



EQUASS Newsflash

Welcome to the new issue of the EQUASS Newsflash! This publication is an initiative of the European Quality in Social Services to provide you with regular updates regarding the most recent developments and achievements of the EQUASS System.

Benchmarking on Quality with EQUASS



On the 4 and 5 October 2011, 16 participants from 11 organisations and from 5 European countries participated in the Benchmarking event organised by the European platform for Rehabilitation in collaborating with the EQUASS Unit, and facilitated by Guus van Beek, the EQUASS Key Expert. The participants represented various branches in the rehabilitation sector: vocational rehabilitation, vocational training for persons with a disability and residential care services for disabled persons.

The objectives of the event were to allow its participants to:

- ☆ Learn from experiences of other centres complying with EQUASS quality principles, and on how to get around specific challenges of EQUASS certification and find the most

appropriate strategies to achieve goals

- ☆ **Get insight in concrete examples and approaches to improve an organisation's practices** in the areas covered by EQUASS, and ultimately improve the EQUASS score.

- ☆ Be engaged in international benchmarking which is one of the EQUASS Excellence requirements.

The Benchmark event offered the participants the opportunity to discuss and share various views on benchmarking and bench learning, the aim and types of bench marking,

the process of benchmarking and the challenges in **defining common agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPI)** for approaches.

The challenge lies in defining KPIs that can be applied in the various sectors in different national contexts, as well as within cultural and national contexts.

Finally, the participants learned about the concept, results and lessons learned of the **Norwegian indicator project** in the Vocational Rehabilitation sector. The seminar concluded on the opportunities and possibilities for benchmarking and bench learning within the European Quality in Social Services: The benchmarking instrument, the comparison of the audit results of EQUASS Excellence awarded organisation and the plans for EQUASS to create an EQUASS community with an EQUASS benchmarking platform.



New EQUASS Assurance Organisations

DalPro AS - APPDA-Norte - CERCICA - Instituto Monsenhor Airoso - APPACDM de Anadia - ARCIL - Theodor-Schäfer-Berufsbildungswerk Husum - REA College Pluyn (Groningen - Nijmegen - Hoensbroek) - MjøsAnker AS - SISO Vekst - SR Produkter AS - Stavne Arbeid og Kompetanse KF - Skjervøy ASVO as - Nordre Land ASVO AS - FunkWeb Services as - Drangedal Produkter AS - Svanem AS - RANSO as - Kvænangen Produkter AS - ALF AS - Enebakk Produkter AS - Optimus as® - Beredt AS - Menova AS - Vekst Ørskog AS - Keops Kurs- og arbeidssenter KF - Berufsförderungswerk Hamm GmbH Berufliches Rehabilitationszentrum in katholischer Trägerschaft - Miljøhuset Gnisten AS - Fretex Øst-Norge AS (Drammen - Skien - Sandefjord - Gol - Jessheim - Lillehammer - Moss - Oslo) - AS Rehabil - Link Arbeid kf - Grønnevikken AS - Båtsfjord Service AS - Nordkyn Vekst AS - Lena Produkter AS - Jæren Industripartner AS - OrbitArena as - SA Jöhvi Haigla rehabilitatsiooniteenus - Kristiine Sotsiaalkeskus - Unikum AS - Leva_Fro As - ASVO Rakkestad AS - Mona Vekst AS - Eiker Vekst AS - Aktivum Rælingen AS - Stiffelsen RIBO - Lysam AS - Herøy ASVO AS - Varodd AS - Astangu Kutserehabilitatsiooni Keskus - Tallinna Vaimse Tervise Keskus - Firda Produkt AS - Modum Industri AS - Modum ASVO - Miljøhuset Gnisten AS - Valhalla verksted AS - VIUNO A/S - ViTo Kompetanse AS - Haapsalu Neuroloogiline Rehabilitatsioonikeskus - Sandane Industri L/L - Hobøl ASVO AS - RehabCare- VINN AS - Hallingdal - Prima AS - Menova AS - meS-kano as - Atico as. - KLÆBU INDUSTRIER AS - Numedal Produksjon as -A3 Ressurs Vennessla AS -BeiarVekst - DELECTO AS - Nord-hordland Industriservice a.s



Upcoming Changes in EQUASS for 2012

Origins of the Changes to EQUASS 2012

The 2012 version of the EQUASS Framework takes its origins in the voluntary European Quality Framework (EQF) for Social Services developed by the **Social Protection Committee**, which itself came from the **Common Quality Framework (CQF) for Social Services of General Interest (SSGI)**, developed by the Prometheus Project. This quality framework describes a set of domains, preconditions and principles, as well as a set of key criteria that influence the quality of social services.

