

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition of splashing colors. On the left, there are bright pink and magenta splashes. In the center, there are deep purple and blue splashes. On the right, there are bright cyan and blue splashes. The colors are dynamic and energetic, with many fine droplets and streaks radiating outwards.

What would we do next?

Recommendations of the NAOF's
young professionals 2018-2019

Introduction

Four young professionals started working for the National Audit Office of Finland (NAOF) in May 2018. The following recommendation scenarios are built upon the observations they made during their development project and how the NAOF could meet these development needs.

The recommendation scenarios deal with the usability of central government data, the development of the data analytics used by the NAOF, and the NAOF's internal project work.

The aim of the recommendation scenarios is to spark a discussion about the development of central government and tell what we would do next.



Data usability at the NAOF – recommended scenario

In an ideal situation, the use of the existing monitoring systems of central government has been further unified.

Uniform use of the common monitoring systems makes high-quality data from all central government accounting offices available to the NAOF. Thanks to the comprehensive data material, central government finances have a solid foundation.

The NAOF benefits from open data in the future: comprehensive high-quality data is available in sufficient volumes. It is easy for the NAOF to receive the data it needs for its development projects, the monitoring of the operating environment, and more efficient management of the risks related to central government finances. This ensures that the NAOF's operations are as comprehensive and efficient as possible.

Data is also be utilised in cooperation between the public and private sector. Tools based on data analytics and artificial intelligence can be developed more efficiently by utilising the specialist competence of companies. At the same time, the information security of data processing is ensured.

The public sector becomes an interesting customer for private sector actors. The NAOF can contribute to the promotion of a truly open data economy and the strengthening and introduction of open interfaces by, for example, promoting the use of common project management systems.

The NAOF should actively monitor the implementation of common reporting practices in central government and encourage central government to develop its systems. In the future, it is important that the NAOF highlights the significance of this in its statements, for example.

Recommendations

- The NAOF assumes a role as a promoter of open data and a developer of the quality of data.
- The NAOF participates in the development of common practices for data ownership and open data in central government to enable new technologies to be developed as required by changes in the operating environment.
- The NAOF encourages central government to develop common systems for efficient monitoring of central government finances to enable real-time identification of risks.



Data analytics at the NAOF – recommended scenario

In an ideal situation, the NAOF focuses on the development of data analytics and reserves sufficient resources for this.

The development of data analytics at the NAOF is the responsibility of a team with cross-cutting NAOF-level operations. The team promotes the utilisation of statistical methods and develops data analytics tools. The responsibility for the management of the data analytics team is clearly assigned to a single person, and the team is actively supported by the NAOF's management.

The team has sufficient competence and vision in the operating environment of data analytics and the opportunities that data analytics offer. The members of the team have both coding competence and strong understanding of audit work. The team develops tools for auditors and plans and implements external purchases of data analytics solutions.

The data analytics team identifies what it will do itself and what it will purchase from outside the NAOF. The development ideas related to data analytics are mainly generated by the employees, who are also offered opportunities to participate in development projects of the field. The data analytics team has opportunities and skills to utilise different sources of data comprehensively. The team also has business contacts to support the NAOF's basic work. The team provides auditors with timely support right from the beginning of audit projects.

Recommendations

- The NAOF strengthens its resources in data analytics and ensures that sufficient recruitments are made. The NAOF utilises universities as its stakeholders: university trainees and these are seen as important resources.
- The NAOF utilises the entire staff's competence and interest actively in development tasks related to data analytics.
- Data analytic tools are an integral part of audit work, and the data analytics team provides support for their use, if necessary.
- The management of the team and data analytics projects is concentrated to ensure a clear overall picture of data analytics at the NAOF.



Teamwork and cultural change in the way of working – recommended scenario


In an ideal situation, when a project is launched, the members of the project team get to know each other, create an atmosphere of trust, and discuss the desired ways of working.

The project team members work together starting from the planning phase of the project and divide and develop the work actively together. This ensures that the competence of all team members is utilised in a diversified manner and that the diversity of the team brings the greatest possible benefits. The diversity is also taken into account in the resourcing phase of the project.

Projects utilise the common methods of project management. The tasks are coordinated and divided between the team members according to their competence and interests.

Communication within the team, as well as with the external stakeholders, is open and constructive. In addition to strengthening the vision, this makes it easier to identify tasks related to the same subjects within the NAOF.

Recommendations

- As soon as a project is launched, the members of the project team focus on getting to know each other. This makes it easier to identify the best ways of working while also promoting genuine collaboration.
 - Project teams divide tasks in a sensible manner and, if necessary, make changes to the division of work flexibly throughout the project.
 - Project teams keep regular team meetings to comment on the work done and develop the operations together.
 - The NAOF employees are supported in the identification of their natural team roles and in teamwork training.
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