

EVALUATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION EXTERNAL ACTION

EVALUATION OF THE TAIEX INSTRUMENT IN THE PERIOD 2015-2020

Volume I – Main report

May 2022



**EVIDENCE
MATTERS**



ADE s.a.

Rue de Clairvaux 40, Box 101

1348 Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium)

+32 10 45 45 10

ade@ade.be

www.ade.eu

]

Framework Contract EVA 2020

Contract No EuropeAid/140122/DH/SER/multi

Contract title: Evaluation of the TAEX instrument in the period 2015-2020

Contact information:

European Commission
Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations – DG NEAR
Unit A.4 - Coordination of financing instruments - performance, results and evaluation
Email: near-eval-monitoring@ec.europa.eu
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/monitoring-and-evaluation_en

LEGAL NOTICE

This document has been prepared for the European Commission as part of the evaluations of the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement (NEAR). However, it reflects the views only of the authors, and the European Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this document and is not liable for any consequence stemming from the reuse of this publication. More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://www.europa.eu>).

PDF ISBN [number] ISSN 2529-3338 doi:[number] [Catalogue number]

Manuscript completed in [Month] [Year when the final report was approved]

The European Commission is not liable for any consequence stemming from the reuse of this publication.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2022

© European Union, 2022



The reuse policy of European Commission documents is implemented by the Commission Decision 2011/833/EU of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39). Except otherwise noted, the reuse of this document is authorised under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC-BY 4.0) licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). This means that reuse is allowed provided appropriate credit is given and any changes are indicated.

For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the European Union, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective rightsholders.

Copyright: [cover picture on first page]; [source: Matej Kastelic/Shutterstock.com]

Evaluation of the TAIEX instrument in the period 2015-2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1	Objectives and scope of the evaluation.....	1
1.2	Purpose and structure of the draft final report.....	1
2	KEY CONTEXT ELEMENTS FOR THE EVALUATION.....	2
2.1	TAIEX origins and evolution	2
2.2	TAIEX: types of events.....	2
2.3	Overview of the 2015-2020 event portfolio.....	3
3	METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH.....	7
3.1	Methodological framework.....	7
3.2	Methodological approach.....	7
3.3	Evaluation tools	9
4	ANSWERS TO EVALUATION QUESTIONS.....	11
4.1	EQ1 - The instrument's ability to address needs.....	11
4.2	EQ2 - Did specific interventions address needs?.....	15
4.3	EQ3 – Contribution to and role of capacity development and institutional strengthening.....	19
4.4	EQ 4 – Effectiveness of the TAIEX implementation modalities.....	32
4.5	EQ 5 – Cost-efficiency, cost-effectiveness and administrative burden.....	36
4.6	EQ 6 - Complementarity with other instruments	40
4.7	EQ 7 - EU added value.....	43
5	OVERALL ASSESSMENT, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	45
5.1	Overall assessment.....	45
5.2	Lessons learnt and good practices.....	46
5.3	Conclusions.....	49
5.4	Recommendations	58

List of tables

Table 1:	Evaluation questions.....	9
Table 2:	Evaluation tools	10
Table 3:	TAIEX's contribution to reforms – differences across strands.....	25
Table 4:	Average cost per type event, excluding online events	37
Table 5:	Average cost per strand, excluding online events	37
Table 6:	Degree of urgency and speed of implementation for recommendations	59

List of Figures

Figure 1:	Menu of options for TAIEX events.....	3
Figure 2:	Expenditure split across TAIEX strands.....	4
Figure 3:	Number of events and expenditure.....	4
Figure 4:	Evolution of expenditure split between classic and non-classic TAIEX events, 2015-2020.....	5
Figure 5:	Expenditure by EU Acquis Chapter covered (2015-2020).....	6
Figure 6:	Overview of the phases of the evaluation.....	7
Figure 7:	Reconstructed intervention logic.....	8
Figure 8:	How TAIEX has contributed to institutional capacity building.....	20
Figure 9:	Perceived share of TAIEX events that led to institutional capacity building outcomes (after 6 months evaluation survey, all strands).....	20
Figure 10:	Beneficiary survey responses to the question “Did the TAIEX event(s) you participated in contribute to any of the following concrete results?” (N=322).....	22
Figure 11:	How TAIEX has supported reforms in beneficiary countries.....	23
Figure 12:	Beneficiary survey responses to the question “Did the TAIEX event(s) you participated in contribute to any of the following concrete results?” (N=322).....	24
Figure 13:	Comparison of perceived results of TAIEX Strategic and TAIEX Classic events in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood region, after 6-months evaluation.....	30
Figure 14:	Degree of urgency and speed of implementation for recommendations.....	58

List of Boxes

Box 1:	Some quotes from interviews on the relevance of TAIEX.....	16
Box 2:	The role of EU Delegations in defining a clear focus for events.....	16
Box 3:	Some emerging best practices in preparing experts.....	18
Box 4:	Enabling Armenia’s police to carry out cybercrime investigations and use digital forensics – TAIEX as an instrument for short-term capacity building.....	21
Box 5:	Enabling the National Bank of Moldova to abide by Basel III requirements – TAIEX as an instrument for medium-term capacity building.....	21
Box 6:	Supporting the 2020 Armenia Police Reform – TAIEX as an EU policy planning and gap-assessment tool.....	22
Box 7:	TAIEX’s contribution to the design and implementation of Kosovo’s Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2020.....	24
Box 8:	Promoting EU leadership on space applications in Latin America – TAIEX PI as a tool for strengthening the EU normative power.....	26
Box 9:	Strengthening school inspection management in Azerbaijan – TAIEX as a tool for creating a positive environment for reform.....	27

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AA	Association Agreement
AAR	Annual Activity Report
AGR	Agriculture (policy field of focus of the TAIEX team)
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BTSF	Better Training for Safer Food
CC	Candidate Country
CEPA	Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement
CRDIV	Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR) and Directive
CRR	Capital Requirements Regulation
CSS	Cyprus Settlement Support
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
DG DEFIS	DG for Defence Industry and Space
DG DEVCO	DG for International Cooperation and Development (currently known as DG INTPA)
DG ELARG	Former DG for Enlargement
DG ENV	Directorate-General for the Environment
DG GROW	DG for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship & SMEs
DG HOME	DG for Migration and Home Affairs
DG INTPA	Directorate-General for International Partnerships (formerly known as DG DEVCO)
DG NEAR	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
DG REFORM	Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support
DG REGIO	Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
EC	European Commission
ECRAN	Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network
EDBE	TAIEX Expert Database
EEAS	European External Action Service
EGNSS	European Global Navigation Satellite System
EIR	Environmental Implementation Review
EM	Evaluation Matrix
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
EPPA	Environment Partnership Programme for Accession
EQ	Evaluation Question
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ERP	Economic Reform Programme
ETT	Environment Energy Transportation Telecommunication (policy field of focus of the TAIEX team)
EU	European Union

EUCC	EU Coordination Centre
EUDEL	European Union Delegation
EUWI+	European Union Water Initiative Plus for the Eastern Partnership
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPI	Foreign Policy Instrument
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HR	High Representative
ICITAP	International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program
ICT	Information and communications technology
IL	Intervention logic
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession
IPARD	EU pre-accession assistance for rural development
INT MARKET	Internal Market (policy field of focus of the TAIEX team)
ISG	Interservice Steering Group
JC	Judgment Criterion
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs (policy field of focus of the TAIEX team)
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LCP	Local Contact Point
LTA	Long Term Assistance
MCSP	Multi-Country Strategy Paper
MCP	Main Contact Point
MN	Meeting Note
MTA	Medium Term Assistance
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MS	Member States
NBM	National Bank of Moldova
NCP	National Contact Point
NHRIs	National Human Rights Institutions
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAP	Project Action Plan
PI	Partnership Instrument
PSF	Policy Support Facility
RIPAP	Regional Implementation of Paris Agreement Project
RoW	Rest of the World
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency,
SLA	Service Level Agreement

SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SRSP	Structural Reform Support Programme (followed by the TSI – Technical Support Instrument)
SRSS	Structural Reform Support Service
TA	Technical Assistance
TAC	Tunisia Anti-corruption Project
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument
TCc	Turkish Cypriot community
TMS	TAIEX Management System
ToR	Terms of Reference
TSI	Technical Support Instrument
UK	United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VP	Vice-President
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Objectives and scope of the Evaluation

This is the final report of the “*Evaluation of the TAIEX¹ instrument in the period 2015-2020*”. The evaluation was commissioned by the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) – Coordination of financing instruments – performance, results, and evaluation unit.

The general objective of this evaluation is “to provide an overall independent assessment on the contribution of the TAIEX instrument in the period 2015-2020 to reform processes in partner countries and EU Member States”. The evaluation has a stock-taking, lesson-learning and forward-looking dimension.

The evaluation’s scope covers all support provided under TAIEX during the period 2015 to 2020 in all thematic areas and in all countries.

Background

TAIEX is a capacity-building instrument aimed at supporting public administrations in improving approximation, implementation, and the enforcement of the European Union (EU) *acquis* and sharing of good practices.

TAIEX was set up in 1996 for a two-year period, to support countries that were candidates for EU Accession (CCs) in transposing and implementing EU legislation (*acquis*) specifically related to the internal single market.

Between 2014 and 2020, the geographic scope of TAIEX was progressively extended to EU MS (through Service Level Agreements with DG ENV, DG REGIO, DG REFORM), as well as to countries covered by the EU development policies (DG INTPA) and by the Partnership Instrument (through the FPI). Its implementation structure is in DG NEAR.

This extension was accompanied by a broadening of the thematic coverage. TAIEX activities are now organized along 9 strands, each with a different thematic and/or geographical focus and with a separate budget:

- Three strands for the enlargement and neighbourhood regions: TAIEX IPA, TAIEX ENI South and TAIEX ENI East.
- One strand focusing on the Turkish Cypriot community: TAIEX TCc.
- Three strands for EU Member States: TAIEX-REGIO Peer 2 Peer (P2P), TAIEX SRSP P2P, TAIEX EIR P2P.
- Two strands for countries outside the EU, enlargement, and neighbourhood regions: TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA.

TAIEX mobilizes the expertise and technical know-how within EU MSs to boost capacity development within beneficiary countries, within the framework of existing EU internal, foreign, and multilateral political commitments.

TAIEX services were initially demand-based, in the sense that all requests were to be initiated by the potential beneficiaries. However, in 2016, TAIEX also added the possibility for Commission services to initiate TAIEX support to allow for a stronger focus on EU priorities.

TAIEX is based on peer-to-peer exchanges and takes the form of short-term projects. It supports five types of events: workshops for beneficiary countries, studies for EU Members States, expert missions to beneficiary countries, peer-review assessments, and work from home.

¹ Technical Assistance and Information Exchange

Methodological approach

This theory-based evaluation was conducted in three phases:

- The structuring phase served to define the approach for the entire evaluation. This consisted among other things in mapping the TAIEX support provided, reconstructing the TAIEX intervention logic showing the expected pathway to move from support to expected results and impacts, and refining the evaluation questions proposed in the TOR and identifying the judgment criteria and sources to be used to address them.
- Data collection consisted of the analysis of available documents; of the mapping of the funding; of interviews with stakeholders at strategic and event level; of seven case studies; and of two rounds of surveys, one targeting experts and participants to TAIEX events and one targeting a broad range of stakeholders. The case studies jointly analysed a selection of 105 events. They involved four online focus group discussions.
- The synthesis phase was dedicated to triangulating the information that was collected through all the different means and from the different sources. Based on that triangulation, the team answered the evaluation questions and formulated conclusions and recommendations.

An Interservice Steering Group (ISG) composed of members from different Commission services ensured the management and steering of the evaluation. Intermediary deliverables were provided at key stages of the evaluation process (inception, interim and draft final report) and discussed with the ISG.

Findings and conclusions

On TAIEX's strategy to address beneficiaries' capacity development needs

TAIEX has fulfilled its role by intervening as a gap-filling instrument for capacity development, both in the enlargement context in which it was created and in the other countries and regions to which its support was later broadened. TAIEX support was generally a part of overarching strategies in pre-accession countries and TCc, but less in other strands, where support was more punctuated. It was intended to be one of many tools/instruments in the broader architecture of aid. This was reflected by the financial weight of TAIEX, which represented a marginal percentage of the overall support that was provided. Overall, TAIEX represented € 65M over the period 2015-2020, i.e., about €10M/year.

TAIEX support was successfully expanded to regions and contexts beyond the enlargement region. This was done in a pragmatic and ad hoc manner that worked well, although there was no clear approach towards retrofitting and the overall objectives remained broad.

Stakeholders have generally appreciated TAIEX, but the demand for TAIEX support has decreased over the years and budgets have been underspent. This was linked to the lack of knowledge of the instrument, a lesser implication in the accession context, the strategic choice of recalibration, and, in a different way, the COVID-19 pandemic. The share of budget spent ranged for instance from 17% in TAIEX INTPA to 54% in TAIEX IPA and to 85% in TAIEX ENI EAST.

The TAIEX Recalibration has only partly succeeded in better inscribing TAIEX IPA-ENI support in broader policy frameworks. TAIEX Strategic enabled Commission Services/ EEAS to request events for the pursuit of key EU priorities that would not have been undertaken by the national authorities, and to use TAIEX in support of other EU instruments and programs (e.g., Twinning). However, in a context of scarce resources and prioritisation of TAIEX Strategic over the demand-driven approach, TAIEX Strategic constrained the capacity to serve countries' specific needs and reform objectives.

On the results achieved and their sustainability

TAIEX has proven to be an effective tool for achieving its key objectives of exchanging best practices and short-term individual and institutional capacity building. There were also examples of TAIEX playing a key role in bringing about structural reforms or paving the way for

political change. These occurred when TAIEX support was clearly inscribed in a broader support strategy. Significant variation was observed across strands, and TAIEX was most constrained by its short-term and ad-hoc nature and its limited critical mass. In most strands, TAIEX accounted for less than 1% of the budget beneficiaries received for reforms with only TCc and SRSP accounting for 4.2 and 1.3% respectively.

TAIEX has succeeded in reaching its goal of being an instrument easy to call upon and addressing demands swiftly. However, there was a slowing down of the speed of delivery in recent years. This was due to several factors such as the lack of available expertise that increased the response and implementation times, and an overload of the TAIEX team.

The achievement of results was conditioned by several recurrent factors, most importantly the presence of high-quality experts, the use of TAIEX as part of a more long-term strategy, and the synergistic use of TAIEX with other instruments. Conversely, adverse political contexts and political instability, and occasional implementation issues hampered results. In some contexts, the sustainability of results remained a challenge, notably for reasons of lack of follow-up and frequent staff turnover in beneficiary administrations.

The TAIEX monitoring and evaluation system was well-organised and consisted of several instruments. However, it faced several challenges in its implementation and there was also no clear strategy for learning lessons.

On the TAIEX implementation modalities (including during COVID-19)

TAIEX events were mostly organised with a low administrative burden for the beneficiaries but they required a considerable effort from EU stakeholders. In some cases, the administrative burden has increased in recent years, but it has remained low compared to other instruments. Direct financial costs of TAIEX events showed large variations across type of events and strands and increased over time. Online events were not always less costly than in-person events.

In the context of the COVID-19 Pandemic, TAIEX rapidly shifted to organising online events, with both a positive and a negative impact on the capacity of events to deliver results. As of April 2020, TAIEX launched online events. Not only did this ensure the continuation of services and the use of the instrument to address key pandemic needs, but the online work also brought environmental benefits and increased the speed and flexibility of the involvement of experts and participants. It showed, however, also limitations in terms of reaching results due to, for instance, the loss of informal interactions and technical difficulties with translation.

The location of the TAIEX management in DG NEAR offered clear advantages and was regarded as appropriate by most stakeholders. Indeed, this allowed, for instance, old and new strands to capitalize on the accumulated expertise and know-how, and on the centralised database of experts. The evaluation did not identify specific drawbacks to this centralisation of the TAIEX management.

On the specific and EU value added provided by TAIEX

TAIEX has offered specific added value through its capacity to complement other support, by preparing it, by filling gaps or by compensating for the absence of other instruments and by doing this in a swift and service-oriented manner.

The EDBE was a key source of EU added value for TAIEX, allowing for the quick identification and deployment of MS experts with the most relevant expertise. It was, however, also confronted with several implementation challenges.

Recommendations

The evaluation presents a set of nine recommendations based on the conclusions. They are all addressed to the Commission and are grouped in two clusters.

On the overall strategy of TAIEX

1. Pursue the use of TAIEX with the same features, but frame the TAIEX's strategy in a

written, actualized document. The Commission should continue to use TAIEX as a swift, gap-filling capacity development instrument, integrated where possible in more broader frameworks. It should also draft a specific strategy document describing the range of purposes for which TAIEX should be used. Relevant purposes should be clearly referenced in each SLA. Such document could also guide a potential further expansion of TAIEX.

2. Develop a clear approach with respect to TAIEX Strategic. The Commission should clarify how it intends to combine and balance the use of TAIEX Strategic with TAIEX Classic, particularly in a context in which the capacity in terms of the number of events that can be organized is limited.

3. Adapt the application process to enhance TAIEX's ability to tailor events to any purpose or broader objective they are meant to contribute to, as well as to favour synergies with other instruments. TAIEX is indeed not conceived as a standalone instrument: it is meant to contribute to the achievement of broader purposes, in combination with other interventions. This could be done by adding specific questions to the application format, aiming at favouring such synergies.

4. The Commission should be more strategic and thorough in its communication to promote the use of TAIEX. This should aim at increasing the awareness and uptake, which were below ambitions in several regions. It should also help clarifying the distribution of responsibilities in terms of creating awareness of TAIEX at the local level.

On implementation and the capacity to generate results

5. Make sure TAIEX maintains its capability to be mobilized swiftly. Swiftness is one of the key assets of TAIEX. But over the 2015-2020 period, the time required to organise events has increased. Several elements have played a role in this respect and should be addressed. They relate, for instance, to the maintenance of the expert database, its further development for certain sectors, and constraints of the TAIEX team in terms of number of events it can organise.

6. Integrate online options in the TAIEX approach. The TAIEX team should integrate online events or features within its menu of options, and notably use them also outside crisis situations. It should also provide guidance on the advantages and disadvantages of online events under different circumstances and examine to what extent the requirements for online events are adequate. Online events could be promoted, for instance, when experts and beneficiaries have already established a relationship, when they allow the participation of key beneficiaries or experts that would otherwise not be available, or for specific follow-up.

7. Maintain the TAIEX management centralised and in DG NEAR and continue to serve other Commission services through SLAs. Indeed, such centralisation has proven to work well for several reasons, even outside regions covered by DG NEAR. Stakeholders were in favour of maintaining it.

8. Improve TAIEX's monitoring and reporting practices with a view of fostering better transparency and learning. TAIEX has an impressive data collection system, but no consolidated and well-developed practices to analyse and use it for learning and improvement. The follow up on events could be improved by making sure, for instance, that expert reports are of good quality, that they are sent to the appropriate stakeholders, and that they are made more accessible within EU Institutions. Results of participant and expert evaluations should be systematically analysed and shared within the TAIEX team and with other relevant stakeholders. Key Performance Indicators and statistics should be developed to assess TAIEX's activity and results.

9. Dimension the TAIEX team adequately in function of the levels of activity (i.e., number of events) that is optimal and that it wishes to achieve for each strand. Several elements indicate that the staffing of the TAIEX team dedicated to the IPA-ENI strands was tight, and that this limited the capacity to address all existing demands. This was compounded by the introduction of TAIEX Strategic, as it was not accompanied by increased staffing. The evaluation hence recommends estimating the case handler effort required to organize events, and to make sure that sufficient resources are available given the objectives pursued. Furthermore, the introduction of new TAIEX strands or activities should come with a specification of the human and financial resources required to implement them.

1 INTRODUCTION

This is the final report of the “*Evaluation of the TAIEX instrument in the period 2015-2020*”. The evaluation was commissioned by the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) – Coordination of financing instruments – performance, results and evaluation unit.

1.1 Objectives and scope of the evaluation

The general objective of this evaluation is “to provide an overall independent assessment on the contribution of the TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange) instrument in the period 2015-2020 to reform processes in partner countries and EU Member States”.²

The evaluation has a stock-tacking, lesson-learning and forward-looking dimension.

The results serve as input for:

- Revisions and upgrades of the TAIEX instrument;
- Redefining the expected synergy effects between TAIEX and the EU’s political and reform objectives;
- Programming, monitoring, reporting and implementing the EU financial assistance.

The scope of the evaluation is:

Temporal	Thematic	Geographic
2015 to 2020	all areas	all countries having benefitted from a TAIEX activity
<i>With a primary focus on the 2018-2020 period (introduction of the strategic version of TAIEX).</i>	<i>With emphasis on the rule of law, environment, and internal market.</i>	<i>i.e., almost global</i>

Source: ADE

1.2 Purpose and structure of the draft final report

The purpose of this report is to present the key findings emerging from the evaluation, together with the conclusions and recommendations derived from the analysis.

The main text includes four sections:

- Section 2 presents key contextual elements for the evaluation;
- Section 3 discusses the evaluation background and methodological approach;
- Section 4 answers the evaluation questions;
- Section 5 presents the conclusions and recommendations.

Nine annexes complete the report:

- (1) Terms of reference;
- (2) Detailed analysis of the inventory of events organized through TAIEX in the 2015-2020 period;
- (3) Survey results;
- (4) List of events included in the case studies;
- (5) Case studies;
- (6) Evaluation matrix;
- (7) Findings at judgement criteria level;

² ToR. Refer to Annex 1.

- (8) List of interviews and focus group discussions conducted;
- (9) Bibliography.

2 Key context elements for the evaluation

TAIEX is a capacity-building instrument aimed at supporting public administrations in improving approximation, implementation and the enforcement of the European Union (EU) *acquis* and sharing of good practices.

TAIEX also helps to facilitate the implementation of bilateral agreements between both EU Member States (MS) and Third Countries, both neighbours and other partner countries. It mobilizes the expertise and technical know-how within EU MSs (in the form of EU MS public sector experts) to spur capacity development within beneficiary countries, within the framework of existing EU internal, foreign and multilateral political commitments.

TAIEX services are demand-based (not subject to programming), rely on peer-to-peer exchanges, and take the form of short-term projects. TAIEX aims to provide support that is flexible, tailor-made and swiftly implementable.

Although its current geographical scope is virtually global, TAIEX relies on the implementation structure located in DG NEAR (C3).

2.1 TAIEX origins and evolution

TAIEX was set up in 1996 for a two-year period, to support countries which were candidates for EU Accession (CCs) in transposing and implementing EU legislation (*acquis*) specifically related to the internal single market.

Since then, TAIEX's activity scope has evolved significantly, including the introduction of a new strategic approach in 2016. This extended the possibility to request events from beneficiary public administrations (classic approach) to Commission services (country units, EU Delegations or line DGs) – in order to allow a stronger focus on EU priorities, particularly but not only concerning fundamental and structural reforms.

In parallel, between 2014 and 2020, the geographic scope of TAIEX was progressively extended to EU MS (through Service Level Agreements with DG ENV, DG REGIO, DG REFORM) as well as to countries covered by the EU development policies (DG INTPA) and by the Partnership Instrument (through the FPI).

The extension of TAIEX's geographic scope was accompanied by an extension of the thematic coverage. Currently, TAIEX activities are organized along 9 strands, each reflecting a different thematic/geographical focus and having a separate budget:

- Three strands for the enlargement and neighbourhood regions: TAIEX IPA, TAIEX ENI South and TAIEX ENI East.
- One strand focusing on the Turkish Cypriot community: TAIEX TCc.
- Three strands for EU Member States: TAIEX REGIO Peer 2 Peer (P2P), TAIEX SRSP P2P, TAIEX EIR P2P.
- Two strands for countries outside the EU, enlargement and neighbourhood regions (also referred in the document as Rest of the World): TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA.

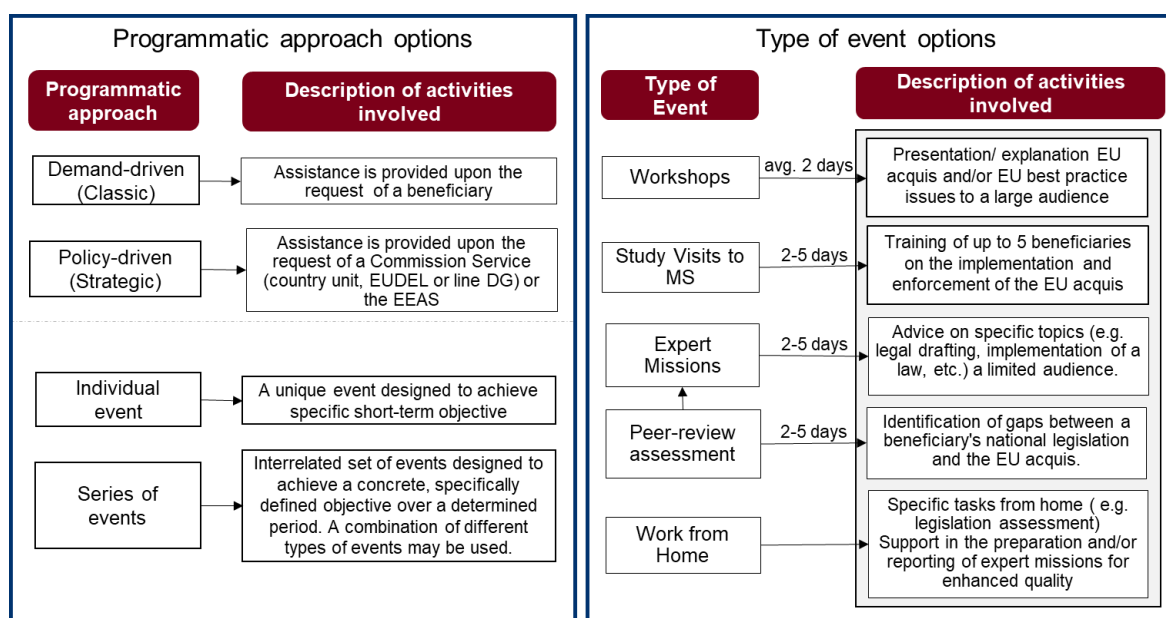
2.2 TAIEX: types of events

TAIEX's assistance activities (also referred to as TAIEX events) can take five forms. All activities are short term. In 2020, TAIEX introduced online events, as part of the COVID-19 continuity scheme.

- Workshops to beneficiary countries:** MS Experts present and explain the EU *acquis* and EU best practice issues to a large audience (selected by the beneficiary country) from the same country or from several countries (regional and multi-country workshops), regarding issues of common interest. The average duration is two days.

- b. **Study visits to EU Member States:** A maximum of three to five officials from the beneficiary countries are sent for 2 to 5-day working visits to EU MS institutions and administrations to learn how to deal with practical issues related to the implementation and enforcement of the EU acquis.
- c. **Expert missions to beneficiary countries:** One or more EU MS experts are sent to provide guidance on legislative projects and on the administrative processes, to advise on legislative acts and on their implementation, to explain the EU acquis, and to present EU best practice examples. Expert missions are addressed to a limited audience and last between 2 to 5 days.
- d. **Peer-review assessment (screening events):** This is a special type of expert mission used to assess gaps between a beneficiary's national legislation and the EU *acquis*. This tool allows for a more in-depth analysis and is based on specific terms of reference. The expert or the team of experts is usually accompanied by representatives of the European Commission (country unit and line DGs). Customarily, an informal debriefing is organised and the findings of the peer reviews are shared with the beneficiaries and in some cases with Member States.
- e. **Work from home:** EU MS experts carry out a specific task or a set of tasks, such as reviewing a piece of legislation, from home. Work from home events can also be organised to support the preparation and/or reporting of peer-review assessments to enhance quality.

Figure 1: Menu of options for TAIEX events



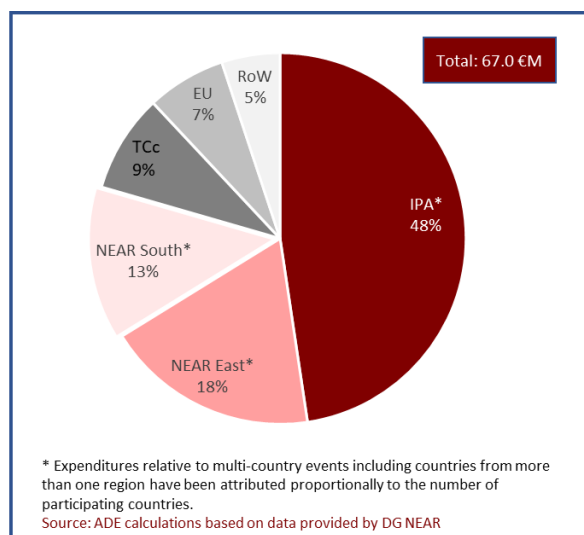
Source: ADE based on strategic documentation on the TAIEX instrument, SLAs, and the TOR

2.3 Overview of the 2015-2020 event portfolio

This section lists the highlights of the event portfolio. A more detailed mapping is presented in Annex 3.

A total of 6,712 events were organized by TAIEX in the 2015-2020 period, corresponding to an expenditure of EUR 67 million. The NEAR region and in particular the Western Balkans and Turkey were the main beneficiaries of TAIEX (though its importance progressively decreased over time).

Figure 2: Expenditure split across TAIEX strands

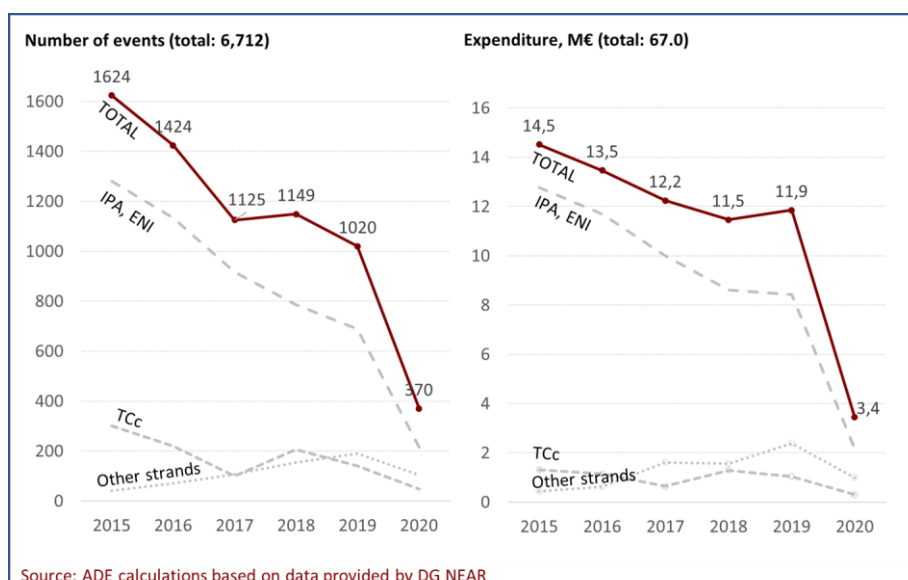


The TAIEX budget was only small compared to the larger policy and funding instruments it is meant to support. It was below one percent for most strands, around one percent for the SRSP, and four percent for the aid programme to the TCC.

There was a decrease in the number of events organized in the 2015-2019 period (annual average: -11%) for the NEAR region and for TCC. The growth trends in other strands were either positive or unclear. In 2020, the number of events sharply dropped because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impossibility to organize in-person events.

The decrease in the number of events closely mirrored the decrease in the demand for the instrument, which dropped from 1,868 applications in 2015 to 1,094 in 2019 (average annual decrease: -12.5%), and 492 in 2020.³ Consequently, only 62% of the budget for the August 2016-July 2020⁴ was spent.

Figure 3: Number of events and expenditure



³ Application approval rates also somewhat declined in the period, though the trend is much less significant. The application acceptance rate for the period was 74.7%.

⁴ Note: Although budget data was provided for the August 2016-July 2020 period for all strands, TAIEX implementation started later than August 2016 for TAIEX SRSP, TAIEX EIR and TAIEX INTPA; in the last case, only in 2020.

There was also a progressive decrease in the use of the classic TAIEX approach – beneficiary-demand based and non-programmatic – to about half of TAIEX events. Instead, more strategic approaches prevailed, including:

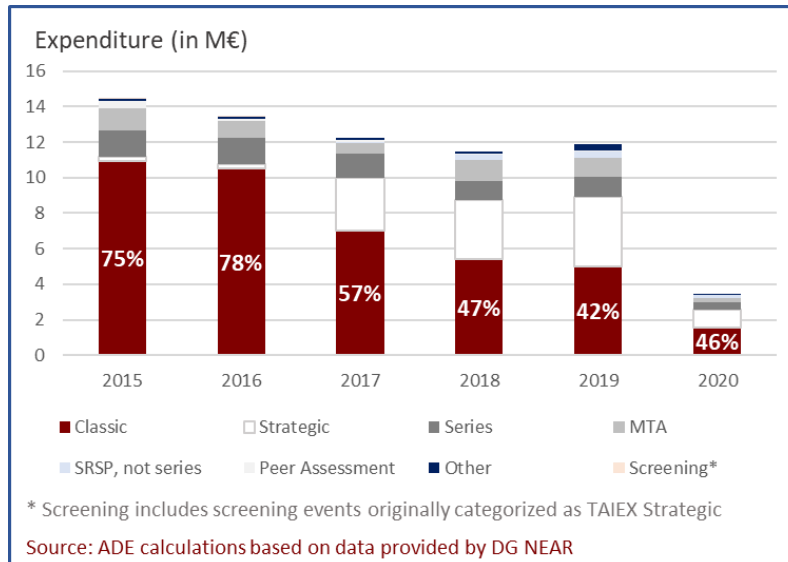
- The use of series of events planned jointly and with a common objective, spread across a length of time;
- The MTA⁵ approach used in the TCc, TAIEX events based on 3-year strategic plans;
- The TAIEX SRSP approach, part of medium-term reform plans requested by each MS and agreed upon by the Commission;
- The TAIEX strategic approach, which was launched in 2016 and which allows the Commission services to request TAIEX events.

Thematically, TAIEX events tended to focus on a limited number of chapters of the acquis. Three chapters – chapter 24 (Justice, freedom and security), chapter 27 (Environment) and chapter 12 (Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy) – jointly accounted for 41% of TAIEX's expenditure in the 2015-2020 period.

In addition, a significant number of events were not focused on the approximation or improved application/enforcement of EU legislation, as was the case in the original version of TAIEX. With the expansion of TAIEX beyond Western Balkan countries and Turkey, a broader range of objectives are pursued. These are, however, still centred on sharing and promoting EU practices, rules, norms and standards.

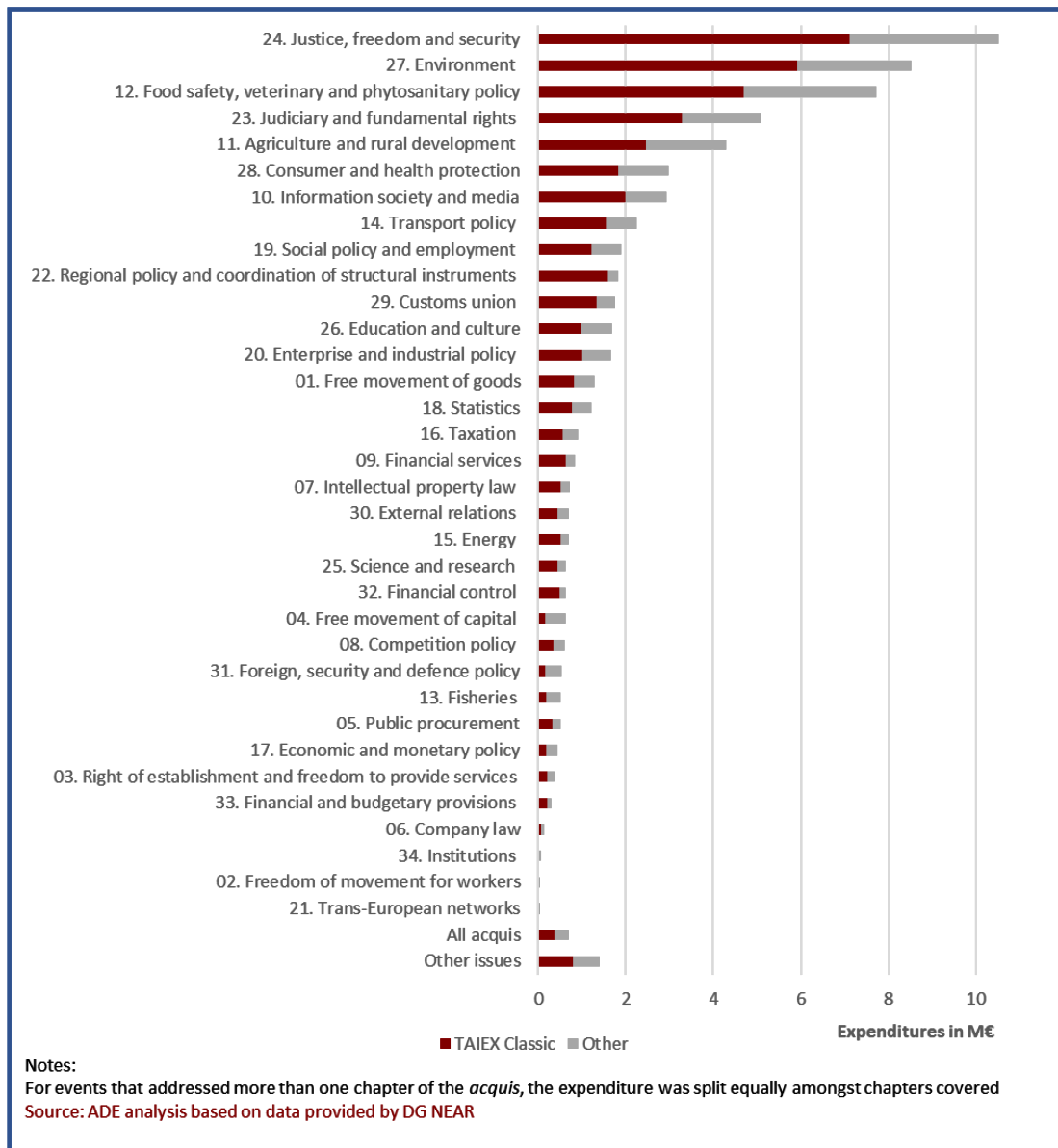
TAIEX REGIO and TAIEX EIR almost exclusively covered one specific chapter, respectively, chapter 22 – Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments, and chapter 27 – Environment.

Figure 4: Evolution of expenditure split between classic and non-classic TAIEX events, 2015-2020



⁵ Medium Term Agreement.

Figure 5: Expenditure by EU Acquis Chapter covered (2015-2020)



3 Methodological approach

3.1 Methodological framework

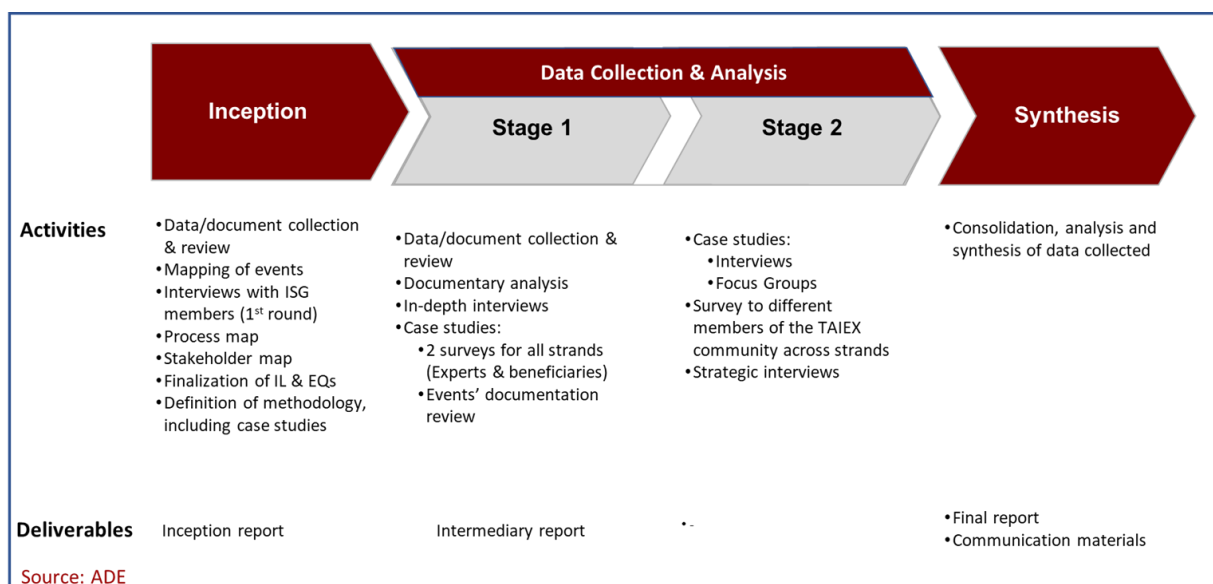
The evaluation uses a theory-based approach with an intervention logic (IL, Figure 7). The IL presents, through a results chain, the succession of elements from inputs to outputs, outcomes and impacts, and the major assumptions behind the links between levels.

The IL did not exist and has been reconstructed *ex-post*. It was developed by analysing key strategic documentation capturing the evolution of the instrument over the years, and using different SLA agreements. The evaluation team did base the IL on the one provided in the ToR but sought (1) to put a stronger emphasis on the common processes that apply to all TAIEX strands and (2) to provide a simpler version that better grasps the essence of TAIEX.

3.2 Methodological approach

The evaluation involved four phases as described in the terms of reference (Annex 1) and in Figure 6, which details the main activities and deliverables.

Figure 6: Overview of the phases of the evaluation



To better focus the evaluation, seven evaluation questions (EQs) have been formulated, covering a set of criteria that is in line with the Better Evaluation guidelines.

Table 1: Evaluation questions

EQ#	Theme	EQ
EQ1	The instrument's ability to address needs	To what extent were the key features of TAIEX as an instrument in line with the needs of beneficiary regions/countries and EU policy priorities in which it intervened? To what extent did those features evolve to enhance TAIEX's capacity to address needs, including by introducing TAIEX strategic and by expanding TAIEX to other regions and contexts of intervention?
EQ2	Did specific interventions address needs?	To what extent were TAIEX events in line with and adapted to specific country, sector, and EU needs? How did the TAIEX support made sure this was the case and what factors played a role in this perspective?
EQ3	Contribution to and role of capacity development and institutional strengthening	To what extent did TAIEX contribute to individual and institutional capacity development and strengthening of institutions in the medium to long run? What role did such strengthening play in bringing about structural reforms and advancing the EU interest, in different contexts and circumstances? To what extent was the introduction of TAIEX strategic in 2016 beneficial in this regard?
EQ4	Effectiveness of the TAIEX implementation modalities	To what extent was TAIEX support flexible, service-oriented and swift, as well as demand-driven and policy-oriented, and what factors enhanced or hampered such approach?
EQ5	Cost Efficiency/effectiveness and administrative burden	To what extent were TAIEX events cost-efficient and cost-effective and implemented with limited administrative burden?
EQ6	Complementarity with other instruments	To what extent did TAIEX complement other instruments pursuing similar goals, and to what extent were there duplications and synergies?
EQ7	Working with peers and EU internal cooperation	To what extent did working with peers offer specific (EU) added value and to what extent has TAIEX built on the potential benefits of the EU internal cooperation?

3.3 Evaluation tools

A range of tools and techniques have been used for data collection and analysis (see Table 2 below). Combining these tools and triangulating the data ensures the validity of the findings and the credibility of the analysis, as well as the wider applicability of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Table 2: Evaluation tools

Evaluation tool
<p>Strategic document recollection and review: These include but are not limited to TAIEX annual and multi-annual implementation reports, service-level agreements (SLAs), Commission decisions and communications, and organigrams of the TAIEX unit. The list of documents consulted is presented in the bibliography (Annex 9).</p>
<p>Inventory analysis & typology: Collection and analysis of the information available on the TMS at event level (6,713 entries). The detailed inventory is presented in Annex 3.</p>
<p>Surveys: Two rounds of surveys were conducted. The first round targeted experts and participants who took part in events reviewed in-depth as part of case studies. The second round of surveys was carried out during the second stage of the data collection and analysis phase and targeted a varied range of stakeholders. The approach and results of the surveys are described in Annex 4.</p>
<p>Case study analysis: Seven case studies were defined, each covering a different region. 105 events were identified and reviewed in depth as part of the case studies, including request forms, agenda, approval forms, authorization forms, order forms and reports. The case studies also involved using focus groups. Annex 5 details the case studies.</p>
<p>Strategic interviews & interviews at the level of case studies: Interviews were conducted with the broadest set of stakeholders; including event beneficiaries, experts, NCPs, personnel in EU Delegations, EU officers in line DGs and units, TAIEX unit team leaders and case-handlers, and strategic officers in DG NEAR. The interviewees are listed in Annex 8.</p>
<p>Focus group discussions: the evaluation team organized a series of four online focus group discussions with (i) TAIEX experts who had taken part in events across multiple strands – with a focus on TAIEX IPA-ENI, TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA, (ii) TAIEX experts that had participated in TAIEX TCc events, (iii) TAIEX NCPs and CPs within EU Delegations in the Eastern Neighbourhood, and members of the EUCC of the TCc. Each discussion lasted for two hours and had between 6 and 11 participants. They were structured around a set of themes communicated beforehand, but also left space to address other issues. The Mentimeter tool was used to stimulate and support the discussion, except in one group. In two of the focus groups, breakout rooms were used to ensure that all participants had the opportunity to provide their input. Each discussion was moderated by two members of the evaluation team, while other members of the evaluation team also participated.</p>

Source: ADE

4 Answers to evaluation questions

4.1 EQ1 - The instrument's ability to address needs

To what extent were the key features of TAIEX in line with the needs of beneficiary regions/countries in which it intervened, and EU policy priorities? To what extent did these features evolve to enhance TAIEX's capacity to address needs?

Summary response:

All stakeholders (including beneficiaries and EU officers) appreciated the instrument. They described it as very valid and at times even as the only viable alternative to address needs.

Throughout the geographic and thematic contexts in which it was used, TAIEX's features enabled it to provide relevant support towards needs that were know how/ knowledge based and limited in scope. This concerned specifically needs that could be best addressed through the exchange of knowledge amongst public sector practitioners and/or required swift action.

Despite the significant geographic and thematic scope expansion of TAIEX since 2005, its design has remained mostly unchanged. Procedures, systems specifics, features and restrictions remained essentially as originally conceived, when TAIEX was exclusively aimed at addressing emerging needs in the transposition of the *acquis* to support accession of candidate countries to the EU.

Over the 2015-2020 period, the demand and use of TAIEX significantly diminished in the IPA-ENI regions and the TCc. This was due to context circumstances that lowered the relevance of transposition needs: slower progress in the accession agenda and lower perceived prospects of a prompt solution for the "Cyprus issue"; increasing availability of alternative support instruments within those regions; and an effort from DG NEAR to use TAIEX's (limited) resources in a more focused and strategic/policy-driven fashion.

In 2019, TAIEX ENI East also began to pre-negotiate, year-on-year, the number of events to be supported in each country and sector.

The catalogue of events was generally perceived as sufficient and complete. Nonetheless, several stakeholders suggested revising the limitations on participation to study visits. Another suggestion concerned leveraging virtual features to introduce even more flexible and quicker event/support options. Also, there seemed to be relatively limited awareness about the available option for EU officers to request TAIEX directly under TAIEX IPA and TAIEX ENI South regions.

Stakeholders across all strands and categories appreciated TAIEX and considered it relevant.⁶ They assessed two of its features, part of the design of TAIEX since its launch in 1996, as unique (or almost unique) and essential for its relevance:

1. The straightforward provision of access to peer (public sector) expertise within MS. In this regard, TAIEX is a unique platform, as it has helped to develop (1) significant know-how and infrastructure – including the EDDB (TAIEX's expert database); (2) a network of support contacts within MS and NEAR local governments; and (3) long-standing arrangements with MS for the participation of public sector officers in events.

⁶ In the survey among TAIEX events participants, 88% of respondents agreed that the needs targeted by TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through other EU tools, with the following percentages agreeing that TAIEX performed better than other options: 97% - tailoring events to specific needs; 93% - rapid organization of events; 97%: benefitting from peer-to-peer experience and advice; and 97% - meaningful involvement of beneficiary institutions (percentages do not consider respondents that did not express an opinion.) The interviews validated these findings across different categories of stakeholders.

2. The flexibility in budget and organization, coupled with flexibility in terms of content. TAIEX's budget is not specifically assigned to topics or geographies. This allowed its use in a wide range of situations as well as its prompt deployment to address emerging needs.

Two other features that were appreciated, were:

1. TAIEX was not conceived as a standalone instrument, but rather as a complement to more articulated and longer-term support programs (i.e., the Phare accession programs).
2. TAIEX was **designed to be primarily beneficiary-demand based**, since the impulse for transposition of the *acquis* necessarily needed to come from beneficiary governments.

Until 2006, the instrument's objective was to support candidate accession countries, to strengthen their knowledge and know-how related to the transposition of the EU *acquis*.

This was documented in the 1995 White Paper "Preparation of the Associated Countries of Central and Eastern Europe for integration into the Internal Market of the Union".⁷

The subsequent extension of TAIEX's scope – geographically as well as thematically – was mainly driven by considerations as to how the instrument, given its signature features and infrastructure, could be leveraged to better address wider needs and objectives.

Accordingly, TAIEX was used for the following objectives in the 2015-2020 period⁸:

- To address (1) knowledge gaps in the transposition of the EU *acquis* (original objective), (2) structural reform efforts endorsed by the EU Commission, (3) the alignment to EU standards;
- To share or collaboratively develop new approaches and best practices at the practitioner level – most notably in new fields (e.g., cybersecurity, environment protection) and amongst MS;
- To support the EU in (1) influencing policy development in Partner Countries, (2) positioning itself as a valuable partner to Partner Countries in specific topics, (3) assessing the situation of Partner Countries on a specific topic and the need for future collaborations.

Overall, the instrument proved to be effective in addressing needs in all the contexts and strands in which it was used.⁹ The relevance of individual features, however, changed depending on the specific context and objective. The possibility of events being requested by EU officers was most valued within TAIEX PI (in consideration of the service's mission being focused on promoting the EU interest) and by TAIEX SRSP and TAIEX TCc (where single events were set within the framework of larger programs, agreed with beneficiaries – but individual applications were coordinated by EU officers). Programmatic approaches were systematically used by TAIEX TCc and with high frequency by TAIEX SRSP, but also increasingly by all other strands. In some contexts, TAIEX addressed the needs for which no other instrument was available.

In 2016, a **recalibration within DG NEAR strands aimed at better focusing the use of TAIEX for supporting EU priorities and related actions.** The goal was to encourage more frequent uses of programmatic approaches and to include the possibility for EU Commission services to request TAIEX events.¹⁰

A similar effort took place in TAIEX TCc during the transition from the 2017-2019 to the 2020-2022 MTAs. The use of TAIEX was refocused on a shorter list of topics, following the priorities of the wider Aid Programme to the TCc and favouring those sectors in which the EU expected advances in the acceptance and implementation of laws. In addition, the coordination within TAIEX and other forms of assistance was strengthened through a reorganization of the Cyprus Settlement Support (CSS) unit of DG REFORM, where officers now cover multiple instruments across the same

⁷ In fact, the original scope of the instrument was limited to the sections of the *acquis* concerning the EU's internal market. However, by 1998 the scope had been extended to cover the entire *acquis*.

⁸ Based on interviews and the review of documents associated with specific events.

⁹ As expressed in survey results, interviews, SLA final reports, EU Commission decisions and past evaluations.

¹⁰ I.e., to use TAIEX in a policy-driving instrument.

sector, rather than the opposite.¹¹ Such efforts led to the instrument having a higher relevance for the EU priorities, but not necessarily for the needs of the beneficiary.¹²

However, **there was no systematic analysis into what type of needs TAIEX could address in the new strands**, where it would operate in another context than the one of its original mission to support transposition of the *acquis*. It was also not assessed whether this would imply changes in the instruments design to make it better tailored to the new contexts of intervention.

The 2015-2020 period saw a progressive reduction in the demand for the instrument in the NEAR regions and the TCc.¹³ This followed both a context-driven reduction in needs and an effort of the EU Commission to re-focus TAIEX resources on a more specific set of priorities.¹⁴ The result was a reduced demand for non-priority topics, not because of lower needs of the beneficiaries, but due to the understanding that applications in such topics would not be approved.

The *acquis* transposition efforts remained important in both the Accession region and the TCc. However, they lost relevance for both IPA, with the slow-down of the accession agenda, and the TCc, where political circumstances made a timely solution to the Cyprus issue appear less likely. Also, the expanding range of support instruments offered by the European Commission somewhat reduced the scope for TAIEX.

Since the end of 2019, within the Eastern Neighbourhood¹⁵, TAIEX also started to request beneficiary countries to plan, year-on-year, the number of events to be supported in each sector. Although the list of programmed events was not meant to be exclusive, it was given priority or was locally perceived as getting priority. **This was considered a negative evolution by some NCPs and EU Delegations. In their views it reduced the instruments' capacity to respond timely to emerging needs, and increased the administrative burden.**

In conclusion, the catalogue of activities and features offered by TAIEX addressed the needs well, but there is also a case for a review:

- The catalogue reflects the original justification in the 2000 Commission decision;
- The stakeholders interviewed and surveyed expressed their satisfaction with the catalogue¹⁶. They also underlined that each type of event had a slightly different added value: workshops, to raise awareness and explore topics, and possibly prepare the ground for future work; expert missions, for in-depth policy or implementation work; and study visits, to get a better understanding of how policy design and implementation can work in practice. In fact, study visits were usually used and perceived as most useful after significant work had already been covered, i.e. through workshops and expert missions.¹⁷

¹¹ Final assessment of TAIEX support for the Turkish Cypriot community under the Medium-Term Assistance 2017-2019 (Note to the file); interviews (MN158, MN 750); Evaluation of the Aid Programme to the Turkish Cypriot community (2013-2018). Such efforts were internal to DG REFORM and did not affect TAIEX TCc processes operated by DG NEAR.

¹² Within the IPA-ENI region, beneficiaries expressed interest in continuing to receive TAIEX support also in areas outside current priorities. Within TAIEX TCc, where recalibration was loosely tied to progress in the introduction of legal texts, beneficiaries and experts pointed out that TAIEX also benefitted in areas where conditions for legal or regulatory reform did not immediately exist, particularly by supporting knowledge development and the introduction of new practices.

¹³ Trends in other strands – newer and smaller – are less clear.

¹⁴ Within TAIEX TCc, the focus was restricted on areas in which conditions for the efficient use of the instrument could be ensured on the beneficiary side; particularly, in terms of availability of local human resources, coordination by the EUCC and commitment and ownership of the beneficiaries. While 35 sectors and sub-sectors were covered in the 2017-2019 MTA, the current MTA only covers 30 sectors and sub-sectors; for 9 of which assistance is furthermore suspended until identified obstacles to poor performance are removed. (Source: interviews and note to the file: Final assessment of TAIEX support for the Turkish Cypriot community under the Medium-Term Assistance 2017-2019). For TAIEX in the NEAR strands, more information is provided in the section on TAIEX recalibration above.

¹⁵ This does not appear to have been implemented in the other NEAR regions.

¹⁶ Within the survey, 98% of participants stated that the type of event organized was appropriate to address needs, and 95% that the single or multiple events options offered were adequate to address needs. They also confirmed their satisfaction with the catalogue in interviews.

¹⁷ These findings are also coherent with those included in the 2015 Evaluation of the TAIEX instrument.

- **A recurring critique was made regarding study visits, notably the limit on the number of participants** (3 or 5, depending on the strand). This was seen as constraining and limiting capacity to deliver results, as not all beneficiaries could benefit from participating.¹⁸
- Some stakeholders pointed to a limited awareness of the option of TAIEX IPA-ENI events to be requested by EU officers within the IPA and ENI South delegations. However, the officers surveyed and interviewed expressed their preference to leave the initiative of requesting events to beneficiaries, except when multiple beneficiaries are involved (i.e. in multi-country or multi-sector events).
- Some further suggestions concerned leveraging the internet to expand the range of possible events to shorter-notice, more flexible options (i.e., one-session virtual events, chat or email-based expertise support).

¹⁸ The problem was seen as compounded by the fact that high ranking officials from beneficiary countries often participated in study visits. This was not necessarily seen as negative, as their support was often critical for broader event outcomes, and their participation in study visits could be a means towards achieving those outcomes. However, this sometimes prevented relevant technical-level beneficiaries to participate given the limit on the number of participants allowed.

4.2 EQ2 - Did specific interventions address needs?

To what extent were TAIEX events in line with and adapted to specific country, sector, and EU needs? How did the TAIEX make sure this was the case and what factors played a role in this perspective?

Summary response:

The stakeholders testified that TAIEX events addressed the needs of the beneficiaries, while at the same time remaining in line with the EU priorities.

This was favoured by:

- (1) TAIEX's **application and event design**;
- (2) In some strands, particularly TAIEX SRSP and TAIEX TCc, events were **closely and systematically framed within broader reform programs**;
- (3) The **TAIEX recalibration process** ensured that events most closely aligned with EU priorities were prioritized (within TAIEX IPA-ENI).

However, some factors also limited TAIEX's capacity to address needs. In particular:

- (1) **Lack of awareness of TAIEX among potential beneficiaries** (as well as, to a lesser extent, among EU officers) within strands, geographies and time;
- (2) The recent introduction within IPA-ENI of **planning processes that include setting an indicative number of events for each country/sector**. In view of some beneficiaries, this reduced the instrument's capacity to address locally perceived needs and to be used to swiftly address emerging issues;
- (3) Constraints in the TAIEX team's event organization capacity due to departing or missing staff.

Amongst the factors that affected the capacity of individual events to address needs, the following were highlighted:

- (1) The commitment from beneficiaries (as well as commitment from key EU stakeholders);
- (2) The clarity of the focus of the events;
- (3) The timeliness of the organization;
- (4) The experience of the TAIEX case handler;
- (5) The restrictions to in-person organization;
- (6) The quality of language interpreters;
- (7) The preparation of the experts.

Overall, the individual TAIEX events addressed the needs of the beneficiaries, while at the same time remaining in line with EU priorities. In individual cases only, there was further potential to adapt to the specificities of beneficiary countries and institutions.¹⁹ This was attested by 98% of survey respondents from the participants' survey who stated that the information discussed during events was relevant to beneficiary needs. Moreover, 91% of respondents agreed that the design of individual TAIEX events was sufficiently tailored to the specificities of beneficiary countries and institutions. All beneficiaries who were interviewed confirmed that events were in line with, and meaningfully addressed, existing needs.

¹⁹ On a few occasions, beneficiaries commented on experts being selected from realities too different from their own to bring an applicable perspective; as well as (in the TCc) on the need to better tailor events' objectives to the capacity of the beneficiaries and to shift some emphasis from transposition of legal texts to training and promotion of changes in practices (both considered areas where TAIEX can have significant impact).

Box 1: Some quotes from interviews on the relevance of TAIEX

“TAIEX provided us with the necessary knowledge and competences to operationalise the new supervisory approach.” – Beneficiary, TAIEX ENI EAST

“In the context of a large reform, putting in perspective what has been done elsewhere is necessary to sustain the changes that are taking place.” – Beneficiary, TAIEX SRSP

“The event was the tool [for the EU] to be considered a partner.” – PI officer

“The topics were relevant. There was a lot to learn, they were quite useful.” – Beneficiary, TAIEX PI

“Without people from outside telling us we had a problem, it would have taken years to figure it out. TAIEX immediately led to more awareness in the country of the issue.” – Beneficiary, TAIEX IPA

“We had trainings in reporting on air pollution – these were directly related to the implementation and very useful.” – Beneficiary, TAIEX TCc

The TAIEX application process and the support given by the TAIEX team in designing events were well perceived. They were suited to formulate well-conceived and country-owned TAIEX activities that addressed needs and were in line with EU interests and actions. In particular:

- The application process ensured that potential stakeholders within the EU were involved or informed about TAIEX events. They could then provide suggestions through consultations during the application review process, and, in the case of EU Delegation staff, often also before the submission of applications.
- Support from EU Delegations and other EU officers, and the know-how of the assigned project officer and the TAIEX team led to solid agendas, including the selection of experts. See below for more details and a concrete example.
- In some cases, EU personnel from headquarters or EU Delegations briefed experts prior to the events on the specific EU interests to be pursued.²⁰
- In the case of DG REFORM’s strands (TAIEX TCc and TAIEX SRSP), beneficiary needs and EU action were also aligned by the events being tightly framed within well-defined and EU-coordinated reform efforts. In the case of TAIEX TCc, the application process was adapted, limiting the role of the TAIEX team to verifying compliance with the SLA and to the organization and supervision of logistics, while the content supervision was subsumed by DG REFORM.

Box 2: The role of EU Delegations in defining a clear focus for events.The role of EU Delegations in defining a clear focus for events

For the application for one of the first TAIEX INTPA events, it required considerable effort by both the beneficiary and the EU Delegation to define the specific focus. This included coaching by the EU Delegation, and rework from the beneficiary. Both parties agreed that the effort paid off in terms of a successful event, and of the competences acquired by the beneficiary.

“The process is well thought out. [...] At the beginning, we focused on describing the process, but did not see the ultimate goal of what we wanted. There were also problems in describing how we wanted to achieve the goal. [...] The EU Delegation supported us and helped to correctly formulate our goal, describe the details of the project. All these efforts paid off in the process of the direct implementation of the project. Thus, competent planning and meticulous preparatory work guaranteed the success of the project. There were no problems in the implementation of the planned activities.” – Beneficiary representative

²⁰ MN504, MN743, MN746.

The TAIEX Recalibration (2016-2018) led to a closer alignment between the use of TAIEX resources and EU priorities. However, it also limited the capacity to address the needs of beneficiaries in other areas. As TAIEX IPA-ENI resources were focused on EU priorities, applications with another focus were either not submitted or rejected.²¹

Addressing needs was also constrained by the fact that the awareness of TAIEX amongst potential beneficiaries varied.²²

NCPs underlined that beneficiary awareness of the instrument required constant awareness-raising. This was even more the case in countries with a high rotation of public servants. However, headquarter-supported marketing efforts in the IPA-ENI region slowed down after 2018,²³ allegedly in association with internal reorganizations of workload connected with the recalibration. The marketing efforts were further constrained by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was further noted that the visibility of TAIEX among EUDEL staff was also low, with consequences for the take-up of the instrument, in particular TAIEX Strategic. Especially EU Delegation staff from the region of Western Balkans and Turkey and the South Neighbourhood often did not seem to know about the option of requesting TAIEX Strategic, despite their clear interest in requesting events. Additionally, TAIEX did not appear to be (yet) well-known amongst EU Delegation officers in INTPA countries, although DG INTPA, the FPI and the TAIEX team had made efforts in this respect.²⁴

Another constraint was a process introduced by TAIEX ENI East²⁵ in 2019, defining a yearly indicative budget in terms of number of events by country/topic, requiring countries to present an annual plan of events to be organized in advance. This procedure was meant to be indicative and was put in place to ensure better alignment of events with EU priorities and to better organize event organization capacity particularly in terms of human resources. However, there is evidence that beneficiaries and other on-site stakeholders perceive the planning as more rigid than it was intended to be.²⁶ In fact, both beneficiaries and EU officers underlined that the planning requirement created an additional administrative burden. They also explained that it limited the possibility to tailor events (or series of events) to specific emerging needs, which appeared difficult to reconcile with the instrument's emerging gap-filling philosophy. However, given that this procedure was introduced immediately prior to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemics, which significantly disrupted TAIEX activities, it is difficult to assess its impact within the scope of this study other than anecdotally.²⁷

Interviews indicated that the **staffing of the TAIEX team dedicated to the IPA-ENI strands was tight.**²⁸ This may have resulted in an excessive emphasis on the efforts described above to focus on priority areas and on improving efficiency through planning.

The capacity of TAIEX events to target needs was reported to be affected by a number of factors:

- **The involvement and commitment** of the beneficiaries and EU actors throughout the application/design phase;

²¹ In interviews, beneficiary explained that they would still be interested in receiving TAIEX support in topics different than those identified as priority.

²² Based on the results of the survey to NCPs and contact points within EU Delegations, and to interviews with these last and beneficiaries.

²³ Based on interviews with the TAIEX team and EU Delegation representatives.

²⁴ The issue can be at least in part attributed to TAIEX INTPA being still in a pilot phase and having - for the timeframe observed - a limited budget. It is worth noting that for EU Delegation officers the possibility to request TAIEX PI events existed previously. This was somewhat limited in budget (the target was 35 events per year throughout all Partner Countries) and scope (support to advance EU priorities). Many interviewees indicated that awareness of TAIEX among EU Delegation personnel other than PI officers and based in non-NEAR Partner Countries was limited, at least until the introduction of TAIEX INTPA.

²⁵ According to the information recollected, this was not extended to IPA or ENI South.

²⁶ Based on interviews (particularly, MN955) and focus groups with local stakeholders.

²⁷ Interviewees signaled one case in which beneficiaries decided to ultimately not ask for support, as they deemed it would have required several events above the quota that had been assigned; and another in which an EU Delegation requested an event on behalf a beneficiary using the TAIEX strategic modality to allow it to happen even if above quota.

²⁸ Based on interviews, TMS data (number of events, number of rejected applications) and analysis of organigrams.

- The presence of a clear focus and realistic objectives for the event, also considering the beneficiaries' capacities;
- **A timely organization**, with delays often leading to topics losing relevance, the inability to address crises, or missing the political momentum for change.²⁹
- A more experienced **TAIEX case handler allowed** to better understand the beneficiary needs and to faster identify experts. Conversely, rotations and prolonged vacancies of specialized case project officers led to delays and a lower quality of events, as well as diminishing demand.
- **The difficulty or impossibility in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic to organize events in person.** Online events were generally seen as suboptimal to support interactive conversations and informal interactions. Also, they posed difficulties for beneficiaries and experts to understand contexts and were often negatively affected by IT-related challenges.
- The **quality of translation**, where necessary, using interpreters familiar with the topic and with an appropriate knowledge of technical language was considered a strong advantage.³⁰
- The profile and preparation of participating experts, whose topic expertise was generally lauded and whose commitment was key to come to benefits and solutions. Experts with previous experience in similar contexts were deemed an asset, and experts from countries that most recently became EU MS were often particularly appreciated in events aimed at transposition of the acquis. TAIEX support was generally evaluated positively; 95% of experts surveyed reported having received adequate preparation and 94% agreed that this was done sufficiently in advance. Conversely, some experts interviewed expressed that the support was at times inconsistent.³¹

Box 3: Some emerging best practices in preparing experts

TAIEX TCc experts that were interviewed generally felt well prepared for their assignment. At the beginning of their engagement that spans multiple events over the course of 2–3-year MTA periods, experts received training from headquarters, aimed among other things at familiarizing them with the specificities of the TCc context. They also often received an on-site introduction upon their first visit to the TCc.

Within TAIEX INTPA, information meetings were put in place before events in order to support experts in familiarizing themselves with beneficiary contexts. These included developing questionnaires by experts to be filled and remitted by beneficiaries, filming beneficiary facilities (e.g., laboratories), and preparatory calls between experts and key beneficiaries.

Another practice recurrently mentioned was pairing experts new to TAIEX with more experienced ones.

²⁹ In the words of an expert: "Quickness is essential in unstable contexts."

³⁰ This was an issue particularly felt in the TCc –, where stakeholders stressed the importance of maintaining a stable collaboration with the same interpreters (which should be carefully selected) throughout consequent events on the same topic, to allow them to progressively familiarize themselves with the topic and with its specific technical vocabulary.

³¹ For example, one expert reported that at times he had to do all the background research himself; or received information packages after the event had started. Another expert reported having been briefed by EU staff before an expert mission (which she reputed very helpful), but not in other cases.

4.3 EQ3 – Contribution to and role of capacity development and institutional strengthening

To what extent did TAIEX contribute to individual and institutional capacity development and strengthening of institutions in the medium to long run? What role did such strengthening play in bringing about structural reforms and advancing the EU interest, under various contexts and circumstances? To what extent was the introduction of TAIEX strategic in 2016 beneficial in this regard?

Summary response:

TAIEX proved to be an effective tool for achieving its key objectives of the exchange of best practices and short-term individual and institutional capacity building, albeit with some exceptions.

As to its other objectives in the various strands, the support for reform, EU Outreach and Public Diplomacy and EU policy planning, **TAIEX showed varying levels of success across regions.** This resulted from differences in national political context, the implementation modalities, as well as strand-specific characteristics and objectives.

Across strands, the achievement of results was facilitated by key factors such as high-quality experts, an agenda tailored to the specific needs of beneficiaries, the use of a series of complementary TAIEX events and the synergistic use of TAIEX with other instruments.

Conversely factors like delays, challenges with translation, inexperienced experts, insufficiently tailored agendas, occasionally hampered implementation. Online and multi-country events tended to be less effective. Outside the EU, low political commitment, limited national capacities and political instability acted as important barriers.

Beyond contextual and event-specific factors, several elements limited the instrument's potential, most notably: insufficient understanding of all the possibilities provided by TAIEX, challenges in monitoring and reporting, a lack of a clear strategy for learning lessons, a lack of a standardised function and concise guidelines for NCPs and EUDEL focal points in NEAR strands, and a lack of integration of TAIEX within a broader strategic framework with clear objectives and expectations for the instrument (for TAIEX REGIO and EIR).

TAIEX's mostly short-term and ad-hoc nature restrained the results the instrument could achieve on its own but was simultaneously key to its strength. When successfully integrated within broader EU programming and used in synergy with other instruments, TAIEX's design, unlike other more-long-term instruments, allowed flexible, swift, and well targeted support to beneficiaries, playing an important gap-filling role.

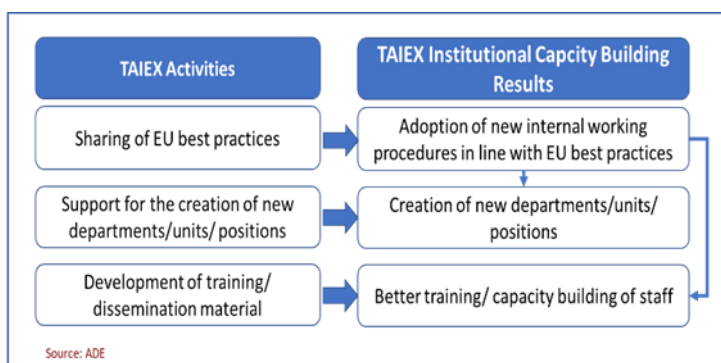
TAIEX Strategic, introduced in DG NEAR strands in 2016, **served as a useful diplomacy, outreach and policy planning tool.** In some contexts, it contributed to better anticipating, sequencing, framing and monitoring TAIEX activities. However, in the context of the limited human resources of the TAIEX Team, this often came at the cost of a delayed response to beneficiaries' requests. In addition, some relevant stakeholders assessed that strategic events requested by DG NEAR and line DGs were limited in their capacity to support capacity building and reforms in countries.

In some contexts, the sustainability of results remained a challenge, notably for reasons of lack of follow-up and frequent staff turnover among beneficiary administrations.

A. TAIEX's contribution to institutional capacity building

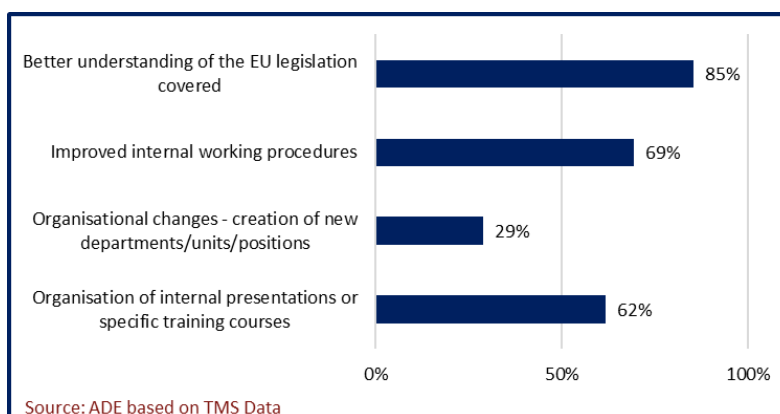
Across all strands, TAIEX contributed to the capacity building of beneficiary institutions, one of its principal roles. This was possible thanks to the MS experts, who explained EU regulatory frameworks, shared EU best practices, and provided direct support for organisational change as well as for the development of training and dissemination material.

Figure 8: How TAIEX has contributed to institutional capacity building



TAIEX’s contribution to capacity-building was confirmed by various sources including case studies, focus group discussions, interviews, surveys and the after 6-months evaluations of TAIEX events. 75% of NCPs, EUD TAIEX focal points, TAIEX PI Applicants and TAIEX INTPA contact points, agreed that TAIEX was instrumental in reinforcing administrative capacities in critical areas. Similarly, 89% of beneficiary respondents and 97% of experts agreed that TAIEX events led to improvements in beneficiary institutions’ administrative capacities, with 77% of beneficiaries stating that TAIEX had concretely changed their way of working.

Figure 9: Perceived share of TAIEX events that led to institutional capacity building outcomes (after 6 months evaluation survey, all strands)³²



The case studies led to the identification of several success stories, such as the one of Armenia’s police presented below.³³

³² The after-6-months evaluations are completed by evaluation correspondents (1 person per event). These are members of staff from beneficiary administrations involved in the organisation of events. The after-6-month evaluations were completed for about 40% of events conducted during the evaluation period.

³³ See annex 5 for examples of success stories.

Box 4: Enabling Armenia’s police to carry out cybercrime investigations and use digital forensics – TAIEX as an instrument for short-term capacity building

Starting in 2009, Armenia faced rising levels of cybercrime. But because of its limited capacities for cybercrime investigation, by 2014 only one cybercrime case had been resolved. Therefore, in 2017, the Investigative Committee of the Police of Armenia decided to turn to TAIEX for support in strengthening its capacity for cybercrime investigation and the use of digital forensics.

A TAIEX expert mission and a study visit were organised. The two events allowed beneficiaries to better understand EU standards and learn from EU best practices. This resulted in several reforms in line with observations and experts’ recommendations, including new training programmes for investigators and candidate investigators, a new department in the Investigative Committee focused on cybercrime, and the development of software and of several implementation tools for digital forensics investigation.

Source: Interviews, survey, events’ documentary review, inventory analysis

TAIEX was mostly used as a short-term tool. The case studies revealed, however, that it also successfully provided medium to long-term support through long series of events (in IPA and ENI EAST) or MTA (TCc). TAIEX’s longer-term support often proved critical in cases where Twinning or OECD Sigma were not available due to political or other reasons such as availability of experts.

Box 5: Enabling the National Bank of Moldova to abide by Basel III³⁴ requirements – TAIEX as an instrument for medium-term capacity building

Under the 2014 Association Agreement with the EU, Moldova is required to abide by the Basel III standards. In 2018, following a two-year Twinning project with the Central Banks of Romania and the Netherlands, the National Bank of Moldova (NBM) successfully adopted a new regulatory framework in line with the EU Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR) and Directive (CRDIV) - the EU implementing acts of Basel III.

However, the NBM lacked key expertise to implement the new framework. Although a Twinning project was initially approved, it was cancelled due to political reasons. After extensive dialogue with the EUDEL it was decided to address the existing needs through multiple TAIEX events. These enabled beneficiaries to make progress in the implementation of the framework, leading among other things to the adjustment of the NBM’s internal procedures regarding the assessment of market and interest rate risk in non-trading activities; the drafting, approval and implementation of a new methodology for assessing capital adequacy of banks; and the development of a complex macroprudential stress testing framework for the banking system.

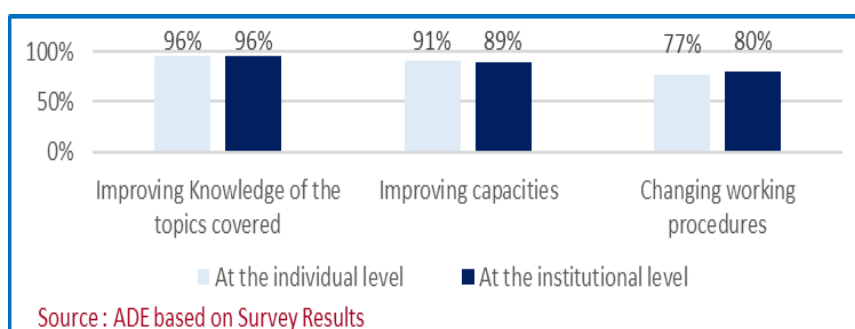
Beneficiaries appreciated “the instant results”, “low bureaucracy” and “flexibility” of TAIEX, which allowed them to select the most appropriate events for their evolving needs.

Source: Interviews, survey, documentary review, inventory analysis

A key constraint to both the capacity of the instrument to bring about institutional capacity building and the sustainability of its results, was the lack of internal follow-up by beneficiaries. In some cases, low levels of political commitment and limited absorption capacities meant that no action was taken to disseminate and institutionalise knowledge and skills gained during the events. As a result, even when TAIEX was successful in strengthening individual knowledge and skills, this did not always translate in concrete changes in working procedures.

³⁴ Basel III is a comprehensive set of reform measures in banking prudential regulation developed by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, to strengthen the regulation, supervision and risk management of the banking sector. Its implementing act in Europe is the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR) and Directive (CRD).

Figure 10: Beneficiary survey responses to the question “Did the TAIEX event(s) you participated in contribute to any of the following concrete results?” (N=322)



The survey results confirmed the lack of follow-up in a significant number of cases, with 76% of beneficiary respondents indicating that in at least one of the events they participated in there was no internal follow-up of the event.³⁵ **Frequent staff turnover, political instability, or even shifts in political momentum** also led to a loss of progress made through TAIEX. The limited number of participants rendered internal follow-up even more critical in the case of **study visits**.

B. TAIEX as a tool for identifying gaps and for improved EU policy planning in NEAR strands

In the IPA and ENI East strands, TAIEX proved to be a useful tool for EU policy planning. This was less so in other strands, in which there was limited awareness of TAIEX’s potential for gaps assessment and policy planning.

EUDEL staff from the Enlargement region and the East Neighbourhood testified that TAIEX expert missions were highly valued as EU policy-planning tools. They were regularly used by EU Institutions in an exploratory fashion when support was requested by beneficiaries. **TAIEX then served to assess the magnitude and kind of support needed, to identify the most suitable instrument to be used (TAIEX, Twinning, TA, OECD sigma etc.), and to examine the level of commitment and preparedness of beneficiaries to undertake longer-term projects.**

Box 6: Supporting the 2020 Armenia Police Reform – TAIEX as an EU policy planning and gap-assessment tool

In 2019, the Armenian Government requested EU support for a police reform. Following consultations between DG NEAR, the Government of Armenia, DG HOME, EEAS, and the EUDEL in Yerevan, it was decided that prior to any EU support, there would be a TAIEX peer-review mission of the sector to identify the needs for a future reform and the possible areas for EU support.

Stakeholders described the mission as critical for advancing police reforms in Armenia. The recommendations of the mission directly informed the Reform Strategy and the 2020-2022 Action Plan of the Police of the Republic of Armenia, both adopted in 2020, as well as EU programming in the country.

Representatives from the beneficiary institutions explained that the mission triggered several organisational changes in line with EU best practices even before the official implementation of the strategy.

In pre-accession countries, peer-review missions were systematically used to assess the progress made towards the implementation of different chapters of the EU *acquis* and for the identification of remaining gaps.

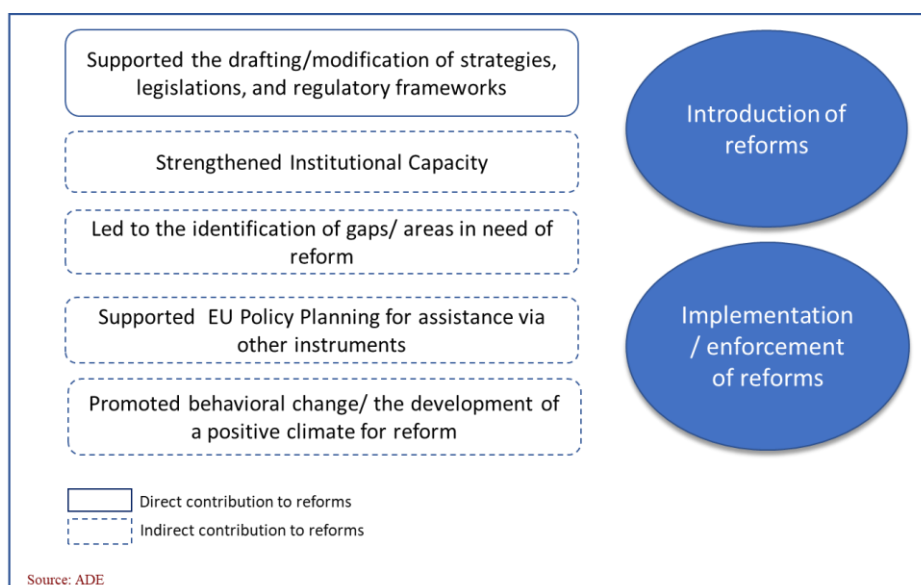
³⁵ Some stakeholders suggest that the TAIEX Team should be more actively engaged in the follow-up of the results of the events as an integral part of its support. This could be for instance by providing guidelines and good practices for follow-up or by organising follow-up meetings six-months after the organisation of the events. However, Commission staff that were interviewed, highlighted that this would be resource intensive.

This was one of the key roles of TAIEX IPA³⁶, with a total of 124 peer-review missions having taken place between 2015 and 2020. The ensuing reports played a key role in informing the opening and closing of negotiation chapters. They also provided a key source of information for policy planning, including the organization of follow-up actions (including via TAIEX) by both the Commission/EEAS and beneficiaries themselves, to ensure that the identified gaps were addressed.

C. TAIEX as a tool for supporting reforms

In some cases, TAIEX played an important role in supporting reforms in beneficiary countries, as illustrated in Figure 11.

Figure 11: How TAIEX has supported reforms in beneficiary countries



As a mostly short-term and ad-hoc instrument of limited financial weight, TAIEX's role was not to implement reforms but to create a leverage effect and play a gap filling role.

TAIEX's contributions to reforms varied significantly across strands, with some strands being more focused on reforms. Low political commitment, political instability, limited absorption capacities of beneficiary institutions were key constraints for TAIEX's effectiveness outside the EU. TAIEX's implementation modalities and strategic approach across strands also played a role.

The case studies led to the identification of a number of examples in which TAIEX, in synergy with other instruments, played an important, and in some cases, critical role in promoting reforms in beneficiary countries.³⁷ This occurred either directly by supporting beneficiaries in the design of strategies, legislations, and regulatory frameworks, when they lacked the capacity to do so on their own. Or indirectly by strengthening institutional capacities for reform, by supporting EU policy planning, by contributing to the identification of areas in need of reform, and by encouraging behavioural/cultural change.

TAIEX's indirect support for reform was considered by all interviewed stakeholders as important. However, it was less immediate, and its results were harder to measure and disentangle from the rest of the EU support.

Outside of the EU, the case studies revealed that low levels of political commitment for reforms, political instability and low absorption capacities were key constraints to TAIEX's capacity to bring about reforms. This is highlighted by the example below.

³⁶ As identified in relevant strategic documents

³⁷ Please refer to annex 5 for more details and examples from the case studies

Box 7: TAIEX's contribution to the design and implementation of Kosovo's Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2020

In 2016, Kosovo revised its 2011-2020 Strategy on Biodiversity and developed an Action Plan for 2016-2020 to ensure alignment with the EU acquis. In the announcement of the revisions, the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning thanked DG NEAR for supporting the process through three TAIEX Expert missions which were seen as critical for achieving the desired reform.

The first mission was used to identify gaps between the Kosovo Biodiversity Strategy and the EU Biodiversity Strategy. The second one to discuss concrete changes to be made in the strategy. Finally, the third one was used to review the draft strategy and New Action Plan.

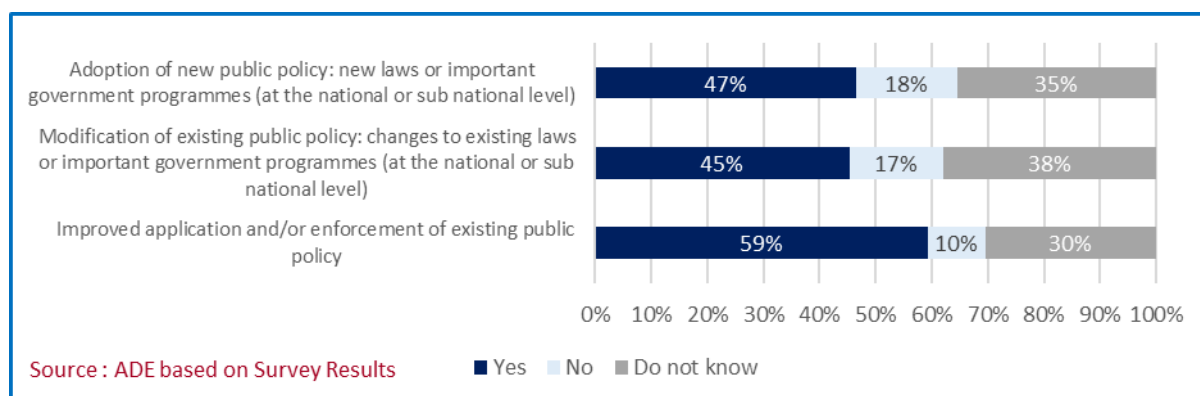
Given the sensitive political context and financial challenges of Kosovo, the beneficiaries highlighted that TAIEX was not only effective, but also the only instrument available to address their needs. Thanks to this series of TAIEX events, Kosovo's legislative framework on Biodiversity reached EU Standards.

However, staff shortages and limited funding hampered the degree to which the Action Plan was implemented. Additional TAIEX events were used by various units of the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning to strengthen their capacity to implement the New Strategy, but again key staff shortages limited the progress that was achieved. In addition, the TAIEX experts also provided support for beneficiaries to apply for other longer-term capacity building instruments to support the implementation process, including an IPA TA project and smaller SIDA projects.

Sources: Interviews, Survey, Review of Events documentation, Review of Government of Kosovo publications, after-6- months evaluation.

In the surveys, 63% of the TAIEX NCPs, EUDEL TAIEX focal points, TAIEX PI and INTPA applicants agreed that TAIEX was instrumental in achieving structural reforms in beneficiary countries. The share was the lowest among ENI South respondents, with 46%.

Figure 12: Beneficiary survey responses to the question "Did the TAIEX event(s) you participated in contribute to any of the following concrete results?" (N=322)



TAIEX's contribution to reforms was constrained by its short-term and ad-hoc nature, and by its limited critical mass.³⁸ Nevertheless, when successfully integrated within broader EU programming and used in synergy with other instruments, the short-term and ad-hoc nature of the instrument became a key source of its strength, allowing it to provide flexible and immediate support that could not be delivered through other instruments.

TAIEX's contribution to reforms varied significantly across strands. Beyond the importance of the political context in each region, differences in the objectives pursued as well as the selected implementation modalities across strands played an important role. TAIEX EIR and REGIO did not specifically target reforms while for TAIEX IPA, ENI and TCC contributing to reforms promoting alignment with EU standards, norms and regulatory frameworks, was the strands' *raison d'être*.

³⁸ This was less the case for TAIEX TCC where the MTA approach was implemented.

Table 3: TAIEX's contribution to reforms – differences across strands³⁹⁴⁰

TAIEX Strand	Degree to which reforms were targeted	TAIEX as a share of the average budget of the supported instruments	Overall effectiveness for reforms	Strand specific strengths	Limiting factors
IPA	Contribution to reforms was a key objective to promote alignment with EU standards, norms and regulatory frameworks	0.9%	Highly effective. Several examples of events directly or indirectly contributing to reforms.	Extensive use of series of events, use of training maps/ workplans, peer-review missions for policy-planning	Political context and limited national capacities
ENI EAST		0.3%		Highly active NCPs and subsequent high visibility. Extensive use of series of events, use of training maps/ workplans, peer-review missions for policy planning	
ENI SOUTH			Limited effectiveness No examples of direct contribution to reforms but evidence of indirect contribution.	-	Very high levels of institutional resistance to reforms. Political context and limited national capacities.
TCC		4.2%	Effective. Several examples of reforms supported by TAIEX but also multiple examples where objectives were not reached.	MTA approach (longer-term support and higher financial weight)	
PI	Partly targeted along with other objectives	0.6%	Effective. Some examples of contribution to reforms when these were explicitly targeted.	-	Political context and limited national capacities

³⁹ For more details refer to the case studies.

⁴⁰ Results from TAIEX INTPA are not presented in the table. As TAIEX INTPA was in a pilot phase during the evaluation period, the number of events conducted was too low for conclusions to be drawn. The limited available evidence suggested that the tool has the potential to contribute to reforms when these are explicitly targeted. However, no concrete examples of achieved reforms were identified and the effectiveness of the instrument was constrained by limited visibility, low awareness of the possibilities offered by TAIEX, political context and limited national capacities. For more details on TAIEX INTPA please refer to Annex 5F.

SRSP	Contribution to growth-promoting reforms was a key objective	1.3%	Highly effective. Several examples of events directly contributing to structural reforms	High levels of coordination and synergies; systematic involvement of beneficiaries in the identification of needs despite strategic nature; use of TAIEX as an instrument of last resort.	No identified strand-specific limiting factors
REGIO	Not targeted	Not Available	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
EIR	Not targeted	Not Available	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Source: ADE

D. TAIEX as a communication and diplomacy tool for strengthening EU visibility and normative power in Partner Countries

TAIEX was an effective communication and diplomacy tool in Partner Countries, especially under TAIEX PI where it was explicitly used for these purposes. Supporting EU outreach and public diplomacy was one of the key roles of TAIEX PI. Over the years, there are several examples of how TAIEX PI successfully promoted and supported policy and political dialogue in beneficiary countries, contributed to strengthening the EU's role or position in a specific sector or context, reinforced the profile of the EU as a key global player, and promoted EU visibility.

Box 8: Promoting EU leadership on space applications in Latin America – TAIEX PI as a tool for strengthening the EU normative power

In 2017 and 2018, 7 TAIEX PI events in the field of space applications (Galileo and Copernicus) promoted European space initiatives and informed about opportunities for stakeholders from regions worldwide.

Following the TAIEX PI study visit on satellite positioning involving Brazil, Chile and Mexico, important milestones for cooperation with the EU were reached.

Chile signed an agreement on Copernicus to host a regional hub for Earth observation data. Mexico suggested to start a future collaboration around Galileo-related physical testing for research purposes. Brazil showed a strong interest in pursuing a dialogue on the European Global Navigation Satellite System (EGNSS).

Today, the three countries are active in EU space applications.

Source: Interview, Event documentary review, TAIEX PI report.

For TAIEX INTPA, a key objective was to address underlying governance and public administration aspects of Team Europe Initiatives while strengthening political dialogue with partner countries and developing partnership cooperation. Although the number of events conducted so far is too small to draw conclusions, there are already cases where TAIEX has played an important public diplomacy role. As an example, TAIEX INTPA was a tool for strengthening EU normative power by supporting the EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation on Justice and Rule of Law.

Across all non-EU strands, TAIEX positively contributed to the EU diplomacy and outreach, even when this was not explicitly targeted. The stakeholders who were interviewed highlighted the importance of TAIEX for creating a sense of proximity between beneficiary administrations and EU Institutions. In the surveys among beneficiaries expressing an opinion, 83% agreed that TAIEX had strengthened the relations of their institution with the EUDEL/EEAS. 95% agreed that it had strengthened the perception of the EU as a valuable partner in their institution. Among NCPs and EUDEL focal points, TAIEX PI Applicants, TAIEX INTPA contact points, 92% agreed that the use of the TAIEX tool supported the visibility of the EU as a united global player.

E. Factors affecting TAIEX' effectiveness at the events' level

Across strands, reaching results was facilitated by key factors such as high-quality experts, an agenda well-tailored to the specific needs of beneficiaries, the use of series of complementary TAIEX events and a synergistic use of TAIEX with other instruments. Conversely, factors like delays, challenges with translation, experts, and insufficiently tailored agendas occasionally hampered implementation. Online and multi-country events tended to be less effective. Outside the EU, low political commitment, limited national capacities and political instability, acted as important barriers, for TAIEX's support to reforms. More specifically:

National context:

- a. **Low political commitment:** For instance, in the TCc, although TAIEX events were successful in providing the necessary support, in most cases they did not translate in reform in the community due to the political context. For example, several draft legal texts that were prepared with TAIEX's support were stalled for a significant time in the adoption process, often rendering them obsolete before they could be passed.
- b. **Limited national capacities** hampering internal follow-up and/or the implementation of adopted reforms.
- c. **Political instability and frequent staff turnovers** leading to a loss of progress made through TAIEX or even shifts in political momentum.

In a context of low political commitment, TAIEX was not used to directly promote reform but rather to create an environment that could enable future reform. It was used to support best practices in technical areas, for supporting change in institutional culture, for creating a sentiment of proximity, and for paving the way for further collaboration including the use of other more long-term instruments. Series of events were particularly helpful in this regard.

Box 9: Strengthening school inspection management in Azerbaijan – TAIEX as a tool for creating a positive environment for reform

In Azerbaijan, there was initially a strong resistance against the proposed reform of the school inspection. Therefore, a series of TAIEX events were organised to support the reforms.

The initial workshop on school self-evaluation was described as having “changed the environment and [making directors] positive to have inspection in their school and to get feedback from inspectors as well”.

The follow-up TAIEX study visit on school inspection management allowed beneficiaries to closely observe how school inspections were conducted, strengthening their knowledge in the field and allowing them to adopt relevant practices back at home.

Sources: Survey, Review of Events documentation, after-6- months evaluation.

Implementation challenges

- **Low quality of experts** (very rare, only 5 case study events): This concerns experts having difficulties in communicating their messages or with insufficient awareness of the local context.
- **Low quality or absence of interpreters** hampered the communication and the possibility to create meaningful interactions.
- **Too broad/generic or too ambitious an agenda:** Insufficient time dedicated to each issue and a lack of concrete guidelines. Beneficiaries felt unable to follow up with specific actions.
- **Failure to engage the right participants**, for study visits that allowed for a very limited number of individuals. Need for technical or operational staff directly involved in the implementation of the issues, but also high-level staff to support political momentum.

- **Delays:** political momentum waned, issue no longer seen as a priority or a need.

Type of event

- **Multi-country events:** often too broad, with difficulties to adapt to the specific needs or capacities of individual countries. Often also translation or communication challenges.
- **Online events:** Loss of informal interactions, technical issues, limited engagement of participants, increased challenges with translation.

F. Factors affecting TAIEX' effectiveness at the instrument's level

Beyond event specific factors, the following factors limited the instrument's potential for achieving results:

- 1) **Lack of integration of TAIEX events in a broader strategic framework and lack of synergy with other instruments for some strands:** In TAIEX REGIO and EIR, TAIEX events were less integrated into a broader strategic capacity building framework and were subsequently used less in synergy with other activities, limiting their capacity to deliver larger-scale results.
- 2) **Insufficient visibility or understanding of all the possibilities** provided by the instrument by potential applicants (NA, EUDELS, line DGs). This was the case in certain strands (ENI South, INTPA, IPA) and among smaller beneficiary institutions. In surveys, 29% of NCPs and EUDEL TAIEX focal points disagreed that TAIEX was sufficiently known among potential users (applicants) within public institutions (only 15% fully agreed).
- 3) **Lack of a standardised function and concise guidelines for NCPs and EUDEL focal points in NEAR strands:** This remark was contingent on the level of seniority of staff and their personal interest in the instrument. Some NCPs and EUDEL focal points expressed a need "for a TAIEX for them" to exchange good practices on how to best promote TAIEX and support beneficiary institutions to apply.
- 4) **Problematic implementation of monitoring and reporting:** The TAIEX monitoring and evaluation system was generally well organised.⁴¹ However, its implementation faced a number of challenges. One was the poor completion of surveys by participants: the after-6-month evaluation, e.g., was completed for only 43% of events. Other issues were final reports of some events that were not submitted or uploaded, the diverging quality of those reports, partly associated with a lack of clear guidelines for their completion; and the absence of a system through which all parties within the Commission (line DGs for example) could access the reports for follow-up.
- 5) **Lack of a clear strategy for learning lessons:** there are few well-defined occasions for learning lessons and sharing of best practices, across strands. The Institution Building days were important in this regard but were insufficient to allow for systematic reflections. .

G. The contribution of TAIEX Strategic in DG NEAR strands

TAIEX Strategic, introduced in DG NEAR strands in 2016, served as a useful diplomacy, outreach and policy planning tool.

⁴¹ The TAIEX monitoring and evaluation system includes: An evaluation survey sent to all participants in TAIEX events (beneficiaries, experts, local co-organisers) immediately after the event); an evaluation survey sent to one evaluation correspondence per event 6 months after the completion of the event to indicate the results achieved; final reports of events (submitted by experts in the case of expert missions and submitted by local co-organisers for workshops); attendance to events by members of the TAIEX Team (DG NEAR C3);TMS database whereby there is a record of all applications and events organised.

In some contexts, it contributed to better anticipating, sequencing, framing and monitoring TAIEX activities. However, in the context of the limited human resources of the TAIEX Team, this often came at the cost of a diminished speed at which TAIEX responded to beneficiaries' requests. In addition, strategic events requested by DG NEAR and line DGs were perceived by involved stakeholders (including beneficiaries, and EUDEL staff) as more limited in their capacity to support capacity building and reforms.

The TAIEX recalibration of 2016 lacked strategic documentation and guidelines as to the concrete changes introduced. However, the evaluation team understood from interviews that the following activities were involved:

- Introduction of training maps and workplans in the fields of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) and Agriculture (AGR) and increased emphasis on annual planning of events.
- Strengthening of the visibility of TAIEX among Commission services (country units, EU Delegations or line DGs) and the EEAS and simplification of the process for request of events by them.
- Promotion of the use of TAIEX as a gaps-assessment, policy-planning tool in support of IPA/ENI programming or Twinning. Expert missions and in particular peer-review missions were used to provide focused audits of the situation of a country in any given area, so as to gather necessary information to fund longer-term and broader-reaching programmes.

Firstly, the introduction of training maps/work plans in TAIEX IPA helped in planning, coordination, and improved sequencing of events, and was much appreciated by beneficiaries. This was the case for Agriculture and to a lesser extent for Justice & Human rights.

However, outside the Enlargement Region, communication and implementation challenges limited their success. In the ENI EAST, e.g., beneficiaries expressed dissatisfaction with their introduction, with several NCPs requesting to end their implementation.

The application process was seen as administratively heavy for NCPs who needed to collect applications from several institutions with varying capacities. The consultation process to approve all these events was long and coordination was seen as burdensome by the TAIEX Team.

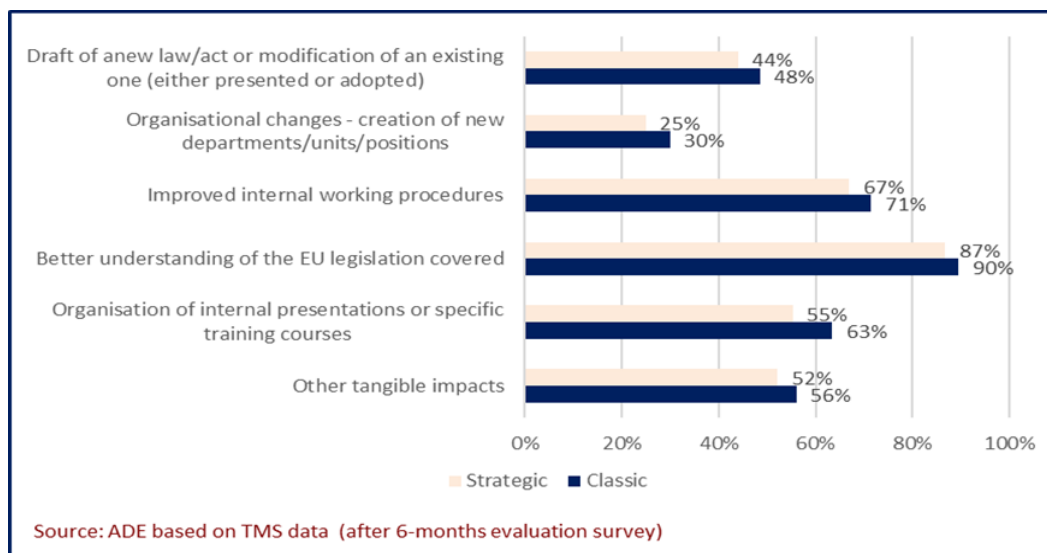
This had an impact on the ability of TAIEX to respond quickly to the needs of beneficiaries, and resulted in TAIEX being perceived as increasingly slow and less flexible in the region. This was exacerbated by communication issues, which led NCPs to believe that ex-post events could not be added to the plans, whereas procedures allowed for that.

The different management and communication approaches for training maps/workplans inside the TAIEX Team, including the tendency for the use of wider and less technical plans in the region, appear to have been key for the differences in their effectiveness across regions. In the ENI South, there was confusion among relevant EUDEL staff as to the degree to which training maps were feasible in the region. This is despite them expressing a clear need for a more medium-term use of TAIEX to cover the existing gap between TAIEX and Twinning in particular in areas that cannot be covered by OECD Sigma.

Secondly, TAIEX Strategic enabled Commission services/EEAS to request events for the pursuit of key EU priorities that would not always have been undertaken by national authorities. As an example, TAIEX Strategic events were used to support several EU programs such as ECRAN (Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network), EPPA (Environment Partnership Programme for Accession) and RIPAP (Regional Implementation of Paris Agreement Project). However, TAIEX Strategic events requested by Geo-desks or line DGs tended to be broader in content and with lower levels of involvement by beneficiaries in their design. Interviewed stakeholders explained that these events were subsequently less likely to be associated with government ownership or concrete results (capacity building and reforms).

As shown in Figure 14 below, the after-6 months evaluations showed systematic differences in results between TAIEX Strategic and TAIEX Classic events, although the differences were not always as high. This was also the case for the survey results.

Figure 13: Comparison of perceived results of TAIEX Strategic and TAIEX Classic events in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood region, after 6-months evaluation⁴²



Thirdly, although TAIEX Strategic boosted the use of TAIEX by Commission services/EEAS, take-up by EUDELs was lower than expected. This was due to low levels of awareness and, as reported in the stakeholder interviews, a lack of belief in the capacity of TAIEX Strategic to achieve the intended results.

None of the NCPs and EUDEL TAIEX Focal Points of TAIEX IPA and ENI South who participated in FGDs were aware of the possibility for EUDELs to request TAIEX events directly outside the context of training maps and workplans.

In TAIEX ENI East, where there was a high awareness of TAIEX Strategic, it was only used exceptionally when the number of events that beneficiaries could request directly was exhausted.

In addition, there was a consensus among EUDEL focal points and NCPs in the region that it was key that requests should come from the beneficiaries themselves. EUDELs can identify topics, but the beneficiary must be willing to pursue these on their own.

Finally, although TAIEX expert missions and in particular peer-review missions requested by Commission services were indeed an effective tool for gaps-assessment and policy planning, TAIEX's recalibration did not contribute to improving or boosting their use, which remained limited outside the Enlargement region. In ENI South, the opportunity to carry peer-review missions was not provided, with some EUDEL focal point highlighting their need.

H. TAIEX's contribution to non-core objectives

TAIEX contributed to several non-core objectives including the formation of peer-to-peer networks, the development of the skills and knowledge of MS experts, and the fostering of regional cooperation.

Peer-to-peer networks: 86% of beneficiaries and 89% of experts agreed that TAIEX events strengthened their network of professional connections with peers and public officers from other countries. This was highly valued by experts, with 42% of survey respondents mentioning it as one of

⁴² When answering the evaluation, the respondents were not aware of whether the event had been classic or strategic. The matching was done based on how events were classified on TMS. On TMS, TAIEX Strategic events includes training map/workplan events as well as events for which the application was only submitted by the EUDEL for operational rather than strategic reasons. These events were associated with higher levels of effectiveness, creating a positive bias.

the three most attractive aspects of their participation in TAIEX events. Beneficiaries who were interviewed explained that this networking allowed them to revert to experts for further advice even after an event. Such continued support on a voluntary basis was also confirmed by 52% of surveyed experts.

Development of the skills and knowledge of MS experts: TAIEX had the unexpected consequence of strengthening the knowledge and skills of MS public officials that acted as TAIEX experts. This was confirmed by experts who were interviewed and by 95% of the respondents to the experts' survey).

