

Guide for Public Experts

TAIEX provides technical assistance to candidate countries and potential candidates (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey), the Turkish Cypriot community, the Beneficiaries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy (Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Moldova, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine) and the Russian Federation.

Responsibility for the management of the instrument lies with the Institution Building Unit of the Directorate-General for Enlargement of the European Commission.

The European Commission covers the costs of transport and accommodation. For the organisation of the logistical aspects, the European Commission relies on a Service Provider. The Service Provider will make all arrangements for flights, accommodation, conference venues, interpreters and other logistical arrangements necessary for the organisation of an Event.

A. Types of Events and the Role of the Expert

There are four kinds of standard Event type:

- *Workshop*
- *Expert Mission*
- *Study Visit*
- *Work from Home*

For the purposes of this guide, only the two first Event types are relevant.

Workshop: The Expert is one of the speakers entrusted with the role of making a presentation and contributing to the general discussions. S/he is expected to attend and contribute for the whole duration of the Workshop.

An Expert participating in a Workshop can also be asked to act as a chairperson. As a chairperson, s/he is expected to organise the preparatory work (e.g. contributing to the development of the agenda, co-ordinating with other Experts etc.) and to moderate the discussions during the Workshop. In the unlikely situation where nobody in charge of the logistical support is present, the chairperson ensures that the logistical arrangements are in place.

After the Workshop, the chairperson shall submit a report to the European Commission about the Event as such, the situation of the Beneficiary in the area of the relevant Acquis and any logistical aspect to be considered.

Expert Mission: The Expert is entrusted with the task described in the agenda, which is developed in co-operation with the Beneficiary. The Expert shall complete a mission report describing the mission and the situation of the Beneficiary in the field of the mission.

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, the results reached and the possible needs of further assistance.

B. Financial compensation

As a general rule, the European Commission grants a Per Diem allowance 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 are automatically deducted from the total amount of Per Diem and FAA paid to the Expert.

With regard to EU Member State Experts mobilised from their public administrations, the European Commission also grants a Fixed Additional Allowance (FAA) of €250 per working day and effective travel day, where this necessitates absence from the office during normal working hours (i.e. between 9 a.m. and 5.30 p.m.). Retired Member State Experts are not entitled to receive FAA for travel days. FAA also applies to Experts from International Organisations, and academics from EU Member State public universities.

When an Expert attends an Event in his/her home country, no Per Diem or FAA will be paid. If attendance at the Event causes the Expert to incur real costs, these will be reimbursed only if duly justified and with the prior approval by the European Commission.

C. Practical Arrangements

1. Travel and accommodation arrangements

All travel arrangements are organised by the Service Provider i.e. booking flights, issuing tickets, providing Per Diem and making hotel reservations as required for all Experts.

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.

The Service Provider will book a 4-star international standard hotel if available. Extra overnight stays before or after the Event are not encouraged and will be booked and paid directly by the Expert.

2. Travel options

Flight: flight tickets are purchased by the European Commission through the Service Provider, which will select dates, fares and flight times, seeking the best value for money. If a change to dates or flight times is required, the Expert shall contact the Service Provider as soon as possible to check whether this change is possible. Flights are booked in full economy or cheaper where available. Business class fares are not foreseen.

The Service Provider will book a direct flight if available and only if it is not more than 25 per cent more expensive than a flight with two legs. Waiting time between connecting flights should not exceed 3.5 hours. Experts are not expected to take flights before 6.30 a.m. or arrive later than 11 p.m. in the evening, unless they agree to do so.

Train or boat: The European Commission will decide to either book and issue the ticket for the Expert, or to reimburse the real cost of the ticket purchased by the Expert, upon receipt of the original tickets and a proof of purchase. Experts can travel in first class except for high-speed trains such as TGV, Thalys or Eurostar where second class tickets should be booked. A premium tickets can be used only if this ticket is not more expensive than a "first class" ticket.

Other means of transport: if written agreement is obtained from the European Commission in advance.

3. Visa arrangements

The Expert is responsible for his/her visa arrangements. The Expert should check before the visit whether s/he will need a visa or not.

The European Commission will not contact Embassies directly on behalf of Experts who may need visa and will not provide additional attestations in support of visa applications.

