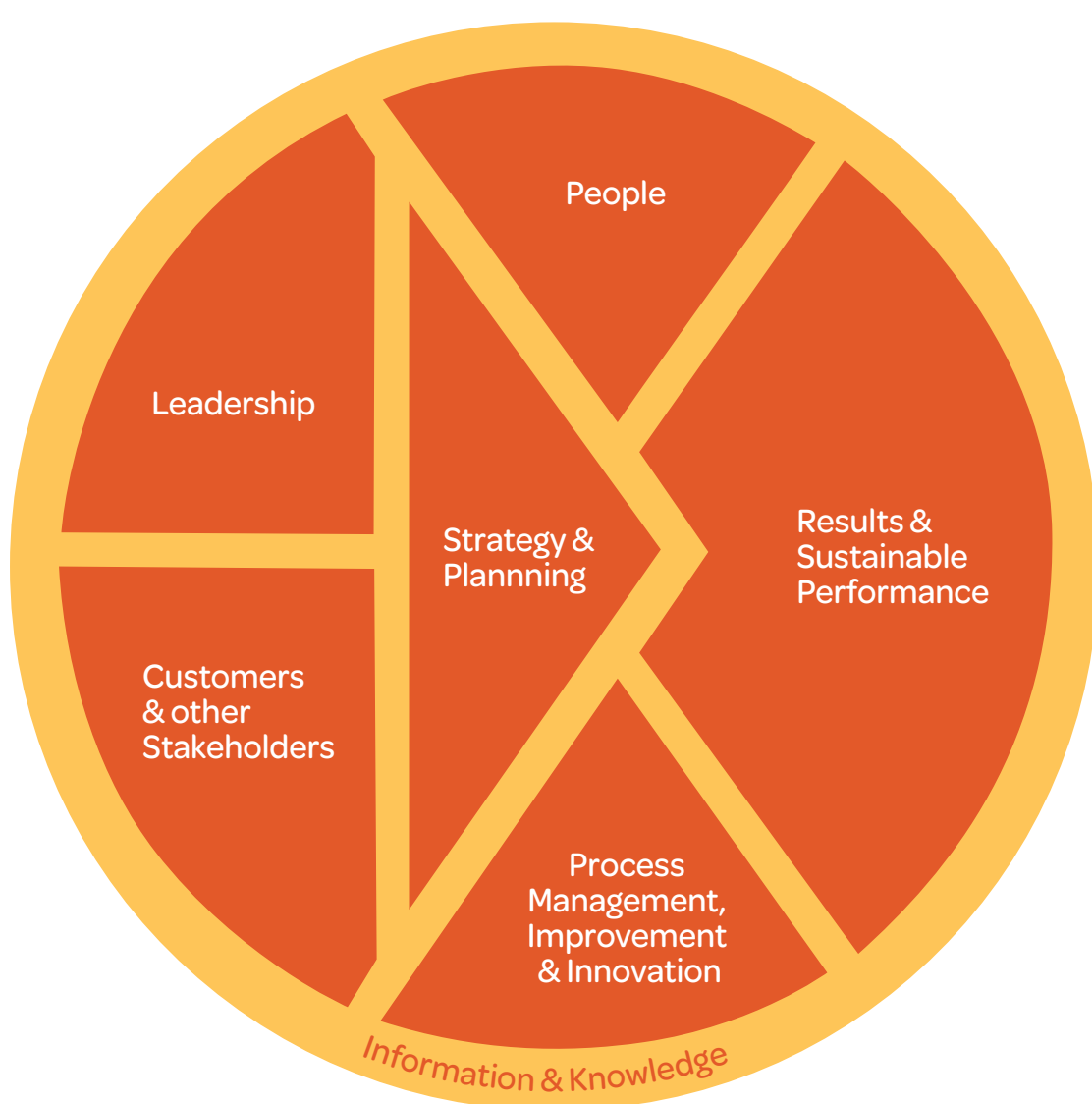
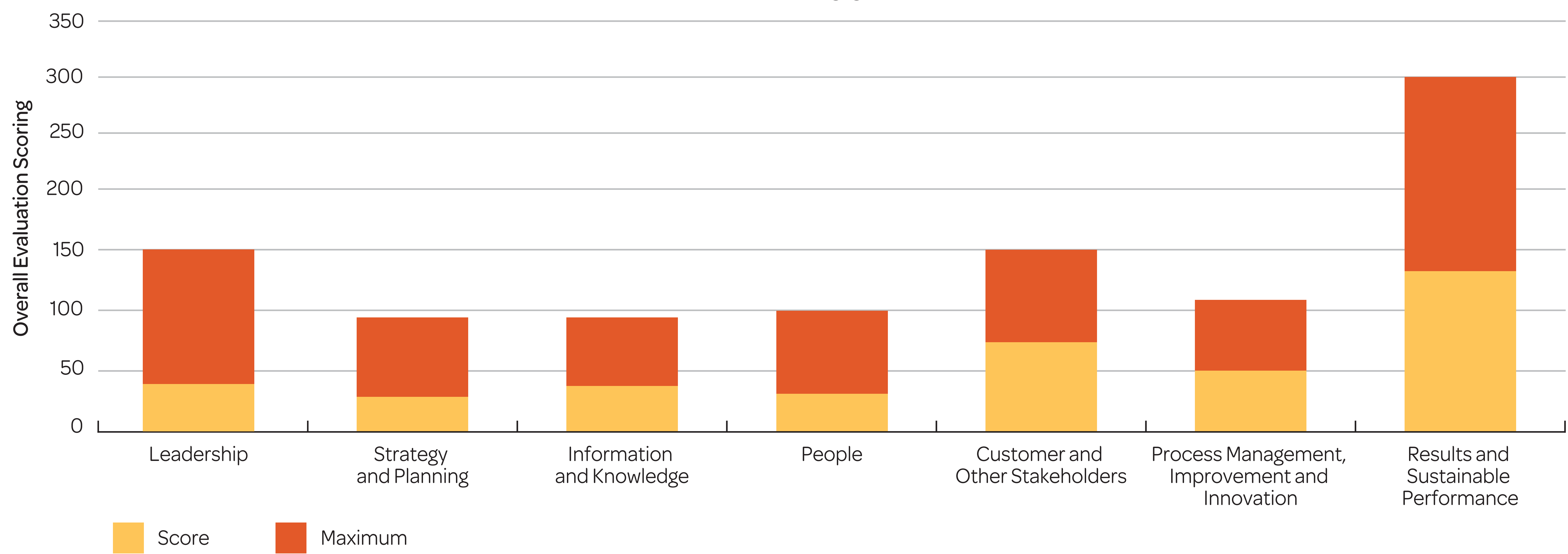