Regional Cooperation: A few beneficiary administrations emphasized the role of TAIEX PI events in fostering regional cooperation. Examples are the regional workshops on Space Applications with ASEAN and Central, Latin America; or those on EU-South Asian Cooperation for Combating Terrorism. Similar examples were identified for TAIEX IPA and ENI, for which the fostering of regional cooperation was an important objective. In TAIEX ENI South, stakeholders indicated that they valued the opportunity offered by TAIEX multi-country country events to exchange best practices with peers in their region. Across strands, 92% of survey respondents indicated that multi-country events had led to a strengthening of their relations with beneficiaries from other countries, although this did not necessarily foster cooperation.

I. TAIEX's alignment with EU cross-cutting priorities

The TAIEX Team undertook actions to promote the instrument's alignment with key EU cross-cutting priorities - namely gender equality & empowerment, and climate change mitigation & adaptation. However, several stakeholders wondered if these actions were sufficient, as only limited progress has been made so far.

On climate change mitigation and adaptation: TAIEX has a high carbon footprint, primarily due to the large number of flights it entails.

Therefore, **in 2020 and prior to the pandemic, the TAIEX Team launched a series of efforts to reduce TAIEX's environmental footprint**, including booking direct flights for experts and participants, finding accommodation within walking distance of the venue, limiting the use of plastic bottles, and keeping events paperless.⁴³ As noted by some interviewees, these measures were not systematically applied in the limited number of in-person events that have taken place since then. Also, awareness on these measures was low: none of the interviewed beneficiaries and experts were aware of active efforts to limit TAIEX's environmental footprint.

On gender equality & women's empowerment: The TAIEX Team has adopted a series of measures over the years to promote gender equality.

In 2016 and in line with the EU Gender Action Plan II (2016-2020), TAIEX adopted the objective of promoting the equal participation of men and women in TAIEX events as both participants and experts. It also started calling on involved partner countries and EU MS to take gender balance into consideration when nominating participants or proposing experts. In 2017, a section was introduced in expert mission reports, requesting experts to provide input on gender inequality in the areas covered by the event. In 2019, to support future action on gender equality, questionnaires identifying obstacles in the area were circulated among NCPs from Member States and pre-selected experts. (AAR 2019). Finally, in 2020, a Work-from-Home on the "Gender Gap in experts in events organized under TAIEX IPA, ENI" was organized.

Results, however, have been limited. There was an increase in the availability of female experts in the EDBE and in their participation in TAIEX events.⁴⁴ However, participation of female beneficiaries

⁴³ In addition, a commitment was made for future TAIEX events to increasingly rely on goods and services with reduced environmental impact throughout their lifecycles and comply with green public procurement principles and the commission's guidelines for sustainable meetings and events – for example by giving preference to environmentally certified hotels and catering services focused on reducing food waste. (AAR 2020)

⁴⁴ While female experts accounted for 37% of newly registered experts in 2015, this rose to 46% by 2020. In addition, between 2016 and 2020, the share of female experts employed by TAIEX rose from 34% in 2016 to 44%.

did not increase, or even decreased in some strands.⁴⁵ Moreover, the lack of clear guidelines on how to complete the gender-equality section of expert mission reports led to inconsistencies and low-quality reporting.

4.4 EQ 4 – Effectiveness of the TAIEX implementation modalities

To what extent was TAIEX support flexible, service-oriented and swift, as well as demand-driven and policy-oriented, and what factors enhanced or hampered such approach?

Summary response:

Overall, TAIEX has reached its goal of being a swift and flexible instrument. The service orientation was further broadened with the development of four new strands over the period 2015-2020.

However, the speed with which events were implemented decreased over time, with differences between strands and types of events. The TAIEX recalibration led to the prioritization of those events that most closely supported EU priorities. This generated a hiatus between strategic events and regular events in terms of speed of implementation. Also, while TAIEX is an instrument aiming at fast implementation, no targets were specified and the speed of implementation was not monitored.

TAIEX proved to be flexible, understood as the ability to adapt to the needs for each specific event. There were limitations, however, and while some were justified (including regarding the maximum number of participants to study visits), the justification was not always clearly communicated.

The instrument's institutional and financial set up as a centralised unit provided clear advantages in terms of swift organization of events. In addition, it allowed old and new strands alike to capitalize on the accumulated expertise and know-how and on the centralized database of experts. Indeed, the identification of experts proved to be a determining factor for the speed of event implementation. However, sometimes the shared responsibilities between the central TAIEX unit and line DGs led to issues regarding the branding of events as both TAIEX events and events of the programme in which they were embedded.

Next to the institutional set-up, the availability of staff in the TAIEX unit played an important role in the identification of experts and thus the speed of implementation, while the peer-to-peer nature of the instrument played against it. Experts employed by public administrations had to be excused of their usual tasks for several days, which could hardly be organized at short notice.

Finally, the TAIEX team reacted swiftly to the unfolding of the Covid-19 pandemic, starting to organize online events at the end of April 2020. Online events allowed for the service to continue while providing a rapid response to emerging needs. For a similar budget, online events allowed for more participants and more experts, including high-profile experts, with a clear environmental advantage. However, online events are relatively complex to organize for the TAIEX unit and they mostly did not allow informal exchanges and interpersonal relations to develop.

Overall, TAIEX has reached its goal of being a swift and flexible instrument, although this varied by strand and by type of event. The speed, however, decreased over time.

- While TAIEX is an instrument aiming to provide relatively swift implementation, no targets were specified. Depending on the strand, between 20% (TAIEX ENI

⁴⁵ While the overall share of events with less than 50% female participants declined from 51% to 40%, the improvements were driven by the introduction of the EU MS strands, rather than improvements in the rest of the world. The involvement of women in TAIEX ENI South events declined over the years. Inclusion of female participants tended to reflect the local culture and context and was unresponsive to the encouragements of the TAIEX Team.

South) and 50% (TAIEX EIR) of events were organized within three months.⁴⁶ Overall, 65% of events were organized within six months and around 85% within a year.⁴⁷ There is evidence of a backlog of events yet to be organized more than one year after they were approved in TAIEX ENI (South and East) strands, where more than 15% of events are affected, and to a similar extent in TAIEX IPA (around 13% of events).

- **The time needed to organize events after their approval increased steadily during the 2015-2020 period.** The share of events organized in less than 3 months decreased from 44% in 2015 to 35% in 2020 (with a lowest value of 32% in 2019). The share of events organized in less than 6 months decreased from 71% in 2015 to 58% in 2020 (with a lowest value of 53% in 2019). This trend was largely confirmed by stakeholders and linked to the increased workload of the TAIEX unit, a reduction in the size of the unit and the development of strategic events, which were more complex to organize.
- **Events were generally swiftly approved,** although there were large variations between strands. Overall, 65% of events were approved within two weeks and more than 90% within a month. Large variations, however, appeared between strands, depending on the type of administrative procedures in place in each strand and on whether the strand requested mostly strategic events or not. For instance, in TAIEX TCc, events were pre-approved as part of annual work workplans. Requests were hence immediately and automatically approved. The approval of requests initiated by Commission services (strategic events) was also faster in general, with for instance 96% of requests approved within two weeks for TAIEX SRSP/TSI and 75% for TAIEX PI (as compared to 50% or less for other strands). Indeed, the TAIEX team prioritized events that aligned better with Commission priorities (following TAIEX recalibration), which by design was most often the case for strategic events. The speed with which requests were processed also depended on the type of events. While 100% of screening missions and 70% of work from home assignments were approved within one week, this was only the case for 10% of study visits, 26% of workshops and 37% of expert missions. Regarding study visits, the relatively slower approval process could be attributed to the time needed to ensure that the request for a study visit was justified.
- **Over time, events were approved faster, but this trend is not shared by all strands.** The improvement was linked to the increasing number of requests for strategic events, which through their better alignment with EU priorities, were faster to approve. However, these requests for strategic events also took up large amount of resources in the TAIEX team. This contributed to reducing the speed of approval for other types of events, as evidenced by the share of requests approved after more than one month, which also doubled from around 10% in 2015 to around 20% in 2020.
- The perception of stakeholders involved in the application and organization of TAIEX events largely confirmed these elements. Overall, stakeholders were satisfied with the *speed* of the organization process. 94% of survey respondents among local event organizers “strongly or mostly agreed that TAIEX events were quick to organize”. This figure was lower for EU officers, but with still a vast majority expressing satisfaction (76%). Some EU interlocutors linked this to a lower satisfaction with swiftness for strategic events (i.e., requested by Commission services), while these strategic events were implemented faster. Also, around 80% of respondents agreed that TAIEX allowed for quicker organization of technical assistance compared to other options.

⁴⁶ TAIEX TCc presents sharply outlying results, with more than 95% of events organized within 3 months.

⁴⁷ Except for screening events, for which only 67% of events were organized within a year. However, that category was not used any more after 2015.

- Participants and experts alike were also generally satisfied with the **smoothness** of the implementation, including the logistics and IT support for online events. Some issues were raised regarding translation, specifically for TAIEX TCc.
- In the absence of quantified targets for implementation modalities, the perception of the stakeholders depended on their previous experiences with technical assistance instruments and mobilization of experts.

Overall, TAIEX proved to be a flexible instrument able to adapt to the needs of each specific event, with some limitations.

- TAIEX allowed for flexibility in terms of the duration of events (5 days being the maximum length in theory); late changes in the list of participants; and number of participants to study visits (all strands benefitted at least once of a derogation in that regard). This was also confirmed by survey respondents, 90% of which strongly or mostly agreed that sufficient flexibility was granted for the organization of TAIEX events.
- In some contexts, however, the flexibility sought could not be granted or the level of flexibility decreased over time. Indeed, the restriction of the set of public officials qualifying as TAIEX beneficiaries (excluding sub-national authorities for instance) sometimes prevented the participation of specific relevant stakeholders. Also, for ENI-East, the introduction in 2019 of the requirement to pre-identify events on a yearly basis decreased the perceived level of flexibility and swiftness of the instrument, limiting the ability to react to needs emerging during the year. Finally, for study visits there was often a perceived lack of flexibility in terms of the maximum number of participants.⁴⁸ Therefore, the organizers of study visits often had to make a trade-off between who should take part in such visits (between operational and managerial public officers) and the limited number of participants, hampering at times the possibility of relevant officers to participate .

During the period, the service-orientation increased with TAIEX serving several additional DGs outside DG NEAR, capitalizing on the TAIEX unit's experience and expertise. The first new strand in the 2015-2020 period was TAIEX Regio Peer 2 Peer P2P, launched in 2015 to support administrative capacity building in regions qualifying for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF). A second launched in 2016 was TAIEX SRSP⁴⁹. Finally, in 2017 TAIEX EIR Peer to Peer P2P was launched to support the EIR programme developed by DG ENV and DG.

Each of the new strands was established through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the line DGs, defining the responsibilities of the line DG, of the TAIEX unit, the overall financial agreement, and the targeted number of events. Some of the strands served through SLAs capitalized on the development of the possibility for EU services to directly request events, including TAIEX PI and TAIEX SRSP.

The establishment of specific agreements per strand contributed to the flexibility and service-orientation of TAIEX. Some issues related to the communication around the events were however not sufficiently clarified.

The various SLAs allowed to tailor TAIEX to the needs of the programmes served, for instance in terms of responsibilities along the workflow or volume of activity to be covered for each case-handler. The institutional set up within the TAIEX team, with on one hand, dedicated specific project officer case handlers for each strand, and on the other hand thematic team leaders with an overview of several strands, also contributed to adapting TAIEX to the needs of each specific strand while keeping an overall coherence between rules applied in each strand.

⁴⁸ The main reason for limiting the number of participants to study visits is to keep the burden for the host institutions at a reasonable level, to avoid discouraging institutions to host such visits.

⁴⁹ TAIEX SRSP is now TAIEX TSI, following the change in the name of the instrument of DG REFORM supported.

In addition, several interviewees noted that the TAIEX team had always been flexible to adapt to the specific needs. This common-sense approach was seen as a large contribution to the flexibility of the instrument. As explained by one representative: *“We try to organize the events following rules. But if we have a good reason to deviate, for example number of people at study visits, or private sector participants, if exception is proportionate, we adopt a common-sense approach”*.

Some issues were reported around communication visuals and branding of events, when the events were embedded in other programmes that had their own name and branding, such as the TSI (previously the SRSP). In such cases, the institutional set-up as a unit distinct from the ones served through SLAs and pursuing its own visibility objectives led to a lower degree of service orientation.

The SLAs also did not cover the sharing of responsibilities regarding the monitoring of the impact of events beyond the after-6-month survey. This, sometimes, generated confusion as to whether the responsibility was within TAIEX or with the respective line DGs.

The instrument’s institutional and financial set up as a centralised unit provided clear advantages in terms of the swift organization of events.

The setup as a single unit allowed all strands to capitalize on the accumulated knowledge and know-how of the TAIEX unit, as confirmed by all stakeholders. In particular, the existence of a centralized expert database and of a network of National Contact Points (NCPs) in Member States countries⁵⁰ facilitated and streamlined the task of finding suitable and available experts for each event, in turn supporting the swift implementation of events.

In addition, the financial set up of TAIEX, including pre-approval based on multi-year agreements for each strand, allowed for the immediate assignment of budgets. Also, multi-year procurement contracts allow a single contractor to manage the organization of all events.

Finally, all strands benefited from an effective system (including specific arrangements with each MS) that facilitated pulling out MS experts for the time needed for participation in TAIEX events, and to compensate them accordingly.

Next to the institutional set up of TAIEX, the sometimes limited availability of staff in the TAIEX unit and the peer-to-peer nature of TAIEX hampered the speed of implementation.

The number of case-handlers has been decreasing over time, and some positions were left unfilled for several months. Based on a combined analysis of TMS data and TAIEX organigrams as of 2017, 2018 and 2019, it appears that each case handler organized 40 events per year on average. According to interviewees, this was at the time the team was already operating at full capacity, meaning that it could not accommodate all the demands for other events.

This was made worse when appropriate experts could not be identified immediately either by the beneficiaries (who can suggest experts in the request) or through the database, and case-handlers in the TAIEX team became crucial to identify suitable experts.

The peer-to-peer nature of the instrument also played against the speed of implementation and flexibility. Many experts are employed by public administrations, so they had to be discharged from their usual tasks for several days.

Finally, the TAIEX team reacted swiftly to the unfolding of the Covid-19 pandemic. Rapidly after the start of the pandemic (the first online event occurred on April 24th, 2020⁵¹), TAIEX started to organize online events, a rapid and effective solution to continue services when traveling was not possible or not advised. In addition, online meetings helped to quickly answer emerging needs related to the pandemic.

Online meetings allowed for additional flexibility regarding the number of participants; on average, more participants registered for online events. They also facilitated the participation of high-profile experts who would otherwise not attend in-person events. Online events presented advantages in terms of cost, allowing more experts and/or more participants to take part for an unchanged budget.

⁵⁰ In charge of facilitating the identification of suitable experts within their MS and of supporting their participation to TAIEX events.

⁵¹ 2 other events were organized in April 2020, 5 events in May and 19 in June.

Finally, they gave rise to new practices, specifically in terms of the preparation given to experts and were appreciated as more environmentally-friendly.

However, some of the potential advantages of online events regarding flexibility were not fully exploited. An example is the option to allow participants to register at a date closer to the event, an option that was not formally implemented.

Online events were also deemed less effective by the participants (as detailed in EQ 3). They were seen as effective concerning the ‘formal’ objectives of TAIEX events, including sharing of knowledge and practices. However, participants deplored the loss of informal exchanges and networking. Also, on-site visits were not possible, which led to a loss of quality in some cases. Overall, the effectiveness of online meetings was perceived to depend on the quality of the moderation and preparation by the moderator and the experts.

4.5 EQ 5 – Cost-efficiency, cost-effectiveness and administrative burden

To what extent were TAIEX events cost-efficient and cost-effective and implemented with limited administrative burden?

Summary response:

The direct financial costs of TAIEX events showed large variations across types of events and strands and increased over time for all types of events and strands.

Overall, TAIEX was perceived as having **simple administrative procedures that allowed timely organization of events**, which in turn **enhanced TAIEX’s capacity to fulfil its role**. Indeed, TAIEX was conceived to be able to rapidly provide capacity building support and support reforms in contexts where the speed of implementation was a key factor to guarantee success.

Explanations for the variation in costs of events include the increase in the share of events organized outside Europe (with higher travel costs), the increasing average number of participants, and the decision in some strands to start paying a fee to the institutions that host study visits as well as paying for venues. However, in some cases, there was an important increase in the cost per participant and per day that could not be explained by these evolutions only.

The **use of more expensive types of events was most often explained by the results targeted or the constraints faced**. However, there was no institutionalized process to ensure that more expensive events were used only when necessary. As a result, the cost-efficiency relied mostly on the common-sense and expertise of the TAIEX team. There was no specific guidance as to when and where study visits were to be used. A specific concern are online events, which did not always cost less than in-person events, but which mobilized more experts and more participants.

TAIEX events were organized with a **low administrative burden for beneficiaries, but the support to applications and to the organization of events required a considerable effort from EU stakeholders** (including EU Delegation personnel), particularly for new strands. This support significantly contributed to both the identification of event opportunities and the success of the events.

The degree of **accessibility of TAIEX**, understood as the possibility for beneficiaries to organize events and benefit from TAIEX, **varied a lot between strands, and across types of events**. Accessibility was particularly high for TAIEX TCc, where events were to be pre-approved on an annual basis, and in strategic strands where events were requested directly by Commission services. For TAIEX events requested by beneficiaries in the neighbourhood region, the degree of accessibility decreased over time as evidenced by the increase in rejected requests. A key factor in this respect was the lack of human resources in the TAIEX team to deal with all requests.

Finally, TAIEX budgets were underused over the period considered. Therefore TAIEX did not deliver on the potential within its budgeted allocations. The main issues for the underspending appear to be falling demand and human resource constraints in DG NEAR.

The direct financial costs of TAIEX events showed considerable variation across types of event and strands. This, variation increased over time for all types of events and all strands. This was explained by the development of strands with more expensive events, the increasing average number of participants, and the decision by some strands to start covering a larger scope of costs.

TAIEX events were organized at an average cost of EUR 10,000, ranging from EUR 2,000 for work-from-home assignments to EUR 20,000 for workshops (Table 4:). Multi-country workshops were the most expensive type of event, as they gathered many participants travelling from abroad, and required larger and more expensive venues. Therefore, the average multi-country workshop costed slightly above EUR 30,000.

Among TAIEX strands, TAIEX PI events were particularly expensive, costing more than twice as much as events for TAIEX EIR and TAIEX REGIO events, and up to almost five times as much as TAIEX TCc events (Table 5:). The main reason was linked to the higher travel costs. Following, the development of TAIEX PI from two to nine percent of the total number of events in its turn explained part of the overall increase in the cost of TAIEX events. In addition, the average number of participants also slightly increased.

However, these elements did not fully explain the total cost increase. For instance, the costs per participant and per day for study visits have significantly risen over the period in TAIEX PI, TAIEX REGIO and TAIEX in the neighbourhood (IPA and ENI strands). In the case of TAIEX REGIO, the increase in the cost of event (from below EUR 600 in 2015 to almost EUR 900 in 2017, stable since then) is explained by the decision to start paying a fee to hosting institutions⁵², but also paying for venues and for translation. In other cases, such as the increase in the cost per participant and per day within TAIEX PI's study visits, from around 1,000€ per participant/day in 2015 to around 1,700€ in 2018, no reasonable explanation was provided.

Table 4: Average cost per type event, excluding online events

	Expert		Work from			(single-country workshops)	Average per year
	Mission	Screening	Study Visit	Home	Workshop		
2015	5.477 €	10.679 €	6.422 €	1.185 €	19.591 €	(16.151€)	8.939 €
2016	5.583 €	39.223 €	7.484 €	1.431 €	19.685 €	(16.564€)	9.458 €
2017	6.879 €	21.698 €	8.916 €	1.436 €	21.602 €	(19.068€)	10.884 €
2018	7.040 €	20.251 €	8.726 €	1.817 €	20.542 €	(17.341€)	9.980 €
2019	7.750 €	11.409 €	9.406 €	2.808 €	23.615 €	(19.581€)	11.621 €
2020	7.856 €		9.316 €	4.498 €	21.065 €	(16.183€)	9.366 €
Average per type of event	6.460 €	13.465 €	8.004 €	2.030 €	20.761 €	(17.501€)	10.003 €

Source: ADE based on TMS database

Table 5: Average cost per strand, excluding online events

	EIR P2P	IPA, ENI	PI	REGIO P2P	SRSP/TSI	TCc	Average per year
2015		9.965 €	14.979 €	5.406 €		4.373 €	8.939 €
2016		10.308 €	17.749 €	6.632 €		5.218 €	9.458 €
2017		10.890 €	24.403 €	7.013 €	7.389 €	6.434 €	10.884 €
2018	13.191 €	10.933 €	23.702 €	7.371 €	7.707 €	6.228 €	9.980 €
2019	10.060 €	12.244 €	38.389 €	7.403 €	9.794 €	7.377 €	11.621 €
2020		9.600 €	55.740 €	8.232 €	7.429 €	6.541 €	9.366 €
Average per strand	11.412 €	10.684 €	24.934 €	6.954 €	8.699 €	5.641 €	10.003 €

Source: ADE based on TMS database

⁵² This was implemented to boost the number of candidate hosting institutions.

Overall, TAIEX was cost-efficient. The use of most expensive types of events was justified by the results targeted or the constraints faced.

However, there was no institutionalized process to ensure that more expensive events were used only when necessary and the cost-efficiency relied mostly on the common-sense and expertise of the TAIEX team. In particular, the expensive multi-country workshops were most often used for the purpose of gaining visibility and raising awareness among a large public on specific topics. Such objectives could not be targeted by other, less expensive, types of events. Similarly, study visits, which were very expensive per beneficiary involved, proved to be necessary in some specific cases where visiting infrastructure was needed. In general, the TAIEX team made sure that expensive visits were duly justified and used only when no other option was available. This practice was however not institutionalized, as there was no specific guidance or process to guarantee that more expensive events (such as study visits) were used only when needed⁵³.

TAIEX events were organized with a low administrative burden for beneficiaries, but the support to applications and to the organization of events required a considerable effort from EU stakeholders (including EU Delegation personnel), particularly for new strands.

The administrative burden to organize TAIEX events was remarkably low. Beneficiaries introduced their requests through an online platform accessible to anyone, which did not require any other identification than an email address. The request was then reviewed, and a response was sent by email, in more than 90% of the cases within one month.

Once the event was approved, the beneficiaries' main administrative constraint was to provide participants' information and participate in post-event surveys (though the latter was not enforced). They also proposed and discussed an agenda for the event.

Other actors that intervened were EU personnel in partner countries and in some cases NCPs. Their involvement consisted mainly in supporting beneficiaries, and was thus light in principle.

The process was facilitated by the existence of pre-defined mechanisms and budget agreements with the implementer. This was confirmed by stakeholders' perceptions, as more than 90% of survey respondents, including beneficiaries, EU officers and experts, stated that administrative burden as low relative to the results reached.

EU in-country personnel interviewed noted that, while little administrative burden was felt, TAIEX events required a significant commitment on the content/ political side – which tended to absorb a significant portion of the time of the designated TAIEX Contact Point.⁵⁴ However, the level of support and the indirect costs generated were valued by beneficiaries and contributed to both the identification of event opportunities and the success of the events.

The degree of accessibility of TAIEX varied a lot between strands, as well as across types of events. Accessibility was particularly high for TAIEX TCc, where events were pre-approved on an annual basis, and in strategic strands. Indeed, for TAIEX PI and TAIEX SRSP approval rates were close to 100%, as events were approved after a quick check of formal requirements (pointing at the process being a “tick-the-box” exercise). During their first year of implementation, new strands experienced high rejection rates. Study visits were also most often subject to rejection (36% of requests rejected on average, excluding SRSP, PI and TCc strands). The level of support received by applicants during the application process was not the same across strands.

For regular TAIEX events (events request by beneficiaries in the neighbourhood region), the degree of accessibility decreased over time as evidence by the increase in rejected requests, the main factor being the lack of human resources to manage requests. For instance, in TAIEX ENI East about 50% of requests were rejected in the years 2018 and 2019, the

⁵³ In TAIEX ENI, the request form introduced a specific section related to justifying the resort to study visit, but without that there appeared to be guidance on when to use that modality.

⁵⁴ It also appears that, in general, the level of commitment of local EU personnel is a differentiating factor for the emergence and success of events.

main reason being the unavailability of staff in the TAIEX unit to deal with the incoming requests (albeit poor quality of applications was also cited).

The shortage of staff was in part due to the increasing time-commitment that the introduction of TAIEX strategic implied for the TAIEX team. The TAIEX team has therefore done efforts (focused on TAIEX IPA-ENI particularly) to simplify the administrative steps required. Novelties included the introduction of training maps, whereby beneficiary institutions in consultation with DG NEAR can request up to 20 events with the same application on a specified chapter of the acquis, planned for the same year.

Also, the introduction of TAIEX Strategic offered the possibility to Commission/EEAS staff to complete the application. In some cases, the beneficiaries appeared to have requested the EUDEL or EU Office in the country (in the case of Kosovo) to directly submit their application for them. Lastly, during the COVID pandemic, a simplified and tailored application form was developed for requesting events to support the management of the pandemic by beneficiary institutions.

Overall, the budget results reached by TAIEX were favoured by simple administrative procedures that allowed timely organization of events in contexts where the speed of implementation was an important factor to facilitate the provision of events and support capacity building.

TAIEX budgets were underused over the period considered. Therefore TAIEX did not deliver on the potential within its budgeted allocations. The main issues for the underspending appear to be falling demand and human resource constraints in DG NEAR. Overall, a mere 62% of the budget allocated to events was used⁵⁵, with the highest level of absorption observed in ENI-EAST (85%) and FPI (79%). This important caveat to TAIEX' ability to mobilize resources towards results was explained by a lack of promotion, visibility and in turn a low number of requests than initially expected, and by a shortage of human resources to deal with applications.

Finally, online events did not always cost less than in-person events, but they mobilized more experts and more participants. Indeed, while online workshops costed less than half the price of in-person events, costs of online expert missions were slightly higher than in-person⁵⁶ counterparts. This surprising finding, contrary to stakeholders' perceptions, could in most cases be explained by a tendency to invite more experts and participants to online expert missions (+83% experts and +30% participants), as well as to the increased duration of online expert missions (+47% days on average). Online workshops on the other hand also mobilized more experts (+49%) but their duration was comparable to their in-person counterparts.

In conclusion, under equal conditions in terms of activities, same duration, number of experts and of participants, online events were cheaper to organize; and the marginal cost of stretching them across any of those dimensions was lower.

However, online events could not reproduce the level of interaction and informal exchanges that were regularly pointed out by stakeholders as important outcomes of TAIEX events. They also did not allow direct observation (for both experts and participants).

⁵⁵ For the period 2016-2020. Data were not available regarding 2015.

⁵⁶ The average cost of online expert mission was EUR 8,060, compared to vs. EUR 6,450 when in-person.

4.6 EQ 6 – Complementarity with other instruments

To what extent did TAIEX complement other instruments pursuing similar goals, and to what extent were there duplications and synergies?

Summary response:

Since its launch, TAIEX was designed to act alongside and complement other instruments to achieve broader objectives – whose definition and framing depends on the specific strand.

Within some strands, TAIEX actions were loosely defined within a broad scope, while in others (most notably, TAIEX TCc and TAIEX SRSP) they were defined within a set plan in tight coordination with the use of other instruments. The use of screening events within TAIEX IPA-ENI (upon request of the EU Commission) was also often associated with the development of intervention plans including the use of TAIEX in combination with other instruments.

Despite the above, TAIEX was occasionally used as a standalone instrument – particularly in sectors and situations which could not be addressed through any other instruments. This and the lack of availability of adequate complementary instruments led to the impossibility to adequately sustain support in view of achieving broader outcomes (e.g., reforms).

No instances of duplication with other instruments were observed in this study. TAIEX’s review of event applications included avoiding duplications and optimizing potential interactions and synergies with other EU actions (particularly, consultations with other EU services).

There appeared to be no TAIEX driven emphasis to identify and promote the coordination of the use of TAIEX with other instruments. Nevertheless, TAIEX was often used in coordination and synergy with other instruments:

- TAIEX was used systematically to support or complement Twinning (within TAIEX IPA-ENI, but TAIEX INTPA also expects to exploit synergies between the two instruments in the future).
- DG REGIO’s Communities of Practitioners used the TAIEX instrument to organize meetings.
- A policy-driven use was made of TAIEX (on EU-demand), notably as a diagnostic/ testing instrument preliminary to the setup of larger interventions.
- TAIEX PI tried to make sure TAIEX events were coordinated with the presence in the beneficiary country of high-level EU or MS officers to allow for their brief intervention.

Beneficiary countries also occasionally created coordination offices to generate synergies and complementarities between EU support instruments.

Since its launch in 1996, TAIEX was not meant to be a standalone instrument but rather to complement and work alongside other instruments and programmes to reach broader objectives.

This initially concerned the EU *acquis* within Western Balkans countries and Turkey. In 2020 this goal was still actual for the Western Balkans and Turkey region:⁵⁷⁵⁸ the role of TAIEX was described as that of a “facilitator”, “driver”⁵⁹, “catalyst” within broader programmes and reform projects.

The scope of eligible events within each of the TAIEX strands that were operational in the 2015-2020 period was defined in terms of support to the overarching objective of that strand, also pursued through the use of several other instruments.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ See in particular: Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) 2014-2020, Multi-country, TAIEX.

⁵⁸ Originally, TAIEX also had a wider coordination role in the overall provision of technical assistance on the transposition of the *acquis*. However, functions specifically related to this were later abandoned.

⁵⁹ Internal user guide on TAIEX and TAIEX Recalibration.

⁶⁰ In some cases, TAIEX was also used more specifically to support other EU projects and instruments – such as EPPA, ECRAN, RIPAP and IPARD (EU pre-accession assistance for rural development), in the Western Balkans and Turkey region; though also in those cases, support was broadly defined and did not define a specific plan.

In most cases, however, strands did not define systematic mechanisms to specify how individual TAIEX events would complement with other instruments. TAIEX SRSP and TAIEX TCc were exceptions in this regard: in these strands TAIEX events were defined within wider sector reform plans developed in collaboration with specific EU MS countries or the TCc, often spanning multi-year periods and in combination with other instruments. Somewhat similar event planning processes also occasionally took place through peer-review missions within IPA-ENI (use of TAIEX on EU demand in a diagnostic fashion). For such events, comprehensive plans of interventions were developed and launched, including TAIEX as well as of other instruments.

In some cases, the unique and distinctive characteristics of TAIEX (see also EQ1) led it to be used as a standalone instrument in situations that were not addressed through any other available instrument. At times, this resulted in issues, as capacity building could also not be followed up through other complementary types of support that were necessary to fulfil the needs of beneficiaries. This potentially led to a waste of resources.⁶¹

TAIEX's review of event applications included elements to avoid duplications and to optimize interactions and synergies with other EU actions. Event applications, e.g., required detailing any other EU/other relevant assistance related to the issues to be covered by the TAIEX event. During the application review process, consultations took place with relevant DGs and other Commission services to identify potential duplications, synergies and complementarities. No instances of duplication with other instruments were observed during this study.

There was also, however, no evidence that TAIEX processes, and more specifically the review of event applications, led to or facilitated the identification and pursuit of opportunities of coordination or synergies with other instruments. Also, no evidence was found of TAIEX promoting the use of other instruments in combination with TAIEX on the website, leaflets and other advertising material or guidelines for beneficiaries or EU Commission users. The single exception is the EIR website, which presented different funding options for support in addressing gaps identified in EIR reports.⁶²

This disconnection was also confirmed by some EU officers who were interviewed.⁶³

Despite the above, TAIEX was recurrently used in combination with or support to some specific other instruments promoted by the EU Commission.

TAIEX was, e.g., regularly used in combination with Twinning, particularly in three ways:

1. To assess the need for a Twinning mission or to establish the basis for one;
2. To assess and draft reports on Twinning's results. The use of TAIEX events (requested by the EU Commission) in this sense was systematic, following all Twinning events;
3. To fill gaps that a Twinning mission could not address.

Another important area of synergy with Twinning is the ED BE, which is shared between the two instruments. Last, synergies with Twinning were also pursued in generating awareness of the instruments. Often NCPs and CPs within EU Delegations were in charge of both instruments. Annual meetings were organized with NCPs in Enlargement countries for both instruments, in the form of TAIEX screening events – to support the coordination, improved management and promotion of both TAIEX and Twinning activities.

⁶¹ This issue was mentioned by stakeholders within TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA, mostly in connection of TAIEX support extended to sectors that were not contemplated in MIPs. (MN739, MN741, MN743). In Uganda, for instance, several events were organized to support pesticide management to meet requirements for exporting agricultural produce to the EU. Stakeholders involved deemed these events highly successful in generating local capacities and developing a legal framework, including a pesticide monitoring plan. To fully implement the plan and achieve the broader objective of meeting EU export requirements, however, the country now needs to pursue accreditation for its Pesticide Residue laboratory. The necessary resources (notably financial) for this endeavor have not been yet identified.

⁶² https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eir/p2p/index_en.htm

⁶³ Some quotes reported: "Activities were very disconnected from each other. [...] No link between training and peer learning. [...] There will be a training, a guidance document, a TAIEX event – with no explicit links." "There are complementarities. Sometimes you go see the neighbour, then apply for more thorough expertise, or money to build the solution. But in general, for the moment there are parallel tracks."

On another note, DG REGIO's Communities of Practitioners⁶⁴ regularly leveraged TAIEX to organize meetings. It was also often used, in its EU-demand version, in support of policy development, most notably as a diagnostic tool and/or a way to assess the opportunity and recommended extent of broader interventions or collaborations within IPA-ENI countries. Finally, TAIEX PI purportedly coordinated some TAIEX events to coincide with the presence in the beneficiary country of high-level EU or MS officers, which briefly intervened.⁶⁵ Although the two actions were not necessarily complementary or focused on the same objective, this allowed for mutual benefits. Indeed, the event could gain a higher visibility and the visit could be enriched with a tangible cooperation element.⁶⁶

Beneficiaries also occasionally pursued synergies through setting up local structures to coordinate the request and use of different types of EU instruments. In particular:

- Ukraine set up a centre to ensure the coordination and effective implementation of TAIEX, Twinning and OECD-sigma Instruments in the country. The centre oversees gathering information, facilitating and supporting the organization of different forms of support to public administration development, institutional capacity strengthening and actions towards adaptation to the standards of the EU.
- In Tunisia, an EU Coordination officer is responsible for all EU-backed technical assistance programs, including TAIEX. One of its tasks is to generate awareness on which programs can complement TAIEX and how, particularly at the moment of application.

⁶⁴ Networks of administrators from EU countries, who are involved in managing EU funding under the ERDF and Cohesion fund

⁶⁵ TAIEX-Partnership Instrument Final Report, July 2016-July 2020.

⁶⁶ For example, within the events reviewed in-depth, Mrs. Federica Mogherini, then High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and Vice-President of the Commission, intervened in the opening of a TAIEX event on security and justice that took place in Mexico in 2016.

4.7 EQ 7 - EU added value

To what extent did working with peers offer specific (EU) added value and to what extent has TAIEX built on the potential benefits of the EU internal cooperation?

Summary response:

Organizing **peer working** via TAIEX at the EU level (as compared to MS or specific DG/ EU service level) allowed for higher effectiveness in channelling EU MS expertise needed by beneficiary countries. It also contributed to the positioning of the EU as an important, united actor on the international scene. The **expert database**, and more in general the know-how developed by the TAIEX team in locating MS public sector expertise according to needs, was an important asset and value added in this respect.

Organizing peer working via TAIEX at the EU level (as compared to MS or specific DG/EU service level) allowed for higher effectiveness in channelling EU MS expertise needed by beneficiary countries. It also contributed to the positioning of the EU as an important, united actor on the international scene. The know-how of the TAIEX team in identifying suitable experts, including through the expert database, was a key asset and value added in this respect.

Organizing peer-to-peer assistance at the EU level (rather than at the MS or at the specific DG and EU service level) offered four substantial benefits at the organizational level.⁶⁷

- It offered a consolidated database of expertise⁶⁸ at the EU level, with a critical mass of experts on a range of topics and from different MS and hence contexts. This allowed finding fits for specific events (i.e., expertise from a specific topic, but also from a variety of settings that offer different contexts of implementation; and with availability on the foreseen event's date). In the words of an EU officer: "The EU has a natural advantage in that it can put forward 27 different solutions – including high tech, advanced ones but also more pragmatic ones, which are at times the most requested."⁶⁹
- Development of know-how and experience, and thus efficiency, in negotiating arrangements to enable the availability of such expertise for a limited number of days, with different countries and institutions (one-stop-shop).
- Achievement of sufficient scale to enable the TAIEX team to include officers specializing in different strands/topics, which enabled them to provide a more effective and efficient service.
- The possibility to use TAIEX also as a networking and training tool within EU communities of experts, i.e., by pairing experts coming from different MS and with different levels of experience in the same event.

The management of TAIEX at the EU level also had advantages from a perception perspective.

- The EU-wide approach makes sense as the purpose of events is normally not focused on the exchange with a specific MS, but with the EU as a whole. This is the case, for example, of events focused on aligning trade practices to support better commercial relationships.
- Within TAIEX PI and events aimed at paving the way for future cooperation in particular⁷⁰, the possibility to access and leverage high quality expertise from multiple countries supported the projection of the image of the EU as a united, strong global player.

⁶⁷ Interviews with EU officers (TAIEX team, TAIEX users, members of DGs with TAIEX SLAs).

⁶⁸ Including 5,473 experts as of March 2021.

⁶⁹ MN738.

⁷⁰ Within the sample: 62261, 66347.

- Most stakeholders surveyed agreed that TAIEX events strengthened participants' perception of the EU as a valuable partner (88% of experts and 86% of participants⁷¹).
- The provision of assistance to non-EU countries at the EU level was coherent with the recent Team Europe approach. Also, in line with that, cases were reported of EU MS either suggesting for the organization of TAIEX events (to EU Delegations, or directly to beneficiaries) or offering the participation of specific experts.⁷²

Complementarities and synergies with other EU assistance (as described in EQ 6) would likely be lost if TAIEX-like actions were implemented at the MS level.

TAIEX did play a limited role in fostering cooperation at EU level.

- *De facto* the implementation of TAIEX entailed a high level of cooperation between DG NEAR, EUDELs, and EU MS (ENI South);
- The evaluation did not find evidence that TAIEX contributed to establishing and/or effectively implementing coordination mechanisms among European actors. The cooperation was mostly organic and the degree of maximisation depended on individuals in EUDELs, national administrations, their level of seniority and their personal commitment to TAIEX.

TAIEX added benefits with respect to what would have resulted from action taken by EU MS on their own, since no current MS action was identified that operates in a way that is like TAIEX or overlaps with it.

- Survey respondents mostly stated that the needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through existing EU MS initiatives (without involving the EU). 58% of participants agreed with a statement in this sense, though 33% offered no opinion; 8% strongly or mostly disagreed. Among experts, 62% agreed, 30% offered no opinion, and 6% disagreed.
- No evidence emerged from the interviews of action taken by individual MS which significantly overlaps with TAIEX or operates in a similar way.

⁷¹ It is worth noting that 9% of experts and 10% of participants did not provide an opinion. Of those that provided an opinion, 97% of experts and 95% of participants agreed with the statement.

⁷² MN736, MN741.

5 Overall Assessment, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Overall assessment

The Commission introduced TAIEX in 1996. The aim of the instrument is to support candidate countries to EU accession through short-term, peer-to-peer assistance to help them with adopting the EU *acquis*.

From 2004, TAIEX expanded to intervene in other regions of the world and in EU MS. This concerned 9 different “strands”: three in the NEAR regions (IPA, ENI South, ENI East), one focusing on the Turkish Cypriot community (TCC), three to organize events in the EU region (Regio, SRSP, and EIR), and two in the rest of the world (PI, and INTPA).

TAIEX was **relevant** at different levels.

The instruments proved well-conceived to address the need for enhanced know-how, limited in scope, acquired via exchanges amongst public sector practitioners and requiring swift action. This was the case in its original set-up in the accession countries, but also when broadened to other contexts. Under this overall framework, individual TAIEX events generally succeeded in addressing beneficiary needs, while remaining in line with EU priorities.

Accordingly, over the 2015–2020 period covered by this evaluation, TAIEX was generally praised by stakeholders for its ability to provide rapid and on-demand support. This consisted in the organization of workshops, expert missions, study visits, and work from home. Through these events, TAIEX intervened as a gap-filling capacity development instrument. In some strands, it did so by inscribing itself in a strategic architecture for overall support, while in others it played a more operational and or punctual role.

TAIEX spent, over the period considered, € 67M for 6,700 events. This constituted an underuse of its allocated budget, and only a fraction of the support the EU provided in the concerned countries and regions.

The demand for TAIEX events decreased over the period for several reasons. In 2016, the introduction of an EU demand component of TAIEX (“strategic”) only partly succeeded in inscribing TAIEX in a more policy planning perspective. It also had some drawbacks on TAIEX’s ability to respond to beneficiaries’ demands. There was an additional and substantial drop in activity caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, but TAIEX implemented a rapid switch to online events.

TAIEX’s **effectiveness** consisted primarily in generating results in terms of a better exchange of information, and the development of individual and institutional capacities. There are also, albeit scarcer, examples of TAIEX having a broader **impact**, notably by playing a role in bringing about structural reforms or initiating the process of political change. The **quality of results** was favoured by the quality of experts, the inscription of TAIEX in longer terms strategies, and its use in synergy with other instruments. Conversely, political instability and logistical issues sometimes hampered the achievement of results. The **sustainability** of results remained, in general, a challenge, notably for reasons of lack of follow-up and frequent staff turnover among beneficiary administrations.

TAIEX provided different types of (EU) **value added**. The constitution of a database, listing experts from different contexts, was a clear benefit of the organization of TAIEX at EU level. Also, the short-term and ad-hoc nature of the instrument was a key strength by allowing it to provide flexible and rapid support that could not be delivered through other instruments.

TAIEX was **complementary** to other support by preparing it, filling gaps, or compensating for the absence of other instruments.

In terms of **efficiency**, the evaluation found that TAIEX was an accessible instrument that succeeded in limiting the administrative burden for stakeholders. The direct costs of TAIEX events presented significant differences across types of event and strands, and increased over time for all of them, for contextual reasons or because of specific decisions taken. The location of the TAIEX management in

DG NEAR offered clear advantages and was regarded by most stakeholders as the best solution, even in a context where TAIEX support had been broadened beyond DG NEAR countries.

5.2 Lessons learnt and good practices

Following are the lessons that emerged from this evaluation and that are relevant beyond its immediate scope.

Lesson #1: Online events have an added value in specific contexts and when used as a complement rather than a substitute for in-person events. They could therefore provide a useful addition to TAIEX's catalogue even after the end of the covid-19 pandemic.

Overall, online events had to deal with several challenges that were not observed for in-person events. They led, for example, to a loss of informal interactions, a key component of TAIEX events, and were associated with a tendency for one-way communication. Also, there were challenges arising from limited internet connectivity, or other technical issues as well as difficulties associated with translation.

Nevertheless, in the context of the COVID pandemic, online events provided specific benefits, and a range of good practices were identified for their use:

1. Through their capacity to ensure continuity of support in crisis situations like the COVID-19 pandemic;
2. When the expert had already worked with the same beneficiaries and had established connections;
3. When the event targeted a broad audience difficult to gather in one physical place for workshops. Online events allowed for a larger number of beneficiaries and experts to participate, especially in the context of multi-country events. For the latter, this also helps to reduce the costs and environmental impact;
4. When there was a need for short-term and immediate support for follow-up of events (for instance to check whether recommendations were being followed). Online events were also reportedly easier to organise in a shorter time frame;
5. When it was difficult to find experts with sufficient availability. For some experts it is difficult to travel and leave their posts for multiple days. Doing a short virtual intervention provides an opportunity to work with them nonetheless.

Lesson #2: Training maps and workplans can be a useful tool for improving planning and the sequencing of events and can contribute to creating momentum for reforms. However, it is essential to communicate well and to make sure sufficient resources are available for their management

The introduction of training maps and workplans in TAIEX IPA was appreciated by the beneficiaries. It helped in planning and coordinating, and it improved the sequencing of events. It also served as a prioritization mechanism in the context of limited human resources within the TAIEX Team and allowed alignment with political and programming priorities of the EU agenda/bilateral agreements.

Good practices include the use of the same experts for several events, and the design of technical and well-focused plans. The plans worked particularly well in the agricultural sector and to some extent for Justice & Human Rights.

Despite the potential of workplans and training maps, in the ENI EAST beneficiaries expressed dissatisfaction with their introduction, with several NCPs having requested their discontinuation. The different management and communication approaches for training maps and workplans adopted for different strands inside the TAIEX Team, including the tendency for the use of wider and less technical plans in the East Neighbourhood, appear to have been key for the differences in their effectiveness across regions.

A need for the TAIEX Team to ensure coherence in its approach across strands and to address the following issues has been identified:

- The high administrative burden for NCPs and TAIEX Team staff, combined with a lengthy approval process. This had an impact on the ability of TAIEX to respond quickly to the needs of beneficiaries and resulted in TAIEX being perceived as increasingly slow and less flexible in the region.
- A limited or unclear communication: The issue of communication was evident in the ENI East where NCPs were led to believe that events could not be added in an ad-hoc fashion to the plans, although procedures allowed for that. This exacerbated the perception of TAIEX as less flexible. In the ENI South, there was confusion among relevant EUDEL staff as to the degree to which training maps were feasible in the region. This is despite them expressing a clear need for a more medium-term use of TAIEX to cover the existing gap between TAIEX and Twinning in particular in areas that cannot be covered by OECD Sigma.

Lesson #3: Study visits present a distinct advantage when used in specific contexts. The inclusion of sufficient and appropriate participants is critical to ensure a proper follow-up

Interviewees were most critical of study visits. Several stakeholders argued that they were often not learning experiences but rather as an opportunity to participate in a tourist-like visit abroad. Study visits were also generally associated with higher costs and EU MS host institutions often described them as burdensome. On the other hand, beneficiaries continue demanding high number of study visits.

Nevertheless, when used in specific contexts, study visits present distinct advantages, when a number of good practices are observed:

- The organisation of study visits for the right purpose. For instance, they proved particularly useful when they concerned technical subject matters, involving the use of hardware or software not yet available in beneficiary institutions or when direct observation of processes was essential (e.g., monitoring and evaluation);
- The requirement for additional justification for the organization of study visits in the application form, followed by a systematic consultation process. These have been effective in screening requests and ensuring that study visits were used only when there was a distinct advantage in organizing one;
- The inclusion of sufficient and appropriate participants. More specifically expanding the limit on the number of participants (3 or 5, depending on the strand). This limit is seen as too restrictive and not effective, particularly as often some of the limited spots tend to be occupied by representatives of the beneficiaries other than the technical-level officers most involved in capacity development efforts. Expanding the limit would allow to include both technical-level officers and high-level staff to ensure visibility and political commitment. Involving both proved to be good practice for promoting follow-up.

Lesson #4: TAIEX Strategic events requested by Commission services/EEAS can be an effective tool for diplomacy, outreach, and policy planning. They can also contribute to better framing and monitoring of TAIEX events. However, they face an issue of ownership by beneficiaries.. This is particularly the case for multi-country events.

The following good practices were identified to support the effectiveness of TAIEX Strategic events and to encourage follow-up by beneficiaries:

- The active involvement of beneficiaries in the design of events;
- The active involvement of EU Delegations in the process (when the request emanates from line DGs);

- A systematic follow-up for multi-country events. It was argued that single-country events should be planned immediately following a TAIEX multi-country event, and this to ensure follow-up action, with the option for beneficiaries to opt-out if such an event does not appear relevant to them.
- Sufficient communication to EU staff that can initiate requests of the possibilities provided by TAIEX Strategic. Currently, there seems to be limited awareness, in particular among IPA and ENI South EUDEL staff.

Lesson #5: TAIEX events, and in particular peer-review missions, can be a useful tool for EU policy planning and gap assessment, but their use requires increased awareness among relevant EU staff that can initiate requests.

In pre-accession countries, peer-review missions were systematically used to assess the progress made towards the implementation of different chapters of the EU acquis and for the identification of remaining gaps.

The reports of these missions proved useful for informing the opening and closing of negotiation chapters. They also provided a key source of information for policy planning. Both the Commission/EEAS and beneficiary authorities used the findings to determine the organisation of follow-up actions (including via TAIEX) to ensure that the identified gaps were addressed.

Apart from the Western Balkans and Turkey, the relevant stakeholders from the East and South Neighbourhood did not show sufficient awareness of this opportunity, in particular EUDELS. This resulted in their underutilisation of peer-review missions, despite their potential and relevance.

Lesson #6: NCPs and EUDEL TAIEX focal points can significantly contribute to both the take-up and effectiveness of TAIEX events when adopting an active role in the instrument

NCPs and EUDEL TAIEX focal points, in some contexts, played a key role in promoting the visibility of the instrument. They ensured that the application process was accessible to national institutions, in particular smaller ones with limited human resources and experience. They also promoted synergies and complementarities with other instruments and programs.

However, their role has varied across time and contexts and has been depending on both the level of seniority of the appointed staff and their personal interest in the instrument. The lack of a standardised function and concise guidelines also played a role in this regard.

Several good practices emerged, notably from the ENI East where these actors were particularly active:

- Using the same NCPs for TAIEX and Twinning, to foster synergies and complementarities across instruments;
- Organising events to foster the exchange of good practices and lessons learnt among NCPs and EUDEL focal points, in addition to the institution building days (“TAIEX for NCPs and EUDEL focal points”);
- Providing clear information about the role and activities of the NCPs and EUDEL focal points, in particular in terms of visibility in cooperation with the TAIEX Team (NCPs) as well as in terms of TAIEX Strategic (EUDEL focal points);
- Using EUDEL policy officers as TAIEX focal points rather than EUDEL administrative staff.

Lesson #7: The quality and preparation of TAIEX experts was key for ensuring the effectiveness of TAIEX events. The TAIEX Team plays an important role in ensuring that experts are well-prepared.

Across all strands, it was highlighted that the selected experts should not only have expertise on relevant topics, but also a sufficient understanding of the context to better respond to the needs of beneficiaries and to consider EU priorities. In addition, they should also be able to communicate their messages clearly.

The following good practices have emerged across strands concerning the role of the TAIEX Team:

- Pairing new TAIEX experts with more experienced ones;
- Providing presentation guidelines to encourage better communication. This has been done at the initiative of some case handlers but was not systematically applied.
- Supporting experts to become familiar with the national context.

Experts can be familiarized with contexts in the following ways:

- Providing them with information packages sufficiently in advance. Across strands, experts valued the information packages of the TAIEX Team. However, these were not always provided or were provided with delays, in some cases even after the event;
- In the TCc context, experts at the beginning of their engagement (which spans 2 to 3-year MTA periods), received training from headquarters aimed at familiarizing them with the specificities of the TCc context. Prior to COVID they also received on-site induction upon their first visit to the TCc.
- In the INTPA context, some innovative practices were used to support experts in familiarizing themselves with beneficiary contexts. These included the development of questionnaires by experts to be completed by beneficiaries; the filming of beneficiary facilities (e.g., laboratories); and preparatory calls between experts and key beneficiaries.

5.3 Conclusions

This chapter presents the main conclusions emerging from the findings of the evaluation, in four clusters:

- Cluster 1 concerns the TAIEX's **strategy** to address beneficiaries' capacity development needs;
- Cluster 2 relates to the **results** achieved and the extent to which they were sustained;
- Cluster 3 talks about the **implementation modalities**, including during **COVID-19**;
- Cluster 4 concerns TAIEX's **specific and EU value added**.

5.3.1 Cluster 1: TAIEX's strategy to address beneficiaries' capacity development needs

Conclusion 1: TAIEX fulfilled its role as gap filling capacity development instrument

TAIEX fulfilled its role by intervening as a gap-filling capacity development instrument, both in the enlargement context for which it was initially created and in the other countries and regions to which its support was later broadened. TAIEX support was generally a part of overarching strategies in pre-accession countries and TCc, but less in other strands, where support was more punctual.

TAIEX was created as a capacity development instrument in a pre-accession context. Its purpose was to contribute to accession support, by filling certain needs and demands in terms of capacity development. In this context, it was intended to be one of many tools/instruments in the broader architecture of aid. This is reflected by the financial weight of TAIEX, which represented a marginal percentage of the overall support that was provided, first to the accession countries, later in the other parts of the world where TAIEX support was introduced. Overall, TAIEX represented € 65M over the period 2015-2020, i.e., about €10M/year.

This gap-filling mode was the way in which TAIEX was mostly used, although it was more embedded in overall strategies in the enlargement context and in TCc. In EU MS, TAIEX was more often used in a more punctual or operational manner.

This conclusion is based on EQ1, EQ2, EQ6

Conclusion 2: A successful broadening of TAIEX to other regions through a pragmatic approach

TAIEX support was broadened to regions and contexts beyond the enlargement region. It proved appropriate for this purpose, but there was no clear approach towards retrofitting and the overall objectives remained broad.

Since its creation, TAIEX support has gradually broadened to other regions and contexts beyond the enlargement context. This included: the TCc where TAIEX continued to be used as a tool for approximation to the EU acquis; the Neighbourhood Region and other Partner Countries in the rest of the world where TAIEX was used to support the implementation of EU bilateral agreements and to foster policy dialogue and strengthen EU normative power (mostly TAIEX PI); and finally, EU MS where TAIEX served as a tool for supporting a number of pre-existing programs through three distinct strands (SRSP, REGIO and EIR).

This expansion of TAIEX to other contexts was based on the implementation of the successful TAIEX formula: leveraging on short-term EU MS public sector expertise and intervening quickly as a gap-filling instrument. The support was embedded in broader service level agreements but was mainly implemented through a pragmatic and adaptive approach with little retrofitting. It was also not laid down explicitly in a strategy what specificities of support would be needed and how the instrument could specifically be used in these new contexts.

This conclusion is based on EQs 1,2

Conclusion 3: An instrument that was appreciated overall but for which demand has decreased

Stakeholders generally appreciated TAIEX. The demand for TAIEX has decreased over the years, however, for reasons linked to the lack of knowledge of the instrument, a lesser implication in the accession context, the strategic choice of recalibration, and, in a different way, the COVID-19 pandemic. Budgets in all strands were underspent.

The general feedback on the instruments was positive across all strands. This was a recurrent theme in interviews with different stakeholders (beneficiaries, experts, Commission representatives, and others), in the focus groups, and in the surveys.

Despite the appreciation, the number of TAIEX events has decreased over the years in the IPA, ENI and TCc strands. Indeed, as shown in the inventory, from 2015 to 2019 and despite some stabilisation/hiccups there was a decrease in both the yearly number of events (from 1,624 to 1,020) and in the amounts spent (from 14.5M€ to 11.9M€).

There are several reasons. Firstly, there was an increase in rejection rates, due to limited human resources and an increased emphasis on prioritisation. At the same time, there was a decline in events requested by beneficiaries, which was not offset by the increase in demand for events by Commission services/EEAS. Newly introduced restrictions in the thematic areas where TAIEX can be applied (TAIEX TCc and ENI) and in the number of events that can be requested by beneficiaries (ENI East) also contributed.

The budgets in all strands were underspent, with the share of budget spent ranging from 17% in TAIEX INTPA, to 54% in TAIEX IPA and to 85% in TAIEX ENI EAST.

For obvious reasons, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a sudden decline of the number of events organised (from 1,020 in 2019 to 370 in 2020), which is also reflected in a drop in expenditures (from 11.9M€ to 3.4M€ for the same years). Indeed, with the pandemic, events in physical attendance were at first prohibited for a certain time (beginning of 2020). Later, they were again allowed, but they remained difficult to organise and saw periods of restricted attendance.

This conclusion is based on EQs 1, 4, 5, and the inventory

Conclusion 4: Partial success of TAIEX recalibration to foster a stronger policy approach with a downturn in the capacity to serve specific needs of countries

The TAIEX Recalibration only partly succeeded in better inscribing TAIEX IPA-ENI support in broader policy frameworks. In a context of scarce resources and prioritisation of TAIEX Strategic over the demand-driven approach, TAIEX Strategic constrained the capacity to serve countries' specific needs and reform objectives.

With the recalibration of TAIEX in 2016, several new features were introduced aimed at making sure that TAIEX intervened as a policy planning tool to meet DG NEAR's core missions in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood regions. This only partly succeeded due to both a limited uptake of TAIEX's strategic features and a lower capacity of TAIEX strategic events to support countries' specific needs and reform objectives in a flexible and swift way.

TAIEX Strategic enabled Commission services/ EEAS to request events for the pursuit of key EU priorities that may not have been undertaken by the national authorities, and to use TAIEX in support of other EU Instruments and programs (e.g., Twinning, ECRAN, EPPA, RIPAP). Planning features of the recalibration, such as training maps and workplans, contributed to a better coordination and sequencing of events, while peer-review missions were an important information source for EU policy planning in the region.

However, the uptake of TAIEX Strategic has been limited. The use of peer-review missions was not boosted. Such events were not organised in the ENI South. In addition, strategic events requested by DG NEAR and line DGs, albeit playing an important role in exposing beneficiaries to key EU priority issues, were limited in their capacity to support concrete capacity building results and reforms. They tended to be broader in content, with lower levels of involvement by beneficiaries in their design and subsequently lower levels of government ownership.

In a context of limited human resources, where TAIEX strategic events were prioritised over the demand-driven approach, this implied that in some cases the countries' specific needs and reform objectives were not served in a timely way, with beneficiaries and NCPs complaining about increased rejections and delays of events they had requested.

This conclusion is based on EQs 1, 3, 4

5.3.2 Cluster 2: Results achieved and their sustainability

Conclusion 5: TAIEX contributed to exchanges of best practices, enhanced individual and institutional capacity building and played, in some cases, a role in structural reforms.

TAIEX proved to be an effective tool for achieving its key objectives of exchanging best practices and short-term individual and institutional capacity building. There were also examples of TAIEX playing a key role in bringing about structural reforms or paving the way for political change. These occurred when TAIEX support was clearly inscribed in a broader support strategy. Significant variation was observed across strands.

Across all strands, TAIEX proved to be an effective tool for achieving its key objectives of exchange of best practices and short-term individual and institutional capacity building, albeit with some exceptions. It did so by sharing EU best practices, providing direct support for organisational change and developing training and dissemination material. Although TAIEX was mostly a short-term tool, in some cases it successfully provided more medium to long-term capacity building support through a series of events (in IPA and ENI EAST) or MTA (TCc). These were associated with higher levels of effectiveness and sustainability.

In some cases, TAIEX played an important role in supporting reforms in beneficiary countries. However, this varied significantly across strands. Differences in the political context across strands, as well as differences in the objectives pursued and in the selected implementation modalities played an important role. Across strands, TAIEX's contribution to reforms was most constrained by its short-term and ad-hoc nature and its limited critical mass. In most strands, TAIEX accounted for less than 1% of the budget beneficiaries received for reforms, with only TCc and SRSP accounting for a higher share (4.2 and 1.3% respectively). Nevertheless, when successfully integrated within broader EU programming and used in synergy with other instruments, the short-term and ad-hoc nature of the instrument became a key source of its strength allowing it to provide flexible and immediate support that could not be delivered through other instruments.

By strengthening administrative capacity building and in some cases by promoting reforms, TAIEX was able to support key EU priorities in the regions where it intervened. In IPA, ENI, TCc and PI, TAIEX in synergy with other instruments had a positive but marginal effect in the alignment of partner countries with EU norms, standards and regulatory frameworks and the implementation of bilateral agreements.

In ENI South, the adverse political context was a key barrier. For TAIEX INTPA, the limited sample of events of the pilot phase does not yet allow for conclusions. In PI, TAIEX was able to contribute to strengthening policy and political dialogue and to strengthening EU visibility and normative power, a key objective of PI. In TAIEX EIR and TAIEX REGIO, the contribution of TAIEX to broader objectives was limited by the lack of ex-ante integration of TAIEX within a broader strategic framework with clear objectives and expectations.

This conclusion is based on EQs 3, 5, and the inventory

Conclusion 6: A swift instrument

TAIEX succeeded in reaching its goal of being an instrument easy to call upon and addressing demands swiftly. However, there was a slowing down of the speed of delivery in recent years.

One of the key objectives of TAIEX was to be a swiftly implemented instrument, delivering rapid results to address short-term ad-hoc needs. Although the speed was not monitored and clear speed targets were not set, stakeholders agreed that TAIEX had generally delivered its support in line with expectations in terms of swiftness.

In emergency situations, TAIEX was able to organise events as quickly as 10 days after the submission of a request. On average, however TAIEX events took more than three months to organise. Depending on the strands, between 20 and 50% of events were organised within three months over the period considered, 65% within six months, and 85% within a year. This is also linked to the fact that overall, the accessibility to TAIEX was high, the administrative burden low, and the budget flexible.

However, over the years TAIEX has been slowing down. This was of course the case in the year 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic that caused a drop in the organisation of events. However, even before the pandemic, the share of events organised in three months dropped from 44% in 2015 to 32% in 2019, and those organised in less than 6 months went from 71% in 2015 to 53% in 2019.

A key source of delays was the challenge to identify experts. This should be seen in the context of the broadening of the scope of TAIEX and the emergence of new issues for which it was used. The expert database, despite its magnitude and large added value, was not always properly kept up-to-date. In addition, in 2018 and 2019, an overload of the TAIEX Team was observed, due to staff turnover and the introduction of TAIEX Strategic that was associated with a higher administrative burden. This limited their capacity to respond to requests in a timely way. The ensuing delays have decreased the satisfaction and lessened the credibility of the instrument for beneficiaries.

This conclusion is based on EQ1,2,4 and 5

Conclusion 7: Factors enhancing or hampering results and their sustainability

The achievement of results was conditioned by several recurrent factors, most importantly the presence of high-quality experts, the use of TAIEX as part of a more long-term strategy, and the synergistic use of TAIEX with other instruments. Conversely, adverse political contexts and political instability, and occasional implementation issues hampered results.

In some contexts, the sustainability of results remained a challenge, notably for reasons of lack of follow-up, and frequent staff turnover in beneficiary administrations.

Across strands, reaching results was facilitated by several recurrent conditions. When TAIEX was used as part of a more long-term strategy (including workplans, training maps, MTA, and series of events) or used in synergy with other instruments, including Twinning, both its effectiveness and sustainability were boosted. High quality experts were also a key factor for success and an important source of TAIEX's added value. The active involvement of beneficiaries in the design of events was critical for ensuring that events were well-tailored to specific needs and for government ownership. Swiftness of response was essential to address urgent needs and capitalise upon political momentum.

Key barriers to TAIEX's effectiveness outside of the EU were a low political commitment, limited absorption capacities of beneficiary administrations, political instability and frequent staff turnover. In such contexts, TAIEX could not be used to directly promote reforms but served to create an environment that could make reforms possible in the future. In addition, a minority of events faced implementation challenges that prevented them from achieving their objectives, such as delays, insufficient or low-quality translation, experts lack of knowledge of the national context, insufficiently tailored/or an overly ambitious agenda.

Online and multi-country events were also systematically associated with more limited results; the former due to a loss of informal interactions and the latter due to an insufficiently tailored agenda to the specific needs of beneficiaries and frequent challenges in translation.

Overall, TAIEX's results tended to be sustainable. However, in some contexts, the sustainability of results remained a challenge, notably for reasons of lack of follow-up, and frequent staff turnover among beneficiary administrations that led to a loss of progress and shifts in political momentum.

This conclusion is based on EQ 2, 3, and 4

Conclusion 8: Challenges in monitoring and reporting, and a lack of a well-developed strategy for learning lessons.

The TAIEX monitoring and evaluation system was well-organised and consisted of several instruments. However, it faced several challenges in its implementation. There was also no clear strategy for learning lessons.

The TAIEX monitoring and evaluation system was well-organised and consisted of several instruments. This included evaluation surveys, final reports of events, attendance of TAIEX team members to certain events, the TMS database, etc.

However, the implementation of this system faced a number of challenges: low completion of surveys by participants (the after-6 month evaluation is completed for only 43% of events); lack of submission/uploading of a final report for some events; diverging quality of those reports, partly associated with a lack of clear guidelines for their completion; absence of a system whereby all parties with the Commission (line DGs for example) have access to reports in order to use them for follow-up.

A clear strategy for learning lessons and capitalizing on the findings from monitoring activities was also missing. The Institution Building Days, albeit a meaningful opportunity for lessons learning, were insufficient to allow for systematic reflections and there was no evidence of reports to allow for formal follow-up. The data obtained from monitoring, through questionnaires and evaluation surveys, were not sufficiently followed up. They were only sparingly shared outside the TAIEX Team, although several stakeholders expressed an interest in consulting them.

This conclusion is based on EQ 2, 3, 4 and 5

5.3.3 Cluster 3: Implementation modalities (including during COVID-19)

Conclusion 9: Direct Costs of events increased over the years.

TAIEX events were overall organised with a low administrative burden for beneficiaries but requiring a considerable effort from EU stakeholders. In some cases, the administrative burden increased in recent years, but it remained low compared to other instruments.

Direct financial costs of TAIEX events showed large variations across type of events and strands and increased over time. Online events were not always less costly than in-person events.

Overall, stakeholders agreed that TAIEX events were organised with low administrative burden for beneficiaries, although there were some exceptions. This contributed to the speed of implementation of TAIEX and to a better control of costs.

The support to event applications and event organisation required, however, a considerable effort from EU staff and NCPs. In some cases, the administrative burden has increased in recent years, due to introducing TAIEX Strategic and requirements for in-advance planning of events at an annual basis. The cost, though, has remained low compared to other instruments.

The costs of all types of TAIEX events increased over time. This was driven by the expansion of TAIEX to the rest of the world, involving higher traveling costs, as well as by changes in the average duration of events and numbers of participants and experts.

Higher costs were also due to a more extensive use of multi-country events which were more expensive than single-country counterparts (up to 200% on average, across years and strands). Multi-country events were valuable communication and visibility tools but were limited in their capacity to contribute to concrete results in terms of capacity building and structural reforms.

In addition, online events were not particularly cheaper than in person events. Online expert missions on average cost the same, and in some strands they were even more expensive (up to 160% of in-person events). Only online workshops tended to be cheaper (up to 60% of costs their offline counterparts).

Online events also brought with them additional IT and logistical costs. This included for instance costs for the use of a platform with simultaneous translation, for an online moderator, for additional IT support for all participants, and for test events with experts and interpreters prior to the real event. Such costs were not compensated by a reduction in transportation, accommodation, venue, and catering costs.

This conclusion is based on EQs 5

Conclusion 10: In the context of the pandemic, there was a rapid shift to online work

In the context of the COVID-19 Pandemic, TAIEX rapidly shifted to organising online events, with both a positive and a negative impact on the capacity of events to deliver results.

TAIEX managed to rapidly transition online as early as April 2020, i.e., about two months after travel restrictions and other measures in relation to the pandemic started to be applied. This demonstrated the flexibility of the instrument and allowed for the continuation of service and the use of the instrument to address key pandemic needs.

However, online events tended to be limited in their capacity to achieve results mostly due to the loss of informal interactions, which were described as critical by beneficiaries, due to the tendency for one-way communication, and due to technical challenges and difficulties with translation.

Nevertheless, stakeholders also associated online events with several benefits. They notably pointed to environmental benefits, by removing travelling, but also to a faster organisation and increased flexibility in the involvement of experts and participants.

This led to the identification of a number of contexts whereby the use of online events could be advantageous despite their limitations, even after the pandemic:

- Events where the expert has previously worked with the same beneficiaries and therefore a connection has already been established;
- When a broad audience is targeted that may be difficult to gather in one place;
- When short-term support is needed for the follow-up of events, to check whether recommendations were pursued and to provide additional support.

This conclusion is based on EQs 4, EQ 5

Conclusion 11: A clear advantage of locating TAIEX management in DG NEAR

The location of the TAIEX management in DG NEAR offered clear advantages and was regarded as appropriate by most stakeholders.

TAIEX was created in the enlargement context. As such the management of TAIEX was quite naturally located in DG NEAR. When TAIEX was broadened to other contexts and regions, the instruments institutional and financial set-up was kept as a single unit within DG NEAR.

This offered several advantages. Notably, it allowed old and new strands alike to capitalize on the accumulated expertise and know-how, and on the centralized database of experts. The existence of a centralised expert database and of a network of NCPs in Member State countries facilitated and streamlined the task of finding suitable and available experts for each event. Also, the design of the instrument allowed for the immediate allocation of budgets to approved events.

There were no perceived drawbacks. Accordingly, there was a broad consensus among stakeholders that it was best to keep the management centralised and to do this within DG NEAR.

This conclusion is based on EQs 4

5.3.4 Cluster 4: Specific and EU value added provided by TAIEX

Conclusion 12: TAIEX added value in the broader context of support

TAIEX offered specific added value through its capacity to complement other support, by preparing it, by filling gaps or by compensating for the absence of other instruments and by doing this in a swift and service-oriented manner.

TAIEX offered different types of added value. It intervened by filling gaps in the support, by complementing other support where needed, but also to prepare other support, when leads for action needed to be explored. TAIEX was also called upon when no other instruments were available. All this was generally done in a swift and service-oriented manner, which was another added value offered by TAIEX.

This conclusion is based on EQs 1,4, 6,7

Conclusion 13: The TAIEX Experts’ database (EDBE): a key added value

The EDBE was a key source of EU added value for TAIEX, allowing for the quick identification and deployment of MS experts with the most relevant expertise. It was however also confronted by several implementation challenges.

The EDBE allowed for the identification and quick deployment of MS experts whose experience was deemed most relevant to beneficiaries’ needs and the national context. There was consensus that the development and management of the EDBE required expertise, resources, and coordination capacity that are hard to accumulate by individual MS and that it was therefore an important source of EU added value.

However, EDBE was also confronted by several implementation challenges, with as a consequence a minority of events facing large delays due to the difficulties in identifying experts. This concerned more specifically: a) profiles of experts that were not properly filled in, making it difficult to identify the right experts; b) the presence of profiles that were not properly updated with inactive profiles remaining available; c) limited availability of experts in certain areas; d) areas of expertise expressed in terms of the EU acquis - more challenging to identify expertise in newly emerging areas particular in the context of the expanding scope of the instrument through new strands.

This conclusion is based on EQs 5, inventory

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, and as requested by the Terms of Reference, we derived a set of 9 recommendations addressed to the Commission with a view to improving TAIEX support. The recommendations are grouped in two clusters:

- Cluster 1 concerns recommendations on the overall strategy of TAIEX;
- Cluster 2 proposes recommendations that could help in facilitating the implementation of TAIEX and in enhancing its capacity to generate results.

The figure and table below provide an overview of the recommendations and of their degree of urgency and speed of implementation.

Figure 14: Degree of urgency and speed of implementation for recommendations

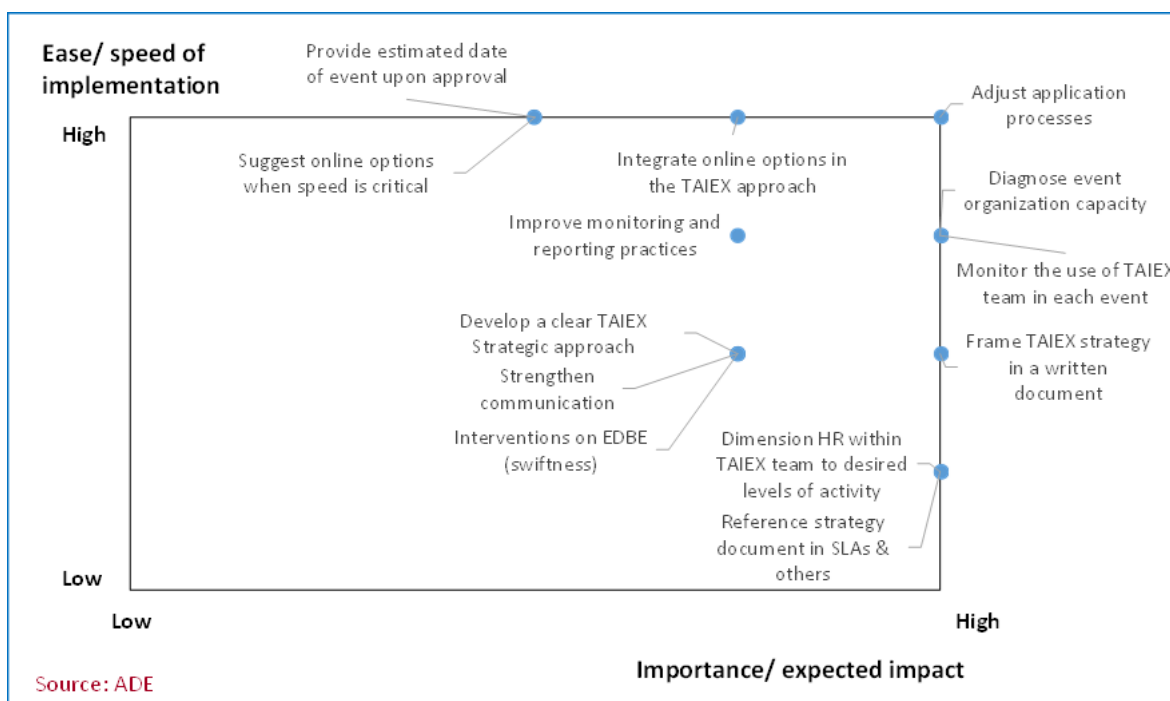


Table 6: Degree of urgency and speed of implementation for recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Im- portance* (impact)	Ur- gency*	Ease/ speed of im- plementation*
1	Frame TAIEX strategy in a written, actualized document	4	4	2
	Reference it in SLAs and other documentation	4	2	1
2	Develop a clear approach with respect to TAIEX Strategic	3	3	2
	Implement a system to monitor the use of TAIEX team resources in each event	4	4	3
3	Adjust application processes	4	2	4
4	Strengthen communication	3	1	2
5	Focus on maintaining swiftness – interventions on EDBE	3	3	2
	Diagnostic of event organization capacity	4	4	3
	Introduction of practice of providing estimated feasible date of event upon approval	3	3	4
	Introduction of practice to suggest online options when speed is critical	2	4	4
6	Integrate online options in the TAIEX approach	3	1	4
7	Maintain the TAIEX management centralized in DG NEAR	4	-	-
8	Improve monitoring and reporting practices	3	2	3
9	Dimension human resources within the TAIEX team to desired levels of activity	4	4	1

* 1 = low, 4 = high

Source: ADE

5.4.1 Recommendations on the overall strategy of TAIEX

Recommendation 1: Frame TAIEX's strategy in a written, actualized document

The Commission should continue to use TAIEX as a swift, gap-filling capacity development instrument, integrated where possible in more broader frameworks. It should also draft a specific strategy document describing the range of purposes for which TAIEX should be used. Relevant purposes should be clearly referenced in each SLA. In addition, the document could also guide a potential further expansion of TAIEX (e.g. through new SLAs).

This recommendation is linked to:

Conclusions 1, 2 and 9

Main implementation responsibility: TAIEX team (DG NEAR C3)

Other associated actors: contact points within Commission services which have active SLAs with TAIEX.

Implementation timeframe:

- *Elaboration of a new strategic document: short/ medium term*
- *Referencing in SLAs, strategy for further expansion of TAIEX, use as part of communication strategies: medium/ long term*

What worked and should continue?

TAIEX is well appreciated, particularly as it has addressed an existing need for swift, flexible and short-term knowledge development support, and has proven to deliver results. Thanks to its flexibility, it has added value in different contexts and both at operational and strategic level, moving beyond its initial focus on the transposition of the *acquis* in candidate countries for EU accession.

What should be strengthened (or discontinued) and how should this be done?

While TAIEX's scope has changed significantly since its inception, the document that frames its purpose(s), characteristics and how the two are aligned has never been updated. As a result, there is no strategic document on which to ground the evolution of the design and use of the instrument for purposes other than the *acquis*.

Elaborating a new white paper or strategic document would allow to clarify which objectives are being pursued through TAIEX in different regions (and through different SLAs). It would also better tailor the instrument to the key objectives. Also, it could serve as a basis to explore and frame potential new SLAs.

Finally, the document could be used to better explain to potential applicants (i.e. beneficiaries and EU officers) how they can use TAIEX, resulting in a higher quantity and quality of demand.

Recommendation 2: Develop a clear approach with respect to TAIEX Strategic

The Commission should clarify how it intends to combine and balance the use of TAIEX Strategic with TAIEX Classic, particularly in a context in which capacity in terms of number of events that can be organized in a given timeframe is limited.

Note: this recommendation mainly concerns NEAR strands; albeit it may also serve as a basis, in the future, to support the definition of the strategy for the use of TAIEX in Partner Countries outside the NEAR region.

This recommendation is linked to:

- *Conclusions 3 and 4*
- *Lessons 4 and 2*

Main implementation responsibility: TAIEX team (DG NEAR C3)

Other associated actors: Other DG NEAR thematic and geographic services (NEAR.A, NEAR.B, NEAR.C) should collaborate in defining the strategy and validate it)

Implementation timeframe:

- *Implementation of a system to monitor the use of TAIEX team resources by each event: short term*
- *Definition and implementation of an approach with regards to TAIEX Strategic: short-medium term (plus subsequent adjustments and revisions)*

What worked and should continue?

The possibility for EU officers to request TAIEX events enabled the use of TAIEX towards EU-driven policy needs. Programmatic/ planning features allowed to provide support in a way that was more extended in time, when relevant.

The definition of priority areas of support allowed a more strategic use of the limited capacity available and represented a clear criterion to assign priority to events when not all of them could be organized.

What should be strengthened (or discontinued) and how should this be done?

Different TAIEX events compete for limited organizational capacity. It would thus be important to understand how much of TAIEX's organization capacity is absorbed by each type of event, and bearing this in mind, to define a strategy to ensure that the use of different features is optimally balanced.

A first sub-recommendation concerns monitoring the level of use of TAIEX's human resources (case handlers) in the organization of individual events. This issue could be addressed by adding a time-use-monitoring feature to TMS and/or other TAIEX internal systems.

Secondly, if resource constraints remain in place, the Commission could consider defining indicative quotas (in terms of number of events) that should be organized according to each modality. These quotas could remain flexible, but it should be ensured that a sizeable capacity is left available to address emerging, non-programmed needs – according to the original philosophy of TAIEX.

Similarly, while the definition of priority areas of support also makes sense in a scenario of limited capacity, the Commission could also consider explicitly reserving some capacity for events that, albeit they do not fall in these categories, are deemed particularly valuable (e.g. have the strong support of EU Delegations).

Recommendation 3: Adjust the application process

The Commission should adapt the application process to enhance TAIEX's ability to tailor events to any purpose or broader objective they are meant to contribute to, as well as to favour synergies with other instruments.

This recommendation is linked to:

- *Conclusions 3 and 4*

Main implementation responsibility: TAIEX team (DG NEAR C3)

Other associated actors: contact points within Commission services which have active SLAs with TAIEX.

Implementation timeframe:

- *Small adjustments to application forms: short term*
- *Wider adjustments to processes: medium term (particularly upon negotiation/ renegotiation of SLAs)*

What worked and should continue?

The TAIEX application process is perceived to work well and to be conducive to the organization of well-conceived and beneficiary-owned events.

Application formats and review/consultation processes have been somewhat tailored to the different strands, although they mostly remain standardized. Application formats are relatively simple and easy to fill in, making TAIEX accessible.

What should be strengthened (or discontinued) and how should this be done?

TAIEX is not conceived as a standalone instrument; rather, it is meant to contribute to the achievement of broader purposes acting in combination with other interventions.

These elements are not, however, clearly reflected in application formats. While formats typically include an "objective" field, it is unclear whether this refers to the specific event or to the broader objective, and it is used inconsistently. Also, while formats require listing other actions which pursue the same goal, they do not require information on all the necessary conditions (beyond capacity development supported by TAIEX) which are required for the broader objective to be reached, and whether those are or can be reasonably expected to be in place.

These issues could be addressed by adding specific questions to the application format, such as "What broader objective is the event meant to contribute to?" and "List what other conditions need to be fulfilled or measures taken to ensure the broader objective can be reached. Please specify how conditions will be ensured and/or measures taken." This should be accompanied by guidance on what these conditions typically are, including political momentum, resources and capacity issues. The application review sheet should also include a checklist in this sense, such as: "Are other conditions to the achievement of the broader objective in place, or can they be reasonably expected to be put in place?" A lack of satisfactory provisions should constitute a reason for rejection.

In addition, the application review process should be adapted through the addition of one or a few questions, so that it promotes reflection on how to best leverage synergies with other available EU instruments, whether their use is already being considered or not.

A further item in the application could ask how dissemination and application of acquired knowledge will be ensured, with the purpose of stimulating reflection on this item from the very beginning.

Also, on a strand-by-strand basis, it should be examined whether it is worth maintaining all steps of the application process as they are, or if some elements should be given emphasis to increase efficiency. In particular in strands where TAIEX events are well inserted in broader programs

(notably TAIEX TCc and TAIEX SRSP), the consultation process could be shortened or waived (as in fact it is the case for TAIEX TCc). Application fields should also be periodically reviewed to ensure relevance. Such aspects should be defined upon negotiation (and re-negotiation) of SLAs.

Concerning study visits, it is suggested that the profile of each person meant to participate be briefly described and justified, and that the discussion on the selection of participants be part of the application review process.

Recommendation 4: Strengthen communication to promote the use of TAIEX

The Commission should be more strategic and thorough in its communication efforts to promote the use of TAIEX.

This recommendation is linked to:

- *Conclusions 3 and 5*
- *Lessons 2, 4, 5 and 6*

Main implementation responsibility: TAIEX team (DG NEAR C3), contact points within Commission services which have active SLAs with TAIEX.

Other associated actors: NCPs, EU Delegations Contact Points.

Implementation timeframe: medium term

What worked and should continue?

TAIEX was overall well appreciated and deemed useful by its users. Several institutions are frequent users.

The NCP network appears to play an important role in supporting the demand for TAIEX in NEAR countries.

Communication and awareness-raising strategies are to some extent diversified among strands and implemented in collaboration with DGs responsible for each SLA. This allows to consider the specificities of each strand as well as the magnitude of its scope.

What should be strengthened (or discontinued) and how should this be done?

Over the period studied, TAIEX has been introduced in new regions, but with an uptake that often remained limited and that was below the ambitions (e.g. TAIEX INTPA, TAIEX REGIO, TAIEX EIR). Several stakeholders linked this issue to low awareness of the instrument.

The uptake of TAIEX Strategic has also been relatively low, particularly within EU Delegations in the NEAR regions, whose representatives (particularly: in the South Neighbourhood and the region of Western Balkans and Turkey) demonstrated limited or no awareness of the option of directly asking for events.

There are also indications that awareness of TAIEX and the opportunities it offers are low in countries beyond the NEAR region. In addition, there appears to be a significant degree of confusion and misunderstanding around planning efforts promoted by the TAIEX team in the NEAR region, as well as the use of training maps and workshops.

Furthermore, the assignment and distribution of responsibilities in creating awareness of TAIEX at the local level is not fully clear. In particular, within NEAR countries it is unclear how these are split between NCPs and EU Delegation contact points (and to which extent these are to be supported from the TAIEX team). TAIEX EIR and TAIEX REGIO do not count with clearly identified contact points at the local level. In the case of TAIEX PI, no systematic awareness efforts were identified beyond those targeted specifically at PI staff.

There is hence a clear case for devising communication plans to make TAIEX and the possibilities it offers better known among potential users, both beneficiaries and EU Commission.

Such communication plan should include the following components:

- Communication materials and training. These should be strengthened, among others by including more in-detail explanations of how TAIEX can be used (also in line with what was expressed in Recommendation 1), highlighting examples as relevant. Also, restrictions and priority criteria (see also Recommendation 2) should be clearly explained to the extent relevant.
- Website(s). These should be revised to ensure that relevant information is available and easy to find. It is advisable that this also includes easy-to-access information on instruments that can be used as complement or alternative to TAIEX.
- Roles and responsibilities in raising awareness for each strand, including at the local level and within the EU Commission. In particular, there should be clearer guidance and expectations in terms of the responsibilities of, respectively, NCPs and EU Delegation contact points (within NEAR countries) and EU Delegation contact points (within non-NEAR partner countries). This should be formalized in guidance manuals specific for each SLA (or geographic region, if more relevant). It is recommended that LCPs also be identified to support the use of TAIEX EIR and TAIEX REGIO within EU MS (note: a possibility in this sense would be to leverage on existing NCPs).*
- Local visits by the TAIEX team were also considered an effective practice in raising awareness and stimulating demand. Therefore that would be worth considering extending, weighed against the time and resource considerations.

** Considering the current limited budget and ambition in terms of number of events of TAIEX INTPA and TAIEX PI (compared to the vastness of the target geographic region) and the still early phase in the implementation of TAIEX INTPA, the evaluation team does not currently recommend the establishment of an NCP network in partner countries outside the NEAR region. Rather, it considers continuing the approach of leveraging a network of contact points within EU Delegations would be more efficient. This recommendation could change, however, should the use of TAIEX be significantly expanded in those regions. Should that be the case, a gradual build-up of an NCP network starting with countries where TAIEX is more established could be considered.*

5.4.2 Recommendations on implementation and the capacity to generate results

Recommendation 5: Focus on maintaining the swiftness aspect of TAIEX

The Commission should make sure that TAIEX maintains its capability to be mobilized swiftly.

This recommendation is linked to:

- *Conclusion 6*

Main implementation responsibility: TAIEX team (DG NEAR C3)

Other associated actors: NCPs in EU MS, TAIEX experts (registered in EDBE).

Implementation timeframe:

- *Interventions on EDBE and other efforts to improve the identification of experts: short-medium term*
- *Diagnostics of event organization capacity and issues beyond high rotation of the TAIEX team: short term (subsequent remedial/ optimization interventions: variable timing depending on their nature)*

- *Introduction of practice of provision of estimate for the organization of each event upon event approval: short term*
- *Introduction of practice to suggest online options when speed is particularly critical (and other characteristics make it viable): short term*

What worked and should continue?

TAIEX's capacity to be mobilised rapidly was highly appreciated by all stakeholders. It is considered one of its key assets and a differentiator versus other EU instruments. Given TAIEX's catalytic function (i.e. as an enabler of broader actions), speed has often proved essential to ensure that events could respond to needs and deliver results (e.g. by allowing to leverage on an existing political momentum).

Well-established administrative and logistics processes have enhanced TAIEX's speed. These include pre-approved event budgeting mechanisms, an established and well-working logistics apparatus, existing arrangements for the short-term involvement of MS experts, elements facilitating swift identification and recruiting of experts (the EDBE and the network of NCPs based in EU MS), and the specific experience and specialization of the TAIEX team.

What should be strengthened (or discontinued) and how should this be done?

Throughout the 2015-2020 period, average times required for the organization of events have increased. This has been a source of dissatisfaction among stakeholders. It is recommended that the Commission acts on strengthening the above-mentioned elements, considered critical to achieving swiftness.

Concerning administrative and logistics processes, no particular issues have been identified. These should be maintained as they are. However, concerning the identification and recruiting of experts:

- (1) The evaluation found that there were some issues with the maintenance of the EDBE, and notably that expert profiles had become obsolete and at times no-longer accessible. Hence, it is recommended that the EDBE design and updating process be reviewed to make sure experts' profiles are kept up to date. This could be done by providing clear and user-friendly. MS NCPs could also support in diffusing guidelines and in periodically reminding national experts to update their profiles.
- (2) Areas in which the EDBE is limited (e.g. innovative topics) should be identified, and strategies should be implemented to address them. Examples are: coordination efforts with NCPs in EU MS to identify experts, or leveraging on existing experts to identify colleagues.

Concerning the TAIEX team, two issues were identified:

- (3) Constraints in the capacity in terms of number of events that can be organized in a set timeframe, linked to the number of case handlers available. This should be better understood, with a view to developing a realistic estimate of capacity. In this sense, monitoring the time spent on the organization of individual events is once again recommended (See also Recommendation 2). Also identifying areas for efficiency optimization is key. Building up queues of events should be strictly avoided. If the capacity is not sufficient and it is not possible to increase it (i.e. by increasing the number of personnel or through efficiencies), it is preferable to develop and communicate priorities as a way to reject excess eligible events. This is, however, not desirable as it would leave eligible needs unattended, as well as affect demand.
- (4) Frequent rotations in the TAIEX team, which led to prolonged vacant positions and sub-optimally frequent induction periods, in which case handlers had to build up experience. It is suggested that rotations be further investigated to understand the root causes and see whether it would be possible to mitigate the issue.

In the spirit of minimizing and managing queues and waiting times, it is suggested that upon the approval of each event the beneficiary/ applicant be given an estimate of the timeframe in which the event is expected to be organized. This would allow the withdrawal of applications in case the timeline is not compatible with the needs.

Last, it is suggested that (in line with Recommendation 6, below) the use of online events be considered/ suggested to applicants in cases in which speed is particularly critical, as those events' characteristics make them comparatively swifter to organize.

Recommendation 6: Integrate online options in the TAIEX approach

The TAIEX team should integrate online events/ features within their menu of options, codifying and providing specific guidance on their advantages/ disadvantages and suitability to different needs and circumstances, and notably introducing their use outside of crisis situations.

This recommendation is linked to:

- *Conclusion 9*
- *Lesson 1*

Main implementation responsibility: TAIEX team (DG NEAR C3)

Implementation timeframe: short term

What worked and should continue?

Online events were originally launched to continue activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, in light of the travel restrictions that were imposed. Besides enabling the timely coverage of topics that were critical at that time (not the least, pandemic-management issues), they proved to have advantages that are also relevant in normal circumstances.

In particular, they lowered barriers to participation of both beneficiaries and experts, by eliminating the need to travel and allowing for more flexibility in time commitments required to participate. They were also more flexible in terms of the timing of the sessions. Last, they are more ecologically friendly.

What should be strengthened (or discontinued) and how should this be done?

(1) It is recommended that online/ hybrid features be permanently integrated in the TAIEX menu of event options, providing explicit guidance on their usage, based on their advantages and disadvantages.

The drawbacks of online events have to do with a lower possibility to entertain informal conversations and establish personal relationships, as well as to directly observe the context in which either beneficiaries or experts operate.

It is recommended that online events be considered in cases in which:

- *Experts and beneficiaries have already established a relationship and the objective of the event is clear and specific and does not require in-person interaction.*
- *The participation of critical beneficiaries and experts would be otherwise impossible. Hybrid events may also be considered in those cases, allowing for the online participation of these people only.*
- *There are important barriers to the organization of offline events.*

Cultural/context factors also affected the perception of the advantageousness of online and hybrid events. In particular, it was noted that online events tended to force punctuality, thus optimizing the use of time. Hybrid options were appreciated in contexts in which internet was not easily available (as all participants could convene in a single well-connected location).

(2) The TAIEX team should review the process of organization of online events in detail, as well as see to the restrictions imposed on their design, to verify whether these are indeed optimized. In particular:

- The organization of online events implies costs that may in some cases be reduced. In particular, the requirement of a testing day for each event could be re-assessed.
- Some design restrictions that applied to in-person events may not be relevant or necessary in the case of online events. In particular, it appears less necessary that an event takes place over multiple consecutive days – options for shorter events or events of the same duration but spread through longer periods could also be considered.

Recommendation 7: Maintain the TAIEX management centralised and in DG NEAR

The Commission should maintain the TAIEX management centralised and in DG NEAR, and continue to serve other Commission services through SLAs.

This recommendation is linked to:

- *Conclusions 1 and 10*

Main implementation responsibility: TAIEX team (DG NEAR C3)

Implementation timeframe: short term

What worked and should continue?

The centralisation of TAIEX management under a sole team has worked well for all stakeholders. This enabled, among other things, the exploitation of resources and know-how such as existing administrative and logistical arrangements and the EDBE.

The lack of expertise of DG NEAR in non-NEAR geographic regions has been successfully compensated through the designation of specialized case handlers seconded from the relevant Commission services with which SLAs have been signed.

What should be strengthened (or discontinued) and how should this be done?

In a context whereby the management of all TAIEX strands remains centralised in DG NEAR, the collaboration between DG NEAR C3 and the relevant Commission services implementing the SLAs could be further improved in the following ways:

- Firstly, as stated in Recommendations 1 and 3, it is suggested that TAIEX's mission and strategy be formally redefined considering the wider range of objectives that it can serve. Each SLA should then reference to this strategy by stating which objectives TAIEX is meant to serve within its scope. Also, it should be accompanied by manuals and guidance notes that define specific adjustments to TAIEX processes (most notably, to the application and application review processes). These should also define processes and assign roles and responsibilities for raising awareness of TAIEX and supporting the organization of events in terms of content (e.g. preparation of experts).
- Secondly, it is suggested that practices within each strand be periodically compared to support cross-fertilization of best practices that may work within different strands. (It is the understanding of the evaluation team that a function has already been created with this purpose.)

Recommendation 8: Improve monitoring and reporting practices

The Commission should further improve TAIEX's monitoring and reporting practices with a view of fostering better transparency and learning.

This recommendation is linked to:

- *Conclusion 8*

Main implementation responsibility: TAIEX team (DG NEAR C3)

Other associated actors: Contact points within Commission services which have active SLAs with TAIEX, other TAIEX users and potential users of the expert reports (including beneficiaries, EU Delegations, line DGs, and other DG NEAR thematic and geographic services (NEAR.A, NEAR.B, NEAR.C), TAIEX experts.

Implementation timeframe: short/ medium term

What worked and should continue?

TAIEX counts on an impressive data collection system (TMS), where a significant amount of qualitative and quantitative information on events is stored in a well-organised way.

What should be strengthened (or discontinued) and how should this be done?

While TAIEX has a solid system to store data and information, it does not seem to have equally consolidated and well-thought practices to analyse and use it for learning and improvement (both of TAIEX itself, and to support follow up of events).

A specific area of improvement concerns the follow up on events. More specifically:

- Expert reports significantly diverge in quality. Also, they do not always seem to be shared or used by stakeholders. The TAIEX team should revise report formats with DGs responsible for each SLA, to ensure the information they include is effectively and that they are sent to the most appropriate stakeholders after each event. Guidance for experts for the completion of reports should also be provided and the quality should be verified, for example, through the post-event survey.
- A system could be devised to make expert reports/recommendations more accessible within EU Institutions (e.g. line DGs and EU Delegations, with recommendations searchable by country, sector and/or timeframe). Right now, the reports are not easy to find and access from outside the TAIEX team.

A second area of improvement concerns more general reporting on TAIEX:

- The results of immediate and after six-month participant and expert evaluations should be systematically analysed and shared within the TAIEX team and other relevant stakeholders as they can be an important source of lesson learning;
- KPI and statistics should be developed to assess TAIEX's activity and results (also considering the specific objective of each strand, and in consultation with relevant stakeholders), in detail at the country/sector level, and assessed periodically (e.g. every 3 months). These should be shared (at least) within the TAIEX team and with relevant stakeholders, including NCPs and people responsible for TAIEX within each DG or service with which TAIEX has SLAs.

Recommendation 9: Dimension the human and financial resources within the TAIEX team to the desired levels of activity

The Commission should dimension the TAIEX team adequately in function of the levels of activity (i.e. number of events) that is optimal and that it wishes to achieve for each strand.

This recommendation is linked to:

- *Conclusions 3, 4, 5 and 6*
- *Lessons 2 and 4*

Main implementation responsibility: TAIEX team, DG NEAR and other DGs which have SLAs with TAIEX, Commission HR functions.

Implementation timeframe: short/ medium term

What worked and should continue?

The specialization of members of the TAIEX team according to strands and, within IPA-ENI, by thematic and geographic areas has been perceived as favourable. The accumulated expertise and knowledge of members of the team who have participated for long periods (in terms of knowledge of beneficiaries and their needs, and of available experts) was also a key asset.

What should be strengthened (or discontinued) and how should this be done?

Several elements indicate that the staffing of the TAIEX team dedicated to the IPA-ENI strands was tight, and that this limited the capacity to address all existing demands. The introduction of TAIEX Strategic further complicated the issue, as it was not accompanied by increased staffing. This meant that part of the already tight TAIEX Classic's capacity was used for TAIEX Strategic. (In contrast with this, the budget assigned to TAIEX for the 2016-2020 period remained significantly underused.)

It is suggested that efforts be put in place to better understand the level of case handler effort required to organize events (see also Recommendation 2), and that these be dimensioned to the level of activity that is deemed most adequate to sustain the broader objectives that TAIEX is to contribute to.

Furthermore, the introduction of new TAIEX strands but also new TAIEX activities (such as TAIEX Strategic) should be accompanied by the specification of the human and financial resources (additional, if necessary) to implement them.

No human resources nor financial capacity constraints have been observed for TAIEX strands other than IPA-ENI in the 2015-2020 period (except for TAIEX PI budget constraints at the beginning of the period, which have been addressed through budget increases). However, it is worth noting that TAIEX INTPA has significant growth potential. If that were to be exploited, there would be a need to progressively add additional staffing and budget.

GETTING IN TOUCH WITH THE EU

In person

All over the European Union there are hundreds of Europe Direct information centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you at: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en

On the phone or by email

Europe Direct is a service that answers your questions about the European Union. You can contact this service:

- by freephone: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (certain operators may charge for these calls),
- at the following standard number: +32 22999696, or
- by electronic mail via: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en

FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT THE EU

Online

Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at: https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en

EU publications

You can download or order free and priced EU publications from EU Bookshop at: <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publications>. Multiple copies of free publications may be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local information centre (see https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en).


The European Commission Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations - NEAR

NEAR Mission


The mission of DG NEAR is to take forward the EU's neighbourhood and enlargement policies, as well as coordinating relations with EEA-EFTA countries insofar as Commission policies are concerned. DG NEAR works closely with the European External Action Service and the line DGs in charge of thematic priorities. By implementing assistance actions in Europe's eastern and southern neighbourhood, DG NEAR supports reform and democratic consolidation, and strengthens the prosperity, stability and security around Europe. DG NEAR helps to promote EU values, policies and interests in this region, and to contribute to developing the special relationship of the EU with its neighbouring countries

Follow us:

 :@[add Twitter account]

 : [add Facebook account]

 : [add Instagram account]

 : [add YouTube account]



EVALUATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION EXTERNAL ACTION

EVALUATION OF THE TAIEX INSTRUMENT IN THE PERIOD 2015-2020

Volume II – Annexes

May 2022



**EVIDENCE
MATTERS**

Neighbourhood
and Enlargement
Negotiations



ADE s.a

Rue de Clairvaux 40, Box 101

1348 Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium)

+32 10 45 45 10

ade@ade.eu

www.ade.eu

]

Framework Contract EVA 2020

Contract No EuropeAid/140122/DH/SER/multi

Contract title: Evaluation of the TAIEX instrument in the period 2015-2020

Contact information:

European Commission
Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations – DG NEAR
Unit A.4 - Coordination of financing instruments - performance, results and evaluation
Email: near-eval-monitoring@ec.europa.eu
B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/monitoring-and-evaluation_en

LEGAL NOTICE

This document has been prepared for the European Commission as part of the evaluations of the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement (NEAR). However, it reflects the views only of the authors, and the European Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this document and is not liable for any consequence stemming from the reuse of this publication. More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://www.europa.eu>).

PDF ISBN [number] ISSN 2529-3338 doi:[number] [Catalogue number]

Manuscript completed in [Month] [Year when the final report was approved]

The European Commission is not liable for any consequence stemming from the reuse of this publication.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2022

© European Union, 2022



The reuse policy of European Commission documents is implemented by the Commission Decision 2011/833/EU of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39). Except otherwise noted, the reuse of this document is authorised under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC-BY 4.0) licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). This means that reuse is allowed provided appropriate credit is given and any changes are indicated.

For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the European Union, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective rightholders.

