

TAIEX - Guide for Public Sector Experts

TAIEX stands for the **Technical Assistance and Information Exchange**. It is an instrument of the European Commission, which provides short-term, peer-to-peer assistance to central government administrations (recipients) in eligible beneficiary countries so as to support them, where appropriate, in:

- the understanding of,
- the convergence with,
- the approximation with,
- the transposition of,
- the implementation of,
- the enforcement of

the EU *acquis* (i.e. the entire body of EU Law), EU policies and EU standards.

A. Types of events and role of the expert

Workshops: single or multi-beneficiary events which typically mobilise more than one expert from more than one EU Member State and usually last between one and three days depending on the needs.

The purpose of a workshop is to present aspects of the EU *acquis* to a wider audience (more than 15 participants) as well as to explain any legislative issues. It may be thematic and relate to the EU *acquis* in substance, or it may be more practical dealing with the implementation and the enforcement of the EU *acquis*.

The expert is expected to attend and contribute to the workshop by making presentations and taking part in the general discussions for the entire duration of the event.

An expert can also be asked to act as a chairperson to moderate the discussions and to submit an evaluation report.

Expert Missions: consist in the sending of EU Member State expert(s) on a mission in order to provide advice to the beneficiary/recipients' institution(s) on specific issues. The expert mission lasts up to five days and provides an opportunity to discuss draft legislation, present examples of best practice and lend assistance where requested to a limited audience (usually maximum 20 participants).

The expert is entrusted with the task described in the agenda, which is developed in co-operation with the beneficiary/recipients' institution. The expert shall complete a brief mission report describing if the objective of the mission was attained, the situation of the beneficiary/recipients' institution and recommendations.

Submission of speeches/presentations and evaluation:

Both for workshops and expert missions, a copy of the presentation (PowerPoint format) or speaking points (MSWord format) to be used during the event shall be sent in the working language of the event to the European Commission by email no later than five working days before the event. Prior to the event this information will be shared with interpreters to facilitate their work and preparation.

By accepting a TAIEX assignment, the expert gives consent to the publication – electronic or in other forms – of his/her contribution. All speeches and materials made available by the expert will be published on the TAIEX website (<http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/taieX/>). Experts are requested to ensure that their presentation or speech does not contain any material for which they have no rights to authorise reproduction or distribution. Please note that the presentation/speech should not contain the European Commission or the TAIEX logo and should not exceed ten MB.

For expert missions, the mission report shall be submitted within 15 days of the end date of the event. The report will not be published on the website but can be shared with the beneficiary administration and/ or European Commission services.

After the end of the event, the expert is requested to provide feedback via an online questionnaire on his/her satisfaction with the event, including the logistical aspects, the participation of the beneficiary/recipients' institution, the results achieved and possible further assistance needs.

B. Financial compensation

As a general rule, the European Commission may grant a Per Diem according to the established rates applicable to the place to be visited. The Per Diem is a daily subsistence allowance which is granted to cover accommodation, meals, local transportation and sundry expenses. The costs of accommodation and meals directly provided by the European Commission or by third parties are automatically deducted from the total amount of Per Diem paid to the expert.

With regard to EU Member State experts mobilised from their public administrations, the European Commission may also grant a Flat Daily Allowance (FDA) of €350 per working day. With respect to travel days falling on a working day, if the flight on the day of departure is scheduled to leave:

- before or at 2.00 pm, full FDA is applicable;
- after 2:00 pm, half FDA (€175) is applicable;
- after 6:30 pm, no FDA is applicable.

Similarly, on the day of return if the flight is scheduled to arrive:

- before 9:00 am, no FDA is applicable;
- before 12:00 am (noon), half FDA (€175) is applicable
- after or at 12:00, full FDA is applicable.

Exceptions can be made if experts work in a city different to that in which the airport is located. If an event takes place during a weekend, these days count as working days as well (except travel days).

When an expert attends an event to the benefit of and taking place in his/her home country, no Per Diem or FDA will be paid. If his/her attendance causes extra real costs these will be reimbursed only if duly justified and with the prior approval by the European Commission.

