



Upgrade for evaluation system

By Andy Ricketts, Third Sector, 25 June 2008

New system: will include section on green issues

Small charities and voluntary organisations will be able to put their green credentials to the test with an updated version of the sector's most widely used performance measurement system.

Charities Evaluation Services will today unveil the third version of its Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations, which has been used by more than 12,000 organisations in a bid to improve their viability.

The update, the first since 2000, introduces new or re-engineered sections on environmental and sustainability issues and the role of third sector organisations in the delivery of public services. It also offers more support for charities working in partnership.

Colin Nee, chief executive of CES, said the system had been changed to keep it up to date with issues in the sector.

"It has more about environmentalism and it addresses the sector's participation in public service delivery," he said. "The results area has been expanded to give a sharper focus on outcomes."

Changes to the system were based on a survey of users. "We spent a year consulting third sector organisations across the country and got 500 responses," said Nee.

Organisations can use PQASSO, which scrutinises governance, management and funding, in either workbook or CD-ROM format.

"The aim of PQASSO is to help voluntary organisations put in place the organisational strength they need to be able carry out their front-end work - providing services to meet social need, campaigning and so on," said Nee.

CES also introduced a quality mark last year, which organisations can use to demonstrate their credentials to funders (Third Sector Online, 26 November).

Colette Williams, head of network standards and development at umbrella body Action with Communities in Rural England, which has developed a version of the PQASSO system for its own members to use, said it was important for charities to consider the impact of their activities on the environment.

FACT FILE

The first version of PQASSO was launched in 1997;

It has been used by more than 12,000 organisations in the voluntary sector to measure performance and viability;

The system looks at areas such as governance, people management, finance management and planning.