Copyright: [cover picture on first page]; [source: Matej Kastelic/Shutterstock.com]

Evaluation of the TAIEX instrument in the period 2015-2020

Table of Contents

ANNEX 1:	TOR	8
ANNEX 2:	DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE INVENTORY OF EVENTS ORGANIZED THROUGH TAIEX IN THE 2015-2020 PERIOD	9
ANNEX 3:	SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES AND RESULTS	23
ANNEX 4:	LIST OF EVENTS INCLUDED IN CASE STUDIES	77
ANNEX 5:	CASE STUDIES	86
ANNEX 5A:	TAIEX CLASSIC AND STRATEGIC IN THE ENLARGEMENT REGION (TAIEX IPA)	87
ANNEX 5B:	TAIEX IN EU MEMBER STATES	106
ANNEX 5C:	TAIEX IN THE EAST NEIGHBOURHOOD	118
ANNEX 5D:	TAIEX IN THE SOUTH NEIGHBOURHOOD.....	136
ANNEX 5E:	TAIEX IN THE TURKISH CYPRIOT COMMUNITY (TCc).....	150
ANNEX 5F:	CASE STUDY: TAIEX IN THE REST OF THE WORLD.....	164
ANNEX 6:	EVALUATION MATRIX	178
ANNEX 7:	FINDINGS AT JUDGEMENT CRITERIA LEVEL.....	261
ANNEX 8:	LIST OF INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS CONDUCTED	312
ANNEX 9 :	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	316

List of Tables

Table 1:	Comparison between budget and expenditures for each TAIEX strand	13
Table 2:	Average cost and characteristics of individual TAIEX single events, per type.....	15
Table 3:	Average cost of individual events, per type of event and across different TAIEX strands (2015-2020 period).....	15
Table 4:	Response rate to first round of survey, by type of participant.	25
Table 5:	Response rate to first round of survey, by strand.....	25
Table 6:	Summary of events covered	161
Table 7:	Total number of rejected tasks, by strand and by year	196
Table 8:	Share of rejected applications by strand and type of event	196
Table 9:	The TAIEX budget by strand as a share of the funds allocated to the corresponding financial instruments over the period 2015-2020	208
Table 10:	The share of contracted funds used over this period	209
Table 11:	Average cost per event, excluding online and multicountry	234
Table 12:	Average duration (in days) for all in person events	234
Table 13:	Average number of experts, excluding multicountry and online events	234
Table 14:	Average number of participants for in-person events.....	234
Table 15:	Share of rejected tasks.....	240
Table 16:	Share of rejected applications by strand and type of event	241
Table 17:	TAIEX's Contribution to Reforms- Differences across strands	277
Table 18:	Average cost per type event, excluding online events.....	296
Table 19:	Average duration, number of experts and number of participants per type of event, excluding online events.....	297
Table 20:	Average cost per strand, excluding online events	297
Table 21:	Average cost per participant and per day for study visits, excluding online events and multicountry events.....	298
Table 22:	Share of tasks that are rejected by strand and over time.....	301
Table 23:	Share of rejected application by strand and type of event.....	301
Table 24:	Percentage of allocated funds that were contracted, by strand, over the period 2016-2020.	304

List of Figures

Figure 1:	Distribution of events and expenditure by strand, 2015-2020 period.....	10
Figure 2:	Evolution in the number of TAIEX applications submitted	11
Figure 3:	Evolution in the application acceptance rate – overall and for IPA-ENI strands.....	11
Figure 4:	Number of events and expenditure, total and detail of largest strands IPA+ENI and TCc.....	11
Figure 5:	Number of events and expenditure, detail of smaller strands (REGIO, SRSP, EIR, PI, INTPA).....	12
Figure 6:	Evolution of number of events and expenditures by type of event, 2015-2020	14
Figure 7:	Allocation of events and expenditure by type of event within different TAIEX strands	14
Figure 8:	Evolution of Average Expenditure and Number of Participants per Event 2015-2020.....	15
Figure 9:	Evolution of TAIEX in the 2015-2020 period, by approach adopted (Classic or Programmatic)	17
Figure 10:	Distribution of TAIEX events by classic/programmatic approach, by strand (Percentage of the total number of events organized under each strand) 2018-2020 only.....	17
Figure 11:	Distribution of TAIEX expenditure by geographic region, 2015-2020.....	18
Figure 12:	Evolution of distribution of TAIEX's expenditure by geographic region, 2015-2020 Percentage of total expenditure of each strand	19
Figure 13:	TAIEX expenditure in the NEAR region, by country (€M)	20
Figure 14:	TAIEX expenditure in the EU region, by country (€M)	20
Figure 15:	Expenditures by country under TAIEX PI	21
Figure 16:	TAIEX expenditure by EU Acquis Chapter covered.....	22
Figure 17:	Phasing of Surveys (First Round)	23
Figure 18:	Phasing of Surveys (Second Round)	23
Figure 19:	Gender of respondents	27
Figure 20:	Country of the institution that respondents represent in TAIEX events.....	27
Figure 21:	Type of institution participants represented/ worked for at the time of your participation as an expert in TAIEX events.....	28
Figure 22:	Number of events that respondents attended as experts in the 2015-2020 period	28
Figure 23:	Years of events respondents participated in as experts	29
Figure 24:	Types of TAIEX events respondents participated in	29
Figure 25:	TAIEX strands in which the respondents were involved in	30
Figure 26:	Type of institution(s) having requested the event(s) attended by the respondents	30
Figure 27:	Topics on which experts provided expertise	31
Figure 28:	Nature of events respondents participated in, in 2020 (virtual, in-person, both).....	31
Figure 29:	Percentage of respondents having participated in multi-country events in the 2015-2020 period .	32
Figure 30:	Percentage of respondents having provided expertise more than once to the same beneficiary through TAIEX.....	32
Figure 31:	Beneficiary countries/ territories to which the respondents provided expertise.....	33
Figure 32:	Percentage of respondents being registered within the TAIEX expert database.....	34
Figure 33:	Frequency of respondents proactively applying/ signaling interest to take part in TAIEX events	34
Figure 34:	Percentage of respondents applying or signalling interest for specific events	35
Figure 35:	Percentage of respondents participating in (other) TAIEX events in roles other than expert	35
Figure 36:	Percentage of respondents' predictions on the results' durability (beyond a year) of the TAIEX events attended.....	38
Figure 37:	Percentage of respondents' having perceived (or not) a substantial difference in terms of effectiveness of the different events	39
Figure 38:	Percentage of respondents' remaining involved with the host institution after the conclusion of the event(s).....	40
Figure 39:	Percentage of respondents who consider or not applying to TAIEX as beneficiary on behalf of their working institution	44
Figure 40 :	Percentage of respondents considering applying to TAIEX as beneficiaries or as experts (or both) on behalf of their working institution	45
Figure 41:	Percentage of respondents recommending (or not) to other public officials from non-EU countries to apply to organise TAIEX events (as beneficiaries).....	45
Figure 42:	Type of factors which respondents considered the most attractive ones of attending to TAIEX events (1 to 3)	46
Figure 43:	Percentage of respondents' gender	50
Figure 44:	Percentage of respondents' awareness about the role of TAIEX in the organization of the events attended.....	50
Figure 45:	Type of country/ territory represented by the respondents in the TAIEX event(s)	51
Figure 46:	Distribution of answers of figure 45 according to the type of TAIEX strand	51

Figure 47: Percentage of people working in the Commission/EEAS at the time of the participation to TAIEX events	52
Figure 48: Type of institution in which the experts worked when participating in the TAIEX event(s)	52
Figure 49: Number of TAIEX events attended by the respondents in the 2015-2020 period	53
Figure 50: Years of respondents' participation in TAIEX event(s)	53
Figure 51: Type of TAIEX event(s) attended	54
Figure 52: Topics covered in the TAIEX event(s)	54
Figure 53: Percentage of respondents having participated in virtual or in-person event(s) (or both)	55
Figure 54: Percentage of respondents having participated to single or multi-country/ regional event(s)	55
Figure 55: Percentage of respondents having been involved in the application process for (at least one of) the event(s) attended?	56
Figure 56: Percentage of respondents having been involved in the organization process for (at least one of) the event(s) attended?	56
Figure 57: Follow-up-activities conducted by the beneficiary institution after TAIEX events	61
Figure 58: Percentage of respondents' institutions considering applying to organize TAIEX in the future	65
Figure 59: Role and TAIEX strand of respondents	69
Figure 60: Percentage of respondents' year of involvement with TAIEX	70
Figure 61: Country/ territory in which respondents were based	70
Figure 62: Respondents' involvement with TAIEX, in the 2015-2020 period	70
Figure 63: Respondents' perception of levels of awareness of TAIEX within public institutions and EU delegations	71
Figure 64: Respondents' perception on the sufficiency of information and tools provided by the TAIEX Team to ensure the best use of the instrument	71
Figure 65: Respondents level of agreement with the following statements	72
Figure 66: Respondents' level of agreement with specific statements related to TAIEX	73
Figure 67: Respondents' answer on whether the actions/ systems put in place favoured coordination between the management of TAIEX and Twinning?	74
Figure 68: Respondents' positive or negative opinion on the coordination of the use of TAIEX with that of other EU instruments/actions	74
Figure 69: Level of respondents' agreement on the coordination between the use of TAIEX with that of other EU instruments and the uniqueness of TAIEX's features	75
Figure 70: Respondents' opinion about the possibility of missed (or not missed) impact due to a lack of coordination	75
Figure 71: Respondents' opinion on the degree of direct involvement of EU MS institutions in the organization of events	76
Figure 72: Expenditure and number of events involving the Enlargement Region by country, total in million EUR and share	88
Figure 73: Average Expenditure by type of single-country event the Enlargement Region, total in million EUR	101
Figure 74: TAIEX expenditure in the EU region, by country (€M)	107
Figure 75: Expenditure and number of events involving the East Neighbourhood by country, total in million EUR and share	119
Figure 76: Expenditure and number of events under TAIEX ENI South by country, total in million EUR and share	137
Figure 77: Average Expenditure by type of single-country event in the South Neighbourhood, total in million EUR	145
Figure 78: Evolution of the number of events and expenditure (direct costs only), TAIEX TCc	151
Figure 79: Evolution of the cost of in-person expert missions and of key variables associated with it (averages)	158
Figure 80: Main characteristics of the TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA strands	165
Figure 81: Respondents' level of agreement that the TAIEX event(s) for which they provided expertise or to which they participated in led to the following.	197
Figure 82: Respondents' level of agreement that the TAIEX event(s) for which they provided expertise or to which they participated in led to the following.	197
Figure 83: The Number of events and expenditure, total and detail of largest strands (IPA, ENI and TCc)	208
Figure 84: Concerns about the implication of TAIEX Strategic on government ownership (All Strands, IPA, ENI)	213
Figure 85: Share of requests approved in 1 week	218
Figure 86: Share of requests approved within 2 weeks	219
Figure 87: Share of events organized within 3 months after approval	219
Figure 88: Share of events organized more than 1 year after approval	220

Figure 89: Share of events organized more than 1 year after approval, excluding 2020	220
Figure 90: Cumulated % of requests approved	221
Figure 91: Request approval rate: % of requests approved within 1, 2 and 4 weeks; excluding TCc	222
Figure 92: Approval time by type of event: share of requests approved within 1 week, 2 weeks and 1 month	222
Figure 93: Share of requests approved within 1 week.....	223
Figure 94: Share of requests approved within 1 week.....	223
Figure 95: Share of requests approved within 2 weeks	223
Figure 96: Cumulated % of events organized over time since approval	224
Figure 97: Share of events organized in less than 6 weeks, 3 months and 6 months after approval	224
Figure 98: Share of events organized within 3 months after approval.....	225
Figure 99: Share of events organized more than 1 year after approval	225
Figure 100: Share of events organized more than 1 year after approval, excluding 2020	226
Figure 101: TAIEX TCc: % of offline events lasting more than 5 days	226
Figure 102: Percentage of study visits with 4, 5 or more participants by strand and over time (excluding online events).....	227
Figure 103: Number of events and total amount spent over time (all strands)	231
Figure 104: Total amount spent by year and type of event (all strands)	232
Figure 105: Total amount spent by year and by strand in IPA, ENI strands	232
Figure 106: Total amount spent by year and by strand in non-IPA, non-ENI strands	233
Figure 107: Share of TAIEX strands in total event expenditures over time.....	233
Figure 108: Study visits: average cost per participant/day excluding online and multicountry events.....	235
Figure 109: Work from home assignments: average cost per expert, excluding online events	236
Figure 110: Workshops: average cost per expert/day, excluding online events	236
Figure 111: Expert missions: average cost per expert/day, excluding online events	236
Figure 112: Average cost for online vs in-person events	237
Figure 113: Total number of expert assignments per year	255
Figure 114: New registration on the Expert Database per year.....	258
Figure 115: Mapping of how TAIEX has contributed to institutional capacity building	272
Figure 116: Perceived share of TAIEX events that led to institutional capacity building outcomes (after 6 months evaluation survey, all strands).....	274
Figure 117: Beneficiary survey responses to the question “Did the TAIEX event(s) you participated in contribute to any of the following concrete results?” (N=322)	274
Figure 118: Mapping of how TAIEX has supported reforms in beneficiary countries	275
Figure 119: Beneficiary survey responses to the question “Did the TAIEX event(s) you participated in contribute to any of the following concrete results?” (N=322)	277
Figure 120: Comparison of perceived results of TAIEX Strategic and TAIEX Classic Events in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood region, after 6-months evaluation	284
Figure 121: Speed with which requests were approved	292
Figure 122: Share of events approved within one week, two weeks and one month, by event type.	292
Figure 123: Evolution over time of the share of events approved within one week, by type of event.	292
Figure 124: Speed with which events were organized.....	292
Figure 125: Evolution over time of the speed of event organization.....	292
Figure 127: Cost of online and in-person events in 2019-2020	299
Figure 128: TAIEX stakeholders’ response to the question: to what extent do you agree that TAIEX allowed the following better than it would have been possible through other options (including available EU and EU MS tools and initiatives)?.....	308

List of Boxes

Box 1 : Note on multi-country events.....	21
Box 2: Summary of findings related to EQ1, TAIEX IPA case study.....	89
Box 3: Summary of findings related to EQ2, TAIEX IPA case study.....	91
Box 4 : The Importance of the Internal Consultation Process for the relevance of events	91
Box 5: Summary of findings related to EQ3, TAIEX IPA case study.....	92
Box 6: TAIEX’s contribution to the design and implementation of Kosovo’s Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2020	93
Box 7: TAIEX’s contribution to the Serbia’s Law on protection of the freedom and liberties of the national minorities	93
Box 8: TAIEX’s support for the design of the Annual Economic Reform Programs across the Enlargement Region	94

Box 9: Enabling the Asylum office of Montenegro to improve information materials for asylum seekers.....	95
Box 10: Summary of findings related to EQ4, TAIEX IPA case study.....	98
Box 11: Summary of findings related to EQ5, TAIEX IPA case study.....	99
Box 12: Summary of findings related to EQ6, TAIEX IPA case study.....	102
Box 13: Synergies between TAIEX and Twinning	103
Box 14: Synergies across instruments -The Public Procurement Bureau of North Macedonia.....	103
Box 15: Summary of findings related to EQ7, TAIEX IPA case study.....	104
Box 16: Summary findings related to EQ1, TAIEX in EU MS case study.....	108
Box 17: Summary findings related to EQ2, TAIEX in EU MS case study.....	109
Box 18: Summary findings related to EQ3, TAIEX in EU MS case study.....	110
Box 19: Summary findings related to EQ4, TAIEX in EU MS case study.....	112
Box 20: Summary findings related to EQ5, TAIEX in EU MS case study.....	113
Box 21: Summary findings related to EQ6, TAIEX in EU MS case study.....	114
Box 22: Summary findings related to EQ7, TAIEX in EU MS case study.....	115
Box 23: Summary findings related to EQ1, TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study.....	119
Box 24: Summary findings related to EQ2, TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study.....	121
Box 25: Supporting the implementation of the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA).....	122
Box 26: Supporting the implementation of the EU-Georgia Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA)	122
Box 27: Summary findings related to EQ3, TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study.....	123
Box 28: Enabling Armenia's police to carry out cybercrime investigations and use digital forensics	123
Box 29: Strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs Control of Travelers in Azerbaijan	124
Box 30: Enabling the National Bank of Moldova to abide by Basel III requirements – TAIEX as a Medium-Term Capacity Building Instrument.....	124
Box 31: Enabling the adoption of a new law on cybersecurity in Ukraine	124
Box 32: Supporting the 2020 Armenia Police Reform	125
Box 33: Fostering Collaboration with the East Neighbourhood on Circular economy	125
Box 34: Summary findings related to EQ4, TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study.....	128
Box 35: Supporting the National Bank of Moldova to fight against money-laundering - The challenge of delays due to an overload of the TAIEX Team and difficulties in finding experts.....	129
Box 36: Summary findings related to EQ5, TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study.....	130
Box 37: Summary findings related to EQ6, TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study.....	131
Box 38: Summary findings related to EQ7, TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study.....	133
Box 39: Summary findings related to EQ1, TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study	138
Box 40: Summary findings related to EQ2, TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study	140
Box 41: Summary findings related to EQ3, TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study	141
Box 42: Summary findings related to EQ4, TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study	143
Box 43: Supporting the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics- The challenge of delays due to an overload of the TAIEX Team, difficulties in finding experts, and COVID.	144
Box 44: TAIEX's flexibility as an important contributor to swiftness	144
Box 45: Summary findings related to EQ5, TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study	145
Box 46: Summary findings related to EQ6, TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study	146
Box 47: Synergies between TAIEX and Twinning	147
Box 48: Summary findings related to EQ7, TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study	147
Box 49: Background to the EU Aid Programme to the TCc.....	150
Box 50: Summary findings related to EQ1, TCc case study.....	152
Box 51: The use of WhatsApp groups as a way to engage experts on an immediate basis	154
Box 52: Summary findings related to EQ2, TCc case study.....	154
Box 53: Summary findings related to EQ3, TCc case study.....	155
Box 54: A success case – The creation of the Statistical office	155
Box 55: An example of stalled progress in the process of revision of legal texts	156
Box 56: Summary findings related to EQ4, TCc case study.....	157
Box 57: Summary findings related to EQ5, TCc case study.....	158
Box 58: Summary findings related to EQ6, TCc case study.....	160
Box 59: Summary findings related to EQ7, TCc case study.....	160
Box 60: Summary of findings related to EQ1, TAIEX in the rest of the world case study	166
Box 61: Summary of findings related to EQ2, TAIEX in the rest of the world case study	168
Box 62: The role of EU Delegations in supporting the definition of a clear focus for events	168
Box 63: Summary of findings related to EQ3, TAIEX in the rest of the world case study.....	169
Box 64: Providing essential knowledge input for reforms: the setup of the RES in Kyrgyzstan	170

Box 65: TAIEX as a tool to distil EU best expertise and project a united, powerful EU image.....	170
Box 66: Supporting reform and building EU leadership in new fields – Justice in Uzbekistan	170
Box 67: Supporting pesticide management in Uganda.....	171
Box 68: Summary of findings related to EQ4, TAIEX in the rest of the world case study	171
Box 69: Summary of findings related to EQ5, TAIEX in the rest of the world case study	172
Box 70: Summary of findings related to EQ6, TAIEX in the rest of the world case study	173
Box 71: Summary of findings related to EQ7, TAIEX in the rest of the world case study	174
Box 72: Enabling Armenia’s police to carry out cybercrime investigations and use digital forensics- TAIEX as a Short-Term Capacity Building Instrument.....	273
Box 73: Enabling the National Bank of Moldova to abide by Basel III requirements – TAIEX as a Medium-Term Capacity Building Instrument.....	273
Box 74: TAIEX’s contribution to the design and implementation of Kosovo’s Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2020	276
Box 75: TAIEX’s contribution of a new Statistical legal text and in the creation of a Statistical office in TCc ...	276
Box 76: Strengthening School Inspection Management in Azerbaijan – TAIEX as a tool for creating a positive environment for reforms	279
Box 77: Supporting the 2020 Armenia Police Reform – TAIEX as an EU Policy Planning and Gap-Assessment Tool	281
Box 78: TAIEX’s contribution to the Serbia’s Law on protection of the freedom and liberties of the national minorities	281
Box 79: Supporting the implementation of the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA).....	283
Box 80: Promoting EU Leadership on Space Applications in Latin America – TAIEX PI as a tool for strengthening EU Normative Power.....	286
Box 81: Building EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation on Justice and Rule of Law – TAIEX INTPA as a tool for strengthening EU Normative Power.....	286
Box 82: Supporting pesticide management in Uganda.....	307

ANNEX 1: TOR



A621-003-ToR-EVA-
2020-1481.pdf

SPECIFIC TERMS OF REFERENCE – PART A

Framework Contract EVA 2020 - EuropeAid/140122/DH/SER/multi

Evaluation of the TAIEX instrument in the period 2015-2020

[OPSYS reference: EVA-2020-1481]

Contracting Authority: MFF, Programming and Evaluation Unit of the DG NEAR of the European Commission

Table of Contents

1	BACKGROUND INFORMATION	3
1.1	TAIEX: origins and evolution	3
1.2	TAIEX: main elements and principles.....	6
1.3	TAIEX: synergies with other institutional building support instruments.....	8
1.4	The overall intervention logic of the TAIEX instrument	9
1.5	Evaluations undertaken.....	11
2	DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATION ASSIGNMENT.....	13
2.1	Rationale and objectives of the evaluation	13
2.2	Requested services.....	14
2.2.1	Scope of the evaluation	14
2.2.2	Evaluation questions and key evaluation criteria	16
2.2.3	Evaluation tools and techniques	19
2.2.4	Phases, activities, and required deliverables	23
2.2.5	Assumptions and envisaged limitations	27
2.2.6	Language of the evaluation and the Specific Contract	27
2.3	Specific Contract Technical offer	27
2.4	Management and steering of the evaluation	29
2.4.1	By the Contracting Authority	29
2.4.2	By the Contractor	30
3	LOGISTICS, LOCATION AND TIMING	30
4	REQUIREMENTS	31
5	REPORTS AND OTHER DELIVERABLES	31

6	QUALITY STANDARDS	32
7	COMMUNICATION WITH THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY	32
8	ANNEXES.....	33
8.1	ANNEX I – Template for the technical offer (organisation & methodology).....	33
8.2	ANNEX II – Evaluation criteria for the technical offer (evaluation grid).....	33
8.3	ANNEX III – List of documents to be used for the preparation of the offer.....	34
8.4	ANNEX IV – TAIEX figures	34
8.5	ANNEX V – TAIEX Guidelines for European Commission and European External Action Service (EEAS) Colleagues.....	42
8.6	Annex VI – Internal user guide on TAIEX and TAIEX recalibration.....	47
8.7	ANNEX VII – Manual of Procedures for TAIEX operations (June 2020)	50

1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 TAIEX: origins and evolution

TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange) is an **institution-building instrument**¹ of the European Union, which has been created to provide peer-to-peer short-term assistance to partner countries' public administrations in the form of support on the approximation, application and enforcement of EU legislation (*EU acquis*) as well as by facilitating the dissemination of EU best practices. It covers all the *acquis* sectors. TAIEX has two key underlying principles: it is demand driven, quick and flexible and supports ownership of the reform process in the beneficiary country. It also creates a community of interest and mind liked peers among practitioners from EU Member States and practitioners from the national administrations of the partner countries.

Initially designed as a support to accession/enlargement tool, TAIEX evolved over the years to embrace the deepening and the widening of the EU external policies: the geographic scope of TAIEX broadened to encompass in 2006 partner countries from the European Neighbourhood Policy. Since 2014, the TAIEX instrument is available worldwide using the funding from Partnership Instrument (PI).

The sectoral scope and political impact of TAIEX evolved to mirror the reinforcement and deepening of the enlargement methodology in 2016 and the publication of the Western Balkan Strategy. In this regard, the TAIEX peer reviews play a crucial role in the enforcement of an evidenced-based enlargement policy. Peer review missions are very useful tools to check the reality on the ground, to fine-tune the assessment of the Commission in preparation of the annual report or in support of the key stages of the accession negotiations (screening, opening of a negotiating chapter, interim benchmarks, closure of a chapter) or to collect information to monitor commitments taken in various frameworks quoted above. This is all the more the case since the new approach adopted in 2016 and the implementation of case-based peer reviews.

Building on the evolving needs of DG NEAR policies as well as on the key pillars of TAIEX (demand-driven, flexible, ownership), TAIEX - together with its longer term peer-to-peer instrument Twinning- was strategically recalibrated in 2018 to best meet the policy needs.

The resulting new policy-driven element of the instrument (**TAIEX Strategic**) has been introduced to ensure that TAIEX supports EU key priorities on fundamental and structural reforms. TAIEX Strategic can provide assistance upon the request of Commission services (country units, EU Delegations or line Directorates-general) and the European External Action Service (EEAS). The strategic use of TAIEX has contributed significantly to the regional and bilateral policy agenda with the neighbourhood countries.

In addition, from 2018, TAIEX operated a pilot in three Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia), through the so-called **TAIEX Strategic support for local authorities**. The instrument delivered fast and tailor-made activities for

¹ 'TAIEX Instrument' is used in this document as a label regrouping all TAIEX elements: IPA, ENI, TAIEX-PI, TAIEX-DEVCO, TAIEX-REGIO Peer-2-Peer, TAIEX-EIR Peer-2-Peer, TAIEX assistance to the Turkish Cypriot community.

local and regional authorities on targeted topics of human resources management and service delivery to citizens and so serves as a platform for peer-to-peer exchanges.

The **primary purpose and scope of TAIEX**, originally tailored to the needs of the EU neighbouring countries and regions, has been subsequently diversified and expanded. The successful implementation of peer-to-peer exchanges in support of the reform process led in the 2010s to a further broadening of the geographical scope of TAIEX, thereby contributing to a stronger geopolitical Europe. This was possible through the conclusion of a number of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with other Commission DGs: REGIO, ENV, REFORM, DEVCO and the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI).

The newly created TAIEX elements can be identified as follows:

- In the countries covered by the Partnership Instrument (PI), technical assistance and exchanges of best practices (**TAIEX-PI**) allow the EU to promote its standards and legislation and to establish a wider political dialogue with third countries. The source of funding for these actions is the Partnership Instrument (PI), run by FPI, which is designed to advance EU and mutual interests abroad. It aims at addressing global challenges, such as climate change and energy security, and support the external dimension of EU policies. The external projection of the "Europe 2020" Strategy represents a major strategic component of the PI. The instrument also addresses specific aspects of the EU's market access, trade, investment and business opportunities and supports public diplomacy and outreach interests.

TAIEX PI actions are important from the outreach and public diplomacy perspectives. TAIEX PI actions have demonstrated to be very successful in terms of strengthening EU's role or position in a specific sector or context, reinforcing the profile of the EU as a key global player; and promoting EU's visibility. The fact that TAIEX is not subject to programming is highly appreciated by the Partnership Instrument users.

- In the countries and territories covered by EU development policies, **TAIEX-DEVCO** aims at strengthening the national development policy context and it supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in line with the EU commitments to the Agenda 2030. TAIEX DEVCO events are expected to be designed in synergy with other technical cooperation actors active in the specific partner country. In line with EU strategic priorities, TAIEX DEVCO is expected to address underlying governance and public administration aspects of Team Europe Initiatives and to pursue 'Europeanisation' of development cooperation at country level by drawing on the full range of EU MS expertise. It can play a role in the enhancement of government ownership and in strengthening political dialogue with partner countries, thus developing partnership cooperation. TAIEX DEVCO assistance is expected to be used in synergy with other cooperation modalities at partner country level to support impact.
- **TAIEX-REGIO Peer-2-Peer²** supports Member States' administrations in the management of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion

² https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/how/improving-investment/taix-regio-peer-2-peer/

Fund. It is part of the Commission's broader effort to help Member States strengthen their administrative capacity to effectively and efficiently implement the Cohesion policy. Public administrations involved in the management of funding from ERDF and the Cohesion Fund can request support.

- **TAIEX-EIR Peer-2-Peer³** assists environmental authorities to address challenges in the implementation of EU environmental policy and legislation identified by the Environmental Implementation Review. It has been established as a new, practical tool that facilitates peer learning between environmental authorities of EU Member States at all levels.
- **TAIEX-SRSP Peer-2-Peer⁴** helps Member States in the implementation of structural reforms agreed in the European Semester in order to build up more effective institutions, stronger governance frameworks and efficient public administrations. The instrument is only available for projects selected under the SRSP and the technical support provided covers growth enhancing reforms, from inception to completion.
- Finally, **TAIEX assistance to the Turkish Cypriot community** supports the preparation and implementation of legal texts aligned with the EU *acquis* in view of the withdrawal of its suspension and the community's ability to apply the *acquis* upon the entry into force of a comprehensive settlement on the island.

Most recently in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the need for innovative solutions to enable the business continuity and increased resilience of the TAIEX instrument. Developing online solutions to keep TAIEX operational has been a key priority and an effective Commission response to the pandemic and its consequences.

The practical measures included prioritising TAIEX activities with a COVID-19 dimension, increasing flexibility for the proposal and implementation of projects and developing a diversity of digital solutions for online meetings. In 2020, most workshops and expert missions have been implemented completely or partially online (where feasible) throughout 2020, through the use of Video-Tele Conferencing (VTC) tools and platforms.

To achieve this, the Partner Countries have been asked to map their individual (short and long term) needs linked to COVID-19, and to identify the sectors in which they see the biggest potential for TAIEX online implementation. These requests are prioritised and aggregated into thematic clusters and subsequently transmitted to those Member States administrations, which have indicated matching expertise for a swift implementation of online events. This information will also serve as a basis for future dedicated flagship events targeting all regions. Such events are being prepared in sectors such as health, economic recovery, education, cybersecurity and the fight against domestic violence.

Finally, in line with the new Commission's priorities, substantial efforts have been invested in 2020 to transform TAIEX instrument to support the European Green Deal and to contribute to the green transition in the EU and its partner countries. The introduction of digital tools aside, the promotion

³ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eir/p2p/index_en.htm

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes/overview-funding-programmes/structural-reform-support-programme-srsp_en

of green public procurement principles and the Commission's guidelines for sustainable meetings and events is gradually decreasing the physical environmental toll of also physical TAIEX events. Similarly, TAIEX continues to be implemented with the objective to support gender equality through both the process design as well as through dedicated events. The share of women amongst TAIEX participants reached 50% in 2019 whilst the share of female TAIEX experts reached 40%.

Detailed statistics on TAIEX events per regions and strands are available in annex.

1.2 TAIEX: main elements and principles

The uniqueness of the assistance provided by TAIEX lies in its **short-term, peer-to-peer and tailor-made nature**, which allows it to be highly flexible and immediately implementable.

TAIEX provides four types of assistance:

- **Expert missions** to beneficiary countries: maximum five days in principle, to provide guidance on legislative projects and on the functioning of the administrative process, to advise on legislative acts and on their implementation, to explain the EU acquis and to present EU best practice examples;
- **Workshops** in beneficiary countries: average duration of approximately two days to present and explain the related EU acquis and EU best practice issues to a large audience (selected by the beneficiary country) from the same country or from several countries (regional and multi-country workshops), regarding issues of common interest;
- **Study visits** to EU Member States: maximum five days in principle, to train a maximum of three officials from the beneficiary countries on how Member States deal with practical issues related to the implementation and enforcement of the EU acquis;
- **Work from home**: EU Member State experts carry out a specific task or a set of tasks, such as reviewing a piece of legislation, from home.

The assistance provided by TAIEX covers all aspects relating to EU standards and legislation, from fundamental rights to consumer protection. Specifically, in the neighbourhood and enlargement regions the four **main policy fields** covered are freedom, security and justice (JHA); agriculture and food safety (AGRI); environment, energy, transport and telecommunications (ETT); internal market (IM).

- **Freedom, security and justice**: Strengthening the EU as an area of freedom, security and justice without internal borders continues to be a priority and it is a model that TAIEX assistance contributes to export. The range of legislation is wide, covering issues such as free movement of persons, visa policy, EU external borders policy, Schengen area, immigration, asylum, judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters, drugs policy coordination, data protection, fundamental rights, racism and xenophobia, police and customs cooperation, crime prevention, fight against organised crime. At the same time, the target groups remain varied and diverse, composed not only of officials of the Ministries of Justice and the Ministries of Interior but very often includes those who have to apply the acquis in their daily work: judges, prosecutors, police officials, other law enforcement agencies, border guards, officials from migration and asylum authorities, customs departments, etc.
- **Agriculture, food safety and fisheries**: The TAIEX instrument delivers assistance across the agriculture, food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary and fisheries sectors. The timely provision of targeted expert support is of particular importance in the veterinary sector. Disease control simulation exercises, both before a disease outbreak and a rapid deployment of experts immediately after disease detection, have been of significant

benefit for the participants. Priorities for agricultural policy assistance are centred on the establishment and development of paying agencies, delegated national institutions charged with the responsibility of administering trade mechanisms and processing farm support payments, from the application stage through to verification, payment and audit. Furthermore guidance is given on the implementation and enforcement of the Common Organisation of the Markets and a range of policy areas from state aids and rural development to quality issues such as the protection of geographical indications and organic farming standards.

- **Environment, energy, transport and telecommunications:** Classical TAIEX assistance or support via the Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network (ECRAN) is provided to our beneficiaries in all fields covered by the environmental legislation (air quality, waste management, nature protection, chemicals, industrial pollution and climate change). Environment and energy are key policies closely linked as production of energy has an impact on the environment and on climate change. The topics addressed range from renewable energy and energy savings to market liberalisation in the oil, gas and electricity sectors. In the area of transport, sectors covered include maritime, inland and aviation including joint programmes with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC). Technical knowledge is also transferred on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and its market regulation. TAIEX activities are organised on topics such as electronic communication, number portability, broadband infrastructure and postal services.
- **Internal market:** The Internal Market is underpinned by a range of supporting measures and policies which the EU and its Member States have adopted to sweep away the technical, regulatory, legal, bureaucratic, and other barriers that stifled free trade and free movement within the Union. Activities cover a vast array of acquis measures, mainly related to the four freedoms, but also extended to EU policies, programmes and initiatives in a larger sense. Assistance is particularly focused on social and employment policy, intellectual property rights issues, financial services, competition policy and consumer protection and health policy. Focus is also given to SMEs and industry, competition issues including state aids, structural funds, Economic and Monetary Union and free movement of capital, taxation and customs.

TAIEX is largely a **demand-driven** instrument, which means that the assistance provided is mainly requested directly by the beneficiaries. Officials in line Ministries dealing with community legislation, staff from regulatory or supervisory bodies and inspectorates, officials in notified bodies, which design, implement or enforce legislation as well as officials in Parliaments, the Judiciary and Law Enforcement Agencies, can introduce requests for TAIEX assistance. Conversely, public officials of EU Member States with expertise relevant to TAIEX beneficiaries can register as TAIEX experts or as institutional contact points. And in the context of TAIEX PI, the assistance is most often initiated by Commission and EEAS in order to advance EU priorities.

In order to guarantee and boost the ownership of TAIEX activities, **the Commission relies on the cooperation of a network of National Contact Points (NCPs)** from EU Member States and, in the Neighbourhood and Enlargement regions, from beneficiary countries. The main role of NCPs from EU MS lies in overseeing TAIEX activities and acting as reference points for experts from their countries who participate in TAIEX activities. Their counterpart in the beneficiary countries can be contacted by all representatives of beneficiary administrations, especially to clarify procedures and assist with any issues related to the organisation of the activities. Where there is no NCP, the contact is via the EU Delegation.

The **beneficiaries** of TAIEX assistance include civil servants working in central public administrations; judiciary and law enforcement authorities; civil servants working in Parliaments and Legislative Councils and representatives of social partners, trade unions and employers' associations.

TAIEX does not provide any direct capacity building support to civil society organisations, individual citizens or private companies.

1.3 TAIEX: synergies with other institutional building support instruments

The TAIEX instrument belongs to the wider institution-building and public administration reform assistance, managed by DG NEAR, in which two other main instruments are included: Twinning and SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management).

Twinning and SIGMA, created in the context of EU Accession, were also adapted to the Neighbourhood region in 2003 and 2008 respectively. The cumulated experience with the candidate countries and potential candidates became an invaluable asset when the Commission extended the three tools to the Neighbourhood. Ensuring the transfer of European know-how in a practical, hands-on and peer-to-peer manner, these instruments are proving to be powerful tools for the **reform and modernisation processes of our neighbours**.

Twinning is a policy-driven instrument supporting institutional cooperation between public administrations in EU Member States and partner countries, by bringing together public sector expertise in order to **achieve concrete, mandatory, operational results through peer-to-peer exchange projects**.

Twinning Projects cover a wide range of areas such as **finance and internal market, environment, justice and home affairs, energy, transport, trade and industry, agriculture, food safety, employment, social affairs, health & consumer protection**, etc.

Twinning as an Institution Building tool rests upon **common features** and the results of Twinning projects include, among others:

- **Improved legislative and regulatory context** in line with EU legislation and regulation in key priority areas;
- **Improved institutional capacity** of the national public administration particularly in fields specified in the national reforms agenda and, in line with EU-partner countries strategic frameworks;
- Improved conditions necessary for the EU-partner countries **economic cooperation and other cooperation areas** (e.g. political development and governance, and social development);
- **Enhanced political dialogue** for further strengthened relations.

From 2019, the Twinning tool has been made available also to countries covered by EU development cooperation policies. DG NEAR manages Twinning DEVCO, in cooperation with DG DEVCO.

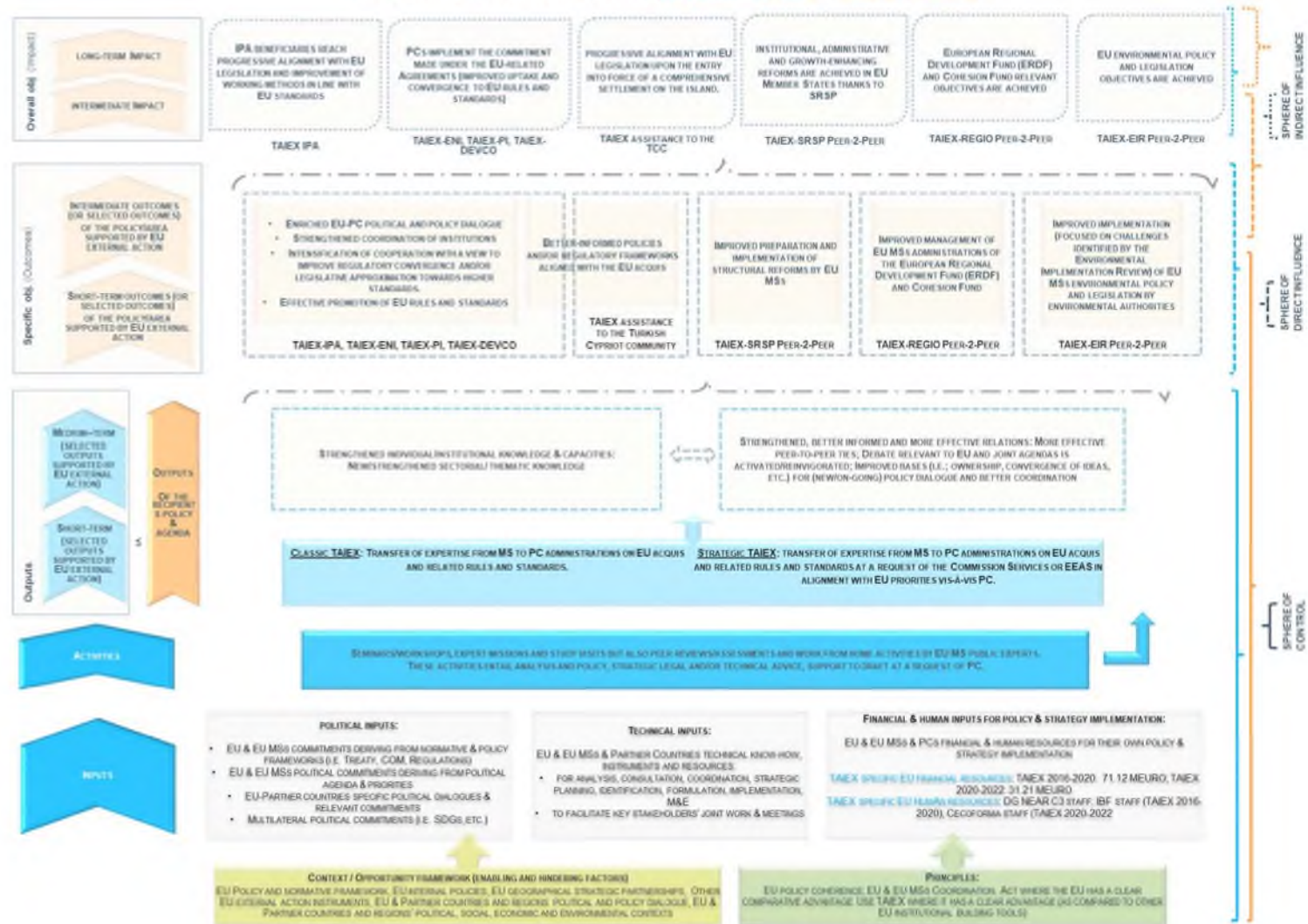
SIGMA is a joint initiative of the **OECD and the EU**, principally funded by the EU. Initially, designed to support Candidate Countries in the context of the EU enlargement, SIGMA is now equally integrated in the EU Neighbourhood Policy framework since 2008.

SIGMA has the capability to mobilise quickly and a readiness to adapt to the specific needs of Partner Countries, on the following main sectors: **administrative law; public expenditure management; internal/external audit; procurement/concessions; civil service; policy capacities and co-ordination; regulatory management and property rights**.

1.4 The overall intervention logic of the TAIEX instrument

The Intervention Logic is expressed through the following diagram:

**OVERALL INTERVENTION LOGIC OF THE TAIEX INSTRUMENT
WITH SPHERES OF CONTROL AND INFLUENCE (EU EXTERNAL ACTION AND COUNTRY PARTNERS)**



1.5 Evaluations undertaken

Since 1996, the TAIEX instrument has been evaluated twice providing significant feedback for all TAIEX stakeholders.

A. Phare Ex Post Evaluation. Phase 1, Multi-Beneficiary Programmes: TAIEX (October 2007)⁵

The evaluation was prepared by the MWH Consortium between December 2005 and July 2006, and reflected the provision of Phare assistance through the TAIEX multi-beneficiary programmes between 1996 and 2004. It examined the performance of TAIEX in addressing the programme objectives and intended results, provided a general assessment of the programme, drew conclusions and highlighted lessons learnt from nine years of TAIEX assistance.

The main conclusions included the following:

- TAIEX has a definite role within the Commission portfolio of institution building measures. It is a short-term, service-oriented and flexible complement to other instruments. It meets needs that the Phare national programmes are not meeting, for a variety of reasons – the required intervention is too small or too short, or needs to be mobilised too quickly. TAIEX also fills gaps that the Directorates General and other organisations are unable to fill through lack of local networks, knowledge, staff, time and the ability to mobilise resources which are restricted by the rigidity of financial regulations.
- TAIEX has played a valuable role in supporting the accession process through its translation and transposition work and through its support for the Peer Review process. The Peer Reviews in particular have been important foundations for the Regular Reports which, in turn, have been instrumental in guiding and targeting the Phare annual programmes.
- Sustainability of TAIEX activities would be enhanced by a more strategic approach and enhanced local ownership. TAIEX runs in parallel with the Phare national programmes, and local institutional ownership of the interventions has not been maximised. Dissemination of lessons learnt and good practices between countries and interventions could be improved. The range of tools used by TAIEX (short-term technical assistance, etc.) is sufficient to ‘plug gaps’, but they are not sufficient to build sustainable capacity at institutional level. Cumulatively, these factors have reduced the sustainability of some interventions. In particular, attention needs to be paid to the sustainability of the Regional Training Programme, which is becoming an important TAIEX activity.
- Good efforts are ongoing to improve cost-effectiveness, and these should be continued. As designed, TAIEX deals with a high volume of short-term, largely demand-driven interventions and as such, wider impacts and sustainability can only be limited. In this context therefore, cost-effectiveness is a core concern. This relates not only to the cost of delivering the interventions, but striking a balance with maintaining high quality, both in terms of logistics and importantly in terms of content. For training events, ‘quality’ includes appropriateness of content to participants, appropriate participants and good quality trainers and speakers. Since 2003 good efforts are ongoing to improve cost-effectiveness, and these

5

https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/financial_assistance/phare/evaluation/ex_post_eval_taiex_oct_07.pdf

should be continued, together with the establishment of clear benchmarks for both cost and quality of actions.

B. Evaluation of the TAIEX Instrument (August 2015)⁶

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the TAIEX's capacity in making available the expertise of Member States' public officials and administrations to countries wishing to align their standards with those of the European Union (EU) in the most relevant and effective way. The final evaluation covered all TAIEX assistance funded by the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) from 2007 to 2014.

The main conclusions included the following:

- **Relevance and design:** TAIEX assistance has been highly relevant in view of existing and emerging international and national commitments of IPA country governments, with respect to furthering public administration and governance reforms and in light of the EU accession requirements. The evaluation identified several strengths and no significant weaknesses in the overall design of the Instrument. The broad, system-focused design of the TAIEX instrument is appropriate in view of the needs of the beneficiary governments and their respective institutions.
- **Effectiveness:** TAIEX contributions to envisaged reforms are almost exclusively positive. There is a record of useful results being delivered in beneficiary countries, which supported reform goals across the various sectors of support. This was achieved through informed strategies, improved legislation, enhanced institutional capacity, the modernisation of practices and new models of work, but also behavioural change. There is evidence of a contribution to successful changes in legal frameworks, policies and strategies, through support provided by TAIEX assistance - in synergy with other instruments - to strengthen the respective BAs' organisational capacities. TAIEX empowered positive changes and the ability of adjustments with the approximations into the EU acquis.
- **Efficiency:** While it is difficult to assess cost-effectiveness of TAIEX (due to the fact that it is a demand driven instrument featuring a less systematic framework of outcome and impact indicators), there is evidence that TAIEX assistance has been delivered in a timely and efficient manner. Its management structures and approaches are appropriate and allow for the selection of the best mechanisms to respond to the needs of the BA. Despite the fact that TAIEX is a demand driven instrument by nature - which can cause fragmentation - it is in a good position to overcome this obstacle by increasingly ensuring sequenced events that have been programmed and supported within sectors. Some positive lessons and experiences from such examples are taken into account and used to inform programming of new TAIEX activities. TAIEX has a strong in-built Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system that provides a good overview of efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of support provided by the instrument.
- **Impact:** TAIEX's overall contribution to EU accession must be looked at in conjunction with other forms of EU (and other donor) assistance to individual countries. Nonetheless, available data on TAIEX and data gathered through this evaluation indicate that TAIEX efforts have contributed to moving existing change processes into the desired direction in the IPA countries. This is particularly the case in terms of behavioural change and legislative/institutional mechanisms development and reform.

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/financial_assistance/phare/evaluation/2015/2014-346665-1-taie-ex-evaluation-report-final.pdf

- Sustainability: The instrument helped create a number of conditions likely to support the sustainability of results. Good foundations for sustainability included adopted legislation and newly established mechanisms, as well as administrative and organisational structures, which are in place - ensuring the effective implementation of TAIEX assistance. While certain achievements are likely to be sustained without further support, others will require additional efforts from national and/or international actors. The main threat to sustainability is a high turnover of staff and low capacities in the public administrations. This is compounded by a lack of political/senior management support to sustaining changes brought about by the TAIEX instrument.
- C. In addition, TAIEX support to the Turkish Cypriot community (TCc) is subject of an evaluation exercise which covers the whole Aid Programme to the TCc from 2013 to 2018. This evaluation exercise is currently ongoing and is managed by the unit A2 of DG REFORM.
- D. Similarly, TAIEX- REGIO Peer 2 Peer is part of a review study on REGIO peer learning tools, which will be concluded in December 2020. The final evaluation report will be shared with the evaluation team ahead of the kick-off meeting.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATION ASSIGNMENT

2.1 Rationale and objectives of the evaluation

The European Commission promotes the systematic and timely evaluation of its programmes, activities, instruments, legislation and non-spending activities, in order to demonstrate accountability and to promote lesson learning to improve policy and practice.

This evaluation is part of the Directorate-general for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) multiannual strategic evaluation Work Programme 2020-2024.

In line with the EU policy on evaluation, this evaluation seeks to be a stock-taking lesson-learning and forward-looking exercise.

The **general objective** of this evaluation is to provide the relevant Commission services and the stakeholders with an overall independent assessment on the contribution of the TAIEX instrument in the period 2015-2020 to support reform processes in partner countries and EU MSs.

The **specific objectives** for this evaluation are:

- To provide an assessment in both qualitative and quantitative terms on the relevance, conditions of implementation and performance of the TAIEX instrument, particularly its efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact and added value.
- To provide an assessment on the coherence/complementarity of TAIEX with other EU-funded institutional support tools. This is particularly relevant with regard to Twinning and SIGMA and budget support (BS) programmes.
- To assess the EU cooperation potential and the EU added value of working with peers in EU MS administrations.
- To assess TAIEX's role in reinforcing the profile of the EU as a key global player; and promoting EU's visibility.
- To identify lessons learnt (both positive and negative), best practices and recommendations in particular as regards:

- the institutional setting and implementation approaches and tools of the TAIEX instrument;
- the efficiency and effectiveness of the support to capacity development;
- the explanatory factors that facilitate or hamper the contribution of TAIEX to policy reforms.

The results of the evaluation will feed the ground for: (i) a potential upgrade of TAIEX (including further simplification of the approaches and adaptation of the tools, if needed); (ii) defining greater synergy effects with the EU's political and reform objectives (iii) as well as for the overall programming, monitoring, reporting and implementation of EU financial assistance.

The main intended **users** of the results of this evaluation include the European Commission, EU Member States and partner countries. The evaluation may also be of interest to civil society organisations and the general public.

The **stakeholders**, specific services and organisations with a stake in the evaluation and with what will be done with the results, to be associated in the evaluation process include (non-exhaustive list):

- EU stakeholders: Commission services (SG, DG NEAR, DG DEVCO, DG REFORM, DG ENV, DG REGIO, FPI; the EEAS; and EU Member States and Embassies in partner regions (TAIEX NCPs and national MS administrations). EU Delegations/EU Offices in candidate and potential candidates covered by pre-accession assistance instruments and in partner countries covered by all other instruments, other EU institutions;
- National authorities in partner countries responsible for the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting of EU external action support (mostly those related to the TAIEX Instrument (NCP, but not only), and other national stakeholders (including local civil society and local authorities);
- International stakeholders: relevant international organisations, relevant civil society organisations and networks, educational institutions and research institutions.

2.2 Requested services

This evaluation is based on the Better Regulation in the EU⁷ package. Nevertheless, as this is not a 'major' evaluation in the sense of the Better Regulation guidelines, it will not involve the development of an open public consultation and it will not be followed by a Staff Working Document.

The request for this evaluation is based on the provisions contained in the Common Implementing Rules Regulation for the implementation of the Union's instruments for financing external action⁸.

2.2.1 Scope of the evaluation

The TAIEX instrument in its entirety is the object of the present evaluation.

⁷ The Better Regulation Package was approved by the European Commission on 19.05.2015 (SWD (2015) 111) and updated on 7.7.2017 (SWD (2017) 350). Please see also: https://ec.europa.eu/info/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox_en.

⁸ Regulation (EU) No 236/2014

2.2.1.1 Temporal scope

The temporal scope is 2015-2020⁹.

The assessment will cover the entire period 2015-2020 so that the repositioning of the instrument introduced in 2018, and its impacts, if any, are carefully reflected upon in comparison to pre-2018 practice. Case studies should nevertheless focus primarily on the period 2018-2020 to compare how traditional and reformed events coexist.

2.2.1.2 Geographical scope

The TAIEX mandate to provide assistance covers:

- Turkey, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo* ;
- Turkish Cypriot community in the northern part of Cyprus - areas of the Republic of Cyprus not under effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus ;
- Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine** , Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine;
- All countries beneficiaries of the Partnership Instrument;
- EU Member States in the framework of administrative cooperation with DG for Regional and Urban Policy, DG Environment and DG Structural Reform Support;
- Partner countries and territories covered by Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development.

Being a remote exercise, the evaluation is expected to reach out to all countries having benefited from a TAIEX activity in the evaluation period.

2.2.1.3 Thematic scope

The evaluation is not expected to deliver a thorough assessment on the contribution made by TAIEX in policy reforms in specific areas but rather to assess whether TAIEX specificities are more effective for a given set of areas. The evaluation will cover all the areas but a greater emphasis will be given to those that have received greater attention by TAIEX activities in the period 2018-2020, such as rule of law, environment, and internal market.

The case studies to be agreed upon at the end of the inception phase, which should be balanced among all strands of TAIEX, will further determine the thematic scope.

⁹ The last evaluation of the TAIEX Instrument covered the period 2007-2014.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

** This designation does not entail any recognition of Palestine as a state and is without prejudice to positions on the recognition of Palestine as a state.

2.2.2 Evaluation questions and key evaluation criteria¹²

In line with the Better Regulation guidelines on evaluations introduced by the Commission in 2015 and revised in 2017, with DG NEAR Guidelines on linking planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation¹³ and DG DEVCO Evaluation approach and methodology¹⁴, the main evaluation criteria in this specific evaluation are: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact. In addition, the evaluation will assess one EU specific evaluation criterion, which is the EU added value.

2.2.2.1 Evaluation questions

The four evaluation questions (EQs) below serve firstly as a way of articulating the key requirements of the evaluation, secondly to articulate the key strategic issues at stake, and thirdly as a mean of ensuring that the relevant objectives, obligations and activities of the TAIEX Instrument are covered.

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the evaluation will provide evidence-based answers to each of the EQs below. In the intermediary and final reports, the contractor will provide substantiated answers (preliminary in the case of the intermediary report) to each of the EQs headings and judgement criteria (JC).

The evaluation team, in consultation with the Evaluation manager, will finalise and complete (with indicators for each JC and relevant data collection sources and tools) the proposed set of EQs and JC during the inception phase.

In their offer, the Framework contractor may propose additional EQs or JC, or suggest improvements to the questions made by the Commission. These suggestions will be discussed with the Commission during the kick-off and inception meetings. If accepted by the Commission, the amended versions of the EQs and JCs will be used.

The Table below provides a schematic overview of the coverage of the evaluation criteria and key issues for each EQ.

TABLE 1 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DAC AND EU EVALUATION CRITERIA AND THE EQS

	EQ 1	EQ 2	EQ 3	EQ 4
	INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP, PROGRAMMING & IMPLEMENTATION	TAIEX ADDED VALUE AS AN INSTITUTION-BUILDING INSTRUMENT	EU COOPERATION POTENTIAL	CONTRIBUTION TO REFORM PROCESSES & EU'S VISIBILITY AND ROLE AS A GLOBAL PLAYER
Relevance	√√	√√√	√√√	√√√
Efficiency	√√√			
Effectiveness	√√	√√√	√√√	√√√
Impact		√	√	√
Sustainability		√	√	√
EU value added		√√√	√√√	√√
Coherence		√√√	√√√	

¹² The definition of the 6 DAC + 1 EU evaluation criteria is contained for reference in the Annex VII.

¹³ See http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/news_corner/monitoring-and-evaluation/index_en.htm

¹⁴ See https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/evaluation-approach-and-methodology_en

1.	<p>To what extent and how have the institutional set-up, programming approach and implementation modalities of the TAIEX Instrument affected (and are at present affecting) the capacity of the TAIEX Instrument to trigger discussions and concrete actions for specific structural reforms?</p> <p>To what extent have the changes introduced to the TAIEX Instrument in 2018 been beneficial in this regard?</p>
	<p><i>JC 1 - The institutional set-up is conducive to proper, timely and effective implementation</i></p>
	<p><i>JC 2 - The programming process allows identifying and formulating well-conceived and country-owned TAIEX activities</i></p>
	<p><i>JC 3 - Implementation modalities integrate flexibility and support for the identification and formulation of TAIEX activities</i></p> <p><i>(incl. in relation to the choice between TAIEX series of interventions (such as training maps) vs single TAIEX activities; or between strategic vs. classic (demand-driven) interventions)</i></p>
	<p><i>JC 4 - The current catalogue of possibilities for the delivery of TAIEX activities (study visit, expert mission, workshop, peer reviews, work from home, on line initiatives, hybrid initiatives and series of events) ensures effectiveness of the instrument</i></p>
2.	<p>To what extent has TAIEX added value as an institution-building instrument, compared to other forms of EU assistance?¹⁵ To what extent has TAIEX developed synergies with other forms of EU assistance?</p> <p>Are there incentives for partner countries and EU MS to use the TAIEX Instrument? If yes, which ones?</p>
	<p><i>JC 1 - TAIEX has been used for actions which could / would not have been better, or equally well, addressed through other EU external action instruments</i></p>
	<p><i>JC 2 - EU support interventions in partner countries (other than TAIEX) and TAIEX have benefitted from each other</i></p>
	<p><i>JC 3 - TAIEX activities have incorporated key principles of public administration reform</i></p>
	<p><i>JC 4 - TAIEX activities have produced changes in staff competences¹⁶ which could / would not have been better, or equally well, addressed through other EU external action instruments</i></p>
	<p><i>JC 5 - Potential (expected or unexpected) political, institutional, organisational and/or individual, or also technical and financial incentives for partner countries and EU MS to use the TAIEX Instrument are taken into account</i></p>
3.	<p>To what extent has TAIEX been, and is at present, maximizing the EU cooperation potential and the EU added value of working with peers in MS administrations?</p>

¹⁵ E.g. Twinning, SIGMA, complementary support of Budget support programmes, other institutional building tools (incl. Technical assistance, but not only) in non-BS programmes linked to partner countries reforms.

¹⁶ Intended as staff with new expertise, or new competences among the existing staff, with a view to better responding to their institution's mission and/or to perform new functions or improve the existing ones.

	<i>JC 1 - European (i.e. EC + Member States) actors have contributed to establishing and/or effectively implementing co-ordination mechanisms on their respective support to Partner countries</i>
	<i>JC 2 - Actors in the field of EU external action have ensured complementarity between their TAIEX activities and those of the EU Member States</i>
	<i>JC 3 - TAIEX added benefits to what would have resulted from action taken by the EU MSs on their own in both EU MSs and Partner countries</i>
4.	To what extent is the TAIEX Instrument contributing to the reform processes in EU MSs and Partner Countries, thus advancing on priorities agreed in formal policy dialogues? To what extent has TAIEX been, and is at present, succeeding in its efforts to support partners beyond the original enlargement region? How does this expansion stand vis-a-vis traditional TAIEX in the neighbourhood and enlargement regions?
	<i>JC 1 – TAIEX support provided to EU MS (REGIO), EU MS (SRSP), to IPA, ENI and DEVCO beneficiaries yields the expected results: improving the administrative capacity of public institutions to design, formulate and/or implement their reform processes and/or manage funds</i>
	<i>JC 2 - TAIEX contribution to global regulatory fora (TAIEX FPI) yields the expected results: supporting policy dialogues and specific bilateral framework agreements</i>
	<i>JC 3 - TAIEX contribution to global regulatory fora (TAIEX FPI), to IPA, ENI and DEVCO beneficiaries yields the expected results: supporting alignment of partner countries with EU norms, standards and regulatory framework</i>
	<i>JC 4 - JC 1 – TAIEX-PI support has contributed to advancing EU interests reinforced EU's visibility and role as a global player</i>
	<i>JC 5 – TAIEX support provided to EU MS (EIR) yields the expected result: effectively supporting i) Member States' experts implementing the EU environmental policy and law in the EU Member States as part of the Commission's Environmental Implementation Review (EIR); ii) Member States on the environmental priorities identified in the European Semester, National Energy and Climate Change Plans (NECPs), Just Transition Plans and recovery and resilience plans under the new Resilience and Recovery Facility</i>
	<i>JC 6 - Due consideration is given to internal and/or external political, organisational, human and technical factors that facilitate or hamper the contribution of TAIEX to the reform processes of Partner countries and EU MSs</i>

2.2.2.2 Questions to be considered in relation to lessons learnt

The following questions will need to be addressed by the Evaluation team while undertaking the evaluation exercise so as to provide answers in the final report:

- What were the factors that facilitated or hampered the contribution of the TAIEX Instrument to the results achieved in both EU MSs and partner countries? What are the context specific factors to the observed changes / developments / trends? Have different regional/national frameworks affected the efficiency and effectiveness of the TAIEX Instrument?
- What lessons can be drawn from TAIEX support in terms of cooperation with EU Member States administrations?
- How can the lessons learnt contribute to the work of the relevant Commission's thematic and geographic services?

2.2.3 Evaluation tools and techniques

The structuring stage aims to define the design and the methodology of the evaluation. The methodology will clearly specify the working methods and the techniques to be used (e.g. data collection, case studies, survey, triangulation methods, etc.). Whenever relevant, the evaluation will consider the Guidance note 'Evaluation with gender as a cross-cutting dimension', jointly developed by NEAR, DEVCO and FPI services.¹⁷

Among the main methodological techniques, the following key elements can be already mentioned:

A. The intervention logic (IL) and the expected effects diagram.

The IL displays the logical sequence of the hierarchy of objectives and expected effects. A first draft of the IL of the TAIEX instrument is presented in the current document. It differentiates between several interlinked levels. These are:

- **Inputs:** The political, technical, financial, human and material resources put in place in order to plan and implement activities. Different budgetary resources are gathered in service contracts for the provision of logistic support for a given period and tendered accordingly. IBF provided logistic support for TAIEX activities from 2016 until July 2020, and CECOFORMA will implement logistic support to TAIEX from August 2020 until July 2022. DG NEAR C3 is the entity in charge of the management of the TAIEX instrument and the service contracts on behalf of the European Commission.
- **Activities:** Specific support tasks put in place to generate outputs within the framework of TAIEX. TAIEX is based on peer-to-peer expertise and as a result works essentially with EU experts from the public sector. DG NEAR C3 TAIEX receives requests from Partner Countries or from EC Services or EEAS, via an IT system called TMS. Following internal consultation, DG NEAR C3 approves or rejects the request and starts the preparation for its implementation. DG NEAR C3 staff will find suitable experts from EU MS as well as to coordinate the preparation of the agenda with the local counterpart. Once the TAIEX activity is ready for implementation, DG NEAR C3 transfers to the service provider the task of organizing the activity requested and approved by DG NEAR C3. TAIEX mainly providing its activities either as:
 - a. Workshops (single or multi-country): meetings gathering more than one expert from more than one EU Member State and a large beneficiary audience. Workshops usually last 2 days);
 - b. Expert Missions (consist in the sending of one (or more) EU Member State expert(s) to provide advice to the beneficiary institution(s) on specific topics (e.g. legal drafting, implementation of a law, etc.) and to a limited audience. Expert missions normally last between 2 and 5 days). A special type of expert mission is a 'peer assessment' or 'peer review' mission. Such missions assess, as required, gaps between a beneficiary's national legislation and the EU acquis.
 - c. Study Visits: consist in sending maximum 3 participants from a beneficiary for a working visit to EU Member State institutions and administrations. Study visits last between 2 and 5 days.
 - d. Work from home: one or more experts carry out a specific task or a set of tasks from their home (e.g. assessing legislation).

¹⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/guidance-gender-sensitive-evaluations-20180516_en.pdf

- **Outputs:** Direct products or services delivered by activities, directly influencing the achievement of outcomes. In the short term, TAIEX activities are aimed at transferring expertise from MS to PC administrations on EU acquis and related rules and standards. In the medium-term, build-up/strengthen individual/institutional knowledge & capacities: New/strengthened sectorial/ thematic knowledge. Also, provide strengthened, better informed and more effective relations: More effective peer-to-peer ties; Debate relevant to EU and joint agendas is activated/reinvigorated; Improved bases (i.e.; ownership, convergence of ideas, etc.) for (new/on-going) policy dialogue and better coordination..
- **Specific objectives (Outcomes):** Short to medium term effects on the political, social, economic and/or environmental areas targeted by TAIEX activities as well as changes in behaviour of addressees of the latter activities. Other external factors and players also influence the targeted areas and addressees. Outcomes are directly influenced by TAIEX activities.

Depending on the funding source of the TAIEX related support, TAIEX is expected to achieve different outcomes. IPA, ENI, DEVCO and Partnership Instruments, shares similar intended outcomes: Enriched EU-PC political and policy dialogue; Strengthened coordination of institutions; Intensification of cooperation with a view to improve regulatory convergence and/or legislative approximation towards higher standards; Effective promotion of EU rules and standards; and Better-informed policies and/or regulatory frameworks aligned with the EU acquis. The support in the Turkish Cypriot Community shall also achieve better-informed policies and/or regulatory frameworks aligned with the EU acquis. Support under SRSP shall improve the preparation and implementation by EU MSs of growth-enhancing reforms. The support funded under REGIO facility shall achieve an improved management of the European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund. In turn, TAIEX EIR – Environment will ensure improved understanding and implementation of the Environmental Impact Review.

- **Overall objectives (Impacts):** Intermediate to long-term change in the political, social, economic and/or environmental global context which stems from interventions of all relevant actors and stakeholders and which is indirectly influenced by the TAIEX Instrument. TAIEX should contribute to achieve the individual objectives set up in the different regulations/strategic frameworks in the areas/domains (IPA, ENI, DEVCO, EIR-ENV, PI-FPI, REGIO, REFORM-SRSP, REFORM-TCc) where the instrument is currently active.

B. Evaluation Questions (Headings, Judgment criteria, indicators and data collection sources and tools).

A draft set of evaluation questions headings and JC is presented here above.

JC determine the appropriate indicators and, more generally, the nature of the data collected and the type of analysis. The indicators will need to allow crosschecking, triangulating from different sources of information and strengthening the evidence base on which the questions are answered.

As mentioned earlier under 2.2.2.1, the evaluation team will, in consultation with the EC evaluation manager (and by extension with the ISG), finalise and complete (with indicators for each JC and relevant data collection sources and tools) the proposed set of EQs during the inception phase. For each indicator, the evaluation team will identify the specific source of information to be considered.

The information gathered and analysed for each indicator will need to be presented in an annex of the intermediary and final reports.

C. Data collection tools.

Several tools will be used for collecting, structuring, processing and/or analysing data throughout the evaluation process:

- **Inventory** of TAIEX activities. The inventory already exists on platform TAIEX Management System. Access to this platform will be given to the awarded Contractor.
- **Literature review.** The team will scrutinise all relevant key documentation on the: EU policy, normative and programming documents (Enlargement Strategies, European Neighbourhood Policy, New European Consensus on Development, the Commission communication on a new Africa – Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs, PI Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) for 2018-2020, Council Regulation 389/2006 establishing an instrument of financial support for encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community, etc.); partner countries official documents (i.e. national programmes for integration into the EU, sector strategies, etc.); TAIEX related documents; Previous evaluations, studies, etc. This list will be further detailed once a set of case studies is defined (see below).
- **Interviews.** Both structured and unstructured. A round of interviews will be carried out via phone/email/video-conference discussions with relevant stakeholders:
 - EU officials in HQs and EU Delegation/offices involved in programming, implementation and oversight of EU support;
 - EU Member States: Administration, body or other semi-public mandated entity, MS TAIEX NCP, respective MS Embassies in partner countries;
 - Beneficiaries stakeholders: mainly national governmental stakeholders (including NCP) and direct beneficiaries, if different (i.e. local authorities).

The selection of key informants and interlocutors will be based on the specific added value they can bring to help answer the various EQs. Interviews will be carried out in all phases. Focus groups can also be envisaged, using participatory methods.

The contracting authority expects the evaluation team to build in sufficient time to look through documents and to have discussions throughout the evaluation process.

- **Case study.** Several case studies are expected to be conducted in a balanced fashion to provide detailed qualitative information on important issues in light of the EQs and in order to allow the evaluators to draw general conclusions. The budget calculation is based on seven case studies. The exact number will be decided in the inception phase by the ISG on the basis of a proposal made by the contractor.

It is worth noting that it is not expected from the evaluation team to undertake a thorough assessment of the selected TAIEX activities. The activities will be simply considered as a mean to inform relevant indicators that will then offer the basis to respond to the judgement criteria and main evaluation question headings. TAIEX activities consideration is expected to provide a view of the actual results generated by the TAIEX Instrument.

The selection of the case studies will be done using a sample approach to be agreed by the ISG.

Some criteria to be considered could be:

- Broader learning potentials;
- Coverage of the different SLAs signed by NEAR with other Commission services;
- Typology of tools, mechanisms, etc.;

- Typology of objectives pursued (strengthening of individual capacities, contribution to policy dialogue, contribution to legislative and regulatory context, etc.);
- Geographical coverage;
- The political and economic context;
- Sector specific considerations;
- Availability of information on the interventions;
- Other.

The final set of case studies will need to ensure, in the case of REGIO and REFORM, complementarity with the analyses already carried out by their respective ongoing evaluations mentioned under §1.4.

The case studies will need to cover as a minimum a total number of 105 representative TAIEX events, as following:

TABLE 2 : SIZE OF SAMPLE FOR FACE-TO-FACE EVENTS

	Expert Mission	Study Visit	Work from Home	Workshop	Total
DEVCO	0	0	0	0	0
REGIO EIR - ENV	1	0	0	0	1
ENPI EAST	5	3	0	3	11
ENPI SOUTH	3	2	0	2	7
IPA	17	6	2	6	31
PI - FPI	5	0	0	1	6
REGIO	1	1	0	1	3
SRSP - REFORM	3	4	1	2	10
TCC - REFORM	9	0	3	0	12
Total	39	16	6	15	81

TABLE 3 : SIZE OF SAMPLE FOR ONLINE EVENTS

	Expert Mission	Work from Home	Workshop	Total
DEVCO	0	0	1	1
REGIO EIR - ENV	0	0	0	0
ENPI EAST	3	0	1	4
ENPI SOUTH	1	0	1	2
IPA	5	0	3	7
PI - FPI	0	0	1	1
REGIO	1	0	1	2
SRSP - REFORM	2	0	2	5
TCC - REFORM	2	0	0	2
Total	14	0	10	24

- **Surveys.** Several online surveys, to be designed in line with the evaluation questions, are expected to be launched to inform the evaluation. This being a remote evaluation, their role in the evaluation will be key and it is expected that around 20% of the working days of the evaluation team are allocated to their drafting, administration and analysis. Their nature will be defined in agreement with the ISG, but it is expected that: i) a first

round of surveys around the case studies is launched at the beginning of the data collection and analysis phase so as to feed the preliminary answers to the evaluation questions and the identification of hypotheses to be tested and information gaps to be filled-in, and ii) a second round of surveys is launched and addressed to the entire TAIEX community of practice so as to test the hypotheses identified in the intermediary report.

- It is expected that key stakeholders that have a direct or more indirect role in TAIEX events, are targeted by the surveys. In particular, the survey to be defined around the case studies will need to ensure that at least 100 representative TAIEX events are soundly covered.
- Key stakeholders to be considered are: EU Delegations' officials, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in partner countries, and EU MS administrations. EU services will support in the identification of the surveys' recipients.
- *Qualitative analysis*, mostly in relation to institutional/administrative capacities of public sector entities.

2.2.4 Phases, activities, and required deliverables

The overall guidance to be used is available on the web page of DG NEAR¹⁸.

The basic approach to the assignment consists of *three main phases*, each one ending with the approval of a specific deliverable in the form of a report. As mentioned under 2.4, the ISG will support the EC Evaluation manager in assessing the quality of the draft deliverables in order to achieve their finalisation. The reports will be revised in light of feedback from the ISG.

The four phases can be synthesized as follows:

A. Inception phase.

This phase aims at structuring the evaluation.

Clarifying the issues of the evaluation is the first aim of this phase. Indeed, the inception phase will start with a kick-off meeting. The meeting has the purpose to arrive at a clear-shared understanding of what is required by the ISG.

Further to a first documentary review to be performed by the evaluation team, the Commission evaluation manager will interact with the evaluation team in order for the latter to finalise the evaluation design: i) finalisation of the overall intervention logic of the TAIEX Instrument, and ii) finalisation of evaluation questions (with indicators, identifying the data collection tools and sources).

The mapping and analysis of TAIEX activities and the methodological proposal for the following phases (data collection tools and analysis), are part of this phase.

Based on these previous analyses, the evaluation team will propose a set of case studies (to be justified by sound selection criteria inspired by those included under 2.2.3) to be examined in detail during the data collection and analysis phase.

18

See: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/financial_assistance/phare/evaluation/2016/20160831-dg-near-guidelines-on-linking-planning-programing-vol-1-v0.4.pdf

The limitations faced or to be faced during the evaluation exercise will need to be discussed and mitigation measures defined.

Finally, the work plan for the overall evaluation process, that will need to be in line with the timing proposed in the present ToR, will also be presented and agreed in this phase.

If necessary, during the Inception Phase suggestions of modifications to the composition of the evaluation team might take place by both parties.

The deliverable of this phase is an inception report.

Sufficient time should be built in between the end of the Inception Phase and the start of the Data collection and analysis Phase for the feedback and approval process.

B. Data collection and analysis phase.

During this phase, deskwork and discussions with relevant stakeholders take place in order to collect and analyse data, and coming up with preliminary answers to the evaluation questions and hypotheses that will guide the finalisation of the data collection and analysis phase and guide the synthesis work. Information gaps for a sound answer to the evaluation questions will also be identified. A brief presentation of data collection and analyses done during this phase, challenges and limitations potentially faced will also be discussed. Changes to the evaluation questions (including judgment criteria and indicators) can also be proposed, if deemed necessary, during this phase (and presented in the intermediary report). On the same line, discussing potential amendments to the selection of case studies (if relevant) identified during the inception phase can be envisaged. The extent of these potential amendments must be of a reasonable nature.

This phase is expected to involve discussions with and the administration of online surveys to:

- EU officials in HQs and EU Delegation/offices involved in programming, implementation and oversight of EU support;
- EU Member States: Administration, body or other semi-public mandated entity, MS TAIEX NCP;
- Beneficiaries stakeholders: mainly national governmental stakeholders (including NCP) and direct beneficiaries, if different (i.e. local authorities).

The deliverables of this phase are both first an intermediary report and further on a slide presentation showing the consolidated findings (intermediary findings & findings from the survey to entire TAIEX community of practice).

Sufficient time should be built in for the feedback and approval process of the intermediary report. Once the intermediary report is approved, further deskwork, discussions and the administration and analysis of the surveys to the entire TAIEX community of practice aiming to validate/reject preliminary answers to the evaluation questions and bring additional information and direct evidence will be done.

Before the start of the Synthesis and reporting phase, the evaluation team shall present the final and consolidated results of the data collection and analysis phase in the form of a detailed remote debriefing to the ISG.

C. Synthesis and reporting phase.

This phase entails the analysis of the data collected to finalise the answers to the evaluation questions, and prepare the synthesis report that includes the overall assessment, lessons learnt,

conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. The final report is also expected to include specific overall assessments for each service level agreement signed by NEAR with other Commission services (REGIO, ENV, REFORM, DEVCO, FPI).

Recommendations should be clear, well structured, operational and realistic in the sense of providing clear, feasible and relevant input for decision-making and should clearly indicate the measures to be undertaken. Presentation of good practices and success stories stemming from different countries and the use of different modalities/tools should be highlighted.

Recommendations for action will be addressed to the Commission. Where appropriate, the evaluator should specify the role of any other actor, including beneficiary institutions and/or civil society organisations, in implementing the recommendations.

The synthesis report will clearly acknowledge where changes in the desired direction are known to be already taking place.

The table below summarises these phases:

Phases	Activities	Deliverables (& meetings) ¹⁹
INCEPTION: STRUCTURING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Background analysis ▪ Interviews with EU HQ, EEAS, EU Member States ▪ Reconstruction of EU external action Intervention's rationale, incl. objectives, specific features and target beneficiaries ▪ Analysis of inventory of the EU external action spending interventions ▪ Finalisation of the EQs ▪ Methodological design to answer to the EQs, incl. case studies proposal and data collection & definition of analysis methods ▪ Report writing (& quality control) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inception Report²⁰ incl.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Final <i>intended / planned</i> Intervention Logic ✓ Evaluation Questions (EQs), with judgment criteria & indicators ✓ Data analysis and collection methods, incl. case studies proposal ✓ TAIEX activities inventory ✓ Work plan ✓ Consultation strategy²¹ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Slide presentation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting(s) with ISG in Brussels/remotely
INTERMEDIARY: DATA COLLECTION &	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In-depth document analysis (focused on the Evaluation Questions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intermediary report²², incl.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Background and key methodological elements

¹⁹ The evaluation team must provide the list of all persons interviewed, documents reviewed, data collected and databases built. The list of persons interviewed will not be published.

²⁰ The Inception Report should not exceed 30 pages, but if required this number can be reasonably increased following consultation with the EC Evaluation manager. Additional material may be placed in annexes, as necessary. The EC Evaluation manager will provide the template.

²¹ Even though an open public consultation (as foreseen by the Better Regulation) will not be organised for the present evaluation, it is expected that the evaluation team presents its strategy for stakeholders' consultation during the evaluation exercise.

²² The Intermediary report should not exceed 40 pages, but if required this number can be reasonably increased following consultation with the EC Evaluation managers. Additional material may be placed in annexes, as necessary. The EC Evaluation manager will provide the template.

<p>ANALYSIS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews ▪ Identification of information gaps and of hypotheses to be tested in the field phase ▪ Report writing (& quality control) ▪ Surveys elaboration, administration and analyses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Preliminary answers to the evaluation questions and preliminary hypotheses to be tested in the field ✓ Remaining work for the synthesis phase ✓ Update work plan, if needed ✓ Main annexes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation matrix with information gathered and analysed by indicator ▪ Case study notes²³ ☑ Slide presentation of key consolidated findings (intermediary & survey to entire TAIEX community of practice) and preliminary conclusions ☑ Meeting(s) with ISG (remotely)
<p>SYNTHESIS & DISSEMINATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expressing findings (focus on the EQs and identifying lessons learnt and best practices, if any) ▪ Overall assessment, Conclusions and Recommendations ▪ Synthesis report writing (& quality control) ▪ Dissemination seminar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Synthesis report²⁴, incl.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Synthesis of methodological steps undertaken during the evaluation exercise, including limitations, if any ✓ Background analysis ✓ Findings, incl. lessons learnt and best practices, if any ✓ Overall assessment (incl. specific overall assessments per service level agreement), conclusions and recommendations ✓ Main annexes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation matrix with information gathered and analysed by indicator ▪ Case study notes ▪ Surveys responses analysis ☑ Executive summary²⁵ ☑ Slide presentation ☑ Illustrated summary²⁶ ☑ Two factsheets²⁷ ☑ Meeting(s) with ISG (remotely) ☑ Final presentation seminar in Brussels/remotely ☑ Dissemination seminar minutes

²³ The case studies notes should not exceed 10 pages, but if required this number can be reasonably increased following consultation with the EC Evaluation manager. EC Evaluation manager will provide the template.

²⁴ The Final Report should not exceed 60 pages, but if required this number can be reasonably increased. Additional material may be placed in annexes, as necessary. The EC Evaluation manager will provide the template.

²⁵ The Executive summary should not exceed four pages, but if required this number can be reasonably increased. The EC Evaluation manager will provide the template.

²⁶ The Illustrated summary should not exceed 20 pages, but if required this number can be reasonably increased. The EC Evaluation manager will provide an example.

²⁷ The factsheets should not exceed three pages, but if required this number can be reasonably increased. The EC Evaluation manager will provide an example.

Once the evaluation is finalised, Commission services will be in charge of further dissemination and of the follow-up.

**DISSEMINATION AND
FOLLOW UP
(by the EC)**

- Action plan writing
- Others to be defined if relevant Follow-up action plan

All meetings with the ISG will be attended at least by Evaluation Team Leader, the Quality Support Expert and the project manager. For all meetings with the ISG, the framework contractor shall submit to the Evaluation Manager a PowerPoint presentation one week in advance. The contractor will prepare draft meeting minutes to be revised, distributed and approved by the Evaluation Manager in consultation with the ISG participants at the latest, one week after the meeting.

2.2.5 Assumptions and envisaged limitations

It is assumed that services within the Commission and the beneficiaries accept the evaluation as an integral part of a learning and accountability function and are committed to provide the necessary information, and will subsequently act on the recommendations and relevant follow-up actions.

The following are additional relevant assumptions for this evaluation:

- Monitoring data is available and provide sufficient and adequate information;
- Access to requested documentation and information on the interventions is ensured by the Commission, EU Member States, national authorities and the intervention implementing partners, when they differ;
- The staff of EU Delegations are regularly informed on objectives and methods of this evaluation, in order to ensure their full cooperation.

In the event that one or several of the above assumptions prove to be untrue, the evaluation team records and immediately informs the Contracting Authority. Limitations cannot be listed exhaustively.

The evaluators also record and report any additional limitation to the evaluation, including due to insufficient collaboration from key stakeholders.

2.2.6 Language of the evaluation and the Specific Contract

The main language of the evaluation and of the specific contract is English. However, the Evaluation Team as a whole should be able to carry the evaluation work also in French, in particular for conducting interviews and translating the e-surveys. A good command of Arabic and/or Russian will be considered an asset.

2.3 Specific Contract Technical offer

The Framework Contractors will submit their specific Contract Technical Offer by using the standard template in Annex I (technical offer; up to 25 pages, excluding annexes). The list of experts and corresponding CVs (of up to 5 pages), which must follow the template provided in Annex B-II-4 of the global terms of reference of the framework contract, will also need to be part of the technical offer. **Offers that do not respect the page limits of up to 25 pages for the**

technical offer and up to 5 pages for each CV will not be taken into consideration for the award of the contract²⁸.

The Statement of Exclusivity and Availability, and the Declarations of confidentiality, which much follow the templates provided in Annex B-II-5 and in Annex 1, respectively, will need to be included for all members of the team.

The offer is expected to demonstrate:

- The team's understanding of the ToR in their own words (i.e. their understanding of what is to be evaluated, and their understanding of the subject areas as relevant to this ToR). In this framework, the offer can propose a revised set of EQs, justifying it and respecting the main areas to be covered.

The offer is expected to present:

- the understanding of the TAIEX intervention logic and its underlying theory of change.
- the development/revision of EQ n° 1 (on institutional set-up, programming approach and implementation modalities of the TAIEX Instrument) with relevant JCs and indicators and data collection tools and methods.

Previous experience of the contractor and information available on EC services websites suffice as sources.

- The relevance of the team composition and competencies to the work to be undertaken.

The offer will clearly state the category of each team member and which tasks the proposed team members are responsible for and how their qualifications relate to the tasks. The team coordination and members' complementarity will be clearly described.

The team members must be independent from the EU external action support interventions that will be covered under this assignment. Should a conflict of interest be identified in the course of the evaluation, it will be notified immediately to the Contracting Authority in accordance with article 9 General Conditions FWC EVA 2020.

During the process of evaluation of offers, the contracting authority reserves the right to interview by phone one or several members of the evaluation teams proposed.

- How the team proposes to undertake the evaluation: the evaluation design and challenges, data collection tools and methods of analysis, how the tasks will be organised (incl. with sectorial experts to be mobilised to contribute to relevant case studies).

The evaluation work will be carried out remotely: due to the COVID-19 pandemic, international travel is either not recommended or not allowed. The safety of the people involved should guide the Framework Contractor's methodological choices. A full range of remote tools and techniques and other approaches should be proposed and detailed in the offer – including a thorough assessment of the advantages and limitations (and mitigation measures) to be adopted for effective and robust final results.

²⁸ The font size for the technical offer cannot be smaller than Times New Roman 11 or Arial 10, and that of CVs cannot be smaller than Times New Roman font size 10 or Arial font size 9.

The methods proposed shall both be quantitative and qualitative.

As far as possible, the methodology will build on the existing monitoring data, documents and evaluations, which will be made available to the framework contractor, but shall provide for the collection of additional data and evidence in a systematic manner.

A selection of relevant sources of evidence for the preparation of the offer is listed in annex III. The Framework Contractors shall identify in their offers other relevant sources and tools they intend to use for each of the activities mentioned in the previous chapter.

The methodological proposal for the awarded contract will be discussed with the Commission during the kick-off meeting.

- The offer is expected to present details on the number of working days per team member (incl. the programme manager) and per phase of the evaluation.
- The level of quality control (mostly in relation to content) which will apply, at which points in the process, and who will undertake them’.

All these aspects will be considered when scoring the received offers against the award criteria for this tender.

Where the evaluation methodology or context raises specific ethical considerations, the Framework Contractor will explain in their offer how the evaluation will adhere to international best practice and standards of ethical conduct in evaluation. In particular, the offer should explain how issues around gender, power dynamics, issues pertaining to privacy and confidentiality of the people involved will be noted.

When designing their offer, Framework Contractors are also reminded of the need to comply with the provisions of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (as per Article 42 of the General Conditions of the Framework Contract).

2.4 Management and steering of the evaluation

2.4.1 By the Contracting Authority

The evaluation is managed by the MFF, Programming and Evaluation Unit of DG NEAR.

The progress of the evaluation will be followed by an Interservice Steering Group consisting of members of EU Services (SG, DG NEAR, DG DEVCO, DG REFORM, DG ENV, DG REGIO, FPI) and the EEAS.

The main functions of the Interservice Steering Group are:

- **Steering the evaluation exercise in all key phases** to comply with quality standards. As mentioned in different parts of the ToR, the role of the ISG will be key in the finalisation of the evaluation framework.
 - The EC evaluation manager (NEAR A4) steers the ISG and is supported in its function by ISG members.
- **Providing input and information** to the evaluation team. Mobilise the institutional, thematic, and methodological knowledge available in the various DGs of the Commission and in the EEAS that are interested in the evaluation. Ensure that the evaluation team has access to and has consulted all relevant information sources and documents.
- **Providing quality control** on the different draft deliverables. The EC evaluation manager,

as lead of the ISG, consolidates the comments to be sent to the evaluation team and endorses the deliverables.

- **Ensuring a proper follow-up** action plan after completion of the evaluation.

The communication between the Interservice Steering Group and the Evaluation Team is always channelled through the Evaluation Manager.

2.4.2 By the Contractor

Further to the Requirements set in the art. 6 of the Global Terms of Reference and in the Global Organisation and Methodology, respectively annexes II and III of the Framework contract EVA 2020, the contractor is responsible for the quality of: the process; the evaluation design; the inputs and the outputs of the evaluation. In particular, it will:

- Before the work actually starts, provide guidance to the evaluation team to ensure that the evaluation team has a clear understanding of the tasks, of the evaluation process, the content and implications of the different steps.
- Support the Team Leader in its role, mainly from a team management perspective. In this regard, the contractor should make sure that, for each evaluation phase, specific tasks and outputs for each team member are clearly defined and understood.
- Provide backstopping and quality control of the evaluation team's work throughout the assignment from evaluation design to final report). The contractor should be supported in this particular field by the Quality Control expert and the Project manager.
- Ensure that the evaluators are adequately resourced to perform all required tasks within the time framework of the contract.

The team of experts needs to comply with section 5.1.2 of the Global Terms of Reference. The team will have to satisfy the highest quality standards. In this regard, the Framework Contractor is requested to check relevant references of the experts proposed. The Contracting Authority will do the same.

3 LOGISTICS, LOCATION AND TIMING

The evaluation tasks will be implemented over a 12 months period from the start date of the contract estimated on January 18 2021 at the earliest.

The period of implementation includes periods foreseen for drafting, reviewing, commenting, revising, and approving all reports and deliverables, briefing/debriefing sessions, and activities for communication and dissemination.

The contracting authority underlines that the framework contractor should ensure that the evaluation team is available to meet the demands of this schedule.

The tasks will be implemented so as to fulfil the requirements for deliverables presented in Part B at the end of these Terms of Reference.

The Framework Contractor must make available appropriate logistical support for the evaluation team, including their travel and accommodation arrangements for each mission, if any, the secretarial support, appropriate software and communication means. The evaluation team will need to have the standard equipment, such as an individual laptop/computer, mobile phones, etc. necessary for the execution of the assignment. No additional cost for these items may be included in the offer.

4 REQUIREMENTS

Please refer to Part B at the end of these Terms of Reference for expertise requirements.

Given the circumstances created by the COVID-19 crisis, the evaluation tasks will be carried out remotely (international travel is either not recommended or not allowed, safety first principle to be applied). An exception to this rule may be up to two trips to Brussels for three evaluation team members if conditions allow. Therefore, the budget proposal should only include a provision for the costs related to these two trips to Brussels lasting for two days each.

The e-surveys to be prepared will have a key importance in data collection and sufficient resources need to be planned for their elaboration, administration and analysis.

Up to ten working days will need to be included in the financial offer to benefit from the services of one or more communication expert(s) (medium level) to be employed in the final reporting phase (to produce an illustrated summary and up to two factsheets). Not being part of the evaluation team requested under Part B §6 Expertise, no CV(s) is/are requested in the tendering process.

Up to 30 working days for sectorial (senior or medium level) experts to be employed to contribute to the case studies is to be considered in the financial offer. Not being part of the evaluation team requested under Part B §6 Expertise, no CVs are requested in the tendering process; they will be asked at the beginning of the intermediary phase, once the specific needs for their services are defined.

In addition, the budget proposal should include costs related to translation into French of the executive summary and to the printing of 20 copies of an illustrated summary (of up to 20 pages).

All the costs other than costs for key experts of the evaluation team will be reflected in a dedicated budget provision under the “Other costs” of the framework contractor’s financial offer.

5 REPORTS AND OTHER DELIVERABLES

Please refer to Part B at the end of these Terms of Reference.

The final report should deliver the elements covered by these Terms of Reference, and must be written such that readers, who are not working in this area, can easily understand.

It (excluding its Appendices) must be no longer than 60 pages format A4 and presented to respect professional quality standards of graphic design, in line with Commission requirements. It should be written in a clear “journalistic” manner and avoid technical jargon to ensure full readability by a broader audience of non-experts. It must include infographics, charts, maps and other visuals, as appropriate, to make it more readable and engaging.

The reports must be written in Arial or Times New Roman 11, single spacing. Inception, Intermediary and draft Final reports will be delivered only electronically. The Final report will also be delivered in hard copies.

The contractor must deliver the Final Report and all publishable deliverables in full compliance with the European Commission’s corporate visual identity, by applying the rules on graphics set out in its Visual Identity Manual, including its logo. The rules, the manual and further information are available at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/services/visual_identity/index_en.htm

The contractor must apply the rules set out in the manual for the graphic design of both the cover page and the internal pages of the report. The professional font (EC Square Sans Pro) to be used for

the study will be made available to the contractor free of charge on acceptance of the terms and conditions for its use after contract signature. No template will be provided to bidders while preparing their bids.

The approved Final report will be presented at a dissemination seminar in Brussels/remotely. The purpose of the seminar is to present the evaluation work to key relevant stakeholders, such as Commission staff, the EEAS and EU Member States, representatives of partner countries, civil society organisations, other donors, etc.

The final report must be submitted together with:

- A publishable *Executive Summary*, aimed at the middle and senior management and serving as a stand-alone document. It must be written in a reader-friendly and journalistic style;
- An *Illustrated summary*, aimed at the wider TAIEX community of practice and serving as a stand-alone document. It must be written in a reader-friendly and journalistic style. This document will present in a visual and user-friendly way the main messages of the final report around findings, conclusions and recommendations;
- Up to two *factsheets*, one of them to be focused around the main best practices and lessons learnt identified;
- A *slide presentation* that summarises, in a highly visual manner using minimal text, the study findings and recommendations.

The contracting authority will publish all of these deliverables on the Commission's central website.

6 QUALITY STANDARDS

The quality of the draft versions of the reports and of the executive and illustrated summaries will be carefully assessed around the following criteria: clarity, soundness of methodological design, reliability of data and robustness of evidence, validity of findings, validity of conclusions, usefulness of recommendations and appropriateness of lessons learnt and best practices analyses. The assessment will be done in the form of specific comments to be included in the different deliverables.

Performance will be assessed by the EC evaluation manager during the whole evaluation exercise (and if needed adjustments will be required, in agreement with the framework contractor) based on the following criteria:

- ✓ Quality of the analysis
- ✓ Relations with the Client
- ✓ Precision and clarity of the writing
- ✓ Methodological skills
- ✓ Communication skills and interview capacity
- ✓ Flexibility and availability
- ✓ Respect of deadlines.

7 COMMUNICATION WITH THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

Any formal communication regarding contractual aspects of this specific contract will be addressed to NEAR-EVAL-MONITORING@ec.europa.eu and Maria-del-Carmen.Bueno-Barriga@ec.europa.eu.

Communication on operational aspects of the specific contract will follow the channels indicated by the evaluation manager.

8 ANNEXES

8.1 ANNEX I – Template for the technical offer (organisation & methodology)

See separate Annex I attached with the Request for Service.

The list and CVs of the key experts for this evaluation must follow the template of Annex B-II-4 of the global terms of reference of the framework contract.

8.2 ANNEX II – Evaluation criteria for the technical offer (evaluation grid)

See separate Annex II attached with the Request for Service.

8.3 ANNEX III – Indicative documentation to be consulted for the purpose of the evaluation by the selected contractor

- TAIEX:
 - TAIEX Manuals and guidelines
 - Service Level Agreements (SLAs) signed by DG NEAR with other Commission DGs: REGIO, ENV, REFORM, DEVCO and the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI).
 - Documents related to the specific TAIEX elements: TAIEX-IPA, TAIEX-ENI, TAIEX-PI, TAIEX-DEVCO, TAIEX-REGIO Peer-2-Peer, TAIEX-EIR Peer-2-Peer, TAIEX-SRSP Peer-2-Peer, TAIEX assistance to the Turkish Cypriot community
 - Documents related to specific TAIEX activities to be covered in the case studies
 - Websites:
 - a. https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/tenders/taix_en
 - b. https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=TAIEX
 - c. https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/EN/policy/how/improving-investment/taix-regio-peer-2-peer/ (DG REGIO – PEER TO PEER)
 - d. https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eir/p2p/index_en.htm (DG ENV - EIR)
 - e. https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes/overview-funding-programmes/structural-reform-support-programme-srsp_en (DG REFORM SRSP)
 - f. https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes/overview-funding-programmes/aid-programme-turkish-cypriot-community_en (DG REFORM - TCc)
- Policy and programming documents
 - Policy documents setting-up the relationships between the EU and partner regions and countries, such as the partnership and cooperation agreements, the stabilisation and association agreements, setting-up thematic priorities and strategies towards third regions, Commission communications, European Council conclusions, etc.
 - Programming documents setting-up the priorities of cooperation in a given period between the EU and partner regions and countries
 - Specific documents:
 - NEAR: Communication on EU Enlargement Policy 2020 (https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20201006-communication-on-eu-enlargement-policy_en.pdf)

- NEAR: Report on the Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy Review 2017 (https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2_en_act_part1_v9_3.pdf)
 - DEVCO: Commission Communication on a new Africa – Europe Alliance for sustainable investment and jobs – Action 6 (https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-africa-europe-jobs-alliance-communication-643_en.pdf).
 - Partnership Instrument: PI Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) for 2018-2020 (https://ec.europa.eu/fpi/sites/fpi/files/C_2018_4001_F1_COMMISSION_IMPLEMENTING_DECISION_P1_982427_en.PDF)
 - ENV- EIR: Delivering the benefits of EU environmental policies through a regular Environmental Implementation Review 2016 (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0316&from=EN>)
 - REGIO – PEER TO PEER: Improving how EU Member States and regions invest and manage EU Cohesion Policy funds (https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_15_4654)
 - REFORM – SRSP: REGULATION (EU) 2017/825 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 May 2017 on the establishment of the Structural Reform Support Programme for the period 2017 to 2020 (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32017R0825&from=EN>)
 - TCc: Council Regulation (EC) No 389/2006 of 27 February 2006 (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32006R0389&from=EN>)
- Websites for more information related to relations between EU and Third Countries:
 - https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/node_en (DG NEAR)
 - https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/where-we-work_en (DG DEVCO)
 - https://ec.europa.eu/fpi/what-we-do/partnership-instrument-advancing-eus-core-interests_en (FPI - Partnership Instrument)
 - European Semester country reports

8.4 ANNEX IV – TAIEX figures

BY FUNDING SOURCE:

Project / Group	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
DEVCO						5	5
EIR – ENV				19	25	2	46
IPA, ENI	1281	1134	918	787	689	168	4977
<i>ENPI EAST</i>	243	214	197	167	139	37	997
<i>ENPI SOUTH</i>	120	123	139	130	91	21	624
<i>IPA</i>	816	714	533	437	391	93	2984
<i>Multicountry</i>	102	83	49	53	68	17	372
PI - FPI	22	15	49	18	21	9	134
REGIO PE	19	55	56	41	37	15	223
SRSP– REFORM			3	77	108	49	237
TCC -REFORM	302	220	99	207	141	41	1010
Grand Total	1624	1424	1125	1149	1021	289	6632

BY PARTNER COUNTRY:

Project/beneficiary	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
DEVCO						5	5
DEVCO						5	5
Cape Verde						1	1
Dominican Republic						1	1
Jamaica						1	1
Uganda						1	1
Uzbekistan						1	1
EIR - ENV				19	25	2	46
EIR				12	19	1	32
Austria							0
Belgium				1			1
Croatia					1	1	2
Czech Republic				1	2		3
Denmark				1			1
Estonia					3		3
Finland					2		2
France				1	1		2
Germany				1			1
Greece					2		2
Hungary				1			1
Ireland				1			1
Italy					2		2
Latvia							0
Lithuania							0
Malta					2		2
Poland							0

Portugal				2	1		3
Romania				1			1
Slovak Republic							0
Slovenia					1		1
Spain				2			2
Sweden					1		1
The Netherlands					1		1
Multicountry				7	6	1	14
Multicountry				7	6	1	14
IPA, ENI	1281	1134	918	787	689	168	4977
ENPI EAST	243	214	197	167	139	37	997
Armenia	5	13	18	12	13	14	75
Azerbaijan	35	19	35	32	28	3	152
Belarus	12	20	22	12	13	1	80
Georgia	33	19	17	10	18	7	104
Moldova	48	46	46	39	28	5	212
Ukraine	110	97	59	62	39	7	374
ENPI SOUTH	120	123	139	130	91	21	624
Algeria	15	19	11	10	5	1	61
Egypt	22	24	22	16	14	6	104
Israel	21	27	19	12	16		95
Jordan	20	12	18	12	10	2	74
Lebanon	16	11	17	16	8	3	71
Libya				6	2		8
Morocco	11	6	10	8	5	2	42
Palestine	3	3	14	18	9	3	50
Tunisia	12	21	28	32	22	4	119
IPA	816	714	533	437	391	93	2984
Albania	55	72	77	37	37	16	294
Bosnia and Herzegovina	56	96	56	53	75	23	359
Croatia	41	2					43
Kosovo	101	94	78	70	52	10	405
Montenegro	181	131	117	83	73	12	597
North Macedonia	122	120	71	84	64	16	477
Serbia	154	114	71	64	58	8	469
Turkey	106	85	63	46	32	8	340
Multicountry	102	83	49	53	68	17	372
Multicountry	102	83	49	53	68	17	372
PI - FPI	22	15	49	18	21	9	134
Multicountry		1	5	1	3	1	11
Multicountry		1	5	1	3	1	11
PI - FPI	22	14	44	17	18	8	123
Andorra				1			1
Argentina					1		1
Australia			3				3
Brazil	1				1		2

Canada	2		2	1			5
Chile		1	1				2
Colombia		1					1
Costa Rica				1			1
Dominican Republic			2			1	3
Ecuador	1						1
El Salvador	1						1
Hong Kong			1	1	1		3
India	6	5	9	1	1		22
Indonesia			2				2
Iran			6		3		9
Iraq			1	1			2
Kazakhstan		1	3				4
Kuwait						1	1
Kyrgyzstan			2	3	3	1	9
Lesotho					1		1
Maldives	1	2					3
Mexico	2	2	5	2			11
Monaco					1		1
Nepal						1	1
Nigeria		1			1		2
Oman		1					1
Panama					1		1
Paraguay	1						1
People's Republic of China			1				1
Peru	1		1			2	4
Qatar						1	1
Republic of Korea	4		2	2		1	9
San Marino				1	1		2
Saudi Arabia	2		2	1			5
Taiwan					2		2
United States of America				1			1
Uzbekistan			1	1			2
Vietnam					1		1
REGIO	19	55	56	41	37	15	223
Multicountry		1	2	5	9	2	19
Multicountry		1	2	5	9	2	19
REGIO	19	54	54	36	28	13	204
Belgium					1		1
Bulgaria	4	4	1	2	1	1	13
Croatia	2	6	3	5	2	1	19
Cyprus				1	1		2
Czech Republic	2	8	2				12
Estonia		1	1	1	2	3	8
Finland					1		1

France	1		1	1		1	4
Hungary	1	1	1	1	3		7
Ireland			1	1			2
Italy		1	1	1			3
Latvia	1	3	2	3	3	1	13
Lithuania	3	13	20	9	7	3	55
Luxembourg				1			1
Malta		2				1	3
Poland	1	4	6	1	2	1	15
Portugal				1			1
Romania	1	6	8	3	2		20
Slovak Republic	1	1	2	1		1	6
Slovenia		1	1	1	2		5
Spain	1	1	3	2	1		8
Sweden			1				1
The Netherlands	1	2		1			4
SRSP - REFORM			3	77	108	49	237
Multicountry						1	1
Multicountry						1	1
SRSP			3	77	108	48	236
Austria					3	2	5
Belgium					6	11	17
Bulgaria				5	2	2	9
Croatia				6	12	7	25
Cyprus			1	4	5	2	12
Czech Republic				6	9	1	16
Estonia				1	2		3
France				1			1
Germany				2		2	4
Greece				1	4	4	9
Ireland					7		7
Italy				8	6	1	15
Latvia				13	7	1	21
Lithuania				11	19	6	36
Luxembourg						1	1
Malta			1	2	4	1	8
Poland				2	4		6
Portugal							0
Romania				11	6		17
Slovak Republic					2	1	3
Slovenia			1	3	3	4	11
Spain				1	5	1	7
Sweden					1		1
The Netherlands					1	1	2
TCC - REFORM	302	220	99	207	141	41	1010
TCC - REFORM	302	220	99	207	141	41	1010
Turkish Cypriot	302	220	99	207	141	41	1010

community							
Grand Total	1624	1424	1125	1149	1021	289	6632

BY TYPE OF EVENT:

Event classification	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Expert Mission	662	655	512	569	456	129	2983
Screening	12	2	2	4	30		50
Study Visit	424	362	307	269	247	30	1639
Work from Home	123	52	31	68	54	50	378
Workshop	403	353	273	239	234	80	1582
Grand Total	1624	1424	1125	1149	1021	289	6632

TAIEX events online under COVID – Video Tele-Conference

BY PARTNER COUNTRY:

Project/beneficiary	2020
DEVCO PEER 2 PEER	5
DEVCO	5
Cape Verde	1
Dominican Republic	1
Jamaica	1
Uganda	1
Uzbekistan	1
EIR - ENV	2
IPA, ENI	65
ENPI EAST	17
Armenia	8
Georgia	6
Moldova	2
Ukraine	1
ENPI SOUTH	9
Egypt	2
Lebanon	2
Palestine	2
Tunisia	3
IPA	30
Albania	10
Bosnia and Herzegovina	10
Kosovo	2
Montenegro	1
North Macedonia	2
Serbia	1
Turkey	4
Multicountry	9
Multicountry	9
PI - FPI	6

PI - FPI	6
Kuwait	1
Kyrgyzstan	1
Peru	2
Qatar	1
Republic of Korea	1
REGIO	7
REGIO	7
Croatia	1
Estonia	2
France	1
Lithuania	2
Malta	1
SRSP - REFORM	20
SRSP - REFORM	20
Belgium	5
Bulgaria	1
Croatia	2
Cyprus	2
Czech Republic	1
Greece	1
Italy	1
Latvia	1
Lithuania	1
Malta	1
Slovenia	3
Spain	1
TCC – Reform	9
TCC – Reform	9
Turkish Cypriot community	9
Grand Total	114

BY TYPE OF EVENT:

Event classification	2020
Expert Mission	62
Work from Home	2
Workshop	50
Grand Total	114

* * *

8.5 ANNEX V – TAIEX Guidelines for European Commission and European External Action Service (EEAS) Colleagues



What does TAIEX stand for?

TAIEX stands for the European Commission's **Technical Assistance and Information**

Exchange Instrument (TAIEX), implemented by the Institution Building, TAIEX, Twinning Unit of DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (NEAR). TAIEX provides short-term, peer-to-peer assistance to central government administrations in countries covered by the Enlargement policy and the European Neighbourhood Policy to support them in the approximation, application and enforcement of the EU *acquis* and of the EU standards and best practice.

Every year TAIEX responds to some 1 100 requests for assistance. On average, around 3 000 EU Member State experts are mobilised by TAIEX every year, reaching over 22 000 public officials from beneficiaries.

How can TAIEX help?

TAIEX can organise the following types of events:

- **Workshops** (single or multi-country): gathering more than one expert from more than one EU Member State and a large beneficiary audience. Workshops usually last 2 days.
- **Expert missions**: consist in the sending of one (or more) EU Member State expert(s) to provide advice to the beneficiary institution(s) on specific topics (e.g. legal drafting, implementation of a law, etc.) and to a limited audience. Expert missions normally last between 2 and 5 days.

A special type of expert mission is a '**peer assessment**' or '**peer review**' mission. Such missions assess, as required, gaps between a beneficiary's national legislation and the EU *acquis*.

- **Study visits**: consist in sending maximum 3 participants from a beneficiary for a working visit to EU Member State institutions and administrations. Study visits last between 2 and 5 days.
- **Work from home**: one or more experts carry out a specific task or a set of tasks from their home (e.g. assessing legislation).

TAIEX is based on **peer-to-peer expertise** and as a result works essentially with EU experts the public sector.

Who can apply for TAIEX assistance?

TAIEX is a **demand-driven** instrument. The assistance is, in principle, provided at the request of beneficiaries via an e-Application link available on the TAIEX website.

Recipients eligible for TAIEX assistance comprise:

- Public and semi-public sector bodies of central government administrations.
- Parliaments (permanent staff thereof).
- Exceptionally, also social partners and private sector organisations provided they play a particular role in the implementation of the EU *acquis*.

TAIEX can also organise events **upon the request of European Commission services and the EEAS**, when considered relevant to beneficiaries. Such requests are referred to as **TAIEX strategic**.

Overall responsibility for the final decision and implementation of TAIEX events lies with the Institution Building Unit of DG NEAR. Within the Unit, **TAIEX country coordinators/contact points** ensure coherence of TAIEX assistance and communication with all stakeholders.

What can you do to help us?

When TAIEX receives a demand-driven request for assistance, we launch a consultation process where all relevant stakeholders (DG NEAR country units, EUDels, EEAS, line DGs) are involved. **If you are the addressee of such a consultation, you are invited to comment**, within 5 working days, on the following aspects of the proposed assistance:

- Relevance of the request with regards to both its content and timing, including with regard to *acquis*/priorities/reforms.
- Absence of overlap with other programmes or projects.
- Advice on Member State host institution and/or experts.

If you have requested the organisation of TAIEX strategic assistance and your request was approved, it is important to provide all information relevant to logistics as early as possible **and at the latest four weeks ahead of the event**. If deadlines are not respected, the implementation of the event is jeopardised.

The contribution of European Commission and EEAS staff to TAIEX workshops is welcomed, whenever possible. Therefore, if you are available and interested to attend a specific TAIEX event as a speaker or participant, please let us know!

Please note that your participation (travel and accommodation) is to be covered from your Institution's mission budget.

TAIEX strategic

EU Delegations, EEAS or DGs (or units) may submit an application for TAIEX assistance via an e-Application link available on the TAIEX website (<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/TMSWebRestrict/applicationForm>).

All sections of the application form **must be filled in:**

- Context and justification of TAIEX assistance, including how this application is not duplicating or overlapping with other initiatives or activities and why this is the right time for such assistance.
- Form of assistance (workshop, expert mission, study visit, work from home) and suggested dates, if any.
- Topics to be addressed (an outline of the agenda).
- Objective and the expected outcome of the assistance.
- (Except for work from home) Local Contact Person/Co-Organiser (LCO) name, position and contact details. For regional workshops, the LCO is the relevant authority in the country where the activity will actually take place. To have ONE contact point in the country or the region is imperative.

Rules and practical organisation of TAIEX events

Subject to the approval of the application and the availability of a TAIEX **project officers**, the organisation of an **expert mission** or **study visit** requires around **6 weeks in advance** of the anticipated date of the event; setting up a **workshop** requires around **10 weeks in advance** of the anticipated date of the event.

All information relevant to logistics must be available at the latest four weeks ahead of the event.

Agenda and participants' list:

These documents are to be prepared in close coordination with the LCO and TAIEX. They must be drafted according to our templates. These documents must be submitted to us **at the latest 4 weeks before the start of the event.**

TAIEX experts/speakers:

The core value of TAIEX is peer-to-peer exchange of information between EUMS administrations and beneficiary administrations.

TAIEX provides for EUMS experts from public administration (this includes scholars from public universities), i.e. "public expert".

If we do not find a suitable public expert, we may exceptionally engage a private expert, such as a member from CSOs or from the private sector. A private expert receives different financial support compared to the public experts.

Events where the speakers are only EU officials or include only speakers from international organisations and/or the private sector are not accepted.

Beneficiary and participants:

The beneficiary must be a public administration in a beneficiary country, with participants as follows:

- Civil servants working in public administrations, including judiciary and law enforcement authorities,

- Staff in parliaments and civil servants working in Parliaments and Legislative Councils,
- Representatives of social partners, trade unions and employers' associations.

TAIEX does not provide direct support to civil society, private citizens or to individual companies. Under strict conditions, members of an NGO can be invited to act as a speaker (see the rule above about TAIEX experts) and members of NGOs may be invited as participants (i.e. to a workshop, along with participants from public administrations).

