

TAIEX - Guide for Participants (Non-Local) in Multi-Beneficiary Workshops

1. Introduction

TAIEX stands for the **Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument** of the European Commission. TAIEX provides short-term, peer-to-peer assistance to central government administrations in eligible beneficiaries/partner 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.

You have been selected as a participant in a TAIEX multi-beneficiary workshop and this guide explains what the European Commission will arrange for you, such as transport and accommodation (according to the rules explained below) and also what is expected from you. Therefore we invite you to read the following carefully to help ensure efficient 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.

Please also note that the European Commission relies on an external service provider for the organisation of the logistical aspects of the event. The service provider will neither finance nor reimburse any arrangements made by the participants themselves unless pre-approved in writing by the European Commission.

Participants are kindly reminded that when on a TAIEX mission, they remain under the responsibility of their administration.

2. Participant Registration

At the latest 4 weeks before the start of the workshop, the European Commission needs to receive the details of all the participants taking part in the event. This information is generally collected by the TAIEX National Contact Point on request, and is then forwarded to the European Commission. Participants should provide the exact spelling of their name as written in the passport they will be travelling on. In addition, the participants are invited to indicate and use your professional email address (as opposed to their private email address, such as Yahoo, Gmail or Hotmail).

3. International travel arrangements

All international travel arrangements are organised or reimbursed by the service provider, according to the information provided by the participants and according to the agenda of the event.

Flight: flight tickets are purchased by the service provider, which will select fares and flight times which offer the best value for money. Departure and return times shall be as close as possible to the event.

The flight selected by the service provider is the only funded option for participants. Participants may not ask for a different flight.

Train: The European Commission will either approve the booking and issuance of tickets for the participants or for the reimbursement of the real cost of the ticket purchased by the participants upon

receipt by the service provider of the original ticket and proof of purchase. Participants may travel in "first class" except on high-speed train services such as TGV, Thalys or Eurostar, where "second class" tickets shall be booked. Premium tickets can only be used if they are not more expensive than "first class" tickets, 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.

4. Accommodation arrangements

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.. This is in most cases the hotel in which the workshop will take place.

The European Commission may offer accommodation to the participants the night before the start of the workshop, and for workshops lasting more than 1 day, the night(s) which fall between the start and the end of the event. No accommodation is in principle offered on the last day of the workshop, unless required by travel arrangements.

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.

Participants who choose to book their own accommodation will not be reimbursed.

5. Visa arrangements

Participants should check before the event whether they will need a visa or not, and if their passport/ID meets the required validity period. Participants are solely responsible for making all the necessary arrangements for obtaining their visa in due time.

If needed to support the visa application, participants 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 participants.

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.

6. Daily Subsistence Allowance (Per Diem)

The European Commission may grant a Per Diem to the participants to cover the possible costs of meals, local travel and sundry expenses at the place of the workshop (see also sections 7 & 8).

All bookings for hotel accommodation, including breakfast are arranged by the service provider. These costs are automatically deducted from the Per Diem and do not have to be paid by the participant. If any additional payments for either accommodation or travel are requested, the participants shall contact the service provider immediately for clarification. Participants who choose to book their own accommodation may receive a Per Diem as if accommodation had been booked for them, (see section 4).

The maximum balance of the Per Diem payable after deduction of accommodation is capped at €80 per night. When meals are offered, the corresponding amount(s) will also be deducted from the Per Diem. Please note, however, that the host institution is not obliged to offer meals.

The Per Diem shall be made available to the participants via money transfer services shortly before departure. Participants will receive a personal code by email a few days before the study visit allowing them to retrieve the Per Diem from a financial institution. Exceptionally, should the transfer not be possible to the place of origin, participants will receive the Per Diem via money transfer services at the place of destination.

The service provider will inform the participants via a confirmation letter, (see section 10), about how, when and where the Per Diem can be retrieved.

7. Additional expenses to be paid by the participants

The costs of telephone calls, minibar, snacks and any other personal expenses are not reimbursed by the European Commission.

8. Local transport expenses

The costs of local transport (e.g. from the place of residence to the airport/train station or from the airport / train station to the venue and back) are not reimbursed by the European Commission.

9. Insurance arrangements

Participants 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.

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

The European Commission and the service provider shall not be liable in respect of sickness, accident or medical expenses incurred by the participants in connection with their assignment. This includes also capital indemnity in case of death or invalidity due to accident or sickness/illness.

10. 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 the practical arrangements).

11. Change of issued flight ticket's dates 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'.

12. Steps to follow if you are not able to attend

Should a participant 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.

Participants will need to return to the service provider any travel tickets or Per Diem received. Further details of the procedure will be provided if this situation arises. Participants should be aware of the fact that it is not possible to be replaced by a colleague once the bookings have been undertaken by the service provider.

13. Event's attendance

Participants are required to stay throughout the entire workshop and should not leave for other purposes. Any unauthorised absences may lead to an adjustment of the Per Diem. Also, participants' home administration and their TAIEX National Contact Point may be informed about their absence.

Signature on the attendance list is required for every day of the event.

14. Evaluation

After the workshop, participants will be requested to provide feedback via an online questionnaire on their satisfaction with the outcome of the event, the presentations of the experts, the logistical aspects and possible further needs for assistance.

15. Reimbursement

If a travel ticket or any other cost is to be reimbursed, this must be agreed in advance with the European Commission, and supporting documents (original tickets and proof of payment) should be provided to the service provider. In such cases, complete bank account details, including the full account name, SWIFT code, IBAN code, and address of the bank should be provided.

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