Any proof of payment for claiming reimbursement shall be submitted no later than 30 days of the end date of the event together with original supporting documents.

In the event that you are not a public sector expert in active public service – either temporarily, because you are taking prolonged leave of absence, or permanently, because you left your administration or you are retired, please inform the European Commission immediately as the rules covering your engagement with TAIEX differ.

C. Practical arrangements

The European Commission relies on an external service provider for the organisation of the logistical aspects. The service provider will make all arrangements for flights, accommodation, conference venues, interpreters and other logistical arrangements necessary for the organisation of the event. Please note that email is the preferred method of communication, and all emails regarding an event should include the five-digit event reference number.

To start off the preparation of the event, the European Commission needs to receive the speaker form duly filled in at the latest four weeks before the start date of the event. Please make sure that you provide the exact spelling of your name as written in the passport you will be travelling on (please check the expiry date of your passport) and your mobile telephone number for use in case of emergency. In addition, you are invited to indicate and use your professional email address (as opposed to your private email address, such as Yahoo, Gmail, Hotmail, etc.).

Furthermore, before accepting participation in a TAIEX event, the European Commission strongly advises you to check the security/travel advice issued by your own EU Member State and to take all necessary measures in that respect.

You are kindly reminded that when on a TAIEX mission, you remain under the responsibility of your own administration.

1. Travel and accommodation arrangements

All travel and accommodation arrangements are organised by the service provider - i.e. booking flights, issuing tickets, hotel reservations.

The service provider will book a 4-star (if available) international standard hotel, covering the duration of the event and as required by the travel schedule. Extra overnight stays before or after the event are neither encouraged nor covered by the European Commission, unless required by the flight schedule booked by the service provider.

The service provider will not finance or reimburse any other arrangements made by the expert unless written authorisation from the European Commission is obtained in advance.

2. Travel options

Flights: flight tickets are purchased by the European Commission through the service provider, which will select dates, fares and flight times, which offer the best value for money according to pre-defined standards. Departure and return times shall be as close as possible to the event.

In line with the principle of sound financial management of public funds, the least expensive ticket should be chosen unless there is a specific professional justification for a different choice. If the expert nevertheless insists on a more expensive travel option than the one proposed, the difference between the costs of the two flight options shall be deducted from the Per Diem.

Train: the European Commission will either approve the booking and issuance of tickets for the expert, or to reimburse the real cost of the ticket purchased by the expert, upon receipt by the service provider of the original tickets and a proof of purchase. Experts may travel in "first class" except on high-speed trains such as TGV, Thalys or Eurostar, where "second class" tickets shall be booked. A premium tickets can be used only if this ticket is not more expensive than a "first class" ticket, or in the case of high-speed train services, not more expensive than "second class" tickets.

Other means of transport: only under exceptional circumstances and if written agreement is obtained from the European Commission in advance.

Important: the service provider will not finance nor reimburse any other travel arrangements made by experts unless written authorisation from the European Commission is obtained in advance.

3. Visa arrangements

The expert should check before the visit whether s/he will need a visa or not and if his/her passport/ID meets the required validity period. Experts are solely responsible for making all the necessary arrangements for obtaining their visa in due time.

If needed to support the visa application, experts should request the European Commission to issue an invitation letter as soon as possible. However, the European Commission will not contact Embassies or Consular Offices directly on behalf of experts.

Upon request, and subject to the prior agreement of the European Commission, all costs related to obtaining the visa (excluding health insurance but including travel costs, if relevant, and any fees incurred by private companies in relation to obtaining the visa in cases when it is compulsory to use such services) can be entirely reimbursed upon receipt of original ticket invoices and proof of payment within 30 days of the end date of the event.

4. Confirmation letter

A confirmation letter providing information about travel arrangements, accommodation, the Per Diem and other practical details, including an emergency contact number, is provided by the service provider shortly before the event and can be used as proof of attendance.

In principle only electronic tickets are issued (no paper tickets). Boarding passes are to be collected at the check-in-desk of the respective airline at the airport of departure.

Unless stated otherwise, accommodation and flights are paid by the service provider. If any additional payments for either accommodation or flights are requested, the service provider shall be contacted immediately.