Logistics:

All logistics are arranged and booked in line with TAIEX rules and procedures, and sound financial management.

Core logistics for **workshops**, including regional and multi-country workshops:

Through its external service provider, TAIEX organises and supports:

- Accommodation and travel for eligible speakers and participants.
- Venue (including coffee breaks, lunches, interpretation).
- Workshop and visibility materials including copies of the agenda, name chevalets, badges, attendance lists, posters to be displayed in the meeting room.

Throughout the duration of the workshop, a Local Venue Support (LVS) is responsible for ensuring that logistics are in place as appropriate (registration of participants and experts, set-up of the meeting room, catering, quality of services, workshop and visibility material, etc.).

Core logistics for **study visits**:

Through its external service provider, TAIEX organises and supports:

- Accommodation and travel for a maximum of 3 participants (who also receive a capped per diem).
- Consecutive interpretation if needed.
- Host fee for the MS institution.

Core logistics for **expert missions**:

Through its external service provider, TAIEX organises and supports:

- Accommodation and travel for eligible speakers.
- Consecutive interpretation if needed.

For the organisation of all logistical aspects, TAIEX relies on an external service provider who is contractually obliged to look for and book the economically most favourable solution within defined standards. Therefore, **TAIEX cannot guarantee the booking of a particular hotel or flight in accordance with the wish of an expert, a participant or local co-organiser, or according to the wish of the applicant in case of TAIEX strategic assistance.**

Also, as a general rule:

- TAIEX cannot organise study visits to the EU institutions or Agencies.
- TAIEX cannot organise or finance missions of Commission and EEAS staff, even if engaged as speakers in TAIEX events.
- TAIEX cannot co-finance/contribute to events organised by third parties.

- TAIEX cannot organise or finance meetings or conferences between beneficiaries and Commission and EEAS staff.
- TAIEX does not have the capacity to organise press conferences (for these, we rely on colleagues with responsibility for communication in EU Delegations and Commission services).

More information on TAIEX:

near-taiex@ec.europa.eu

<http://ec.europa.eu/taiex>

<http://ec.europa.eu/taiex/experts>

@eu_near #EUTaiex

<http://www.facebook.com/EUNEAR>

8.6 Annex VI – Internal user guide on TAIEX and TAIEX recalibration



What is TAIEX?

- TAIEX is the European Commission's **Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument** (TAIEX), implemented by the Institution Building, TAIEX, Twinning Unit of DG NEAR C.3.
- TAIEX provides **short-term, peer-to-peer assistance** to government administrations to support them in capacity building, in the approximation, application and enforcement of the EU *acquis*, to share EU best practices, and to help implement bilateral agreements. Support consists of workshops, expert missions or study visits so that experts from the EU Member States' public administrations can pass on tailor-made expertise to address short-term institutional or capacity-building needs. Given its successful implementation in the Neighbourhood and Enlargement area, TAIEX has been extended to countries covered by the Partnership Instrument.
- TAIEX covers a **wide range of service-oriented activities** such as assessment of draft legislation, guidance in setting up key institutions, optimal functioning of institutions based on exchanges of best practices.
- TAIEX is a facilitator and a **driver to push forward and support the reform processes** in a sustainable and pragmatic way in NEAR countries.
- On average, per year, around 5 000 EU Member State experts volunteered to contribute to TAIEX activities, reaching over **30 000 public officials** from partner countries and beneficiaries.
- TAIEX' very asset is to provide services that are flexible, **tailor-made and quickly implementable**.

What is TAIEX recalibration?

- TAIEX recalibration was developed and endorsed in early 2016. The aim of recalibrated or strategic TAIEX is to ensure that TAIEX supports EU's key priorities on **fundamental and structural reforms** that are needed, both in the enlargement and neighbourhood regions, functioning as a catalyst for reforms where possibilities arise.
- Strategic TAIEX should be seen as a **policy planning tool upfront** to meet DG NEAR core missions whereas "classic" TAIEX e.g. demand driven from beneficiary countries would continue to exist in parallel.
- A number of key policy documents already call for a **pro-active and sequenced role** for TAIEX to help our partners meet for instance the operational conclusions of Association Agreement meetings, the Partnership Priorities or broader Communications. This is where strategic TAIEX applies.
- There is definitely room to better anticipate, sequence, frame and monitor DG NEAR's reform support for **better efficiency and enhanced credibility**. Strategic TAIEX is about forecasting and sequencing activities in support of policy reform to make them more operational and better targeted (See Annex 1).
- TAIEX strategic also comes in to **support of IPA/ENI programming or Twinning** by for instance, carrying out tightly focused audits of the situation of a country in any given area: e.g. a series of TAIEX-led expert missions on waste management or in the veterinary sector could provide a critical mass of information to fund longer term and broader-reaching programmes.

What is the added value of TAIEX for geographical units?

- TAIEX is **cost neutral** for the unit's budget.
- TAIEX, as a **service oriented tool and unit**, can, upon broad guidelines from the leading geographical unit, define sharp and targeted sets of activities and programmes to meet the country's needs.
- TAIEX has a **very broad and well-grounded understanding of the EU *acquis*** that enables us to advise geographical units on the implementation of policy measures when relevant.
- **Reporting is systematic**. A new template has been drafted and will be introduced shortly. This will provide us with a better reporting, with clear conclusions and recommendations thus easier to digest and use for geographical units.

What are TAIEX tools?

- **Workshops (single or multi-country)**: meetings gathering more than one expert from more than one EU Member State and a large beneficiary audience. A workshop usually last 2 days, as experience shows that this is most effective in terms of absorption capacity of participants.
- **Expert Missions**: consist in the sending of one (or more) EU Member State expert(s) to provide advice to the beneficiary institution(s) on specific topics (e.g. legal drafting, implementation of a law etc.) and to a limited audience. Expert missions normally last between 2 to 5 days.
- A special type of expert mission is a **peer review mission**. Such missions assess, as required, gaps between a beneficiary's national legislation and the EU *acquis*. This tool provides for a more in-depth analysis and replies to specific terms of reference. The expert or the team of experts is usually accompanied by representatives of the Commission (country unit and line DGs). Customarily, an informal debrief is organised at the premises of the EU Delegation. The findings of the peer reviews are shared with the beneficiary and in some cases with Member States (for ease of reference Terms of Reference in Annex 2-model reports can be provided on request).
When relevant and notably for the peer-assessment/review missions, **work from home** will be organised for preparatory and/or reporting for enhanced quality. Conference calls can also be organised prior the mission with the expert(s) in order to make the most of the assistance provided.
- **Study Visits**: consist in the sending of maximum 3 participants from a beneficiary for a working visit to EU Member State institutions and administrations. Study visits last between 2 to 5 days.

The different types of assistance can be combined and are not exclusive to each other.

Who can apply for TAIEX assistance and how does it work?

- Under the recalibration, TAIEX can easily provide assistance **upon the request of European Commission services** (country units, EU Delegations or line DGs) **and the EEAS**, when considered relevant to beneficiaries. Within DG NEAR, a registered email to C3 Head of Unit from the Head of Unit or the Deputy is sufficient as long as it states the objective of the request, its reasoning as well as its timeframe (See Annex 3). For other requests, an official note is required.
- This applies in particular to countries covered by the **Partnership Instrument** where demand is exclusively driven by the relevant Commission DGs or by the EEAS, including EU Delegations. The geographical reach of TAIEX/PI is limited to Asia, the Middle East and Latin America.

- In parallel, TAIEX “classic” still provides assistance that is demand driven, at the request of beneficiaries via an e-Application link available on the TAIEX website.
- **Eligible recipients for TAIEX assistance comprise:**
 - Public and semi-public sector bodies of central government administrations;
 - Parliaments (permanent staff thereof);
 - Exceptionally, also social partners and private sector organisations provided they play a particular role in the implementation of the EU *acquis*.

How long does it take to put a TAIEX activity in place?

- On average **two months** from the moment when a request for assistance is approved. TAIEX has a reliable and wide data base of experts to react quickly to almost all kinds of needs. For more details, see Annex 4 (Use of TAIEX step by step). In case of justified need, this can also be implemented faster.
- When TAIEX receives a request for assistance, a **consultation process** is launched in which all relevant stakeholders are involved.
- Overall **responsibility for the final decision and implementation** of TAIEX events lies with the Institution Building Unit of DG NEAR. Within the Unit, TAIEX country coordinators/contact points have been put in place so as to ensure coherence of TAIEX assistance and good communication with all stakeholders (see contact list in Annex 5).

Is there any restriction to TAIEX? In concrete terms, what TAIEX cannot do or provide for?

- TAIEX is based on peer-to-peer expertise and as a result works essentially with **EU experts from the public sector**.
- TAIEX cannot organise study visits to the **EU institutions or Agencies**.
- TAIEX cannot organise or **finance missions of Commission and EEAS staff**, even if engaged as speakers in TAIEX events.
- TAIEX cannot co-finance/contribute to events organised by **third parties**.
- TAIEX cannot organise **press trips**.
- TAIEX does not have the capacity to organise **press conferences** (for these, we rely on colleagues with responsibility for communication in EU Delegations and Commission services).
- The duration of expert missions and peer reviews is limited to **five working days** but a sequence of events can be envisaged in case of additional work needed.
- There is **no restriction in terms on topics/subjects** covered as long as they relate to the *acquis* or international standards.
- For the organisation of **all logistical aspects**, TAIEX relies on an external service provider who is contractually obliged to look for and book the cheapest solution within defined standards. Therefore, we cannot guarantee to book a particular hotel or flight in accordance with the wish of an expert or co-organiser.

European Commission
DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
Institution Building Unit - TAIEX
 Rue de la Loi 15, B - 1049 Brussels
e-mail: NEAR-TAIEX@ec.europa.eu
TAIEX website: <http://ec.europa.eu/taieux/>
TAIEX video: <http://vimeo.com/75197634>
TAIEX on twitter: [#EUTaieux](https://twitter.com/EUTaieux) 5

8.7 ANNEX VII – Manual of Procedures for TAIEX operations (June 2020)

Table of contents:

1. INTRODUCTION
2. WORKFLOW
3. FINANCIAL COMPENSATION AND ARRANGEMENTS
4. TRAVEL
5. OTHER LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS
6. EVENT REPORT
7. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose of the manual

The Manual of Procedures (henceforth the manual) is intended to provide the staff of the European Commission (Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Institution Building, TAIEX, Twinning unit – henceforth IBU) and the service provider with practical guidance on the procedures to be followed in the preparation and implementation of TAIEX events. It defines the roles of the IBU and of the service provider in the preparation and the delivery of TAIEX events.

However, as the manual does not cover every possible detail of TAIEX operations and is not intended to constitute an exhaustive, nor an exclusive overview of all applicable rules, regulations and practices, the IBU provides clarification on a regular day-to-day basis.

The IBU may amend the manual at any time as it may deem necessary, for an improved implementation of the activities.

1.2. Definitions

For the purpose of the manual, the following definitions apply:

- **Acquis** - the accumulated legislation, legal acts and court decisions which constitute the body of European Union law;
- **Addendum to an event** – the document prepared by the service provider and signed by the IBU modifying certain expenditure or other items in an OF in the period up to the end date of an event;
- **Authorisation Form (AF)** – the document prepared and signed by the IBU informing the service provider that it can start arrangements for the organisation of an event;
- **Beneficiary** – any country or territory eligible for TAIEX assistance according to relevant EU legislation;

- **Institution Building unit (IBU) within the European Commission** – the authority responsible for the management of TAIEX, represented by the head of the IBU or by his/her delegates;
- **Corrigendum to an event** – the document prepared by the service provider and signed by the IBU to endorse necessary changes to an OF after the end date of the event;
- **EU Agency** - specialised and decentralised organisation of the European Union established to support the EU Member States and their citizens. The complete list can be found at the following link https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/agencies_en#type-of-agencies;
- **Evaluation Correspondent** – contact person in the beneficiary administration who is to be contacted by e-mail six months after the end of the event to provide an evaluation of the medium to long term impact. His/her contact details are in principle mentioned in the event application form and encoded in TMS;
- **Event** – a technical assistance activity planned, organised and delivered by the IBU with the logistical support of the service provider in the form of a workshop, expert mission, study visit or work from home, as well as in the form of online events (see also section 1.3.);
- **Executive Agency** - executive agencies are EU agencies established in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 58/2003 (OJ L 11, 16.1.2003) with a view to being entrusted with certain tasks relating to the management of one or more EU programmes. The complete list can be found at the following link https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/agencies_en#type-of-agencies;
- **Expenditure Report (ER)**– a document created by the service provider presenting a list of all costs incurred in relation to an event and including the supporting invoices and/or other documentary proof;
- **Expert mobilised by TAIEX** – a person to whom the IBU assigns the task of providing TAIEX assistance at an event;
- **TAIEX Expert Database (EDB)** – an electronic platform containing a repository of information on EU Member State experts, granting them the opportunity to express their interest to engage in specific TAIEX events;
- **Flat Daily Allowance (FDA)** – the flat-rate allowance compensating the absence from service of an expert mobilised by TAIEX belonging to the public administration (or assimilated) of an EU Member State and contributing to an event;
- **Head of the IBU** – the head of the IBU of the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations of the European Commission;

- **Host institution** – a public or a semi-public body in an EU Member State hosting beneficiary administration participants on the occasion of a study visit;
- **Local Co-organiser (LCO)** – a representative of the recipient acting as contact person for the organisation of an event;
- **Local Venue Support (LVS)** – a service meant to ensure the appropriateness of logistics at the venue of a workshop, or in exceptional cases for other forms of events;
- **Mandated Body** – semi-public body which is accredited to implement projects according to the same conditions as if it was an integral part of the administrations, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/tenders/twinning/index_en.htm;
- **Medium Term Assistance (MTA)** – single event (lasting more than one week) or interrelated set of events designed to achieve a concrete, specifically defined objective or set of objectives over a determined period, starting on the date of the first assistance activity;
- **National Contact Point (NCP)** – a central contact person for TAIEX appointed by the public administration of an EU Member State or beneficiary;
- **Order Form (OF)** – a document prepared by the service provider and submitted for IBU's signature authorising the service provider to enter into legal commitments with third parties for the definitive logistical arrangements relating to the organisation of an event;
- **Participant** – a person belonging to or representing a recipient of TAIEX assistance and attending an event;
- **Per Diem** – a daily subsistence allowance paid per night away to experts mobilised by TAIEX and participants, participating at an event to cover accommodation, meals, local travel and sundry expenses;
- **Recipient** – any institution, organisation, agency, authority, grouping or other entity of a beneficiary to which TAIEX has agreed to provide assistance (see also 1.5.);
- **Service Provider** – the contractor providing logistical support for the implementation of TAIEX assistance;
- **Series of events** – a sequence of technical assistance events on the same or similar topic with the same recipient. The aim of a series of events is to support the beneficiary to achieve a specific goal that cannot be achieved through a single event;

- **TAIEX case handler** – the staff of the IBU in charge of the organisation of events under the supervision of a team leader; terms **TAIEX project officer** and **TAIEX project manager** may be used interchangeably
- **TAIEX fee** – the sum of money paid per working day to a private expert to remunerate her/his contribution to an event;
- **TAIEX Report Preparatory Fee (RPF)** – the sum of money, equivalent to FDA, paid to experts to remunerate preparation of reports concerning their participation at TAIEX events;
- **TAIEX Management System (TMS)** – the database and workflow management system shared by the IBU and the service provider for the purpose of the organisation of events;
- **Task Form (Expert/Translation)** – document signed by a team leader and sent to an expert mobilised by TAIEX, authorising him/her to work from home on a specific task and for a determined length of time. The task form is also used for translations;
- **Team Leader** – the person in the IBU bearing the responsibility for the organisation of events under the authority of the head of the IBU;
- **Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX)** – the instrument for the provision of technical assistance centrally managed by the IBU of the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations;
- **Timesheet** – supporting document completed, dated and signed by the expert mobilised by TAIEX, certifying the time spent to complete the work requested and authorised in the task form expert or task form translation.

1.3. Event classification

1.3.1. Workshops

Workshops can be organised in a beneficiary (in a number of cases in Brussels). They can be single-beneficiary or multi-beneficiary. "Single-beneficiary" means that the event is organised for participants from one beneficiary. "Multi-beneficiary" means that the event is organised for participants from two or more beneficiaries. Workshops usually take place in a single location, however, depending on the agenda a workshop can include visits to more than one location in and/or outside the beneficiary.

Workshops typically mobilise more than one expert from more than one EU Member State and usually last one to two days depending on the needs. Most of the experts' work consists in delivering training or presentation(s) to a large audience. Workshops often require interpretation (usually simultaneous). Workshops require 1 LVS per each 20 participants.

Workshops can also be organised in the form of a video-teleconferences (VTCs), i.e. as an online events. The same principles as above apply, including also the same financial compensations to experts (see section 3) and contractor's fee per type of event. VTCs may require booking of conference room on the beneficiary side to enable better connection for participants.

Within 15 days from the end date of the event, the experts will complete a report from the workshop.

1.3.2. Expert missions

Expert missions are events where experts mobilised by TAIEX go for a mission in a beneficiary usually up to five days; they may be peer-reviews, including reviews following a Twinning or explanatory meetings.

Expert missions are usually single-beneficiary and, exceptionally, multi-beneficiary. "Single-beneficiary" means that the event is organised for one beneficiary. "Multi-beneficiary" means that the event is organised for two or more beneficiaries. Expert missions usually take place in a single location, but depending on the agenda the expert(s) can visit more than one location in one or more beneficiaries. Missions to Brussels or elsewhere in the EU can be also foreseen. One, two or more experts (particularly in the case of peer-reviews) can be mobilised in the framework of one expert mission and may require interpretation, usually consecutive, but simultaneous interpretation can also be arranged.

Expert missions typically take place at the recipient's own premises, often including meetings in different venues or field visits. TAIEX does not pay for any alternative venue.

Expert missions can also be organised in the form of a VTCs, i.e. as an online events. The same principles as above apply, including also the same financial compensations to experts (see Section 3) and contractor's fee per type of event. VTCs may require booking of conference room on the beneficiary side to enable better connection for participants.

A special types of expert mission are:

- a 'peer assessment' or a 'peer-review' mission. Such missions assess, as required, the gaps between a beneficiary's national legislation and the *acquis* with a view to measuring the beneficiary's progress with regard to approximation with the *acquis* and/or best practices in a specific field; they also assess result and sustainability of Twinning projects (Twinning Review missions). A preparatory mission prior to a peer-review mission may be organised as a separate event for experts to be briefed by the European Commission on details of the engagement.
- explanatory meetings: provide in depth explanation of the *acquis* to a beneficiary and information of state of play in beneficiary. They are organised on the initiative of the European Commission and take place in Brussels.

Within 15 days from the end date of the event, the experts will complete a mission report describing the objective of the mission, the situation of the beneficiary/recipients' institution and recommendations.

1.3.3. Study visits

Study visits are events where participants from a beneficiary visit EU Member State institutions and administrations for a maximum of five days. Study visits are usually single-beneficiary and, exceptionally, multi-beneficiary. "Single-beneficiary" means that the event is organised for participants from one beneficiary. "Multi-beneficiary" means that the event is organised for participants from two or more beneficiaries. Study visits often take place in a single location, but depending on the agenda the participants can visit more than one location in one or more EU Member States. The standard number of participants on a study visit is three per beneficiary; however justified exceptions are possible.

After the study visit, the participants will send a report back to IBU within 15 days of the end date of event.

1.3.4. Work from home

One or more experts can be requested by the IBU to carry out a specific task or a set of tasks from their home.

Work from home may notably be required in the framework of the assistance to the Turkish Cypriot community in the northern part of Cyprus or for preparing and/or reporting on peer assessment missions and other types of events.

Work from home must be authorised by the IBU through a task form.

The service provider will pay the expert upon receipt of the certified timesheet and any other evidence as required, as certified correct by the TAIEX case handler.

1.4. Eligible beneficiaries

- Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey (i.e., beneficiaries of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II)²⁹ ;
- Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, the Republic of Moldova, Morocco, Palestine³⁰, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine (i.e., beneficiaries of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)³¹ ;
- Turkish Cypriot community in the northern part of Cyprus;
- all third countries, regions and territories eligible for measures supported by the Partnership Instrument (PI)³² and under the framework of the administrative cooperation within the policies managed by DG International Cooperation and Development³³
- the European Union Member States in the framework of the administrative cooperation within the policies managed: DG for Regional and Urban Policy³⁴, the Structural Reform Support Service³⁵, Environmental Implementation Review (EIR)³⁶ et al.

²⁹ Regulation (EU) No 231/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 11 March 2014, establishing an Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) – OJ L77 of 15.3.2014, p. 11.

³⁰ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the European Union Member States on this issue.

³¹ Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 11 March 2014, establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument – OJ L77 of 15.3.2014, p. 27.

³² Regulation (EU) No 234/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 11 March 2014, establishing a Partnership Instrument for cooperation with third countries – OJ L77 of 15.3.2014, p. 77.

³³ Commission Decision C(2019)7438 Final on the financing of the annual work programme relating to coordination and promotion of awareness on development issues for 2019 - implemented through SLA between DG DEVCO and DG NEAR concerning the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) and Twinning support to third countries, regions and territories eligible for measures supported by DG DEVCO

³⁴ Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

If relevant, the following countries and territories may be associated to the activities, in accordance with Article 16(1) of Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 (ENI Regulation): Bahrain, Chad, Iraq, Kuwait, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and United Arab Emirates. The list of beneficiaries may be subject to revision.

1.5. Eligible recipients

The recipients of TAIEX assistance comprise public and semi-public sector bodies such as national administrations, the judiciary, parliaments, regional and local administrations, representatives of trade unions and employers' associations and civil society organisations, in the event that they play a role in the transposition, implementation and enforcement of specific EU legislation.

As a rule, applications should be submitted by public institutions and administrations of the eligible beneficiaries.

The list of eligible recipients may be subject to revision.

1.6. Eligible experts

1.6.1. Public sector

For TAIEX events the IBU usually engages serving experts from the public sector. These include experts belonging to the public administration (or assimilated institutions, such as mandated bodies) of an EU Member State, EU institutions and agencies or International Organisations. Experts from the European Economic Area countries can also be mobilised to provide expertise relating to common *acquis*³⁷.

Academics from public universities or retired public sector experts from EU Member States or from EU institutions can likewise be mobilised on an exceptional basis.

Academics from public universities contributing to an event are treated as EU Member State experts.

Public sector experts who are not in *active* public service – either temporarily (prolonged leave of absence) or permanently (experts who have left their administration or are retired) and who are mobilised for any TAIEX event are considered as private sector experts and therefore subject to service procurement rules³⁸.

³⁵ Regulation (EU) 2017/825 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on the establishment of the Structural Reform Support Programme for the period 2017 to 2020 and amending Regulations (EU) No 1303/2013 and (EU) 1305/2013 (OJ L 129, 19.5.2017, p. 1), as amended by Regulation (EU) 2018/1671 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 amending Regulation (EU) 2017/825 to increase the financial envelope of the Structural Reform Support Programme and adapt its general objective OJ L 284, 12.11.2018, p. 3

³⁶ COM/2017/063 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions The EU Environmental Implementation Review: Common challenges and how to combine efforts to deliver better results

³⁷ EEA experts are encoded in TMS as “Other Speaker”

³⁸ See section 3.2.2. for more details.

Retired experts should in principle only be mobilised in the first two years following their retirement. Exceptions may be envisaged in particular for assignments under TAIEX Medium Term Assistance and peer-review/assessment missions.

In exceptional cases, experts from the administrations of the beneficiaries can be mobilised for TAIEX activities. They are not entitled to FDAs, but they can receive report preparation fee (RPF).

1.6.2. Private sector

Private sector experts are engaged exceptionally in cases where no public sector expert is available. Private sector experts include private consultants, academics from private universities, experts from international organisations and members of non-governmental institutions and are subject to service procurement rules.

1.7. Gender equality and protection of personal data

1.7.1. Gender equality

The IBU strives to promote gender equality by ensuring equal access and participation of women and men in TAIEX events and by engaging both women and men as experts. Likewise, gender issues should be considered in the planning and implementation of TAIEX events to ensure that the needs and conditions of both women and men are reflected and addressed. On this the IBU gathers statistics.

1.7.2. Protection of personal data

Personal data relating to the persons involved in the events is collected and processed via the TMS database and its applications. EU legislation applies with regard to the storage of data and data protection. A privacy statement explains how personal data of individuals intending to participate or having participated in TAIEX events are stored and managed together with the respective provisions taken to protect this data; for more detail on this see https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/taix_privacy_statement_online.pdf.

The service provider ensures that its sub-contractors and the service provider itself fully respect and apply the provisions laid down in the privacy statement and in Regulation (EU) 2018/1725, of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC..

1.8. Division of tasks between IBU and service provider

The IBU acts as the principal source and is solely responsible for planning, definition of content and control of TAIEX events. This includes the decision on the organisation of an event, its format, the preparation of the agenda, the identification and classification of experts, host institutions, participants, interpretation and the decision on dates and location.

The implementation of TAIEX activities is shared between the IBU and the service provider. The latter assumes full responsibility for correctly carrying out the logistical part of the

organisation of TAIEX events and for the related payments to be executed. Confidentiality of the information processed is crucial.

The main TAIEX logistical arrangements to be carried out by the service provider refer to (but are not limited to):

- *Uploading (encoding³⁹) the participants, the host institution, the experts in the TMS database and updating the information on participants, experts and hosts when required and in case when online registration is not functional;*
- *Editing events' agendas when required (in terms of formatting) and ensuring that speakers' name plates are prepared in line with the agendas;*
- *Liaising with participants and experts on travel and accommodation arrangements;*
- *Booking and paying for accommodation⁴⁰;*
- *Booking and paying for travel (international/local)⁴¹, including:*
 - *Booking and issuing tickets for transportations⁴²;*
 - *Rental car and taxi reservation⁴³*
 - *Reservation of a bus/car with driver⁴⁴*
- *Booking and paying for catering and the venue – usually only for workshops;*
- *Identifying, selecting and contracting services (including interpretation and translation) and ensuring the quality thereof;*
- *Booking and paying for meeting and interpretation facilities with the necessary equipment;*
- *Ensuring when requested video and telephone conference connections as well as live video streams from TAIEX events, including ensuring their smooth operation;*
- *Sending confirmation of the logistic arrangements made to participants, host institutions and experts;*
- *Printing and dispatching information materials (e.g. agendas if requested, badges, brochures, name plates, etc.) – usually for workshops;*
- *Providing an event report – usually for Workshops;*
- *Preparing and submitting to the Contracting Authority an Expenditure Report for final approval of costs related to an event;*

³⁹Avoiding double (or more) entries for the same person/institution in TMS database.

⁴⁰ Including any change(s) or cancellation(s).

⁴¹ The part of the services relating to travel should be carried out in co-operation with an IATA accredited travel agency. That agency should have the necessary authorisation to issue, in the TAIEX Beneficiaries and EU Member States, air, rail, road and ferry tickets, make hotel reservations and supply other related services.

⁴² Including any change(s) and cancellation(s) of tickets already issued.

⁴³ Including any change(s) or cancellation(s).

⁴⁴ Including any change(s) or cancellation(s).

- *Ensuring appropriate visibility of TAIEX Instrument during events;*
- *Ensuring that TAIEX events run smoothly and up to the professional standards.*

The service provider shall also assume the responsibility for the performance of any third party to which it has delegated the provision of logistical services.

Before undertaking any act which may give rise to reimbursement of expenditure by the IBU, the service provider must seek the IBU's prior, written approval for the commitment, usually by means of an OF.

With regard to inviting participants, host institutions and experts, the IBU invites the ones selected to submit electronically or online a participant, host institution or expert registration form to confirm their participation. Once the participation of the participants, host institution or experts is confirmed and encoded as such in the TMS database the service provider can contact the participants, host institution or experts as well as local co-organisers directly in order to organise all practical arrangements (travel, accommodation, allowances, etc.). The service provider can also contact the participants, host institutions and experts directly concerning outstanding payments. The service provider follows on any complaint concerning logistical arrangements formulated by experts or participants and reports with no delay to the IBU on measures taken.

The IBU reserves the right to contact the participants, host institutions and experts mobilised by TAIEX as well as any other pertinent stakeholder at any stage of the event implementation process described above.

Any derogation from the rules as per this manual (whether it is related to a participant, host institution and expert or even from the TAIEX case handler), will have to be supported by the written (e-mail) and uploaded approval of the team leader in the TMS.

Approval from the team leader, will have to be requested via the TAIEX case handler. In case the TAIEX case handler is not available, the back-up should be contacted and afterwards the team leader or their back-up.

1.9. Document and signature

The terms 'document' and 'signature' shall apply to both paper and electronic documents and the signature shall be attached to both paper and electronic documents when relevant.

1.10. Environmental aspects

Continuous effort should be made to adapt and improve the way TAIEX assistance is implemented so as to adopt an environmentally-friendly approach, i.e. in the choice of transport for experts and participants, but also, whenever appropriate, a paperless process throughout the organisation of the TAIEX assistance.

2. WORKFLOW

2.1. Authorisation form (AF)

Following the approval by the IBU of a request for assistance, the team leader assigns the preparation of the event to a TAIEX case handler in his or her team. A draft AF is automatically created in the TMS with a date by default (01/01/2100). Upon his or her assignment to the event,

the TAIEX case handler shall enter a reasonable and plausible date in the system, taking account of the beneficiary's wish as well as general planning constraints.

Once key information ⁴⁵on the event is available, the TAIEX case handler submits the AF to a team leader. This AF is verified and signed by a team leader and then by a Head of Unit or a Deputy Head of Unit as soon as possible and in principle no later than three weeks before the event start date. After signature, the event's status in TMS changes to "AF signed". This signals to the service provider that the relevant preparations can start.

2.2. Order form (OF)

The service provider arranges all logistical services as set out in the AF and encodes all corresponding information and data in an OF in TMS. The service provider shall include a ten per cent⁴⁶ contingency allocation in the OF to cover unforeseen additional costs. Once finalised on the service provider's side, the OF is checked by the IBU for ex-ante approval on the day it is submitted by the service provider which in principle should be no later than ten working days before the event start date.

The OF is verified and approved by the TAIEX case handler and then signed by a team leader on behalf of the IBU. The service provider can enter into legal commitments for items which are eligible for reimbursement (purchase of tickets, confirmation of hotel bookings, etc.) only upon signature of the OF by the IBU. The Head of Unit will sample/control all signed OFs on a regular basis.

2.3. Addenda and Corrigenda

Addenda/corrigenda are signed by the IBU to authorise additional costs or relevant changes to event items after signature of the OF.

Addenda can be prepared and issued only within the period from the date following the signature of the OF until the end date of the event. Corrigenda should only be prepared and issued after the end of the event. Addenda and corrigenda should be submitted in the same manner as OF's.

Addenda/corrigenda require only a team leader's electronic approval in TMS.

No addenda/corrigenda need to be signed for cost variations as long as the total amount of all variations remains within the event's contingency. When submitting the expenditure report for the event concerned, the service provider will detail the variations in a separate note, providing all pertinent evidence in order to justify the discrepancy of costs.

2.4. Postponed and cancelled events

When an event's AF was signed and the event was subsequently cancelled before the OF was signed:

⁴⁵ Key information includes dates and timing of the event; draft agenda, provisional number of participants and speakers, interpretation needs if known at that stage; contact details of the local co-organiser. For workshops, key information also includes provisional information about conference facilities and catering.

⁴⁶ The contingency is calculated as 10 per cent of the total expenditures excluding the fee due to the service provider.

- if no work has been done – TAIEX case handler checks and confirms that no work has been done by the service provider. Team leader will advise the service provider and then un-sign the AF.
- if work has been started -TAIEX case handler checks and confirms that work by the service provider has been started. Team leader will advise the service provider to claim the half fee through the revoked events procedure – event will be submitted with no costs except those for the ½ contractors fee and all non-refundable costs resulting from pre- approvals. All information about any work done so far by the service provider should be uploaded in the TMS as proof of work done.

In case an event is cancelled after OF signature, TAIEX case handler, after informing team leader, will advise the service provider that the event has been revoked and that all logistics need to be cancelled through an addendum. The addendum will include all non-refundable costs and will be processed with the full fee to service provider being left on the mother file. If the event is to be rescheduled then a new event needs to be created.

In the case of the postponement or change of dates of an AF-signed event, where the service provider has undertaken work:

- If the dates of the rescheduled event are known then these should be communicated to service provider at the time of the postponement. Team leader will advise the service provider to claim additional half fee if work has been done.
- If the dates are more than 3 months in the future then the event should be cancelled and replaced with a completely new event so that the service provider can claim the ½ fee due and all non-refundable costs resulting from pre-approvals.

When the start/end times are changed after the event is AF-signed and if this change subsequently requires the service provider to re-arrange bookings, a team leader will advise the service provider to claim the half fee.

When the start/end times are changed after OF signature and if this change subsequently requires the service provider to re-arrange bookings, a team leader will advise the service provider to claim the half fee through an addendum. The addendum will also include all non- refundable costs.

2.5. Expenditure Report (ER)

After implementation of the event the service provider submits a list of all related costs in a duly signed and dated expenditure report - an indicative template is presented in Annex I.E.

All supporting documents shall be attached to the report.

Expenditure reports and the attached supporting documents shall be submitted electronically to the IBU. Only one ER is admissible.

3. FINANCIAL COMPENSATION AND ARRANGEMENTS

3.1. Per Diems (Daily Subsistence Allowance, DSA)

Participants and experts, with the exception of staff from the European Commission, the other EU institutions/services and executive agencies, who need to travel abroad ⁴⁷in order to attend an event may receive a Per Diem when not covered otherwise by their administration. This is paid per night away in order to attend an event.

The Per Diem covers accommodation costs, meals, local travel at the place of mission and sundry expenses. Per Diem rates vary depending on the beneficiary visited and are usually updated twice a year. The IBU informs the service provider of the applicable rates. If accommodation and meals are provided, the corresponding costs (taxes included) are deducted from the Per Diem.

When the IBU support includes accommodation, it is organised by the service provider:

- Regarding the experts, they may exceptionally book their own accommodation and will then receive the normal Per Diem subject to possible deduction for meals, as outlined below. For experts the minimum balance of the Per Diem, payable after deduction of accommodation costs, is €80 per night;
- Regarding the participants, should they decide to book their own accommodation, then the related costs will not be reimbursed by the IBU. Instead, they will receive the same balance of the Per Diem as if accommodation had been booked for them. For participants the Per Diem, payable after deduction of accommodation costs, is fixed at €80 per night. Deductions for meals is then undertaken from this amount.

If meals are provided by the IBU at events, the real cost is deducted from the Per Diem payable after deduction of the accommodation.

If lunch or dinner is provided by third parties, the deduction represents 30 per cent of the Per Diem (after deduction of the accommodation costs and, when relevant, before the deduction of the meals provided by the IBU).

Commission officials shall deduct these meals from their own statement of travel expenses.

For a one day event with no night spent on site, half the per diem is granted to experts. For participants a maximum of €80 is payable from which any meals provided are to be deducted.

For experts or participants arriving late or in the middle of the night at the place of destination, DSA for that night should be granted.

For addenda and/or corrigenda, the Per Diem rate indicated in the original approved OF shall be used.

In the exceptional case that an expert stays after or arrives prior to an event for personal reasons, no DSA will be granted for the duration of his/her extra stay. The DSA will be granted on the basis of the travel arrangements the service provider would normally have booked for him/her and will include a deduction of any additional cost for the flights.

Participants are not allowed to extend their stay for personal reasons, be it before or after the event.

3.2. Flat Daily Allowances (FDAs) and TAIEX fees

3.2.1. Public sector experts

⁴⁷ For the events taking place in the expert's home country, accommodation can be provided in certain cases – see section 5.1.1 for more details

Serving public sector experts may receive a Flat Daily Allowance (FDA), with the exception of experts from EU institutions and agencies and experts from Permanent Representations to the EU contributing to a Brussels event, unless otherwise specifically agreed (for instance Europol)⁴⁸.

When granted, the FDA amounts to €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.

Experts mobilised to beneficiaries where the weekly working days are Sunday to Thursday are entitled to receive an FDA for Sunday, if required to work on that day. An FDA may also be payable for the Friday as this is normally a working day for the expert in their home administration.

Experts are entitled to allocation of FDA for travel during a public holiday, provided the public holiday is on a week day.

In the exceptional case that an expert stays after or arrives prior to an event for personal reasons, no FDA will be granted for the duration of his/her extra stay and will include a deduction of any additional cost for the flights. The FDA will be granted to the expert only for the duration of the event.

Experts are entitled to receive up to 2 report preparatory fees (RPF) for writing a mission/workshop report. The allocation and the number of such fees shall be specified in the AF and approved by the IBU.

Experts mobilised for peer-review missions may receive RPF maximum 5, for drafting their mission report provided that this report is submitted within 3 weeks from the end date of the peer- review mission and after the approval of the report by the IBU. These RPF will be allocated and paid by separately created Work from Home events.

Experts mobilised for online events are entitled to receive up to 2 additional FDA for the preparatory work. The allocation and the number of such FDA shall be specified in the AF and approved by the IBU.

3.2.2. Private sector experts

If, on an exceptional basis, a private sector expert is mobilised for a TAIEX event, a TAIEX fee of

⁴⁸ For experts from mandated bodies entitled to act in the place of public administrations in the implementation of Twinning projects (list available at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/tenders/twinning/index_en.htm) may receive a FDA of € 350.

€350 may be paid to him/her per working day, travel days excluded.

Experts are entitled to receive up to 2 RPFs for writing a mission/workshop report. The allocation and the number of such fee shall be specified in the AF and approved by the IBU.

If, on an exceptional basis, a private expert is mobilised for work from home, a TAIEX fee of maximum €350 may be paid per working day.

Private experts mobilised for peer-review missions may receive RPF, maximum 5, for drafting their mission report provided that this report is submitted within 3 weeks from the end date of the peer-review mission and after the approval of the report by the IBU. These fees will be allocated and paid by separately created Work from Home events.

Retired public sector experts may receive a TAIEX fee of maximum €350 per working day and are subject to service procurement rules in the same way as any private sector experts.⁴⁹

Experts mobilised for online events are entitled to receive up to 2 additional fees for the preparatory work. The allocation and the number of such fees shall be specified in the AF and approved by the IBU.

In the exceptional case that a private expert stays after or arrives prior to an event for personal reasons, no TAIEX fee and no DSA will be granted for the duration of his/her extra stay. The TAIEX fee will be granted to the expert only for the duration of the event and a deduction of any additional cost for the flights will be made.

3.3. Payment Procedures

3.3.1. Participants

(1) Study visits requiring the participant to travel abroad:

The Per Diem allowance shall be made available to the participants via money transfer services before departure. Should a cost-efficient money transfer tool (similar to Western Union's "Quick Cash") not be available in their country of origin, participants will receive the Per Diem via money transfer services at the place of destination.

Failure for participants to submit a study visit report shall have no consequences on the payment of any DSA as this report is not considered as a deliverable for the purposes of effecting payment or justifying amounts paid to participants.

(2) Workshops/Expert Missions requiring the participant to travel abroad:

The Per Diem allowance shall be made available by money transfer services to the participant on arrival in the location where the event takes place, including workshops taking place in Brussels.

3.3.2. Experts

⁴⁹ As per Article 265 §1 of the Rules of Application (RAP) of the EU Financial Regulation, payments for amounts less than or equal to €2 500 in respect of item of expenditure may consist simply in payment against invoices without prior acceptance of a tender, and service contracts with a value of less than or equal to €20 000 may be awarded on the basis of a single tender. For the remainder, article 168 §1 of the RAP stipulates that the estimated value of a contract with a private sector expert may not be determined with a view to evading the thresholds and procedures for awarding service contracts, nor may such a contract be split up for that purpose. The above mentioned threshold only applies to the TAIEX fees, and does not include the Per Diem and any other covered expenses - such as travel costs.

The Per Diem allowance, FDA for experts' participation and RPF shall be paid to the bank account(s) indicated by the expert within 20 working days of the end of the event. When an event lasts more than two weeks, half of the payment is made within five working days of the start of the event and the other half of the payment is made within 20 working days after the end of the event.

On a specific request of the IBU, the Per Diem allowance may exceptionally be paid before the start of the event.

Failure for a public or private expert to submit a mission report shall have no consequences on the payment of DSA or FDA/fee which is linked to the participation in the mission/workshop, as this report is not considered as a deliverable for the purposes of effecting payment or justifying amounts paid to experts' participation.

TAIEX fees shall be paid to private sector experts based on the signed 'contract for supply of services' within 30 days of the receipt of the expert's invoice. For work from home, payment shall be made upon receipt of the certified timesheet and any other requested supporting evidence.

RPF paid to experts mobilised for peer-review missions for drafting of their mission report shall be paid provided that this report is submitted within 3 weeks from the end of the peer-review mission and after the approval of the report by the IBU. The approval of the report by the IBU may be given more than 3 weeks from the end of the peer-review mission, but not later than 6 months. These fees will be allocated and paid by separately created Work from Home events.

RPF paid to experts for writing a mission/workshop report and additional FDAs or fees for preparatory work linked to online events shall be paid after the approval of the report by the IBU. IBU case handler will immediately inform the service provider about the receipt and approval of the report.

3.3.3. Host institutions

Host institutions are entitled to request a flat-rate compensation of €350 per day of event for hosting a study visit. This payment may only be made via bank transfer to the institution's bank account. No real costs are reimbursed.

3.3.4 Specially organised events

Upon prior agreement of the head of the IBU, in exceptional cases, a public or semi-public institution or non-profit organisation of public interest may be compensated for its contribution to the co-organisation of a TAIEX event. The amount to be paid, in the form of a lump-sum, shall correspond to a FDA of €350 per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) / day contributed by the co-organiser.

3.4. Events organised upon request of an EU institution, EU agency or International Organisation

If an event is organised upon the request of an EU institution, EU agency or International Organisation, experts from the aforementioned are not entitled to travel arrangements and financial compensation. The IBU will inform the service provider if an event is to be organised upon the request of an EU institution, EU agency or International Organisation.

3.5. Reimbursement policy

The service provider shall reimburse costs related to participation in an event only upon receipt of a duly completed and signed expense report and the original proof of payment. For the reimbursement of travel costs the original or electronic tickets, the original boarding passes and/or other supporting documents shall be sent along with a proof of payment. Electronically sent documents may be accepted as proofs, if duly justified (i.e. originals lost in post).

The service provider shall reimburse costs related to participation in an event only upon receipt of the original proof of payment if submitted within 30 days of the end date of the event.

4. TRAVEL

4.1. Entitlements

Participants and experts attending an event abroad are entitled to have their international outbound and inbound travel arranged and paid for, including when there are no other suitable options, travel from their home town to another country airport to reach their final destination. Under certain conditions local travel can also be arranged or reimbursed, for example for travel between venues in two different cities.

The service provider will neither arrange nor reimburse travel for staff of the European Commission, the other EU institutions/services and executive agencies.

4.2. Arrangements

The service provider shall take care of all travel arrangements for participants and experts attending an event i.e. booking and issuing of tickets.

Travel arrangements should be time-efficient, and as environmentally-friendly as possible.

The arrival and departure time to and from a destination shall be as close as possible to the event, e.g. experts and/or participants attending an event should arrive the evening before the event starts (for events which start in the morning) and depart on the day when the event finishes or early on the next day at the latest.

Participants should receive one within standard travel proposal, which will be booked by the service provider. In case no within standard option can be proposed the least out of standard option available should be proposed. Exceptions can only be made for professional reasons. Service provider shall obtain written confirmation and proof of professional reason.

Experts should be offered at least two within standard travel options but clearly indicating that in line with the principle of financial management of public funds, the least expensive ticket should be chosen unless there is a specific justification for a different choice. In case no within standard option can be proposed the least out of standard option available should be proposed. If the expert insists on a more expensive travel option than the one proposed: if the reason for rejecting the proposed option is not related to professional activities (in home country/country of departure) or to personal family related issues, the approval can only be given on a no additional cost to the IBU basis and the difference between the costs of the two travel options is deducted from the Per Diem, TAIEX fee or FDA. Service provider shall obtain written confirmation and/or proof of professional or private reason.

Exceptionally, by giving prior notification, travel arrangements can be made and directly paid for by an expert. If the ticket bought independently is more expensive than the ticket that would have been bought by the service provider, reimbursement of costs shall be limited to the value of the latter. The service provider shall reimburse the corresponding costs as soon as possible upon receipt of proof of payment and supporting documents if submitted within 30 days of the end date of the event.

4.3. International travel

4.3.1. Air transportation

(1) Ticket policy

The ticket shall be issued, in principle, as one ticket. In principle it shall be up to full economy fare, non-reimbursable except via the issuing travel agent and non-changeable. The airline chosen shall be IATA bonded and should not be low cost companies.

Pre-approval of flights (for FPI and DEVCO events see section 7) will be undertaken in cases where the initial cost of the flight exceeds €800. In cases where the initial cost does not exceed

€800 but in the opinion of the contractor it is probable that the cost of the flights will increase significantly then pre-approval should also be sought as soon as possible.

Where the cost of flights increases between the time of the OF submission and the issuance of tickets: if the increase is within the 10% contingency amount for tickets, then the contractor

should proceed with the issuance of the tickets. Should the cost difference of the tickets (including any other cost increases to the foreseen expenditure of the activity) exceed the 10% contingency amount, then the contractor should proceed with the issuance of tickets and prepare an addendum to address the cost differences.

(2) Flight Schedule

Travel arrangements have to be organised as follows for the *experts*:

- Direct flight whenever possible;
- As a rule, maximum two legs if direct flight is not available;
- Earliest flight departure time: 08:00 a.m. unless otherwise agreed with the expert;
- Latest flight arrival time: 10:00 p.m. unless otherwise agreed with the expert;
- Transfer time between connecting flights: maximum 3.5 hours unless otherwise agreed with the expert;

Travel arrangements have to be organised as follows for the *participants*:

- Direct flight whenever possible;
- As a rule, two legs if direct flight is not available;
- Earliest flight departure time: 08:00 a.m. unless otherwise agreed with the participant;
- Latest flight arrival time: 10:00 p.m. unless otherwise agreed with the participant;
- Transfer time between connecting flights: maximum 3.5 hours unless otherwise agreed with the participant;

(3) Issues linked to specific beneficiaries

- Participants from Palestine are entitled to receive two full Per Diem allowances to cover their travelling and accommodation costs to and from the international airports of Amman (Jordan) or Cairo (Egypt).
- For technical assistance to the Turkish Cypriot community in the northern part of Cyprus, all expert flights to/from the island must be routed through the Larnaca airport.
- Due to the lack of any public transport between Larnaca airport (CY) and Nicosia, taxi transport will be organised as part of the event.
- Experts/participants travelling to/from events organised in the framework of activities supported/funded by the Partnership Instrument shall in principle be booked in business class for any flight section over four hours. For the other flights (for four hours or less), the basic rules apply unless it is cheaper in full business.
- Participants from Libya, who need to stay overnight in Tunis in order to catch a flight (inbound and outbound journey), are entitled to receive a full Per Diem for Tunisia to cover their accommodation costs. Transport from Libya to and from Tunisia will be arranged by the participants themselves and the costs will be reimbursed. For the reimbursement of travel costs the original or electronic tickets, the original boarding passes and/or other supporting documents shall be sent along with a proof of payment.

The TAIEX Case Handler will advise all Libyan participants that prior agreement from the IBU Team Leader is needed in cases where it is necessary for the participants to go to Tunis to apply for and subsequently to collect their visa. In these cases the complete itinerary for obtaining the visa will be required. Once approved, the transport costs for the participants will be reimbursed in the same manner as above and the participants will also be provided with a full Per Diem for Tunisia to cover the costs for any overnight accommodation they require for this purpose.

In cases where expert missions or workshops are organised for Libya in Tunisia, participants from Libya are entitled to receive full Per Diems for Tunisia (all deductions will be made as per normal TAIEX rules). Arrangement and reimbursement of transport will be done in the same manner as above.

- Upon the request, Israeli participants are entitled to receive travel arrangements organised respecting Shabbat. Accommodation and DSA will be granted on the basis of the travel arrangements the service provider would normally have booked.

4.3.2. Other transportation

(1) Train, intercity bus and boat

For train tickets for experts, a "first class" ticket shall be booked by the contractor or in cases where this is not possible reimbursed, except for high speed train services such as TGV, Thalys or Eurostar where the booking should be for "second class" travel. Premium tickets may be used if not more expensive than "first class". For participants, a "second class" ticket shall be booked by the contractor or in cases where this is not possible reimbursed.

Wherever appropriate, intercity bus and boat transportation can also be proposed.

(2) Car

For international travel of experts and participants, the use of a private car could be accepted. The total number of kilometres travelled on the basis of the most efficient itinerary can be reimbursed at a rate of €0.25 per km. Experts and participants will remain fully liable for any accidents in which they may be involved during the trip.

4.3.3. Local travel of experts linked to international travel

Transport costs in the home country linked to international travel should be notified and justified as soon as possible in the travel arrangement process and may be reimbursed to the experts.

In general and where possible public transport should be the preferred option. Where the expert chooses to use his/her own vehicle, the reimbursement will be limited to the equivalent of the cost of a return train or bus ticket (as per section 4.3.2.) to/from the airport. If the route is not at all served by rail or bus, or if it is not served in accordance with the expert's flight departure/arrival time, the cost of travel shall be reimbursed at the rate of €0.25 per km.

Experts using their own vehicle will remain fully liable for any accidents in which they may be involved during the trip.

Expenses on taxis fares will not be reimbursed as the DSA is considered to cover all sundry expenses incurred during the TAIEX mission.

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

- to and from the airport, if no public transport is available or if it is not served in accordance with the expert's flight departure/arrival time;
- for flights leaving before 8 a.m. and arriving before 8 a.m. or after 11 p.m.⁵⁰
- for trains leaving before 8 a.m. and arriving after 11 p.m.

Reimbursement of local transportation costs shall be processed after receipt of proof of payment where applicable if submitted within 30 days of the end date of the event.

Upon request of the IBU, transportation should be provided for the experts between the airport of destination and the hotel depending on the security situation of the country. The countries concerned may change overtime but the service provider will be informed by the IBU accordingly.

4.3.4. Local travel of participants linked to international travel

For local travel of participants linked to international travel, the same rule as for the local travel to and from the venue applies (see section 4.4.).

4.3.5. Other costs

(3) Luggage

⁵⁰ Except if the expert rejected the standard flight that the service provider offered or if the expert has chosen to extend his/her stay

In case an airline charges extra costs for checked-in luggage, the corresponding amount can be reimbursed to both experts and participants.

(4) Visa

Experts and participants who may need a visa are responsible for obtaining it themselves. In case invitation letters are necessary, the IBU may request the service provider to encode participants and/or experts in TMS at short notice.

Upon request, 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 if submitted within 30 days of the end date of the event.

4.4. Local travel to and from the venue

Transport to and from the venue can be organised in the following cases:

- Local participants living more than 400 km from the venue are entitled to travel by plane, organised by the service provider.
- Should these participants not wish to travel by plane, travel costs can be reimbursed as a lump sum on the basis of the most efficient itinerary, following a request from the local co-organiser. In this case the service provider shall, before the event, pay the concerned participants the following amounts:

One-way distance in km	Amount allowed in € for return trip (except when travelling by plane)
From 400 km to 499 km	€50
From 500 km to 799 km	€70
From 800 km to 999 km	€100
From 1000 km to 1199 km	€140
From 1200 km to 1499 km	€150
From 1500 km to 1999 km	€210
More than 2000 km	By plane

Local participants living less than 400 km away from the venue are not entitled to travel support from TAIEX.

In order to avoid high local transport costs for internal flights, trains, buses or taxis, the service provider shall, wherever possible, organise group transport, e.g. hiring cars, minibuses or buses as appropriate.

In general and where possible group transport is encouraged for participants from the same area, in cases where this is refused the IBU reserves the right to not cover the travel expenses of one or more participants.

5. OTHER LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

In exceptional cases and when justified, single source procurement of any logistical arrangements under Section 5 may be authorised by the IBU head of unit at AF stage or before the OF is signed. Any justification should be uploaded in the TMS by the service provider.

5.1. Accommodation

5.1.1. Entitlements

Participants and experts attending an event abroad are entitled to accommodation. The service provider shall take care of all accommodation arrangements, i.e. booking and payment. In exceptional cases and when justified, pre-booking of accommodation may be authorised by a team leader before the OF is signed. Any justification should be uploaded in the TMS by the service provider.

For workshops in the beneficiary country of a participant, accommodation can be provided if the participant lives at least 100 km from the venue, including for the night before the event starts. For events lasting more than one day, all participants (including those residing less than 100 km from the venue, but excluding those residing in the town of the venue) are offered the possibility to have accommodation on the middle nights of the event.

In exceptional cases, accommodation may be provided to the participants for expert missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

For events taking place in the expert's home country, accommodation can be provided, except if the expert is residing in the town of the venue. If the expert lives at least 100 km from the venue, accommodation can also be provided for the night before the event starts.

On the IBU request, service provider will take care of the booking, but not of the payment, of the accommodation for staff of the European Commission, the other EU institutions/services and executive agencies participating at TAIEX events, and other non-funded speakers and participants. In case of no-show and incurred cancellation fees for such booked rooms, IBU will approve the payment of fees upon received justification for no-show.

5.1.2. Arrangements

As a general rule, the service provider shall take care of the booking and payment of the accommodation of experts and participants who are entitled to it, on a 'bed and breakfast' basis. The service provider shall inform the hotel management that no additional costs for private telephone calls, minibar, Wi-Fi, etc. will be covered.

Based on an attendance list, the service provider must verify that the number of hotel rooms invoiced by the hotel matches the real number of participants. In case a participant does not show up at the workshop, instructions should be given by the service provider to the hotel to cancel the room. Any cancellation charges must have been clearly shown in the original price offer.

The service provider shall book whenever possible a four-star international standard hotel, environmentally certified²³, located at a reasonable distance from the venue of the event and/or easily accessible by public transport or walking. The principle of reasonable distance should also apply to study visits. A "reasonable distance" must be intended as a distance of not more than

three kilometres - within three kilometres of the venue for a study visit and an expert mission and within three kilometres of the city centre for workshops.

In EU capitals and other places in the EU, where the hotel prices exceed the ceilings mentioned in the Commission guide for missions (available in TMS), three star hotels should be booked.

If the above-mentioned requirements cannot be met, the service provider shall propose an alternative option by submitting an event for OF signature and providing a justification in the Recommendation Comments of the New Offer tab.

For events in the framework of assistance to the Turkish Cypriot community in the northern part of Cyprus, experts can only stay in hotels built on land that has Turkish Cypriot title deeds (i.e. non- disputed land).

For events taking place in Israel, only hotels located within Israel's pre-1967 borders will be considered eligible to host TAIEX events or to provide accommodation for experts and/or participants.

For expert missions in Algeria, payment on the spot for hotel accommodation by the experts will be accepted by the IBU, and therefore full DSA will be applicable. In cases where the expert objects to paying on the spot, normal TAIEX procedures will be followed. Where the expert does not advise that they will book their own hotel accommodation, the reservation will be made by the contractor.

5.2. Catering and Conference facilities/equipment

Catering service should be based, whenever possible, on environmentally friendly values²⁴

The service provider shall ensure that suppliers make separate offers for coffee breaks, lunches, conference room, conference equipment etc. Package offers mixing catering and conference facilities/equipment should be avoided. Exceptions should be fully justified in the OF.

Catering units for workshop should be in principle ordered for 90% of participants registered at the final participants' list avoiding the unnecessary waste

Based on the signed attendance list, the LVS responsible for the workshop, if available, shall on the spot inform the caterer concerning the final number of coffee breaks and lunches needed.

²³ Certified hotels that apply sustainable operations (e.g. Green Key, EU Ecolabel) or an environmental management system (e.g. EMAS)

²⁴ Reusable dishes and food containers, no plastics; seasonal, organic and/or local food, fruits and vegetables; use of water fountains and water jars; avoiding food waste

The LVS shall also check if all services requested were provided and if not shall report this in the event report. The LVS shall also verify the final hotel account and check if the hotel records match the instructions received by the service provider and if the hotel has complied with the instructions given concerning rooms, lunch and coffee breaks.

Lunch, water and coffee as part of an event will also be provided to the LVS.

The service provider shall ensure the availability of video and telephone conferences for events if requested by the IBU.

5.3. Interpretation

Interpretation shall be ensured by a maximum of two interpreters per language.

The service provider shall choose the qualitatively and economically most advantageous offer on the basis of the total costs linked to the interpretation services (fees and reimbursables for travel and accommodation). Water, lunch and coffee as part of an event will also be provided to interpreters.

Interpreters are not entitled to receive additional financial compensation over and above the contracted amount .

An interpreter is to work maximum eight hours per day, excluding all breaks.

For experts mission with 20 and more participants two consecutive interpreters are required.

For the duration of half a day of work of an interpreter, a full day rate can be paid if the services of the interpreter could otherwise not be purchased.

5.4. Translation

The beneficiary institution is responsible to provide for translation at its own cost. This includes translation of the *acquis* into their own language and for the translation of documents for review by Member State experts into English or French in the case of Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria and when French experts are requested.

Given the peculiarity of the overall assistance to the Turkish Cypriot community in the northern part of Cyprus, an exception could be granted and requires the approval of a team leader.

Exception could also be granted for translation of documents linked to peer-review missions.

6. EVENT REPORT

Within 14 calendar days of the end of each workshop, an event report shall be prepared by the service provider and sent to the IBU with a reference to the logistical aspects.

The event report must refer to the OF number and be kept together with all alterations or additions to the original OF.

For each workshop, the report shall include:

- Explanation of how it was logistically implemented.
- Where relevant the original attendance list(s), which must be signed by participants before each morning and afternoon session of the event. It (they) will serve as supporting document(s) for the different costs mentioned in the expenditure report table.
- With regard to visibility: concrete proof that throughout the workshop it was clear to the audience and other stakeholders (for instance press) that the event was organised and funded by TAIEX.

Following receipt of the feedback questionnaires the IBU may ask the service provider to add to or modify the event report.

7. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

For the events organised in the framework of the Partnership Instrument (PI), DEVCO or other service level agreements (such as TAIEX-REGIO PEER 2 PEER, TAIEX-EIR PEER 2 PEER,...), some logistical arrangements differ.

For events supported/funded by the Partnership Instrument (PI) and DEVCO, the following peculiarities apply, unless stated otherwise in the AF:

- Experts/participants in study visits travelling to/from the events shall in principle be booked in business class for any flight section over four hours. For the other flights (for four hours or less), the basic rules apply unless it is cheaper in full business.
- For experts and for participants attending study visits, flights pre-approval should be requested to ensure availability and reasonable ticket costs.
- Should the event take place in a country not using the EUR as currency, the DSA should be paid as follows:
 - If USD is available, DSA will be paid in USD.
 - If only local currency available DSA will be paid in local currency.

For events organised in the framework of other service level agreements, all the peculiarities will need to be mentioned in the AF.

TERMS OF REFERENCE – PART B

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Benefitting Zone

2. Contracting authority

The European Union, represented by the European Commission, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium.

3. Contract language

English

LOCATION AND DURATION

4. Location

- Normal place of posting of the specific assignment: Home-based
- Mission(s) outside the normal place of posting and duration(s): Please refer to ToR Part A, § 4.

5. Start date and period of implementation

The indicative start date is 18/01/2021 and the period of implementation of the contract will be 700 days from this date (indicative end date: 19/12/2022).

REQUIREMENTS

6. Expertise

The minimum requirements covered by the team of experts as a whole are detailed below:

- Qualifications and skills required for the team: 1. Working experience in relation to: o EU enlargement policy and strategy and pre-accession assistance (IPA); o EU neighbourhood policy and strategy and assistance (ENI); o EU development policy and strategy and assistance; o EU foreign policy actions. 2. Knowledge of the TAIEX instrument; knowledge of other institutional instruments such as Twinning instrument would be an advantage; 3. Knowledge of the EU institutional framework; 4. Knowledge of different aid instruments, including Budget support and blending; 5. Analytical skills; 6. Excellent writing and editing skills.
- General professional experience of the team: The evaluation team must have a cumulative experience of at least 15 years in the area of evaluation (of which at least a minimum of ten successfully completed complex policy and strategy evaluations), mostly in but not limited to the field of external relations, with solid experience in rigorous evaluation methods and techniques; Experience in the Public Sector of at least one of the senior experts will be an advantage.
- Specific professional experience of the team: At least one of the experts (excluding the quality support expert) must have a minimum of three successfully completed complex policy and

strategy evaluations. This includes quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. Experience in the evaluation of institutional/administrative capacities of public sector entities will be considered an asset. Technical/sector knowledge and experience, of the team as a whole, in the specific areas mentioned under heading 2.2.1.3.: rule of law, environment, and internal market would be an asset.

- Language skills of the team: The evaluation team will have command of English at level C2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CERF) – both spoken and written. At least one team member will have command of French at level C2. A good command of Arabic and/or Russian at level B2 of the CERF will be considered an asset.

Requested number of days per category:

Expert category	Minimum requirement concerning the category	Number of working days	Additional information
Senior	<p>While the requirements for the expert category are described in the global terms of reference, the additional requirements for a team leader are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least three successfully accomplished assignments as team leader and/or evaluation manager for multi-disciplinary evaluation teams of a similar complexity, • Strong experience of the Commission's evaluation methodological guidelines, • Excellent communication, team co-ordination, presentation and proven report writing and editing skills in English, • Fluency in English (level C1). If the proposed team leader does not have experience in managing complex 	80	<p>TEAM LEADER position is required. The number of working days presented is the minimum required and can be increased in the offer.</p>

Expert category	Minimum requirement concerning the category	Number of working days	Additional information
	evaluations of a similar size and character, another senior/medium level expert of the team is expected to have this experience.		
Senior	The requirements for expert categories are described in the global terms of reference	50	Contractors please duplicate this line to propose any additional expert you see fit as part of your offer with at least 50 working days of senior expertise in addition to the team leader and to the quality support expert. The number of working days presented is the minimum required senior expertise and can be increased in the offer.
To be defined by the tenderer	The requirements for expert categories are described in the global terms of reference	1	Contractors please duplicate this line to propose any additional expert you see fit as part of your offer. The number of working days presented is the minimum required senior expertise and can be increased in the offer.
Medium	While the requirements for the expert category are described in the global terms of reference, the additional requirements for a project manager are	10	PROJECT MANAGER position is required. The number of working days presented is the minimum required and can be increased in the offer. The expert category

Expert category	Minimum requirement concerning the category	Number of working days	Additional information
	<p>as follows: Must have at least three years of experience in similar (project manager) positions. She/he must be part of the permanent staff of the Framework Contractor. Its work is expected to focus on accompanying the TL in the evaluation's team management, ensuring that the work proceeds well and that internal and external deadlines are met.</p>		<p>for this position is minimum that of a medium expert</p>
Junior	<p>While the requirements for the expert category are described in the global terms of reference, the additional requirements for a junior expert are as follows: Must have at least three successfully completed assignments in similar (junior expert) positions for similar assignments. Must have at least one experience in the administration of e-surveys, where its role is expected to be crucial.</p>	35	<p>JUNIOR expertise is required. The number of working days presented is the minimum required and can be increased in the offer.</p>
Senior	<p>While the requirements for the expert category are described in the global terms of reference,</p>	25	<p>QUALITY SUPPORT position is required. The number of working days presented is the minimum</p>

Expert category	Minimum requirement concerning the category	Number of working days	Additional information
	the additional requirements for a quality support expert are as follows: Must have at least three successfully completed assignments in similar (quality support) positions for similar assignments. She/he must be part of the permanent staff of the Framework Contractor. Its work is expected to focus both on the evaluation process (methodological design) and on the evaluation deliverables.		required and can be increased in the offer.

7. Incidental expenditure

No incidental expenditure provided for in this contract.

8. Lump sums

No lump sums provided for in this contract.

9. Expenditure verification

No expenditure verification report is required.

10. Other details

No other details provided for in this contract.

REPORTS AND DELIVERABLES

11. Reports and deliverables requirements

Title	Content	Language	Submission timing or deadline
Draft final report	Synthesis report, incl.: - Synthesis of methodological	English	After 10 Month(s) after the project start

Title	Content	Language	Submission timing or deadline
	<p>steps undertaken during the evaluation exercise, including limitations, if any -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Background analysis - Findings (answers to the evaluation questions) - Overall assessment, lessons learnt, conclusions and recommendations - Main annexes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Evaluation matrix with information gathered and analysed by indicator o Case study notes o Surveys analyses - Executive summary - Slide presentation - Dissemination seminar minutes 		
Publishable Final Illustrated Summary	Same specifications as for the Draft illustrated Summary, incorporating any comments received from the concerned parties	English	After 12 Month(s) after the project start
Publishable Final factsheet(s)	Incorporating any comments received from the concerned parties.	English	After 12 Month(s) after the project start
Inception report	Same specifications as of the Draft Inception Report, incorporating any comments received from the concerned parties on the draft report that have been accepted	English	After 3 Month(s) after the project start
Draft inception report	Inception Report incl.: - Final intended / planned Intervention Logic - Evaluation Questions (EQs), with judgment	English	After 2 Month(s) after the project start

Title	Content	Language	Submission timing or deadline
	<p>criteria & indicators - Data analysis and collection methods, incl. case studies proposal - TAIEX activities inventory and analysis - Work plan - Consultation strategy</p>		
<p>Draft Intermediary report</p>	<p>Draft Intermediary report, incl.: - Background and key methodological elements - Preliminary answers to the evaluation questions and preliminary hypotheses to be tested - Remaining work for the synthesis phase - Update work plan, if needed - Main annexes: # Evaluation matrix with information gathered and analysed by indicator # Case study notes # Surveys</p>	<p>English</p>	<p>After 5 Month(s) after the project start</p>
<p>PowerPoint presentation</p>	<p>Consolidated findings (intermediary & survey to the entire TAIEX community of practice) and preliminary conclusions</p>	<p>English</p>	<p>After 8 Month(s) after the project start</p>
<p>Draft executive summary</p>	<p>The executive summary is expected to highlight the evaluation purpose, the methods used, the main evaluation findings and the conclusions and recommendations. It is to be considered a “stand alone” document.</p>	<p>English</p>	<p>After 11 Month(s) after the project start</p>

Title	Content	Language	Submission timing or deadline
Draft Illustrated Summary	The illustrated summary is expected to highlight the evaluation purpose, the methods used, the main findings and the conclusions and recommendations in a visual and user-friendly manner.	English	After 11 Month(s) after the project start
Draft fact-sheets	Content to be decided later on.	English	After 11 Month(s) after the project start
Final report	Same specifications as of the Draft Final Report, incorporating any comments received from the concerned parties on the draft report that have been accepted	English	After 12 Month(s) after the project start
Publishable Final Executive Summary	Same specifications as for the Draft Executive Summary, incorporating any comments received from the concerned parties on the draft report that have been accepted	English	After 12 Month(s) after the project start

ANNEX 2: DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE INVENTORY OF EVENTS ORGANIZED THROUGH TAIEX IN THE 2015-2020 PERIOD

Overall key features:

- TAIEX funded 6,712 events for a total of EUR 67 M.
- IPA+ENI and TCc accounted for 89% of funding (other strands for 11%).
- The average number of events funded and amounts spent decreased over the years (average annual rates: -11% and -5% respectively).
- In 2020 (COVID-19) TAIEX usage dropped significantly across all strands.

In terms of type of event funded:

- Main events funded were expert missions (45% in number, 49% in expenditure); study visits (23%, 29%) and workshops (24%, 20%). Work-from-home assignments and screening together accounted for 2% of the budget.
- Workshops and work-from-home assignments relative importance increased significantly in 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The type of events predominantly funded varied across different TAIEX strands.

The average cost of events:

- Increased quite steadily for nearly all types over the period 2015-2019.
- Varied significantly across different TAIEX strands.

The use of the “classic” (on-demand, gap-filling) approach has decreased over the years, while the use of alternative approaches have increased; however most strands continue favouring the “classic” approach (and overall the classic approach remains predominant).

Geographically:

- Enlargement countries accounted for 48% of TAIEX funds over the 2015-2020 period, followed by East (18%) and South (13%) Neighbourhood countries and the TCc (9%); EU and the rest of the world accounted for respectively 7% and 5%.
- The relative weight of the regions is becoming more evenly spread over time.
- For non-NEAR/non-TCc regions:
 - Funding represented 11% of the overall TAIEX funding with EUR 4.3 M for the EU, EUR 2.6 M for TAIEX PI, and less than EUR 100K for TAIEX INTPA.
 - At individual country levels amounts remained always below 500k and regularly below 100k, except in Lithuania that received close to 700k.

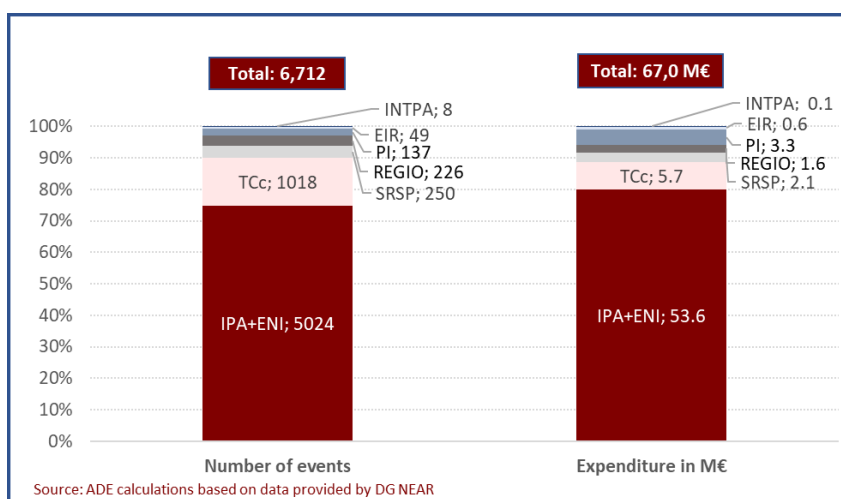
TAIEX events concentrated on three groups of themes: (i) justice, freedom and security; (ii) environment and food safety; (iii), veterinary and phytosanitary policy (jointly 40% of expenditure).

1 Overall characteristics and evolution of TAIEX

In the 2015-2020 period, TAIEX organised 6,712 events, for a total of 67 M EURO¹. 75% of the events (5,024), or 80% of the expenditure, benefited Neighbourhood and Enlargement countries (NEAR); 15% of the events, corresponding to 9% of the expenditure, benefitted the TCc; while the remainder were organized in fulfilment of SLAs with other DGs or the FPI.

Other than those covering the NEAR countries, the largest TAIEX strand is the one that supports the TCc, which corresponds to 15% of the events and 9% of the budget.

Figure 1: Distribution of events and expenditure by strand, 2015-2020 period



TAIEX number of events and expenditure progressively and significantly decreased between 2015 and 2019 (respectively, -37% and -18%, corresponding to average annual decline rates of -11% and -5%). The decrease concerned mainly the IPA/ENI region and the TCc; while TAIEX PI and TAIEX REGIO exhibited less evident trends and TAIEX EIR and TAIEX SRSP exhibited a positive growth trend. (TAIEX INTPA was only introduced in 2020.)

In the same period, the number of events exhibited a steeper decline than the expenditure, evidencing a trend towards an increase in the average cost of events².

The decline in the number of events largely reflects a decline in the number of applications (-12.5% per year on average in the 2015-2020 period) – which concerns mainly the IPA-ENI region.³ Application acceptance rates also showed a tendency to decline, though to a much smaller extent. (Note: the applications acceptance rate in the period was 74.7%.)

¹ This concerns direct costs of events only and does not include overhead expenses.

² The average cost of each type of event seems to have increased in time up to 2019 for all type of events; the trend also continued in 2020 with the exception of workshops, whose average price significantly dropped in 2020 – likely due to the fact that, in consequence of the COVID 19 pandemics, they were mostly organized online.

³ Findings on the reasons behind this decline are presented under EQ1 (JC 1.4).

Figure 2: Evolution in the number of TAIEX applications submitted

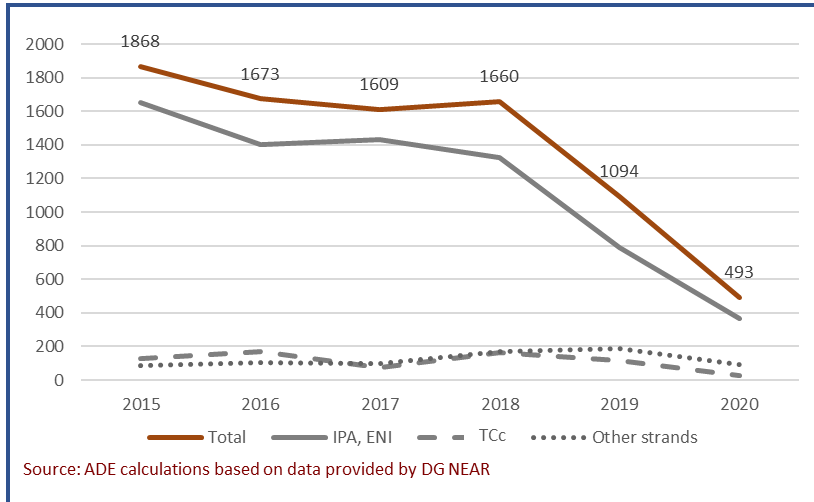
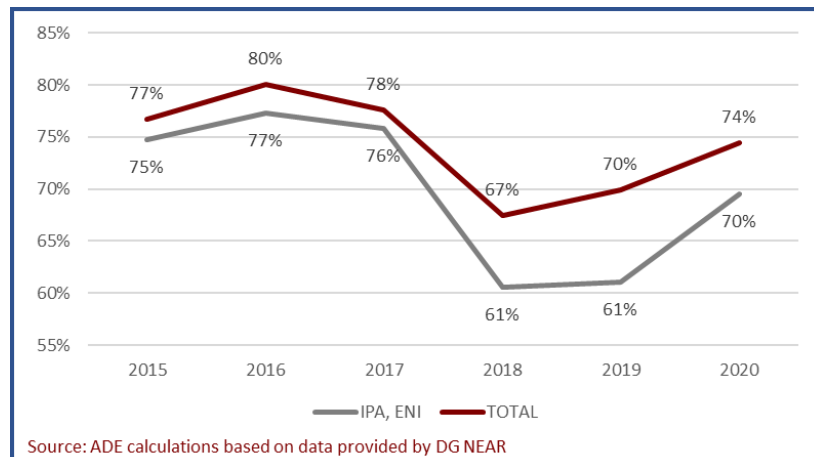


Figure 3: Evolution in the application acceptance rate – overall and for IPA-ENI strands



In 2020 all TAIEX strands experienced a steep drop (71% in terms of expenditures and 64% in terms of events), which is mainly attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. This drop affected all pre-existing strands, albeit to different extents.

Figure 4: Number of events and expenditure, total and detail of largest strands IPA+ENI and TCC

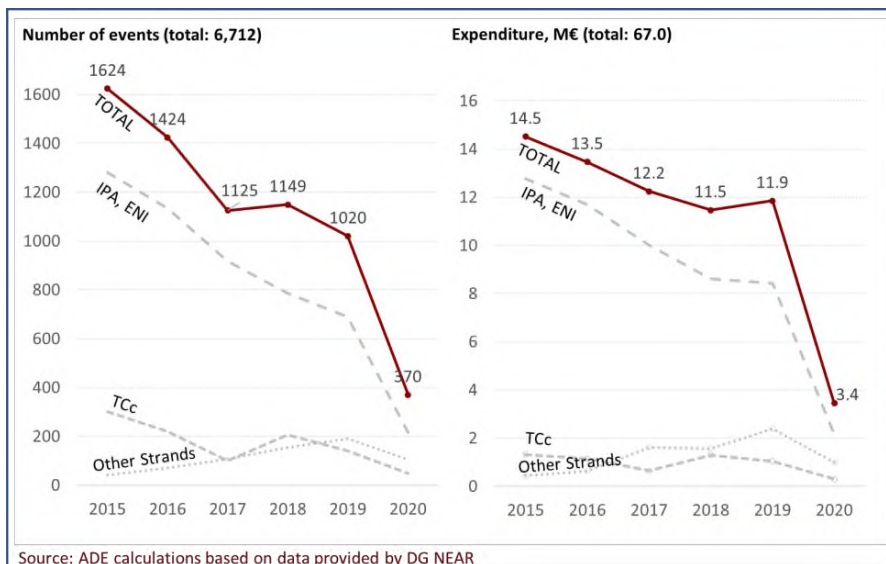
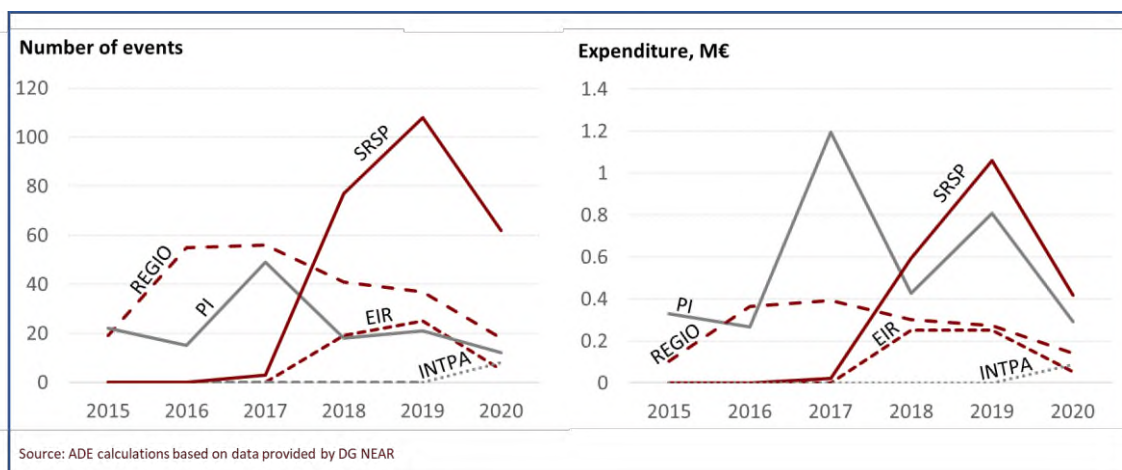


Figure 5: Number of events and expenditure, detail of smaller strands (REGIO, SRSP, EIR, PI, INTPA)



Across all strands, expenditures were below the budget for the period; the number of events organized also appears to have been significantly below expectations. The COVID-19 pandemic presumably contributed to this; however, the difference between budget and expenditure/events is too large for this to be the only justification⁴.

⁴ All budget periods ended in July 2020; thus, only the last five months should have been affected by the pandemics.

Table 1: Comparison between budget and expenditures for each TAIEX strand

Region	TAIEX strand	Budget, EUR M (period August 2016-July 2020)*	Expenditure in % of budget (period August 2016-July 2020)	Target number of events per year, according to SLAs signed in 2020	Average number of events per year (2015-2020, full years of operation only; % comparison is to 2020 target)***
NEAR	IPA-ENI	36,2	54%	n.a.	137**
	ENI South	10,1	63%	n.a.	220**
	ENI North	9,8	85%	n.a.	657**
Northern Cyprus	TCc	5,6	63%	160	203 (126%)
EU	REGIO	2,1	58%	70	38 (54%)
	SRSP	2,8	68%	100	81 (81%)
	EIR	0,65	77%	35	11 (31%)
RoW	PI	3,5	79%	35	21 (60%)
	INTPA	0,2	16%	35	8 (23%)

* Note: some strands started activities significantly later than August 2016.

** Some multi-country events often involve countries from multiple strands within the NEAR region and are thus different to attribute to a specific strand. For the purpose of this table, multi-country events have been attributed proportionally to the distribution of single-country events.

*** % comparisons reported in parenthesis are not formally accurate as the two numbers compared refer to different periods. Nonetheless, the percentage should give an idea of achieved events vs. ambitions.

Source: ADE analysis, based on NEAR data and TAIEX SLAs signed in 2020.

2 Allocations by type of event

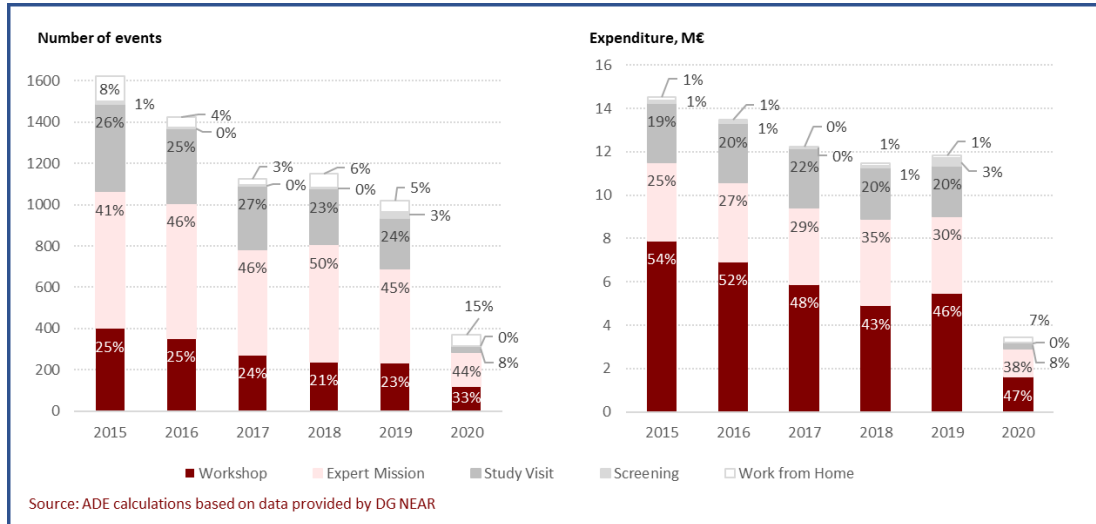
Five types of events were organized in the 2015-2020 period, with a strong focus on expert missions, study visits and workshops. Up to 2020, all types of events (expert missions, study visits, workshops, work-from-home assignments, and screening) were organized in person; starting with April 2020, in consequence of the COVID-19 pandemics, most events were organized online.

Expert missions were by far the most frequent events (45%), followed by study visits (24%) and workshops (24%). Workshops accounted for 49% of the total expenditure, with expert missions and study visits accounting for 29% and 20% respectively.⁵

The distribution of events per type remained approximately constant between 2015 and 2019. In 2020, the share of work-from-home assignments and (remote) workshops significantly increased (in terms of number) while the share of study visits drastically fell; and no screening event was organized. The drop in the average cost of workshops (due to the use of the online medium) compensated for the (relative) increase in their number; resulting in the share of expenditure in workshops remaining approximately constant.

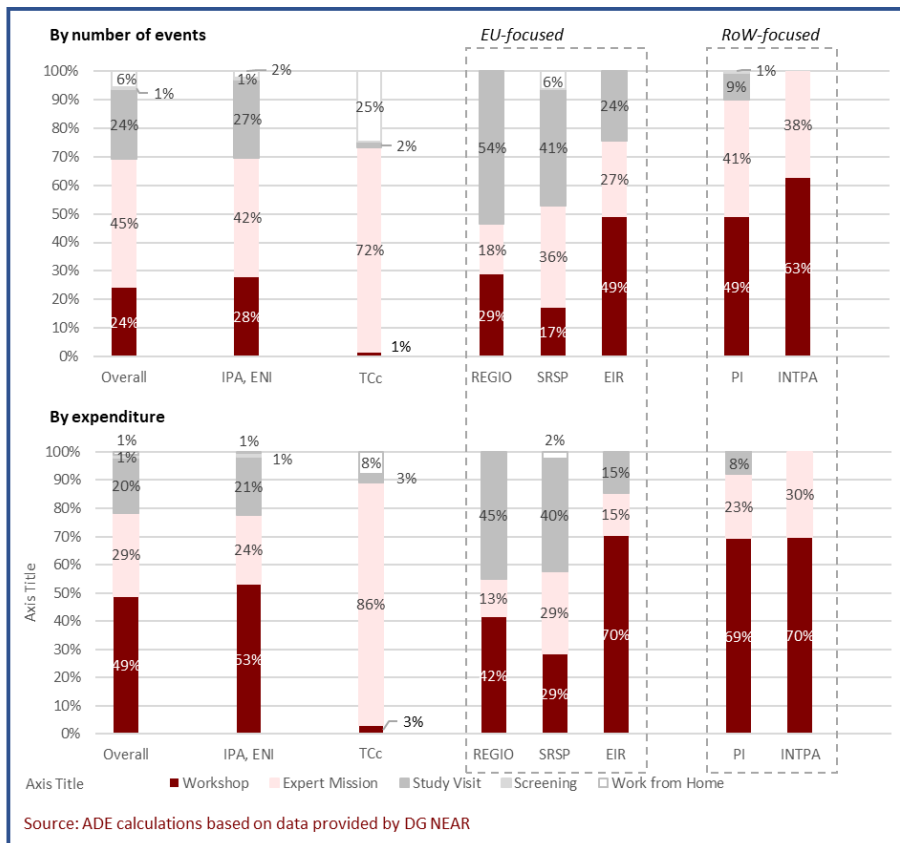
⁵ Work from home and screening events accounted respectively for 6% and 1% of the total number of events, and 1% each in terms of the total expenditure.

Figure 6: Evolution of number of events and expenditures by type of event, 2015-2020



The type of events predominantly funded varied across different TAIEX strands. Workshops were by far used most within TAIEX PI, TAIEX INTPA and TAIEX EIR; while TAIEX REGIO and TAIEX SRSP appear to have a preference for study visits.

Figure 7: Allocation of events and expenditure by type of event within different TAIEX strands



The average cost of all types of events increased quite steadily throughout the 2015-2019 period, except for screening events, which experienced an erratic trend. In 2020, the average cost of workshops dropped substantially (due to the lower cost of organizing them online, as it was done since April 2020 in consequence of the COVID 19 pandemic); while the tendency to increase continued for all other types of events. Most notably, the average cost of work-from-home assignments jumped 1.6 times in 2020 with respect to 2019.

Figure 8: Evolution of Average Expenditure and Number of Participants per Event 2015-2020

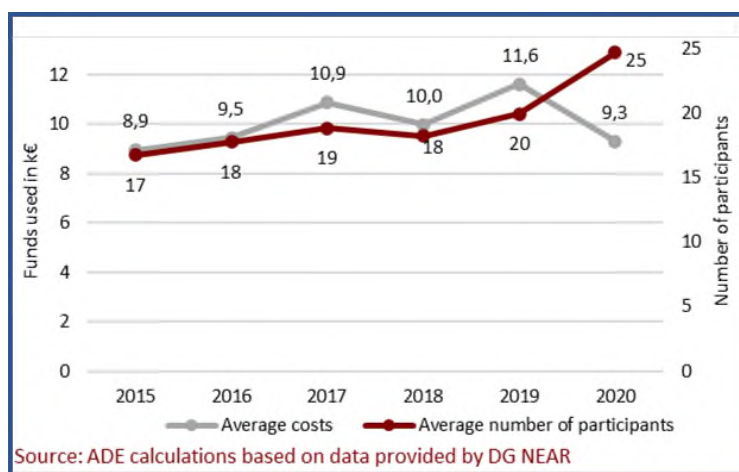


Table 2: Average cost and characteristics of individual TAIEX single events, per type

Type of event	2015-2020 period			2020 only			Average annual increase in cost in the 2015-19 period (CAGR)
	Average cost (EUR)	Average number of participants	Average number of days	Average cost (EUR)	Average number of participants	Average number of days	
Workshop	20,203	49	2	13,355	54	2	4.8%
Study Visit	8,001	3	3	9,082	4	3	10.0%
Expert Mission	6,512	12	4	7,978	15	5	9.1%
Screening	13,465	52	2	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1.7%
Work from Home	2,038	n.m.	68 ⁶	4,417	n.m.	37 ⁷	24.1%

Source: ADE calculations based on data provided by DG NEAR

The average cost of organizing events also varied significantly across different TAIEX strands. The costs for all events are for instance much higher in PI than in the other regions. Work from how assignments are much more expensive in SRSP than in TCc. In some cases, differences appear easy to explain (e.g. higher costs of events within the PI strand are likely due to higher transportation costs) while others are less straightforward (e.g. differences in the cost of work-from-home assignments).

Table 3: Average cost of individual events, per type of event and across different TAIEX strands (2015-2020 period)

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

⁶ The number of days for work from home events captures the number of days that elapsed from the start of the contract until the submission of the deliverables by the involved experts. It does not reflect the number of working days of experts the experts. The maximum number of working days for work from home is 20 days.

⁷ See footnote above.

IPA, ENI	20,359	8,053	6,252	13,465	2,515
REGIO P2P	10,105	5,868	5,240	-	-
TCC	12,638	9,698	6,738	-	1,747
PI	34,362	19,617	13,463	-	6,041 ⁸
EIR P2P	16,258	6,701	6,436	-	-
SRSP P2P	13,885	8,182	6,870	-	3,040
INTPA	12,393	-	8,860	-	-

Source: ADE calculations based on data provided by DG NEAR

3 TAIEX “Classic” vs TAIEX “Strategic” and other programmatic approaches

Throughout the years, the use of the “TAIEX Classic” on-demand, “gap-filling” approach has decreased significantly both in relative and absolute terms – to the point that “Classic” events currently only represent about half of the total; while the use of alternative approaches has picked up.

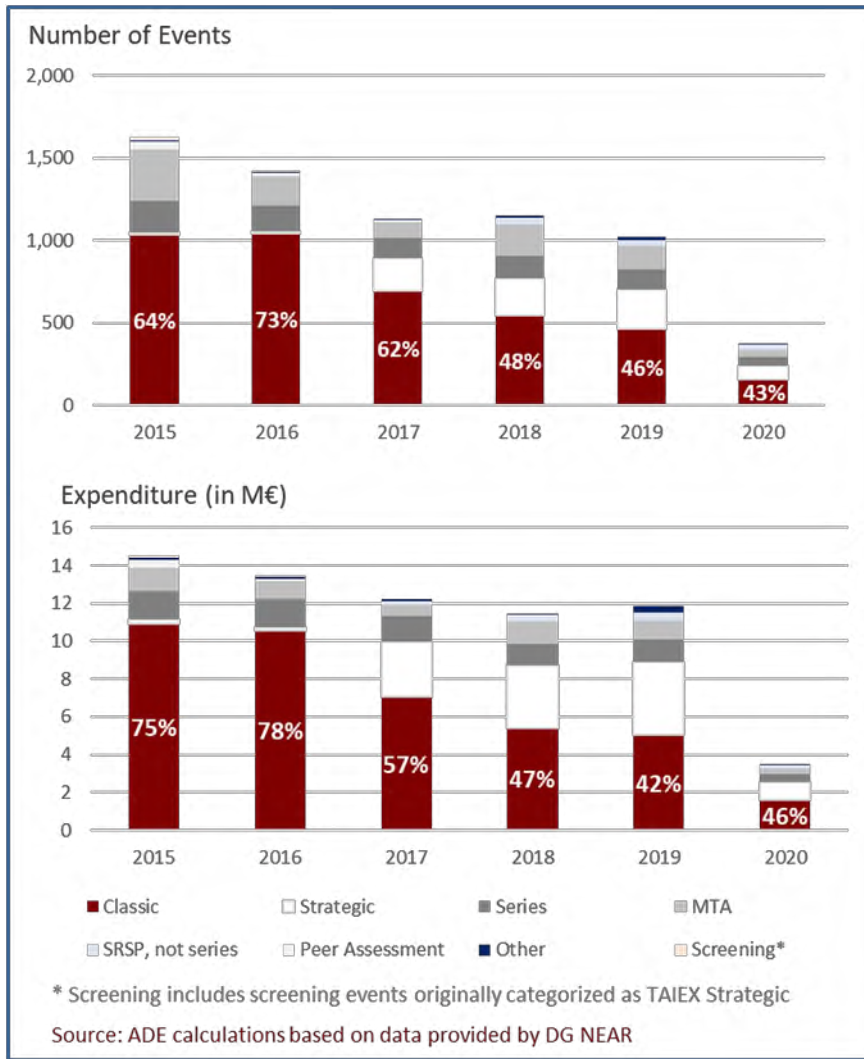
TAIEX was indeed originally conceived as a beneficiary demand-driven instrument only. Also, it was meant to provide a timely and flexible response to emerging specific training and know-how transfer needs, that could not be effectively addressed through other programmes due to their limited scope and/or need for quick mobilization.⁹ However, in time other approaches to using TAIEX emerged – either more programmatic in nature, or oriented towards a more proactive use of the instrument towards the achievement of EU priorities. These approaches include:

- The use of “series” of events. These consist in a sequence of several events, which are requested jointly – in a single application – by the beneficiary; all events are aimed at pursuing steps towards a single objective.
- The use of the instrument for organizing “peer assessment” and “screening” events. These are aimed at assessing the status of a country compared to the acquis; in the case of “peer assessment”, they are conducted by public sector experts (as such, they are considered a special type of expert missions); while screening events are conducted by the EU Commission.
- The “MTA” (Medium Term Assistance) approach: within the TCC, TAIEX assistance is structured in 3-year plans, under which experts are involved for extended periods of time (up to 60 days per year), allowing for a more stable presence (even through homework and distance interaction). Single events are guided by sectoral Project Action Plans, which are developed jointly by TAIEX experts and beneficiaries during an initial appraisal mission.
- TAIEX SRSP: TAIEX SRSP designs events in alignment with structural reform projects, of which they are considered components. The overall reform projects are requested and agreed upon with EU MS; however, TAIEX applications are usually compiled and submitted by EC officers in charge of those projects. Often, TAIEX SRSP projects are articulated in series.
- Last, in 2017 “TAIEX Strategic” was launched. As opposed to “TAIEX Classic”, which can only be requested by beneficiaries, “TAIEX Strategic” allows the organization of events upon request of EC services or the EEAS, when this is considered relevant to beneficiaries.

⁸ Only one event in the sample.

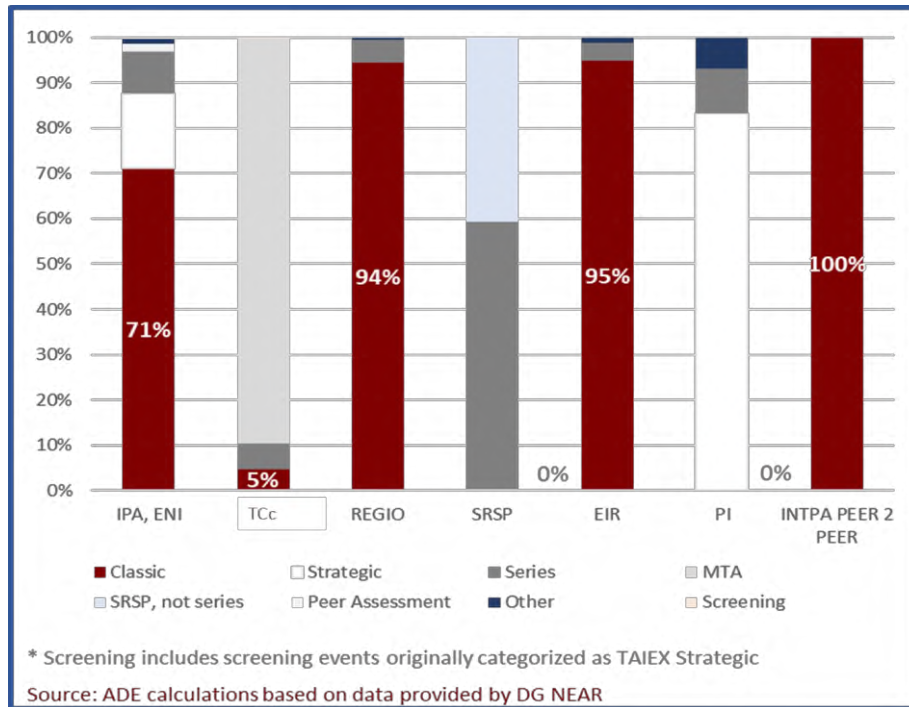
⁹ Review of TAIEX documentation and previous evaluation.

Figure 9: Evolution of TAIEX in the 2015-2020 period, by approach adopted (Classic or Programmatic)



Some strands continue however to show a strong preference towards the use of the “classic” approach. Programmatic approaches are most widely used within the DG REFORM strands (TCC and SRSP), where they are almost universally adopted by design, as well as, to a lesser extent, within IPA-ENI.

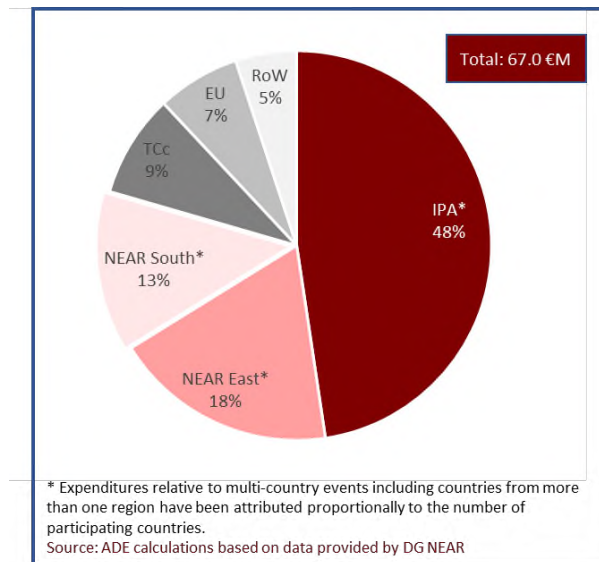
Figure 10: Distribution of TAIEX events by classic/programmatic approach, by strand (Percentage of the total number of events organized under each strand) 2018-2020 only



4 Allocations by geographic region

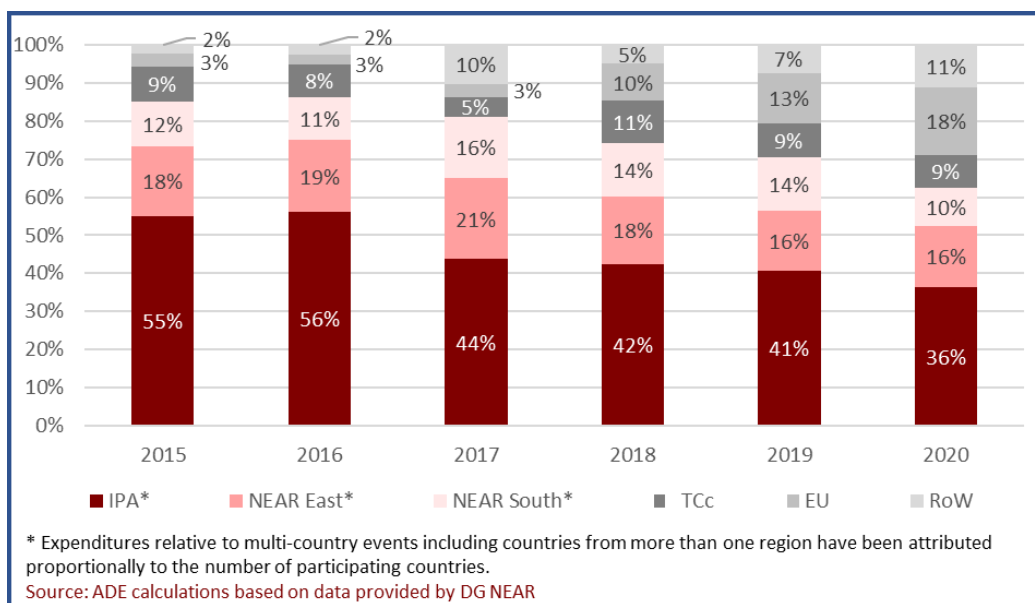
The main recipients of TAIEX funds in the 2015-2020 were enlargement countries (48%), followed by East and South Neighbourhood countries (19% and 13% respectively) and the TCc (9%).

Figure 11: Distribution of TAIEX expenditure by geographic region, 2015-2020



However, the relative weight became more evenly spread with time. Since the signature of SLAs with other DGs, an increasing share of TAIEX funding has been devoted to other geographies (EU countries and the rest of the world).

Figure 12: Evolution of distribution of TAIEX’s expenditure by geographic region, 2015-2020
Percentage of total expenditure of each strand

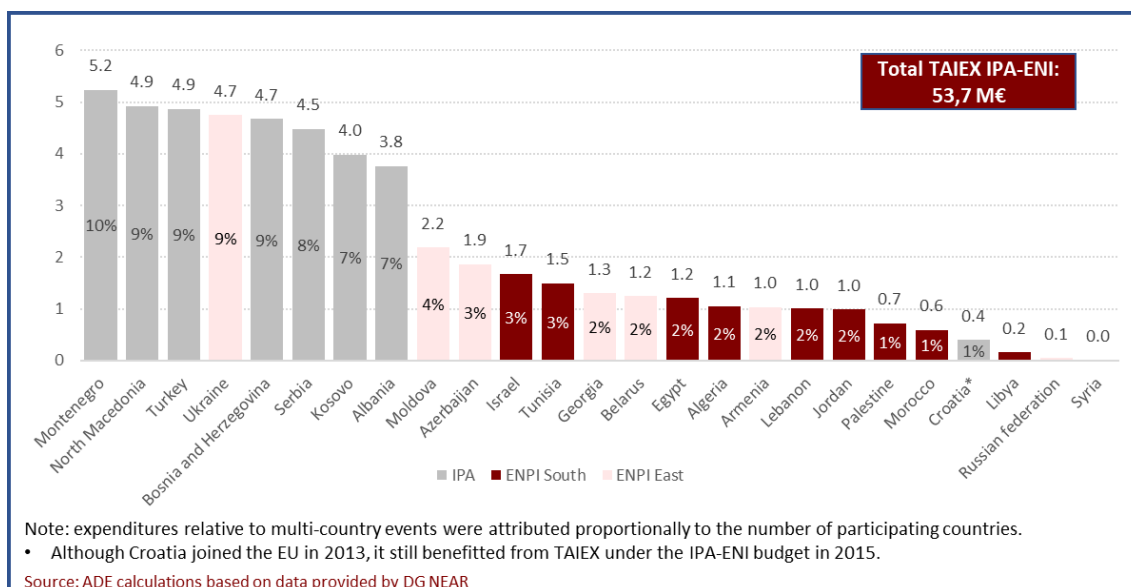


5 Top recipient countries, by region

NEAR region

Enlargement countries were the main beneficiaries of TAIEX IPA-ENI in the 2015-2020 period (with the exception of Ukraine, which was the fourth largest beneficiary).

Figure 13: TAIEX expenditure in the NEAR region, by country (€M)

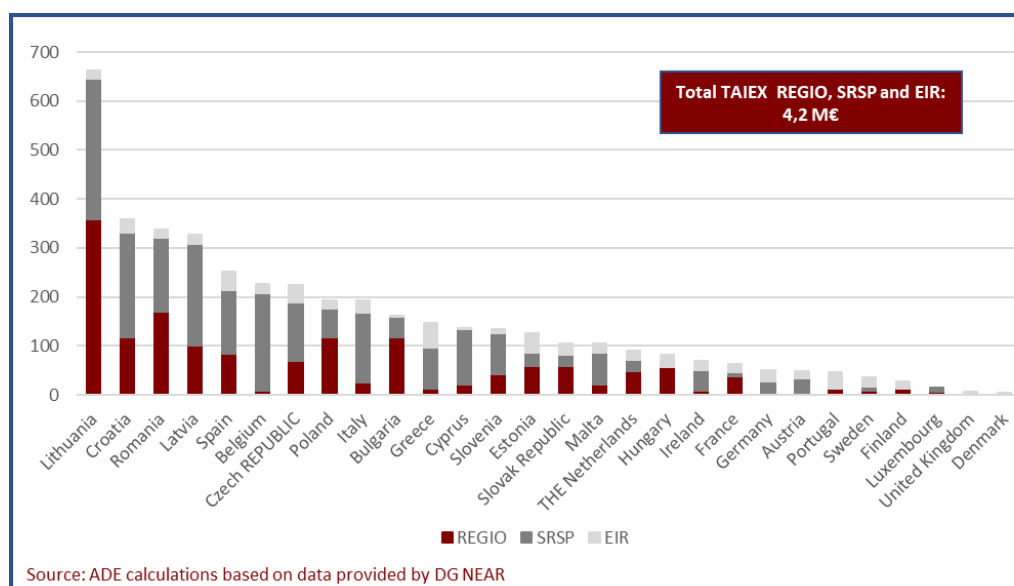


EU Region

All EU Member States were beneficiary of some TAIEX events. Most of them were beneficiaries of all the three strands operating in the region (TAIEX REGIO P2P, TAIEX SRSP P2P and TAIEX EIR P2P); exceptions were Denmark, Hungary, Portugal, Luxemburg, Finland, and the UK.

The EU MS which benefitted the most from TAIEX was by far Lithuania. It accounted for 16% of expenditure in the region.