Based on the EQF and the CQF, the **EQUASS Awarding Committee** decided to adopt the new principles and quality criteria in its certification programme, so that all EQUASS certification programmes comply with these Quality Frameworks. Therefore the EQUASS certification can be considered as an expression of adopting the requirements of the European Commission, and **adapting to the changing demands of stakeholders and the European Commission**, and the changing context in the social sector.

All EQUASS certification programmes will be based on the same framework: the 10 Principles for Quality and 50 underlying criteria.

What are the major changes of the EQUASS 2012?

The EQUASS certification programmes will be offered at three levels:

☆ EQUASS Assurance

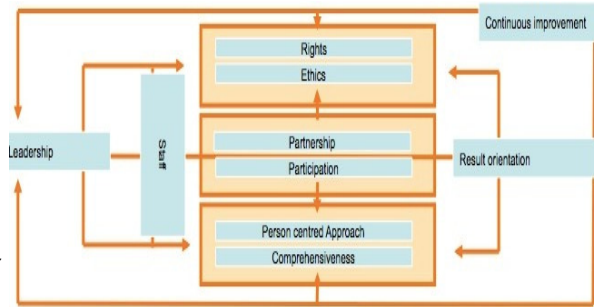
The *EQUASS Assurance certification* programme, the 50 criteria will be assessed on 100 Performance Indicators for Assurance. All indicators must be met. The certification is valid for 2 years.

☆ Committed to Excellence (name subject to change):

The *Committed to EQUASS Excellence* certification will be given once to those organisations that cannot provide 3 years trends in results on the 50 criteria yet nor systematic benchmarking. Fixed criteria for performance on approach, deployment and results will be applied for this certification. The certification is valid for 18 months.

☆ EQUASS Excellence

The EQUASS Excellence certification programme will be assessed on a self-evaluation report in which the applicant describes its performance on the 50 criteria from the perspective of approach, deployment and achieved results. The performance will be evaluated and reported to the Awarding Committee. The certification is valid for 3 years.



The three certification programmes are strongly linked to each other, and will facilitate and encourage a natural way of quality development and improvement in organisations for social services.

Because the certification programmes are based on the latest developments on quality in the social sector, some new elements have been included in the programmes. Additional issues, such as *self-determination, informed choices and empowerment of service users, proximity of services, competences of staff, position of volunteers, benefits for service users, added value of partnership and stakeholders, quality of life of service users and innovation* are therefore included in the new certification programmes and must be addressed properly for EQUASS certification.

Implementation and Timeline

The 'new' EQUASS certification programmes (including criteria for awarding) will be implemented from **1 January 2012** and the supported documentation (i.e. application form, self-evaluation tool, brochure, information about the principles, criteria and indicators) will be available on the EQUASS web site and on the web sites of the EQUASS Licence holders.

For additional information: please contact the EQUASS coordinator at mdubost@epr.eu or equass@equass.be.

Upcoming EQUASS events and contributions

- **10 Nov 2011:** Annual EQUASS Awarding Ceremony, Athens, Greece
- **10 Nov 2011:** EQUASS Information to Greek Stakeholders in the Rehabilitation Sector, Athens, Greece
- **21-22 Nov 2011:** PRIME Project Kick-Off Meeting, Nijmegen, The Netherlands
- **23 Nov 2011:** Information in Eskilstuna, Sweden
- **28 Nov 2011:** 2nd QALL conference Berlin, Germany
- **15 December 2011:** Final Conference of the ESF project "Piloting EQUASS in Estonia", Tallinn, Estonia
- **19-20-21 December 2011:** EQUASS Excellence Training, Brussels, Belgium

NLN obtains EQUASS Excellence Award

Congratulations to the National Learning Network in Ireland, that was awarded with EQUASS Excellence for 28 of its sites in October 2011. NLN is Ireland's largest non-Government training organisation with centres in almost every county in Ireland.

The centres serves about 2.500 learners (whole time equivalent) and provides a wide range of vocational and rehabilitative services and training for persons with disabilities. NLN delivers high results in gainful employment or further continuation of studies for the users that complete their training programme. The multi-site audit of its 28 locations is also a record-breaker in EQUASS history.

National Learning Network

Investing in People, Changing Perspectives