In case of an emergency regarding travel or accommodation, outside office hours, please contact the service provider emergency number as indicated in the confirmation letter. For emergency during office hours, please contact the service provider's event organiser (i.e. the person who organised your practical arrangements).

5. Change of issued flight ticket's dates and/or routing

Issued flight tickets are not transferable and no changes will be made in routing or dates.

If the outbound part of a return-ticket is not used, the inbound part will automatically be cancelled by the airline. If you cannot board the outbound ticket please inform the service provider immediately in order to minimise the financial loss caused by your 'no-show'.

6. Steps to follow if the expert's participation needs to be cancelled

Should an expert not be able to attend, s/he must immediately contact the European Commission and the service provider to explain the situation. S/he should make sure that the European Commission is informed and confirms receipt of the message.

Please note that, in case the expert is not able to take the flight, part of the flight price can be recoverable if the expert informs the service provider prior the departure time of the flight.

The expert needs to return to the service provider any travel tickets or payments received. Further details of the procedure will be provided if this situation arises.

7. Transfer of Per Diem and FDA

The service provider will, in principle, transfer Per Diem and FDA payment to the bank account(s) indicated by the expert within ten working days after the start of the event. The cost of the bank transfer is paid by the European Commission, unless otherwise agreed.

Full and accurate bank details shall be provided to ensure that the transfer is executed without delay. The Swift/BIC Code and/or the IBAN number shall be indicated as these are mandatory for payments within the EU Member States. Without this information, no payment can be made to the experts.

8. Additional expenses to be paid by the expert

The costs of private telephone calls, minibar, meals and all other personal expenses are not reimbursed by the European Commission.

9. Local transport expenses at the event venue

The costs of local transport (e.g. from the airport/train station to the conference venue and back) are not reimbursed by the European Commission. On an exceptional basis taxi fares related to international travel may be reimbursed if no public transport is available (e.g. for transfers between Larnaca Airport and Nicosia) and only upon receipt of a duly completed and signed expense report and the original taxi bill within 30 days of the end date of the event.

10. Local transport expenses in the expert's home country

If there are any additional transport costs in the home country of the expert linked to international travel, the European Commission should be notified as soon as possible. The costs may be reimbursed to the experts if duly justified and upon prior agreement by the European Commission.

Taxi fares linked to international travel may be reimbursed to experts in the following cases:

- to and from the airport, if no public transport is available;
- for flights leaving before 8 a.m. and arriving before 8 a.m. or after 11 p.m.¹;
- for trains leaving before 8 a.m. and arriving after 11 p.m.

Reimbursement of local transportation costs will be processed only after receipt of a duly completed and signed expense report and the proof of payment and original tickets, where applicable, within 30 days of the end date of the event.

11. Insurance arrangements

Experts are responsible for all of their own insurance arrangements such as for:

- travel;
- full coverage for health care costs due to sickness and accident (in-patient and emergency out-patient);
- emergency repatriation;
- transportation to medical centre;
- sending of a medical service provider;
- emergency dental care costs;
- in case of death, repatriation of the body to the place of origin.

¹ Except if the expert rejected the standard flight that the service provider offered or if the expert has chosen to extend his/her stay or if the expert is booking his/her own flights.

The costs for insurance arrangements will not be reimbursed by the European Commission.

The European Commission and the service provider shall be under no liability in respect of sickness, accident or medical expenses incurred by the experts in connection with their assignment. This includes also capital indemnity in case of death or invalidity due to accident or sickness/illness.

12. Available technical equipment

For workshops, technical equipment is organised by the service provider and includes at least a laptop (for Word and PowerPoint presentations).

13. Event's attendance

Experts are expected to stay throughout the entire event and should not leave for other purposes. Any unauthorised absences may lead to an adjustment of the Per Diem and the FDA which would otherwise be paid.

When applicable, the signature of the attendance list is required at the start and the end of each day of the event.

D. Personal data protection

Personal data related to experts will be processed in accordance with the privacy statement of the TAIEX instrument (see http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/taieux/pdf/privacy_statement_online.pdf) and in compliance with Regulation (EC) N° 45/2001, of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data.

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