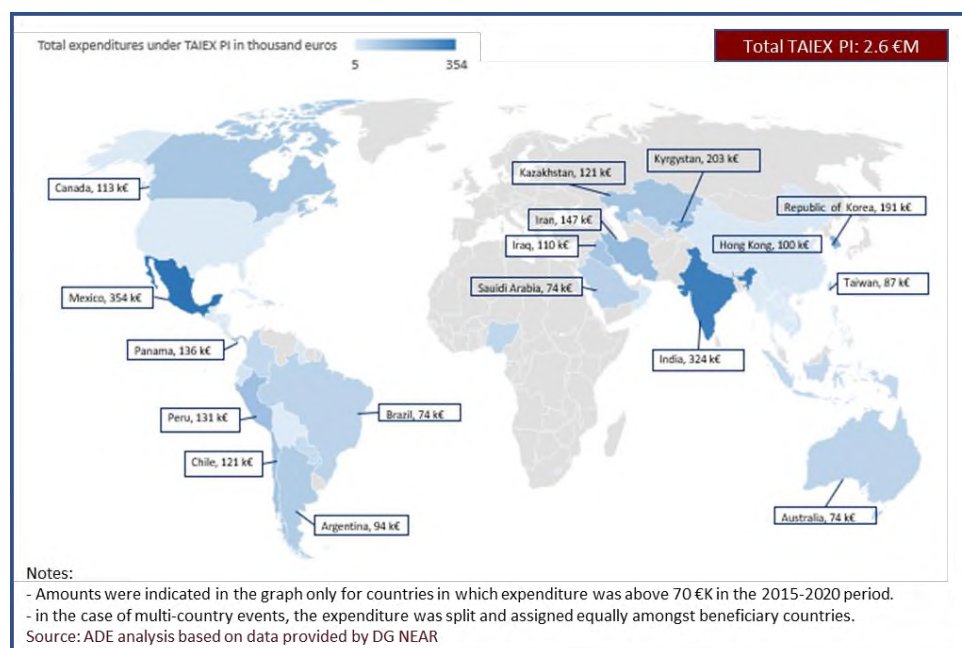
Figure 14: TAIEX expenditure in the EU region, by country (€M)



Rest of the world

Within TAIEX PI, the largest share of funds in the 2015-2020 period was spent in the Latin American region, followed by Asia-Pacific. The countries which received the largest amounts were Mexico, India, Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Korea.

Figure 15: Expenditures by country under TAIEX PI



TAIEX INTPA was only launched in 2020, and only 8 events were organized in that year (corresponding to € 88,545). Beneficiary countries were the Dominican Republic, Uzbekistan, Honduras, Cape Verde, Jamaica and Uganda. It is worth noting that Dominican Republic, Uzbekistan and Honduras were also beneficiaries of TAIEX PI in the 2015-2020 period, while the latter three countries were not.

Box 1 : Note on multi-country events

6.4% of events (429 events) benefited more than one country; these events represent 18.2% of the total expenditure.

Multi-country events were for the main part workshops: 23% of workshops have been organized in this form, representing 86% of the total sample of multi-country events and 93% in terms of expenditure; in addition, the large majority of screening events have been organized in this form (40 out of 50 screening events present in the sample). A few work-from-home assignments, study visits and expert missions have also been organized as multi-country, though it appears to be rather exceptional.

Among TAIEX strands, TAIEX EIR seems to have the stronger preference for multi-country events, with 32.7% of its events in the 2015-2020 period organized in this form (corresponding to 47.2% of its expenditure).

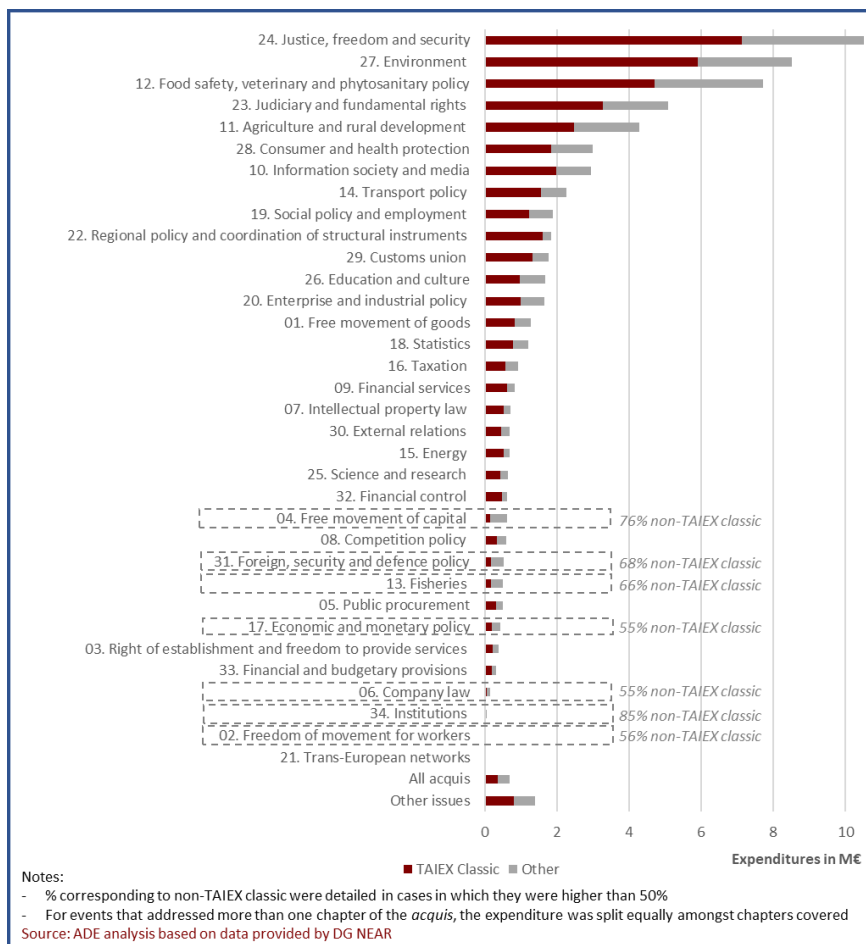
Source: ADE analysis based on data provided by DG NEAR

6 Allocation by thematic area/sub area

TAIEX events concentrated on a few of the 34 chapters of the *acquis*. In particular, chapters 24 (Justice, freedom and security), 27 (Environment) and 12 (Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy) jointly account for 40% of the expenditure in the 2015-2020 period.

For some of the less covered chapters, a quite significant percentage of events were organized through approaches other than TAIEX Classic. The issue will be investigated further in the subsequent phases of the project.

Figure 16: TAIEX expenditure by EU Acquis Chapter covered



ANNEX 3: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES AND RESULTS

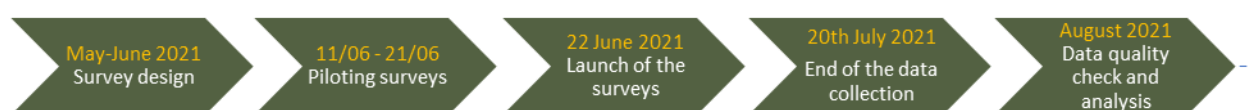
Altogether, two rounds of surveys were conducted as part of this evaluation.

The **first round** of surveys was conducted during the interim phase of this evaluation and included two surveys targeting the stakeholders' groups below:

1. **TAIEX participants:** This group includes all people that took part in a TAIEX event included in the case studies as beneficiaries. Interpreters as well as VLC attendees are not included.
2. **TAIEX experts:** This group includes all people that were registered in the Experts' Database and that took part as experts in at least one TAIEX event included in the case studies.

The survey questions were formulated based on the judgement criteria and indicators and built on the interviews conducted as part of the interim phase.

Figure 17: Phasing of Surveys (First Round)



Source: ADE

The surveys of the first round were launched on the 22nd of June 2021 using the EU Survey Platform. The survey for experts remained open until the 14th of July while that of beneficiaries until the 20th of July. A detailed phasing of the surveys is shown in Figure 17 above. Both surveys were published in English, French and Spanish. The survey for TAIEX participants was also published in Turkish. All survey questionnaires were distributed by ADE, through the EU Survey platform.

The **second round** of surveys took place during the synthesis phase of the evaluation and included four different surveys addressed to stakeholders from different strands:

1. TAIEX IPA, ENI East & ENI South:
 - TAIEX National Contact Points:
 - EU Delegation TAIEX Focal Points:
2. TAIEX PI:
 - Applicants
3. TAIEX INTPA:
 - TAIEX Applicants (National Authorities)
 - DG INTPA contact points in EU Delegations
4. TAIEX EIR:
 - EIR National Contact Points:

The four surveys had most of their questions in common but exhibited some variation to account for strand specific characteristics. The survey questions were designed to test hypotheses, address remaining gaps and triangulate findings from the interim phase.

Figure 18: Phasing of Surveys (Second Round)



Source: ADE

The second round of the surveys was launched on the 11th of January 2022 and remained open until the 23rd. Two reminders were sent. A detailed phasing of the surveys is shown in Figure 18 above. The surveys were published in English and were distributed by ADE, through the EU Survey platform.

1 Communication Strategy

A high level of participation by all groups and sub-groups of targeted stakeholders was necessary to allow for a robust analysis— particularly for the first round of the survey. For this to happen, the following actions were put in place:

1. Emphasis was put to ensure that surveys are as short, simple and concise as possible.
2. Explicit assessment of data quality-quantity trade-off (amount, complexity and type of questions) was made.
3. Complex skipping patterns ensuring relevance to specific stakeholder categories were used.
4. A pilot test was done to assess clarity and accessibility of surveys.
5. The EU Survey tool was used for all surveys. The tool is user friendly, mobile usable and complies with the GDPR requirements of the European Union. We do not think that this challenged the independence of the evaluation: it has been made very clear to respondents that this is not an EU survey but an independent one and that all responses will be treated anonymously.
6. Stakeholders were notified in advance of the official launch of the survey:
 - a. DG NEAR C3 and representatives of DGs which have SLAs in place with TAIEX were asked to inform all relevant stakeholders about the evaluation and surveys through an email prior to the launch. They were also encouraged to share about them in any interaction they may have with the targeted stakeholders.
 - b. Targeted stakeholders contacted for interviews and FGDs were encouraged to respond and share about the surveys with their colleagues.
 - c. Information on the surveys was included in the briefing note that is shared with all interviewees.
7. The letter of support provided by DG NEAR was sent to survey addressees along with the invitation to complete the survey.
8. The Surveys (first round) were translated in French and Spanish to facilitate the participation of relevant stakeholders. The Survey for Participants was also translated in Turkish.
9. Stakeholders received the surveys through a personalized email via the EU Survey Platform.
10. Reminders were regularly sent to stakeholders: A total of three reminders were sent to experts and four to beneficiaries, for the first round of surveys. In the second round a total of two reminders were sent to all stakeholders.

2 Response Rate and Sample Representativeness (first and second round)

The surveys achieved a sufficiently high response, allowing the acquisition of a representative sample as indicated by a comparison of key population and sample variables.¹⁰ The table below summarizes the responses received and provides key information for each of the surveys conducted.

¹⁰ Details on the representativeness of the sample are provided separately for each survey in the following sections of this annex.

Table 4: Response rate to first round of survey, by type of participant.

ID	Target Group	Total number of invitations sent	Total number of responses	Total number of undelivered	Response rate	Remarks
1	TAIEX Participants	1884	335	247	20,5%	ADE invited the stakeholders and conducted the follow-up. The survey was available in English, French, Spanish and Turkish.
2	TAIEX Experts	297	129	18	46,2%	ADE invited the stakeholders and conducted the follow-up. The survey was available in English, French and Spanish.
3	TAIEX NCPs	44	16	0	36,3%	ADE invited the stakeholders and conducted the follow-up. The survey was available in English.
4	EUDEL TAIEX Focal Points	25	18	0	72%	
5	PI Applicants	19	6	1	33,3%	
6	INTPA NA Applicants	23	1	0	4,4%	
7	INTPA TAIEX Contact Points	18	6	1	35,3%	
8	TAIEX EIR Contact points	53	6	2	11.8%	

Source: ADE survey

For TAIEX participants, the breakdown by strands is provided in the table below. Responses are indicated separately for strands that had both a classic and a strategic component. The response rate for TAIEX ENI South and TAIEX PI were amongst the lowest mainly due to what appears to be a problematic registration of participants' email addresses under these strands.

Table 5: Response rate to first round of survey, by strand.

TAIEX STRAND	Total number of invitations sent	Total number of responses	Total number of undelivered	Response rate
IPA Classic	731	158	60	23.5%
IPA Strategic	82	18	11	25.4%
ENI EAST Classic	116	24	23	25.8%
ENI EAST Strategic	133	21	41	22.8%
ENI SOUTH Classic	130	13	12	11.0%
ENI SOUTH Strategic	110	10	21	11.2%
TCc	35	12	2	36.4%
REGIO	59	14	11	29.2%
SRSP	256	41	33	18.4%
EIR	21	4	3	22.2%
PI	137	12	22	10.4%
INTPA	74	8	8	12.1%
Total	1884	335	247	20.5%

Source: ADE survey

The respondents provided their answers to open questions in English, French, Spanish, Turkish, Croatian, and Bosnian. When deemed relevant, comments extracted from the surveys that were submitted in languages other than English, are presented throughout this report as translated in English by the Evaluation Team. A complete summary of the results of the different surveys are presented hereunder in sections 4.1. and 4.2. of this Annex. Selected findings are also systematically integrated in the body of the final report.

3 Expected Risks, Challenges, and Mitigation Strategies

The two main risks identified are a low response rate and biased responses:

1. Low response rate: A high response rate was necessary to allow for a meaningful analysis. A series of strategies and efforts were employed to raise awareness about the survey and motivate and facilitate participation. Tools included but were not limited to frequent reminders, translation of the survey in French, Spanish, and Turkish, a differentiated communication strategy for each stakeholder, a user and mobile friendly survey platform.

2. Biased responses: Different sub-groups for each targeted stakeholder may have different perceptions of TAIEX and their insufficient identification and targeting may result in a biased analysis (for example, participants from different years, different types of institutions, different types of events may have different views of the Instrument). To address this concern, the evaluation team proceeded with the identification of potential sub-groups among the targeted stakeholders, employed differentiated communication strategies to each sub-group and asked questions to enable the systematic identification of each sub-group.

4 First Round of Surveys

Responses to the survey for experts

This survey targeted experts that contributed to TAIEX events included in the case studies sample. 359 contributions were made by experts to the events selected for the case studies. This number does not equal to the total number of TAIEX experts, as it appears that many experts contributed several times to TAIEX events. The total number of experts that participated in the case studies events is represented by the 297 addresses collected through the TMS database, with the support of the TAIEX technical team. The link of the survey was sent to these addresses. 18 of these emails were followed by a delivery failure message. The experts appeared to have left their institution or have changed email addresses. A total of 129 responses were received for this survey, leading to an estimated response rate of 46%.

Remarks:

- The number of respondents varies across questions, as sometimes no answer was provided by a respondent in relation to a specific item. Depending on the answers to previous questions, certain questions were hidden, to prevent confusion, if the experts had stated that they had not experienced the aspect addressed by these questions.
- Percentages may not add up to a 100% in some questions whereby, multiple responses were possible.
- All figures in tables have been rounded to one decimal place and all figures in graphs to the nearest unit.

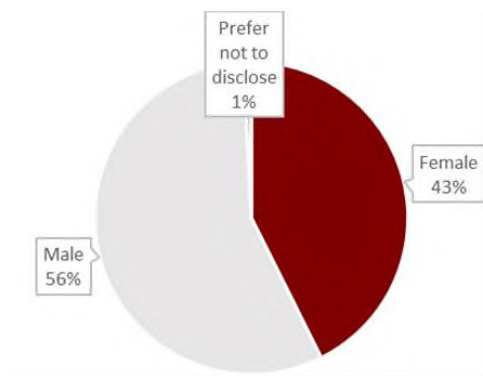
The respondents provided their answers to open questions in French and English. When deemed relevant, comments extracted from the surveys that were submitted in languages other than English, are presented throughout this report as translated in English by the Evaluation Team.

Section B – General Information about yourself

B3. Gender of respondents

A total of 129 of responses were considered for this question.

Figure 19: Gender of respondents



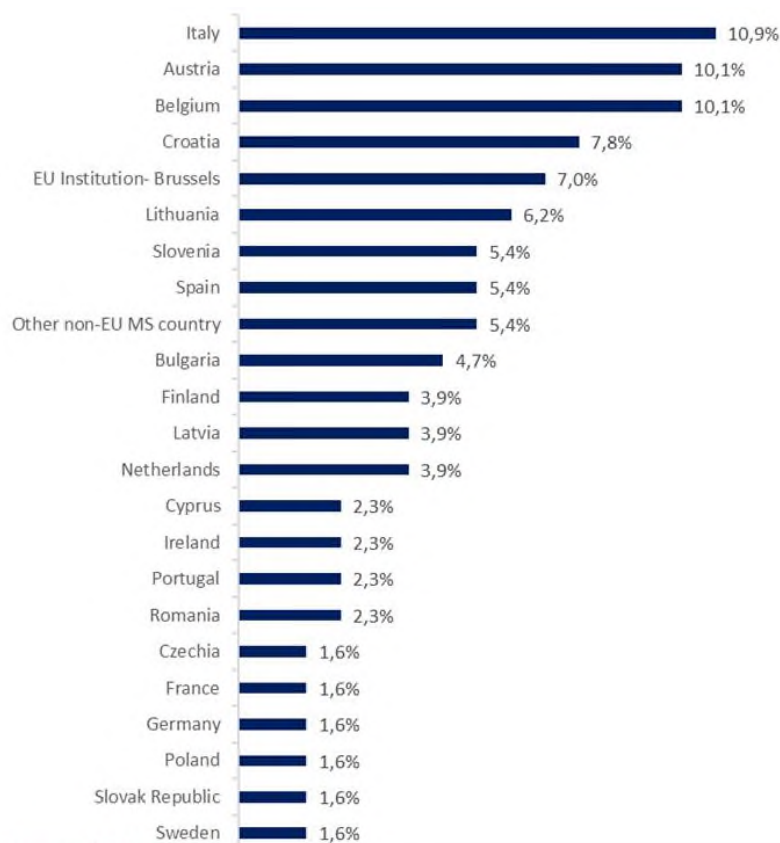
Source: ADE Survey

B6. Country of the institution that respondents represent in TAIEX events

A total of 138 of responses were considered for this question.

In addition to the countries listed in the graph below, there was one respondent from each of the following countries: Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Malta, Hungary, Luxembourg.

Figure 20: Country of the institution that respondents represent in TAIEX events

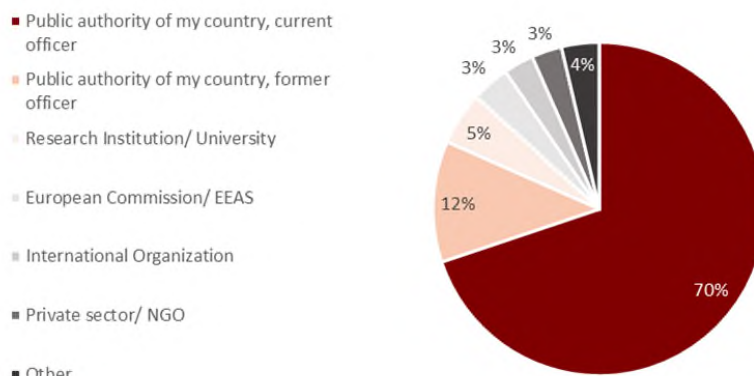


Source: ADE Survey

B7. Type of institution you represented/ worked for at the time of your participation as an expert in TAIEX events

A total of 136 of responses were considered for this question.

Figure 21: Type of institution participants represented/ worked for at the time of your participation as an expert in TAIEX events

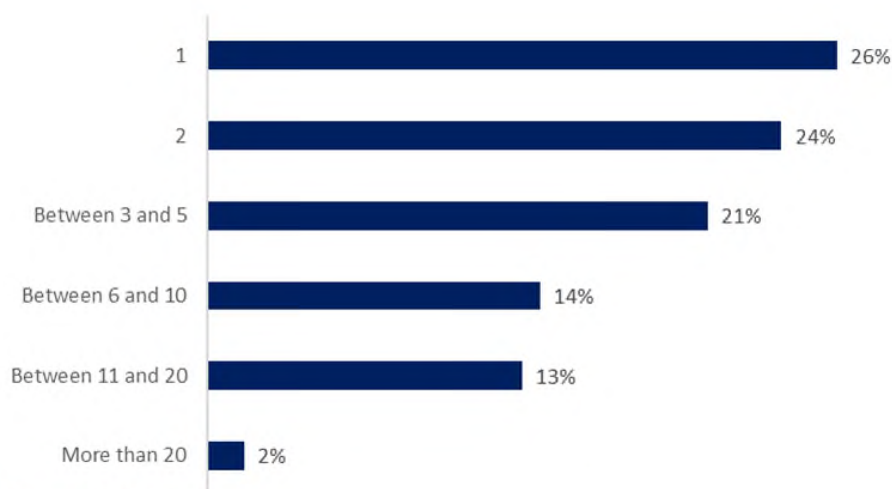


Source: ADE Survey

B8. As you recall it, how many TAIEX events have you taken part as an expert in the 2015-2020 period?

A total of 129 of responses were considered for this question.

Figure 22: Number of events that respondents attended as experts in the 2015-2020 period

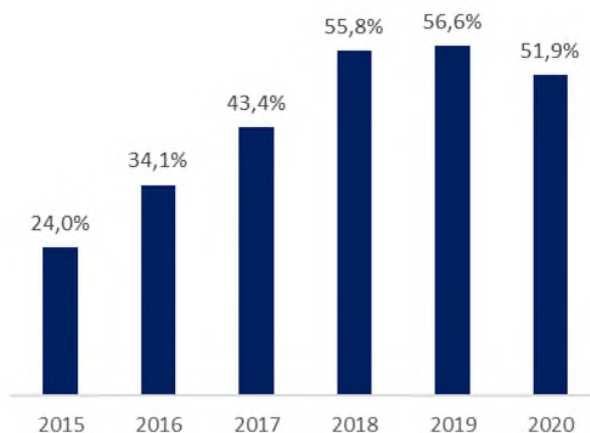


Source: ADE Survey

B9. In which year(s) did the events in which you took part as an expert take place?

A total of 343 of responses were considered for this question.

Figure 23: Years of events respondents participated in as experts

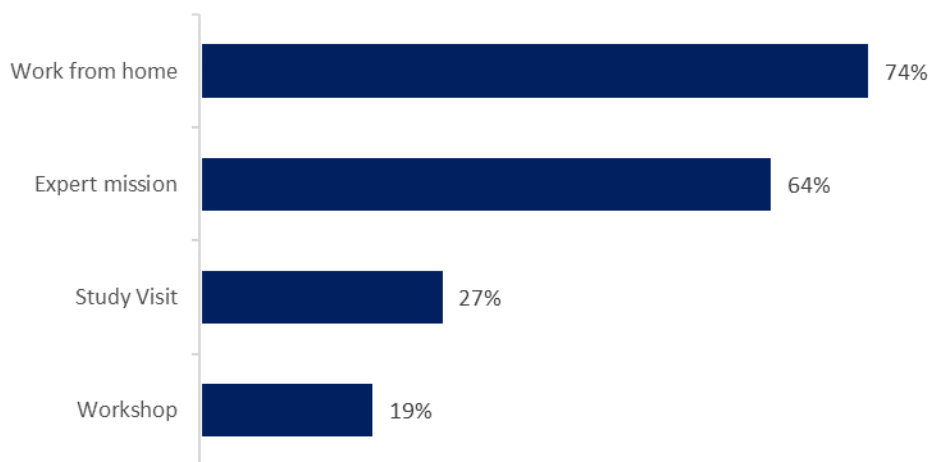


Source: ADE Survey

B10. In what types of TAIEX events have you provided expertise in?

A total of 238 of responses were considered for this question. Respondents could select more than one type of event.

Figure 24: Types of TAIEX events respondents participated in

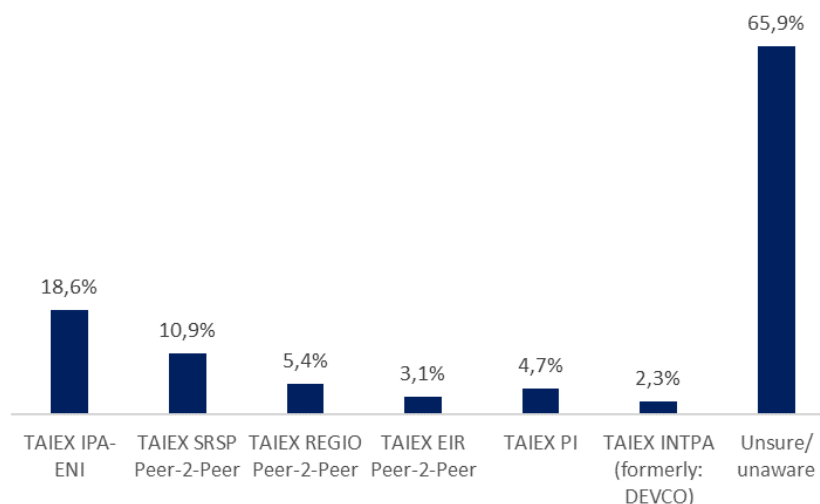


Source: ADE Survey

B11. For which TAIEX strands (sub-instrument) have you provided expertise for?

A total of 143 of responses were considered for this question. Respondents could select more than one strand.

Figure 25: TAIEX strands in which the respondents were involved in

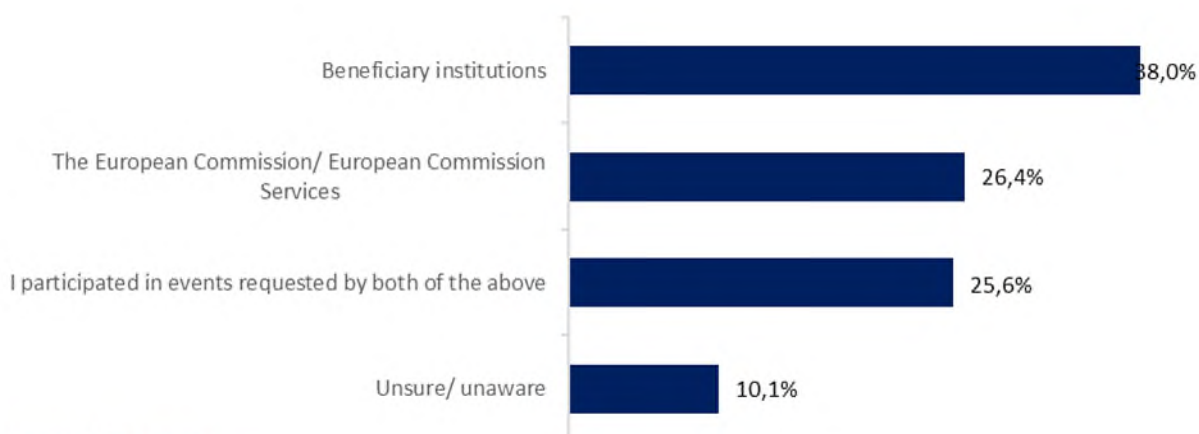


Source: ADE Survey

B12. What institution(s) requested the event(s) that you participated into as an expert?

A total of 129 of responses were considered for this question. Respondents could select more than one type of institution.

Figure 26: Type of institution(s) having requested the event(s) attended by the respondents

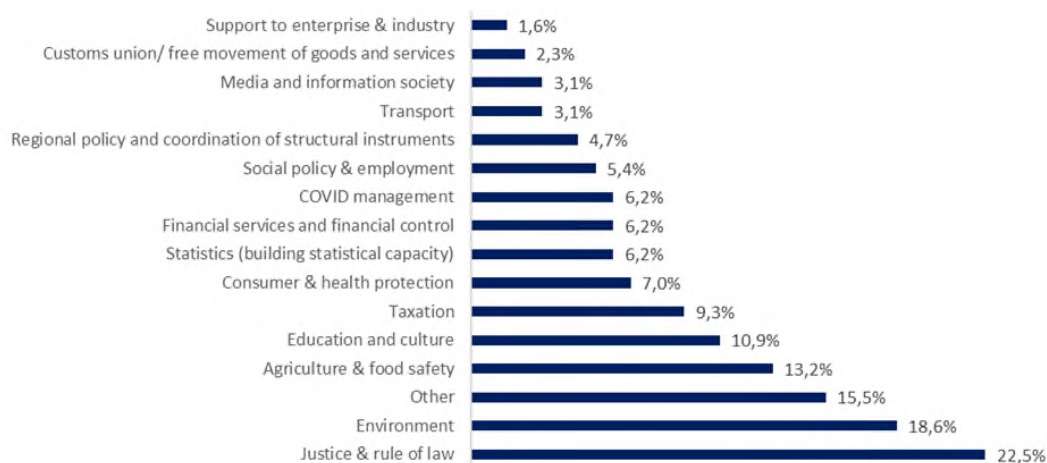


Source: ADE Survey

B13. What topics did you provide expertise on during the TAIEX events you participated in?

A total of 175 of responses were considered for this question. Respondents could select several topics.

Figure 27: Topics on which experts provided expertise



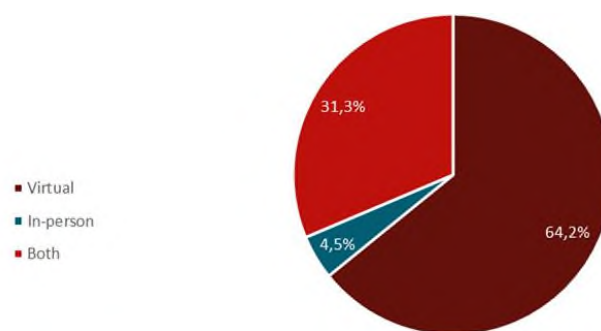
Source: ADE Survey

20 answers belong to the “other category”. Respondents that selected that option were asked to specify the topics they provided expertise on; the answers include various topics, including personal data protection firearms trafficking and databases, administrative capacity-building, radicalization, and migration. The topic “Energy” was proposed but did not receive any answer.

B14. Was/ were the event(s) you provided expertise in 2020 virtual or in-person?

A total of 67 of responses were considered for this question.

Figure 28: Nature of events respondents participated in, in 2020 (virtual, in-person, both)

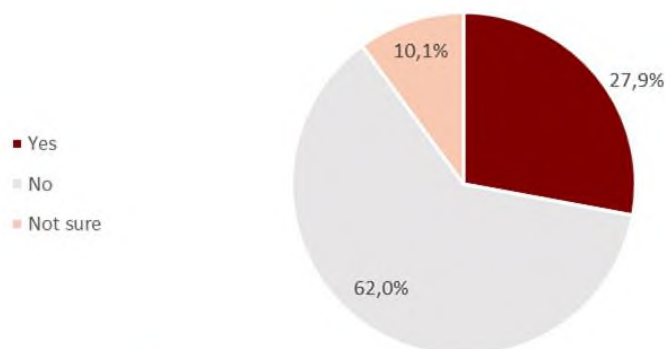


Source: ADE Survey

B15. Did you take part in any multi-country events (with more than one beneficiary country/ territory) in the 2015-2020 period?

A total of 129 of responses were considered for this question.

Figure 29: Percentage of respondents having participated in multi-country events in the 2015-2020 period

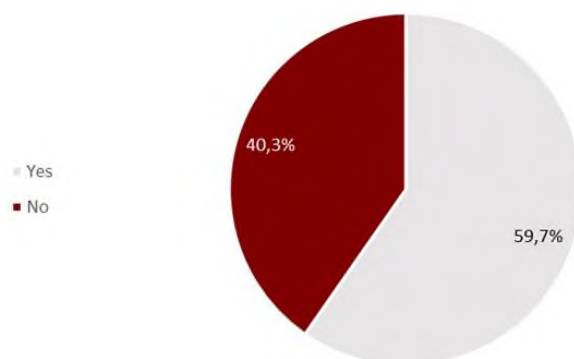


Source: ADE Survey

B16. Did you provide expertise to the same beneficiary institution in more than one event?

A total of 129 of responses were considered for this question.

Figure 30: Percentage of respondents having provided expertise more than once to the same beneficiary through TAIEX

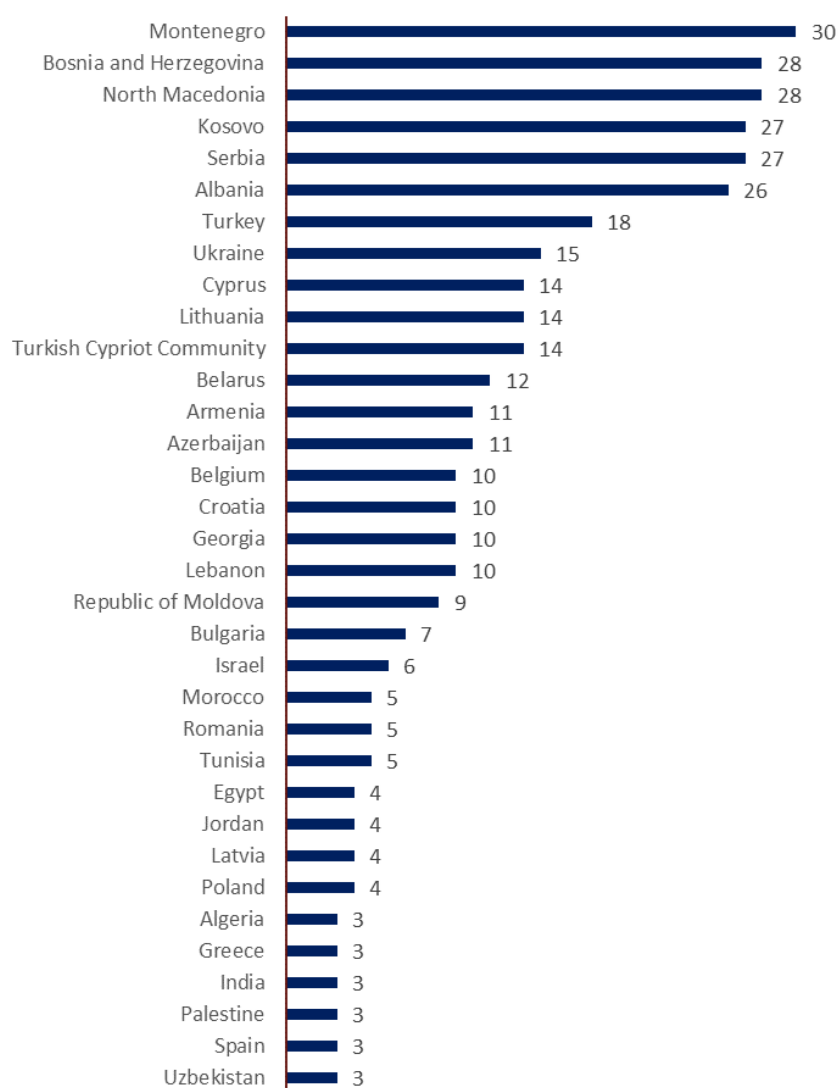


Source: ADE Survey

B17. Please list the beneficiary countries/ territories to which you provided expertise.

A total of 423 of answers were considered for this question. Beneficiary countries or territories where expertise was provided only once (Benin, Brazil, Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Czechia, Eritrea, Finland, Gabon, Iran, Italy, Lesotho, Malaysia, Monaco, Netherlands, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Senegal, Slovakia, United Kingdom) or twice (Austria, Dominican Republic, Hungary, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Slovenia) do not appear on the graph.

Figure 31: Beneficiary countries/ territories to which the respondents provided expertise



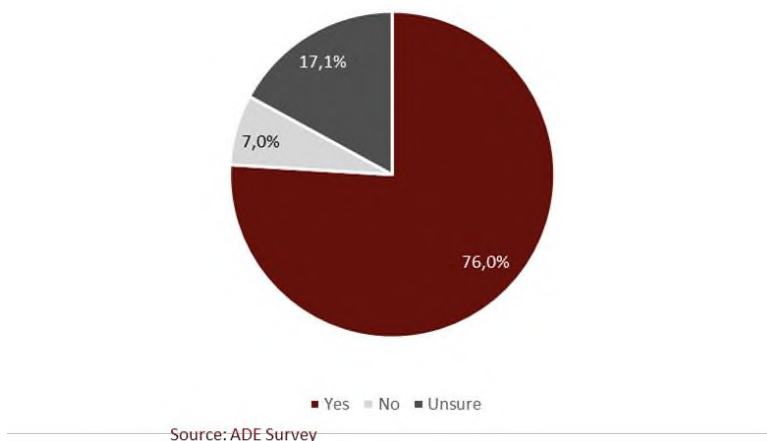
Source: ADE Survey

Section C – Your overall participation in the TAIEX community

C1. Are you registered within the TAIEX expert database (EDBE)?

A total of 129 of responses were considered for this question.

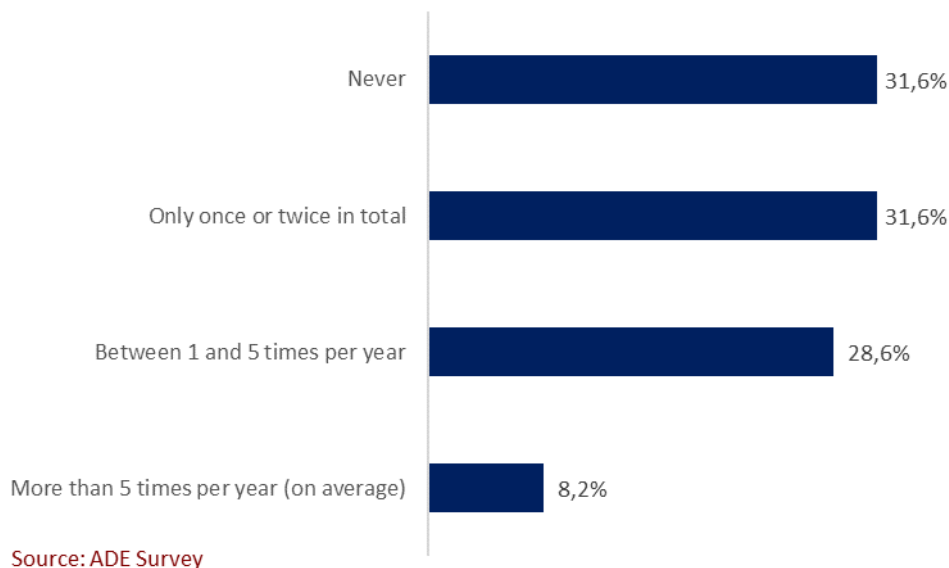
Figure 32: Percentage of respondents being registered within the TAIEX expert database



C2. How frequently have you proactively applied/ signalled interest to take part in TAIEX events?

The total number of responses to question C2 was 98.

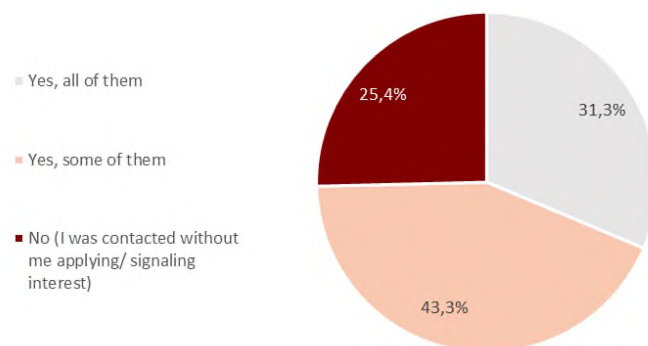
Figure 33: Frequency of respondents proactively applying/ signalling interest to take part in TAIEX events



C3. Have you applied to/ signalled interest in the events in which you participated to as an expert?

A total of 67 of responses were considered for this question.

Figure 34: Percentage of respondents applying or signalling interest for specific events

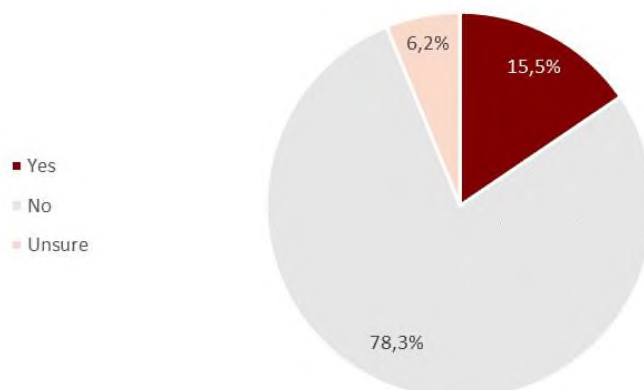


Source: ADE Survey

C4. Did you also take part in (other) TAIEX events in roles other than expert (i.e. beneficiary, participant)?

A total of 129 of responses were considered for this question.

Figure 35: Percentage of respondents participating in (other) TAIEX events in roles other than expert



Source: ADE Survey

Section D –TAIEX’s usefulness

D1. To what extent do you agree that the TAIEX event(s) for which you provided expertise led to the following?						
	Strongly agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion / Cannot judge	Total number of responses
Improved participants’ knowledge and capacities (at the individual level)	58.9%	38.8%	0%	0%	2.3%	129
Strengthened participants’ networks with public officers from different countries	38.8%	44.2%	3.1%	0.8%	13.2%	129
Improved beneficiary institutions’ capacities (at the institutional level)	34.9%	55%	3.1%	0%	7%	129
Generated impulse for significant changes or reforms in the beneficiary institution(s)/ country(ies) (policy/ regulatory/ organizational/ others)	27.1%	45.7%	6.2%	0%	20.9%	129
Strengthened relations between the beneficiary institution(s) and the Commission/ EEAS	23.3%	38%	7.8%	0.8%	30.2%	129
Strengthened relations between the beneficiary institution(s) and your institution	21.7%	34.1%	17.1%	3.9%	23.3%	129
Strengthened relations among different beneficiary institutions (in the case of multi-country events)	25.0%	47.2%	2.8%	0%	25.0%	36
Higher visibility of EU norms, standards and regulatory frameworks	55%	33.33%	3.1%	0%	8.5%	129
More convergence of ideas and practices between the beneficiary institution(s) and EU (or EU member states) institutions	41.1%	46.5%	3.9%	0%	8.5%	129
Strengthened participants’ perception of the EU as a valuable partner	43.4%	44.2%	3.1%	0%	9.3%	129
Improved EU policy planning	14.7%	39.5%	6.2%	0.8%	38.8%	129

D2. To what extent did the TAIEX event(s) for which you provided expertise led to the following benefits to you personally?						
	Strongly agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion / Cannot judge	Total number of responses
Improved my personal knowledge	53.5%	41.1%	3.9%	0%	1.6%	129
Strengthened my network of professional connections with peers/ public officers from other countries	48.8%	40.3%	5.4%	0.8%	4.7%	129
Improved my relations with/ visibility to institutions of the EU and EU member states	34.9%	45%	4.7%	1.6%	14%	129

D3. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?						
	Strongly agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion / Cannot judge	Total number of responses
TAIEX events helped advance EU priorities and objectives in the beneficiary country(ies)/ territory(ies)	49.7%	38.8%	2.3%	0%	9.3%	129
TAIEX events helped beneficiary countries/territories advance along their own national needs, priorities and interests	49.6%	42.6%	1.6%	0%	6.2%	129

D4. To your knowledge, did the TAIEX event(s) in which you provided expertise meaningfully contribute to any of the following changes?				
	Yes	No	Do not know	Total number of responses
Adoption of new public policy (intended as legislation, government programmes etc., at the national or sub national level)	48.9%	3.9%	47.3%	129
Modification of existing public policy	48.1%	5.4%	46.5%	129
Improved application and/or enforcement of existing public policy	55.8%	4.7%	39.5%	129
Adoption of standards and practices in line with EU practice or requirements	62%	3.1%	34.9%	129
Formal changes in working procedures or organizational structures (e.g. creation or reshuffling of institutions/ departments/ units/ positions) or working procedures	44.2%	6.2%	49.6%	129
Informal but significant changes in the way of working	58.1%	3.1%	38%	129

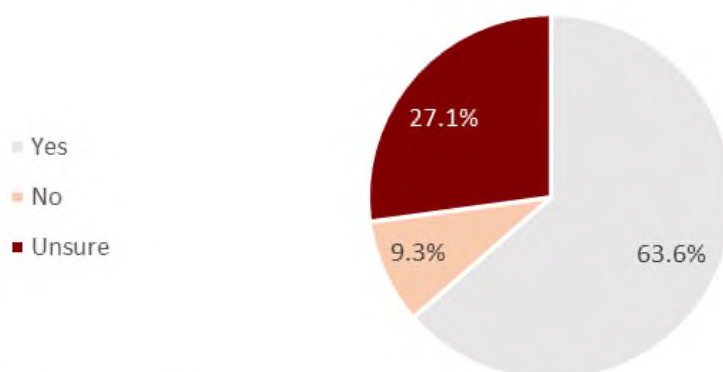
D5. Can you provide any specific example of results/ changes that TAIEX contributed to?

This was an open question. A total of 59 responses were provided. 30 respondents gave examples of concrete changes (e. g. new IT system, evaluation of a tool fighting against corruption, creation of an independent statistics institute...). 18 of them provided examples of changes in legislation (e. g. alignment of Armenian legislation on road transport, change of proposed law on data protection in Kosovo, creation on NHRI in Turkey...) 13 of them mentioned examples of changes in practice (e. g. database to register conflict of interest, implementation of pilot cooperative tax compliance program...) The examples covered a broad spectrum. Some respondents also gave their opinion on TAIEX usefulness, most of them being very positive about it ("useful", "remarkable results with positive impacts").

D6. Have you observed or do you expect the results of the TAIEX events you took part in to last in time, i.e. beyond a year?

Total number of responses to question D6 was 129.

Figure 36: Percentage of respondents' predictions on the results' durability (beyond a year) of the TAIEX events attended



Source: ADE Survey

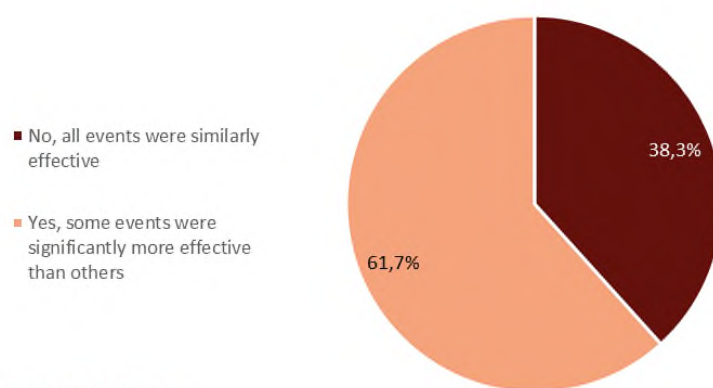
D7. Which types of results are more or less likely to last in time? Why?

This was an open question. A total of 57 responses were provided. 24 respondents mentioned changes in legislative framework. 4 of them mentioned tangible changes (manuals, systems) and 8 of them mentioned changes in practices (mindset, working procedures and methods, awareness at practitioners). In addition, one respondent pointed out results are based on the local context of beneficiaries.

D8. Did you observe/ perceive a substantial difference in terms of effectiveness of the different events in which you participated?

Total number of responses to question D8 was 94.

Figure 37: Percentage of respondents' having perceived (or not) a substantial difference in terms of effectiveness of the different events



Source: ADE Survey

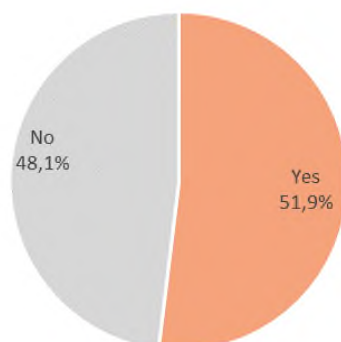
D9. In the TAIEX events you took part in, which contextual factors to the events enhanced or hampered effectiveness? (E.g. political, cultural, institutional, whether the event was requested by the Commission or the beneficiary etc.)

This was an open question. A total of 68 answers were submitted. The most frequently factor that were mentioned is the political and institutional willingness of beneficiary/ participants (28 answers). 16 answers mention similar context and culture (or the fact that the event is taking it into account). In addition, 7 answers mention virtual events and 3 answers mention clear narrow focus.

D10. Did you remain involved in some form with the beneficiary institutions/ participants after the conclusion of the event(s)?

The total number of responses to question D10 was 129.

Figure 38: Percentage of respondents' remaining involved with the host institution after the conclusion of the event(s)



Source: ADE Survey

D11. How would you assess the TAIEX event(s) in which you participated in terms of their overall usefulness for different stakeholders?

	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not useful	Do not know	Total number of responses
For beneficiary participants (at the individual level)	81.4%	15.5%	0%	4%	129
For beneficiary institutions	72.1%	23.3%	0.8%	3.9%	129
For you	65.9%	34.1%	0%	0%	129
For your institution	27.9%	49.6%	12.4%	10.1%	129
For the EU	51.9%	31.8%	0%	16.3%	129

D12. Please use this space to provide any further details/ comments on TAIEX events' usefulness and results.

This was an open question. A total of 36 answers were submitted. Most of the respondents consider TAIEX events as very useful, with positive impact on awareness and capacity building. TAIEX events are perceived as important tool to spread the implementation of EU laws and standards. Benefits from sharing practices and experience among different participants were also pointed out. A majority of respondents expressed high satisfaction level ("one of the best tools of the EU", "please continue and expand", "very useful", "positive overall effect", "excellent learning opportunities").

Section E – TAIEX’s characteristics and event organization processes

E1. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:						
	Strongly agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion / Cannot judge	Total number of responses
The registration process on the experts' database was quick and straightforward	60.2%	35.7%	4.1%	0%	0%	98
I received adequate information to prepare for the event(s)	68.2%	27.1%	4.7%	0%	0%	129
Information was provided to me sufficiently in advance	58.9%	35.7%	4.7%	0.8%	0%	129
I was sufficiently involved in the organization of the event(s) (design of the agenda etc.)	63.6%	24.8%	1.5%	1.5%	8.5%	129
The type of event(s) organized (i.e. workshop, expert mission, study visit or work from home) was/were the most appropriate to address beneficiaries' needs	55.8%	41.1%	0.8%	0%	2.3%	129
The overall design of the event(s) was adequate	61.2%	35.7%	2.3%	0%	0.8%	129
The event(s) had the right audience (i.e. included the participants that were most critical for the desired outcomes to happen)	55.9%	38.8%	2.3%	0%	3.1%	129
The beneficiary institution(s) demonstrated significant commitment to the event(s)	60.5%	33.3%	1.6%	0.8%	3.9%	129
Follow-up activities requested or supported by TAIEX (including the compilation of the event report) are useful	50.4%	27.9%	7%	2.3%	12.4%	129
Follow-up activities requested or supported by TAIEX (including the compilation of the event report) are sufficient	43.4%	25.9%	10.9%	3.1%	17.1%	129

E2. Is there any practice/ activity in addition to existing ones that you think should be regularly implemented or suggested as part of the events' follow up in order to promote the sustainability of the results?

This was an open question. A total of 34 of answers were provided for this question. Most respondents consider that follow up with experts should be regularly implemented or suggested as part of the events' follow up (15 answers). 4 respondents suggest doing more events, 2 of them suggest involving beneficiaries in reporting, 1 respondent suggests giving a checklist of recommendations to the next expert and 2 respondents suggest that experts prepare something to be shared with beneficiaries.

E3. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements about the TAIEX event(s) you participated in:						
	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion / Cannot judge	Total number of responses
The event(s) was/were well organized from a logistics standpoint	71.3%	24%	0%	0.8%	3.9%	129
Language issues were adequately addressed (did not affect the quality of the event)	73.6%	20.4%	3.1%	0.8%	1.6%	129
The IT support provided during events was adequate	62%	31%	0.8%	1.6%	4.7%	129
IT challenges during in-person events were adequately addressed (did not affect the quality of the event)	58.3%	33.3%	4.2%	4.2%	0%	24
IT challenges during online events were adequately addressed (did not affect the quality of the event)	65.1%	30.2%	0%	3.2%	1.6%	63

E4. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the online TAIEX event(s) in which you participated?						
	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion / Cannot judge	Total number of responses
The quality/ usefulness of online events was similar to that of in-person events	15.6%	40.6%	29.7%	12.5%	1%	64
Organizing events online was a better option than waiting until conditions related to the pandemic allowed in-person events	60.9%	32.8%	3.1%	0%	3.1%	64
Online events should be maintained as an option even after the pandemic	37.5%	37.5%	23.4%	1.6%	0%	64

E5. Please use this space to provide any further details/ comments on the organization of TAIEX events (including the possibility of online events):
<p>This was an open question. A total of 27 of answers were provided for this question.</p> <p>Most of the respondents agree that virtual events offer less opportunity than physical events (lack of informal interactions, lower level of deepness in discussions, fewer opportunities to strengthen connections with other stakeholders...) Yet, they generally agree that virtual events are better than none. The interest of the format (virtual/ physical) also depends on the nature of the event (first event or follow up, theme, languages...). A few respondents mention that the online format allows to cover a wider audience. Most of them agree that the best option is a combination of two options, based on the type of event.</p> <p>Many respondents consider that TAIEX events are very well organized. A few respondents mentioned the language as a barrier.</p>

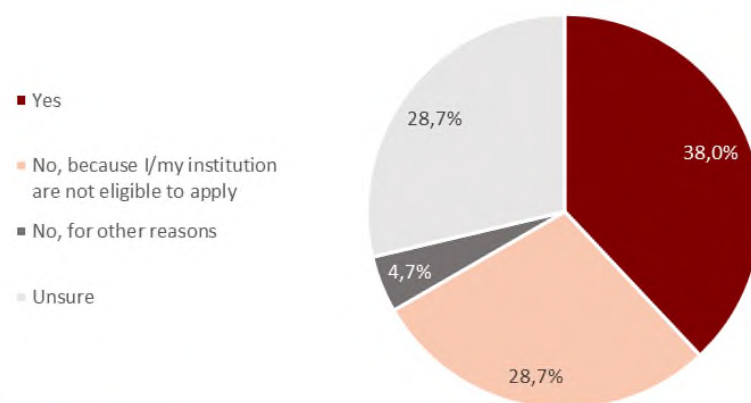
Section F – Awareness and attractiveness of TAIEX as an instrument

F1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the level of awareness of TAIEX in public institutions?						
	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
Public officers in my institution are generally aware of the TAIEX instrument and the opportunities it offers	21.7%	41.9%	19.4%	3.9%	13.2%	129
Information about TAIEX and the opportunities it offers is easily accessible and usable	26.4%	45%	18.6%	1.6%	8.5%	129

F2. Would you consider applying to TAIEX (or supporting the application to TAIEX) as beneficiary on behalf of the institution you work for?

The total number of responses to question F2 was 129.

Figure 39: Percentage of respondents who consider or not applying to TAIEX as beneficiary on behalf of their working institution

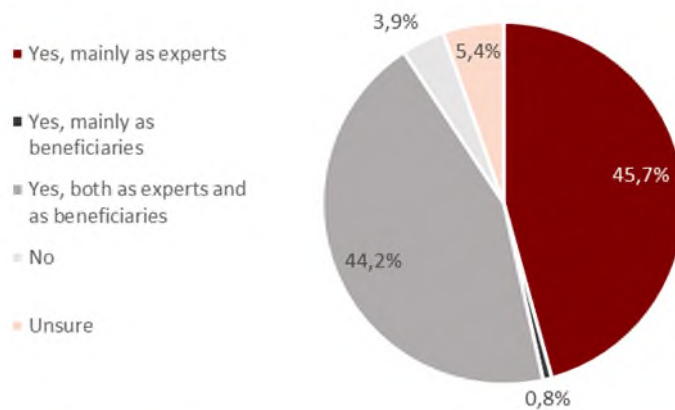


Source: ADE Survey

F3. Would you consider applying to TAIEX (or supporting the application to TAIEX) as beneficiary on behalf of the institution you work for?

The total number of responses to question F3 was 129.

Figure 40 : Percentage of respondents considering applying to TAIEX as beneficiaries or as experts (or both) on behalf of their working institution

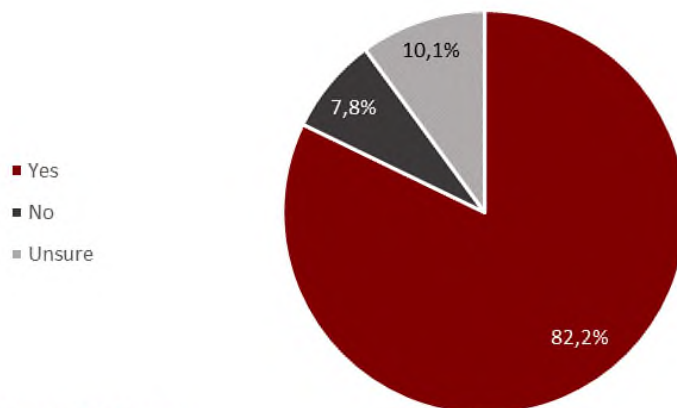


Source: ADE Survey

F4. Would/ did you recommend to other public officials from non-EU countries to apply to organise TAIEX events (as beneficiaries)?

The total number of responses to question F4 was 129.

Figure 41: Percentage of respondents recommending (or not) to other public officials from non-EU countries to apply to organise TAIEX events (as beneficiaries)



Source: ADE Survey

F5. Please use this space to provide any further details/comment concerning existing awareness and attractiveness of the TAIEX instrument and the opportunities it offers, from the point of view of beneficiaries:

This was an open question. The total number of responses to question F5 was 29. Most of the respondents provided comments about TAIEX attractiveness and opportunities. Many of them mentioned share of knowledge and expert high qualification as a very positive aspect.

A few respondents provided comments about TAIEX awareness. The majority considers that the level of awareness of the TAIEX instrument is limited and diverse among the beneficiaries. It might also be impeded by changes in personal.

F6. What factors would you say are the most attractive in participating to TAIEX events as an expert? (select up to three)

The total number of responses to question F6 was 129.

Figure 42: Type of factors which respondents considered the most attractive ones of attending to TAIEX events (1 to 3)



Source: ADE Survey

Section G – EU Value added and coherence and complementarity with other instruments

G1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?						
	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
TAIEX events were used to complement and enhance other existing EU tools	39.5%	35.7%	0%	0%	24.8%	129
The needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through other existing EU tools	23.4%	29.7%	6.3%	2.3%	38.3%	128
The needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through EU member states bilateral initiatives (without involving the EU)	31.3%	32.0%	6.3%	0%	30.5%	128

G2. Could you provide any specific examples of how TAIEX has been used to complement or in coordination with other EU or EU member states tools?

This was an open question. A total of 22 answers were provided for this question. TWINNING is the most frequently mentioned program (5 answers). Respondents also referred to BTSF (Better Training for Safer Food), SRSS and Community of Practitioners.

G3. In your opinion, which characteristics of TAIEX make it most useful/ unique compared to other EU tools for capacity building?

This was an open question. A total of 38 answers were provided for this question. 14 respondents praised the technical expertise and professionalism of experts. 11 respondents referred to the peer-to-peer dimension. 7 respondents mentioned the low level of bureaucracy and administrative requirements, making TAIEX events easy to organize. 5 respondents referred to TAIEX's adaptiveness to beneficiary's needs (length, content, format of events), including one respondent that mentions the possible combination between online and physical events. One respondent praised the increased feeling of being part of a community within the European Union.

G4. To what extent do you agree that TAIEX allowed the following better than it would have been possible through other options (including available EU and EU Member States tools and initiatives)?

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
Tailoring events to specific needs	55%	25.6%	1.6%	0%	17.8%	129
Rapid organization of events	40.3%	35.7%	3.9%	0%	20.2%	129
Meaningful involvement of beneficiary institutions	48%	34.1%	1.6%	0%	16.3%	129
Benefitting from peer-to-peer experience and advice	54.3%	27.9%	1.5%	0.8%	15.5%	129

Section H – Final comments and suggestions

H1. Feel free to provide here any further comments (including recommendations) about the TAIEX Instrument that you would like to share:

This was an open question. A total of 32 responses were provided. Many respondents expressed their pride at contributing to TAIEX events and provided very positive comments on TAIEX (“excellent”, “great experience”, “grateful”, “great”, “good and useful”). A few respondents provided suggestions about the format (number of presentations per day, proposal of both virtual and physical options) and TAIEX expansion.

Responses to the survey for participants

This survey targeted participants of TAIEX events that were included in the case studies sample. 2356 participants are considered for the selected TAIEX events in total. Of those, a certain number of people participated several times to TAIEX events. The total number of participants, excluding redundancies related to people who participated on several occasions, equals to the 1884 email addresses provided by the Commission. The link of the survey was sent by email to these addresses. A total of 335 responses were received for this survey, leading to an estimated response rate of 20,5%. 247 of these emails were followed by a delivery failure message. This may indicate that some of the participants were not reached either because there was a change in staff or because there was a mistake in the address provided.

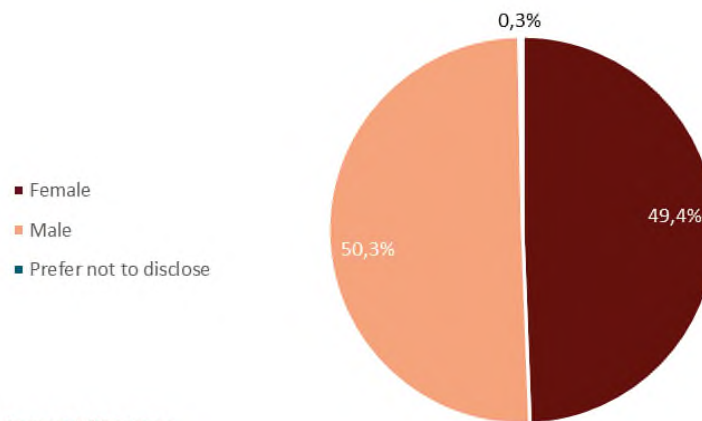
Important remarks:

- The number of respondents varies across questions, as sometimes no answer was provided by a respondent in relation to a specific item. Depending on the answers to previous questions, certain questions were hidden, to prevent confusion, if the participants had stated that they had not experienced the aspect addressed by these questions.
- Percentages may not add up to a 100% in some questions whereby, multiple responses were possible.
- All figures in tables have been rounded to one decimal place and all figures in graphs to the nearest unit.

Section B – General Information about yourself**B3. Your Gender**

The total number of responses considered for question B3 was 334.

Figure 43: Percentage of respondents' gender

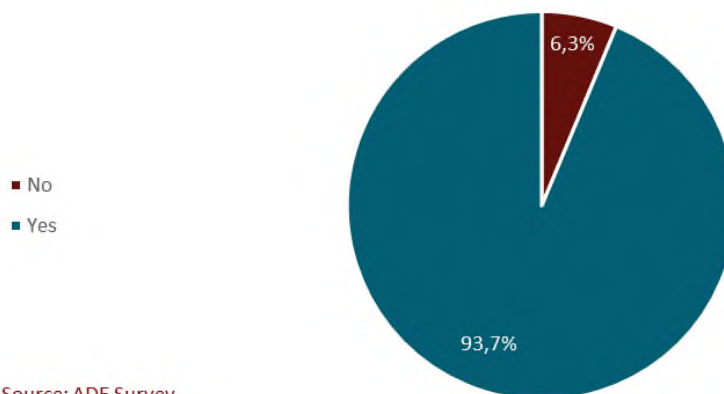


Source: ADE Survey

B6. Were you aware that the events listed in the email we sent you had been organized through TAIEX?

The total number of responses considered for question B6 was 335.

Figure 44: Percentage of respondents' awareness about the role of TAIEX in the organization of the events attended

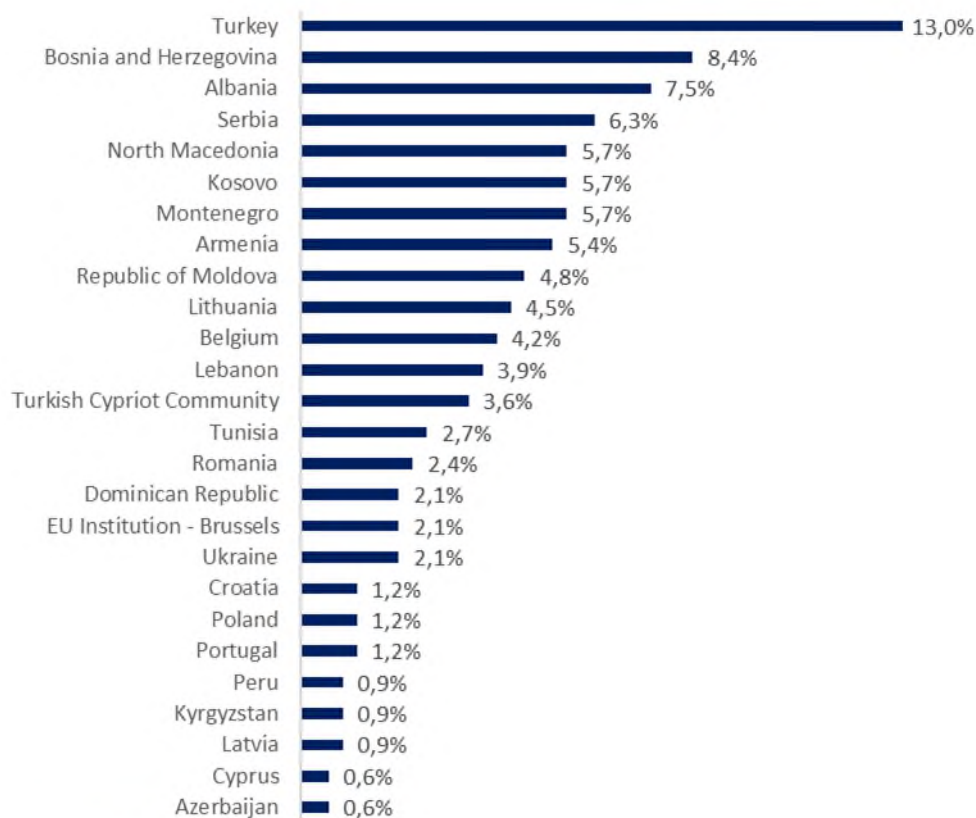


Source: ADE Survey

B7. Country/ territory of the institution you represented in the TAIEX event(s)

The total number of responses considered for question B7 was 332. Countries which were represented by only one participant do not appear on the figure (Iran, India, Netherlands, Bulgaria, Austria, Georgia and Mexico).

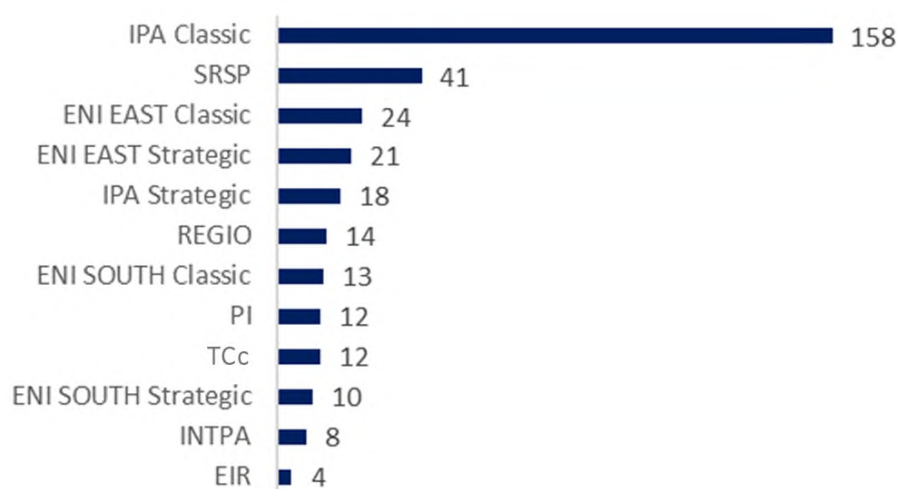
Figure 45: Type of country/ territory represented by the respondents in the TAIEX event(s)



Source: ADE Survey

Furthermore, the graph below represents the distribution of answers according to the type of TAIEX strand.

Figure 46: Distribution of answers of figure 45 according to the type of TAIEX strand

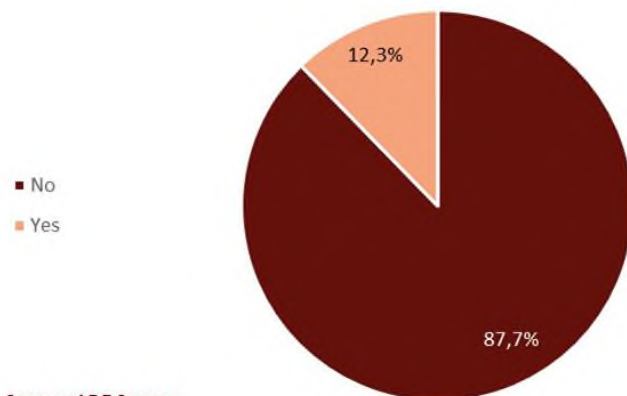


Source: ADE Survey

B8. Did you work for the Commission/ EEAS at the time of your participation in TAIEX events?

The total numbers of responses to question B8 was 334.

Figure 47: Percentage of people working in the Commission/EEAS at the time of the participation to TAIEX events

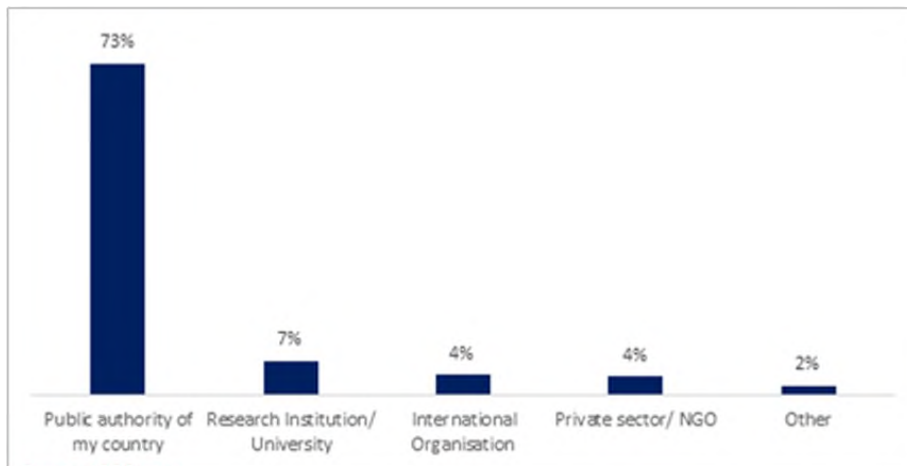


Source: ADE Survey

B9. What kind of institution did you work for when participating in the TAIEX event(s)? If other, please specify.

The total number of responses to question B9 was 294. Percentages do not add up to a 100 as more than one answers were possible.

Figure 48: Type of institution in which the experts worked when participating in the TAIEX event(s)

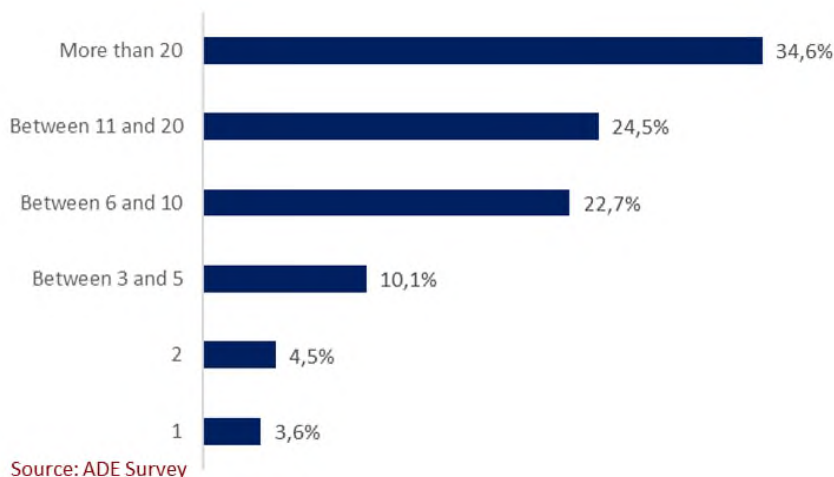


Source: ADE Survey

B10. As you recall it, in how many TAIEX events have you participated in the 2015-2020 period? (overall – including events outside the case study sample)

The total number of responses to questions B10 was 335.

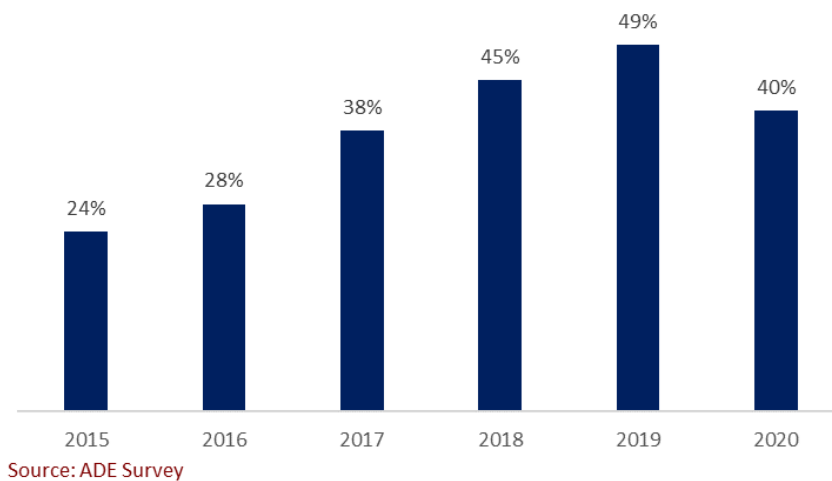
Figure 49: Number of TAIEX events attended by the respondents in the 2015-2020 period



B11. In which year(s) did the TAIEX events you participated in take place (as you recall it)? (select all that apply)

The total number of responses to question B11 was 294. Percentages do not add up to a 100 as more than one answers were possible.

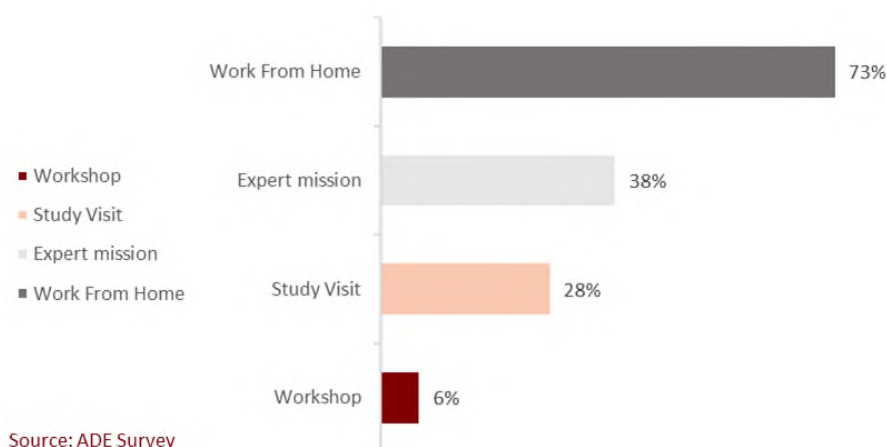
Figure 50: Years of respondents' participation in TAIEX event(s)



B12. In what types of TAIEX events have you participated in (select all that apply)

The total number of responses to question B12 was 294.

Figure 51: Type of TAIEX event(s) attended



B13. What topics were covered in the TAIEX event(s) in which you participated? (select all that apply). If other, please specify:

The total number of responses to question B13 was 294.

Figure 52: Topics covered in the TAIEX event(s)

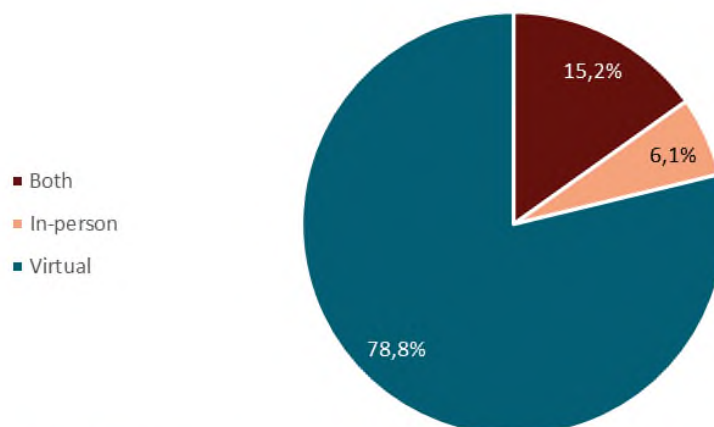


When they selected the “other” option, respondents were asked to specify the topics of the TAIEX events they participated in. 44 of them selected “others”. They mostly mentioned e-commerce, change management and crisis management, circular economy, anti-corruption and administrative capacity building.

B14. Was/were the event(s) you participated in 2020 virtual or in-person?

The total number of responses to questions B14 was 132.

Figure 53: Percentage of respondents having participated in virtual or in-person event(s) (or both)

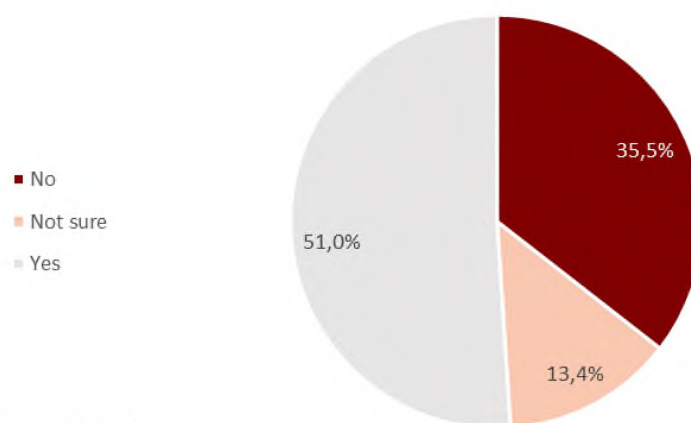


Source: ADE Survey

B15. Were any of the event(s) in which you took part multi-country/ regional? (Involve beneficiaries from multiple countries/ territories i.e. other than your and the host country/ territory)

The total number of responses to questions B15 was 335.

Figure 54: Percentage of respondents having participated to single or multi-country/ regional event(s)



Source: ADE Survey

B16. Were you involved in the application process for (at least one of) the event(s) in which you participated? / B17. Were you involved in the organization of (at least one of) the event(s) in which you participated?

The total number of responses to questions B16 and B17 was 334.

Figure 55: Percentage of respondents having been involved in the application process for (at least one of) the event(s) attended?

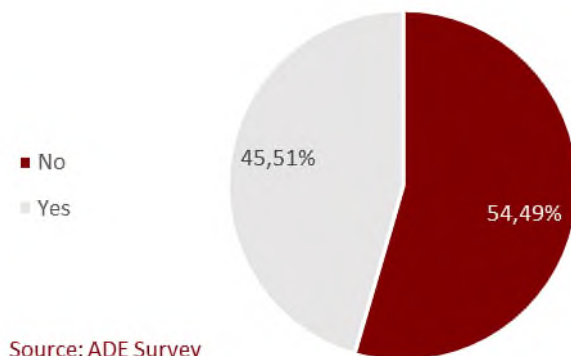
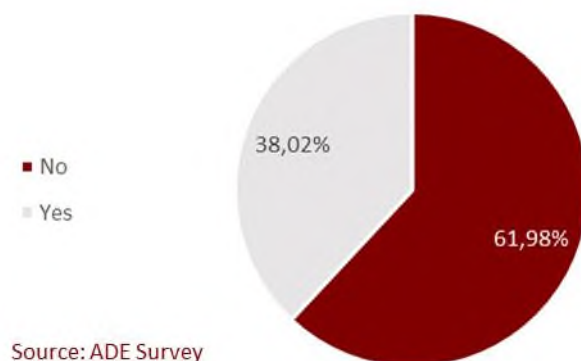


Figure 56: Percentage of respondents having been involved in the organization process for (at least one of) the event(s) attended?



Section C – TAIEX's usefulness

C1. To what extent do you agree with the following about the quality of TAIEX event(s) you participated in? If you have participated in more than one event, please provide us your general/ average impression						
	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
The information provided/ discussed during the event(s) was relevant to the beneficiaries' needs/ beneficiary institutions' needs	57.9%	39.1%	1.2%	0.6%	1.2%	335
The experts' knowledge on the topics covered was adequate	58.2%	37.9%	1.8%	0.3%	1.8%	335
The experts conveyed information in a clear and practical manner	56.1%	39.1%	2.1%	0.3%	2.4%	335

C2. To what extent do you agree that the TAIEX event(s) you participated in contributed to the following? If you have participated in more than one event, please provide us your general/ average impression.:						
	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
Strengthening/ forming new professional connections among public officers from different countries	36.5%	41.6%	9.0%	1.8%	11.1%	334
Improving beneficiaries' knowledge on the topics covered	51.0%	42.4%	2.4%	0.9%	3.3%	335
Improving beneficiaries' capacities/ skills to do my work	43.0%	42.1%	7.8%	1.2%	6.0%	335
Changing concretely the way beneficiaries do their work	23.4%	42.8%	16.8%	2.7%	14.4%	334

C3. To what extent do you agree that the TAIEX event(s) you participated in contributed to the following in the beneficiary institution and country/territory? If you have participated in more than one event, please provide us your general/ average impression.:						
	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
Improvement/ expansion of institutional knowledge on the topics covered	40.6%	49.1%	3.8%	0.3%	6.3%	320
Improvement of institutional capacities (concrete capacity to get things done)	31.8%	46.5%	7.9%	1.9%	12.0%	318
Strengthening of the relations between the beneficiaries and the Commission and/or the EEAS	31.2%	36.3%	11.2%	1.0%	19.8%	314
Strengthening of the relations between the beneficiary institution and public institutions from the countries of origin of experts	32.2%	45.1%	11.4%	0.6%	10.7%	317
Strengthening of the relations among beneficiary participating public institutions during multi-country/regional events	29.4%	50.6%	7.5%	0.0%	12.5%	160
Higher awareness of EU norms and standards among beneficiaries	41.3%	44.8%	4.8%	0.6%	8.6%	315
More convergence of ideas and/or practices between beneficiary institutions and EU institutions/ partner EU member states' institutions	35.4%	46.5%	6.4%	0.3%	11.5%	314
Generating impulse for significant changes or reforms (policy/regulatory/ organizational/ others) in beneficiary institutions	31.2%	43.0%	11.2%	1.3%	13.4%	314
Strengthening the perception of the EU as a valuable partner among beneficiary institutions	43.5%	42.5%	4.5%	0.0%	9.6%	313
Improved EU policy planning	30.0%	45.0%	7.5%	0.0%	17.5%	40

C4. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? If you have participated in more than one event, please provide us your general/ average impression.:						
	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
TAIEX events helped advance EU priorities and objectives in beneficiary countries/ territories	37.5%	44.1%	4.8%	0.9%	12.6%	333
TAIEX events helped beneficiary countries/territories to advance along their national needs, priorities, and interests	34.7%	46.1%	6.3%	0.9%	12.0%	334

C5. Based on your knowledge, did the TAIEX event(s) you participated in contribute to any of the following concrete results?:				
	Do not know	No	Yes	Total number of responses
Adoption of new public policy: new laws or important government programmes (at the national or sub national level)	35.4%	17.7%	46.9%	333
Modification of existing public policy: changes to existing laws or important government programmes (at the national or sub national level)	38.1%	16.5%	45.3%	333
Improved application and/or enforcement of existing public policy	30.3%	10.2%	59.4%	333
Adoption of standards and practices in line with EU practice or requirements	28.0%	8.7%	63.2%	332
Formal changes in working procedures or organizational structures (e.g. creation or reshuffling of institutions/ departments/ units/ positions) or working procedures	37.8%	21.3%	40.8%	333
Informal but significant changes in the way of working	26,7%	14,7%	58,7%	333

C6. Can you provide any specific examples of results/changes that TAIEX contributed to?

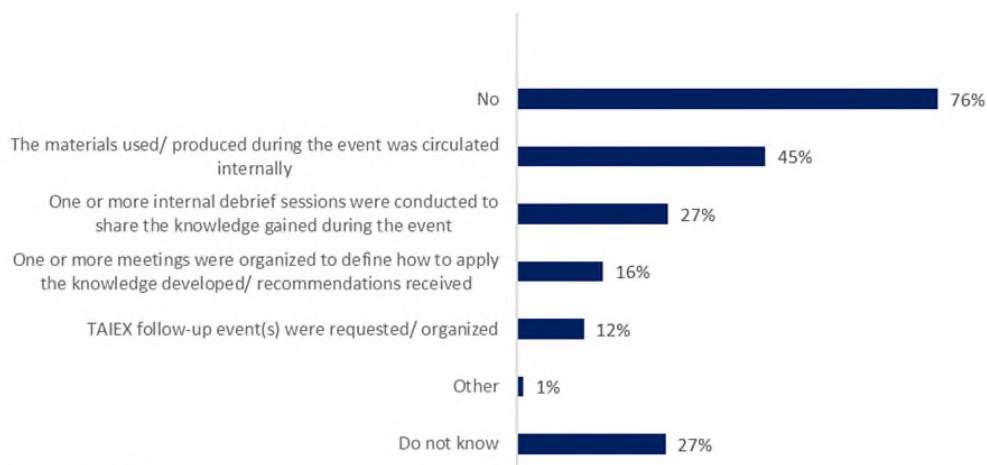
This was an open question. The total number of responses to question C6 was 16. 5 respondents gave concrete examples of changes in working procedures or creation of new infrastructures. 2 respondents mentioned changes in law and implementation of EU policies.

C7. According to you, how long did the results of the TAIEX event(s) in which you participate last, or how long do you expect them to last?:					
	Between 6 months and 3 years	For more than 3 years	Less than 6 months	No opinion/ cannot judge	Total number of responses
Improved individual knowledge, capacities and ways of working	38.4%	27.1%	15.5%	19.0%	284
Improved institutional knowledge and/or capacity	40.9%	25.1%	12.9%	21.2%	279
Peer-to-peer network formation	34.9%	17.6%	14.4%	33.1%	278
Strengthened relations between beneficiary institutions and EU institutions/ partner EU member states' institutions	32.3%	23.7%	14.0%	30.1%	279
Strengthened relations between different public institutions which took part in the TAIEX event(s)	37.6%	19.7%	13.6%	29.0%	279
Higher awareness of EU norms and standards	33.3%	30.1%	15.9%	20.0%	276
Convergence of ideas and practices between beneficiary institutions and EU/ partner EU member states' institutions	33.7%	24.0%	13.8%	28.6%	276
Impulse for significant changes or reforms	31.4%	23.5%	14.8%	30.3%	277
Strengthened perception of the EU as a valuable partner	31.9%	30.1%	15.2%	22.8%	276
Improved application/ enforcement of public policy	37.8%	32.0%	11.6%	18.6%	172
Adoption of standards and practices in line with EU practice or requirements	37.9%	36.2%	11.3%	14.7%	177
Formal changes in organizational structures and working procedures	39.5%	29.4%	17.7%	13.5%	119
Informal but significant changes in the way of working	34.5%	36.3%	16.7%	12.5%	168

C8. To your knowledge, did the beneficiary institution conduct any specific activity to follow up TAIEX events? (select all that apply)

The total number of responses to question C8 was 255.

Figure 57: Follow-up-activities conducted by the beneficiary institution after TAIEX events



Source: ADE Survey

When they selected the “other” option, respondents were asked to specify the type of activity that the beneficiary institution conducted to follow up TAIEX events. 2 answers were provided: one respondent mentioned the development of a reform project proposal and another mentioned the creation of a national help desk.

C9. Are there any event follow up best practices that you think should be systematically introduced or recommended by TAIEX to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the events?

This was an open question. The total number of responses to question C9 was 81. 14 respondents provided negative answers. 6 respondents provided positive answers, without specifying the type of follow up practice that should be introduced in their opinion. Among the other respondents that think that follow up practices should be systematically introduced or recommended, here are the most provided answers:

- 4 respondents think that TAIEX events should be recorded and shared among participants and public officers after the event.
- 13 respondents consider that feedbacks and open questions should be collected during the event and/ or after the event and that updates should be shared to the participants.
- 8 respondents suggest that follow up events should be organized to allow participants to exchange about their experiences and to share updates.

C10. How would you assess the TAIEX event(s) in which you participated in terms of their overall usefulness?					
	Do not know	Not useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful	Total number of responses
For beneficiary participants (at the individual level)	1.5%	1.5%	21.5%	75.5%	335
For beneficiary institutions	5.1%	1.5%	30.5%	63.0%	335
For the EU	21.4%	2.4%	21.4%	54.8%	42

C11. Please use this space to provide any further details/ comments on TAIEX events' usefulness and results

This was an open question. 65 answers were provided for this question. Most of the respondents praised TAIEX usefulness. 24 respondents considered peer-to-peer exchanges and discussions with experts as very useful, as it improved their knowledge of the topic of the EU legislation. 11 respondents provided negative comments or suggestions to improve TAIEX usefulness, regretting that TAIEX events is not accessible to a broader number of participants, that there are sometimes language issues, and that the discussions do not always lead to concrete recommendations.

Section D – TAIEX’s characteristics and event organization processes

D1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the application and organization process of TAIEX events? If you have participated in more than one event, please provide us your general/ average impression:						
	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
The application process was not too cumbersome	47%	43%	7%	3%	0%	111
Adequate support was provided by the EU delegation/ NCPs/ the TAIEX team during the application process	64%	30%	4%	1%	0%	137
TAIEX informative and/or support materials were available in a language I easily understand	57%	40%	3%	0%	0%	91
TAIEX events were quick to organize	45%	42%	10%	2%	0%	128
The design of individual TAIEX events was sufficiently tailored to the specificities of the beneficiary country/ institution	48%	43%	7%	2%	0%	132
The type of event organized (i.e. workshop, expert mission, study visit or work from home) was the most appropriate to address needs	51%	47%	2%	0%	0%	135
The single event/ multiple events options offered (e.g. series) were adequate to address needs	51%	44%	5%	0%	0%	129
My institution’s level of involvement in the design of the event(s) was adequate	48%	47%	5%	0%	0%	127
Sufficient flexibility was granted for the organization of TAIEX events	47%	44%	7%	2%	0%	125
The communication with the European Commission leading up to the event was satisfactory	55%	43%	2%	0%	0%	102
The communication with the beneficiaries leading up to the event was satisfactory	63%	26%	11%	0%	0%	19
TAIEX promoted national government ownership of the event(s)	48%	48%	5%	0%	0%	101
TAIEX provided sufficient support to facilitate the follow-up of events	44%	49%	8%	0%	0%	117
The administrative burden for my institution of organizing a TAIEX event(s) was reasonable compared to the result	51%	44%	4%	1%	0%	117
The cost for my organization for the organization of a TAIEX event(s) were reasonable compared to the result	57%	39%	3%	0%	0%	89

D2. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements about the TAIEX event(s) you participated in: If you have participated in more than one event, please provide us your general/ average impression.:

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
The event(s) was/were well organized from a logistics standpoint	61.5%	32.2%	2.1%	0.3%	3.9%	335
Language issues were adequately addressed (did not affect the quality of the event)	63.6%	28.4%	3.6%	0.9%	3.6%	335
The IT support provided during events was adequate	56.7%	32.2%	2.4%	0.3%	8.4%	335
IT challenges during in-person events were adequately addressed (did not affect the quality of the event)	50.0%	42.9%	0%	0%	7.1%	28
IT challenges during online events were adequately addressed (did not affect the quality of the event)	54.5%	34.2%	4.1%	0.8%	6.5%	123

D3. Please comment on any difficulties you experienced / aspects that you think could be improved in the event application and organization process:

This was an open question. 63 answers were provided for this question. 33 respondents answered that they had not encountered any difficulty. 10 respondents had encountered difficulties related to organization (logistics, IT support, communication, translation...). A couple of them expressed difficulties with the online format. 5 respondents considered the organization process as too rigid and too long. 1 respondent expressed difficulties to find experts.

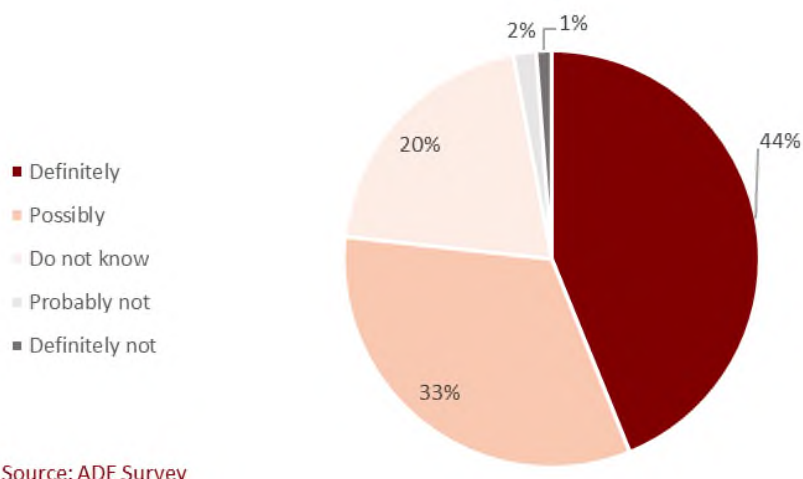
D4. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the online TAIEX event(s) in which you participated?

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
The quality/ usefulness of online events was similar to that of in-person events	22.3%	53.2%	12.9%	6.5%	4.8%	124
Organizing events online was a better option than waiting until conditions related to the pandemic allowed in-person events	50.8%	35.5%	4.8%	4.8%	4.0%	124
Online events should be maintained as an option even after the pandemic	37.1%	33.9%	14.5%	8.1%	6.5%	124

D5. Will you/ your institution consider applying to organize TAIEX events in the future?

The total number of responses to questions D5 was 335.

Figure 58: Percentage of respondents' institutions considering applying to organize TAIEX in the future



Source: ADE Survey

D6. Please use this space to provide any further details/ comments on the organization of TAIEX events:

This was an open question. The total number of responses to questions D6 was 52. 16 respondents expressed positive comments about the organization of TAIEX events. 4 participants provided negative comments (related to translation, to the length of the organization process or to the global usefulness of the events). 3 respondents suggested to extend TAIEX by increasing the number of TAIEX events, or by extending the topics covered by TAIEX, the types of experts or the types of beneficiaries.

Section E – Awareness of TAIEX as an instrument

E1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the level of awareness of TAIEX?:						
	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
There is sufficient awareness of TAIEX within my institution	30.7%	42.3%	14.0%	2.1%	10.9%	293
There is sufficient awareness of TAIEX within public institutions that can benefit from it	28.6%	54.8%	7.1%	0%	9.5%	42
There is sufficient awareness of TAIEX within European Institutions (Commission Services/EEAS/ EUDELS) that can request TAIEX events	28.6%	61.9%	0%	0%	9.5%	42
Information about TAIEX and the opportunities it offers is easily accessible and usable	29.9%	48.7%	8.4%	2.1%	11.0%	335

E2. Please use this space to provide any additional detail/ comment on this topic:

This was an open question. The total number of responses to questions E2 was 25. Respondents mostly regretted that TAIEX awareness was unequal among the beneficiaries, restricted to the highest levels. Most of them recommended to extend TAIEX events to a broader spectrum of participants and to increase communication about TAIEX.

Section F – EU Value added and coherence and complementarity with other instruments

F1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?:						
	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
TAIEX events were used to complement and enhance other existing EU tools	36.7%	46.2%	3.2%	0%	13.9%	18
The needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through other existing EU tools	22.2%	36.2%	6.0%	2.1%	33.5%	334
The needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through existing EU member states initiatives (without involving the EU)	25.5%	32.9%	6.9%	1.5%	33.2%	334

F2. Could you provide any specific examples of how TAIEX has been used to complement or in coordination with other EU or EU member states tools?

This was an open question. The total number of responses to questions F2 was 46. 24 respondents provided a negative answer. Twinning was the most frequently mentioned EU tool (8 respondents mentioned it). A couple of respondents gave other examples like EUMS.

F3. In your opinion, which characteristics of TAIEX make it most useful/ unique compared to other EU tools for capacity building?

This was an open question. The total number of responses to questions F3 was 60.

Respondents praised the flexibility of TAIEX, whose organization is fast and demand driven. 15 respondents mentioned the high quality of experts and 7 respondents mentioned the advantages of sharing experiences and practices, related to the peer-to-peer format.

F4. To what extent do you agree that TAIEX allowed the following better than it would have been possible through other options (including available EU and EU member states tools and initiatives)?						
	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
Tailoring events to specific needs	40.3%	43.0%	2.1%	0.6%	14.0%	335
Rapid organization of events	36.1%	41.2%	5.4%	0.3%	17.0%	335
Meaningful involvement of beneficiary institutions	40.6%	40.9%	2.4%	0.3%	15.8%	335
Benefitting from peer-to-peer experience and advice	42.4%	38.8%	1.5%	1.2%	16.1%	335

Section G – Final comments and suggestions

G1. Feel free to provide here any further comments (including recommendations) about the TAIEX Instrument that you would like to share:

This was an open question. 56 answers were provided for this question. Most of the respondents expressed highly positive feedbacks about TAIEX (“grande valeur ajoutée”, “very important”, “nice experience” ...) Multiple respondents expressed thanks for their participation in TAIEX events and the wish that it would continue.

5 *Second Round of Surveys*

This survey targeted participants of TAIEX events that were included in the case studies sample. ___ participants are considered for the selected TAIEX events in total. Of those, a certain number of people participated several times to TAIEX events. The total number of participants, equals to the 129 email addresses provided by the Commission. The link of the survey was sent by email to these addresses. A total of 127 responses were received for this survey, leading to an estimated response rate of 98.4%. 2 of these emails were followed by a delivery failure message. This may indicate that some of the participants were not reached either because there was a change in staff or because there was a mistake in the address provided.

Important remarks:

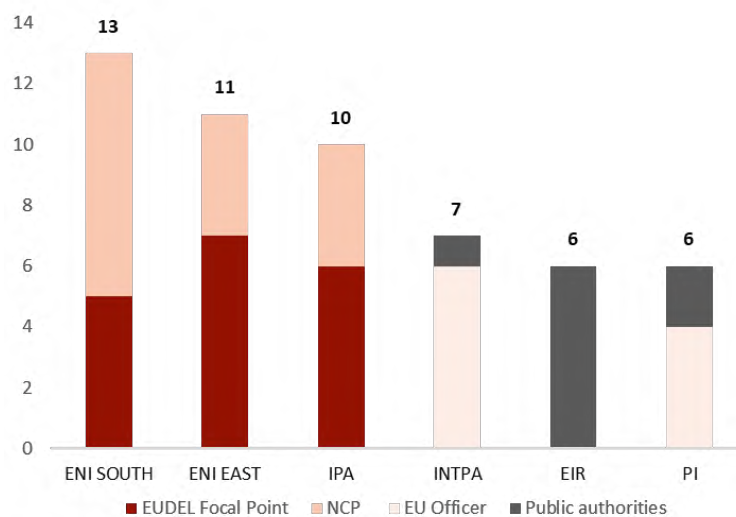
- The number of respondents varies across questions, as some of them were not addressed to one group of survey respondents. In this case, the total number of answers would lower from 53 to 47. Moreover, the NCPs and EU Delegation agents’ group received one differently formulated and one extra survey question.
- All figures in tables have been rounded to one decimal place and all figures in graphs to the nearest unit.
- The respondents provided their answers to open questions in French and English. When deemed relevant, comments extracted from the surveys that were submitted in languages other than English, are presented throughout this report as translated in English by the Evaluation Team.

Section A

A3. In the 2015-2020 period, for which kind of institution did you work for?

The total number of responses considered for question A3 was 53. Slightly different versions of this question were presented to respondents based on the TAIEX strand they were involved in.:

Figure 59: Role and TAIEX strand of respondents



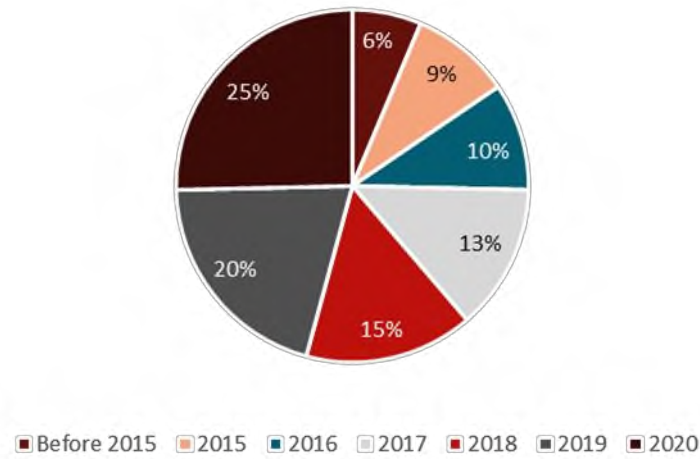
Source: ADE Survey

A4. In which of the following years were you involved with TAIEX?

Before 2015	9
2015	13
2016	14
2017	19
2018	22
2019	29
2020	36

The total number of responses considered for question A4 was 53. This was a multiple-choice question.

Figure 60: Percentage of respondents' year of involvement with TAIEX

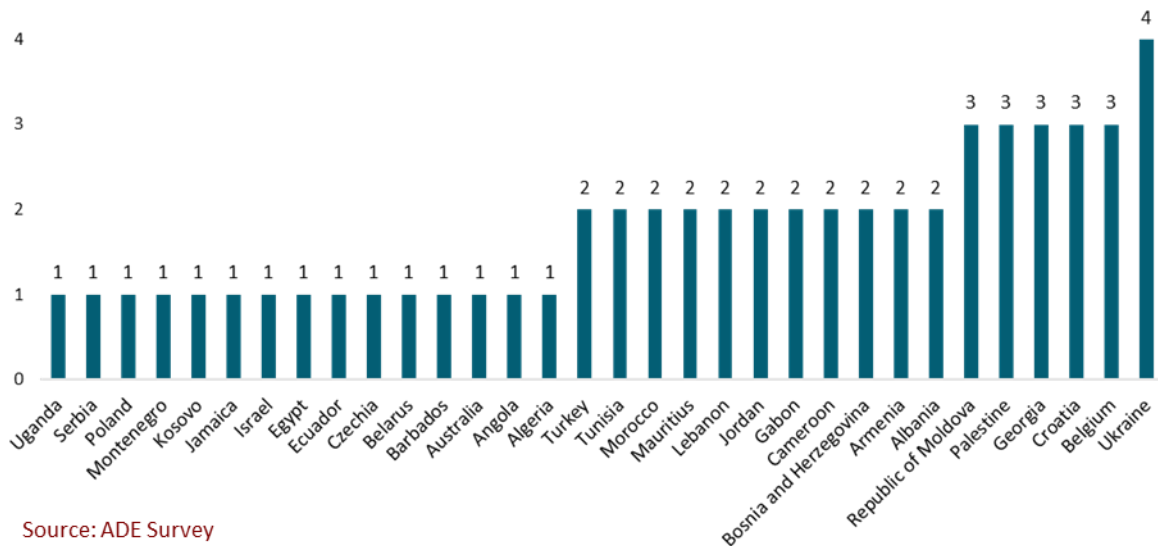


Source: ADE Survey

A6. Country/ territory in which you were based at the time:

The total number of responses considered for question A6 was 53.

Figure 61: Country/ territory in which respondents were based

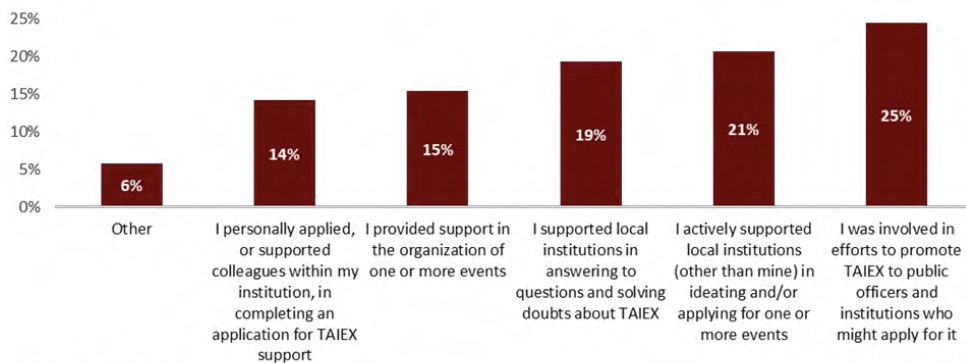


Source: ADE Survey

A7. How have you worked with TAIEX, in the 2015-2020 period?

The total number of responses to question A7 was 53. This was a multiple-choice question.

