



Briefing Sheet on Joint Cabinet Office and HM Treasury's Review of the Third Sector



Aim of the Review

To define the future role of the Third Sector in social and economic regeneration within the context of the long term challenges that our society faces.

What does the government mean by 'third sector'?

The 'third sector' comprises non-governmental organisations which are value-driven and which principally reinvest their surpluses to further social, environmental or cultural objectives. It includes voluntary and community organisations, charities, social enterprises, cooperatives and mutuals. Faith groups also play a very important role.

Why should the Voluntary/Community Sector contribute to this review?

The Government has continually stated its commitment to supporting the role of the Third Sector in building strong communities, encouraging voluntary participation in the local community and delivering public services. This review is the latest in a series of cross-cutting reviews involving the VCS (the ones in 2002 and 2004 led to ChangeUp) and is particularly significant because the results will feed into next year's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). The CSR will determine the Government's future funding priorities and therefore it is vital that the voice of the diverse VCS is heard.

The review is overseen by a cross-Whitehall Ministerial Group involving eight departments and has advice from Michael Jacobs, Special Advisor to the Chancellor and a sector adviser, Campbell Robb. An advisory panel made up of representatives from the Sector including the Faith Sector, is also involved.

What is the timescale for the review?

The Review, which was announced in the 2006 Budget, was launched in May and the consultation phase will last until September 2006. This consultation phase will include a series of regional events (the South East event was the first one on 5th June), sub-regional and sub-sectoral events. The second phase of the Review will be the analysis of the consultation responses from the Sector and initial findings will be reported to Ministers. Initial recommendations will be included in the Pre-Budget report in November but the full report will be ready next year to feed into the Comprehensive Spending Review.

What are the objectives of the Review?

- To assess the current landscape with regard to what has been achieved so far and what remains to be done;
- To define the role of the sector; identify how it interacts with the sector and how this should be structured;
- To identify how government and the sector can best work together and what more it should do to achieve the long term goals of building a more cohesive society in the context of demographic change in the global economy.

Themes of the Review

The Review is based around six themes and a questionnaire has been produced with various questions around each theme to help people think about the issues. The themes are:

- Cohesive communities and building voice for citizens
- Partnership working to deliver a shared agenda
- Future role of the sector in shaping and delivering public services
- Creating a sustainable resource base
- Promoting innovation and enterprise
- Creating a culture of volunteering and mentoring

How to get involved in the Review

There are various ways that people and organisations from the Third Sector can get involved in the review.

The Treasury and Cabinet Office have indicated that they are planning to run some sub-regional and sub-sectoral events in the region and details will be publicised when they are known. To compliment this possibility RAISE has been contracted by GOSE to increase the reach of the Review, particularly focusing on:

- Rural groups and communities
- Marginalised groups and communities
- Small groups and communities.

Obviously the views of the whole VCS are wanted but RAISE is particularly keen for the smaller groups to be able to contribute to the Review as the diversity of the Sector needs to be highlighted. RAISE will be publicising information about any local events which will include a session on the Third Sector Review, or any additional events which are being organised in the region, via our e-bulletin and newsletter.

At any consultation event, a briefing pack will be available which will include a copy of the questionnaire. We are encouraging all our partners to disseminate this information as widely as possible through their own networks. This briefing sheet and the questionnaire can also be downloaded from the RAISE website.

Responses to the Consultation should be submitted to the Treasury/Cabinet Office as detailed on the consultation questionnaire.

If you require any further information or if you would like to let RAISE know your views to assist our response to the Review please email RAISE: thirdsector@raise-networks.org.uk or call Kathryn Shephard on 01483 470174.

Further sources of information

RAISE e-bulletin, newsletter and website: www.raise-networks.org.uk

NCVO website: www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

Cabinet office website www.digbig.com/4mcsk