Costs associated with obtaining a visa are in principle to be paid by the Expert or his/her administration.

4. Confirmation of travel and accommodation arrangements

Details of accommodation and other practical details are given in a confirmation letter which is sent 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.

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

Tickets are not changeable, except by the Service Provider with prior approval of the European Commission. As a general rule, extra costs resulting from the changes in the original ticket routing and/or dates at the request of the Expert for personal reasons are deducted from the Expert's total amount of Per Diem and FAA.

If the Expert insists on another more expensive flight option than the standard one proposed and if the reason for rejecting the proposed options is not related to professional activities but is duly justified, the difference between the costs of the two flight options is deducted from the Per Diem and FAA.

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

The Expert shall immediately notify by e-mail and/or by phone his/her contact person at the European Commission and the Service Provider (as detailed in the confirmation letter) to explain the situation and make sure that the European Commission is aware of the cancellation of the participation, and confirms receipt of the message. The Expert needs to return any flight tickets or payments received. Further details of the procedure will be provided by the European Commission or the Service Provider should this occur.

7. Transfer of Per Diem and FAA

The Service Provider will transfer Per Diem and FAA payment to the bank account indicated by the Expert within 10 working days after the start of the Event. When an Event lasts more than 10 working days, half of the payment is made within 5 working days of the start of the Event and half of the payment is made within 10 working days after the end 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 on the Expert Attendance Form to ensure that the transfer is executed without delay. The Swift Code and/or the IBAN number shall be indicated as these are mandatory for payments within the EU Member States. Without this information, no payments can be made to the Experts.**

Whenever the payment by the Service Provider is subject to the submission of evidence of costs incurred by the expert or other documentary proof (for instance time-sheets for Work from Home), no claim can be considered if submitted later than 3 months after the conclusion of the pertinent Event/Task.

8. Calculation of Per Diem allowances

The Per Diem allowance is calculated in Euro according to standard rates for each night spent away attending an Event. For a one-day Event with no night spent away, half the Per Diem will be granted.

In principle all hotel bookings (including breakfast) are arranged by the Service Provider. **These costs are automatically deducted from the Per Diem allowance and do not have to be paid by the Expert.**

9. Additional expenses to be paid by the Expert

The costs of private telephone calls, minibar, meals and all other personal expenses and incidentals of the Expert have to be paid with the Per Diem allowance.

10. Local transport expenses

The cost of local transport (e.g. from the airport/train station to the conference venue and back) has to be paid by the Expert from the Per Diem allowance. 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 the original taxi bill.

11. Reimbursement of tickets

If an Expert requires a reimbursement of a ticket s/he bought independently, the original ticket and invoice shall be mailed to the Service Provider no later than 15 days after the return trip. Reimbursements for tickets received after this deadline may be refused.

12. Insurance arrangements

Experts are responsible for their own insurance arrangements for items such as:

- 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.

The 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.

13. Submission of speeches/presentations

A copy of the presentation (PowerPoint format) or speech (MS Word format) from each Expert shall be sent to the European Commission electronically not later than 5 working days before the Event. Experts are strongly encouraged to submit their presentations and speeches within the established deadline, especially when interpretation is required.

All speeches and materials made available by the Expert will be published on the TAIEX website (<http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/taix/>). 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.

By accepting a TAIEX assignment, the Expert gives consent to the publication – electronic or in other forms – of his/her contribution. S/he also acknowledges that his/her personal data are communicated to the authorities of their Member States.

14. Available technical equipment

The technical equipment available at a Workshop includes at least a laptop (for Word and PowerPoint presentations). If Experts require any other material or equipment, they should inform the Service Provider immediately.

15. Events' 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 which would otherwise be paid.

16. Contact details

E-mail is the preferred method of communication: **all communication regarding an Event must include the five-digit Event reference number** located at the top of the Expert Attendance Form.

European Commission
DG Enlargement/ Institution Building Unit (TAIEX)
 Rue de la Loi 170, B-1049 Brussels
 E-mail: Elarg-Taix@ec.europa.eu
 General fax: + 32-2-296 76 94

*Questions regarding the programme, its content, or what is expected of the Expert:
 see confirmation letter.*