Figure 62: Respondents' involvement with TAIEX, in the 2015-2020 period



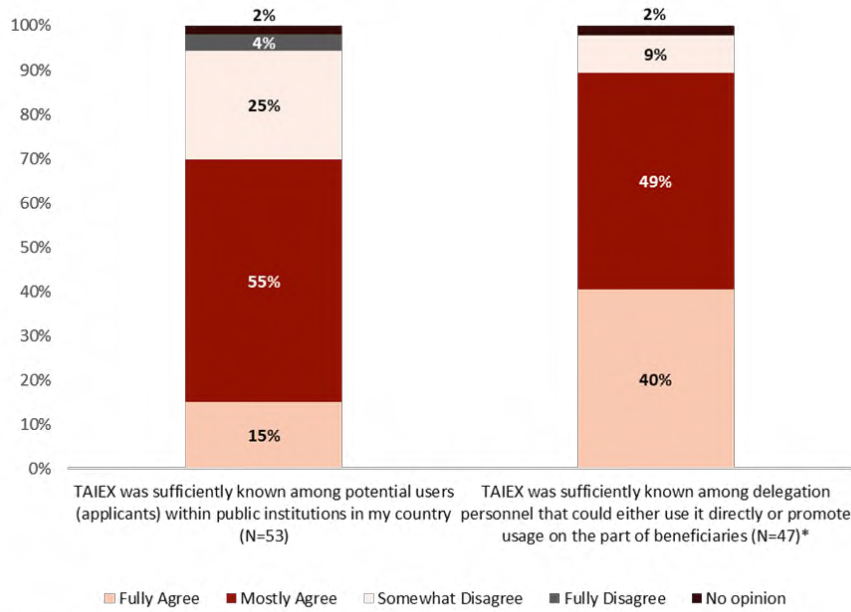
Source: ADE Survey

Section B

B1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Question B1 asked respondents to describe how much they agree with two statements. The first statement was addressed to all respondents and the total number of responses was 53. The second statement was not addressed to EIR Contact Points and, hence, the total number of responses was 47.

Figure 63: Respondents’ perception of levels of awareness of TAIEX within public institutions and EU delegations

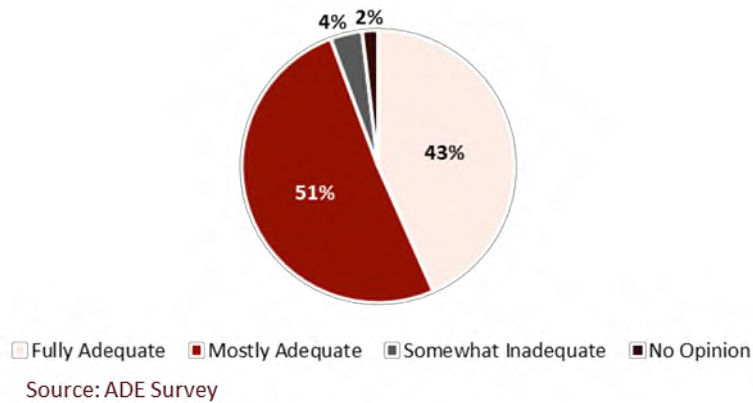


Source: ADE Survey

B2. How adequate was the information and guidance provided by TAIEX (information and tools available, on-call support) to support you in promoting the best use of the instrument?

The total number of responses to questions B2 was 53.

Figure 64: Respondents’ perception on the sufficiency of information and tools provided by the TAIEX Team to ensure the best use of the instrument



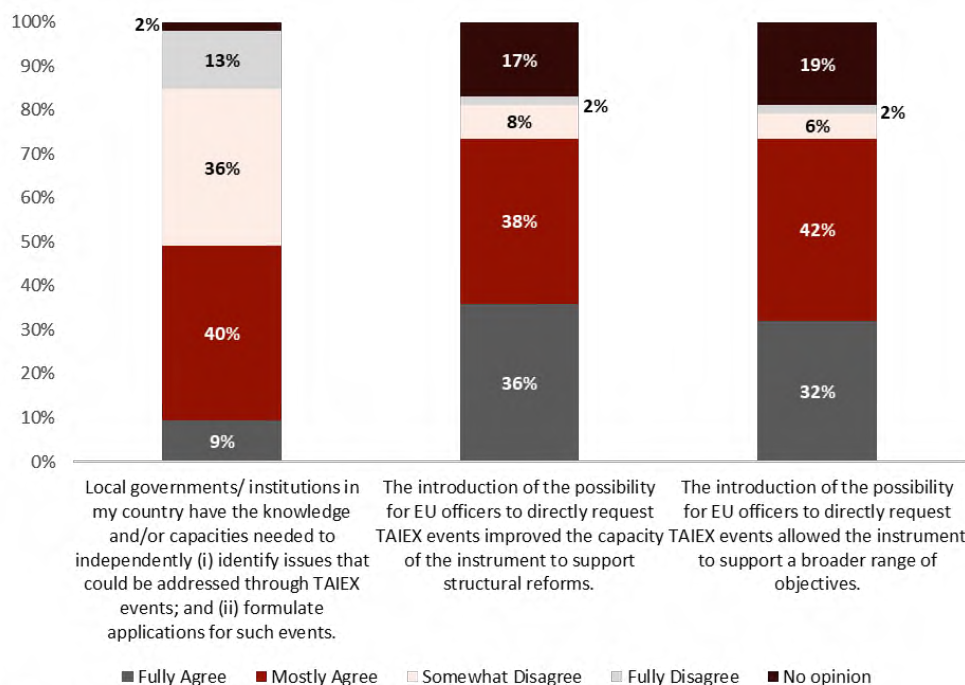
Source: ADE Survey

Section C

C4. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

The total number of responses to questions C4 was 53.

Figure 65: Respondents level of agreement with the following statements



Source: ADE Survey

C5. Please feel free to comment on the statements above:

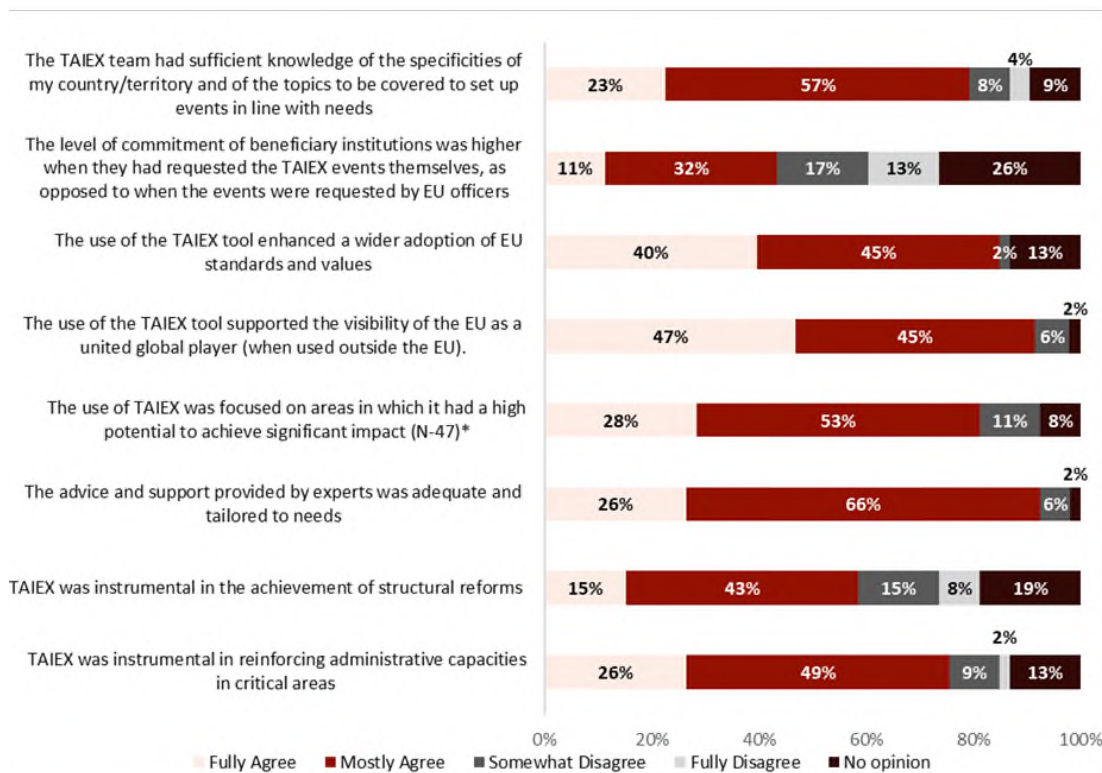
This was an open question. A total of 24 responses were provided. Many respondents were not aware of the possibility for EU officers to requests TAIEX directly, yet it is generally understood that such practice allowed “to organize events which were more policy- and reform-driven (high on the bilateral agenda), rather than ad-hoc events in the low-priority areas”.

Section D

D4. To what extent do you agree with the following statements (as refers to your country)?

Questions D4 asked respondents to describe to what extent they agree with eight statements. The fifth statement was not addressed to EIR Contact Points and, hence, the total number of responses was 47*. All other questions were addressed to all respondents and the total number of responses was 53.

Figure 66: Respondents’ level of agreement with specific statements related to TAIEX



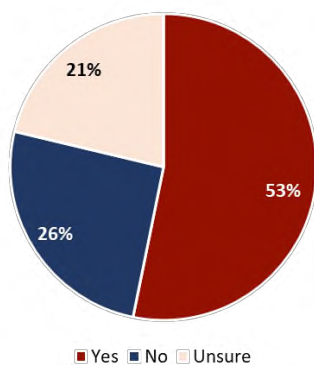
Source: ADE Survey

Section E

E1. In your country, were there actions/ systems in place to favour coordination between the management of TAIEX and Twinning?

Question E1 was not addresses to EIR Contact Points, hence the total number of respondents was 47.

Figure 67: Respondents’ answer on whether the actions/ systems put in place favoured coordination between the management of TAIEX and Twinning?

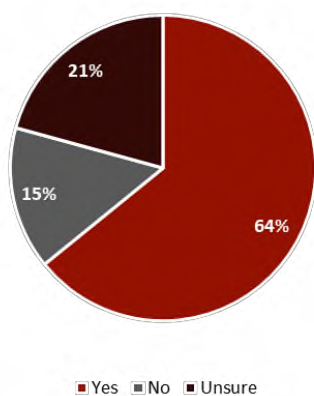


Source: ADE Survey

E2. In your country, was the use of TAIEX coordinated with that of other EU instruments/ actions?

The total number of respondents for question E2 was 53.

Figure 68: Respondents’ positive or negative opinion on the coordination of the use of TAIEX with that of other EU instruments/actions

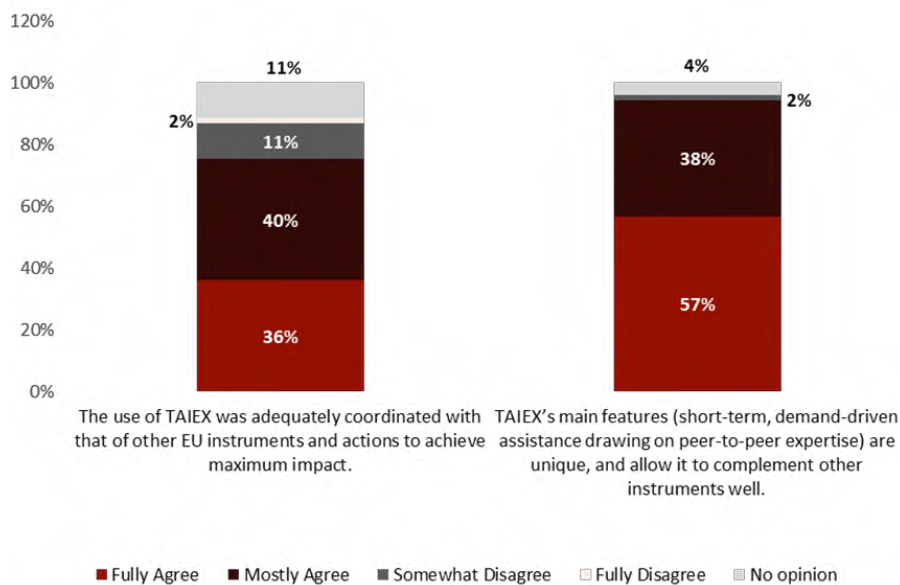


Source: ADE Survey

E3. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?:

The total number of respondents to question E3 was 53.

Figure 69: Level of respondents’ agreement on the coordination between the use of TAIEX with that of other EU instruments and the uniqueness of TAIEX’s features

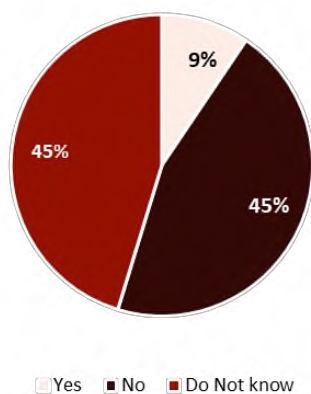


Source: ADE Survey

E5. Would you say that any significant opportunity for impact was missed because of lack of coordination with other types of EU instruments/ actions/ support?

The total number of respondents to question E5 was 53.

Figure 70: Respondents’ opinion about the possibility of missed (or not missed) impact due to a lack of coordination

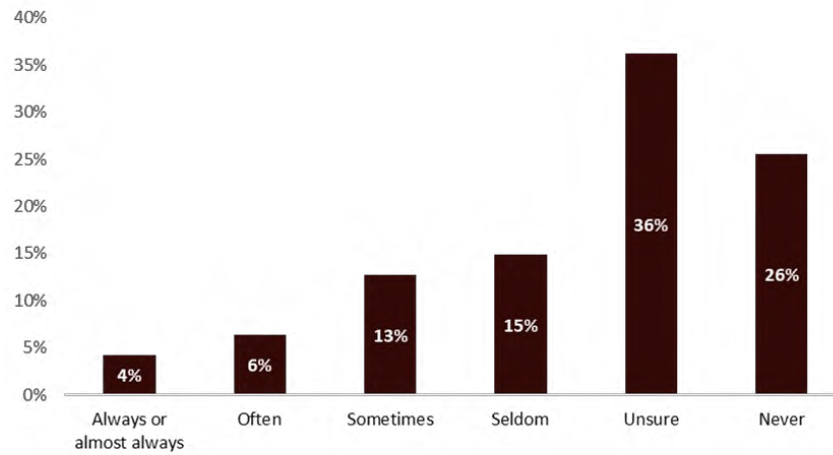


Source: ADE Survey

E6. In your experience, how often do EU Member States institutions (e.g. embassies) get directly involved in the organization of events or events themselves? (Beyond the participation of national experts)

Question E6 was not addresses to EIR Contact Points, hence the total number of respondents was 47.

Figure 71: Respondents' opinion on the degree of direct involvement of EU MS institutions in the organization of events



Source: ADE Survey

ANNEX 4: LIST OF EVENTS INCLUDED IN CASE STUDIES

1 Case study 1: TAIEX Classic in the Enlargement Countries (TAIEX IPA)

TAIEX Strand	Year Start Date	Event Id	Name	Event Classification	Event Group	Beneficiary Country	Amount	Chapter of the Acquis
IPA	2016	61945	TAIEX Expert Mission on Drafting the Strategic Document against Cannabis Cultivation and Trafficking	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Kosovo	5467.93	27 Environment
IPA	2020	80303	TAIEX Expert Mission on Climate change and its impact on health	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Kosovo	13899.6	27 Environment
IPA	2017	63887	TAIEX online Workshop on the use of blockchain technology to support the public administration during the Covid -19 crisis	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Kosovo	5014.98	18 Statistics
IPA	2018	66578	TAIEX ECRAN Multi-Beneficiary Workshop on Protected Area Management and Development of Tourism Infrastructure	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Kosovo	4185.37	23 Judiciary and fundamental rights
IPA	2018	67435	TAIEX Online Expert Mission on Draft of the Law on Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Montenegro	5559.51	24 Justice, freedom and security
IPA	2017	63482	TAIEX Expert Mission on E-training on Classified Information	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Montenegro	4094.52	24 Justice, freedom and security
IPA	2018	65587	TAIEX Workshop on the development of a mentoring programme for newly appointed judges	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	North Macedonia	8051.07	23 Judiciary and fundamental rights
IPA	2019	68808	TAIEX Expert Mission on Review of the Strategy on Biodiversity 2011-2020 and Development of an Action Plan 2016-2020	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	North Macedonia	5672.07	12 Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy
IPA	2017	65164	TAIEX Expert Mission on transposing the Industrial Emissions Directive	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Serbia	7212.98	24 Justice, freedom and security
IPA	2017	63867	Twinning Review Mission on Support to Statistics	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Albania	9470.2	24 Justice, freedom and security
IPA	2020	80131	TAIEX Expert Mission on the Data Protection and Access to Public Documents draft laws	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Albania	13460	27 Environment ,28 Consumer and health protection
IPA	2020	80022	TAIEX Expert Mission on Drafting the Regulation on Universal Services	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Bosnia and Herzegovina	6080	24 Justice, freedom and security
IPA	2017	63037	TAIEX Study Visit on Determining the Criteria for Less Favoured Areas Payment Scheme for Mountain Areas	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Bosnia and Herzegovina	5026.34	23 Judiciary and fundamental rights, 24 Justice, freedom and security
IPA	2016	63098	TAIEX Expert Mission on the Implementation of the Asylum Law	Expert Mission	Part of a Series	Montenegro	4437.05	23 Judiciary and fundamental rights, 24

								Justice, freedom and security
IPA	2016	63631	TAIEX Expert Mission on Establishing a Civil Protection and Rescue System	Expert Mission	Part of a Series	Montenegro	5305.27	24 Justice, freedom and security
IPA	2017	65196	TAIEX Expert Mission on Drafting the Strategy and Action Plan on Prisons and Probation	Expert Mission	Part of a Series	Kosovo	4605.37	10 Information society and media
IPA	2020	70703	TAIEX Expert Mission on Information Materials for Applicants for International Protection	Workshop	TAIEX Classic	Albania	8083	10 Information society and media
IPA	2015	61017	TAIEX Study Visit on Inspection Control on Food Nutritional Declarations and Health Claims	Workshop	TAIEX Classic	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey	56573.3	27 Environment
IPA	2019	66839	TAIEX Twinning Review Mission on Support to efficient Prevention and Fight against Corruption	Workshop	TAIEX Classic	Bosnia and Herzegovina	22368.75	23 Judiciary and fundamental rights
IPA	2019	67110	TAIEX Expert Mission on EFSA data collection	Workshop	TAIEX Classic	Serbia	7867.6	24 Justice, freedom and security)
IPA	2018	61680	TAIEX Study Visit on Prevention of Money Laundering	Workshop	TAIEX Classic	Turkey	18105.91	12 Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy
IPA	2017	59312	TAIEX Expert Mission on Customs and Cybercrime: Introducing and Addressing the Phenomenon	Study Visit	TAIEX Classic	Turkey	13957.63	24 Justice, freedom and security
IPA	2019	65205	TAIEX Workshop on technical preparation of "Prüm like" PCC SEE AFIS Database network in Serbia	Study Visit	TAIEX Classic	Turkey	10586.04	24 Justice, freedom and security
IPA	2018	65233	TAIEX Workshop on Multitoxin Analysis in Food and Feed	Study Visit	TAIEX Classic	North Macedonia	8579.66	24 Justice, freedom and security
IPA	2018	64726	TAIEX Study Visit on Detection of False and Forged Documents in Maritime Law Enforcement	Study Visit	TAIEX Classic	Kosovo	10553.74	11 Agriculture and rural development
IPA	2017	62013	TAIEX Study Visit on Supporting Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings	Study Visit	TAIEX Classic	Montenegro	9128.23	12 Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy

2 Case Study 2: TAIEX Strategic in the Enlargement Countries (TAIEX IPA)

TAIEX Strand	Year Start Date	Event Id	Name	Event Classification	Event Group	Beneficiary Country	Amount	Chapter of the Acquis
IPA	2019	69259	TAIEX work from home for peer review mission on public procurement	Work Home	from TAIEX Strategic	Serbia	4816	24 Justice, freedom and security
IPA	2020	70190	TAIEX work from home following peer review mission on fight against	Work Home	from TAIEX Strategic	Montenegro	6216	24 Justice, freedom and security

			terrorism and violent extremism					
IPA	2019	64268	TAIEX Workshop on Support for Young Farmers within Rural Development Programs	Workshop	TAIEX Strategic	Turkey	27857.17	11 Agriculture and rural development
IPA	2020	69349	TAIEX Expert mission on assistance for the preparation of the 2020-2022 Economic Reform Programmes (ERPs)	Expert Mission	TAIEX Strategic	Bosnia and Herzegovina	7838	17 Economic and monetary policy
IPA	2018	67768	TAIEX Peer Review Mission on Visa Policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Expert Mission	TAIEX Strategic	Bosnia and Herzegovina	11444.7	24 Justice, freedom and security
IPA	2019	69363	TAIEX Expert mission on preparing the 2020-2022 Economic Reform Programmes (ERPs)	Expert Mission	TAIEX Strategic	Montenegro	8888.01	17 Economic and monetary policy
IPA	2020	80017	TAIEX Expert Mission on Improvement of biocidal products surveillance	Expert Mission	TAIEX Strategic	Montenegro	11320	27 Environment
IPA	2018	66604	TAIEX Expert Mission on Inspection Requirements of the SEVESO III Directive	Expert Mission	TAIEX Strategic	Montenegro	7376.37	27 Environment
IPA	2019	69327	Expert mission on assistance for the preparation of the 2020-2022 Economic Reform Programmes (ERPs)	Expert Mission	TAIEX Strategic	North Macedonia	9093.9	17 Economic and monetary policy
IPA	2020	70475	TAIEX Workshop on Joint Inspection Control for Industrial Emissions	Workshop	TAIEX Strategic	Montenegro	12990.36	27 Environment
IPA	2017	64469	TAIEX Workshop on Environmental Monitoring	Workshop	TAIEX Strategic	Serbia	12170.67	27 Environment
IPA	2020	80288	TAIEX EPPA National Workshop on creating a Circular Economy	Workshop	TAIEX Strategic	Turkey	13800	27 Environment
IPA	2018	66494	TAIEX Study Visit on Quality Control of Water Intended for Human Consumption	Study Visit	TAIEX Strategic	Montenegro	8255.78	27 Environment

3 Case Study 3: TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood (TAIEX ENI)

TAIEX Strand	Year Start Date	Event Id	Name	Event Classification	Event Group	Beneficiary Country	Amount	Chapter of the Acquis
ENI	2020	80006	TAIEX Workshop on Best practices in the field of public order and security in crisis management caused by COVID-19	Workshop	TAIEX Classic	Moldova	10249	24 Justice, freedom and security
ENI	2017	65386	TAIEX Regional Workshop on Circular Economy	Workshop	TAIEX strategic	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine	27088.41	27 Environment
ENI	2017	65755	TAIEX Multicounty Workshop on ICT innovation and start-up ecosystems	Workshop	TAIEX strategic	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia,	16756.14	10 Information

						Moldova, Ukraine		society and media
ENI	2019	64681	TAIEX Workshop on Carrying out Efficient Customs Control of Travelers	Workshop	TAIEX Classic	Azerbaijan	14769.95	29 Customs union
ENI	2017	64347	TAIEX Study Visit on School Inspection Management	Study Visit	Part of a Series	Azerbaijan	8117.3	26 Education and culture (Partial),26.10 Education and training [16.30] (Complete)
ENI	2018	65793	TAIEX Expert Mission on Support on e-government development	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Azerbaijan	10898.61	10 Information society and media
ENI	2020	70456	TAIEX Online Expert Mission on the approximation to the Environmental Liability Directive	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Armenia	14664	27 Environment
ENI	2019	68931	TAIEX Peer Review Mission on Police reform in Armenia	Expert Mission	TAIEX strategic	Armenia	14305.62	24 Justice, freedom and security
ENI	2018	66929	TAIEX Expert Mission on Security Measures against Cyber-Threats during Elections	Expert Mission	TAIEX strategic	Ukraine	8217.63	10 Information society and media, 24 Justice, freedom and security
ENI	2020	70633	TAIEX Online Expert Mission on development of a National Maritime Single Window	Expert Mission	TAIEX strategic	Georgia	8812	14 Transport policy
ENI	2018	66731	TAIEX Expert Mission on Strategic Support to the Moldovan Organic Farming Sector	Expert Mission	TAIEX strategic	Moldova	4304.85	11 Agriculture and rural development
ENI	2019	68746	TAIEX Expert Mission on Supervisory Review and Evaluation of Credit and Counterparty Risk	Expert Mission	TAIEX strategic	Moldova	9539.08	09 Financial services
ENI	2020	70718	TAIEX Online Expert Mission on Harmonisation of International Road Freight Regulations with EU requirements	Expert Mission	TAIEX strategic	Armenia	8730	14 Transport policy
ENI	2017	64951	TAIEX Study Visit on Resilient and Efficient Institutions working on Cyber-Security	Study Visit	TAIEX strategic	Ukraine	8232.34	10 Information society and media,24 Justice, freedom and security
ENI	2019	69096	TAIEX Study Visit on Macprudential Policy Instruments	Study Visit	TAIEX strategic	Moldova	7612.98	09 Financial services

4 Case Study 4: TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood (TAIEX ENI)

TAIEX Strand	Year Start Date	Event Id	Name	Event Classification	Event Group	Beneficiary Country	Amount	Chapter of the Acquis
ENI	2019	65845	TAIEX Expert Mission on the Administrative Management of Prosecution Offices	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Egypt	7636.7	23 Judiciary and fundamental rights, 24 Justice, freedom and security
ENI	2020	66865	TAIEX Expert Mission on Institutional national accounts	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Palestine	9640	18 Statistics
ENI	2018	67053	TAIEX Expert Mission on Training Capacities of the Internal Security Forces of Lebanon	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Lebanon	5660.18	24 Justice, freedom and security
ENI	2017	65160*	Mission d'expert TAIEX sur la lutte contre l'usage des engins explosifs par des groupes terroristes	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Tunisia	13300.8	24 Justice, freedom and security
ENI	2018	65436	TAIEX Workshop on Whistle-blower, Witness and Expert Protection in Corruption Cases	Workshop	TAIEX strategic	Tunisia	19148.54	23 Judiciary and fundamental rights
ENI	2020	68837	TAIEX Workshop to fight against corruption and better protect whistle-blowers	Workshop	TAIEX Classic	Tunisia	6092	23 Judiciary and fundamental rights
ENI	2017	65710*	TAIEX Workshop on Illicit Firearms Trafficking in Lebanon	Workshop	TAIEX Classic	Lebanon	23187.83	24 Justice, freedom and security
ENI	2018	65992	Visite d'étude TAIEX sur l'organisation et le fonctionnement du Secrétariat Général du Gouvernement	Study Visit	TAIEX Classic	Tunisia	7112.43	35 Other issues
ENI	2017	64016	TAIEX Study Visit on Crime Scene Investigation Techniques	Study Visit	TAIEX Classic	Egypt	10741.29	24 Justice, freedom and security
ENI	2018	65437	TAIEX Expert Mission on Corruption-cases Exposure and Whistle-blower Protection	Expert Mission		Tunisia	4,304.85	23 Judiciary and fundamental rights
ENI	2019	68963	TAIEX Workshop on Countering Firearms Trafficking and Firearms Databases	Workshop		Lebanon	10,249	24 Justice, freedom and security

*For this event it was not possible to contact beneficiaries either through the survey or through interviews, due to a lack of available contact details. Its analysis is therefore exclusively based on review of available documentation and the after 6-month evaluations

5 Case Study 5: TAIEX in EU Member States (TAIEX SRSP/ REGIO/ EIR)

TAIEX Strand	Year Start Date	Event Id	Name	Event Classification	Event Group	Beneficiary Country	Amount	Chapter of the Acquis
EIR	2018	67419	TAIEX EIR P2P Expert Mission on Waste Management	Expert Mission	Part of a Series	Portugal	13597.8	27 Environment
REGIO	2019	69576	TAIEX REGIO Multi-Country Workshop on State Aid in the Rail and Public Transport Sectors	Workshop	TAIEX Classic	Poland, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Lithuania, Romania	8149.99	22 Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments

REGIO	2020	80052	TAIEX REGIO Online workshop on roadmaps for administrative capacity building	Workshop	TAIEX Classic	Lithuania	12026	22 Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments
REGIO	2020	63184	TAIEX REGIO Online Expert Mission on Public Contract Management and Detection of Errors	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Lithuania	7200	22 Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments
REGIO	2017	62777	TAIEX REGIO Expert Mission on the Efficient Use of Technical Assistance under European Structural and Investment Funds	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Lithuania	4066.68	22 Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments
REGIO	2018	62883	TAIEX REGIO Study Visit on Ex-Post Control of Projects Financed under ERDF	Study Visit	TAIEX Classic	Lithuania	5107.5	22 Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments
SRSP	2020	69899	TAIEX SRSP Study Visit on E-commerce	Study Visit	SRSP PEER 2 PEER	Belgium	8471.88	16 Taxation
SRSP	2019	69849	TAIEX SRSP Workshop on Digital transition for schools	Workshop	Part of a Series	Belgium	13614.35	26 Education and culture
SRSP	2020	80043	TAIEX SRSP Online Workshop Supporting the digital transition of the BE-FR education system	Workshop	SRSP PEER 2 PEER	Belgium	10892	26 Education and culture
SRSP	2020	70157	TAIEX SRSP Expert Mission on Technical Support to the co-operative compliance reform and implementation of the co-operative compliance programme	Expert Mission	Part of a Series	Belgium	10260	16 Taxation
SRSP	2019	68618	TAIEX SRSP Expert Mission on Strengthening the administrative capacity of the National Agency for Fiscal Administration	Expert Mission	Part of a Series	Romania	5182.29	16 Taxation
SRSP	2018	66479	TAIEX SRSP Expert Mission on Anti Money Laundering Interview Techniques	Expert Mission	Part of a Series	Latvia	10331.52	24 Justice, freedom and security
SRSP	2018	67285	TAIEX SRSP Expert Mission on Implementation of Integrated Tax Administration System	Expert Mission	Part of a Series	Cyprus	14308.3	16 Taxation
SRSP	2020	70706	TAIEX SRSP Expert Mission on Implementation of Integrated Tax Administration System	Expert Mission	Part of a Series	Cyprus	3000	16 Taxation
SRSP	2019	68811	TAIEX SRSP Work from Home on developing a unified evaluation system for research, experimental development and innovation projects	Work from Home	Part of a Series	Lithuania	4466	20 Enterprise and industrial policy

SRSP	2019	68982	TAIEX SRSP Workshop on reform of school leadership	Workshop	Part of a Series	Lithuania	24439.12	26 Education and culture
SRSP	2020	70545	TAIEX SRSP Workshop on the Cypriot disability assessment	Workshop	Part of a Series	Lithuania, Latvia	5620	19 Social policy and employment
SRSP	2019	69419	TAIEX SRSP Study visit on reform of the school management system and improvement of school leadership	Study Visit	SRSP PEER 2 PEER	Lithuania	10765.33	26 Education and culture
SRSP	2019	69286	TAIEX SRSP Study Visit on financial account compilation	Study Visit	Part of a Series	Croatia	8938.35	32 Financial control
SRSP	2018	66206	TAIEX SRSP Workshop on Change Management in the National Agency for Fiscal Administration	Workshop	Part of a Series	Romania	12604.63	16 Taxation
SRSP	2019	69419	TAIEX SRSP Study visit on reform of the school management system and improvement of school leadership	Study Visit	SRSP PEER 2 PEER	Lithuania	10765.33	26 Education and culture
SRSP	2018	67443	TAIEX SRSP Study Visit on Support to build specialised transfer pricing capacity in Croatia	Study Visit	SRSP PEER 2 PEER	Croatia	4641.12	16 Taxation

6 Case Study 6: TAIEX in the Turkish Cypriot community (TAIEX TCc)

TAIEX Strand	Year Start Date	Event Id	Name	Event Classification	Event Group	Beneficiary Country	Amount	Chapter of the Acquis
TCc	2020	80321	Expert Mission on residues	Expert Mission	MTA	Turkish Cypriot community	4530	12 Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy
TCc	2020	80413	Mission on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualification (MRPQ)	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Turkish Cypriot community	9090	03 Right of establishment and freedom to provide services
TCc	2015	60240	Expert Mission on Mission on Industrial Pollution Control	Expert Mission	MTA	Turkish Cypriot community	10973.42	27 Environment
TCc	2020	80263	Assistance in the field of Food Safety and Animal Health	Work from Home	MTA	Turkish Cypriot community	13750	12 Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy
TCc	2020	80053	MTA in the field of Environment	Work from Home	MTA	Turkish Cypriot community	13250	27 Environment
TCc	2016	61202	Expert Mission on Industrial Pollution Control	Expert Mission	MTA	Turkish Cypriot community	12098.23	27 Environment

TCc	2019	68316	Expert Mission on Food Safety	Expert Mission	MTA	Turkish Cypriot community	7991.74	12 Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy
TCc	2019	68279	Expert Mission on Chemicals	Expert Mission	MTA	Turkish Cypriot community	8290.6	27 Environment
TCc	2019	68200	Expert Mission on Statistics	Expert Mission	MTA	Turkish Cypriot community	5954.85	18 Statistics
TCc	2018	66147	Expert Mission on Mission on Statistics	Expert Mission	Part of a Series	Turkish Cypriot community	15250.27	18 Statistics
TCc	2018	67538	Expert Mission on Green Line Trade - Inspection of Fishing Vessels	Expert Mission	MTA	Turkish Cypriot community	25099.78	01 Free movement of goods
TCc	2018	67903	Expert Mission on Noise	Expert Mission	MTA	Turkish Cypriot community	10171.72	27 Environment
TCc	2017	64564	Expert Mission on Mission on Nature Protection and Natura 2000	Expert Mission	TAIEX Classic	Turkish Cypriot community	7870	27 Environment
TCc	2017	64197	TAIEX Expert Mission on Assistance on Green Line Trade	Expert Mission	MTA	Turkish Cypriot community	11468.48	12 Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy
TCc	2016	61643	MTA in the field of Free Movement of Goods	Work from Home	Part of a Series	Turkish Cypriot community	3407.7	01 Free movement of goods

7 Case Study 7: TAIEX in the Rest of the World (TAIEX PI/ INTPA)

TAIEX Strand	Year Start Date	Event Id	Name	Event Classification	Event Group	Beneficiary Country	Amount	Chapter of the Acquis
PI	2016	62261	TAIEX PI Expert Mission in support of the EU-Mexico High Level Dialogue on Security and Justice	Expert Mission	TAIEX Strategic	Mexico	30998.44	24 Justice, freedom and security
PI	2019	68711	TAIEX PI- Multicountry Workshop Towards a Pacific Alliance common visa	Workshop	Other	Colombia, Chile, Mexico	80127.39	24 Justice, freedom and security
INTPA	2020	70650	TAIEX Workshop on transition from face-to-face modality of the justice system to virtual users and customer services	Workshop	TAIEX Strategic	Dominican Republic	10122.75	23 Judiciary and fundamental rights, 24 Justice, freedom and security
PI	2018	66347	TAIEX PI Expert Mission on Countering Online Radicalisation	Expert Mission	TAIEX Strategic	India	24264.29	24 Justice, freedom and security

PI	2017	63336	TAIEX PI Expert Mission on the Monitoring and Analysis of Veterinary Medicines Residues	Expert Mission	Part of a Series	India	12143.5	12 Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy
PI	2017	63433*	TAIEX PI Expert Mission on Crisis Management Operations: Human Rights and Gender Issues	Expert Mission	TAIEX Strategic	Chile	24667.19	23 Judiciary and fundamental rights
PI	2017	64827	TAIEX PI Expert Mission on Alignment to EU Import/Export Standards	Expert Mission	TAIEX Strategic	Kyrgyzstan	13513.03	30 External relations
PI	2020	80114	TAIEX PI Workshop on Labour Conflict Management with Peru	Workshop	TAIEX Strategic	Peru	12442.46	19 Social policy and employment
PI	2017	65687	TAIEX PI Expert Mission on the FATF Action Plan: Targeted Financial Sanctions Regime	Expert Mission		Iran		04 Free movement of capital 09 Financial services 24 Justice, freedom and security 32 Financial control

* For this event it was not possible to contact beneficiaries either through the survey or through interviews, due to a lack of available contact details. Its analysis is therefore exclusively based on review of available documentation and the after 6-month evaluations.

ANNEX 5: CASE STUDIES

ANNEX 5A: TAIEX CLASSIC AND STRATEGIC IN THE ENLARGEMENT REGION (TAIEX IPA)

1 Coverage & Methodology

These two case studies cover TAIEX Classic and TAIEX Strategic¹¹ events in the Enlargement countries. The two case studies are presented jointly to favour systematic comparisons between them and to limit repetitions given large degree of common characteristics.

The cases studies focus primarily on an in-depth review of 39 events, 26 classic and 13 strategic. These events cover all of the countries of the region. Albania and Kosovo¹² are only covered under TAIEX Classic. Events were selected to be loosely representative of the overall sample of 2015-2020 events, though a clustering approach has also been used. For the complete list of events reviewed in-depth as well as for more details on the selection of events, see Annex 4. In addition to the detailed review of documentation associated with the events selected for in-depth study (application forms, approval forms, authorization forms, final reports), the case study relied on interviews (4 beneficiaries, 3 TAIEX Team staff, 1 NCP, 2 EUDEL TAIEX Focal Points), 2 focus group discussions (1 with TAIEX NCPs and EUDEL TAIEX Focal points and 1 with TAIEX Experts); in depth review of the results of the two surveys conducted in the context of this evaluation; analysis of the after 6-months evaluations of all TAIEX events in the Enlargement Region; a review of strategic documentation associated with the TAIEX IPA strand; review of previous evaluations; and finally a documentary review of a randomly selected sample of rejected applications.

2 Overview of TAIEX in the Enlargement Region, 2015-2020

The first and biggest TAIEX strand

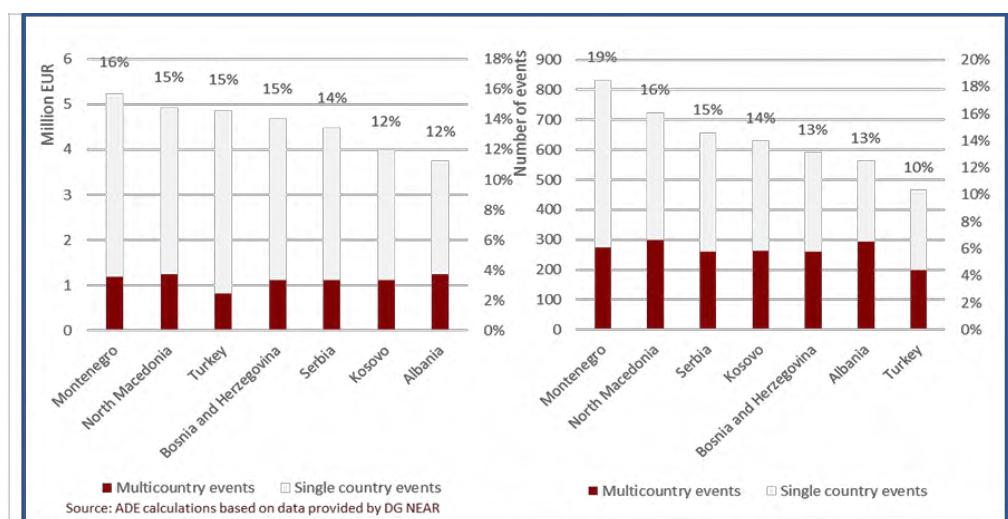
TAIEX IPA was launched in 1996, following, the 1995 White Paper. Originally intended as a two-year tool to support EU accession candidate countries in transposing and implementing EU legislation (acquis) specifically related to the internal single market. Since 1998, expanded to cover technical assistance for all EU legislation. Despite the expansion of the geographic coverage of TAIEX in recent years through the introduction of additional strands, Pre-accession countries have remained the biggest beneficiaries of TAIEX. A total of 3281 TAIEX events benefitted exclusively the Enlargement region in the 2015-2020 period, accounting for about EUR 31.4 million in direct expenditure (60% of the total TAIEX expenditure). In addition to these, Pre-accession countries also benefitted from 68 multi-country events¹³ that also involved Eastern and/or Southern Neighbourhood countries, corresponding to a total of EUR 2.8 million. Overall, Montenegro was the biggest recipient of TAIEX funds in the Enlargement Region (16%), followed by North Macedonia (15%), Turkey (15%), Bosnia Herzegovina (15%) and Serbia (14%). Kosovo and Armenia benefitted from 12% of funds each.

¹¹ The case study on TAIEX Strategic events that were requested by European Institutions but also events organised in the context of training maps. These are jointly requested by beneficiaries and the Commission. They have since the recalibration of TAIEX been classified by the Commission as strategic due to their policy planning role.

¹² This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and it is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

¹³ 61 workshops, 6 work-from-homes, and 1 study visit. The multi-country work-from-homes focused almost exclusively on digitalisation issues during the COVID pandemic (e-Health, e-Education, Telecom/Broadband, Cybersecurity and e-Government). There was also a TAIEX Work from Home on Gender Gap in TAIEX experts.

Figure 72: Expenditure and number of events involving the Enlargement Region by country, total in million EUR and share¹



A large decline in TAIEX Classic events but a small increase in TAIEX Strategic events

The number of events organised annually under TAIEX involving exclusively Pre-Accession countries rapidly declined between 2015 and 2019, falling from 816 events to 391 events. In 2020, in the context of the COVID pandemic, a total of 118 events were organised, most of which were organised online. The rapid decline of events was driven by both a decline in the demand for TAIEX Classic events and an increase in rejection rates. The introduction of TAIEX strategic boosted demand but was insufficient to counter the decline in TAIEX Classic, having peaked at 144 events in 2018. Since its introduction the share of TAIEX Classic events has been systematically increasing from 29% in 2017 to 56% in 2019.

Differences in the thematic priorities pursued under TAIEX Strategic and TAIEX Classic

There are significant differences between TAIEX Strategic and TAIEX Classic in the Enlargement region in terms of the chapters of the acquis that they target. Under TAIEX Classic the top chapters of the acquis in terms of expenditures on which TAIEX provided expertise were Justice, freedom and security (21%); Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy (16%); Judiciary and fundamental rights (12%); Agriculture and rural development (10%); Environment (7%); and Consumer and health protection (6%). Under TAIEX Strategic the top chapters were Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy (27%), Environment (17%), Agriculture and rural development (15%); Justice, Freedom and Security (10%); Judiciary and Fundamental rights (9%); and Fisheries (5%).

Extensive use of series of events and expert missions. More use of workshops under TAIEX Strategic

The largest share of TAIEX Classic events focusing exclusively on the Enlargement Region in the 2015-2020 period were expert missions (41.1%), followed by study visits (34.7%) and workshops (24.3%). The distribution of events was different for TAIEX Strategic in the region: Expert mission were also the most common type of event (40.1%) followed by workshops (35.1%) and work from home (10.5%). Study visits were much less frequent than under TAIEX Classic with 8.1%, followed by screenings with 6.3%. Peer-review missions (a special type of expert missions) and screenings are a unique feature of TAIEX Strategic in the region. These types of events were only used in this and the ENI EAST strand.

3 *Insights emerging from the case study, referring to each EQ*

EQ1 Relevance at the instrument level: The instrument's ability to address needs

Box 2: Summary of findings related to EQ1, TAIEX IPA case study

- The introduction of TAIEX IPA in 1996 addressed a clear gap in the EU Toolkit. The unique features of TAIEX IPA (Peer working, swiftness, flexibility and low bureaucracy) made it an instrument able to play a valuable and gap filling role in the Enlargement Region, providing short-term and well targeted support to beneficiaries for the alignment with the EU acquis.
- The different evolutions of the strand, including the introduction of TAIEX Strategic in 2016 and of TAIEX for local authorities in 2018, were relevant to the needs of beneficiaries and were aligned with EU priorities.
- The institutional set-up of TAIEX was well-designed. However, in practice frequent staff rotations within the TAIEX Team, a lack of a clear management structure and challenges in keeping the EDBE up to date undermined institutional efficiency.
- **The existing catalogue of activities was sufficiently comprehensive. However, two challenges have been identified: study visits as insufficiently flexible in terms of participants and the lack of an even more short-term type of event for very punctual follow-up of events.**

TAIEX IPA was launched in 1996, following, the 1995 White Paper. It had a very clear and relevant purpose a) strengthening the beneficiary countries' administrative capacity to transpose, implement and enforce the EU acquis; b) fostering the exchange of best practice among peers in all areas where reforms are required as part of the accession preparation process; c) facilitating cooperation between the Western Balkans and Turkey through the organisation of multi-country events; and d) identifying gaps and assessing the progress of beneficiary countries in the approximation process through peer-review missions.

The introduction of TAIEX in the region addressed a clear gap in the EU Toolkit. The 1995 White Paper, identified a clear need for as a rapid and short-term instrument intended to act as a problem solver and a catalyst that would complement other programmes (initially, the national Phare programmes) by responding with tailor-made actions to individual requests that could not otherwise be covered by other EU Instruments (which tended to be slower and more long-term).

The persistence of the need for an instrument like TAIEX was reaffirmed with the Multi-Country Strategy Paper 2014-2020 (MCSP), the Indicative Strategy Papers (Strategy Papers), the South East Europe 2020 Strategy and is repeatedly being reaffirmed in the European Commission's annual Progress Reports. These documents have identified rule of law, economic governance, democracy and fundamental rights- areas highly targeted by TAIEX- as key EU priorities in the Enlargement region.

Appropriateness of the design of TAIEX

The institutional set-up of TAIEX was well-designed to promote the rapid, flexible, and service-oriented implementation of TAIEX. Interviewed stakeholders identified the following key features: thematic and country specialisation of the TAIEX Team, development of the EDBE and the installation of the TAIEX Team within DG NEAR C3). **However, in practice frequent staff rotations within the TAIEX Team, a lack of a clear management structure and challenges in keeping the EDBE up to date undermined institutional efficiency.**

Peer working nature was relevant: Peer working was considered by beneficiaries and involved stakeholders as one of the unique essential features of TAIEX similarly to the quickness, flexibility and low bureaucracy. It was particularly suitable for the pursuit of TAIEX's objectives because it allowed beneficiaries to:

- a. Learn directly from experts whose institutions followed the model they sought to pursue, or similar/ related ones. The beneficiaries had the opportunity to suggest from which country the experts should come from.

- b. Focus on practical and concrete experience (unlike other types of trainings and interactions which may also be useful, though in other circumstances and/ or in a complementary fashion). Experts could draw on their experience to provide practical information and bring clarity to details/ obstacles of particular interest to practitioners.

It also contributed to the formation of peer-to-peer networks which were highly valued by both beneficiaries and experts and were associated with higher levels of effectiveness and sustainability of results.

The existing catalogue of activities was sufficiently comprehensive:

- Each type of event had unique results/ addressed specific needs. Combination of different types allowed for a comprehensive approach:
 - For example, study visits tended to be highly technical and specific in nature and were used to allow beneficiaries to directly observe the practices they sought to adopt: in Montenegro the 2018 TAIEX Study Visit on Quality Control of Water Intended for Human Consumption, the participants had the opportunity to directly observe the practices of MS' institutions involved in the inspection of the quality of water intended for human consumption: Water Supply Management, laboratories and Inspectorates. Thanks to this direct observation of the implementation of the inspection, beneficiary inspectors reported having come to valuable conclusions and findings that has helped them to carry out inspections in a more qualitative manner.
 - On the other hand peer-review missions (a special type of expert missions) such as the ones on assistance for the preparation of the 2020-2022 Economic Reform Programmes (ERPs), in North Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina served in identifying the gaps between EU beneficiaries' regulatory frameworks and the EU acquis, in assessing the progress beneficiaries had made in view of the Copenhagen Criteria, and in providing concrete recommendations about how identified gaps could be addressed. Peer-review missions which were only used under TAIEX IPA and TAIEX ENI EAST where highly valued by EU stakeholders but also beneficiaries as policy planning tools.
- Series of events option were crucial for supporting even bigger reforms when other longer-term instruments such as Twinning were not available for political or other reasons
- Online events, introduced in 2020 in the context of the pandemic were critical for the continuation of service and for addressing urgent needs associated with the crisis. However, they lacked the key feature of informal interactions that was highly appreciated by beneficiaries and described as essential for the achievement of results (see EQ3). Satisfaction with online events in the surveys was particularly low in TAIEX IPA compared to other strands.

Two challenges have been identified by surveyed and interviewed stakeholders in terms of the catalogue of activities:

- Study visits as insufficiently flexible in terms of participants.
- Lack of an even more short-term type of event for very punctual follow-up of events which was in some cases identified as essential. Such follow-up was in some case conducted in an informal fashion outside TAIEX at the initiative of the experts.

The evolution of TAIEX IPA

Over the years, a number of evolutions took place in the TAIEX IPA strand, including the introduction of TAIEX Strategic, of training maps and workplans and of TAIEX for Local Authorities. The recommendations of the two previous evaluations on the TAIEX IPA strand in 2007 and 2014 appear to have been considered in these evolutions.

Expansion of thematic scope: In 1998, the mandate of the TAIEX IPA strand was extended to cover the entire acquis (in accordance with Agenda 2000) instead of just chapters of the acquis related to operating in the internal market. This expansion was based on the recognition that "as the enlargement process proceeds, the assistance becomes more and more detailed and specialized,

making the support from MS experts even more vital, since they are the only ones with real experience in implementing the Acquis.” (Commission decision, 2000). The high take-up rates and favourable feedback from beneficiary countries, which highlighted among others the fact that TAIEX covered needs that other instrument do not, were also considered when deciding the extension of the instrument. (Source: Commission decision of 1998).

Introduction of TAIEX Strategic: Originally, TAIEX IPA, was purely demand-driven and events could only be requested by national public administrations (TAIEX Classic). In 2016, with the recalibration of TAIEX, TAIEX Strategic was also introduced which extended the possibility to request events to Commission services (country units, EU Delegations or line DGs). The options for training maps and workplans were also introduced with the recalibration. This evolution of the instrument was the result of a series of consultations involving the senior management of DG NEAR; DG NEAR Heads of Units; DG NEAR directors; beneficiary countries and EU Delegations. The Introduction of TAIEX Strategic was expected to allow for better thematic prioritisation, stronger focus on EU’s priorities, particularly (but not only) concerning fundamental and structural reforms, improved coordination with other units and finally better sequencing of events while having at the same time in mind staff constraints that TAIEX was facing at the time.

Introduction of TAIEX for Local Authorities: From 2018, TAIEX operated a pilot in three Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia), through the so-called TAIEX Strategic support for local authorities. The instrument was intended to deliver fast and tailor-made activities for local and regional authorities on targeted topics of human resources management and service delivery to citizens. EUEDEL focal points from these countries highlighted the important role local authorities play in the implementation of legislation and standards and reaffirmed the need for supporting their capacity building. Those from countries not having yet benefited from it expressing a clear interest in its expansion.

EQ2 relevance at intervention level: Did specific interventions address needs?

Box 3: Summary of findings related to EQ2, TAIEX IPA case study

- TAIEX IPA events were in line with EU priorities in the Enlargement region and addressed in a relevant way specific beneficiaries needs. TAIEX’s approach and well-established processes were well designed to ensure alignment.
- The only concerns systematically raised in terms of relevance were associated with TAIEX Strategic events requested by line DGs as well as with multi-country events. TAIEX Strategic events were reported as being less likely to promote government ownership than their classic counterparts. Multi-country events were often too broad/failure to adapt to the specific needs/ capacities of individual countries. interpretation/ communication challenges.

TAIEX events in the Enlargement Region were in line and adapted to EU priorities in the region as well as to specific beneficiaries needs. Interviewed stakeholders attributed the relevance of TAIEX events to the TAIEX approach and established process including: a) the internal consultation prior to approval; b) the systematic involvement of beneficiaries in the design of events both for TAIEX Classic and TAIEX Strategic, as well as c) the occasional use of peer-review missions and work-from-home events to review the context, identify gaps as well as prepare other types of events.

Box 4 : The Importance of the Internal Consultation Process for the relevance of events

The completion of the approval form during the internal consultation process by the different stakeholders seems to be more than a tick the box exercise with adjustments occasionally being requested prior to approval. For instance, in the case of the 2020 TAIEX Expert Mission on Climate change and its impact on health in Albania (80131), the beneficiaries had originally requested a series of events. Instead, the TAIEX Team only approved one expert mission that was intended to assess how to best address the identified needs. The TAIEX Team indicated that it was important for the TAIEX experts to analyse the current situation in Albania, existing legislation and structures in place in order to assess if longer term assistance, such as a Twinning project, would be more

appropriate instead of series of TAIEX events given the complexity of the request. Similarly, for the 2017 TAIEX Expert Mission on Drafting the Regulation on Universal Services (65196) in Bosnia & Herzegovina, there appears to have been a lengthy discussion over what the content of the event should be to address the identified needs. The EU Office reacted against the inclusion of secondary legislation but eventually DG NEAR C3 convinced them otherwise.

Source: Interviews, TAIEX events' documentation

Case study event documents (particularly: expert reports) show that events consistently addressed beneficiary needs in a relevant way. In the case of events directly requested by beneficiaries, the needs described in the application form closely matched the needs targeted by the events' final agenda. Only in one of the events reviewed for the case studies (2016 TAIEX Multicountry - Workshop on EU acquis related to airport charges and charging scheme for air navigation services), the content of the event was not deemed sufficiently relevant. According to beneficiaries from several countries the event focused on Regulation 391/2013 and very little on Regulation 1794/2006 which was the Regulation most of the beneficiaries were still trying to implement. It was suggested that the event did not sufficiently consider the difference in progress made across countries. In addition, the content was reported to be too broad with experts failing to provide concrete examples (see also EQ3).

The overall relevance of TAIEX events, was reaffirmed by survey respondents who indicated that events were indeed well conceived, addressing needs, and country owned. 54/62 agreed that the design of individual TAIEX events was sufficiently tailored to the specificities that the type of event organized (i.e. workshop, expert mission, study visit or work from home) was the most appropriate to address needs; and 51/53 that the events were country owned. Survey results also indicate that the vast majority of participants from the Enlargement strongly agreed with the relevance of the information provided and quality of delivery albeit with some exceptions as indicated above.

The only concerns systematically raised in terms of relevance were associated with TAIEX Strategic events requested line DGs and multi-country events:

- **Strategic events:** The systematic involvement of the beneficiary institution in the design of events appears to have been key in ensuring that events are well-conceived and sufficiently tailored to the needs of beneficiaries. Although overall involvement of beneficiaries in the design of events remained high for most TAIEX Strategic events, this was less so the case for events requested by line DGs. According to interviewees, these were less likely to promote government ownership than their classic counterparts. This was also associated with lower likelihood of follow-up by beneficiaries and subsequently more limited results (see EQ3)
- **Multi-country events:** often too broad/failure to adapt to the specific needs/ capacities of individual countries. interpretation/ communication challenges (see EQ3)

EQ3 Capacity development, institutional strengthening, and structural reforms

Box 5: Summary of findings related to EQ3, TAIEX IPA case study

- Despite its relatively small size and short-term nature, TAIEX IPA played an important and in some cases critical role in supporting beneficiary countries in the approximation of EU norms, standards and regulatory frameworks.
- However, TAIEX events did not always manage to achieve their intended results. This was mostly due to the national political context, low quality of experts, too broad/generic or too ambitious agenda, delays, low quality or absence of interpretation, failure to engage the right participants. Online and Multi-country events were associated with more limited results.
- TAIEX strategic events were associated with several advantages in terms of improved visibility, planning and sequencing of events. However, they were linked to lower levels of government ownership and limited likelihood of follow-up. In addition, although the TAIEX recalibration boosted the use of TAIEX by Commission Services/EEAS, there was a lower-than-expected take-up, mostly due to low levels of awareness.

- Peer-review missions were shown to be a valuable tool for EU policy planning in the region, but their use remained limited after 2015 when it reached its peak.
- The results of TAIEX were generally seen as sustainable, although in some cases the lack of follow-up by beneficiaries and frequent staff turnovers undermined the sustainability of results.

Despite TAIEX's relatively small size and short-term nature, TAIEX played an important and in some cases critical role in supporting beneficiary countries in the approximation of EU norms, standards and regulatory frameworks. It did so, by playing a number of different roles:

1. It strengthened the capacity of beneficiary administrations
2. It provided highly technical support allowing for the design and/or implementation of reforms
3. It acted as a gap filling tool addressing specific short-term needs that could not be addressed through other longer-term instruments such as Twinning and TA
4. It served as a policy planning tool (assessing the situation and identifying needs) allowing for better EU programming in the country (TAIEX strategic)
5. It acted as opening initiative for further collaboration in a specific area (TAIEX Strategic)

A number of successful examples have been identified through the case studies:

TAIEX as a tool for the design or implementation of reforms

Box 6: TAIEX's contribution to the design and implementation of Kosovo's Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2020

In 2016 Kosovo, revised its 2011-2020 Strategy on Biodiversity and developed an Action Plan for 2016-2020 to ensure alignment with the EU acquis. In the announcement of the revisions, the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning thanked DG NEAR for supporting the process through three TAIEX Expert missions which were seen as critical for achieving the desired reform. The first mission was used to identify gaps between the Kosovo Biodiversity Strategy and the EU Biodiversity Strategy. The second one to discuss concretely changes to be made in the strategy and the third one to review the draft strategy and New Action Plan. Given the sensitive political context and financial challenges of Kosovo, beneficiaries highlighted that TAIEX was not only highly effective, but also the only instrument available to address their needs. Thanks to this series of TAIEX events Kosovo's legislative framework on Biodiversity reached EU Standards. However, staff shortages and limited funding the degree to which the Action Plan was implemented. Additional TAIEX events were used by different units of the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning to strengthen their capacity to implement the New Strategy, with key staff shortages however, limiting achieved progress. The TAIEX experts also provided support for beneficiaries to apply for other longer-term capacity building instruments to support the implementation process including an IPA TA project and smaller SIDA projects.

Sources: Interviews, Survey, Review of Events documentation, Review of Government of Kosovo publications, after-6-months evaluation.

Box 7: TAIEX's contribution to the Serbia's Law on protection of the freedom and liberties of the national minorities

For the advancement of the Pre-Accession Negotiations on Chapter 23 with Serbia, the EU called for the effective application of Serbia's domestic and international obligations on the protection of the freedom and liberties of the national minorities. TAIEX provided critical support to ensure this was achieved.

A first peer-review mission was organised in the beginning of 2017 on the protection of minorities and cultural rights. This provided an assessment of the status quo and led to the identification of a number of gaps and challenges. On this basis, the government of Serbia developed a Draft Law on the Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities. A follow-up Expert Mission was

requested last minute to ensure that the prepare law was aligned with EU requirement and ensure its alignment with relevant sectoral laws. The same expert was used to capitalise upon her experience. The recommendations provided the basis for a number of amendments to the proposed legislation which was eventually successfully adapted.

Sources: Survey, Review of Events documentation, after-6- months evaluation.

Box 8: TAIEX's support for the design of the Annual Economic Reform Programs across the Enlargement Region

As of 2015, all candidate countries and potential candidates, in order to facilitate the convergence process, are requested to submit annual Economic Reform Programmes (ERP) to the European Commission. The ERPs must include medium-term macroeconomic projections (including for GDP growth, inflation, trade balance and capital flows), budgetary plans for the next three years and a structural reform agenda.

The Enlargement countries have often needed last-minute, short-term assistance to draft their economic reform programs and TAIEX has been instrumental in enabling countries to complete them. A total of 16 TAIEX expert missions (4 in Bosnia & Herzegovina, 4 in Albania, 4 in North Macedonia, 3 in Montenegro, and 1 in Kosovo) and one multi-country workshop took place to support the preparation of the Annual ERPs. The use of TAIEX in the context of the ERPs highlighted the importance of its rapid and short-term nature: The countries need to submit the ERPs on 31st January of each year but they are often unaware of the specific gaps until only a couple of months before the deadline. The definition of the agenda and the selection of experts therefore has to occur rapidly in those months to ensure that the countries can submit the ERPs in time.

Beneficiaries expressed high levels of satisfaction with the received support and highlighted its importance for ensuring their timely compliance with the requirements.

Sources: Interviews, FGD, Survey, Review of Events documentation, after-6-months evaluation.

TAIEX as a tool for short-term capacity building

- In North Macedonia, the 2017 TAIEX Expert Mission on the Assessment of the Use of Discretionary Powers in Public Administrations, led according to beneficiaries to improved knowledge in instruments and mechanism for integrity of law-enforcement agencies and eventually to the adoption of a new methodology for assessment of discretionary powers in line with EU practices.
- The study visit of officials from the Innovation Fund of the Republic of Serbia to the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation in Helsinki, was key in allowing the beneficiaries to strengthen their knowledge and capacity in the area, contributing to the government's efforts to develop a knowledge-based and innovative economy. Finnish experts provided practical advice on the establishment and operation of an innovation ecosystem in line with EU best practice, on performance and impact indicators and on evaluation mechanisms for nationally funded start-ups. According to the European Innovation Scoreboard, Finland was one of the best performing MS in this area and beneficiaries had specifically requested for their expertise.

TAIEX as a tool for the identification of gaps and support for EU policy planning

TAIEX served in identifying the gaps between EU beneficiaries' regulatory frameworks and the EU acquis, in assessing the progress beneficiaries had made in view of the Copenhagen Criteria, and in providing concrete recommendations about how identified gaps could be addressed. This was done mainly through:

- Peer-review missions: 136 peer-review missions and work from home events in support of peer-review missions took place in the region of the Western Balkans and Turkey (TAIEX

IPA) between 2015 and 2020 and provided a key source of information for policy planning, including for the organization of other follow-up TAIEX events by both the Commission/EEAS and beneficiaries themselves, to ensure that the identified gaps were addressed. (See for instance the example of Serbia above)

- Bilateral screenings: 8 bilateral screening events were organized in Serbia. These events served for the presentation of progress on the acquis by the beneficiaries to the Commission and provided a platform for discussion between the beneficiaries and the Commission on the progress that remained to be made.

Even when the identification of gaps was not the explicit objective of the TAIEX expert missions, it was often a result thereof, with several of the final reports of expert missions reviewed for the case studies identifying areas for further action either through TAIEX or other EU and non-EU capacity building instruments.

Box 9: Enabling the Asylum office of Montenegro to improve information materials for asylum seekers

In Montenegro, the 2016 Expert Mission on Information Materials for Applicants for International Protection significantly contributed to the drafting of information materials for asylum seekers and persons who have been granted international protection. The mission was part of Montenegro's training map proposal of 27 events on chapter 24. Although the experts could not work on all the updates, through this single mission, as more time was needed to list and study the current existing informational material and assess all the future needs (taking also into consideration all the potential asylum evolutions), the event enabled the Asylum Office to acquire a clear image of the gaps in the existing information material and provided concrete suggestions for improving at least part of it.

Sources: Interview, Survey, Review of Events documentation, after-6- months evaluation, AAR 2016

The overall capacity of the instrument to contribute to both individual and institutional capacity building as well as to reforms was also reaffirmed during the Focus Group Discussions, Interviews and Surveys. More specifically:

- In the surveys the majority of participants agreed (93%) on the fact that events improved beneficiary knowledge on the topics covered as well as their capacities to do their work (84%). Most participants also agreed that TAIEX events changed concretely the way beneficiaries do their work, but there was comparatively less strength in the agreement (67%). Opinions on improvements in knowledge and capacities at the institutional level obtained similar results. 88% of survey respondents agreed that TAIEX had led to improvements in institutional knowledge and 76% that it had led to improvements in institutional capacities (concrete capacities to get things done)
- The surveys also confirmed the perception of beneficiaries that TAIEX had significantly contributed to structural reforms albeit to a lesser extent than capacity building. The majority of respondents from the Enlargement Region agreed that at least one of the events they had participated in had led to: adoption of new public policy (49% agreed, 38% did not know); modification of existing public policy (47% agreed, 42% did not know); improved application and/or enforcement of existing public policy (61% agreed); adoption of standards and practices in line with EU practice or requirements (66% agreed, 29% did not know); formal changes in working procedures or organisational structures (41% agreed, 39% did not know); and finally informal but significant changes in the way of working (99/175 agreed, 49 did not know).
- The after 6-month evaluations also confirm the perception that TAIEX was able to bring both capacity building and structural reform results: 28% of events in the Enlargement Region were reported to have led to organisational changes – creation of new departments/ units/ positions, 46% to the drafting of a new law/act or to the modification

of an existing one and 71% more broadly to improved internal working procedures. 91% were reported to have led to a better understanding of EU legislation covered.

Factors affecting the effectiveness of TAIEX results

TAIEX was particularly effective in the Enlargement Region, largely thanks to strong commitment by beneficiaries, high quality of experts with relevant expertise, extensive use of series of events as well as workplans / training maps, and finally synergistic use of TAIEX with other instruments: The high quality of experts was described as particular crucial to the achievement of results:

- The beneficiaries could each time select experts whose experience and national context was deemed as most relevant to them. Experts deployed under TAIEX IPA events mainly came from Croatia (16.7%), Italy (12.8%) and Slovenia (9.3%). In events outside the Enlargement region experts from Croatia accounted only for 5.7% and Slovenia for 3.8%. Croatia was considered as a success story and its recent experience in joining the EU was highly sought after. Slovenia was seemed as culturally and institutionally similar. The commission actively sought to grant the requests of beneficiaries in terms of the country of origin of experts. However, in some cases, this was not granted to a lack of availability.
- Satisfaction with the experts provided through the TAIEX Instrument has been very high. In the surveys, the vast majority indicated that they were highly satisfied with the quality of the experts: 94% agreed (53% strongly agreed, 3% did not know and just 1% strongly disagreed) that the experts' knowledge on the topics covered was adequate and 93% agreed (56% strongly) that experts conveyed information in a clear and practical manner. Over the years the satisfaction of the beneficiaries with experts increased (accumulation of expertise and larger availability of experts in the EDBE, coming from a larger number of countries and with a greater variety of areas of expertise).

However, a number of cases were identified whereby TAIEX did not manage to achieve its intended results. This was mostly due to the national political context. In some cases, frequent staff turnovers led to a loss of progress or a waning of political commitment. More critically in several countries, it was reported that limited institutional capacity limited the beneficiary authorities' ability to follow-up on recommendations made by TAIEX experts or to properly implement adopted reforms. For a minority of events implementation challenges were detrimental to TAIEX's success. Online and Multi-country events were associated with more limited results.

Implementation challenges

- a. Low quality of experts (very rare but critical): Experts incapable of transmitting/communicating their messages or with insufficient awareness of the local context.
 - According to one beneficiary from a problematic event in Turkey "experts were not sufficiently prepared and could not create the necessary motivation to do something new in the participants".
 - Another beneficiary highlighted the importance of experts communication skills: "Speakers should express their knowledge and experience by giving examples and speaking. Not only through reading from slides full with text. It was extremely difficult to follow the trainers reading from the slides. Everyone can read by himself, there is no need to attend trainings as this. What is needed are experienced speakers that will make you listen. The speakers should be chosen more carefully regarding the knowledge of the matter from their own experience or ability to answer the questions and speaking English especially..
- b. Too broad/generic or too ambitious agenda: Insufficient time dedicated on each issue and lack of concrete guidelines. Beneficiaries felt unable to follow up with specific actions:
 - In Montenegro, one participant highlighted how the experts had failed to provide concrete recommendations for the reform of the system during the expert mission. The state which expected such concrete proposals was unable to implement the reforms on its own.

- Another survey respondent from Albania indicated that: “We hope that the TAIEX tool will be improved in the future. TAIEX events on Higher Education for Albania in the previous period were totally not related to the needs of the country. They were mainly oriented to the needs of some consultants.”
- c. Delays: political momentum waned, issue no longer seen as a priority/ need.
- d. Low quality or absence of interpretation undermined communication and the possibility to create meaningful interactions.
- e. Failure to engage the right participants: Need for technical/operational staff directly involved in the implementation of the issues covered but also high-level staff to support political momentum. In one of the events of the sample, intended for the design of a strategy, the person responsible for the strategy’s approval was last minute unable to attend. This significantly constrained the amount of progress that could be achieved and a follow-up event had to be organised. The issue of participants was also reported during the experts’ FGD as an issue by 3 of them, in particular in association with study visits that allowed for a very limited number of individuals.

Type of event

- a. Multi-country events: often too broad/failure to adapt to the specific needs/ capacities of individual countries. Interpretation / communication challenges.
- b. Online events: Loss of informal interactions, technical issues, limited engagement of participants, increased challenged with interpretation.
- c. Study visits: Study visits were seen as very helpful when highly technical issues were at stake/ there was a need for direct observation. However, they were often described by EUDEL staff as a ‘vacation’ for beneficiaries, not necessarily selected on the basis of their needs. Moreover, given the more limited number of participants institutionalisation of knowledge was described as more challenging

Sustainability of TAIEX results

The results of TAIEX in terms of both administrative capacity and structural reforms were generally seen by survey respondents as sustainable with the majority expecting them to last for more than 6 months. A clear example of how TAIEX can have sustainable results is the 2017 TAIEX Workshop on Border Police Risk Analysis in Bosnia & Herzegovina. According to interviews, the event led to a drastic change in the capacity of the involved institutions to carry out risk analysis with the practices adopted following the event having been sustained almost 4 years after the organization of the event. Nevertheless, several interviewees and experts highlighted how the lack of follow-up and in some cases frequent staff turnover undermined the sustainability of results.

TAIEX’s financial weight and critical mass

Overall, in the period 2015-2020 a total of 67 million euros were dedicated to TAIEX in the Enlargement Region. This is a very small share (less than 0.9%) of the total budget of the IPA instrument, through which TAIEX is financed, over the same period.

TAIEX’s mostly short-term and ad-hoc nature, and its limited financial weight naturally constrained the magnitude of results the instrument could achieve on its own, but was simultaneously a key source of its strength. When successfully integrated within broader EU programming and used in synergy with other instruments, TAIEX’s design, unlike other more-long-term instruments, allowed it to provide flexible, swift, and well targeted support to beneficiaries, playing an important gap-filling role.

As indicated in the previous sections, the specificity and short-term nature of TAIEX was often what was needed for significant progress to be made. As one of the interviewees from Bosnia & Herzegovina put it “there were times when the government knew exactly what they needed to do to meet the conditions, but couldn’t make it happen. Having peers come and explain how to turn theory into practice was necessary for the reforms to take place.”

It must be noted that the budget doesn't appear to have been a constraint, with 46% of the budget contracted between the 1st of August 2016 and the 31st of July 2020 having remained unspent. The share of unused funds under TAIEX IPA was the second highest across all strands (except for TAIEX INTPA).

The role of TAIEX Strategic on effectiveness

TAIEX strategic events were associated with a number of advantages but also faced a number of challenges:

Firstly, the introduction of training maps/ workplans helped in planning, coordination, and improved sequencing of events, and was very appreciated by beneficiaries. This was the case for Agriculture and to a lesser extent for Justice & Human rights.

Secondly, TAIEX strategic enabled Commission Services/ EEAS to request events for the pursuit of key EU priorities that may not have been undertaken by the national authorities. Similarly, TAIEX Strategic facilitated the emergence of synergies with other EU instrument (see EQ6). However, TAIEX Strategic events requested by Geo-desks or line DGs tended to be broader in content and with lower levels of involvement by beneficiaries in their design. As such, albeit playing an important role in exposing beneficiaries to those issues, they were described as less likely to be associated with government ownership or concrete results (capacity building and reforms). This is also reflected in the after-6 months evaluations whereby Strategic events were systematically associated with a lower likelihood to bring about results.

Thirdly, although TAIEX Strategic boosted the use of TAIEX by Commission Services/EEAS there was a **lower than expected take-up, in particular by EUDELS, mostly due to low levels of awareness**. All of the NCPs and EUDEL focal Point in the FGD reported not being aware of the possibility for EUDEL's to request directly events. Most of them expressed interest in pursuing this option.

Finally, peer-review missions were shown to be a valuable tool for EU policy planning in the region but their use remained limited after 2015 when it was at its peak.

EQ4 Flexibility, service orientation, and swiftness of the TAIEX Instrument

Box 10: Summary of findings related to EQ4, TAIEX IPA case study

- TAIEX IPA appears to have become significantly slower in recent years, due to difficulties in the identification of suitable experts and to an overload of the TAIEX team starting from 2018. The uncertainty associated with the COVID-19 pandemic also contributed to this in 2020.
- Nevertheless, TAIEX has remained one of the quickest Technical Assistance instruments available to beneficiaries, with events organised as quickly as a week after approval. TAIEX IPA was the quickest among DG NEAR strands.
- Key factors identified by interviewed stakeholders for TAIEX's swiftness: the organisation of the DG NEAR C3 into 4 TEAMS each with specific thematic expertise, the existence of country specific focal points, the accumulated know-how.
- In addition to swiftness, TAIEX was widely recognized, by both beneficiaries and Commission staff, for its flexibility and service orientation. Flexibility has often been the reason rendering TAIEX the preferred instrument.

TAIEX was one of the quickest Technical Assistance instruments available to beneficiaries in the Enlargement, with events organised as quickly as a week after approval. This enabled TAIEX to address urgent needs that could not be addressed through other instruments and capitalise upon political momentum in the beneficiary countries to achieve reforms (see EQ3). The following factors were identified by interviewed stakeholders as key for TAIEX's swiftness: The organisation of the DG NEAR C3 into 4 TEAMS each with specific thematic expertise, the existence of country specific focal points that deal with the approval and organisation of events; the accumulated know-how, and in particular the existence of established processes, relations and agreements with providers, arrangements with

MS for the participation of experts etc. The existence of the EDBE was also critical for the rapid identification and deployment of experts.

TAIEX IPA was the quickest among DG NEAR strands. On average, TAIEX events in the Eastern Neighbourhood took about 18 days to be approved and 7.3 months to be organised after approval. Only 6% of events were organised within 6 weeks and 56% within 6 months from their approval. 16% of events took more than a year to organise after their approval.

However, it appears to have become significantly slower in recent years with the average time between organisation and approval having increased from 5.5 months in 2015 to 8.6 months in 2019. The most recurrent causes of long delays under in recent years were difficulties in the identification of suitable experts as well as an overload of the TAIEX team starting from 2018 that led to the systematic postponement of several events. The uncertainty associated with the COVID-19 pandemic also led to delays in the organization of non-urgent events associated with the pandemic.

TAIEX Strategic events were generally quicker to approve and organise, with an average time of 9 days for approval and 6.2 months for their organisation. The use of training maps contributed to improved planning and sequencing of events and facilitated the timely, in advance identification of experts. Events requested directly from EU Institutions were associated with applications of higher quality. EU applicant institutions (mostly EUDELs) also in some cases played an active role in the identification of experts. Speeding up the process

The flexibility of TAIEX was highly appreciated by beneficiaries and has often been the reason rendering TAIEX the preferred instrument. A key aspect of the instrument's flexibility was the opportunity to organize follow up events in a swift manner. In some cases, TAIEX events led to the identification of additional needs, or it was not possible to fully address the need with the single event and further action was required. The flexibility of the instrument meant that additional events could quickly be organised to cover those needs. The flexibility of the Instrument was also highlighted during the COVID pandemic. The transition of TAIEX into a fully virtual instrument occurred very rapidly (with the first online events were organised in April 2020) enabling the instrument to continue providing support to partner countries in the Enlargement region throughout the crisis. A significant degree of flexibility was also demonstrated in term of the duration of events (from 1 to 18), number of experts (from 1 to 28) and number of participants (from 1 to 218) in line with the needs of beneficiaries.¹⁴

Overall and despite certain challenges, TAIEX in the Enlargement Region was widely recognized, by both beneficiaries and Commission staff, for its swiftness, flexibility and service orientation. All interviewees identified these elements as key strengths of the instrument, in particular when compared to other EU tools. This was also confirmed by the surveys, where the majority of respondents from Pre-accession countries agreed that TAIEX events were quick to organize (59/70 respondents) and that sufficient flexibility had been granted in the organization (55/58). The majority (55/62) also agreed on the fact that the design of the events was sufficiently tailored to the context's specificities.

EQ5 Cost efficiency/ effectiveness and administrative burden¹⁵

Box 11: Summary of findings related to EQ5, TAIEX IPA case study

- The administrative burden for the application and organisation of TAIEX events in the Enlargement region was reasonable and manageable for most beneficiaries, with the instrument praised for its lower bureaucracy relative to other instruments, including Twinning.

¹⁴ This doesn't take into account the duration of work from home events.

¹⁵ As a necessary premise, it is worth clarifying the evaluation team currently lacks data on costs of TAIEX events which do not directly pertain to the logistical organization (that is, any involvement of EU officers, including those belonging to the TAIEX team): as such, statements on cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness are necessarily incomplete.

- Although, the introduction of TAIEX Strategic was associated with lower administrative burden for beneficiaries, it was more resource intensive for TAIEX Team staff and other EU staff involved in the process.
- The (direct) cost of organizing events under TAIEX IPA was reasonable and on average lower than other DG NEAR strands, across all types of events. Some cost-effectiveness concerns were nevertheless raised concerning multi-country, online and strategic events.

The administrative burden for the application and organisation of TAIEX events in the Enlargement region was reasonable and manageable for most beneficiaries, with the instrument praised for its lower bureaucracy relative to other instruments, including Twinning. A number of key factors rendered the process accessible for beneficiaries.

- Support to beneficiaries by NCPs in the application process: This was described as crucial for enabling small/inexperienced institutions to apply.
- A number of developments over the years in the application that increased the administrative burden for beneficiaries: These include a) the introduction of a simplified and tailored application form for the request of events to support the management of the COVID-19 pandemic and b) the introduction of workplans and training maps whereby beneficiary institutions in consultation with DG NEAR can request with the same application multiple events on a specified thematic area.

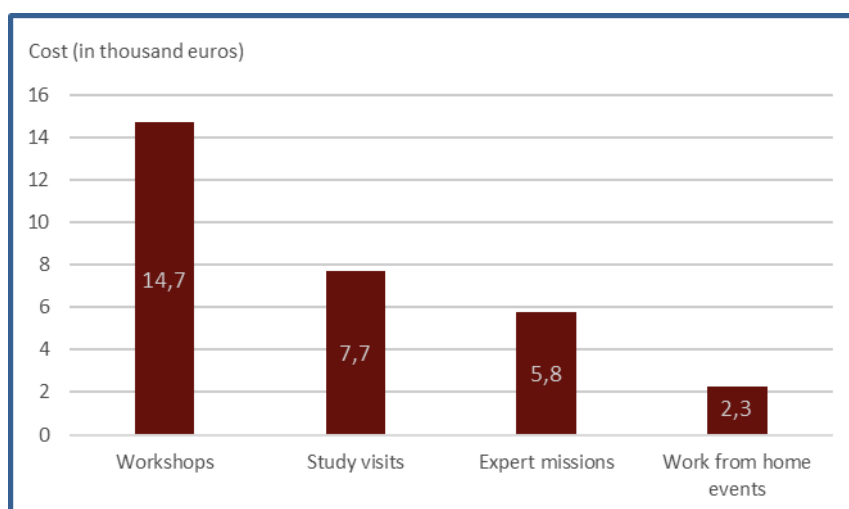
The relative low administrative burden for beneficiaries, was also reaffirmed by the surveys whereby 57 out of the 64 respondents to the survey from the TAIEX IPA strand agreed (29 strongly) with the statement that the application process was not too cumbersome and that adequate support was provided by the local EU delegation, the NCPs and the TAIEX team during the application process. However, a few applicants from beneficiary institutions indicated that they would have appreciated more support from the EU delegation/ NCPs/TAIEX Team. 43 out of 45 that informative and support materials were available in a language they could easily understand.

Although, the administrative burden was low for beneficiaries, a relatively higher burden was reported for TAIEX Team staff and other EU staff involved in the process. This was associated with the following:

- Introduction of TAIEX Strategic: This increased need for coordination across institutions. It also entailed stronger efforts for visibility and marketing activities.
- Low responsiveness/ non-compliance with agreed procedures by the Western Balkans and Turkey beneficiary region (TAIEX IPA): EU staff involved in the organisation of TAIEX events, commented on how the non-compliance of beneficiaries with TAIEX processes hindered the effective and timely organisation of events and increased the burden of them (due to need for follow-up/increased exchanges). As one of them put it “Beneficiary's compliance with TAIEX procedures and deadlines is essential in the organisational process. Delays from the beneficiary sides and late communications/changes requested by the beneficiaries may hinder the smooth organisation of the assistance”.
- Lack of clearly defined responsibilities leading to duplication of work among actors: A number of actors raised the need for clarifying the responsibilities between the TAIEX Team, NCPs, the local EU Delegation/Office to ensure the smooth organisation of events and avoid duplication of work. According to one them “the only problem experienced in a number of TAIEX events involving a large number of participants related to the emailing of the invitation with some duplication confusing the recipients. Once the list of participants is approved by TAIEX, it automatically generated email invitation in English that participants didn't know what it related to. They had already been contacted/ invited by [us] with many relevant details on the event provided. It is quite essential for the field level to have a direct involvement in the logistic based on the field experience and knowledge of the structures involved.”

The (direct) cost of organizing events under TAIEX IPA was reasonable and on average lower than other DG NEAR strands, across all types of events. For a detailed breakdown of costs by type of event, see figure below:

Figure 73: Average Expenditure by type of single-country event the Enlargement Region, total in million EUR



No systemic sources of inefficiencies in terms of direct costs were identified. Only in one event aimed at the amendment of a legislation, it was indicated that the lack of interpretation services led to large delays and inefficiencies. The expert made her recommendations, but these could not be incorporated in the text because there was no interpreter, as a result these could not be reviewed by beneficiaries during the event and the procedure could not move beyond a certain point. Another event had to be organised.

The following cost-effectiveness observations have been made:

- 1) **Multi-country (in person) events: These were much more expensive than single-country events.** Multi-country Workshops cost on average EUR 28.4 thousand almost twice as high as their single country counterparts. At the same time albeit generally serving an important visibility role and contributing to the introduction of topics to beneficiaries, they were less likely to be associated with concrete results (EQ3)
- 2) **Online events: These unlike the expectations of most stakeholders were not always cheaper than their in-person counterparts.** Only online workshops were systematically cheaper (70% of the costs of in-person workshops). For expert missions, the average cost was higher for online events as compared to in person ones with EUR 9.3 thousand relative to EUR 5.8 thousand. Online events entailed a number of additional IT and logistical costs, for example for the use of a platform with simultaneous interpretation, for an online moderator, for additional IT support for all participants and for test events with experts prior to the real event to ensure events run smoothly. In the case of workshops, this increase in costs was offset by the reductions in the costs associated with travel, accommodation, catering and venue. This was not the case for expert missions whereby the costs associated with transportation, accommodation and catering tend to be much lower.
- 3) **TAIEX Strategic events:** In terms of direct expenditures for the realisation of events, there were no differences in the costs between TAIEX Classic and TAIEX strategic events, after accounting for differences in the types of events and countries involved. However, several stakeholders have associated with increased administrative burden for EU stakeholders involved due to increased coordination challenges as well as additional visibility and communication work. In addition, these were more likely to be multi-country workshops and associated with more limited results. (see EQ3)

EQ6 Complementarity with other instruments

Box 12: Summary of findings related to EQ6, TAIEX IPA case study

- TAIEX was recognised as bringing a unique combination of benefits as compared to other instruments available (rapid, peer to peer, low-bureaucracy, flexible).
- There was no evidence of duplication largely thanks to TAIEX's uniqueness and gap-filling nature as well as to well-established processes within the TAIEX team.
- Twinning was seen as better suited to address long-term needs and bring reforms in the region. However, it was associated with higher levels of bureaucracy and limited flexibility.
- TAIEX Strategic was associated with a clear tendency for the pursuit of synergies. This was especially the case with Twinning, mostly due to the installation of the two instruments within the same unit (DG NEAR C3) and the use of common NCPs for their coordination in the region.
- There is no evidence of actively pursued synergies among TAIEX Classic events. Nevertheless, even when synergies were not actively pursued many complementarities emerged as the beneficiary administrations also benefitted from other EU instruments.

TAIEX was recognised as bringing a unique combination of benefits as compared to other instruments available in the Enlargement Region (rapid, peer to peer, low-bureaucracy, flexible).

- All interviewed stakeholders agreed that TAIEX had distinct advantages relative to other capacity building instruments, with speed, flexibility, low bureaucracy, and peer-to-peer support being cited by most.
- In the survey, the majority of beneficiaries agreed that the needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through other existing EU tools (61% agreed) or through existing EU member states initiatives (without involving the EU) (61% agreed). In particular, the majority of respondents to the survey agreed that TAIEX outmatched other available options (e.g. other EU and EU MS tools and Initiatives) in terms of the following: a) rapid organisation of events (81% agreed), b) benefitting from peer-to-peer experience and advice (82% agreed), c) meaningful involvement of beneficiary institutions (86% agreed) and d) tailoring events to specific needs (85% agreed).

There is no evidence to suggest the existence of duplication with other instruments and programs largely thanks to the instrument's uniqueness and gap-filling nature as well as to well-established processes within the TAIEX team to prevent duplication and improve coordination across actors (namely the consultation process prior to approval).

TAIEX Strategic was associated with a clear tendency for the pursuit of synergies but no evidence of actively pursued synergies has been identified among TAIEX Classic events in the Enlargement region. This was also partly captured in the surveys, whereby there was a difference among the degree to which participants in TAIEX strategic and TAIEX classic events agreed that TAIEX complemented and enhanced other EU tools. For strategic events 100% of Commission/EEAS staff agreed and 86% of beneficiaries (with the rest indicating that they do not know/have no opinion rather than disagreeing). For Classic events, 77% of Commission/EEAS staff and 82% of beneficiaries agreed.

There were strong synergies between TAIEX and Twinning in the Enlargement Region, largely thanks to the installation of the two instruments within the same unit (DG NEAR C3) and the use of common National Contact Points for their coordination in the region. The organisation of annual meetings with National Contact Points (NCPs) in the form of TAIEX screening events to support the coordination, improved management and promotion of TAIEX and Twinning activities in Enlargement Countries, were also largely appreciated.

Box 13: Synergies between TAIEX and Twinning

A total of 42 TAIEX events were explicitly organized in the Enlargement to support Twinning missions. It is currently mandatory for all Twinning missions to be followed by TAIEX Peer-review missions 6 months after their completion in order to assess their results and identify remaining gaps. Work from home missions have also been used to support the drafting of the Twinning reports. A number of additional TAIEX events were used to fill in remaining gaps from Twinning projects. Some TAIEX events that led to the identification of needs to be addressed through Twinning projects and provided the necessary foundations for their launch.

Source: TMS data, strategic documentation provided by DG NEAR, TAIEX events' documentation

Twining was seen as better suited to address long-term needs and bring reforms. However, it was associated with higher levels of bureaucracy and limited flexible.

Beyond Twinning, TAIEX strategic events were also used to systematically support other EU projects and instruments implemented in the Enlargement region in particular in the field of environment.

For example, the Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network (ECRAN), the EU Environment Partnership Programme for Accession (EPPA) and the Regional Implementation of the Paris Agreement Project (RIPAP). A total of 119 TAIEX events were organised in 2015 and 2016 to support the ECRAN project corresponding to a total of EUR 2.4 million. Of those, 74 were multi-country and aimed at fostering the creation of networks and the emergence of regional cooperation on the issues targeted. The ECRAN was deemed as highly effective and TAIEX was seen as crucial for its success. A member of the TAIEX team (DG NEAR C3) was part of ECRAN's steering committee to ensure the effective integration of TAIEX in ECRAN's activities. EPPA is a network that strengthens regional cooperation in the Western Balkans to help implementing the EU environmental acquis. A total of 19 TAIEX workshops (of which 11 and 15 involved representatives from all of the Enlargement Region Countries) were organised in 2019 and 2020 to support the EPPA project corresponding to a total of EUR 0.34 million. RIPAP supports beneficiaries to implement the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement and to strengthen regional cooperation, through the exchange of information, best practices and experience. It covers Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. 7 events were organised in 2018 corresponding to EUR 0.14 million in support of the RIPAP.

So far, although all countries in the Enlargement Region (except Turkey) are receiving Budget Support and despite the potential of the use of TAIEX for the fulfilment of variable tranche indicators, there has been no evidence of complementarities among the two instruments. This is an area to be further explored at later stages.

Even when synergies were not actively pursued many complementarities emerged as the beneficiary administrations also benefitted from other EU instruments promoting institutional capacity building, including Twinning, DG NEAR Technical Assistance, OECD-SIGMA, budget support, and other thematic projects.

Box 14: Synergies across instruments -The Public Procurement Bureau of North Macedonia

The Public Procurement Bureau of North Macedonia had over the years benefitted from a number of different instruments following its launch in 2005. In 2006-2008, it was the beneficiary of a technical assistance project financed by the EU that accompanied its establishment as well as of a USAID technical assistance project that supported the development of an e-procurement system. In 2012-2013, it was supported by the German administration in a Twinning project, "Support to the Public Procurement System". Throughout the years it was also supported by TAIEX and SIGMA and pre-covid was expected to benefit from another twinning project in 2020. These instrument build on one another and provided complementary support that allowed for the expansion of the Bureau and its gradual adoption of new administrative functions.

Source: TAIEX events' documentation

EQ7 EU Added Value, working with peers and EU internal cooperation**Box 15: Summary of findings related to EQ7, TAIEX IPA case study**

- There was significant added value in organising TAIEX at the EU level rather than by individual MS. Several advantages of TAIEX were associated to its EU nature, namely the large availability of experts from MS thanks to the EDDBE, improved coordination and avoidance of duplication, pursuit of EU priorities and increased EU visibility, and finally economies of scale.
- The implementation of TAIEX entailed high levels of cooperation across DG NEAR C3, EUDELS, and EU MS (through NCPs and in some cases embassies). However, there does not appear to have been an explicit strategy for maximising cooperation across EU actors.

There was significant added value in organising TAIEX at the EU level rather than by individual MS. Interviewed beneficiaries, NCPs, EUDEL TAIEX focal points and TAIEX TEAM staff as well as survey respondents associated several advantages of TAIEX to its EU nature, namely the large availability of experts from MS thanks to the EDDBE, improved coordination and avoidance of duplication, pursuit of EU priorities and increased EU visibility, and finally economies of scale.

The development of the EDDBE: There was consensus that the development and management of the Experts' Database required expertise and resources that are hard to accumulate by individual MS. The EDDBE allowed for the identification and quick deployment of MS experts, whose experience was deemed most relevant to their needs and national context of beneficiaries. For instance the study visit of officials from the Innovation Fund of the Republic of Serbia to the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation in Helsinki, was key in allowing the beneficiaries to strengthen their knowledge and capacity in the area, contributing to the government's efforts to develop a knowledge-based and innovative economy. Finnish experts provided practical advice on the establishment and operation of an innovation ecosystem in line with EU best practice, on performance and impact indicators and on evaluation mechanisms for nationally funded start-ups. According to the European Innovation Scoreboard, Finland was one of the best performing MS in this area and beneficiaries had specifically requested for their expertise.

Coordination and avoidance of duplication: The network of EUDELS and the regular channels of Communication with line DGs appear to have been key for the avoidance of duplications. The TAIEX Team was in regular contact with focal points in EU Delegations as well as in line DGs and thematic colleagues within DG NEAR both for encouraging the uptake of TAIEX Strategic but also in the context of the consultation process for the approval of events. However, there is no evidence yet to suggest that such cooperation was extended beyond the direct implementation of TAIEX activities and had implications for the overall coordination across institutions.

Pursuit of EU priorities and increased visibility of the EU: The organisation of TAIEX at the EU level ensured its alignment and active support for EU priorities in the region (see EQ2). It also contributed to strengthening the visibility of the EU as confirmed by beneficiaries in interviews and surveys.

Economies of scale: Having a sole instrument with significant scale allowed it to perfect logistic mechanisms – among others, for temporarily hiring and compensating public officers that would otherwise not be easily available, as occupied with their regular jobs.

The EU added value of TAIEX was also confirmed through the surveys, whereby the vast majority of participants from the IPA strand agreed that the needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through existing EU member states initiatives (without involving the EU).

The implementation of TAIEX entailed high levels of cooperation across DG NEAR C3, EUDELS, and EU MS (through NCPs and in some cases embassies). However, there does not appear to have been an explicit strategy for maximising cooperation across EU actors. The established cooperation was largely organic and the degree of its maximisation dependent upon the persons responsible for TAIEX in EUDELS and national administrations (NCPs), their level of seniority as well as their personal commitment to TAIEX.

4 Bibliography

Documents:

ECRAN Working together towards alignment with the European Union environmental and climate policies and legislation in EU Candidate Countries and Potential Candidates: Results Brochure 2016. http://www.ecranetwork.org/Files/ECRAN_Results_Brochure.pdf

European Union (2012), *TAIEX Annual Activity Report 2011*.

European Union (2013), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2012*.

European Union (2014), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2013*.

European Union (2015), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2014*.

European Union (2016), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2015*.

European Union (2017), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2016*.

European Union (2018), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2017*.

European Union (2019), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2018*.

European Union (2020), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2019*.

European Union (2021), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2020*.

Web resources

“Center for Adaptation of the Civil Service To the standards of the European Union”. Accessed August 24, 2021. <http://www.center.gov.ua/en/>

“Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network ECRAN”. Accessed August 24, 2021. <http://www.ecranetwork.org/Steering-Committee>

“EPPA Eu Environment Partnership Programme for Accession. Project.” Accessed August 24, 2021. <https://eppanetwork.eu/project/>

“Regional Implementation of Paris Agreement Project. About the project.” Accessed August 24, 2021. <https://www.ripap.eu/about/the-project>

ANNEX 5B: TAIEX IN EU MEMBER STATES

1 Introduction

TAIEX operates within the European Union through three strands: TAIEX Regio Peer2Peer, TAIEX TSI Peer2Peer (previously TAIEX SRSP Peer2Peer) and TAIEX EIR Peer2Peer. Each of those TAIEX strands belongs to one or more larger programmes of the EU, namely:

1. **The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**, focusing on the following four areas: Innovation & research, the digital agenda, the support for SMEs, and the low carbon economy; **and the Cohesion Fund (CF)**, targeting mainly trans-European transport networks, including infrastructure projects and environment. In both cases, TAIEX assistance is aimed at reinforcing the administrative capacity of national and regional administrations regarding fund management.
2. **The Technical Support Instrument (TSI, previously Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP))**. The TSI stems from a request for support by an EU member state needing capacity reinforcement to implement a reform in one of the following areas: growth-sustaining reforms in the context of economic governance processes; reforms to achieve sustainable economic growth and job creation; implementation of economic adjustment programmes. The support programme may include but is not limited to TAIEX events.
3. **The European Implementation Review (EIR)**, supporting the implementation of environment policies and regulations in EU member states. It does so by assessing the main existing gaps relative to agreed policy objectives and commitments in each MS in the form of a bi-yearly report). The first reports were published in 2017 and a second round was published in 2019.

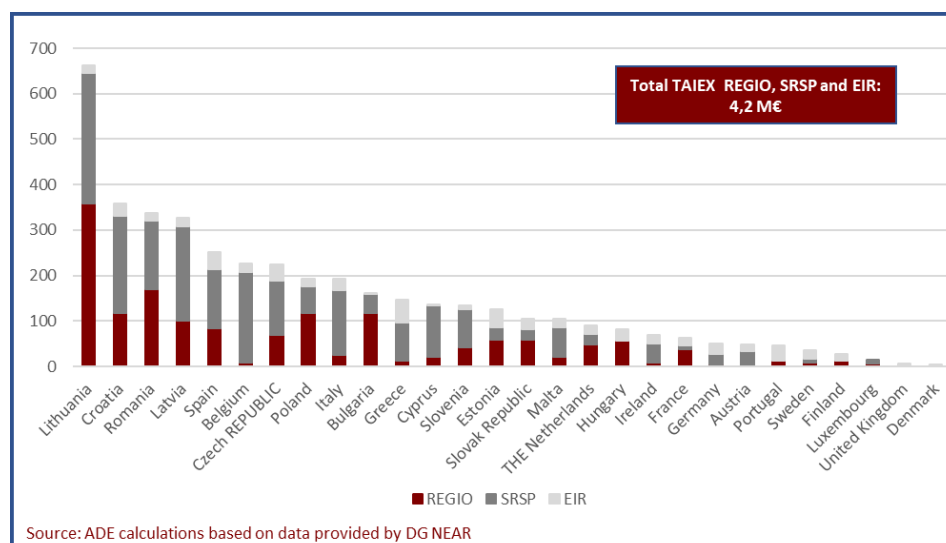
Overview of TAIEX in the EU Member States in the 2015-2020 period

TAIEX started operating in EU MS in 2015 with the launch of TAIEX REGIO, followed in 2017 by TAIEX SRSP and in 2018 by TAIEX EIR. Overall, 487 events have been organized under the three strands in the 2015-2020 period, resulting in an expenditure of EUR 4.2 million (direct costs of events only), as you can see in figure 74. This corresponds to 7% of the overall number of TAIEX events in the period, and 6% of the expenditure.

In particular, 226 events were organized by **TAIEX REGIO P2P**, which corresponded to EUR 1.6 million in direct expenditures. Until the end of 2020, TAIEX REGIO P2P operated using almost exclusively the classic TAIEX model, where events are requested by beneficiaries. A limited use of series of events has also been made, mostly recently. About half of TAIEX REGIO P2P events are study visits (54% of the events, corresponding to 45% of the expenditure); the second most popular type of events is workshops (29% of events and 42% of the expenditure), followed by expert missions (18% of events and 13% of expenditures). No work from home assignments took place under this strand. About 8% of the events organized are multi-country.

250 events were organized under **TAIEX SRSP P2P**, which corresponded to EUR 2.1 million in direct expenditures. The number of events organized by TAIEX SRSP P2P shows a clear increasing trend between 2017 and 2019. A significant use of series of events is made – in fact, these account for almost 60% of the expenditure of TAIEX SRSP until 2020. Only 3 out of 250 events organized were multi-country. Study visits are the most used (representing 41% of events and 40% of the expenditure).

49 events were organized through **TAIEX EIR P2P**, corresponding to EUR 0.5 million in expenditures. Most events were workshops, which account for 49% of the number of events and 70% of the expenditure. Study visits and expert missions have been also used, in roughly similar proportions (each around 25% of the events and 15% of the expenditure); but no work from home assignment have been organized. It is worth noting that a significant number of events (16) – all of them workshops – were multi-country.

Figure 74: TAIEX expenditure in the EU region, by country (€M)

2 Methodology

This case study is based on the review of 21 events, including 15 for TAIEX SRSP, five for TAIEX REGIO P2P and one for TAIEX EIR P2P. Events have been selected to be loosely representative of the overall sample of 2015-2020 events, though a clustering approach has also been used (i.e. a somewhat larger than proportionate number of events has been attributed to some of the most represented sectors, regions and types of events, in order to allow for more relevant comparisons). Also, more weight has been given to the most recent years of activity, to favour conclusions and recommendations more applicable to the current context.

The documentary review of events has been corroborated by interviews with policy officers in line DGs (DG ENV, DG REGIO and DG REFORM), EU officers within the TAIEX unit in charge of the three strands, experts and beneficiaries of the events. A total of 10 interviews have been conducted. Finally, the findings have been triangulated with the answers to the two surveys.

Limitations encountered centred mainly on the stakeholder's availability and willingness to respond to interview requests. Albeit stakeholders to be surveyed and interviewed were independently selected by the evaluation team, not all could be contacted or were responsive. It is possible that self-selection in participating to the exercise may have resulted in inherent biases – for example, stakeholders who had positive experience with TAIEX and are interested in using the instrument again may have been more willing than others to invest their time in supporting the evaluation. Given the difficulties encountered to meet stakeholders individually, no focus group discussion could be organized, but interviewees were grouped where relevant and possible.

3 Findings per Evaluation Question

EQ1. The instrument's ability to address needs

To what extent were the key features of TAIEX as an instrument in line with the needs of beneficiary regions/countries and EU policy priorities in which it intervened? To what extent did those features evolve to enhance TAIEX's capacity to address needs, including by introducing TAIEX strategic and by expanding TAIEX to other regions and contexts of intervention?

Box 16: Summary findings related to EQ1, TAIEX in EU MS case study

- The three strands of TAIEX operating in EU MS chose to start using the instrument because it answered a need, to be able to contract peer experts (TAIEX SRSP) or to fill an existing gap in terms of capacity building in areas specific to implementation of EU acquis (TAIEX EIR) or management of.
- In each of the three strands operating in EU MS, peer working was relevant to develop the knowledge sought.
- While there was no additional value TAIEX being located in DG NEAR, there was a clear advantage of building on the existing database, capitalize on the team's know-how and established procedures and contracts.

Strands operating within the EU MS joined TAIEX as an existing, operational peer-to-peer scheme as they needed an instrument to support administrative capacity building, as laid out in the various Service Level Agreements (SLAs). The reasons for joining varied between the three strands, as did the depth of the need assessment performed. TAIEX REGIO P2P was launched as an administrative capacity building tool with the ultimate goal of enhancing the take up and management of two regional funds (the Cohesion Fund and the European Regional Development Fund), as evidenced by the Commission communications¹⁶ and confirmed by an interview¹⁷. A specific analysis of the relevance of a peer-to-peer scheme was performed, which evidence the following needs: a web-based platform for exchanges and discussions¹⁸, a service for direct answers from the Commission services, and in addition a peer-to-peer learning system¹⁹. It was also noted that in the management of the regional funds, there would be not clear experts and beneficiaries among the peers²⁰. TAIEX-EIR P2P was launched based on the experience of TAIEX REGIO strand as a tool to offer practical support to implement the recommendations of the bi-annual European Implementation Review (EIR), as confirmed in interviews²¹. DG REFORM, hosting the SRSP programme, had previous experience of TAIEX through the TCC strand. No specific need analysis was performed either for TAIEX EIR or for TAIEX SRSP, and no study of alternative set ups were performed either. In all three cases, it was obvious to join the existing TAIEX instrument to avoid duplication.

TAIEX EIR and TAIEX REGIO events were demand-driven and were highly appreciated by beneficiaries as they filled the gap of support²², while TAIEX SRSP/TSI events were requested by the Commission services to support the SRSP programme which is itself demand-driven. In the case of TAIEX EIR, alignment with broader EU priorities was ensured by the enforced alignment with the EIR, which is a EU programme²³.

The speed of implementation is particularly important for TAIEX SRSP because the programme supported is relatively short and the TAIEX events are best suited early in the process.

In each of the three strands operating in EU MS, peer working was relevant to develop the knowledge sought. For TAIEX REGIO P2P and TAIEX EIR P2P in particular, the instrument supports capacity building around the implementation of EU funds (TAIEX REGIO) and EU Acquis (TAIEX EIR), for which only fellow EU MS public policy officers have expertise²⁴. For TAIEX SRSP, the reforms supported are most often very specific to the local context, but peer expertise was relevant in the early stages of the reform process in order to identify a large array of solutions implemented elsewhere when facing

¹⁶ European Commission, March 2015, "Improving how EU Member States and regions invest and manage EU Cohesion Policy funds – Fact Sheet".

¹⁷ MN 506.

¹⁸ A similar solution was implemented through the Community of Practitioners (CoP).

¹⁹ Other existing support options include the TAP (technical assistance platform for financial instruments) and the JASPERS network, under EIB management.

²⁰ European Commission, 2014, "Assessment of demand and supply in administrative capacity to manage European structural and investment (esi) funds and explore interest in a new staff exchange instrument called "common expert exchange system" (CEES)".

²¹ MN 503, MN 508.

²² MN 508.

²³ MN 505, MN 507, MN 510.

²⁴ MN 506, MN 508.

similar challenges. Confirming the elements from the events' report, all participants interviewed and surveyed praised the opportunity to interact with 'hands-on' experts²⁵.

For strands operating in EU MS, there was **no additional value TAIEX being located in DG NEAR but there was a clear advantage of building on the existing database, capitalize on the team's know-how and established procedures and contracts**²⁶. The specialization of case handlers within a centralized unit served well the purpose of capitalizing on institutional knowledge while offering targeted services²⁷.

All stakeholders interviewed and surveyed expressed their satisfaction with the catalogue of activities, including the online options.

EQ2 relevance at intervention level: Did specific interventions address needs?

To what extent were TAIEX events in line with and adapted to specific country, sector, and EU needs? How did the TAIEX support made sure this was the case and what factors played a role in this perspective?

Box 17: Summary findings related to EQ2, TAIEX in EU MS case study

- The identification of potential activities was a challenge for TAIEX EIR and TAIEX REGIO, resulting in unused budget in both strands.
- The relevance of the topics addressed was globally high, as per participants and expert feed-back.
- Overall, the peer-to-peer feature of the instrument was highly appreciated within each event for the applicability of the expertise brought. In some cases, differences in the local contexts of the experts and beneficiaries decreased the relevance of the events.

The identification of potential activities was a challenge for TAIEX EIR and TAIEX REGIO, resulting in unused budget in both strands²⁸. In both cases, the visibility and advertisement of TAIEX was not sufficient to reach the operational agency susceptible to benefit from the instrument²⁹. In TAIEX EIR, the identification of opportunities was complicated because the EIR identifies very broad gaps which do not lead to immediate identification of the potential for TAIEX events³⁰. During some periods, staffing issues in TAIEX unit and/or in the line DGs led to the inability to organize activities³¹.