Figure 1. The Seven Categories of the ABEF

Results

A Feedback Report was provided by the evaluation team and this outlined a number of key strengths and opportunities for improvement for consideration overall. Refer to Figure 2 for the overall BEE score in each category. The main areas for focus included:

- Reviewing the strategic plan to ensure scenario planning of major business risks;
- Adopting, training and integrating a corporate methodology for continuous improvement are embedded;
- Completing an integrated strategic planning cycle;
- Continuing the harmonisation of the various disciplines;
- Considering the way data, analytics and reporting are selected, and linked to the strategic plan;
- Implementing a rigorous annual performance process with clear performance criteria and values;
- Developing and deploying a well-articulated transition plan from the current to future state to achieve the ‘ONE TEAM’.

From the 55 opportunities listed, a consolidated list of approximately 37 new opportunities were considered for implementation. This was because some of opportunities reported by the Evaluators were considered by RCPAQAP to be replication of the same opportunity. There were a further 12 opportunities that were deemed to be already ‘in progress’, and a further four that were in progress.

In summary:

- 67% of total opportunities reported were assessed by us as being new opportunities for the business.
- 22% of the total opportunities reported were already things the company is working on.
- 7% of the total opportunities reported were both in progress but the Evaluators provided suggestions for further improvements and opportunities.

Conclusion

The benefits of an independent assessment of the organisation by experienced ABEF evaluators forced the RCPAQAP to look beyond standard technical requirements for accreditation and apply the same rigor to enhance its business activities. The organisation is undergoing significant changes with many activities and projects underway. Some of these activities and projects are already in the ‘approach’ and ‘deployment’ phases with ‘results and improvements’ based on these still to be realised. The ABEF and evaluation process has provided support in our efforts of continuously improving the organisation and made us question and challenge existing patterns of thought, clarify opportunities and identify ways of bringing about the desired future for the RCPAQAP.