The relevance of the topics addressed was globally high, as per participants and expert feed-back. In one case for TAIEX EIR, it surfaced that the topics of the event were pushed by the Commission services and not totally appropriated by beneficiaries and experts.

"The Commission has a very clear idea of what the recommendations should be in our report" (MN 505)

- TAIEX events in EU MS ensured that they addressed needs through various mechanisms:
- TAIEX EIR and TAIEX REGIO are demand-based. SRSP/TSI is a demand-based programme.
- TAIEX EIR implemented a round of consultation with internal Commission experts to ensure that the events requested, and their agenda were relevant.
- In a specific case of a SRSP series of event, the private consultant that accompanied the reform process as part of the SRSP workplan dedicated her work previous to the TAIEX events to prepare the events, for instance gathering material to target the peers' presentation to the needs of the beneficiaries.

²⁵ MN 32, MN 506, MN 508.

²⁶ MN 501, MN 503, MN 506.

²⁷ MN 503, MN 506.

²⁸ Reports on implementation, SLAs, TMS database.

²⁹ MN 32, MN 500, MN 505, MN 508.

³⁰ MN 505, MN 508.

³¹ MN 503, 507.

Stakeholders' view, through feed-back from the survey conducted immediately after the event and six months after it and evaluation's survey and interviews, confirmed that events were relevant to the needs of the beneficiaries.

Beneficiaries also valued the flexibility to design the event freely. Many SRSP events reviewed requested an exception to some guideline (number of people taking part to study visit, timing, etc.) Those were always granted.

In some cases, the events were flagged as potentially sub-optimal by the TAIEX unit, they however went through as requested. Issues flagged included for example events in a series being only a few days apart. In other cases, the agenda sent with the request was mostly empty, or to be determined, or the first event of a series was presented as a "kick-off event" for the series, which was flagged as not relevant, but the event went through anyway. In all these cases, the database and event documentation did not show any reaction of the requester following the remarks.

Overall, the peer-to-peer feature of the instrument was highly appreciated within each event for the applicability of the expertise brought. In some cases, differences in the local contexts of the experts and beneficiaries decreased the relevance of the events.

EQ3 Contribution to and role of capacity development and institutional strengthening

To what extent did TAIEX contribute to individual and institutional capacity development and strengthening of institutions in the medium to long run? What role did such strengthening play in bringing about structural reforms/ advancing the EU interest, in different contexts and circumstances? To what extent was the introduction of TAIEX strategic in 2016 beneficial in this regard?

Box 18: Summary findings related to EQ3, TAIEX in EU MS case study

- In EU MS, TAIEX events mainly targeted knowledge, as one element of institutional capacity. Skills were also sometimes targeted, but more rarely so and most often not as main objective.
- The limited critical mass of individual TAIEX events did not hamper the results reached.
- TAIEX has suffered from an overall lack of visibility among its potential beneficiaries.
- Online events were appreciated by stakeholders as they allowed continuation of service, but their results relative to in-person events varied depending on the topic.

In EU MS, TAIEX events mainly targeted knowledge, as one element of institutional capacity. Skills were also sometimes targeted, but more rarely so and most often not as main objective. Other aspects of institutional capacity, systems and institutions, were almost never targeted³². In all three strands, events were indeed mainly targeted at allowing public policy officers to learn about the solutions implemented by another MS to face a specific issue, related respectively to the implementation of the EU acquis on environmental issues (TAIEX EIR) or to the management of EU regional funds (TAIEX REGIO³³). For TAIEX SRSP, events were the opportunity for public officer designing a reform to learn about what has been implemented in other countries.³⁴

In the context of TAIEX SRSP, events contributed to an ongoing support programme targeting reforms. In TAIEX EIR, events were targeted to filling gaps in the implementation of the environment acquis, which in some cases may be associated with reforms. In TAIEX REGIO, no reform process was targeted, and this was not an issue of the critical mass of TAIEX.

Example from TAIEX SRSP³⁵: A series of event was organized to support a reform on digital transformation of schools. Experts from Spain, Slovenia, Portugal, Ireland and Italy came to present

³² The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines institutional capacity as the capability of an institution to set and achieve social and economic goals, through knowledge, skills, systems, and institutions.

³³ As confirmed by the recent evaluation of peer-to-peer capacity building instruments of Regio.

³⁴ Source: review of events requests and other documents.

³⁵ Event 80043.

specific projects or practices implemented in their respective countries. The objective was for the beneficiaries to benefit from list of ideas to feed the design of the reform.

Or as one stakeholder from DG REGIO put it: “The people who attend learn, sometimes it is transferred to institutions, when the knowledge can be used immediately (...) System change is not a SMART goal of TAIEX. The maximum we can do is a change of practice.” (MN 506). This was confirmed by stakeholders from DG ENV, who explicitly confirmed that the objective of TAIEX events was the exchange of information, and to a lesser extent raising of awareness about specific topics. This finding was also confirmed by the short surveys conducted six months after the events.

Even though **the limited critical mass of individual TAIEX events did not hamper the results reached**, some beneficiaries pointed to a lack of follow up. In general, follow up was organized by the line DGs policy officer (in DG ENV, DG REGIO and DG REFORM) but without that there appeared to be a systematic process in place. Also, confusion appeared on whether the responsibility to monitor the long-term impact of events lied within the TAIEX team or within line DGs.³⁶

Overall, all stakeholders agreed that TAIEX reached the results intended at event level. Events were indeed satisfactory in reaching the targeted exchanges of information on best practices in the various topics targeted. Some stories of immediate use of the newly acquired knowledge, generating changes of practices, emerged. For example, a region in Portugal improved its waste management practices following a series of event where experts for Lithuania exposed the solution implemented in a similar urban context.

TAIEX SRSP built on the possibility for Commission services to request events as strategic event. That possibility is used by SRSP policy officer as DG REFORM coordinates all the support offered through the SRSP projects. On the opposite, TAIEX EIR and TAIEX REGIO events are mostly requested by beneficiaries. Both strands however started to use the possibility for Commission services to request events recently, to raise awareness about new topics for instance.

While it never appeared that individual events were too limited to reach their specified targets, **TAIEX has suffered from an overall lack of visibility among its potential beneficiaries.** Multiple reasons were brought forward, including a low promotion effort combined with potential beneficiaries being located in agencies relatively far (in distance or relation) from the central administration where TAIEX was being promoted. This was particularly the case for TAIEX EIR and TAIEX REGIO as demand-based scheme targeting very operational staff in dedicated, sometimes sub-national, agencies. TAIEX SRSP did not suffer from the lack of visibility as the instrument is always being requested directly by Commission services.³⁷

Networking and developing new professional relationships were often expressed a side result by beneficiaries, and the loss thereof was deplored for online events. However there were no strong or systematic evidence of creation of networks that remained functional after the events.

Online events were appreciated by stakeholders as they allowed continuation of service, but their results relative to in-person events varied depending on the topic. For instance, while they were deemed good for discussing legislation issues, this was less the case for discussing practical implementation. Hybrid options were suggested by almost all interviewees³⁸.

³⁶ MN 501, 506, 509.

³⁷ MN 506, 508, 510.

³⁸ MN 501, 506, 509, 509.

EQ4 Effectiveness of the TAIEX implementation modalities

To what extent was TAIEX support flexible, service oriented and swift, as well as demand driven/policy oriented, and what factors enhanced or hampered such approach?

Box 19: Summary findings related to EQ4, TAIEX in EU MS case study

- The approach and administrative process to approve and organize events varied a lot between the three strands, as TAIEX SRSP events are strategic events that are being requested by Commission services.
- The speed with which event were organized varied between strands, with TAIEX EIR being organized faster than other strands.
- Overall, stakeholders from TAIEX EIR and TAIEX REGIO were satisfied with the level of flexibility and service orientation.
- The ability to implement events swiftly was hampered by staffing issues, mainly for TAIEX SRSP. For TAIEX EIR, staffing issues also existed but led to rejection of application rather than slow implementation.
- Service orientation of TAIEX was differently appreciated between the strands.

The approach and administrative process to approve and organize events varied a lot between the three strands.

- SRSP event requests are being introduced directly by the SRSP policy officer (in DG REFORM, strategic programmatic approach) and are approved very speedily, with 81% of requests approved within 1 week, 96% within 2 weeks.
- EIR and REGIO event requests are being introduced by the beneficiaries (classic approach) and experience slower approval speed. For TAIEX Regio, 18% of events are approved within 1 week, 53% within 2 weeks. For TAIEX EIR, 18% are approved within 1 week and only 37% are approved within 2 weeks. The slower rate of approval of TAIEX EIR events is due to the broad internal consultation done during the approval process.

The speed with which event were organized varied between strands, with TAIEX EIR being organized faster than other strands.

- In TAIEX EIR, 57% of events were organized within three months, and 84% within six months.
- In TAIEX REGIO, 44% of events were organized within three months, and 75% within six months.
- In TAIEX SRSP, 43% of events were organized within three months, and 70% within six months.

The three strands also demonstrated different level of flexibility³⁹, with TAIEX SRSP event requests most often mentioning exceptions to the maximum number of participants to study visits (in theory 3 for TAIEX events, a limit that has been increased to 5 for TAIEX SRSP, which was often deemed too few). In general, TAIEX SRSP events have been granted most exception and derogation requests. In a few cases in the events reviewed, comments have been made in the approval form suggesting amendments to the event. Those comments have not been followed upon. It is also pointed out in the TAIEX SRSP 2016-2020 implementation report that:

“The dynamism of national reform programmes sometimes leads to very late request for TAIEX SRSP assistance. Even for a fast instrument such as TAIEX SRSP this poses a challenge, in particularly for the external service provider. The contractor is applying flexibility, but

³⁹ While no specific definition of flexibility existed, it was understood broadly as meeting beneficiaries' expectations in terms of agenda and date, and having a common-sense approach regarding number of participants, inclusion of private sector experts, ... (MN 502, 507).

this occasionally leads to compromises on the quality in terms of relations with participants or robustness of the agenda.”

Overall, stakeholders from TAIEX EIR and TAIEX REGIO were satisfied with the level of flexibility and service orientation. Stakeholders from TAIEX SRSP expressed their dissatisfaction with the speed and smoothness (issues of communication) of TAIEX⁴⁰.

The ability to implement events swiftly was hampered by staffing issues, mainly for TAIEX SRSP. For TAIEX EIR, staffing issues also existed but led to rejection of application rather than slow implementation⁴¹.

Service orientation of TAIEX was differently appreciated between the strands. While for TAIEX REGIO, the services rendered by TAIEX to DG REGIO were highly appreciated, this was not the case for TAIEX SRSP where stakeholder expressed dissatisfaction, related to the speed of event implementation, flexibility (for instance in accommodating last-minute changes to experts). In both TAIEX EIR and TAIEX SRSP, issues were raised regarding the branding and communication effort around TAIEX events. It appeared in several cases that TAIEX pushed its own name and brand to the detriment of the line DG served.⁴²

EQ5 Cost efficiency/ effectiveness and administrative burden

To what extent were TAIEX events cost-efficient and cost-effective and implemented with limited administrative burden?

Box 20: Summary findings related to EQ5, TAIEX in EU MS case study

- The average cost of in-person events under EU MS strands was around or below the average for all in-person TAIEX events (EUR 10,000).
- The average cost per participant per day was however very high in TAIEX SRSP compared to other strands.
- The administrative burden was deemed reasonable by most stakeholders from TAIEX EIR and TAIEX REGIO, which are both classic strands where the beneficiaries applied directly for TAIEX assistance. On the opposite, stakeholders from TAIEX SRSP expressed their dissatisfaction with the administrative burden.

The average cost of in-person event was of EUR 11,500 for TAIEX EIR, EUR 8,700 for TAIEX SRSP and EUR 7,000 for TAIEX REGIO, hence around or below the average for all in-person TAIEX events (EUR 10,000). The average cost of TAIEX REGIO events has however strongly increase over the period (from EUR 5,400 in 2015 to EUR 8,200 in 2020). The latter was linked to an increase in the cost of study visits. Indeed, the cost per participant and per day of study visits has strongly increased for TAIEX REGIO over the period. This could be explained by several facts: over the period, TAIEX REGIO started to pay for venues for study visits (following issues of public procurement when costs related to these were exposed by hosting institutions), it also started to pay for interpretation during those visits and finally it started to pay a fee to hosting institutions. The latter was not introduced at the start of TAIEX REGIO, but as budget was not used in full, the fee was introduced to boost the number of candidate hosting institutions. Indeed, it was mentioned by host institutions that the burden to host such visit was high and not being compensated sufficiently.⁴³

The average cost per participant per day was however very high in TAIEX SRSP compared to other strands (both in EU MS and outside). Indeed, with an average cost per participant and per day of around EUR 1,500, TAIEX SRSP is the highest-ranking strand on that measure, which is driven by the

⁴⁰ MN 32, 505, 508, 509.

⁴¹ MN 502, 507.

⁴² MN 503, 506.

⁴³ MN 32, MN 503.

fact that a large share of events are study visits which were relatively more expensive per participant than other types of events.

The administrative burden was deemed reasonable by most stakeholders from TAIEX EIR and TAIEX REGIO, which are both classic strands where the beneficiaries applied directly for TAIEX assistance. On the opposite, stakeholders from TAIEX SRSP expressed their dissatisfaction with the administrative burden implied by TAIEX. The process of filling the request form, getting approval (through the Approval form) and then approving and organizing the event, including preparing the agenda, appeared in several cases to be done as tick-the-box exercise⁴⁴. Examples follow:

- In one case, the request form mentioned “kick-off” as for the objective of the first event of a series and “tbc” as for the objective of the following events. While an email was sent to explain that organizing kick-off events was not acceptable for TAIEX events, the application was nonetheless approved.
- In other cases, the wrong type of event was ticked.
- In one case, the approval form noted that the event, foreseeing a study visit for a single participant, did not provide value for money. The event was nonetheless approved.
- In one case, the approval form noted that the time period between two events was too short and should be extended. There appeared to be no specific follow up to this suggested amendment.
- In several cases, the expert reports were not correctly filled. For example, the section on next steps was filled as regard to the next steps for the countries of origin of the experts and not of the beneficiaries.

The administrative burden of online events has been deemed unreasonable by stakeholders from TAIEX EIR and TAIEX SRSP. In particular, stakeholders did not see of the added value of the requirement for a full testing day regarding the use of the online platform and the requirement to register participants and experts within the same delay as in-person events (for which the required delay related to catering and travelling planning). In at least one case, event participants and experts bypassed TAIEX to organize the event online themselves⁴⁵.

EQ6 Complementarity with other instruments

To what extent did TAIEX complement other instruments pursuing similar goals, and to what extent were there duplications and synergies?

Box 21: Summary findings related to EQ6, TAIEX in EU MS case study

- The level of complementarity and synergies varied a lot between the three strands in EU MS. For TAIEX SRSP, the level of complementarity and synergies was high.
- On the opposite, TAIEX was used mostly as a stand-alone instrument for TAIEX REGIO and TAIEX EIR. For TAIEX REGIO, the low level of coordination and synergies stemmed from the absence of an overarching capacity building programme that TAIEX would be supporting.

The level of complementarity and synergies varied a lot between the three strands in EU MS. For TAIEX SRSP, the level of complementarity and synergies was high. In TAIEX SRSP, TAIEX events are integrated into a larger support programme which, besides TAIEX, includes mainly private consultancy. Even as TAIEX represents a marginal share of the cost of the SRSP, events were being strongly integrated with the rest of the support programme, thanks to the coordination effort provided by the policy officer at DG REFORM.

- In one case, the whole support was organized around the TAIEX events, with the private consultant preparing the ground for the choice of experts and helping them center their presentation around the aspects of their expertise most relevant for the beneficiaries. The

⁴⁴ MN 501, events documentation.

⁴⁵ MN 505, event documentation review.

private consultant then prepared a note based on the presentations to serve as basis for the next steps.

On the opposite, TAIEX was used mostly as a stand-alone instrument for TAIEX REGIO and TAIEX EIR. For TAIEX REGIO, the low level of coordination and synergies stemmed from the absence of an overarching capacity building programme that TAIEX would be supporting.⁴⁶ For TAIEX REGIO, other tools at the disposal of beneficiaries included training material and guidance. While no examples of duplication were found, complementarity or synergies were not present either with these other tools. One exception regards the links between TAIEX REGIO and the Community of Practitioners (CoP), which is a virtual network of public policy officers. TAIEX events were used to organize in-person meetings for the CoP as complement to online exchanges. Training maps were being developed for the new programming period.

The request form submitted by event organizers includes a question on whether the elements to be targeted by the TAIEX event are covered by any other EU programme. No event reviewed for this case study mentioned the existence of such programme, even in cases of obvious synergies, such as in the SRSP programme. This may however have reflected a “tick-the-box” approach where the person submitting the application mainly wishes to re-assure the TAIEX team of the absence of duplication more than identify potential complementarities or synergies.

EQ7 Working with peers and EU internal cooperation

To what extent did working with peers offer specific (EU) added value and to what extent has TAIEX built on the potential benefits of the EU internal Cooperation?

Box 22: Summary findings related to EQ7, TAIEX in EU MS case study

- Working with peers at the EU level added value in EU MS strands by two means:
 - Reaching a critical size for the expert database.
 - Ensuring access to expertise related to implementation of EU-acquis (DG ENV) or EU-specific programme management (DG REGIO) that does not exist outside of EU MS policy officer.
- While both means were relevant for TAIEX REGIO and TAIEX EIR, TAIEX SRSP on the other hand was less able to draw on the existing database as the topics addressed were less related to the expertise previously accumulated in by TAIEX.

Working with peers at the EU level added value in EU MS strands by two means:

- **Reaching a critical size for the expert database**, though this was less obvious for TAIEX SRSP which often required expertise outside of TAIEX’s historic areas. In all cases, the **identification of matching pairs of peers relied on the support from EU policy officers in line DG.**
 - In one example, the matching of experts and beneficiaries for a TAIEX EIR event relied on the policy officer from DG ENV being in charge of these two countries in particular.
 - In many cases for TAIEX SRSP, the policy officers in DG REFORM identified the experts through their own professional networks.
- Ensuring access to expertise related to implementation of EU-acquis (DG ENV) or EU-specific programme management (DG REGIO) that does not exist outside of EU MS policy officer, which was also less the case in TAIEX SRSP which support reform processes that are not necessarily linked to the EU acquis or EU specific policies.

⁴⁶ MN 32, 506, review of strategic documentation.

While TAIEX SRSP stakeholders valued working with peer expertise in general, the added value of the EU appeared less clearly than in other strands and depended on the added value of working at the EU level for the supported reform programme as a whole.

- Often, the policy officers of SRSP relied on their own professional network as the required expertise was lacking in the database, or the schedule was too short to launch a request through the database⁴⁷.

4 Bibliography

Strategic documents:

- *Service-Level Agreement between DG Regional and Urban Policy and DG NEAR on the implementation of a cross-subdelegation between the two Directorates-General concerning TAIEX support to Member State.* January 2015, European Commission, Ref. Ares(2015)503227 – 06/02/2015.
- *Amendment n 0 1 to the Service Level Agreement between DG REGIO and DG NEAR for TAIEX support to Member States, Ref. Ares(2015)503227 - 06/02/2015.*
- *Service Level Agreement between the SRSS and DG NEAR concerning the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) support to Member States.* August 2017, European Commission, Ref. Ares(2017)4174215 - 25/08/2017.
- *Service Level Agreement between DG Environment and DG NEAR concerning the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) support to Member States.* July 2017, European Commission, Ref. Ares(2017)4052735 - 16/08/2017.
- *Service Level Agreement between the SRSS and DG NEAR concerning the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) support to the Turkish Cypriot community and Member States.* December 2018, European Commission, Ref. Ares(2018)6626928 - 21/12/2018.
- *Service Level Agreement between the SRSS and DG NEAR concerning the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) support to the Turkish Cypriot community and Member States.* November 2019, European Commission, Ref. Ares(2019)7303932 - 27/11/2019.
- *Service Level Agreement between DG REFORM and DG NEAR concerning the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) support to the Turkish Cypriot community and to Member States.* June 2020, European Commission, Ref. Ares(2020)3653227.
- *TAIEX – Guidelines for European Commission and European External Action Service (EEAS) Colleagues.* TAIEX, European Commission, 2019.
- *Internal user guide on TAIEX and TAIEX recalibration.* TAIEX, European Commission, 2017.
- *TAIEX Service Level Agreement: DG NEAR – DG REFORM Final Report. Reporting period: August 2016 – July 2020.* European Commission, Neighbourhood and enlargement negotiations, 2020.
- *COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 26.2.2020 on the financing of the Structural Reform Support Programme and the adoption of the work programme for 2020 and repealing Commission Implementing Decision C(2019)8197.* European Commission, C(2020)1026, 2020.

Reports:

- *TAIEX-SRSP PEER 2 PEER. Sharing EU Member States' expertise on structural reforms.* European Union, 2020.

Websites:

- "EPPA EU Environment Partnership Programme for Accession. Project." Accessed August 26, 2021. <https://eppanetwork.eu/project/>

⁴⁷ MN 501, 502.

- “European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations. TAIEX.” Accessed August 26, 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/tenders/taix_en
- “European Commission. Overview of funding programmes: Technical Support Instrument (TSI).” Accessed June, 29, 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/info/overview-funding-programmes/technical-support-instrument-tsi_en
- “European Commission. EU Economic governance: monitoring, prevention, correction. The European Semester.” Accessed August 26, 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester_en
- “European Commission. Recovery from the coronavirus. Recovery and Resilience Facility.” Accessed August 26, 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en
- *Study on peer learning tools for the administrative capacity building of Member State bodies involved in the management of funds from the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund.* European Union, December 2020.

ANNEX 5C: TAIEX IN THE EAST NEIGHBOURHOOD

1 Coverage & Methodology

The case study concerns the implementation of TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood in the period 2015-2020. All of the countries of the East Neighbourhood are covered: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

The case study focuses primarily on an in-depth review of 15 events. Events were selected to be loosely representative of the overall sample of 2015-2020 events, though a clustering approach has also been used. For the complete list of events reviewed in-depth as well as for more details on the selection of events, see Annex 4. In addition to the detailed review of documentation associated with the events selected for in-depth study (application forms, approval forms, authorization forms, final reports), the case study relied on interviews (3 beneficiaries, 2 TAIEX Team staff, 1 NCP), 2 focus group discussions (1 with TAIEX NCPs and EUDEL TAIEX Focal points and 1 with TAIEX Experts); in depth review of the results of the two surveys conducted in the context of this evaluation; analysis of the after 6-months evaluations of all TAIEX events in the East Neighbourhood; a review of strategic documentation associated with the TAIEX ENI strand; review of previous evaluations; and finally a documentary review of a randomly selected sample of rejected applications.

2 Overview of TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood, 2015-2020

The second biggest strand of TAIEX

Over the evaluation period, a total of 1031 TAIEX events benefitted exclusively the East Neighbourhood, accounting for about EUR 11.4 million in direct expenditure (19.6% of the total expenditure of TAIEX in the period). In addition to these, the East Neighbourhood also benefitted from 62 multi-country events⁴⁸ that also involved Enlargement and/or Southern Neighbourhood countries (corresponding to a total of EUR 1.76 million). Overall, Ukraine benefitted from the largest number of TAIEX events in the region (41%), followed by Moldova (29%) and Azerbaijan (20%). Georgia, Belarus and Armenia benefitted from 16%, 14% and 13% of events respectively.

A declining number of events

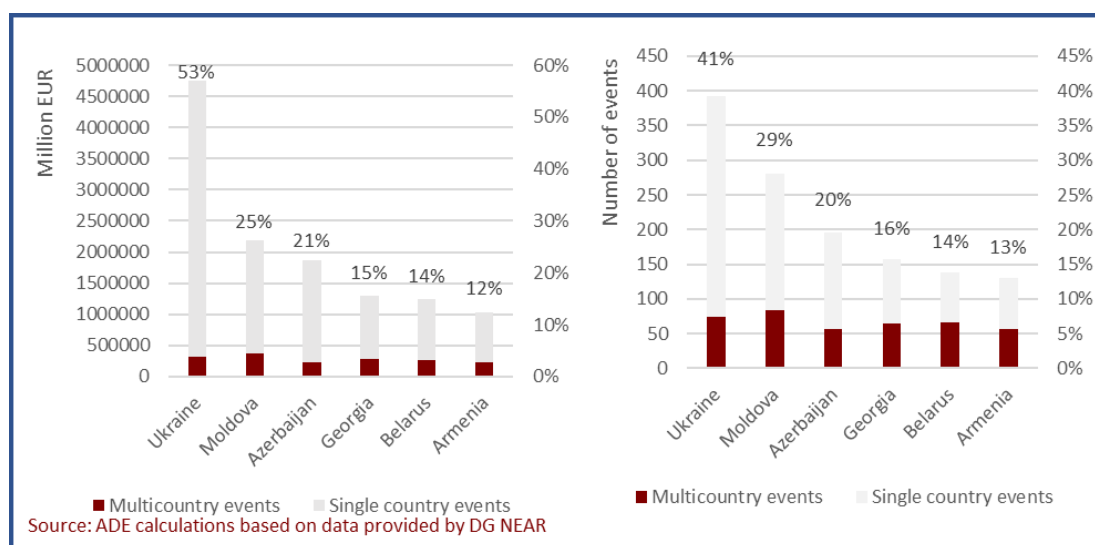
The number of events organised annually under TAIEX involving East Neighbourhood countries declined at a relatively constant rate between 2015 and 2019, falling from 261 to 153 events. In 2020, in the context of the COVID pandemic, a total of 58 events were organised, of which 32 were online. The majority of events benefitting the East Neighbourhood were requested directly by beneficiaries. However, since the Introduction of TAIEX Strategic in 2016, there was an increasing share of events requested by the Commission/ EEAS.

An extensive use of expert missions and series of events

The largest share of TAIEX events focusing exclusively on East Neighbourhood Countries in the 2015-2020 period were expert missions (40.4%), followed by study visits (29.6%), workshops (29.6%) and finally work-from-home events (0.5%) Events can be organised either as stand-alone actions or as part of a series. Series of events can also take the form of LTA (Long-Term Assistance) or MTA (Medium Term Assistance).

⁴⁸ 55 multi-country workshops, 6 multi-country work-from-home missions (all in 2020) and 1 multi-country study visit. The multi-country work-from-homes focused almost exclusively on digitalisation issues during the COVID pandemic (e-Health, e-Education, Telecom/Broadband, Cybersecurity and e-Government). There was also a TAIEX Work from Home on Gender Gap in TAIEX experts.

Figure 75: Expenditure and number of events involving the East Neighbourhood by country, total in million EUR and share⁴⁹



A strong focus on Justice & Human Rights

The top chapters of the acquis in terms of expenditures on which TAIEX provided expertise in the East Neighbourhood were Justice, freedom and security (23%); Judiciary and fundamental rights (8%); Customs Union (8%); and Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy (8%). Consumer and health protection, Transport policy, Education and culture, Environment and Information Society and media each represented 5% of total expenditures.

Experts predominantly from Neighbouring countries and recently acceded EU MS

Experts deployed in the East Neighbourhood mainly came from Lithuania (12%), Italy (9%), Romania (7%), Belgium (7%), Poland (6%), Croatia (6%) and Spain (5%). The share of Lithuanian and Romanian experts was particularly high relative to other strands. Lithuanian and Romanian experts accounted for 2.5% and 4.5% of experts in events not involving the East Neighbourhood.

3 Insights emerging from the case study, referring to each EQ

EQ1 Relevance at the instrument level: The instrument's ability to address needs

Box 23: Summary findings related to EQ1, TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study

- TAIEX was introduced following the success of TAIEX in Pre-accession countries, addressing a clear gap in the EU toolkit.
- Even though the institutional set-up of TAIEX was well-designed, in practice frequent staff rotations within the TAIEX Team, a lack of a clear management structure and challenges in keeping the EDBE up to date undermined institutional efficiency.
- The existing catalogue of activities was sufficiently comprehensive, despite study visits considered insufficiently flexible in terms of participants and the lack of a more short-term type of event for punctual follow up.
- EUDELS in the region reported abstaining from the use of TAIEX Strategic highlighting the importance of requests by beneficiaries for the achievement of results.

⁴⁹ The graphs below are based on calculations that also include events for which countries from the East Neighbourhood were not the only beneficiary.

TAIEX was introduced to the East neighbourhood in 2005 following the success of TAIEX in Pre-accession countries in promoting the harmonisation of beneficiaries' regulatory frameworks and the sharing of best practices in EU acquis-related fields.

It had a clear and relevant purpose. According to the Commission Implementing Decisions for TAIEX in the European Neighbourhood, TAIEX was intended to “support partner countries in the implementation of EU bilateral cooperation related agreement” – a key requirement for deepening economic integration and strengthening political cooperation - “by providing short-term, needs-driven, tailor-made and swiftly mobilised assistance” and by “being complementary to, and working alongside other instruments and programmes”.

The introduction of TAIEX in the region addressed a clear gap in the EU Toolkit. Both the May 2004 ENP Commission Strategy Paper as well as the subsequent ENP Action plans identified TAIEX as a key instrument for achieving the European Neighbourhood Policy objectives. **According to interviewed NCPs and EUDEL TAIEX focal points, there was and (still is) a clear need for a flexible and rapid capacity building instrument in the region given the volatile political context and the lack of clearly defined strategies by national authorities that have in some contexts limited opportunities for long term planning by the EU.**

The persistence of the need for an instrument like TAIEX was also reaffirmed with the adoption by the European Commission of the European Neighbourhood –wide measures' Strategic Priorities (2014-2020) and Multiannual Indicative Programme (2018-2020). According to them a key priority for the region is providing "targeted capacity building" and more specifically “supporting the approximation of the regulatory framework to EU norms and standards and enhancing public governance systems”, with TAIEX being identified as one of the key instruments to achieve this.

Appropriateness of the design of TAIEX

The institutional set-up of TAIEX was well-designed to promote the rapid, flexible, and service-oriented implementation of TAIEX. Interviewed stakeholders identified the following key features: thematic and country specialisation of the TAIEX Team, development of the EDBE and the installation of the TAIEX Team within DG NEAR C3). **However, in practice frequent staff rotations within the TAIEX Team, a lack of a clear management structure and challenges in keeping the EDBE up to date undermined institutional efficiency.**

Peer working nature was relevant: Peer working was considered by beneficiaries and involved stakeholders as one of the unique essential features of TAIEX similarly to the quickness, flexibility and low bureaucracy. It was particularly suitable for the pursuit of TAIEX's objectives because it allowed beneficiaries to:

- a. Learn directly from experts whose institutions followed the model they sought to pursue, or similar/ related ones. The beneficiaries had the opportunity to suggest from which country the experts should come from.
- b. Focus on practical and concrete experience (unlike other types of trainings and interactions which may also be useful, though in other circumstances and/ or in a complementary fashion). Experts could draw on their experience to provide practical information and bring clarity to details/ obstacles of particular interest to practitioners.

It also contributed to the formation of peer-to-peer networks which were highly valued by both beneficiaries and experts and were associated with higher levels of effectiveness and sustainability of results.

The existing catalogue of activities was sufficiently comprehensive:

- Each type of event had unique results/ addressed specific needs. Combination of different types allowed for a comprehensive approach
- Peer-review missions – a type of event only used in the Western Balkans and Turkey (TAIEX IPA) and ENI East- was particularly helpful as a policy planning tool allowing for the identification gaps. For example, the 2018 TAIEX Expert Mission on Strategic Support to the

Moldovan Organic Farming Sector in Moldova was organised following a joint mission between DG NEAR C1, C3 and EEAS during which the sectors where TAIEX can strategically intervene in Moldova were identified.

- Series of events option were crucial for supporting even bigger reforms when other longer term instruments such as Twinning were not available for political or other reasons.
- Online events, introduced in 2020 in the context of the pandemic were critical for the continuation of service and for addressing urgent needs associated with the crisis. However, they lacked the key feature of informal interactions that was highly appreciated by beneficiaries and described as essential for the achievement of results (see EQ3).

Two challenges have been identified in terms of the catalogue of activities:

- Study visits as insufficiently flexible in terms of participants.
- Lack of an even more short-term type of event for very punctual follow-up of events which was in some cases identified as essential. Such follow-up was in some case conducted in an informal fashion outside TAIEX at the initiative of the experts.

The introduction of TAIEX Strategic

The Introduction of TAIEX Strategic in 2016 was the result of a series of consultations involving the senior management of DG NEAR; DG NEAR Heads of Units; DG NEAR directors; beneficiary countries and EU Delegations. It was expected to allow for better thematic prioritisation, stronger focus on EU's priorities, particularly (but not only) concerning fundamental and structural reforms, improved coordination with other units and finally better sequencing of events while having at the same time in mind staff constraints that TAIEX was facing at the time.

Although there was a clear need for improved planning and sequencing of events as well as an opportunity to use TAIEX in a more strategic fashion to support EU priorities, there was also a need to strengthen government ownership of events as identified in the 2014 Evaluation of the TAIEX Instrument. The increased emphasis on events requested by Commission Services/EEAS were seen by several interviewed stakeholders (including two TAIEX Team staff) as conflicting with the objective of government ownership. This was particularly raised by **EUDELS in the region who reported abstaining from the use of TAIEX Strategic, highlighting the importance of requests by beneficiaries** for the achievement of results. For a discussion on the observed results of TAIEX Strategic see EQ3.

EQ2 Relevance at intervention level: Did specific interventions address needs?

Box 24: Summary findings related to EQ2, TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study

- All TAIEX events were in line and adapted to EU priorities in the region as well as to specific beneficiaries needs.
- Beneficiaries indicated that events were indeed well conceived, addressing needs, and country owned.
- TAIEX's relevance is attributed to well established TAIEX processes: the internal consultation prior to approval, the systematic involvement of beneficiaries in the design, the occasional use of peer-review missions and work-from-home events to review the context.
- Only some concerns were raised in terms of the relevance of TAIEX Strategic and multi-country events.

TAIEX events in the East Neighbourhood were in line and adapted to EU priorities in the region as well as to specific beneficiaries needs. Interviewed stakeholders attributed the relevance of TAIEX events to the TAIEX approach and established process including: a) the internal consultation prior to approval; b) the systematic involvement of beneficiaries in the design of events both for TAIEX Classic and TAIEX Strategic, as well as c) the occasional use of peer-review missions and work-from-home events to review the context.

Case study event documents (particularly: expert reports) show that events consistently addressed beneficiary needs in a relevant way. In the case of events directly requested by beneficiaries, the needs

described in the application form closely matched the needs targeted by the events' final agenda. They were also explicitly associated with EU priorities in beneficiary countries. Some examples are provided below and also under EQ3:

Box 25: Supporting the implementation of the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

The EU-Armenia CEPA was signed in 2017 to strengthen political and economic cooperation and strengthen trade relations while also supporting EU broader objectives in the East Neighbourhood.

Two of the events of the case studies in 2020 were explicitly requested by Armenia to enable it to abide by the requirements of the CEPA. The 2020 TAIEX Online Expert Mission on the approximation to the Environmental Liability Directive (70456) was requested to allow the fulfilment of the relevant obligations under the CEPA. The event resulted in concrete recommendations about what the country needs to do to achieve the approximation. Similarly, the 2020 TAIEX Online Expert Mission on Harmonisation of International Road Freight Regulations with EU requirements (70718) provided direct support for the harmonization of the regulatory framework of the transport sector in line with Armenia's obligations.

Source: Documentary Review, Surveys, After-6-month evaluations

Box 26: Supporting the implementation of the EU-Georgia Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA)

The 2020 TAIEX Online Expert Mission on development of a National Maritime Single Window (70633) in Georgia was requested by the beneficiaries to allow them to address key gaps in the implementation of the Association Agreement (AA) and DCFTA. This was also seen as an EU priority with DG NEAR C1 and the EUDEL having strongly endorsed it. The punctual support provided by TAIEX was described as very helpful although the online format of the event created a number of challenges.

Source: Documentary Review, Surveys, After-6-month evaluations

Survey results also confirmed the relevance of TAIEX events. Beneficiaries from the East Neighbourhood, indicated that events were indeed well conceived, addressing needs, and country owned. 24/25 agreed that the design of individual TAIEX events was sufficiently tailored to the specificities of the beneficiary country/ institution; 25/25 agreed (11 strongly) that the type of event organized (i.e. workshop, expert mission, study visit or work from home) was the most appropriate to address needs; and 18/19 that the events were country owned. Country ownership was achieved through effectively addressing an existing need as well as involving local government counterparts since early in the event design process.

Only some concerns were raised about the following in terms of the relevance of TAIEX events:

- **Strategic vs Classic:** The systematic involvement of the beneficiary institution in the design of events appears to have been key in ensuring that events are well-conceived and sufficiently tailored to the needs of beneficiaries. Although overall involvement of beneficiaries in the design of events remained high for most TAIEX Strategic events, this was less so the case for events requested by line DGs. According to interviewees, these were less likely to promote government ownership than their classic counterparts. This was also associated with lower likelihood of follow-up by beneficiaries and subsequently more limited results (see EQ3)
- **Thematic restrictions and restrictions in the number of applications submitted by beneficiaries:** Although, organised events tended to be highly relevant for the needs of beneficiaries, complaints were expressed by EUDELs and NCPs that recent restrictions in the thematic areas where TAIEX can be used as well as the limitations in the number of events that can be organised in each country have undermined the overall relevance of the instrument. According to them, several key priorities/ needs cannot be addressed as a

result. It must be noted, that TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood had the highest share of rejected events (38%), despite a general appreciation that applications tended to be of good quality relative to other strands.

EQ3 Contribution to and role of capacity development and institutional strengthening

Box 27: Summary findings related to EQ3, TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study

- TAIEX was particularly effective in the East Neighbourhood in promoting institutional capacity building and to a certain extent reforms, largely thanks to strong commitment by beneficiaries, high quality of experts, extensive use of series of events and particularly active NCPs in the region.
- Peer-review missions were shown to be a valuable tool for EU policy planning in the region.
- However, some cases were identified whereby TAIEX did not manage to achieve its intended results, mostly due to the national political context.
- TAIEX strategic events were associated with several advantages but also came at a cost. TAIEX Strategic events requested by Geo-desks or line DGs were less likely to be associated with government ownership or concrete results. Furthermore, there was a lower than expected take-up of TAIEX strategic, due to both low levels of awareness and a disbelief of achieving results through it.

Despite TAIEX's relatively small size and short-term nature, TAIEX played an important and in some cases critical role in the implementation of EU bilateral agreements with partner countries. It did so by playing a number of different roles:

1. It provided highly technical support allowing for the implementation of reforms/transformation of practices.
2. Acted as a gap filling tool addressing needs that could not be addressed through other longer-term instruments such as Twinning and TA.
3. Served as a policy planning tool (assessing the situation and identifying needs) allowing for better EU programming in the country (TAIEX strategic).
4. It acted as opening initiative for further collaboration in a specific area (TAIEX Strategic).

A number of concrete examples have emerged through the review of the events of the case study of how TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood strengthened the administrative capacity of beneficiary institutions and supported broader reforms in beneficiary countries.

A. TAIEX as a Short-Term Capacity Building Instrument

Box 28: Enabling Armenia's police to carry out cybercrime investigations and use digital forensics

Armenia faced rising levels of cybercrime starting from 2009, but with limited capacities for cybercrime investigation, only one cybercrime case had been resolved by 2014. In 2017, the Investigative Committee of the Police of Armenia decided to turn to TAIEX for support in strengthening its capacity for cybercrime investigation and the use of digital forensics. A TAIEX expert mission and a study visit were therefore organised. The two events allowed beneficiaries to better understand EU standards and learn from EU best practices. This triggered several reforms in line with observations and experts' recommendations including the development of new training processes of investigators and candidate investigators, the establishment of a new department in the Investigative Committee focused on cybercrime and finally the development of software and of a number of implementation tools for digital forensics investigation.

Source: Documentary Review, Survey, After 6-month evaluation

Box 29: Strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs Control of Travelers in Azerbaijan

In Azerbaijan the 2019 TAIEX Workshop on Carrying out Efficient Customs Control of Travelers was conducted to assist the frontline customs officers in carrying out customs controls of travellers and goods more effectively in line with EU legislation. The beneficiaries reported that based on the knowledge obtained during the workshop, it was decided to create a special department specifically dealing with travellers within the customs' authority. In addition, new instructions to the local customs departments were issued and amendments to the existing guidelines for travellers' control were made. The participants conducted dissemination activities at their working places to ensure the institutionalization of the knowledge they had acquired including the sharing of all the workshop materials and the production of an additional report summarizing the workshop's findings.

Source: Documentary Review, Survey, After 6-month evaluation

B. TAIEX as a Medium-Term Capacity Building Instrument

Although TAIEX was mostly a short-term tool, in some cases, it was successfully used to provide more medium to long-term support through long series of events. Albeit, not considered as effective as other instruments, TAIEX's longer term support often proved critical in cases where Twinning or OECD Sigma were not available due to political or other reasons such as availability of experts.

Box 30: Enabling the National Bank of Moldova to abide by Basel III requirements – TAIEX as a Medium-Term Capacity Building Instrument

Under the 2014 Association Agreement with the EU, Moldova is required to abide by the Basel III standards. In 2018, following a two-year Twinning project with the Central Banks of Romania and the Netherlands, the National Bank of Moldova (NBM) successfully adopted a new regulatory framework in line with the EU Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR) and Directive (CRDIV) - the EU implementing acts of Basel III. However, the NBM lacked key expertise to implement the new framework. Although a second Twinning project was initially approved for these purposes, due to political reasons, it was cancelled. After extensive dialogue with the EUD it was decided to have multiple TAIEX events instead. The series of TAIEX events enabled beneficiaries to make significant progress in the implementation of the framework, leading among other things to the adjustment of the NBM's internal procedures regarding the assessment of market and interest rate risk in non-trading activities; the drafting, approval and implementation of a new methodology for assessing capital adequacy of banks; and the development of a complex macro prudential stress testing framework for the banking system. Although initially hesitant about the capacity of the instrument to address the magnitude of their needs, the beneficiaries appreciated "the instant results", "low bureaucracy" and "flexibility" of TAIEX, that allowed them to each time to select the most appropriate type of events for their constantly evolving needs.

Source: Interviews, Documentary Review, Survey, After 6-month evaluation

C. TAIEX as a Tool for supporting reforms

Box 31: Enabling the adoption of a new law on cybersecurity in Ukraine

Cybersecurity was one of the key strategic priorities for the EU's cooperation with Neighbourhood partners as set out in the Joint Communication on the ENP review (JOIN(2015) 50 final) adopted on 18 November 2015. A series of events were organized to strengthen cybersecurity capacity of the relevant authorities in Ukraine. The initial TAIEX workshop in 2016 in the area of cyber security of civilian critical infrastructure led to the identification of a number of steps Ukraine had to take in

the area. The 2017 study Visit on Resilient and Efficient Institutions working on Cyber-Security in Ukraine allowed beneficiaries to observe key EU practices in the field. Beneficiaries reported that following the series of events the cyber capacity of the relevant national authorities was significantly strengthened, fostering the necessary environment to the adoption of a new law on cybersecurity in the end of 2017.

Source: Interviews, Documentary Review, Survey, After 6 month evaluation

D. TAIEX as an EU Policy Planning and Gap-Assessment Tool

Box 32: Supporting the 2020 Armenia Police Reform

In 2019, the Armenian Government requested EU support for police reform. Following consultations between DG NEAR, the Government of Armenia, DG HOME, EEAS, and the EUDEL in Yerevan, it was decided that prior to any EU support, a TAIEX Peer-review mission of the sector would be conducted in order to identify the needs for a future reform and the possible areas for EU support. The mission was described as critical for advancing police reforms in Armenia. The recommendations of the mission directly informed the Reform Strategy and the 2020-2022 Action Plan of the Police of the Republic of Armenia that were adopted in 2020 as well as EU programming in the country. The beneficiary institutions argued that the report and recommendations produced through TAIEX were broadly disseminated and provided an “eye-opening” account of the large differences between Armenia and the EU in terms of police-related legislation and practices. This triggered a number of organisational changes in line with EU best practices even before the official implementation of the strategy.

Source: Documentary Review, Survey, After 6 month evaluation

E. TAIEX as an opening initiative for further collaboration in a specific area

Box 33: Fostering Collaboration with the East Neighbourhood on Circular economy

The 2017 TAIEX Regional Workshop on Circular Economy was organised in support of the strategy elaborated by DG NEAR to strengthen collaboration with DG ENV and promote the Circular Economy agenda. The workshop provided updates on the developments of the circular economy in the EU and in the countries of the Eastern Partnership and contributed to the identification of possible areas of further cooperation with a view of promoting the circular economy in the context of the EU regional cooperation with the countries of the Eastern Partnership. The 2017 TAIEX Regional Workshop on Circular Economy, strengthened the knowledge of participants aim at identifying possible areas of further cooperation with a view of promoting the circular economy in the context of the EU regional cooperation with the countries of the Eastern Partnership.

Source: Documentary Review, Survey, After 6 month evaluation

The capacity of the instrument to contribute to both individual and institutional capacity building and reforms was also reaffirmed during the Focus Group Discussions, Interviews and Surveys. Two key findings however emerged, individual gains were not always institutionalised and that TAIEX's role in supporting reforms was more limited than its capacity building potential.

More specifically:

- In the surveys, events' participants from the ENI EAST unanimously agreed (and in most cases strongly agreed) on the fact that events improved beneficiary knowledge on the topics covered as well as their capacities to do their work. Most participants also agreed that TAIEX events changed concretely the way beneficiaries do their work, but there was

comparatively less strength in the agreement, as well as some (mild) disagreement (4 of the 45 respondents mostly disagreed and 1 strongly disagreed).

- The surveys also confirmed the perception of beneficiaries that TAIEX had significantly contributed to structural reforms albeit to a lesser extent than capacity building. The majority of respondents from the East Neighbourhood agreed that at least one of the events they had participated in had led to: adoption of new public policy (26/45 agreed, 12/45 did not know); modification of existing public policy (24/45 agreed, 14/45 did not know); improved application and/or enforcement of existing public policy (30/45 agreed, 11 did not know); adoption of standards and practices in line with EU practice or requirements (35/45 agreed, 8/45 did not know); formal changes in working procedures or organisational structures (25/45 agreed, 12/45 did not know); and finally informal but significant changes in the way of working (30/45 agreed, 11 did not know).
- The after 6-month evaluations also confirm the perception that TAIEX was able to bring both capacity building and structural reform results: that 32% of events in the East Neighbourhood led to organisational changes and/or the creation of new departments/ units/ positions, 57% led to the drafting of a new law/act or to the modification of an existing one and 70% more broadly to improved internal working procedures.

Factors affecting the effectiveness of TAIEX results

TAIEX was particularly effective in the East Neighbourhood, largely thanks to strong commitment by beneficiaries, high quality of experts with relevant expertise, extensive use of series of events as well as workplans/ training maps, and particularly active NCPs in the region. The high quality of experts was described as particular crucial to the achievement of results:

- The beneficiaries could each time select experts whose experience and national context was deemed as most relevant to them. Experts deployed in the East Neighbourhood mainly came from Lithuania (12%), Italy (9%), Romania (7%), Belgium (7%), Poland (6%), Croatia (6%) and Spain (5%). The share of Lithuanian and Romanian experts was particularly high relative to other strands, with cultural and institutional proximity being frequently cited as reasons for. Lithuanian and Romanian experts accounted for 2.5% and 4.5% of experts in events not involving the East Neighbourhood.
- Satisfaction with the experts provided through the TAIEX Instrument has been very high. In the surveys, all of the events' participants from the ENI EAST agreed that the information provided/ discussed during the event(s) was relevant to their needs/their institutions' needs (28/45 strongly); that the experts' knowledge on the topics covered was adequate (27/45 strongly); and that the experts conveyed information in a clear and practical manner (25/45 strongly). Over the years the satisfaction of the beneficiaries with experts increased (accumulation of expertise and larger availability of experts in the EDBE, coming from a larger number of countries) (TMS data).

However, a number of cases were identified whereby TAIEX did not manage to achieve its intended results. This was mostly due to the national political context. In some cases, frequent staff turnovers led to a loss of progress or a waning of political commitment. More critically in several countries, it was reported that limited institutional capacity limited the beneficiary authorities' ability to follow-up on recommendations made by TAIEX experts or to properly implement adopted reforms. For a minority of events implementation challenges were detrimental to TAIEX's success. Online and Multi-country events were associated with more limited results.

Implementation challenges

- a. Low quality of experts (very rare): Experts incapable of transmitting/ communicating their messages or with insufficient awareness of the local context.
- b. Low quality or absence of interpretation undermined communication and the possibility to create meaningful interactions.

- c. Too broad/generic or too ambitious agenda: Insufficient time dedicated on each issue and lack of concrete guidelines. Beneficiaries felt unable to follow up with specific actions.
- d. Failure to engage the right participants: Need for technical/operational staff directly involved in the implementation of the issues covered but also high-level staff to support political momentum.
- e. Delays: political momentum waned, issue no longer seen as a priority/ need. (see EQ4 for more details)

Type of event

- a. Multi-country events: often too broad/failure to adapt to the specific needs/ capacities of individual countries. interpretation/ communication challenges. For instance, although the 2017 TAIEX Regional Workshop on Circular Economy (55386) was generally seen as highly successful and participants found it very informative, it was suggested that its presentational nature and the large number of participants appear to have limited opportunities for discussion. Some participants commented on the need for smaller group discussions/ round tables to take place. Experts also commented that participants did not sufficiently engage in discussions.
- b. Online events: Loss of informal interactions, technical issues, limited engagement of participants, increased challenged with interpretation. NCPs and EUDEL TAIEX focal points were particularly vocal about the need to move from the ENI East.
- c. Study visits: Study visits were seen as very helpful when highly technical issues were at stake/ there was a need for direct observation. However, they were often described by EUDEL staff as a 'vacation' for beneficiaries, not necessarily selected on the basis of their needs. Moreover, given the more limited number of participants institutionalisation of knowledge was described as more challenging.

Sustainability of TAIEX results

The results of TAIEX in terms of both administrative capacity and structural reforms were generally seen by survey respondents as sustainable with the majority expecting them to last for more than 6 months. Nevertheless, several interviewees and experts highlighted how the lack of follow-up, due to limited capacities of beneficiary authorities, and in some cases frequent staff turnover undermined the sustainability of results.

TAIEX's financial weight and critical mass

Overall, in the period 2015-2020 a total of 21 million euros were dedicated to TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood. This is a very small share (0.6%) of the total budget of the ENI instrument, through which TAIEX is financed, over the same period.

TAIEX's mostly short-term and ad-hoc nature, and its limited financial weight naturally constrained the magnitude of results the instrument could achieve on its own, but was simultaneously a key source of its strength. When successfully integrated within broader EU programming and used in synergy with other instruments, TAIEX's design, unlike other more-long-term instruments, allowed it to provide flexible, swift, and well targeted support to beneficiaries, playing an important gap-filling role as identified in the examples presented above.

It must also be noted that the budget doesn't appear to have been a constraint, with 15% of the budget contracted between the 1st of August 2016 and the 31st of July 2020 having remained unspent. The share of unused funds under TAIEX ENI EAST was the lowest across all strands.

TAIEX Strategic

TAIEX strategic events were associated with a number of advantages but also came at a cost:

Firstly, the introduction of training maps/ workplans helped in planning, coordination, and improved sequencing of events, and was very appreciated by beneficiaries. This was the case for Agriculture and to a lesser extent for Justice & Human rights. However, the increased emphasis on in-advance, yearly

planning of events came **according to NCPs at the expense of the flexibility of the Instrument and its capacity to respond in an immediate and ad-hoc fashion** to the needs of beneficiaries. whereby a requirement was introduced (in 2019) to pre-identify all events in the beginning of each year, beneficiaries complained that there were significant delays in addressing more urgent needs that emerged during the year and were not included in the yearly plans.

Secondly, TAIEX strategic enabled Commission Services/ EEAS to request events for the pursuit of key EU priorities that may not have been undertaken by the national authorities (for instance on gender equality or circular economy). **Similarly, TAIEX Strategic facilitated the emergence of synergies with other EU instrument** (see EQ6). **However, TAIEX Strategic events requested by Geo-desks or line DGs tended to be broader in content and with lower levels of involvement by beneficiaries in their design. As such, albeit playing an important role in exposing beneficiaries to those issues, they were described as less likely to be associated with government ownership or concrete results** (capacity building and reforms). This is also reflected in the after-6 months evaluations whereby Strategic events were systematically associated with a lower likelihood to bring about results.

Thirdly, although TAIEX Strategic boosted the use of TAIEX by Commission Services/EEAS there was a **lower than expected take-up, in particular by EUDELS, due to both low levels of awareness and, as appears from interviews, a disbelief in the capacity of TAIEX strategic to achieve intended results.** EUDELS in the FGD reported actively abstaining from the use of TAIEX Strategic, highlighting the importance of requests by beneficiaries. The general message was that EUDELS cannot force beneficiaries to pursue topics that do not interest them. They can bring topics on the table but the beneficiary has to be willing to pursue them on their own. EUDELS in the region used TAIEX Strategic exceptionally and mostly - if not exclusively at the request of beneficiaries when the maximum number of events beneficiaries could request was used. There was very limited use of TAIEX Strategic by line DGs with these events being mainly used for introduction of topics or identification of needs with generally lower levels of engagement by beneficiaries.

Finally, peer-review missions were shown to be a valuable tool for EU policy planning in the region but their use remained limited after 2015 when it was at its peak.

Contribution to non-core objectives

There was consensus among stakeholders in both the FGDs and interviews that TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood beyond contributing to reaching the specific objectives it was designed for, allowed for the formation of public sector networks and the improvement of EU's visibility and public perception in beneficiary countries. The latter was also supported by the surveys whereby, 40 of the 44 survey respondents from the ENI EAST strand agreed (25 strongly) that TAIEX had strengthened the EU's visibility as a valuable partner. Only 2 mostly disagreed and 2 expressed no opinion.

EQ4 Effectiveness of the TAIEX implementation modalities

Box 34: Summary findings related to EQ4, TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study

- TAIEX was one of the quickest Technical Assistance instruments available to beneficiaries, with events organised as quickly as 8 days after approval. Nevertheless, TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood was amongst the least quick TAIEX strands in terms of the organisation of events.
- Key factors related to TAIEX's swiftness were identified by interviewed stakeholders: the organisation of the DG NEAR C3 into 4 TEAMS each with specific thematic expertise, the existence of country specific focal points, the accumulated know-how, the existence of the EDDBE and the active role of NCPs in the region.
- During the FGD with NCPs and EUDEL focal points, it was concluded that the instrument has become significantly slower in recent years, due to difficulties in the identification of suitable experts as well as an overload of the TAIEX team starting from 2018.

- The uncertainty associated with the COVID-19 pandemic also led to delays in the organization of non-urgent events associated with the pandemic.
- The flexibility of TAIEX was highly appreciated by beneficiaries and has often been the reason rendering TAIEX the preferred instrument.
- However, the recent introduction of the requirement to pre-identify in the beginning of the year the number and type of events to be organised in each country, has significantly undermined instrument's flexibility and capacity to organise needs driven follow-up events.

TAIEX was one of the quickest Technical Assistance instruments available to beneficiaries in the East Neighbourhood, with events organised as quickly as 8 days after approval. This enabled TAIEX to address urgent needs that could not be addressed through other instruments and capitalise upon political momentum in the beneficiary countries to achieve reforms (see EQ3). The following factors were identified by interviewed stakeholders as key for TAIEX's swiftness: The organisation of the DG NEAR C3 into 4 TEAMS each with specific thematic expertise, the existence of country specific focal points that deal with the approval and organisation of events; the accumulated know-how, and in particular the existence of established processes, relations and agreements with providers, arrangements with MS for the participation of experts etc. The existence of the EDBE was also critical for the rapid identification and deployment of experts. Finally, swiftness was favoured by the particularly active role of NCPs in the region, who both supported the application process for beneficiaries and helped with coordination during the organisation phase.

Box 35: Supporting the National Bank of Moldova to fight against money-laundering - The challenge of delays due to an overload of the TAIEX Team and difficulties in finding experts.

In 2018, there was a crisis in the banking sector of Moldova triggered by lack of experience and lack of normative framework to fight against money laundering. The National Bank of Moldova needed immediate capacity building support to address the crisis and turned to TAIEX to provide it. However, the TAIEX event took over a year to organise. Due to an overload of the TAIEX Team, a project manager was not assigned to this request for 6 months, despite multiple relaunches by beneficiaries about the urgency of the situation. Once a project manager was appointed, it took over 6 months to find an appropriate expert, with the EUDEL of Moldova having to step in to support the process. Although the beneficiaries appreciated the support they eventually received, they complained that it was not there when they needed the most, allowing the crisis to deteriorate.

Source: Interviews, survey, documentary review, inventory analysis

Nevertheless, TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood was amongst the least quick TAIEX strands in terms of the organisation of events (only TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood was slightly slower). On average, TAIEX events in the East Neighbourhood took about 18 days to be approved and 7.3 months to be organised after approval. Only 6% of events were organised within 6 weeks and 56% within 6 months from their approval. 16% of events took more than a year to organise after their approval.

In addition, during the FGD with NCPs and EUDEL focal points, it was concluded that the instrument has become significantly slower in recent years for beneficiaries in the ENI EAST, with significant implications for the instrument's effectiveness and the involvement of beneficiaries. This was also confirmed by the data whereby it was indicated that the average organisation time systematically increased from 6.4 months in 2015 to 11.7 in 2019.

The most recurrent causes of long delays under this strand were difficulties in the identification of suitable experts as well as an overload of the TAIEX team starting from 2018 that led to the systematic postponement of several events. The uncertainty associated with the COVID-19 pandemic also led to delays in the organization of non-urgent events associated with the pandemic.

Similar to the case for the TAIEX events on Macprudential Policy Instruments in Moldova was the 2018 TAIEX Expert Mission on Support on e-government development in Azerbaijan (65793) which exhibited over 6 months of delay as the Team indicated that "due to the current high demand for TAIEX assistance it is likely that the preparations will be delayed".

The flexibility of TAIEX was highly appreciated by beneficiaries and has often been the reason rendering TAIEX the preferred instrument. A key aspect of the instrument's flexibility was the opportunity to organize follow up events in a swift manner. In some cases, TAIEX events led to the identification of additional needs or it was not possible to fully address the need with the single event and further action was required. The flexibility of the instrument meant that additional events could quickly be organised to cover those needs. The flexibility of the Instrument was also highlighted during the COVID pandemic. The transition of TAIEX into a fully virtual instrument occurred very rapidly (with the first online events were organised in April 2020) enabling the instrument to continue providing support to partner countries in the Enlargement region throughout the crisis.

However, the recent introduction of the requirement to pre-identify in the beginning of the year the number and type of events to be organised in each country, has significantly undermined the flexibility of the instrument and in particular the capacity to organise needs driven follow-up events. Some concerns were also raised about the rigidity of requirements for participants in study visits.

EQ5 Cost efficiency/ effectiveness and administrative burden⁵⁰

Box 36: Summary findings related to EQ5, TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study

- The (direct) cost of TAIEX events in the East Neighbourhood was reasonable and comparable with other TAIEX DG NEAR strands; no examples of inefficiencies were identified.⁵¹ Nevertheless, several concerns were raised for the cost-effectiveness of online events as well as multi-country events which were particularly costly.
- The administrative burden for the application and organisation of TAIEX events was reasonable and manageable for most beneficiaries.⁵² However, most of the involved stakeholders complained that it had significantly increased in recent years, due to the introduction of the requirement to identify all desired events in the beginning of the year and to the challenges in finding experts.
- However, the high levels of support by NCPs and the developments in the application increasing the accessibility of the process rendered the process accessible for beneficiaries.

The (direct) cost of TAIEX events in the East Neighbourhood was reasonable and comparable with other TAIEX DG NEAR strands; no examples of inefficiencies were identified for the events reviewed in depth for the case studies.⁵³ Nevertheless, several concerns were raised for the cost-effectiveness of online events as well as multi-country events which were particularly costly.

- Firstly, multi-country (in person) events were much more expensive than single-country events with many survey respondents as well as interviewed beneficiaries questioning their effectiveness (see eq. 3). Multi-country study visits cost on average EUR 15.4 thousand almost twice as much as their single country counterparts. Multi-country Workshops cost

⁵⁰ As a necessary premise, it is worth clarifying the evaluation team currently lacks data on costs of TAIEX events which do not directly pertain to the logistical organization (that is, any involvement of EU officers, including those belonging to the TAIEX team): as such, statements on cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness are necessarily incomplete. Nevertheless, the following observations have been made:

⁵¹ Only in one of the events reviewed in depth for the case studies, there were some indications of inefficiencies but there was no consensus among involved stakeholders. The experts despite being very positive about the contribution of TAIEX commented, that the third day of the event was unnecessary and that the event could have been organised just for two days.

⁵² 18 out of the 21 respondents to the survey from the TAIEX ENI EAST strand agreed (9 strongly) with the statement that the application process was not too cumbersome. 21 of the 22 TAIEX ENI EAST participants that responded to the survey agreed that the administrative burden implied by the organization of the event was reasonable compared to the result, with 13 strongly agreeing. At the same time 14 out of the 15 participants agreed that the overall cost for their institution for the organization of a TAIEX event(s) was reasonable compared to the result.

⁵³ Only in one of the events reviewed in depth for the case studies, there were some indications of inefficiencies but there was no consensus among involved stakeholders. The experts despite being very positive about the contribution of TAIEX commented, that the third day of the event was unnecessary and that the event could have been organised just for two days.

on average EUR 31.7 thousand compared to an average of EUR 19 thousand for single country ones.

- Secondly, online events were not particularly cheaper and were described as significantly less effective than their offline counterparts (See EQ3). Only single-country online workshops tended to be cheaper than their offline counterparts at EUR 11.6 thousand (61% of the in-person costs). Online expert missions, costed on average EUR 10.9 thousand (160% of in-person events). Multi-country online workshops appear to have almost the same cost as their single-country counterparts (around EUR 12 thousand). Online events entailed a number of additional IT and logistical costs, for example for the use of a platform with simultaneous interpretation, for an online moderator, for additional IT support for all participants and for test events with experts as well as interpreters prior to the real event to ensure events run smoothly, that were not offset by the reduction in transportation, accommodation, venue, and catering costs.

The administrative burden for the application and organisation of TAIEX events in the East Neighbourhood was reasonable and manageable for most beneficiaries.⁵⁴

A limited administrative capacity, shortage of staff and frequent staff turnovers in beneficiary administrations appeared to be a big challenge in the region, often resulting in poor quality applications. However, a number of key factors rendered the process accessible for beneficiaries:

- **High levels of support by NCPs:** NCPs and EUD TAIEX focal Points were particularly active in the region which was highly appreciated by beneficiaries. When beneficiaries did not have the capacity to submit the application they provided critical support.
- **A number of developments over the years in the application that increased the accessibility of the process:** These include the introduction of a simplified and tailored application form for the request of events to support the management of the COVID-19 pandemic by beneficiary institutions (see for example event 80006). The introduction of workplans and training maps whereby beneficiary institutions in consultation with DG NEAR can request with the same application multiple events on a specified thematic area. (See for example events 70633 and 70718 which were organised as part of workplans).

Although the administrative burden was overall reasonable, most of the involved stakeholders complained that it had significantly increased in recent years – mainly for two reasons: a) the introduction of the requirement to identify all desired events in the beginning of the year; and b) the challenges in finding experts. More specifically:

- There was consensus among NCPs in the FGD, that starting from 2019, the increased requirements for advance planning and pre-identification of applications in the beginning of the year created a lot of coordination challenges.
- Significant delays in the organisation of events had led several interviewed beneficiaries to believe that they needed to identify themselves the experts or at least their institution of origin prior to applying if they wanted to have the event organised on time. NCPs and EUDEL staff also reported encouraging this.

EQ6 Complementarity with other instruments

Box 37: Summary findings related to EQ6, TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study

- TAIEX was recognised as bringing a unique combination of benefits as compared to other instruments available in the East Neighbourhood (rapid, peer to peer, low-bureaucracy, flexible).

⁵⁴ 18 out of the 21 respondents to the survey from the TAIEX ENI EAST strand agreed (9 strongly) with the statement that the application process was not too cumbersome. 21 of the 22 TAIEX ENI EAST participants that responded to the survey agreed that the administrative burden implied by the organization of the event was reasonable compared to the result, with 13 strongly agreeing. At the same time 14 out of the 15 participants agreed that the overall cost for their institution for the organization of a TAIEX event(s) was reasonable compared to the result.

- Twinning was seen as better suited to address long-term needs and bring reforms.
- There is no evidence to suggest the existence of duplication with other instruments and programs largely thanks to the instruments' uniqueness and gap-filling nature as well as to well-established processes within the TAIEX team to prevent duplication and improve coordination across actors.
- There were strong synergies between TAIEX and Twinning, largely thanks to the installation of the two instruments within the same unit (DG NEAR C3) and the use of common NCP for their coordination in the region.
- Beyond Twinning however, there is very limited evidence of actively sought synergies with other capacity building instruments active. Nevertheless, a large number of complementarities still emerged as the beneficiary administrations also benefitted from other EU capacity building instruments.
- The introduction and use of TAIEX strategic does appear to have favoured the use of TAIEX in support of other instruments, but it's potential was not fully exploited, mostly due to limited visibility and awareness of the opportunities provided by TAIEX Strategic among relevant EU staff.

TAIEX was recognised as bringing a unique combination of benefits as compared to other instruments available in the East Neighbourhood (rapid, peer to peer, low-bureaucracy, flexible).

- All interviewed stakeholders agreed that TAIEX had distinct advantages relative to other capacity building instruments, with speed, flexibility, low bureaucracy, and peer-to-peer support being cited by most. As one TAIEX beneficiary from Moldova put it in the survey:

“TAIEX is the European Commission's **fastest technical assistance and information exchange tool**, which supports beneficiary authorities in the process of harmonizing national legislation with EU law and applying harmonized legislation, as well as facilitating the sharing of EU best practices.[TAIEX is] one of the **most accessible from the perspective of bureaucratic process** when accessing it (for example it doesn't envisage a very thorough budgetary planning) as other EU technical assistance instrument might require (such as Twinning).”

- The review of case study documentation revealed that in some cases TAIEX was selected over other instruments for its unique benefits. For instance, in the case of the 2020 TAIEX Workshop on Best practices in the field of public order and security in crisis management caused by COVID-19 (80006) in Moldova TAIEX was seen as a preferred tool due to its peer-to-peer nature. It was indicated in the approval form that “while the assistance could be delivered by the ongoing TA project as well, the TAIEX application presents a good occasion to bring closer together the Moldovan Carabinieri and its peers from EU MS”.
- In the survey, the majority of beneficiaries agreed that the needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through other existing EU tools (only 2 out of 45 disagreed) or through existing EU member states initiatives (without involving the EU) (only 3 of 45 respondents mostly disagreed). In particular, the majority of respondents to the survey agreed that TAIEX outmatched other available options (e.g. other EU and EU MS tools and Initiatives) in terms of the following: a) rapid organisation of events (36 of 45 respondents) benefitting from peer-to-peer experience and advice (38 of 45 respondents agreed), c) meaningful involvement of beneficiary institutions (38 of 45 respondents) and d) tailoring events to specific needs (39 of 45 respondents, 4 expressed no opinion).

There is no evidence to suggest the existence of duplication with other instruments and programs largely thanks to the instruments uniqueness and gap-filling nature as well as to well-established processes within the TAIEX team to prevent duplication and improve coordination across actors (namely the consultation process prior to approval). The beneficiary countries in the region were also particularly active in promoting coordination across regions. For example, Ukraine has set up a centre to ensure the coordination and effective implementation of the TAIEX, Twinning and OECD-sigma Instruments.

There were strong synergies between TAIEX and Twinning in the East Neighbourhood, largely thanks to the installation of the two instruments within the same unit (DG NEAR C3) and the use of common National Contact Points for their coordination in the region. More specifically:

- 13 TAIEX expert missions and 1 TAIEX workshop were explicitly organised in the region to support the preparation or reporting of Twinning missions⁵⁵.
- A number of additional TAIEX events were used to fill in remaining gaps from Twinning projects.
- Some TAIEX events that led to the identification of needs to be addressed through Twinning projects and provided the necessary foundations for their launch. The event was also seen as the basis for future Twinning.

Twining was seen as better suited to address long-term needs and bring reforms. However, when Twinning was not available for political or other reasons, beneficiaries appreciated the piecemeal, needs-driven support provided through series of TAIEX events, with some examples of TAIEX having successfully provided relatively long-term support for big reforms.(see EQ3)

Beyond Twinning however, there is very limited evidence of actively sought synergies with other capacity building instruments active in the East Neighbourhood (OECD-SIGMA, budget support, and other thematic instruments). The introduction and use of TAIEX strategic does appear to have favoured the use of TAIEX in support of other instruments, but it's potential was not fully exploited, mostly due to limited visibility and awareness of the opportunities provided by TAIEX. The Commission services and the EEAS, generally had a comprehensive idea of the actions taking place in the country/ thematic area of their focus. They could use TAIEX to complement and support other instruments of the EU's toolkit. For example, the 2017 TAIEX Regional Workshop on Circular Economy was requested by the Commission to support existing actions and other capacity building instruments of the EU to support the Circular Economy priorities of the EU.

Nevertheless, even when synergies were not actively pursued a large number of complementarities emerged as the beneficiary administrations also benefitted from other EU instruments promoting institutional capacity building, including Twinning, DG NEAR Technical Assistance, OECD-SIGMA, budget support, and other thematic projects. For instance, the Ministry of Environment of Armenia, received TAIEX support on the approximation to the Environmental Liability Directive while also simultaneously benefitting from "European Union for Climate" (EU4Climate)⁵⁶ Action and the European Union Water Initiative Plus for the Eastern Partnership (EUWI+) project.⁵⁷

EQ7 EU Added Value, working with peers and EU internal cooperation

Box 38: Summary findings related to EQ7, TAIEX in the East Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study

- There was significant added value in organising TAIEX at the EU level rather than by individual MS as recognized by interviewed beneficiaries, NCPs, EUDEL TAIEX focal points and TAIEX TEAM staff. Advantages consisted in the large availability of experts from MS thanks to the EDBE, improved coordination and avoidance of duplication, pursuit of EU priorities and increased EU visibility, and finally economies of scale.

⁵⁵ It is currently mandatory for all Twinning missions to be followed by TAIEX Peer-review missions 6 months after their completion in order to assess their results and identify remaining gaps.

⁵⁶ This Action is funded by the European Union and aims to help six Eastern Partner countries (the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) to preserve and better use their natural capital and stimulate economic growth by supporting environment-related action, demonstrating and unlocking opportunities for greener growth and setting mechanisms to better manage environmental risks and impacts.

⁵⁷ Started in 2019 European Union Water Initiative Plus for the Eastern Partnership (EUWI+) project: The objectives of the project are: 1) Support to further reforms of water policies, establishment of an adequate governance framework, and development of institutional capacities in support of policy implementation 2) Support the transition from pilot basin to country scale timely implementation of EU Water.

- The implementation of TAIEX entailed high levels of cooperation across DG NEAR C3, EUDELS, and EU MS. However, there does not appear to have been an explicit strategy for maximising cooperation across EU actors.

There was significant added value in organising TAIEX at the EU level rather than by individual MS. Interviewed beneficiaries, NCPs, EUDEL TAIEX focal points and TAIEX TEAM staff as well as survey respondents associated several advantages of TAIEX to its EU nature, namely the large availability of experts from MS thanks to the EDBE, improved coordination and avoidance of duplication, pursuit of EU priorities and increased EU visibility, and finally economies of scale.

- The development of the EDBE: There was consensus that the development and management of the Experts' Database required expertise and resources that are hard to accumulate by individual MS. The EDBE allowed for the identification and quick deployment of MS experts, whose experience was deemed most relevant to their needs and national context of beneficiaries. For example, for the 2020 TAIEX Online Expert Mission on development of a National Maritime Single Window (70633), the Georgian authorities specifically asked for an Estonian Expert because Estonia was deemed as a leading country in EU on Digitalization – a key component of the reform. Thanks to the EDBE this request was quickly granted.
- Coordination and avoidance of duplication: The network of EUDELS and the regular channels of Communication with line DGs appear to have been key for the avoidance of duplications. The TAIEX Team was in regular contact with focal points in EU Delegations as well as in line DGs and thematic colleagues within DG NEAR both for encouraging the uptake of TAIEX Strategic but also in the context of the consultation process for the approval of events. However, there is no evidence yet to suggest that such cooperation was extended beyond the direct implementation of TAIEX activities and had implications for the overall coordination across institutions.
- Pursuit of EU priorities and increased visibility of the EU: The organisation of TAIEX at the EU level ensured its alignment and active support for EU priorities in the region (see EQ2). It also contributed to strengthening the visibility of the EU as confirmed by beneficiaries in interviews and surveys.
- Economies of scale: Having a sole instrument with significant scale allowed it to perfect logistic mechanisms – among others, for temporarily hiring and compensating public officers that would otherwise not be easily available, as occupied with their regular jobs.

The EU added value of TAIEX was also confirmed through the surveys, whereby the vast majority of participants from the ENI East strand agreed that the needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through existing EU member states initiatives (without involving the EU). Only 3 of the 44 respondents mostly disagreed.

The implementation of TAIEX entailed high levels of cooperation across DG NEAR C3, EUDELS, and EU MS (through NCPs and in some cases embassies). However, there does not appear to have been an explicit strategy for maximising cooperation across EU actors. The established cooperation was largely organic and the degree of its maximisation dependent upon the persons responsible for TAIEX in EUDELS and national administrations (NCPs), their level of seniority as well as their personal commitment to TAIEX. The involvement of MS' embassies in TAIEX varied significantly across countries, ranging from frequently in Azerbaijan and Moldova to seldom in Ukraine and Armenia. In some cases, MS embassies played an active role, by supporting the identification of areas of expertise their public officials could support and attending regularly events, while in others they weren't involved at all.

4 Bibliography

European Union (2012), *TAIEX Annual Activity Report 2011*.

European Union (2013), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2012*.

European Union (2014), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2013*.

European Union (2015), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2014*.

European Union (2016), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2015*.

European Union (2017), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2016*.

European Union (2018), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2017*.

European Union (2019), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2018*.

European Union (2020), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2019*.

European Union (2021), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2020*.

Web resources

“Center for Adaptation of the Civil Service To the standards of the European Union”. Accessed August 24, 2021. <http://www.center.gov.ua/en/>

“Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia. Police Reform Strategy of the Republic of Armenia – Approved”. Accessed February 28, 2022. <https://www.moj.am/en/article/2706>

“European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations. TAIEX.” Accessed August 26, 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/tenders/taix_en

ANNEX 5D: TAIEX IN THE SOUTH NEIGHBOURHOOD

1 Coverage & Methodology

The case study concerns the implementation of TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood in the period 2015-2020. The following countries are covered: Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon and Palestine. These countries despite certain similarities exhibit significant differences in their socio-economic and political contexts and have had different levels of participation in TAIEX over the years.

The case study focuses primarily on an in-depth review of 12 events. Events were selected to be loosely representative of the overall sample of 2015-2020 events, though a clustering approach has also been used. For the complete list of events reviewed in-depth as well as for more details on the selection of events, see Annex 4. In addition to the detailed review of documentation associated with the events selected for in-depth study (application forms, approval forms, authorization forms, final reports), the case study relied on interviews (2 beneficiaries, 3 TAIEX Team staff, 4 EUDEL focal points), a focus group discussion (TAIEX Expert); in depth review of the results of the two surveys conducted in the context of this evaluation; analysis of the after 6-months evaluations of all TAIEX events in the Southern Neighbourhood; a review of strategic documentation associated with the TAIEX ENI strand; review of previous evaluations; and finally a documentary review of a randomly selected sample of rejected applications.

Methodological Challenges: This case study face a number of challenges relative to other case studies including: a) low-response rate to the beneficiary survey, b) low completion of the after 6-months evaluation, c) lack of contact details for a relatively high share of participants, d) incomplete documentation on TMS and missing final reports.

Overview of TAIEX in the Southern Neighbourhood, in the 2015-2020 period

The fourth biggest TAIEX strand

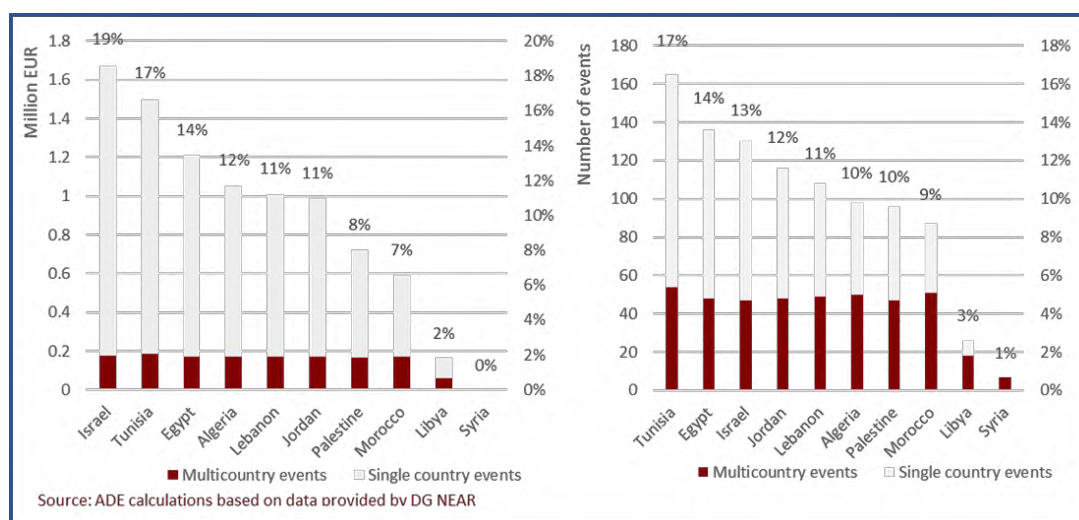
Over the evaluation period, a total of 638 TAIEX events benefitted exclusively the South Neighbourhood, accounting for about EUR 7.75 million in direct expenditure (12% of the total expenditure of TAIEX in the period). In addition to these, the South Neighbourhood also benefitted from 45 multi-country workshops and 6 multi-country work-from-home events⁵⁸ that also involved Enlargement and/or Eastern Neighbourhood countries. These corresponded to a total of EUR 2.2 million. Overall, Israel was the biggest recipient of TAIEX funds in the Southern Neighbourhood (19%), followed by Tunisia (17%) and Egypt (14%). The largest number of events was organised in Tunisia (165), followed by Egypt (136) and Israel (130).

An increasing demand for TAIEX events in the pre-Covid era

Unlike other DG NEAR strands, demand for TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood was increasing until 2018. Nevertheless, the number of events, remained relatively constant between 2015 and 2018, averaging at 138 events per year. It however experienced a steep decline in 2019, falling to 102. Rather, than being driven by a decline in demand, this was the outcome of increasing rejection rates which rose from less than 20% to 37% in 2018 and 2019. In 2020, in the context of the COVID pandemic, both demand and activities were significantly halted with 37 events having been organised, of which only 17 were conducted online after the introduction of restrictions.

⁵⁸ The multi-country work-from-homes focused almost exclusively on digitalisation issues during the COVID pandemic (e-Health, e-Education, Telecom/Broadband, Cybersecurity and e-Government). There was also a TAIEX Work from Home on Gender Gap in TAIEX experts.

Figure 76: Expenditure and number of events under TAIEX ENI South by country, total in million EUR and share⁵⁹



Extensive use of study visits

The largest share of TAIEX events focusing exclusively on Southern Neighbourhood Countries in the 2015-2020 period were study visits (36.8%), followed by expert missions (35.1%), workshops (27.6%) and finally work-from-home events (0.5%).

A strong emphasis on Justice and Human Rights

The top chapters of the acquis in terms of expenditures on which TAIEX provided expertise in the Southern Neighbourhood were Justice, freedom and security (17%); Environment (14%); Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy (10%); Judiciary and fundamental rights (8%); and Transport Policy (6%).

A strong preference for experts from francophone or Mediterranean countries

Experts deployed in the South Neighbourhood mainly came from Italy (18%), France (14%), Spain (9%), Belgium (7%), Germany (5%), Greece (5%) and Portugal (5%). The share of French experts was particularly high compared to other strands mainly due to linguistic, cultural and institutional similarities in particular in the Maghreb region. Overall, the majority of experts came from Member States in the Mediterranean which were considered as culturally closer to the Southern Neighbourhood.

⁵⁹ The graphs below are based on calculations that also include events for which countries from the South Neighbourhood were not the only beneficiary.

2 *Insights emerging from the case study, referring to each EQ*

EQ1 Relevance at the instrument level: The instrument's ability to address needs

Box 39: Summary findings related to EQ1, TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study

- TAIEX was introduced following the success of TAIEX in Pre-accession countries addressing a clear gap in the EU Toolkit.
- The expansion of TAIEX was not sufficiently accompanied by an assessment of how the different political, social and economic context in the region may affect the instrument's effectiveness.
- The institutional set-up of TAIEX was well-designed. However, in practice frequent staff rotations within the TAIEX Team, a lack of a clear management structure and challenges in keeping the EDBE up to date undermined institutional efficiency.
- Peer working nature was relevant and considered as one of the unique essential features of TAIEX similarly to the quickness, flexibility and low bureaucracy.
- The existing catalogue of activities was sufficiently comprehensive: each type of event had unique results/ addressed specific needs. However, online events, introduced in the context of the pandemic were critical for the continuation of service and for addressing urgent needs, peer-review missions were not used in the South Neighbourhood, study visits were often described as not necessarily selected on the basis of needs and there was a lack of an even more short-term type of event for very punctual follow-up of events.

TAIEX was introduced to the South Neighbourhood in 2005 following the success of TAIEX in Pre-accession countries in promoting the harmonisation of beneficiaries' regulatory frameworks and the sharing of best practices in EU acquis-related fields.

It had a clear and relevant purpose. According to the Commission Implementing Decisions for TAIEX in the European Neighbourhood, TAIEX was intended to "support partner countries in the implementation of EU bilateral cooperation related agreement" – a key requirement for deepening economic integration and strengthening political cooperation - "by providing short-term, needs-driven, tailor-made and swiftly mobilised assistance" and by "being complementary to, and working alongside other instruments and programmes".

The introduction of TAIEX in the region addressed a clear gap in the EU Toolkit. Both the May 2004 ENP Commission Strategy Paper as well as the subsequent ENP Action plans identified TAIEX as a key instrument for achieving the European Neighbourhood Policy objectives. **According to interviewed NCPs and EUDEL TAIEX focal points, there was and (still is) a clear need for a flexible and rapid capacity building instrument in the region given the volatile political context and the lack of clearly defined strategies by national authorities that have in some contexts limited opportunities for long term planning by the EU.**

The persistence of the need for an instrument like TAIEX was also reaffirmed with the adoption by the European Commission of the European Neighbourhood –wide measures' Strategic Priorities (2014-2020) and Multiannual Indicative Programme (2018-2020). According to them a key priority for the region is providing "targeted capacity building" and more specifically "supporting the approximation of the regulatory framework to EU norms and standards and enhancing public governance systems", with TAIEX being identified as one of the key instruments to achieve this.

The expansion of TAIEX to the Southern Neighbourhood was not sufficiently accompanied by an assessment of how the different political, social and economic context in the region may affect the instrument's effectiveness. The increased resistance to reforms created a number of additional barriers and challenges. Several stakeholders suggested that a more medium-term approach was essential in the region, similar to the MTA one adopted in the TCc.

Appropriateness of the design of TAIEX

The institutional set-up of TAIEX was well-designed to promote the rapid, flexible, and service-oriented implementation of TAIEX. Interviewed stakeholders identified the following key features: thematic and country specialisation of the TAIEX Team, development of the EDBE and the installation of the TAIEX Team within DG NEAR C3). **However, in practice frequent staff rotations within the TAIEX Team, a lack of a clear management structure and challenges in keeping the EDBE up to date undermined institutional efficiency.**

Peer working nature was relevant: Peer working was considered by beneficiaries and involved stakeholders as one of the unique essential features of TAIEX similarly to the quickness, flexibility and low bureaucracy. It was particularly suitable for the pursuit of TAIEX's objectives because it allowed beneficiaries to:

- a. Learn directly from experts whose institutions followed the model they sought to pursue, or similar/ related ones. The beneficiaries had the opportunity to suggest from which country the experts should come from.
- b. Focus on practical and concrete experience (unlike other types of trainings and interactions which may also be useful, though in other circumstances and/ or in a complementary fashion). Experts could draw on their experience to provide practical information and bring clarity to details/ obstacles of particular interest to practitioners.

It also contributed to the formation of peer-to-peer networks which were highly valued by both beneficiaries and experts and were associated with higher levels of effectiveness and sustainability of results.

The existing catalogue of activities was sufficiently comprehensive:

- Each type of event had unique results/ addressed specific needs. Combination of different types allowed for a comprehensive approach which has highly appreciated by beneficiaries.
- Online events, introduced in 2020 in the context of the pandemic were critical for the continuation of service and for addressing urgent needs associated with the crisis. However, they lacked the key feature of informal interactions that was highly appreciated by beneficiaries and described as essential for the achievement of results (see EQ3).

The following challenges and limitations have however been identified in terms of the catalogue of activities:

- **Peer-review missions were not used in the South Neighbourhood** despite interest by EUDELS in them. This type of event was used in both the Western Balkans and Turkey (TAIEX IPA) and ENI East and was regarded as a particularly helpful as a policy planning tool allowing for the identification gaps.
- Study visits, the most frequently used type of event in the region, were often described by EUDEL staff as a 'vacation' for beneficiaries, not necessarily selected on the basis of their needs. Moreover, given the more limited number of participants, institutionalization of knowledge - already a big challenge in the region- was described as particularly challenging. Nevertheless, they were seen as very helpful when highly technical issues were at stake/ there was a need for direct observation. For example, TAIEX Study Visit on Crime Scene Investigation Techniques (640146) benefitting Egypt allowed beneficiaries to directly observe tools and technologies that are not available in their country. As explained by beneficiaries in their request for a study visit. "Crime Scene Examination is very practical and based on examination, watching and observing the evidences on the crime scene. In addition, there are new technologies for examining the crime scene which may not all yet be available in Egypt"
- A lack of an even more short-term type of event for very punctual follow-up of events. Such follow-up was in some case conducted in an informal fashion outside TAIEX at the initiative of the experts.
- Limited use of series of events

The introduction of TAIEX Strategic

The Introduction of TAIEX Strategic in 2016 was the result of a series of consultations involving the senior management of DG NEAR; DG NEAR Heads of Units; DG NEAR directors; beneficiary countries and EU Delegations. It was expected to allow for better thematic prioritisation, stronger focus on EU's priorities, particularly (but not only) concerning fundamental and structural reforms, improved coordination with other units and finally better sequencing of events while having at the same time in mind staff constraints that TAIEX was facing at the time.

Although there was a clear need for improved planning and sequencing of events as well as an opportunity to use TAIEX in a more strategic fashion to support EU priorities, there was also a need to strengthen government ownership of events as identified in the 2014 Evaluation of the TAIEX Instrument. The increased emphasis on events requested by Commission Services/EEAS were seen by several interviewed stakeholders (including two TAIEX Team staff) as conflicting with the objective of government ownership. For a discussion on the observed results of TAIEX Strategic see EQ3.

EQ2 Relevance at intervention level: Did specific interventions address needs?

Box 40: Summary findings related to EQ2, TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study

- TAIEX events are considered by all stakeholders to address well the needs of beneficiaries, in a variety of sectors and across all countries of the South Neighbourhood and to be aligned with EU priorities.
- This was also confirmed by the survey respondents who considered the events as well conceived, addressing need, and country owned and who agree with the relevance of the information provided and quality of delivery.

All stakeholders appear to consider that TAIEX events addressed well the needs of beneficiaries, in a variety of sectors and across all countries of the South Neighbourhood and were aligned with EU priorities. For instance:

- The 2018 TAIEX Workshop on Whistle-blower, Witness and Expert Protection in Corruption Cases in Tunisia supported the EU priorities of promoting good governance and public administration reform, including support to the fight against corruption in the country. The fight against corruption was one of the main objectives of the EU support to Tunisia identified in the Joint Communication (2016) 47 final "Strengthening EU support for Tunisia". At the same time, the fight against corruption was a priority for the Tunisian Government which in 2020 issued a national strategy for good governance and the fight against corruption (2016-2020).
- The TAIEX Expert Mission on Training Capacities of the Internal Security Forces of Lebanon provided support for the security sector reform which was one of the EU-Lebanon priorities for 2016-2020.

This was also confirmed by the surveys:

- Survey respondents indicated that events were indeed well conceived, addressing needs, and country owned. Country ownership was achieved through effectively addressing an existing need as well as involving local government counterparts since early in the event design process.
- Survey results also indicate that respondents from the South Neighbourhood agree (and for the most part strongly agreeing) with the relevance of the information provided and quality of delivery. All of the respondents agreed that the information provided/ discussed during the event(s) was relevant to their needs/their institutions' needs; that the experts' knowledge on the topics covered was adequate; and that the experts conveyed information in a clear and practical manner.

EQ3 Contribution to and role of capacity development and institutional strengthening

Box 41: Summary findings related to EQ3, TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study

- TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood supported capacity development among events' participants, on topics relevant to their countries' needs; and to a somewhat lesser but still significant extent, within their institutions.
- When it comes to reforms, despite TAIEX being intended to support them, it was largely unable to do so, mostly due to the political context and high levels of institutional resistance to reforms. Nevertheless, the instrument proved to be an important tool, for the transfer of best practices in particular in highly technical areas, for supporting change in institutional culture, for creating a sentiment of proximity, and for paving the way for further collaboration including the use of other more long-term instruments with higher likelihood to bring about reforms.
- TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood was amongst the least effective strands, due to, beyond the challenging political context, the limited use of series of events, the limited role of NCPs, the low levels of engagement and problematic communication.
- The lack of follow-up posed a particular challenge for the sustainability of TAIEX results in ENI South. In addition, in many cases frequent staff turnover and overall political instability in the region undermined the sustainability of results.

TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood supported capacity development among events' participants, on topics relevant to their countries' needs; and to a somewhat lesser but still significant extent, within their institutions. When it comes to reforms, despite TAIEX being intended to support them, it was largely unable to do so, mostly due to the political context and high levels of institutional resistance to reforms. Nevertheless, the instrument proved to be an important tool, for the transfer of best practices in particular in highly technical areas, for supporting change in institutional culture, for creating a sentiment of proximity, and for paving the way for further collaboration including the use of other more long-term instruments with higher likelihood to bring about reforms. As one of the interviewed EUD staff from the region put it *"TAIEX is too small and cannot bring about reforms but it is contributing to creating an environment where reforms will perhaps be possible in the future"*

In this context several concrete examples have emerged of how TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood contributed to capacity building and in an indirect and limited fashion to reforms:

- a. In September 2017, TAIEX organised a regional workshop on employment policies for young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs), for the benefit of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. Using the mapping and analysis conducted in collaboration with the experts, the participants formulated policy recommendations for youth employment initiatives for the next programming cycle of the EU bilateral cooperation with Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria.
- b. In November 2018, TAIEX organised a Strategic Workshop on Matching Skills Shortages in Tunisia. The workshop successfully mapped skills shortages in Tunisia, exploring possible ways to improve training and learning opportunities vital for employment.
- c. Food safety is a major concern for Lebanon and its citizens. TAIEX organised an expert mission and a workshop on food safety to allow Lebanon to pursue its objectives. According to Alberto Mancuso and Giuseppe Diegoli, the Italian experts involved, the mission was crucial for the "beneficiaries to identify gaps and overlaps in food safety practices" and to devise "a roadmap for the improvement of the food safety system and an action plan". These documents were discussed during the workshop, with a view to establishing a food safety authority in the future.
- d. The TAIEX Expert Mission on Training Capacities of the Internal Security Forces of Lebanon allowed for the development of new trainings and provided support for the security sector reform

TAIEX ENI South was amongst the least effective strands. This was attributed to the following factors:

- **Limited use of series of events:** Among DG NEAR strands, ENI South deployed series of events the least. In addition, there was a lack of clarity among EUDEL staff about the use of training maps.
- **Limited role of NCPs:** Among DG NEAR strand NCPs in the ENI South were the least active. Limited political commitment as well as declines in funding for European Offices in National authorities were provided as explanations.
- **Low levels of engagement and problematic communication.** Only for one of the 13 events reviewed in depth for the case studies, the after 6-month evaluation was completed. This means that there was no systematic tool available to measure the medium-term results of the events. It is not yet clear why the completion rate is so low for TAIEX ENI South. A very limited number of email addresses were available, and the participants' registration was in most cases not properly completed.
- **High levels of political resistance to reforms.** The high level of corruption within institutions, the lack of transparency within regulatory practices, the low level of rule of law and an often ponderous and non-responsive public sector lead to high levels of political resistance to reforms. Interviewed EUDEL staff highlighted that in this context, a short-term instrument like TAIEX could not directly contribute to reforms

For a minority of events implementation challenges were detrimental to TAIEX's success. Online and Multi-country events were associated with more limited results.

Implementation challenges

- a. Low quality of experts (very rare): Experts incapable of transmitting/ communicating their messages or with insufficient awareness of the local context.
- b. Low quality or absence of interpretation undermined communication and the possibility to create meaningful interactions.
- c. Too broad/generic or too ambitious agenda: Insufficient time dedicated on each issue and lack of concrete guidelines. Beneficiaries felt unable to follow up with specific actions.
- d. Failure to engage the right participants: Need for technical/operational staff directly involved in the implementation of the issues covered but also high level staff to support political momentum.
- e. Delays: political momentum waned, issue no longer seen as a priority/ need. (see EQ4 for more details)

Type of event

- a. Multi-country events: often too broad/failure to adapt to the specific needs/ capacities of individual countries. interpretation/ communication challenges.
- b. Online events: Loss of informal interactions, technical issues, limited engagement of participants, increased challenged with interpretation.
- c. Study visits: Study visits were seen as very helpful when highly technical issues were at stake/ there was a need for direct observation. However, they were often described by EUDEL staff as a 'vacation' for beneficiaries, not necessarily selected on the basis of their needs. Moreover, given the more limited number of participants institutionalisation of knowledge was described as more challenging.

Sustainability of TAIEX results

The lack of follow-up posed a particular challenge for ENI South. Follow-up in the form of TAIEX events was not very frequently organized compared to other strands even when a need for them was clearly identified by the experts. For example, in the case of the 2018 TAIEX Study Visit on the organization and functioning of the General Secretariat of the government (65992) benefitting Tunisia, there was a suggestion for 4 follow-up expert missions, to address aspects of the topic that was not possible to fully cover and also to explore in more depth certain key areas as these were identified during the study visit. However, none of those were actually implemented.

In addition to lack of follow-up, in some cases frequent staff turnover and overall political instability in the region undermined the sustainability of results.

TAIEX's financial weight and critical mass

Overall, in the period 2015-2020 a total of 20 million euros were dedicated to TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood. This is a very small share (0.6%) of the total budget of the ENI instrument, through which TAIEX is financed, over the same period.

TAIEX's mostly short-term and ad-hoc nature, and its limited financial weight naturally constrained the magnitude of results the instrument could achieve on its own, but was simultaneously a key source of its strength. When successfully integrated within broader EU programming and used in synergy with other instruments, TAIEX's design, unlike other more-long-term instruments, allowed it to provide flexible, swift, and well targeted support to beneficiaries, playing an important gap-filling role as identified in the examples presented above.

It must also be noted that the budget doesn't appear to have been a constraint, with 37% of the budget contracted between the 1st of August 2016 and the 31st of July 2020 having remained unspent.

EQ4 Effectiveness of the TAIEX implementation modalities

Box 42: Summary findings related to EQ4, TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study

- TAIEX ENI South was the least quick TAIEX strand in terms of the organisation of events, partly due to challenges in the communication with beneficiaries.
- TAIEX became increasingly slow in recent years due to difficulties in the identification of suitable experts as well as an overload of the TAIEX team starting from 2018 and the uncertainty associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Nevertheless, TAIEX was one of the quickest Technical Assistance instruments available in the South Neighbourhood.
- The flexibility of TAIEX was highly appreciated by beneficiaries often rendering TAIEX the preferred instrument. Nevertheless, in some cases more flexibility was demanded by NCPs and EUDEL focal points in terms of participants, entities covered and capacity to organise events at the subnational level.

TAIEX was one of the quickest Technical Assistance instruments available to beneficiaries in the South Neighbourhood, with events organised as quickly as 13 days after approval.

This enabled TAIEX to address urgent needs that could not be addressed through other instruments and capitalise upon political momentum in the beneficiary countries to achieve reforms (see EQ3). **The following factors were identified by interviewed stakeholders as key for TAIEX's swiftness:** The flexibility of the instrument's processes, the organisation of the DG NEAR C3 into 4 TEAMS each with specific thematic expertise, the existence of country specific focal points that deal with the approval and organisation of events; the accumulated know-how, and in particular the existence of established processes, relations and agreements with providers, arrangements with MS for the participation of experts etc. The existence of the EDBE was also critical for the rapid identification and deployment of experts.

Box 43: Supporting the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics- The challenge of delays due to an overload of the TAIEX Team, difficulties in finding experts, and COVID.

In 2017 and 2018 there appear to have been a period whereby the TAIEX Team received more applications than they could effectively deal with. For example, the 2020 TAIEX Expert Mission on Institutional national accounts (66865) in Palestine exhibited over 2 years of delay in its organization because as the Team indicated “there was a very high demand for TAIEX assistance” at the time of application in 2018. The delay was also exacerbated by the outbreak of the COVID pandemic and the challenges in finding Statistics experts. Similar was the case for the 2018 TAIEX Study Visit on the organization and functioning of the General Secretariat of the government (65992) benefitting Tunisia whose preparations were delayed for 6 months.

Source: Interviews, survey, documentary review, inventory analysis

Box 44: TAIEX’s flexibility as an important contributor to swiftness

The flexibility of the instrument was seen as crucial for ensuring its swiftness. For example, the 2017 TAIEX expert mission on the fight against the use of explosive machines by terrorist groups (65160) in Lebanon, was treated as urgent and no internal consultation was conducted to speed up the process. The consultees were informed about the event once the task had already been created. The event still however took 2 months to organize from the submission of the application due to a number of challenges in coordination.

Source: Interviews, event documentary review

Nevertheless, TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood was the least quick TAIEX strand in terms of the organisation of events. On average, TAIEX events in the South Neighbourhood took about 20 days to be approved and 7.5 months to be organised after approval. Only 4% of events were organised within 6 weeks and 52% within 6 months from their approval. 17% of events took more than a year to organise after their approval. During interviews with former and current staff of the TAIEX Team, it was indicated that this was largely due to challenges with the communication and coordination with beneficiaries. One of the interviewed staff of the TAIEX Team described the ENI South beneficiaries as the most challenging to communicate with across all TAIEX strands. In a number of the events, reviewed in depth for the case study; beneficiaries appear to have delayed the submission of the participants’ list and to have not been properly registered with their own email address. This caused delays in the signing of the Authorisation Form and in the organisation of events.

In addition, TAIEX appears to have become significantly slower in recent years with the average time between organisation and approval having increased from 6.8 months in 2015 to 10.8 months in 2019. The most recurrent causes of long delays under in recent years were difficulties in the identification of suitable experts as well as an overload of the TAIEX team starting from 2018 that led to the systematic postponement of several events. The uncertainty associated with the COVID-19 pandemic also led to delays in the organization of non-urgent events associated with the pandemic.

It must be noted that there was a very big difference in the swiftness between TAIEX Classic and TAIEX Strategic in the South Neighbourhood (bigger than in other DG NEAR Strands. TAIEX Strategic events took on average 9.8 days to be approved as compared to 20.6 for TAIEX Classic. At the same time, they took on average 138 days to organize after approval as compared to 231.6 for TAIEX Classic.

The flexibility of TAIEX was highly appreciated by beneficiaries and has often been the reason rendering TAIEX the preferred instrument. A key aspect of the instrument’s flexibility was the opportunity to organize follow up events in a swift manner. In some cases, TAIEX events led to the identification of additional needs or it was not possible to fully address the need with the single event and further action was required. The flexibility of the instrument meant that additional events could quickly be organised to cover those needs. The flexibility of the Instrument was also highlighted during the COVID pandemic. The transition of TAIEX into a fully virtual instrument occurred very rapidly (with the first online events were organised in April 2020) enabling the instrument to continue providing

support to partner countries in the South Neighbourhood throughout the crisis. A significant degree of flexibility was also demonstrated in term of the duration of events (from 1 to 8), number of experts (from 1 to 22) and number of participants (from 1 to 188) in line with the needs of beneficiaries.

Nevertheless, there were several examples where NCPs and EUDEL focal points indicated they would have appreciated more flexibility. These included the inclusion of sub-national authorities- mayors as well as non-strictly public administrations – complex status of certain independent entities that could not benefit from support.

Overall and despite certain challenges, TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood was widely recognized, by both beneficiaries and Commission staff, for its swiftness, flexibility and service orientation. All interviewees identified these elements as key strengths of the instrument, in particular when compared to other EU tools. This was also confirmed by the surveys.

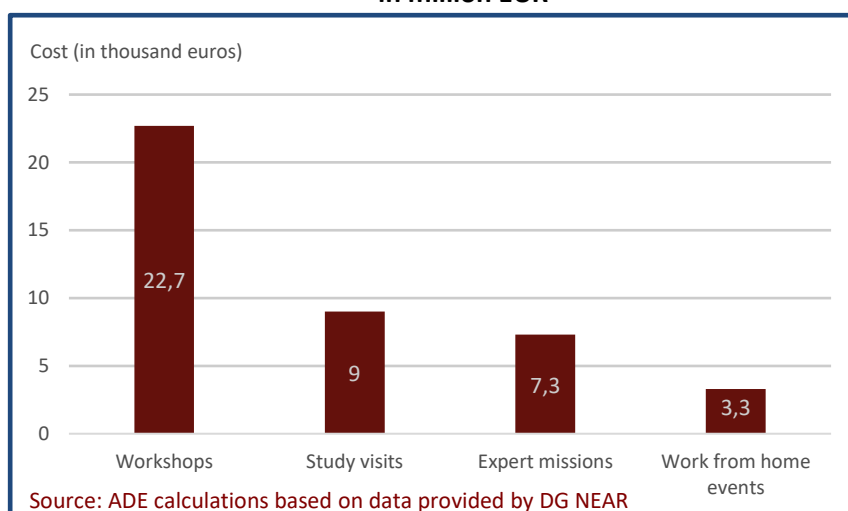
EQ5 Cost efficiency/ effectiveness and administrative burden

Box 45: Summary findings related to EQ5, TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study

- The (direct) cost of TAIEX events in the South Neighbourhood was reasonable and comparable with other TAIEX DG NEAR strands; no examples of inefficiencies were identified for the events reviewed in depth for the case studies.
- Nevertheless, several concerns were raised for the cost-effectiveness of online events as well as multi-country events which were particularly costly. To a lesser extent, concerns were raised about study visits which were seen by some as excessively used in the region.
- The administrative burden for the application and organisation of TAIEX events was reasonable and manageable for most beneficiaries. For smaller and less-experienced institutions the support by NCPs and EUD focal points was key.

The (direct) cost of TAIEX events in the South Neighbourhood was reasonable and comparable with other TAIEX DG NEAR strands; no examples of inefficiencies were identified for the events reviewed in depth for the case studies. For a detailed breakdown of costs by type of event, see graph below:

Figure 77: Average Expenditure by type of single-country event in the South Neighbourhood, total in million EUR



Nevertheless, several concerns were raised for the cost-effectiveness of online events as well as multi-country events which were particularly costly. To a lesser extent some concerns were also raised for study visits.

- Firstly, multi-country (in person) events were much more expensive than single-country events with many survey respondents as well as interviewed beneficiaries questioning their effectiveness (see eq. 3). Multi-country Workshops cost on average twice as much as their

single country ones. They also involved a larger administrative burden for organisers including TAIEX Team staff.

- Secondly, online events were not particularly cheaper and were described as significantly less effective than their offline counterparts (See EQ3). Only single-country online workshops tended to be cheaper than their offline counterparts. Online expert missions were significantly more expensive. Online events entailed a number of additional IT and logistical costs, for example for the use of a platform with simultaneous interpretation, for an online moderator, for additional IT support for all participants and for test events with experts as well as interpreters prior to the real event to ensure events run smoothly, that were not offset by the reduction in transportation, accommodation, venue, and catering costs.
- Finally, although not much more expensive than expert missions, concerns were raised that the additional costs for the organisation of study visits were not always justified in terms of added value. Many stakeholders felt that study visits in the South Neighbourhood were used beyond what was necessary.

The administrative burden for the application and organisation of TAIEX events in the South Neighbourhood was reasonable and manageable for most beneficiaries. Most survey respondents agreed with the statement that the application process was not too cumbersome. All of the respondents agreed that adequate support was provided by the local EU delegation and the TAIEX team during the application process, and that informative and support materials were available in a language they could easily understand.

A limited administrative capacity, shortage of staff and frequent staff turnovers in beneficiary administrations appeared to be a big challenge in the region, often resulting in poor quality applications. Support by NCPs and EUD TAIEX focal Points was critical when beneficiaries did not have the capacity to submit the application. The reduction of EU funding for the EU coordination centers in the Ministry of foreign affairs in several of the benefitting countries limited in recent years the availability of NCPs. Rejection rates increased significantly in 2018 and 2019 partly due to low quality of applications.

EQ6 Complementarity with other instruments

Box 46: Summary findings related to EQ6, TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study

- TAIEX was recognised as bringing a unique combination of benefits as compared to other instruments available in the South Neighbourhood (rapid, peer to peer, low-bureaucracy, flexible).
- Twinning was seen as better suited to address long-term needs and bring reforms. However, it was associated with higher levels of bureaucracy and limited flexibility.
- There is no evidence to suggest the existence of duplication with other instruments and programs largely thanks to the instrument's uniqueness and gap-filling nature as well as to well-established processes within the TAIEX team.
- There were strong synergies between TAIEX and Twinning, largely thanks to the installation of the two instruments within the same unit (DG NEAR C3) and the use of common NCPs. Beyond Twinning, there is very limited evidence of actively pursued synergies with other instruments in the region.
- Even when synergies were not actively pursued many complementarities emerged as the beneficiary administrations also benefitted from other EU instruments.

TAIEX was recognised as bringing a unique combination of benefits as compared to other instruments available in the South Neighbourhood (rapid, peer to peer, low-bureaucracy, flexible).

All interviewed stakeholders agreed that TAIEX had distinct advantages relative to other capacity building instruments, with speed, flexibility, low bureaucracy, and peer-to-peer support being cited by most. This was also confirmed by the surveys.

There is no evidence to suggest the existence of duplication with other instruments and programs largely thanks to the instrument's uniqueness and gap-filling nature as well as to well-established processes within the TAIEX team to prevent duplication and improve coordination across actors (namely the consultation process prior to approval).

There were strong synergies between TAIEX and Twinning in the South Neighbourhood, largely thanks to the installation of the two instruments within the same unit (DG NEAR C3) and the use of common National Contact Points for their coordination in the region. The organisation of annual meetings with National Contact Points (NCPs) in the form of TAIEX screening events to support the coordination, improved management and promotion of TAIEX and Twinning activities in Enlargement Countries, were also largely appreciated.

Box 47: Synergies between TAIEX and Twinning

A large number of TAIEX events were explicitly organized in the South Neighbourhood to support Twinning missions. It is currently mandatory for all Twinning missions to be followed by TAIEX Peer-review missions 6 months after their completion in order to assess their results and identify remaining gaps. Work from home missions have also been used to support the drafting of the Twinning reports. A number of additional TAIEX events were used to fill in remaining gaps from Twinning projects. Some TAIEX events that led to the identification of needs to be addressed through Twinning projects and provided the necessary foundations for their launch. As one of the survey respondents highlighted "Twinning could be used as a follow up to TAIEX. TAIEX allows reflecting on gap analysis; follow-up to fill this gap comes then often, naturally, under the form of a Twinning or TA project".

Twinning was seen as better suited to address long-term needs and bring reforms. However, it was associated with higher levels of bureaucracy and limited flexibility

Beyond Twinning, there is very limited evidence of actively pursue synergies with other instruments in the region. The introduction of TAIEX Strategic appears to have fostered a more synergistic use of TAIEX with TAIEX Strategic events in the sample having for instance been used to support other EU programs such as EMPACT and Switch Med.

So far, although most countries in the ENI South received Budget Support, there has been no evidence of complementarities among the two instruments. Some EUDEL's in the region expressed interest in the potential of the use of TAIEX for the fulfilment of variable tranche indicators.

Even when synergies were not actively pursued many complementarities emerged as the beneficiary administrations also benefitted from other EU instruments promoting institutional capacity building, including Twinning, DG NEAR Technical Assistance, OECD-SIGMA, budget support, and other thematic projects. Characteristic is the case of the Anti-Corruption Agency of Tunisia which simultaneously with TAIEX was benefitting from Twinning as well as a very large number of technical assistance projects financed by both the EU and other donors such as the Appui institutionnel à la mise en œuvre de la stratégie de modernisation de la fonction publique tunisienne (2019-2021); the Projet d'Appui aux Instances Indépendantes en Tunisie (PAII-T)- (Tunisia Anti-corruption Project (TAC)) (36 mois. Janvier 2019 – Décembre 2021); the Programme d'appui à la gouvernance économique (PAGE) (72 mois, en cours). The coordination was promoted by a very active coordination officer that overlook all EU programs benefitting the institution.

In the surveys, all of the respondents from the ENI SOUTH strand indicated that they agreed that TAIEX events were used to complement and enhance other existing EU tools.

EQ7 Working with peers and EU internal cooperation

Box 48: Summary findings related to EQ7, TAIEX in the South Neighbourhood 2015-2020 case study

- There was significant added value in organising TAIEX at the EU level rather than by individual MS. Interviewed beneficiaries, NCPs, EUDEL TAIEX focal points and TAIEX TEAM staff as well as survey respondents associated several advantages to the EU nature of TAIEX, namely the

large availability of experts from MS thanks to the EDBE, improved coordination and avoidance of duplication, pursuit of EU priorities and increased EU visibility, and economies of scale.

- The implementation of TAIEX entailed high levels of cooperation across DG NEAR C3, EUDELS, and EU MS. However, there does not appear to have been an explicit strategy for maximising cooperation across EU actors.

There was significant added value in organising TAIEX at the EU level rather than by individual MS. Interviewed beneficiaries, NCPs, EUDEL TAIEX focal points and TAIEX TEAM staff as well as survey respondents associated several advantages of TAIEX to its EU nature, namely the large availability of experts from MS thanks to the EDBE, improved coordination and avoidance of duplication, pursuit of EU priorities and increased EU visibility, and finally economies of scale.

- The development of the EDBE: There was consensus that the development and management of the Experts' Database required expertise and resources that are hard to accumulate by individual MS. The EDBE allowed for the identification and quick deployment of MS experts, whose experience was deemed most relevant to their needs and national context of beneficiaries. The importance of this was highlighted in the few cases whereby it was not possible to get an expert from the most relevant context. For example, in the TAIEX Study Visit on Crime Scene Investigation Techniques (64016) benefitting Egypt, event ended up taking place in Latvia although it was requested by beneficiaries to be conducted in the Netherlands. The beneficiaries despite finding the study visit very useful and rich in materials indicated that there was "a need for a more developed country in this field. Latvia was very great however it is a very small country with new prosecution". They subsequently asked for follow-up events in other countries such as the Netherlands or Germany.
- Coordination and avoidance of duplication: The network of EUDELS and the regular channels of Communication with line DGs appear to have been key for the avoidance of duplications. The TAIEX Team was in regular contact with focal points in EU Delegations as well as in line DGs and thematic colleagues within DG NEAR both for encouraging the uptake of TAIEX Strategic but also in the context of the consultation process for the approval of events. However, there is no evidence yet to suggest that such cooperation was extended beyond the direct implementation of TAIEX activities and had implications for the overall coordination across institutions.
- Pursuit of EU priorities and increased visibility of the EU: The organisation of TAIEX at the EU level ensured its alignment and active support for EU priorities in the region (see EQ2). It also contributed to strengthening the visibility of the EU as confirmed by beneficiaries in interviews and surveys.
- Economies of scale: Having a sole instrument with significant scale allowed it to perfect logistic mechanisms – among others, for temporarily hiring and compensating public officers that would otherwise not be easily available, as occupied with their regular jobs.

The EU added value of TAIEX was also confirmed through the surveys, whereby all of the respondents from the ENI South strand, having expressed an opinion, agreed that the needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through existing EU member states initiatives (without involving the EU).

The implementation of TAIEX entailed high levels of cooperation across DG NEAR C3, EUDELS, and EU MS (through NCPs and in some cases embassies). However, there does not appear to have been an explicit strategy for maximising cooperation across EU actors. The established cooperation was largely organic and the degree of its maximisation dependent upon the persons responsible for TAIEX in EUDELS and national administrations (NCPs), their level of seniority as well as their personal commitment to TAIEX.

3 Bibliography European Union (2012), TAIEX Annual Activity Report 2011.

European Union (2013), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2012*.

European Union (2014), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2013*.

European Union (2015), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2014*.

European Union (2016), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2015*.

European Union (2017), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2016*.

European Union (2018), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2017*.

European Union (2019), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2018*.

European Union (2020), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2019*.

European Union (2021), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2020*.

ANNEX 5E: TAIEX IN THE TURKISH CYPRIOT COMMUNITY (TCc)

1 Introduction

This document concerns the implementation of TAIEX in the northern part of Cyprus in the 2015-2020 period.

The **TAIEX TCc** strand was launched in 2006 jointly with the Aid Programme for the TCc⁶⁰, within which it is integrated. Within the period observed, the Aid Programme to the TCc was initially managed by DG ELARG (now DG NEAR), then briefly transferred to DG REGIO (2015-2016) and eventually to the Secretariat General's Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) – which was later transformed into DG REFORM. Within DG REFORM, it is operated by Unit A3 (Cyprus Settlement Support, or CSS).

Within the Aid Programme to the TCc, TAIEX TCc specifically provides support for the implementation of Objectives 5 and 6, which focus on the preparation of legal texts aligned with the *acquis communautaire* and preparation for implementation of the *acquis* upon a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. In addition, TAIEX provides assistance to Green Line Trade⁶¹, particularly in the form of inspections to assess compliance with trade requirements.

During the 2015-2020 period, TAIEX TCc organized a total of 1,081 events, corresponding to a total direct⁶² expenditure of EUR 5.7 million.⁶³

Box 49: Background to the EU Aid Programme to the TCc

The area of Cyprus north of the Green Line is de facto run by Turkish Cypriot local bodies.

Under the terms of the 2004 Cyprus accession agreement to the EU, Cyprus is considered to be an EU MS; however, the *acquis communautaire* has been suspended in the northern part of Cyprus.

The overall objective of the EU Aid Programme to the TCc is “to facilitate the reunification of Cyprus by encouraging the economic development of the TCc, with particular emphasis on the economic integration of the island, on improving contacts between the two communities and with the EU, and on preparation for the *acquis communautaire*” (Article 1, Aid Regulation).

The unique political, legal and diplomatic context significantly affects the implementation of the Aid Programme, whose operations are conditioned by the need to avoid any action that would indicate political recognition of an administration other than the government of the Republic of Cyprus.

The implementation of the Aid Programme is facilitated on the TCc side by an EU Coordination Centre, which provides the link between the TCc and the EU (playing a role which is similar to that of IPA offices in the Western Balkans accession countries and Turkey).

Disclaimer:

If reference is made in this case study to any “officers”, “authorities”, “institutions”, “bodies”, “laws”, “legislation”, “regulation” and the “adoption” of legal texts in the TCc, this is to facilitate a clear understanding of the administrative “structures” and processes but without any intention to recognize the self-proclaimed “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus”.

⁶⁰ Based on Council Regulation No 389/2006 of 27 February 2006 – available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32006R0389> (accessed on 30 July 2021).

⁶¹ The line separating the government controlled areas from the non-government controlled areas of the Cyprus Island is referred to as the “Green Line”. Green Line Regulation (Council Regulation 866/2004) sets out the terms under which persons and goods can cross this line from the non-government controlled areas into the government-controlled areas.

⁶² Includes events' costs paid through the implementing organization only. (Does not include: costs related to the operation of the TAIEX team or to support obtained from EU personnel; extra costs borne by beneficiaries.)

⁶³ Note: before March 2020, all events were organized in-person; afterwards, all events were organized online.

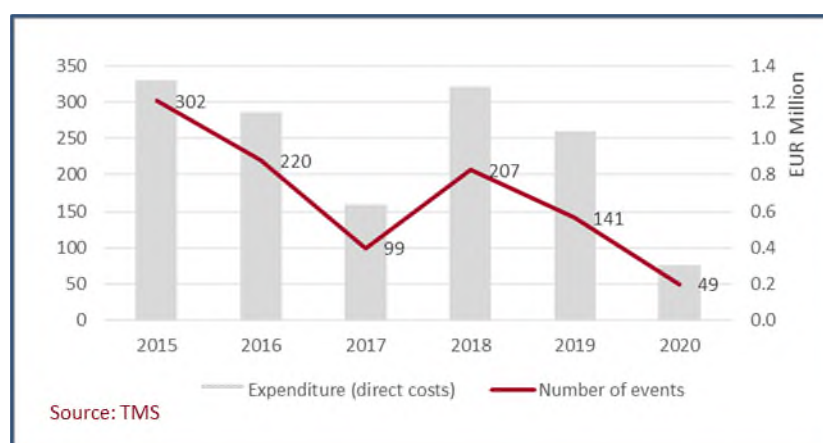
2 Overview of the use of TAIEX in the TCc in the 2015-2020 period

The support provided via TAIEX to the TCc is based on strategic and overall programming basis. Every 3 years, Medium Term Assistance (MTA) agreements are discussed by the CSS Unit with the relevant beneficiaries, defining sectors to be supported and objectives to be accomplished within each sector. TAIEX experts are then selected and recruited for the whole MTA period⁶⁴: they support the drafting of sectoral Project Action Plans (PAP), which detail activities to be pursued towards the objectives set, and subsequently provide support in their implementation; such support is articulated in TAIEX events.

In the period observed, three MTAs took place: one concluding in 2017, a second lasting from 2017 to 2019 (entirely within the period), and a third one which started in 2020 and will conclude in 2022.

The number of events organized had a tendency to decrease throughout the years (as well as the expenditure, albeit to a lesser extent); that is, even previous to the final drop observed in 2020, which can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impossibility to organize in-person events. (The last 15 events were organized online). The overall decrease can be explained by the more result-oriented attitude applied towards the beneficiaries, focus on a selected number of priority areas, and stricter rules introduced to organising events. It may also be the consequence of a settlement *fatigue* and distant prospects for reunification. A significant part of the available budget remained unused: 37% of funds available for the August 2016-July 2020 period were not used.

Figure 78: Evolution of the number of events and expenditure (direct costs only), TAIEX TCc



The target number of events per year set in the 2020 TAIEX TCc SLA is 160.

TAIEX TCc used mainly two types of events: expert missions (732 in the period⁶⁵, corresponding to 72% of the total in number and 86% in terms of budget spent) and work from home assignment (253, or 25% in number and 8% in budget). In addition, 19 study visits and 14 workshops⁶⁶ were organized.

In terms of topics covered – the 2017-2019 MTA included activities in 17 sectors through 35 PAPs (each covering a sector or sub-sector)⁶⁷. Performance was mixed: in 11 cases, 75% of the activities and objectives contemplated in PAPs were reached; in 11, completion was between 40 and 70%; and in the remaining 13 cases, it was lower than 40%. In consideration of this and of the limited capacity on the ground, the following MTA (current as of end of this study) decided to focus on fewer sectors (14),

⁶⁴ The time commitment requested to experts is substantial, up to 60 working days per year.

⁶⁵ Of which 14 online.

⁶⁶ Of which one online.

⁶⁷ *Acquis* chapters of the *acquis* that received the most attention in the 2015-2020 period were 27 – Environment (18% of the expenditure) and 12 – Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy (16% of the expenditure), followed by 1 – Free movement of goods and 11 – Agricultural and Rural Development (about 9% of the expenditure each). Other chapters that received significant attention (more than 5% of the expenditure) were 4 – Free movement of capital, 28 – Consumer and Health Protection, 19 – Social policy and employment and 18 – Statistics. All those jointly account for 78% of the total TAIEX expenditure in TCc.

to be tackled by roughly 30 PAPs; furthermore, in 9 of those continued support will be made conditional to the removal of obstacles related to insufficient staffing and commitment.⁶⁸

The *acquis* chapters that received the most funding in the overall 2015-2020 period were:⁶⁹

- 27 – Environment (18% of the budget);
- 12 – Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy (16%);
- 1 – Free movement of goods (9%);
- 11 – Agriculture and Rural Development (9%).

3 Methodology

This case study is based on documental review, data review and interviews conducted at the strategic (i.e. overall instrument) level and a more in depth analysis of 11 events⁷⁰. For the latter, the team reviewed event-specific and PAP-specific documentation; surveyed participants and experts; and interviewed a selected number of stakeholders.

A total of 9 interviews have informed this case study, including:

- The TAIEX case handler in charge of TAIEX TCc as of 2020;
- 3 representatives of the CSS Unit of DG REFORM (based in Brussels);
- 1 representative of the EUCC;
- 4 beneficiaries (representatives of the Turkish Cypriot local bodies)

In addition, a focus group involving 11 TAIEX experts who had collaborated with TAIEX TCc in the 2015-2020 period and a group interview with 6 representatives of the EUCC were also organized.

4 Main findings, according to the TAIEX Evaluation EQs

EQ1 – The instrument’s ability to address needs

Box 50: Summary findings related to EQ1, TCc case study

- TAIEX TCc addressed relevant needs linked to the approximation of the *acquis*. The TAIEX instrument was well suited to support this purpose; and was also adapted to the specificities of the TCc context (most notably through the use of the MTA approach).
- Two characteristics of TAIEX that allowed significant value added were flexibility (to adapt to new uses, and in terms of budget and programming) and speed.
- TAIEX TCc was also used to address needs for which there was no other instrument available, in consideration of the fact that the EU toolkit to support the TCc is relatively reduced.
- Stakeholders criticized an excessive focus on the production of legal texts and structural reform – evidencing the opportunity for TAIEX to also address needs in terms of raising general awareness on EU practices and fostering progressive change, also beyond the TCc “administration”.
- The catalogue was deemed relevant and adequate. Some issues were identified:
- Concerning study visits, the tight limits on participant numbers (3); also, the perception of their current use being more based on “rewards” considerations than relevance.

⁶⁸ Note to the file: Final assessment of TAIEX support for the Turkish Cypriot community under the Medium-Term Assistance 2017-2019.

⁶⁹ Source: TMS.

⁷⁰ Events to be reviewed in depth have been selected to be loosely representative of the overall sample of 2015-2020 events, though a clustering approach has also been used (i.e. a somewhat larger than proportionate number of events has been attributed to some of the most represented sectors, regions and types of events, in order to allow for more relevant comparisons). Also, more weight has been given to the most recent years of activity, to favour conclusions and recommendations more applicable to the current context. The complete list is available in annex 4.

- The temporary impossibility of in-person events (due to the COVID-19 pandemics).
- The need/opportunity for “even quicker” solutions to access expertise (i.e. internet based).
- The need for TAIEX to be complemented by more long-term and comprehensive support, i.e. Twinning.
- The size of the instrument and its budget were adequate.

The introduction and implementation of the *acquis communautaire* within the TCc addressed relevant needs – more specifically, the need of alignment with the EU, which will become essential in the event of reunification of Cyprus, and more general development needs in the TCc. TAIEX as an instrument was well-designed to support this purpose, which is very similar to the one for which it was originally designed (support the transposition of the EU *acquis* in countries candidates for accession to the EU).

Analogously to TAIEX IPA, peer working was deemed very relevant, as it brought direct understanding of technical issues that arise and capacity of practical problem solving on how to address them.

The design of the specific MTA approach within the TCc, coupled with the flexibility of TAIEX, was well-suited to the specificities of the TCc context.⁷¹ In particular:

- The long-term planning approach allowed negotiating and pursuing sizable goals in spite of government instability. At the same time, the flexibility of the instrument allowed adapting MTAs and PAPs to effective progress. (Note: to some extent, flexibility was also noted to be a double-edged sword – as the lack of tight accountability mechanism may have contributed to less incentive in meeting objectives and de-prioritization of TAIEX compared to other instruments⁷²).
- The long-term recruiting of experts allowed themselves time to familiarize themselves with the specificities of the TCc context and develop productive relationships with the beneficiaries.

The speed of the instrument was noted to be a highly relevant characteristic, particularly given the volatile nature of the TCc political context: whenever momentum existed to advance in the “legislation” process, it had to be leveraged on quickly. Speed was also a critical asset for topics that required urgent responses, e.g. related to health and most notably the COVID-19 pandemics.⁷³

The limited range of EU instruments available to support the TCc led to TAIEX being used towards a broader set of needs – including to fulfil inspections needed for Green Line Trade, and long term capacity building of Turkish Cypriot local bodies. While TAIEX contributed to those purposes, several stakeholders voiced the need of instruments better designed to support long term capacity building – in particular, more similar to Twinning. (However, the implementation of Twinning in the territory is unfeasible due to the political context.)⁷⁴

According to some stakeholders (beneficiaries and experts), TAIEX TCc’s objectives appear at times too focused on the production of legal texts and structural reform, neglecting to recognize importance to other needs related to general awareness and training on EU practices. In fact, both beneficiaries and experts noted that TAIEX can also bring significant benefits in terms of raising awareness on practices and paths towards development; and through that, lead to changes in practices most notably at the private sector level, and/or start creating the cultural ground for long term changes at the “legal and regulatory” level – even when the conditions do not exist for legal texts to be prepared and implemented immediately.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Evaluation of the Aid Programme to the Turkish Cypriot Community (2013-2018); interviews.

⁷² MN158, MN505.

⁷³ MN752, MN755.

⁷⁴ Interviews, in particular: MN158, MN505, MN750, MN755. The catalogue of instruments available to support the TCc is strongly affected by the political situation of the territory, and the need on the part of the EU to avoid any action that would indicate political recognition of the local administration.

⁷⁵ MN749, MN505, MN754.

A few issues emerged concerning the TAIEX catalogue:

- The number of participants in study visits was tightly limited to 3. This restricted the possibility for relevant working group⁷⁶ (WG) members to go; particularly in cases in which multiple sectors were involved in a same event and/ or when higher level officers from Turkish Cypriot local bodies were also involved.⁷⁷
- Also concerning study visits, several stakeholders signalled that these tend to be used as incentives, i.e. to some extent be negotiated in function of the achievement of specific milestones (rather than being more strictly based on considerations on the added value they can bring).⁷⁸
- The (temporary) impossibility of in-person events was seen as a significant issue. While online events were seen as a good complement by several stakeholders, it was also noted that they did not work well as the “main” or sole component, particularly if experts were new to the TCc context or when concrete institutional development work (beyond the drafting of legal texts) was needed.⁷⁹
- The need/ opportunity was voiced for “even quicker” event options (particularly: internet based) that would allow to promptly access expertise for immediate needs.⁸⁰ (See also the box below.)

Box 51: The use of WhatsApp groups as a way to engage experts on an immediate basis

Expertise needs related to supporting the management of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic could hardly wait the time needed to organize TAIEX events, particularly the in-person versions. In fact, the introduction of online events was seen very positively in this endeavour, as they allowed support to continue and implied less constraints to timely organization.

To enable even faster and more continuous collaboration, the TAIEX TCc health working group also created a WhatsApp group, through which beneficiaries and experts continued to dialogue in-between events to immediately clarify doubts and enable faster progress on the most urgent issues.

Sources: MN752, MN755

The size of TAIEX TCc’s budget was adequate to its purpose.

The budget of TAIEX’s operational expenses represented a substantial size (around 4.2%⁸¹) of the Aid Programme budget; furthermore, a substantial portion of it (37%) remained unused in the August 2016-July 2020 period⁸².

EQ2 – On whether specific interventions addressed needs

Box 52: Summary findings related to EQ2, TCc case study

- The design and use of the MTA approach ensured that each event was relevant to needs.

The MTA approach, as specifically designed and used within TAIEX TCc, ensured that each event was relevant to needs and to the broader objectives set within the MTA and the overall EU support to the TCc. In particular:

⁷⁶ Working groups included people within the TCc local bodies specifically assigned to work towards the objectives of each PAP.

⁷⁷ MN755.

⁷⁸ MN505, MN750.

⁷⁹ MN505, MN751, MN752, MN754, MN755. For more information on the perceived advantages and disadvantages of online events, see EQ5.

⁸⁰ MN754.

⁸¹ This estimate was obtained comparing the average annual budget for TAIEX TCc in the August 2016-July 2020 period with the average annual budget of the Aid Programme to the Turkish Cypriot Community in the 2013-2018 period – as reported in the Evaluation of the Aid Programme to the Turkish Cypriot Community (2013-2018), pg.17.

⁸² Based on data provided by the TAIEX team.

- MTAs sectors of interventions and overall objectives were chosen by beneficiaries and discussed with/ approved by the CSS Unit – thus ensuring beneficiary interest and alignment with the broader Aid Programme; and facilitating feasibility by taking into account considerations/ adaptations based on knowledge acquired and past progress on the same topics.⁸³
- PAPs were defined by experts and beneficiaries (facilitating engagement and commitment), and approved by DG REFORM (to ensure relevance and alignment with the overall Aid Programme).⁸⁴
- The engagement of experts for long term periods allowed more time for careful selection, as well as more opportunity for them to become familiar with the specificities of the TCc context and thus to better tailor their advice to needs. Longer term engagement also allowed a higher investment in the induction of experts – in fact, interviewed TAIEX TCc experts universally expressed having felt well prepared for their engagements.⁸⁵

EQ3 – Effectiveness in terms of capacity building and contribution to broader objectives

Box 53: Summary findings related to EQ3, TCc case study

- TAIEX contributed to significant progress towards alignment with EU *acquis* in the TCc. However, progress lagged behind the objectives set.
- TAIEX also significantly contributed to the development of individual capacities of the beneficiaries, as well as to parts of the TCc that were most closely related to the activities.
- The following were identified as factors that significantly affected (positively or negatively) the effectiveness of TAIEX TCc events:
 - The instability of the political scene and of elected bodies.
 - The existence of political will to broadly align with the EU *acquis* and to achieve change in each specific topic.
 - Quantity, quality and commitment of working group members dedicated to each PAP.
 - Quality of interpreters.
 - Availability and quality of other resources needed for project implementation.
 - The capacity and willingness of experts to engage in devising solutions applicable to the TCc context.

TAIEX contributed to significant progress towards alignment with the EU *acquis* in the TCc. However, progress lagged significantly behind the initial objectives set.

As a result of the 2017-2019 MTA only, at least 30 legal texts were adopted. However, performance compared to initial objectives was mixed depending on PAPs, with 11 out of 35 having completed 75% or more of the activities and objectives foreseen, another 11 having completed between 40 and 75%, and the remaining 13 lagging behind with less than 40% of the activities completed.

Box 54: A success case – The creation of the Statistical office

TAIEX TCc played a critical role in the passing of a new Statistical legal text and in the creation of a Statistical office in the TCc – which as of March 2020 was functioning with 16 employees (with plans to grow to 27 in the short term). This was arguably one of the most successful among the sectorial PAPs implemented in the 2017-2019 MTA – with around 95% of planning activities completed. Assistance is still being provided in the following MTA to support the passing of complementary legal

⁸³ MN750, note to the file: Final assessment of TAIEX support for the Turkish Cypriot community under the Medium-Term Assistance 2017-2019, Evaluation of the Aid Programme to the Turkish Cypriot Community (2013-2018).

⁸⁴ MN750, note to the file: Final assessment of TAIEX support for the Turkish Cypriot community under the Medium-Term Assistance 2017-2019, Evaluation of the Aid Programme to the Turkish Cypriot Community (2013-2018).

⁸⁵ MN158, MN505, MN750, MN755, note to the file: Selection of medium-term TAIEX experts for the benefit of the Turkish Cypriot community under the Medium-Term Assistance 2020-2022.

texts and the Statistical Office in becoming fully operational. Improved statistics in the TCc is essential for undertaking effective reforms and helping settlement preparations.

Despite the success, experts noted that one major challenge that has and will continue to affect activities is the lack of resources – in particular, human resources in the Statistical office, which are too few compared to the tasks that they are expected to perform, and IT infrastructure. Objectives were, in general, described as over-ambitious compared to the resources available (by both experts and beneficiaries); which project stakeholders have been trying to approach by setting priorities. Other challenges noted have been the need to achieve more effective collaboration between the Statistical office and other areas of the TCc “administration”; and the instability of TCc elected bodies, which led to inconsistent political commitment and delayed the time needed for the passing of legal texts.

Sources: MN505, Final report on Assistance to Turkish Cypriot community in the field of Statistics, Statistics sector sheet annex to the Final Assessment of TAIEX support to the Turkish Cypriot community under the Medium-Term Assistance 2017-2019.

Box 55: An example of stalled progress in the process of revision of legal texts

The PAP on Civil Explosives and Pyrotechnic Articles did not register any progress in the 2017-2019 period. A first event had taken place on the topic in early 2017 (under the previous MTA), during which a secondary legal text was drafted and submitted to the TCc’s “Central Legislative Board” – with the agreement to postpone further missions until the text had been reviewed and given feedback. Since then and until the end of the 2017-2019 MTA, feedback was not received and only minor activities took place – such as the predisposition of the PAP and the provision of some material and information at the request of the EUCC. Further progress is nonetheless being sought under the current MTA.

Sources: Final report, Free Movement of Goods, Civil explosives and pyrotechnic articles; Civil explosives and pyrotechnic articles sector sheet annex to the Final Assessment of TAIEX support to the Turkish Cypriot community under the Medium-Term Assistance 2017-2019; envisaged MTA outputs for the 2020-2022 MTA.

Beyond the development of legal texts and other structural objectives, beneficiaries report having strongly benefitted from TAIEX activities in terms of individual learning. In fact, the importance of this type of contribution – at the level of working groups, but also beyond – was further underlined by both beneficiaries and experts, as a way to facilitate changes in practices (within the public and private sector) as well as to set the cultural basis for broader institutional changes in the long term.

The following were identified as factors that significantly affected (positively or negatively) the effectiveness of TAIEX TCc events:⁸⁶

- **The extent of political will to broadly align with the EU *acquis* and to achieve change in each specific topic.** With the decline in the perceived likelihood of the achievement of the reunification of Cyprus (particularly, since the suspension of the talks in 2017), alignment with the *acquis* lost relevance in the political agenda.⁸⁷
- For what concerns specific topics – interest should be granted by the fact that PAP topics are requested by the TCc; however, in practice frequent political change may lead to variability in the level of political commitment towards each specific topic.⁸⁸
- **The instability of the political scene and of elected bodies.** Frequent electoral processes and the consequent continuous distraction and turnover caused significant delays in the passing of legal texts (up to the extreme of them, at times, not being relevant by the time

⁸⁶ MN63, MN158, MN505.

⁸⁷ MN63, MN158.

⁸⁸ MN505, MN755.

they were finally ready to be passed); as well as, as mentioned above, variability in the momentum and political commitment towards each topic.⁸⁹

Quantity, quality and commitment of working group members dedicated to each PAP.

- Human resources within the “administration” tend to be scarce and insufficiently trained. In practice, the capacity was thinly spread and insufficient to allow reaching all of the objectives set in PAPs. In addition, there were several reports of group members not being willing or able to fully commit to TAIEX activities – i.e. not showing up during events, or leaving early due to conflicting commitments. Another frequent complaint was that activities to be completed by working group members in-between events tended to lag behind schedule.⁹⁰
- **Quality of interpreters.** This was identified to be an important issue by both beneficiaries and experts. In general, it was deemed very important that a good interpreter be identified upon the launch of activities within each PAP, and be subsequently maintained through it – in order to allow him/her to also gradually the specificities of the technical language associated with each sector.⁹¹
- **Availability and quality of other resources needed for project implementation,** such as, for example, IT equipment, or infrastructure (and to some extent, mentality and cultural acceptance).⁹²
- **The capacity and willingness of experts to engage in devising solutions applicable to the TCc context.** Experts were generally deemed competent in their area of expertise; however, some of them were more able and willing than others to learn about the context and engage in devising solutions applicable to it; as well as in engaging in coordinating activities and going beyond their specific expertise provision tasks – which was deemed to really make a difference.⁹³

EQ4 – Effectiveness in terms of implementation modalities

Box 56: Summary findings related to EQ4, TCc case study

- TAIEX TCc events were mostly organized within one month from application. Two factors that facilitated speed were (1) the waiving of a consultation process and need for formal application approval from DG NEAR (only a mere compliancy check with SLA requirements was performed) and (2) not needing to identify experts, which were pre-selected at the beginning of each MTA.
- The need for translation of texts was identified as a significant factor slowing speed.
- The instrument demonstrated flexibility in adapting to respond to different types of needs, as well as to allow in-progress adaptation of MTAs and PAPs depending on the level of advancement reached.

Most TAIEX TCc events that took place in the 2015-2020 period (70%) were organized in one month or less, and over 90% in less than two months.⁹⁴ This made it the fastest strand within TAIEX. Two factors that contributed to this were:

⁸⁹ MN63, MN158, MN505, MN755.

⁹⁰ MN158, MN505, mission reports, note to the file: Final assessment of TAIEX support for the Turkish Cypriot community under the Medium-Term Assistance 2017-2019, Evaluation of the Aid Programme to the Turkish Cypriot Community (2013-2018).

⁹¹ MN505, MN755.

⁹² MN 158, MN505, MN749.

⁹³ MN158, MN749, MN755. It was also noted that experts coming from more similar contexts – in terms of size of the country, historical political and socioeconomic background, or recent experience of transposition of the *acquis* – were generally able to better grasp the specificities of the TCc context in a faster way. However, positive experiences were also reported with experts from other countries.

⁹⁴ Based on TMS data.

- Unlike in all other TAIEX strands, the individual events application approval process from DG NEAR only required a compliance check with SLA requirements;⁹⁵ therefore, no time was needed to conduct consultation processes. In fact, over 90% of events were approved in the same day in which the application was submitted.
- No search for experts was necessary for individual events, as experts were pre-selected for the duration of each entire MTA.

An organizational issue that was noted to slow down the organization of events was the translation of documents previous to events. 10 days were normally required for translation, plus time to give the experts the opportunity to review them.

TAIEX demonstrated significant flexibility, particularly in terms of allowing the addressing of different needs (compensating for the lack of availability of alternative support instruments) and the adjustment of MTAs and PAPs in time (in terms of budget and programming) in function of progress.⁹⁶ (In this respect, see also EQ1.) Experts nonetheless commented on the excessive rigidity of PAPs, wishing for easier adaptability of programmes to emerging better understanding of needs and on-the-ground conditions and limitations.⁹⁷

EQ5 – Cost efficiency and administrative burden

Box 57: Summary findings related to EQ5, TCc case study

- The direct costs of in-person events were in line with those of TAIEX IPA/ENI.
- The direct costs of expert missions tended to increase in time (as did the number of participants involved; and to a lesser extent, the number of experts and duration of events).
- Online events implied significant savings in terms of direct costs. They also implied advantages in terms of the possibility to continue activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, the higher “discipline” enforced in terms of attendance, and the lesser time commitment required on experts. However, the lack of in-person options led to less concrete understanding; online interactions were less spontaneous and more awkward, with higher difficulty in maintaining concentration; and there was less active time available. Also, Green Line Trade activities (inspections) had to be suspended.
- The administrative burden was considered reasonable by all parts involved.
- Experts criticized excessive rigidity in PAPs and inflexibility in travel arrangements.

The direct costs⁹⁸ of in-person events averaged EUR 7K for expert visits, EUR 13K for workshops and EUR 10K for study visits. These amounts are close to those observed within the TAIEX IPA-ENI strands.

The direct costs of work-from-home assignments varied significantly, presumably in consideration of the scope of each – ranging from EUR 266 to EUR 13,750.

The average cost of in-person expert missions tended to increase in time, from EUR 5.6K in 2015 to EUR 7.9K in 2020 respectively. Within the same timeframes, the average number of participants and experts involved in those events and the duration of each event also increased on average – which contributes to explain this variation. No relevant trends were detected for other types of events.

Figure 79: Evolution of the cost of in-person expert missions and of key variables associated with it (averages)

	2015	2019*	2020
--	------	-------	------

⁹⁵ Documentation for all TAIEX events reviewed included a note in this sense.

⁹⁶ MN158, MN505.

⁹⁷ MN 505.

⁹⁸ These amounts (obtained from TMS) include costs borne by the logistics provider as well as including expert fees and transportation; however, they do not include overhead costs related to the TAIEX team, the cost of CSS or other EU officers supporting the design and organization of the event, or any other cost borne by the EU or the beneficiary.

Direct costs of expert missions (EUR)	5,606	8,226	7,884
N. of participants	4.6	6.3	10.1
N. of experts	1.5	1.8	1.5
Duration (days)	4.2	4.5	6.8
* 2019 was also included in the table in consideration of 2020 being an out-of-the-ordinary year, in which the COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted activities.			
Source: TMS.			

The direct cost of online events were, on average, significantly lower compared to in-person versions. In particular, expert missions costed 35% less, and workshops costed 81% less. (No online study visit was organized.) *Albeit online events were cheaper across all TAIEX strands, the drop in costs within TAIEX TCc was the most significant observed.*

Besides lower costs, **online events were reputed to have some other significant advantages.**

First and foremost, they **allowed continuation of activities even during the COVID19 pandemic** – which was emphatically appreciated by several beneficiaries.⁹⁹

Also, they were found to **force more “discipline” in presence to events.**¹⁰⁰ Within in-person events, there were frequent instances reported of expected participants (from TCc working groups, or other higher-level TCc “administration” officers) either not showing up or leaving early due to the insurgence of other commitments; this was much less frequent with online events, which have stricter timetables. Also, as online events are shorter, they forced a better focus.

Last, they required a significantly **more manageable time commitment from experts**, making it easier to organize them.¹⁰¹

On the other side, **online events also implied some significant issues:**

- There was **less active time**, which was perceived as a serious limit to the potential scope of the discussion. Sessions lasted a maximum of three hours, often with a tight ending as some participant (particularly, the expert(s)) had an immediately ensuing commitment. In in-person events, discussions could be longer, and also continue less formally during breaks.¹⁰²
- At the same time, maintaining the concentration in front of the screen for three hours was perceived as difficult.¹⁰³
- Two participants noted that **online discussions tend to be less spontaneous** – and in particular, it is more awkward and complicated to ask questions (i.e. clicking on the “raise the hand” button, typing in in the chat etc.). There is also less time to discuss issues, particularly if they are not tightly related to the agenda.¹⁰⁴
- On-site visits are impossible, which limits the possibility to reach a concrete understanding of the context and the issues at hand, as well as to build trust between beneficiaries and experts.¹⁰⁵ The impossibility to conduct on-site visits also forced to temporarily discontinue Green Line Trade inspections.¹⁰⁶

No issues were raised by beneficiaries as far as the administrative burden was concerned. Within the participant survey, most TAIEX TCc respondents “mostly agreed” with the sentence “The administrative burden my institution of organizing a TAIEX event was reasonable compared to the result”. On the other side, experts criticized PAPs for being excessively rigid and bureaucratic – while

⁹⁹ MN752, MN753, MN755.

¹⁰⁰ MN158, MN505, MN750, MN752.

¹⁰¹ MN505.

¹⁰² MN752, MN755.

¹⁰³ MN755.

¹⁰⁴ MN752, MN753.

¹⁰⁵ MN158, MN750, MN753.

¹⁰⁶ MN754.

a more flexible approach could have been potentially more adequate and easier to manage given the adaptability required by work in the TCc context.¹⁰⁷

Concerning logistics, two people criticized the **inflexibility of travel/logistic arrangements** – particularly, they reported requests from experts to adjust travel arrangements to remain in the northern part of Cyprus for extra days (beyond the event) being denied; while small extensions could have been helpful in familiarizing themselves with the context.¹⁰⁸

EQ6 – Complementarity with other instruments

Box 58: Summary findings related to EQ6, TCc case study

- TAIEX TCc is purposefully used in tight complementarity with the overall Aid Programme to the TCc.
- No other instrument is available within the TCc to address the needs that TAIEX acts upon.

TAIEX TCc is highly integrated within the overall Aid Programme to the TCc.

In particular, the definition of MTAs and PAPs as well as the implementation of PAPs is done in tight coordination with other actions of the Aid Programme. (This includes the possibility to implicitly embed conditionality or sequencing embedded in programme objectives: for instance, investments in a specific sector may be made conditional to previous improvements in the related legal framework, or to sustained implementation.)¹⁰⁹

In addition, since 2020 and in order to promote an even stronger integration and focus on results, project managers within the CSS have been reorganized so as to cover specific sectors (coordinating the use of multiple instruments within them) rather than by instrument.¹¹⁰ Within the EUCC, officers are also assigned responsibilities on a sector-by-sector task, covering the use of multiple instruments within them.¹¹¹

No evidence of other instruments with TAIEX's characteristics and available within the TCc and that could create potential issues of duplications was found; – with the possible exception of other EU-supported Technical Assistance, with which however the risk of duplication was minimal, since the use would have been overseen by the same CSS and EUCC officers.

EQ7 – EU internal cooperation

Box 59: Summary findings related to EQ7, TCc case study

- Given the specific focus on the transposition of the *acquis communautaire*, the EU is the most appropriate actor to implement TAIEX TCc.
- TAIEX managed at the EU level offers access to a wider range of experts – making it easier to find good fits.

The EU appears to be the most logical and appropriate actor to implement TAIEX TCc in consideration of the focus of the instrument, i.e. *“preparation for the introduction and implementation of the acquis communautaire”*.

Implementation of the program at the EU level (compared to the MS level) also allowed access to a broader range of experts, expanding the possibility of finding adequate fits.

¹⁰⁷ MN505. The same critique was also mentioned in the Evaluation of the Aid Programme to the Turkish Cypriot Community (2013-2018).

¹⁰⁸ Email sent to the evaluation team by an expert to follow up on MN505.

¹⁰⁹ MN63, MN750, Evaluation of the Aid Programme to the Turkish Cypriot community (2013-2018).

¹¹⁰ MN750, Note to the file “Final assessment of TAIEX support for the Turkish Cypriot community under the Medium-Term Assistance 2017-2019.

¹¹¹ MN749, MN755.

Interviewees mentioned that the preferred choices tended to fall on experts from countries which most recently joined the EU, in view of higher similarity of the context of origin to the TCc (in terms of the more recent experience in implementing the EU *acquis* and similar former political background)¹¹² but also because compensation levels tended to be perceived as more attractive in those countries.^{113,114}

This said, while it is true that most of the experts who supported TAIEX TCc in the 2015-2020 period were from the EU13 group (Romania, Croatia and Poland, respectively providing 14.2%, 13.2% and 12.1% of the experts who supported in the period), there was significant variation in the overall group in terms of country of origin, including 20 countries of which 15 from the EU15.¹¹⁵

5 Annexes

Annex 1: List of events reviewed in depth

Event-specific documentation was reviewed for all the events listed below; also, participants and experts were invited to complete a survey. A selection of stakeholders from the below events was also subsequently interviewed.

Events have been selected to be loosely representative of the overall sample of 2015-2020 events, though a clustering approach has also been used (i.e. a somewhat larger than proportionate number of events has been attributed to some of the most represented sectors and types of events, in order to allow for more relevant comparisons). Also, more weight has been given to the most recent years of activity, to favour conclusions and recommendations more applicable to the current context.

Table 6: Summary of events covered

Event ID	Approach	Name of event	Year	Type of event	Online?	Acquis chapters covered	Expert reports documentation provided?
60240	MTA	Expert Mission on Industrial Pollution Control	2015	Expert Mission	NO	27 Environment	Yes
61202	MTA	Expert Mission on Industrial Pollution Control	2016	Expert Mission	NO	27 Environment	Yes
61643	MTA*	MTA in the Field of Free Movement of Goods	2016	Work from Home	NO	01 Free movement of goods	No expert report, but a presentation and a skeleton for draft regulation
64197	MTA	Expert Mission on Assistance on Green Line Trade	2017	Expert Mission	NO	12 Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy	Yes
64564	MTA**	Expert Mission on NATURA 2000 and Nature Protection	2017	Expert Mission	NO	27 Environment	Yes

¹¹² MN755.

¹¹³ MN158.

¹¹⁴ Another preference mentioned by interviewees was towards smaller countries.

¹¹⁵ Based on TMS data.

66147	MTA*	Expert Mission on Statistics	2018	Expert Mission	NO	18 Statistics	Yes
67538	MTA	Expert Mission on Green Line Trade – Inspection of Fishing	2018	Expert Mission	NO	01 Free movement of goods	Yes
67903	MTA	Expert Mission on Environmental Noise	2018	Expert Mission	NO	27 Environment	Yes
68200	MTA	Expert Mission on Statistics	2019	Expert Mission	NO	18 Statistics	Yes
68279	MTA	Expert Mission on Chemicals	2019	Expert Mission	NO	27 Environment	Yes
68316	MTA	Expert Mission on Food Safety	2019	Expert Mission	NO	12 Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy	Yes
80053	MTA	MTA in the field of Environment	2020	Work from Home	NO	27 Environment	Task form only – the assignment relates to translation
80263	MTA	Assistance in the field of Food Safety and Animal Health	2020	Work from Home	NO	12 Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy	Task form only – the assignment relates to drafting of legal texts and other documentation
80321	MTA	Expert Mission on Residues	2020	Expert Mission	YES	12 Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy	Yes
80413	MTA**	Expert Mission on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications	2020	Expert Mission	YES	03 Right of establishment and freedom to provide service	Yes

* Originally classified as series in the TMS database. Review of documentation suggests that the events were part of a MTA instead.

** Originally classified as “TAIEX Classic” in the TMS database. Review of documentation suggests that the events were part of a MTA instead.

Annex 2: List of stakeholders interviewed

- The TAIEX case handler in charge of TAIEX TCc as of 2020;
- 3 representatives of the CSS Unit of DG REFORM (based in Brussels);
- 1 representative of the EUCC;
- 4 beneficiaries (representatives of the TCs local bodies)

In addition, a focus group involving 11 TAIEX experts who had collaborated with TAIEX TCc in the 2015-2020 period and a group interview with 6 representatives of the EUCC were also organized.

Annex 3: Bibliography

Documents

- European Commission. Directorate General for Structural Reform Support. *Evaluation of the Aid Programme to the Turkish Cypriot community (2013 – 2018). Draft Final Report*. Brussels: European Commissions, 2020.
- Council Regulation No. 389/2006. Accessed July 30, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32006R0389>
- Commission Decision of 2000, extending the operations of the TAIEX for 2011.
- Congressional Research Service, “Cyprus: Reunification Proving Elusive” Updated April 15, 2019.
- MTA 2017-2019, Final assessment: note to the file and annexes.
- MTA 2020-2022, Expert selection process: note to the file and terms of reference.
- MTA 2020-2022, Note to the file and annex on envisaged MTA outputs.

Web resources

- Website of the Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community

https://ec.europa.eu/info/overview-funding-programmes/aid-programme-turkish-cypriot-community_en

- Website on the Green Line Regulation

https://ec.europa.eu/info/mission-statement-directorate-general-structural-reform-support/monitoring-green-line-regulation_en

ANNEX 5F: CASE STUDY: TAIEX IN THE REST OF THE WORLD

6 Introduction

This document analyses how TAIEX was implemented outside the EU and the NEAR regions in the 2015-2020 period. Implementation was done through two strands: **TAIEX PI** (implemented in coordination with the FPI), which was active since 2015; and **TAIEX INTPA** (implemented in coordination with DG INTPA), which was only launched in 2020 and will be considered in its “pilot phase” until 2022. In total, during the period covered TAIEX PI organized 137 events while TAIEX INTPA organized 8 events; corresponding to a total direct¹¹⁶ expenditure of EUR 3.4 million.¹¹⁷

7 Overview of TAIEX outside the EU and NEAR regions in the 2015-2020 period

TAIEX PI was launched in the second half of 2014.

It was meant to enrich the Partnership Instrument (PI) toolkit, enabling leveraging on EU MS public sector expertise towards the overall PI purpose of promoting the EU’s strategic interests worldwide¹¹⁸.

To ensure alignment with such purpose, TAIEX PI events were requested by EU services rather than beneficiary public administrations¹¹⁹. However, in practice, to ensure mutual interest and success beneficiaries tended to be closely involved in the definition and design of events.

TAIEX PI experienced an initial strong uptake, which required budget extensions in 2017 and 2018, and peaked at 49 events in 2017. In 2018 and 2019 the number of events dropped to 18 and 21 (possibly in connection with the rotation of the TAIEX PI case handler in the second half of 2018, and the vacancy of the position until April 2019); followed by a second drop to 12 in 2020, associated with the emergence of COVID-19.

TAIEX INTPA was launched (as a pilot) beginning 2020 (the pilot will conclude as of end 2022). Its purpose was to enable a structured, coherent and effective access to EU MS public sector expertise as a tool for development and cooperation.

To ensure local ownership on reform processes, TAIEX INTPA events may only be requested by public institutions in partner countries (i.e. beneficiaries); though the approval and support of local EU Delegations is a necessary prerequisite for approval. Delegations tend to get closely involved in coaching beneficiaries in the application and event design process.

Given its recent introduction – which almost coincided with the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemics – all TAIEX INTPA events organized up to end 2020 have taken place online.

¹¹⁶ Includes events’ costs paid through the implementing organization only. (Does not include: costs related to the operation of the TAIEX team or to support obtained from EU personnel; extra costs borne by beneficiaries.)

¹¹⁷ Note: before March 2020, all events were organized in-person; afterwards, all events were organized online. All TAIEX INTPA events organized in the period covered were online.

¹¹⁸ This is declined into four main objectives:

- 1) Offering policy support and responding to global challenges;
- 2) Projecting the international dimension of Europe 2020;
- 3) Enhancing market access and boosting trade, investment and business opportunities for EU companies;
- 4) Promoting public diplomacy and cooperation.

¹¹⁹ This dates prior to the introduction of TAIEX strategic; it was therefore a novelty for TAIEX.

Figure 80: Main characteristics of the TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA strands

	TAIEX PI	TAIEX INTPA
Year of launch	2014	2020
Main focus	Promotion of EU interest	Sustainable development, eradication of poverty, human rights (SDGs)
Target number of events per year (SLAs signed in 2020)	35	35
Yearly budget (based on 2016-2020 period)	EUR 875,000	EUR 650,000
Budget compared to instrument(s) supported (proxy)	<1%*	0.001%**
Who could apply?	EU officers only	Beneficiaries only
Total number of events in the 2015-2020 period	137 (9 online)	8 (all online)
Main topics (acquis chapters) covered - % based on amounts	Information Society and Media (13%) Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy (11%) Company law (8%) Consumer and health protection (8%) External relations (5%)	

* TAIEX PI yearly budget compared to PI budget for the 2014-2020 period, annualized.

** TAIEX INTPA yearly budget compared to 2019 EU development assistance.

Sources: ADE analysis based on SLAs, budget data and other official documentation.

No trends were identified as to the geographical distribution of TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA events, except for the scarce use of TAIEX PI in Africa.

8 Methodology

This case study is based on documental review, data review, interviews conducted at the strategic (i.e. overall instrument) level and a more in depth analysis of a 11 selected events (8 TAIEX PI events and 3 TAIEX INTPA events)¹²⁰. For these last, the team reviewed event specific documentation; surveyed participants and experts¹²¹; and interviewed a selected number of stakeholders.

A total of 15 interviews have informed this case study, including:

- The TAIEX case handlers in charge of TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA as of 2020 (2);
- 2 representatives of FPI (based in Brussels);
- 2 representatives of DG INTPA (based in Brussels);
- 2 PI project managers;
- 1 beneficiary of TAIEX PI;

¹²⁰ The complete list is available in annex 4.

¹²¹ Events to be reviewed in depth have been selected to be loosely representative of the overall sample of 2015-2020 events, though a clustering approach has also been used (i.e. a somewhat larger than proportionate number of events has been attributed to some of the most represented sectors, regions and types of events, in order to allow for more relevant comparisons). Also, more weight has been given to the most recent years of activity, to favour conclusions and recommendations more applicable to the current context.

Additional note: two of the three TAIEX INTPA events were added to the sample at later moment, and their participants could not be invited to participate in the survey.

- 2 beneficiaries of TAIEX INTPA (one of which in writing, due to language challenges);
- 3 EU Delegation members who supported the realization of TAIEX INTPA events;
- 1 representative of a line DG who took part in a TAIEX PI event.

Obstacles encountered and limitations identified:

- Albeit stakeholders to be surveyed and interviewed were independently selected by the evaluation team, not all could be contacted or were responsive. It is possible that self-selection in participating to the exercise may have resulted in inherent biases – for example, stakeholders who had positive experience with TAIEX and are interested in using the instrument again may have been more willing than others to invest their time in supporting the evaluation.
- The geographic dispersion of beneficiaries complicated the use of some information recollection methods. In particular, due to differences in language it was decided to not make use of focus groups and group interviews techniques¹²²; and in one case, the interview was realized in writing to facilitate the intervention of an interpreter.

9 Main findings, according to the TAIEX Evaluation EQs

EQ1 – The instrument’s ability to address needs

Box 60: Summary of findings related to EQ1, TAIEX in the rest of the world case study

- TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA were piloted based mainly on hypothesis of potential usefulness. No significant structured analysis of needs was conducted previous to the launch.
- Objectives pursued mostly did not relate to the transposition of the EU *acquis*. Rather: alignment of standards, support to reform efforts, promotion of the EU as a partner.
- TAIEX had significant distinctive and value added elements compared to other instruments: capacity to support access to MS public sector experts, swiftness, flexibility in terms of content and small size. Some concerns emerged as to whether it may be at times used as the only, rather than best, option available to address issues.
- The setup in DG NEAR was universally considered functional.
- TAIEX PI events were requested only by EU officers; and TAIEX INTPA events only by beneficiaries. Both strands made significant use of events in series.
- The events’ catalogue was generally deemed sufficient. Online events were perceived as valuable, though not a substitute to events in presence; feedback on hybrid events was mixed.

Both TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA were introduced on a pilot basis, based on the hypothesis that MS public sector expertise¹²³ could be productively leveraged on towards the objectives of the FPI and of DG INTPA, and that TAIEX as an instrument could adequately support in this sense; though without significant preliminary studies or analyses conducted towards assessing the extent of needs or the fit of the instrument to the specificities of the FPI, DG INTPA and the contexts in which they operate. DG INTPA is planning an evaluation for the end of the pilot period, which will provide input to considerations on scaling up the instrument.¹²⁴

Unlike in the original conception of TAIEX (in the accession countries), the needs addressed do not relate to the transposition of the EU *acquis* – as for the most part, non-NEAR countries are not directly interested in that. Rather, events revised pursued objectives such as alignment of standards (particularly: to enable trade with the EU), support to reform efforts (in directions supported by the EU) and the promotion of the EU as a partner or model.

¹²² Albeit the case study benefitted from two focus groups conducted with experts who supported different TAIEX strands.

¹²³ MN744, Note to the file “TAIEX activities under the Partnership Instrument” (2014), SLAs.

¹²⁴ MN744, note to the file “TAIEX activities under Partnership Instrument (PI).” (2014).

Compared to other instruments available to the FPI and DG INTPA, TAIEX was perceived to have some relevant differentiating elements, notably:¹²⁵

- It supported **access to EU MS public sector experts**, in a straightforward and administratively lean way. Particularly within DG INTPA, this element was perceived as necessary and high value added within development activities; however, no other straightforward means provided it, and especially not in a way that would enable reaching more than one EU MS at the same time. (Some previous activities involving EU MS public sector experts had been organized through delegated cooperation, but only within projects and normally just involving one MS.)
- Its **swiftness**. Unlike other interventions, TAIEX can potentially be implemented in a matter of weeks – particularly due to its budget being pre-approved and logistics and administrative processes being tested and well-oiled. This characteristic proved particularly useful in situations that required urgent interventions as well as to profit from favourable political momentum situations (particularly in relatively unstable contexts).¹²⁶
- Its **flexibility** in terms of content. TAIEX can in principle be used for any topic; including those that are not considered under medium and long term country support programming (once again, due to its budget being pre-approved and not tied to specific geographies and sectors of intervention).
- Its **small size**, which allows to address needs that do not require large budgets and interventions; and supports swiftness.

It is worth noting that those characteristics at time led to TAIEX being the only instrument available to address a specific problem; though perhaps not a perfect fit. Interviews surfaced that this may create issues – most notably, when in order to be solved issues also need complementary/ follow up interventions that cannot be addressed through TAIEX (e.g. because not related to knowledge gaps).¹²⁷

The setup in DG NEAR was universally considered functional. In fact, DG NEAR was recognized to have accumulated significant know-how (including knowledge, administrative and logistics capabilities) in supporting peer-to-peer exchanges, which it would have been difficult and inefficient to replicate in other services. The lack of specific geographic competence was deemed as adequately addressed through the designation of specific case handlers for each strand, which were seconded by the DG responsible for the strand and were in frequent communication with it.¹²⁸ (In this respect, see also EQ4.)

In terms of type of events and features used: **both strands used mostly workshops and missions**, with TAIEX PI also making a (lesser) use of study visits. The work from home feature was used only once (by TAIEX PI) in the period under review.

By design, **TAIEX PI events were requested by EU officers** – coherently with the purpose of their supported instrument (PI), which focuses on the promotion of EU interest; nonetheless, steps are also consistently taken to ensure beneficiaries are also involved and interested.¹²⁹ On the other side, **TAIEX INTPA events were, as a rule, requested only by beneficiaries**, to ensure beneficiary ownership.¹³⁰

The events' catalogue was generally deemed sufficient by stakeholders interviewed. **Online events were largely perceived as valuable and offering significant advantages** (see EQ5 for more detail); **though not a substitute to events in presence**, which are also needed – particularly, to better contextualize advice (in the case of experts going to beneficiary countries) and for beneficiaries be able to directly experience the implementation of solutions (in the case of study visits).¹³¹

¹²⁵ MN300, MN700, MN738, MN741, MN743, MN744, MN951; and survey results.

¹²⁶ In the words of an interviewee: “quickness is essential in unstable contexts”.

¹²⁷ MN741, MN743, MN744.

¹²⁸ TAIEX PI SLA, MN700, MN734, MN744, MN900.

¹²⁹ MN300, MN700.

¹³⁰ MN744, MN951.

¹³¹ MN300, MN739, MN740.

Feedback on hybrid events was mixed: in some contexts, they were deemed useful to address connectivity issues, as they allowed to concentrate participants located in beneficiary countries in a single location set up for the purpose; however, in others they were associated with more difficulties in strictly respecting set schedules (necessary for online participants) and maintaining concentration of participants on experts talking through screens, rather than on on-site conversations.¹³²

EQ2 – On whether specific interventions addressed needs

Box 61: Summary of findings related to EQ2, TAIEX in the rest of the world case study

- Events addressed needs in a relevant way.
- The TAIEX application/ event design process was perceived as soundly designed to support the realization of relevant and well-focused events.
- Country ownership is perceived as high.
- Awareness of TAIEX PI was mostly limited to PI officers. Awareness of TAIEX INTPA was very scarce as the instrument was just launched.
- Among factors that enhanced or hampered capacity to address needs were beneficiary and EU Delegation commitment, the availability of the option to hold in-presence events, communication from TAIEX in local languages (when needed) and quality of internet connection and IT equipment (for online events).

All events reviewed were found to address needs in a relevant way.¹³³

TAIEX's process of application was deemed soundly designed in this sense. Particularly, TAIEX PI stakeholders deemed that consultations facilitated the identification and involvement of all relevant EU stakeholders, which helped them strengthened both the design and the implementation of the event. It is worth noting, however, that the process seemed to be appreciated mostly from a "procedural" side, with content ownership being largely retained by PI officers, at times also including the selection of experts.¹³⁴

In TAIEX INTPA's case, the process was also often seen as an additional beneficiary capacity building moment, as beneficiaries received assistance and coaching (mostly, from EU delegations) on precisely identifying the issues they chose to focus on and steps to address them.

Box 62: The role of EU Delegations in supporting the definition of a clear focus for events

The application for one of the first TAIEX INTPA events required considerable effort by both the beneficiary and the EU Delegation to define the specific focus. This included considerable coaching by the EU Delegation, and rework from the beneficiary. Both parties agreed that the effort paid off in terms of a successful event, and of competences acquired by the beneficiary.

"The process is well thought out. [...] At the beginning, we focused on describing the process, but did not see the ultimate goal of what we wanted. There were also problems in describing how we wanted to achieve the goal. [...] The EU Delegation supported us and helped to correctly formulate our goal, describe the details of the project. All these efforts paid off in the process of the direct implementation of the project. Thus, competent planning and meticulous preparatory work guaranteed the success of the project. There were no problems in the implementation of the planned activities." – Beneficiary representative

¹³² MN300, MN739, MN741, MN 742.

¹³³ Based on review of documentation (particularly: expert reports) and interviews with stakeholders. Also, in the participant survey all TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA stakeholders agreed that the information provided during the event was relevant to the beneficiaries' needs, except for one that offered no opinion.

¹³⁴ MN300, MN700, MN743.

All TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA stakeholders consulted (through interviews or the participants' survey) **agreed that TAIEX promoted national government ownership of events.** In the case of TAIEX INTPA, this was by design (as beneficiaries are the ones requesting the events); while in the case of TAIEX PI, it was ensured by consulting the opportunity of individual events with beneficiaries, and involving them early on in the application and organization processes.¹³⁵

It is worth noting that the emergence of events was also dependent on the awareness of TAIEX on the part of potential applicants. **TAIEX PI was reported by several sources to be well-known among PI officers** (largely thanks to annual PI training events), **but much less so other EU officers, and particularly EU Delegation personnel.** In the period observed, **TAIEX INTPA had been just launched and was still largely unknown;** however, in 2020 a website, a set of videos and leaflets were developed, and a first information webinar targeted at EU Delegations personnel was conducted (later followed by more).¹³⁶

The following were identified as factors that enhanced or hampered capacity of events to address needs:

- The level of **beneficiary involvement/ commitment** – which affected both quality of design and of participation¹³⁷.
- The level of **commitment of the EU Delegation** to support the application and organization of the event. (In the word of an interviewee: “For some of them, it may be just extra work that they may not want.”)¹³⁸
- **The availability of the option to hold in-presence events**, deemed important for specific purposes (particularly: personally experiencing the beneficiary/ expert reality).
- For online events, the availability and quality of IT equipment and internet connections.
- Communication with and from TAIEX in languages well known to the beneficiary.¹³⁹

EQ3 – Effectiveness in terms of capacity building and contribution to broader objectives

Box 63: Summary of findings related to EQ3, TAIEX in the rest of the world case study

- Events achieved capacity building objectives. In several cases, they also substantially contributed to broader objectives.
- Key factors that were observed to play a role in this sense were the existence of political momentum and political will; whether necessary resources (including human and financial capacities) were in place for the beneficiary to follow up on the event; and the possibility to hold more than one event on the same topic.
- The size of the TAIEX INTPA budget during the period appeared very small compared to the potential range of issues to be supported.

Events mostly achieved their objectives in terms of knowledge transmission. Agendas of events reviewed were found to be coherent with events' objectives as expressed in applications; and within the participants' survey, all TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA respondents agreed that TAIEX events improved beneficiary knowledge on the topics covered; most also agreed that TAIEX improved their capacity to do their work, albeit this was not true for 25% of TAIEX INTPA respondents.¹⁴⁰ In the case of one of the

¹³⁵ MN300, MN700.

¹³⁶ MN734.

¹³⁷ In reality, no events was observed to be “ineffective”. However, in one case commentaries from the EU Delegation see

¹³⁸ MN734.

¹³⁹ These last two issues were not strongly reflected in the participants' survey, possibly also because of respondents' self-selection bias – as the survey was offered online and in four languages only. From interviews, it appears that these issues only tend to emerge in specific contexts – but when they do, they have a significant impact.

¹⁴⁰ In fact, one TAIEX PI respondent disagreed with both statements. However, when contacted for follow up, he clarified he had confused TAIEX events with other events in which he had taken part, and his responses were therefore ultimately considered not relevant.

TAIEX INTPA events reviewed, in the expert report the time allocated was deemed insufficient to cover all topics included in the agenda.

Several cases were evidenced of cases in which TAIEX events provided a significant contribution to broader objectives – including legal reforms but also advancement in EU priorities. With more frequency, success cases were in topics connected with the implementation of trade standards enabling exports to the EU. Some examples are reported in the boxes below.

Box 64: Providing essential knowledge input for reforms: the setup of the RES in Kyrgyzstan

Two TAIEX PI events (an expert mission and a workshop) took place in Kyrgyzstan in 2017 and 2018 to support alignment to EU Import/ Export standards.

In particular, support was given in the setup of the Registered Exported System (RES). The first event empowered beneficiaries to kick-start the project by providing them basic background knowledge, otherwise lacking in the country: this enabled them, among others, to design and tender necessary consultancies. Practical knowledge support was also provided throughout implementation, through the second event and, occasionally, by experts on an on-call basis. According to a beneficiary interviewed, the introduction of the system significantly supported increased trade between Kyrgyzstan and the EU.

Box 65: TAIEX as a tool to distil EU best expertise and project a united, powerful EU image

Two related TAIEX PI events (the second a follow up to the first one) were set up to strengthen cooperation ties between the EU and India in the field of countering online radicalization. From the EU perspective, positioning the EU as a “partner of reference” for India on this topic was a clear objective.

The TAIEX setup allowed the quick organization of the events and the possibility of selecting and convening the best and most tailored expertise available throughout the EU, making the event highly successful from an image standpoint.

Box 66: Supporting reform and building EU leadership in new fields – Justice in Uzbekistan

TAIEX allowed to profit from favourable political momentum to support the the Uzbekistan ministry of Justice in improving its capacities in terms of regulatory impact assessment and systematization of legislation – a topic for which funding was not otherwise foreseen under the existing MIP.

Events organized (two in 2020, subsequently followed by more) directly contributed to the drafting of a Presidential decree on the comprehensive systematization of the national legislative base. In addition, they enabled the EU Delegation to build a working relationship with the Ministry of Justice and become a recognized interlocutor in Justice and Rule of Law within the country.

The fact that a new EU Programming Period began in 2021 also allowed to give consideration to Justice-related topics in subsequent cooperation planning, supporting follow up beyond TAIEX events

Box 67: Supporting pesticide management in Uganda

Several events were organized in Uganda to support pesticide management, in view of meeting requirements for exporting agricultural produce to the EU. Despite COVID restrictions, which made physical events impossible, the events were deemed highly successful by all stakeholders involved in generating local capacities and developing a legal framework, including a pesticide monitoring plan. In order to fully implement the plan and achieve the broader objective of meeting EU export requirements, however, the country now needs to pursue accreditation for its government Pesticide Residue laboratory – an endeavor for which necessary resources (including: financial) have not been yet identified.

The following factors were identified as enhancing or hampering effectiveness:¹⁴¹

- Whether the beneficiary had or could obtain the **necessary resources** (including financial and human capabilities) **to follow up on the knowledge gained through events**. Lacking those, the risk was that knowledge would remain as such, without being put in practice; and progressively be dispersed (among others, due to personnel rotation) or become obsolete.
- In the case of reforms: **visibility and political will for implementation**. In one case in particular, a beneficiary interviewed expressed that the fact that the issue supported by TAIEX was perceived as high stakes for the political leadership and had an associated deadline really helped the matter in coming through.¹⁴²
- Unless the issue is highly specific, **possibility to hold several events on the same topic**. As an EU officer noted, “one is usually not enough”.¹⁴³

The overall budget of TAIEX PI appeared approximately adequate to sustain its use in support of the PI instrument. In fact, albeit additional financing had to be added in the first years of operation¹⁴⁴, budget was ultimately underused in the 2016-2020 period¹⁴⁵ (also due to the insurgence of the COVID19 pandemics). On the other side, **the size of TAIEX INTPA** (meant to allow for up to 35 events per year) **appeared extremely small compared to its potential scope**; however, it is understood that the opportunity for scaling up the instrument will be assessed at the end of its pilot phase.¹⁴⁶

EQ4 – Effectiveness in terms of implementation modalities

Box 68: Summary of findings related to EQ4, TAIEX in the rest of the world case study

- Most TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA events were organized within four months since the application. Comments on the quality of organization were very positive.
- TAIEX adapted to address a variety of needs, in terms of topics but also objectives. (In fact, at times it is chosen as the only instrument available to address a specific purpose.) – *See findings reported under EQ1 for more detail.*
- TAIEX’s setup was key in enabling quickness and flexibility.

Most TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA events were organized within four months since the application. The median time for approval of TAIEX PI events was 6 days, with 90% approved within 3 weeks. The average (additional) time for organization of events was 4 months (median: 3 months). The times needed for the organization of the first TAIEX INTPA events appear similar.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴¹ Based on interviews and own analysis.

¹⁴² MN733.

¹⁴³ MN734.

¹⁴⁴ Amendments 1 and 2 to the 2016 SLA.

¹⁴⁵ 79% of the budget available for the August 2016-August 2020 period was used. (Based on data provided by the TAIEX team.)

¹⁴⁶ MN744, MN951.

¹⁴⁷ Based on TMS data.

Comments on the quality of the logistics organization were very positive. In the participants' survey, all respondents agreed to the statement that "The events were well organized from a logistics standpoint", except for one person that offered no opinion. This was confirmed in interviews.¹⁴⁸

TAIEX's specific design and setup was key in supporting quickness and flexibility. In particular:

- The budget setup (automatic approval upon application, with amounts based on pre-determined logistics criteria and without topic-based restrictions) enabled ample flexibility in terms of content, and streamlined time to organization.
- The existence of pre-negotiated systems to administratively enable and support the recruitment of MS public sector experts was a key, unique asset in enabling participation.
- Long standing agreements with a single logistic provider facilitated good quality and, once again, streamlined time to organization.
- The fact that both TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA counted with dedicated case handlers, seconded (respectively) by the FPI and DG INTPA enabled better customization of events to the needs and specificities of beneficiaries as well as in line with the FPI and DG INTPA's priorities.

EQ5 – Cost efficiency and administrative burden

Box 69: Summary of findings related to EQ5, TAIEX in the rest of the world case study

- TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA were the most expensive strands in terms of direct costs. EU officers' time was deemed a significant source of indirect costs, albeit not easily quantifiable.
- The administrative burden was perceived as minimal and mostly borne by the TAIEX team.
- Online events offered important advantages in terms of direct costs, simplification of travel issues and higher accessibility. However, they also implied the need to deal with IT/connectivity issues and the impossibility to directly experience other contexts. Feedback on hybrid events options was mixed.

TAIEX PI events were on average more expensive than in other TAIEX strands, with in presence single country events averaging EUR 32K in direct costs¹⁴⁹ for workshops, EUR 17K for study visits and EUR 13K for expert missions. The limited information available for TAIEX INTPA (8 online events only) suggests that in the long term costs may be in line with TAIEX PI.¹⁵⁰ This was attributed to higher travel costs, in consideration of longer distances but also of higher logistic complexity – i.e. linked to visa, health and security issues and requirements.

In addition to direct costs, **interviews and the review of events evidenced that the organization of TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA events required a significant investment of EU officers' time (particularly, to support content).**¹⁵¹ EU officers involved included the TAIEX case handlers (in particular, it was noted that organizing events in novel contexts often characterized by high complexity in terms of beneficiary capacity and logistics required a higher time intensity), line DGs and EU Delegation officers. In the case of TAIEX INTPA events, scarce capacity and/or lack of experience in preparing TAIEX applications on the part of beneficiaries tended to imply that significant coaching was required in the application and event design process on the part of the EU Delegation. Some EU Delegation officers questioned whether the results achievable through TAIEX were indeed worth the time investment; also, the ability and willingness to commit time needed was evidenced to be not equal across EU Delegations – which prompted TAIEX INTPA to offer the possibility to get external support (in the form of consultants) for TAIEX-related tasks.

¹⁴⁸ Particularly: MN300, MN700, MN739, MN741.

¹⁴⁹ Costs related to logistics and the participation of experts only. Costs related to TAIEX team personnel, overhead and other related to EU personnel and/or borne by the beneficiary are not included.

¹⁵⁰ Based on TMS data.

¹⁵¹ MN300, MN700, MN734, MN741, MN743, MN744, survey with TAIEX NCPs and CPs within EU Delegations.

The administrative burden implied by events was deemed very reasonable. Within the participants' survey, 100% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement "The application process was not too cumbersome." Interviewees also confirmed that the burden implied by administrative and logistic processes was very reasonable.¹⁵²

Online events offered important advantages. Costs and travel-related complexities significantly diminished; in fact, the average direct cost of TAIEX PI online workshops dropped significantly (-69%)¹⁵³. Also, online events facilitated accessibility both on the participant side and the expert side – in particular, by: (a) making it easier and less expensive to add participants (often as easy as sharing a link) – realistically opening also the possibility for auditing-only participants from other countries or contexts; and (b) opening the option to not fully commit the agenda to the event (continue to work in the hours before and after, participate to only some session). Last, holding events online implies a significantly lower negative environmental impact. **However, they also resulted in disadvantages** linked to IT/internet issues (depending on the specific geographic context, but with relative frequency), the impossibility to directly experience the beneficiary context on the part of experts (or vice-versa, in the case of study visits)¹⁵⁴ and a lesser capacity to favour concentration and informal interactions. In general, however, the opinion on online events in TAIEX INTPA and TAIEX PI seemed to be more positive with respect to other strands.¹⁵⁵

Feedback on hybrid events was mixed: in fact, the possibility to concentrate people in a single site with good internet connection was deemed a good solution in countries with significant issues in this sense; though in other contexts, it resulted in distraction from the interaction with the experts.¹⁵⁶

EQ6 – Complementarity with other instruments

Box 70: Summary of findings related to EQ6, TAIEX in the rest of the world case study

- TAIEX PI's *modus operandi* naturally favoured the use of TAIEX in combination with other instruments towards broader objectives. (Tool in EU/PI officers' toolkit.)
- No instances of duplication with other actions were observed. In fact, TAIEX was often used to address issue for which no other instrument/ budget was available; which at times resulted in an unmet need for complementary follow-up instruments.
- In the case of TAIEX INTPA, some incipient synergies with Twinning were observed.
- In the case of TAIEX PI, an area of synergy occasionally exploited was coordination with presence of senior EU officers in the beneficiary country.

Within TAIEX PI, TAIEX was considered as a tool within the toolkit of EU officers (which were the ones submitting the applications) **to achieve specific EU interest related objectives**; as such, the ideation and discussion of events' design is naturally geared towards achieving complementarity with other actions.¹⁵⁷

No instances of duplication were observed in TAIEX PI or TAIEX INTPA. In fact, interviewees expressed that the use of TAIEX was either reserved to or deemed most useful in cases in which issues could not be addressed through other instruments.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵² Particularly: MN300, MN700, MN740.

¹⁵³ Based on TMS data.

¹⁵⁴ The consequence of this were mitigated, to some extent, through the introduction of practices to better prepare experts, such as more focus on the preparation of information packages, pre-event questionnaires and video assessments.

¹⁵⁵ Participants' survey, MN 300, MN734, MN739, MN741, MN742.

¹⁵⁶ MN741, MN742.

¹⁵⁷ MN300, MN700.

¹⁵⁸ MN741, MN743. In particular, in consideration of the TAIEX characteristics described in EQ1. Quote from EU Delegation officer: "We tried to reserve TAIEX for issues for which we had no other budget."

This, however, at times created issues or potential issues in terms of the fact that TAIEX could not, by itself, entirely address the problem at hand – particularly as concerned aspects not related to lack of knowledge or capacities, and different, not immediately available instruments would have been needed to follow up through wider interventions.¹⁵⁹

As for complementarities with specific other instruments and type of actions:

- In the case of TAIEX INTPA, one of the events organized contributed to set the basis for the application for a Twinning. Further use of TAIEX in complementarity with Twinning is envisaged to take place in the future.¹⁶⁰
- In the case of TAIEX PI, the intervention of senior EU or EU MS officers in events was at time sought/ coordinate, in order to generate synergies. (Intervention of senior EU officers in events provided prestige; while officers, at the same time, could present the event as a tangible deliverable of partnership with the EU.)¹⁶¹

EQ7 – EU internal cooperation

Box 71: Summary of findings related to EQ7, TAIEX in the rest of the world case study

- The management of TAIEX at the EU level:
 - Enabled a wider selection of experts, with experience in different types of contexts – thus enabling choices in this sense that make the event more relevant to beneficiaries.
 - Enabled networking and, to some extent, reciprocal training amongst EU MS experts.
 - Facilitated the projection of a “united image” at the EU level.
 - Instances of instrument known to MS – may suggest beneficiary/ delegation to ask for events or point at experts.
- MS at times also got directly involved in requesting and/or supporting the organization of events.

The management of TAIEX at the EU level offered smoother access to a wider range of experts, with experience in a range of contexts with different characteristics, some of which were more easily similar/ relevant to specific events’ beneficiaries. In the words of an EU officer: “The EU has a natural advantage in that it can put forward 27 different solutions – including high tech, advanced ones but also more pragmatic ones, which are at times the most requested.” (MN738) Having a single instrument also enables combining experts from different countries within the same events, when relevant.

Combining experts from different countries and with different levels of expertise in the same event also enabled some reciprocal training, both as TAIEX experts and in their topic area in general (specifically sought after by TAIEX INTPA), as well as generated internal network effects. In the case of TAIEX INTPA, the network of EU MS practitioners had a relevant role in promoting the launch of the instrument (and in particular, in building a specific database of expertise)¹⁶²; promoting continuous involvement in the instrument on their part, also at the strategic level, as well as the use of the instrument also in a “community strengthening” logic, may prove a source of relevant synergies.

¹⁵⁹ Examples of this concerned the addressing through TAIEX of issues that were not covered by countries’ MIP in place at the time. TAIEX allowed immediately intervening in such issues, but follow up through other instruments had to wait for the following MIP. Sources: MN739, MN741, MN743.

¹⁶⁰ MN951, Survey results, TAIEX DEVCO and Twinning DEVCO – Activity Report.

¹⁶¹ TAIEX PI Final report July 2016-July 2020. High-level presence was verified in one event in the sample (specifically noted in the agenda) and reported in an interview for another (MN700).

¹⁶² In particular: MN505, MN744.

The possibility to reach out, select and involve the best expertise existing at the EU level (including from multiple countries) was a clear asset to events whose purpose was related with projecting a united/ relevant player image for the EU.

Last, it is worth mentioning that there was evidence of TAIEX being known (at least in some cases) to MS administrations and embassies, which at times promoted its use – for example, by suggesting the request of events to beneficiaries or EU Delegations, and/or by suggesting experts.¹⁶³ In one of the cases reviewed, MS Embassies in the beneficiary country also got directly involved in the event organization, by actively supporting the selection of experts and definition of the agenda.¹⁶⁴

10 Annexes

Annex 1: List of events reviewed in depth

*Event-specific documentation was reviewed for all the events listed below; also, participants and experts were invited to complete a survey – with the exception of the two events marked with *, which were added at a later moment. A selection of stakeholders from the below events was also subsequently interviewed.*

Events have been selected to be loosely representative of the overall sample of 2015-2020 events, though a clustering approach has also been used (i.e. a somewhat larger than proportionate number of events has been attributed to some of the most represented sectors, regions and types of events, in order to allow for more relevant comparisons). Also, more weight has been given to the most recent years of activity, to favour conclusions and recommendations more applicable to the current context.

Event ID	TAIEX strand	Name of event	Beneficiary country(ies)	Year	Type of event	Request/ Programmatic approach	Direct costs (EUR)	Acquis chapters covered
62261	PI	Expert Mission in support of the EU-Mexico High Level Dialogue on Security and Justice	Mexico	2016	Expert Mission	EU Delegation (regional) Sole event - Connected to event with EU political presence	30,998	24 Justice, freedom and security
63336	PI	Expert Mission on the Monitoring and Analysis of Veterinary Medicines Residues	India	2017	Expert Mission	EU Delegation Part of a large series of expert missions (2016-2017)	12,143	12 Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy
63433	PI	Expert Mission on Crisis Management Operations: Human Rights and Gender Issues	Chile	2017	Expert Mission	EU Delegation Part of a series of two events – the first was a study visit (2016)	24,667	23 Judiciary and fundamental rights
64827	PI	Expert Mission on Alignment to EU Import/Export Standards	Kyrgyzstan	2017	Expert Mission	EU Delegation Part of a series of two events – the second was a workshop (2018)	13,513	30 External relations
65687	PI	Expert Mission on the FATF Action Plan: Targeted Financial Sanctions Regime	Iran	2017	Expert mission	EEAS (HQ) Part of a series of three expert missions (2017)	7,263	04 Free movement of capital 09 Financial services 24 Justice, freedom and security 32 Financial control
66347	PI	Expert Mission on Countering Online Radicalisation	India	2018	Expert Mission	EU Delegation Was followed up by a workshop in 2019	24,264	24 Justice, freedom and security
68711	PI	MultiCountry Workshop Towards	Colombia, Chile, Mexico	2019	Workshop	EEAS (HQ)	80,127	24 Justice, freedom and security

¹⁶³ MN736, MN741.
MN700.

		a Pacific Alliance common visa				<i>Follow up on previous workshop (2017)</i>		
70650	INTPA	Workshop on transition from face-to-face modality of the justice system to virtual users and customer services	Dominican Republic	2020	Workshop VIRTUAL	Partner country <i>Sole event</i>	10,123	23 Judiciary and fundamental rights 24 Justice, freedom and security
80023*	INTPA	Workshop on regulatory impact assessment and systematization of legislation	Uzbekistan	2020	Workshop VIRTUAL	Partner country <i>Meant to be a series of two events: however, only one finally took place</i>	17,165	24 Justice, freedom and security
80026*	INTPA	Workshop on pesticides residue certification	Uganda	2020	Workshop VIRTUAL	Partner country <i>Part of a series of events</i>	12,140	01 Free movement of goods 11 Agriculture and rural development 12 Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy 28 Consumer and health protection
80114	PI	Workshop on Labour Conflict Management with Peru	Peru	2020	Workshop VIRTUAL	EU Delegation (regional) <i>Sole event</i>	12,442	19 Social policy and employment

Annex 2: List of stakeholders interviewed

- The ISG members representing TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA (2)
- Further representatives from both TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA (2)
- TAIEX team members acting as focal points for TAIEX INTPA and TAIEX PI events in the 2015-2020 period (2)
- Two FPI project managers (2)
- One FPI beneficiary (1)
- Two INTPA beneficiaries, of which one in writing (2)
- Three EU delegation members who supported TAIEX INTPA events (3)
- A representative of a line DG who took part in a TAIEX PI event (1)

Annex 3: Bibliography

Documents related to TAIEX PI

- Note to the file, with subject: TAIEX activities under Partnership Instrument (PI). Brussels, 24/07/2014.
- Note to the attention of Mr. Daniel Hachez, Head of Unit, DG ELARG/D2. Brussels, 24 September 2014. *Only the cover was transmitted to the evaluation team, the actual note could not be found.*
- Commission Implementing Decision of 22.6.2015, on the 2015 Partnership Instrument Annual Action Programme for cooperation with third countries to be financed from the general budget of the European Union – main text and Annex 6 (Action Fiche for Technical Assistance and Information Exchange – TAIEX)
- Commission Implementing Decision of 22.5.2017, on the 2017 Partnership Instrument Annual Action Programme for cooperation with third countries to be financed from the general budget of the European Union – main text and Annex 19 (Action Fiche for Technical Assistance and Information Exchange – TAIEX)
- Service Level Agreement between the FPI and DG NEAR, on the implementation of a co-delegation between the two Services concerning TAIEX support to third countries, regions and territories eligible for measures supported by the Partnership Instrument. June 2016.

- Service Level Agreement between FPI and DG NEAR, concerning the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) support to third countries, regions and territories eligible for measures supported by the Partnership Instrument. June 2017.
- Organising TAIEX Activities for the cooperation between the Partnership Instrument FPI.4 and NEAR.C.3, Workflow Chart. Annex to FPI-NEAR SLA of June 2017.
- Amendment n. 2 to the Service Level Agreement between FPI and DG NEAR, concerning the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) support to third countries, regions and territories eligible for measures supported by the Partnership Instrument. June 2018.
- Service Level Agreement between FPI and DG NEAR, concerning the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) support to third countries, regions and territories eligible for measures supported by the Partnership Instrument. 2020.
- TAIEX-Partnership Instrument Final Report, July 2016-July 2020. September 2020. Elaborated by DG NEAR.
- Programme Statement – Partnership instrument for cooperation with third countries (PI). Accessible at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/about_the_european_commission/eu_budget/db_2021_programme_statement_partnership_instrument_for_cooperation_with_third_countries_pi.pdf (Extracted on July 26th 2021).

Documents related to TAIEX INTPA

- Service Level Agreement between DG DEVCO and DG NEAR concerning the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) and Twinning support to third countries, regions and territories eligible for measures supported by DG DEVCO.
- TAIEX DEVCO AND TWINNING DEVCO – Activity Report. Reporting period: June 2019-July 2020
- TAIEX INTPA leaflet
- TAIEX INTPA User guide

Web resources

- TAIEX website with link to application: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/funding-and-technical-assistance/taix_en
- TAIEX INTPA videos
 - <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-193946>
 - <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-193947>
 - <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-193948>
 - <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-193949>

ANNEX 6: EVALUATION MATRIX

EQ 1 – The instrument’s ability to address needs

To what extent were the key features of TAIEX as an instrument in line with the needs of beneficiary regions/countries and EU policy priorities in which it intervened? To what extent did those features evolve to enhance TAIEX’s capacity to address needs, including by introducing TAIEX strategic and by expanding TAIEX to other regions and contexts of intervention?	
Judgment criteria and indicators	
JC.1.1	The design of TAIEX and the evolution of the instrument were based on an analysis of the type of needs the instrument would address in the beneficiary regions/countries, in the intervention sectors and in relations to priorities of the different DGs and the EU more broadly
I-1.1.1	Existence of documented analyses on how the TAIEX instrument’s design matched the needs it intended to address, and evolved in this respect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the 1995 white paper and the 2000 Commission Decision, the initial design of TAIEX (IPA) was studied to respond to practical expertise needs emerging from Accession candidate countries engaged in the transposition of the <i>acquis</i> as it concerned the internal market. The scope of TAIEX interventions was defined thanks to databases which established a diagnosis of needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Its role was designed as a problem solver and catalyst. It was meant to complement the national Phare programmes by responding with tailor-made actions to emerging individual requests for assistance, not otherwise covered but potentially blocking progress. ▪ It was demand based – as initiative for legal transposition needed to come from candidate countries: the EU could not impose it other than as a prerequisite for accession. However - as described in paragraph 6 of the 2000 Commission Decision - all requests were to be verified for their compatibility with the overall pre-accession strategy and the priorities of the Accession Partnerships. ▪ One of its core functions was to facilitate leveraging on EU Member States public officers as providers of expertise, in consideration of them being the only ones with first-hand experience in the implementation of the <i>acquis</i>. From the 2000 Commission Decision: “Member States experts are vital in this process, particularly as assistance becomes more and more detailed and specialized - as they are the only ones with real experience in implementing the <i>acquis</i>.” ▪ Its original activities included the operation of a system to maintain a systematic diagnostic of needs/progress on transposition of the EU <i>acquis</i> – within which activities for sharing EU expertise on the <i>acquis</i> were broadly framed¹⁶⁵. • TAIEX IPA was subsequently expanded/adapted in response to sustained demand and positive feedback in terms of its usefulness towards accelerating and facilitating reform and progress towards integration to the EU, by both beneficiaries and the Commission. • The 1998 Commission Decision extends the scope of TAIEX activities to cover all <i>acquis</i>, in order to match the increasing needs of the beneficiary countries: “It is clear that the services provided through the Office are meeting needs which other technical assistance 	

¹⁶⁵ This diagnostic feature included databases and mechanisms to maintain them updated, including peer review missions – which are organized as TAIEX events. Although the overall diagnostic feature was later abandoned, peer review missions continued to take place in the Western Balkans and Turkey including throughout 2015-2020 period; also, they were taken up by TAIEX EIR. (Other strands also made use of them, though only very occasionally.)

	<p>measures do not accommodate. These needs will continue to exist and will become stronger in the foreseeable future. The reinforcement and extension of the TAIEX throughout the pre-accession period is a logical answer to these demands."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2000 Commission Decision expresses a persisting demand for TAIEX and specifies TAIEX activities, including types of events. The document states that "it should be noted that, as the enlargement process proceeds, the assistance becomes more and more detailed and specialised, making the support from Member States experts even more vital, since they are the only ones with real experience in implementing the Acquis". • It is worth mentioning that the 2000 Commission decisions seems to allow for the possibility for events that are not requested by beneficiaries.¹⁶⁶ • Focus on organization of short term, peer-to-peer (i.e. featuring MS public officers as experts) events only.¹⁶⁷ • The 2005 Council Decision enabled the extension of TAIEX to ENPI and the Commission Decision of 11.11.2011 established the continuation of TAIEX IPA-ENI. • The possibility for EU Services to request TAIEX was requested by TAIEX PI in 2014. • No single current institutional-level strategic document defining the scope of TAIEX, its objectives and features appears to exist.
I-1.1.2	Stakeholders' view on the extent to which the instrument was optimally designed to allow it to address needs in the different regions, countries, and sectors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extension of TAIEX to new geographical areas was made mostly based on the case for the potential value added of the instrument – given its features as well as the infrastructure built/ know-how accumulated.¹⁶⁸ The usage of TAIEX in other strands was not necessarily oriented towards <i>acquis</i> transposition needs, extending towards other purposes as well. However, the main features of the instruments – namely, it being short term, based on the provision of peer-to-peer MS public sector expertise, and adaptable to a wide range of contents – were universally maintained. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coherence of each strand with different DGs and strands priorities' was ensured through the establishment in SLAs of application and eligibility/ priority rules (designed to fit the needs of/ purpose to be played within the instruments supported). In some cases, eligibility rules are framed by official diagnostics¹⁶⁹ and bi/multi-lateral agreements¹⁷⁰ (similarly to what happened in the original TAIEX version with the Phare programs). ▪ Some TAIEX features were adapted for better serve the purposes envisaged for new strands: in particular, in the case of TAIEX PI events were to be requested (primarily)

¹⁶⁶ 2000 Commission Decision, paragraph 6: "A large part of TAIEX assistance will remain demand- driven, but all requests for assistance will be verified for their compatibility with the overall pre-accession strategy, and in particular the priorities of the Accession Partnerships and the national Phare programmes based on these priorities."

¹⁶⁷ No specific document makes the case for forgoing other activities. However, in practice from the 2011 Commission Decision onwards activities other than the organization of events are not mentioned anymore. Also, long term secondments of experts (Twinning) are not mentioned in documentation after the 1998 Commission decision – it is understood that Twinning was at some point separated from TAIEX operations.

¹⁶⁸ Some preliminary analysis and assessment were conducted in some cases, i.e. for TAIEX Regio (Assessment of Demand and Supply in Administrative Capacity to Manage European Structural and Investment (ESI) funds and explore interest in a new staff exchange instrument called "Common Expert Exchange System (CEES)) and for TAIEX INTPA (MN744). Support arguments for extensions to new TAIEX strands can be found in COM(2005) 321 (TAIEX-ENI), the note to the file "TAIEX activities under Partnership Instrument (PI) – 24/07/2014, C(2015) 4109 (TAIEX-PI) and in all SLAs concerning TAIEX signed by DG NEAR and other DGs.

¹⁶⁹ Organized and maintained by entities external to TAIEX. This is in particular the case of TAIEX EIR – where events must be coherent with needs identified in the EIR'.

¹⁷⁰ SLAs and interviews with EU Services' officers (including the TAIEX team).

	<p>by EU officers¹⁷¹; and the use of TAIEX events in series, following a programmatic approach (specifically: the Medium Term Assistance (MTA) approach) for TAIEX TCc^{172,173}.</p> <p>Evidence gathered from the first round of surveys:</p> <p>96,9% of the respondents to the experts' survey strongly or mostly agree that the overall design of the event(s) was adequate. 96,9% of them strongly or mostly agree that the type of event organized was the most appropriate to address beneficiaries' needs.</p> <p>91% of the respondents to the participants' survey strongly or mostly agree that the design of individual TAIEX events was sufficiently tailored to the specificities of the beneficiary country/institution.</p>
JC 1.2	The institutional set-up favoured TAIEX' ability to address needs
I-1.2.1	Extent to which alternatives to the current setup (single structure dedicated to TAIEX, located within DG NEAR) have been envisaged/considered to comply with the same function as TAIEX
	<p>Interviews surfaced that alternative setups had at some point at least been considered within DG NEAR – among others, because the current setup is not attractive for human resources (which may be a factor in the high rotation). The possibility has at some point been raised to move TAIEX to the Secretary General or to move it/ make it become an agency; however, it was also considered that the setting within NEAR facilitated TAIEX in playing a more strategic role (i.e. political, proactive dimension; strategic use), and that the move outside the DG would have likely resulted in the instrument becoming less flexible and more procedural. (MN 746)</p> <p>On the other side, it does not appear that the possibility of alternative (separate) setups have been considered by other DGs and services which have SLAs in place with TAIEX, mostly on the ground that the necessary investment in capacity would not be justified and the know-how would be difficult to replicate. (In particular: MN 300, MN 501, MN 700.)</p>
I-1.2.2	Stakeholders' perception as to the advantages and disadvantages of the structure being installed in DG NEAR
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders of non-NEAR strands¹⁷⁴ mentioned the following as key advantages of TAIEX: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Administrative/ logistic capabilities – which enable the quick, low bureaucracy organization of events – including the pre-existing agreement with a logistic provider, pre-arranged agreements to recruit MS experts from multiple countries and institutions, and the consolidated database of experts (EDBE). ▪ Accumulated know-how in designing events fit to needs (application/ event design processes), which – with adjustments – can be leveraged on among strands. ▪ Within the TAIEX team, specific strand/ sector/ geography responsibilities are assigned to each member, which was considered very favourably in interviews. In fact, this allowed TAIEX team members to develop expertise and understanding as

¹⁷¹ Note to the file "TAIEX activities under Partnership Instrument (PI) – 24/07/2014. As the PI's mission is to promote the EU interest, it was deemed more logical that events' requests would come from EU officers.

¹⁷² The specific approach taken by TAIEX TCc allows the Aid Programme to the TCc to support the territory with capacity development in a structured, medium-term way; which would not be feasible through other programs due to the specific political situation.

¹⁷³ In principle, neither the possibility of TAIEX requests by actors other than beneficiaries nor the possibility of sequencing events were previously excluded, though they were not the typical *modus operandi*. See in particular the Commission Decision of 2000, , paragraph 6: "A large part of TAIEX assistance will remain demand-driven..." and paragraph 7. ("... these activities will, where appropriate, be gained to gain continuity.")

¹⁷⁴ Interviews with non-NEAR (EU) stakeholders: MN300, MN700, MN741, MN743, MN744.

to the specificities of each strand/ sector/ geography, and thus respond more pertinently and efficiently to requests.¹⁷⁵ Also, team members responsible for non-NEAR strands are seconded from EU Services associated with each strand, which favours them maintaining a close tie with such services and thus being fully aware of their priorities and needs.¹⁷⁶

Evidence gathered from interviews and surveys (open questions):

- Stakeholders also generally deem that the concentration of TAIEX activities in a single structure, serving multiple services, is optimal; and that this aspect should not be changed. For instance, when asked to comment the fact that TAIEX PI events are managed by DG NEAR, one interviewee (MN_300) said that **“it does not matter who is operating** if FPI philosophy is respected (...) it works very well. (...) Being divided between different entities would not increase the quality of the tool. **The structure, as it is today, works well and they achieved what they wanted.** If, in the future, someone wants to offer an option of a fully FPI managed TAIEX facilities, I have nothing against it. But it must be coherent. It is like a Mercedes. You buy it because you can rely on it. It has a good reputation. If we create two TAIEX tools, one working well and the other not, it will destroy TAIEX reputation. Let us not destroy what is working well.”
- Another interviewee (MN_501) expressed the same type of remark: “where else? It does not matter for me. We are working mostly with a system.”
- For interviewee MN_700, “it is useful that TAIEX is centralized. **There is no issue at all** that TAIEX services are provided by DG NEAR. They gave responses on what was possible within minutes. It is not something that random people in each DGs could deal with.”
- Whatever the strand they represent, they also believe that the TAIEX team has been performing very well within its current setting in DG NEAR. As expressed by interviewee MN_300, “my colleagues worked very well”.

I-1.2.3	Extent to which the design of the structure (TAIEX team, instruments at its disposal) is appropriate to achieve the intended outputs
---------	--

Evidence gathered from interviews and documentation:

- From a know-how and extent of use standpoint, the case for the location of TAIEX within DG NEAR could be easily made. DG NEAR¹⁷⁷ has been operating TAIEX since 1996, being until 2014 the only user of TAIEX (as the Aid Programme to the TCc was originally under its umbrella, and SLAs setting up other non-NEAR strands were only launched afterwards). To date, it is still by far the largest user of TAIEX (though decreasing in importance)¹⁷⁸.
- The possibility of moving TAIEX to a different type of structure, less tied to DG NEAR, has been considered to some extent (in particular, to the SecGen, or to an agency). A key disadvantage perceived is that it could become more difficult for it to be used as a DG NEAR policy tool.¹⁷⁹
- The setup of the TAIEX team, where specific strand/ sector/ geography responsibilities are assigned to each member, was commented on very favourably in interviews. For instance, when asked to comment the advantages and disadvantages of a separate or thematic structure, interviewee MN_55 stated that “having the expertise helps answering requests. It is easier. Sometimes, I received 300 a year, so it was easier to understand what it was about, to be able to understand how to support beneficiaries. One team leader deals with a certain sector, you can go to this person.”

¹⁷⁵ With EU officers (both within and outside the TAIEX team).

¹⁷⁶ MN734, MN744, MN770, ISG notes to the intermediary report.

¹⁷⁷ Previously: DG ELARG.

¹⁷⁸ Based on TMS data.

¹⁷⁹ MN746.

- A disadvantage of TAIEX's current location is that it is characterized by high personnel rotation.¹⁸⁰
- At the same time, interviewee MN_055 pointed at the fact that the TAIEX has been substantially reduced in terms of personnel in the 2015-2020, which affected its capacity to timely and adequately respond to requests. According to the interviewee, "TAIEX faced a lot of challenges", including "reduction of staff" from "14 members to one member". The person added that "reduction staff was not a decision, rather because recruitment procedure was very long, from six to nine months. Like in other DGs, there were cuts, so you have to focus on priorities. It can explain delays in implementation. We had to prioritize our work." Later, the interviewee said that "Few years ago, it sometimes took to three months between the moment beneficiary submitted application and the moment expert came in the country. It can be even shorter. But **because of reduction of staff**, introduction of TAIEX strategic, it takes more time now."
- According to the available documentation, especially organigrams, in 2019, six jobs were vacant with on-going recruitment and one person was on maternity leave among 30 TAIEX team members. In 2020, the recruitment process was completed for only 4 of these 6 vacant jobs.
- According to the TMS documentation, in 2019, 47% of EIR requested events (9/19 requests) were rejected because of the lack of TAIEX staff. As expressed in the email that one TAIEX team member sent to the beneficiary ten months after the application submission: "We would like to apologise for the delay in replying to your applications N° 30826 & 30831 - HU - TAIEX Study Visit on Deposit-Return Systems for Beverage Containers, which was caused by human resource issues. A new colleague has recently joined the TAIEX – EIR team as such operations will shortly recommence." The same reason was provided to explain the treatment delays for requests No 30548, 30642, 30867, 30920, 31107, 31109 and 31339.
- Interviewee MN_870 also pointed out similar problems: "at the end of 2018, there was no project officer dealing with TAIEX PI, **there was a big resource gap**. We spent six months or so without anyone. All actions were given to colleagues in the unit that did not know exactly how to deal with them. This is what happened. A few actions were implemented **with a lot of delay**. (...) **That year was bad**."
- For another interviewee (MN_950), "you need to keep in mind the large volume of events that was organized. At some point, we were overloaded with events – we had 400 events to deal with all at once".

JC.1.3	The objectives pursued were suitable to contribute to reaching broader beneficiaries and EU objectives in the different regions, countries, and sectors
--------	---

I-1.3.1 –	Extent to which TAIEX documents explain how the specific objectives in terms of capacity building, visibility, and strengthened relation are to contribute to broader objectives
-----------	--

Evidence gathered from case studies, interviews and documentation:

- For some strands (TAIEX PI, TAIEX SRSP, TAIEX TCc, TAIEX EIR, TAIEX REGIO), usage rules and limitations logically ensure that all single events objectives are aligned with broader objectives, including EU objectives.
- Initiative or strong intervention of EU officers in the definition, application and design of the event ("strategic"-like features): this ensures that events are aligned with broader objectives and priorities that TAIEX is meant to support.
- Existence of a clearly stated "broader framework of objectives/priorities" (such as an agreed-upon statement of diagnostic and objectives in terms of situation to be reached) that TAIEX events are meant to align to. For example, in the case of TAIEX EIR the

¹⁸⁰ MN746, review of organigrams, observations from the Evaluation Team while reviewing events documentation.

	<p>“constraint” to the scope of application is constituted by the country reports elaborated within the Environmental Implementation Review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the application review process, TAIEX verifies the eligibility of TAIEX events in terms of coherence with EU priorities and objectives within the specific region, country and/or sector, as well as eligibility rules set by SLAs when applicable. The convenience of the event, including its non-duplication with other actions, is also verified through consultation (mostly by email) with relevant EU stakeholders (i.e. DGs, EU delegations). (Note: this process is simplified in the case of TAIEX TCc, where due to the specific nature/ setup events are approved without going through the consultation process.)
I-1.3.2 –	Extent to which stakeholders confirm the importance of pursuing these objectives and consider this set of objectives as complete to contribute to the broader objectives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each SLA defines the objectives that TAIEX is to be used towards. These were at times cited or recalled upon during interviews¹⁸¹: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TAIEX EIR: the purpose of the event addresses areas for improvement identified through EIR country diagnostics. TAIEX PI events are implemented within the scope of the PI instrument (they must be associated to priority EU objectives/ part of strategies to promote the EU interest). TAIEX SRSP events are defined as components of broader strategic reform plans to be implemented within EU MS. TAIEX TCc events are defined coherently with the Aid Programme to the TCc, as well as part of three years Project Action Plans (PAPs). <p>In some interviews, the following were also mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TAIEX can be used to prepare the ground for more robust programming (e.g. by raising new issues, satisfying an immediate needs, opening doors, conducting a diagnostic) (MN770, MN951) TAIEX’s flexibility allows it to be used to address urgent situations for which there is no other instrument available – albeit this is not necessarily the way it is designed to be used. (MN743, MN 744) Similarly, its size allows it to tackle issues that are important yet too small to warrant the use of other instruments. (MN741) Also, it can be used to advance on political objectives or pursue information in a way that is not perceived as aggressive (MN746) <p>In general, many interviewees agreed that TAIEX has moved beyond its original focus on supporting transposition of the acquis (although that remains an objective). (MN07, MN167, MN746, MN770, MN870, MN900, MN951)</p>
JC.1.4 -	There was (and still is) a need for a demand-driven, rapid, and service-oriented instrument in the different regions, countries, and sectors; there was also a need to introduce a more strategic / programmatic approach
I-1.4.1 –	Extent to which TAIEX documentation explains how TAIEX defined a gap in this respect and intended to fill it
	<p>Evidence gathered from documentation:</p> <p>TAIEX documentation concerning the need for an instrument with its characteristics is essentially limited to documentation cited in JC 1.1 above; along with subsequent Council and Commission</p>

¹⁸¹ SLAs, final reports for SLAs (periods ending in 2020), MN63, MN158, MN700.

Decisions, which attest to continuing demand for the instrument as well as its functionality, given uniqueness and complementarity with other instruments available.¹⁸²

- The 1995 White Paper provides precisions about the objectives and the design of TAIEX instrument. The executive summary explains that “Additional help will be provided, notably through a new technical assistance information exchange office, managed by the Commission and supported by a multi-country PHARE programme. This office will facilitate the provision of assistance, by setting up a database on alignment with the internal market and related assistance which will be accessible to all interested parties, and by acting as a clearing house to match requests for assistance with advice and expertise available in the Union.” TAIEX is part of a global pre-accession strategy, which aims “to help meet the challenge for the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEECs) of preparing their accession to the European Union”. The White Paper “provides guidelines for the content and the organization of technical assistance”. The chapter 5 aims at “ensuring that the White Paper’s analytical contribution is translated into coherent and effective technical assistance covering both legislation and structure, in response to the need emerging from the CEEC’s national strategies”.
- The 1998 Commission Decision extends the scope of TAIEX activities: as stated in the document’s summary, “the TAIEX mandate has been reinforced and extended in the framework of the pre-accession strategy and more in particular in Agenda 2000 and now covers technical assistance in the field of approximation of legislation for the entire *acquis*”.
- Point 3 (Background) of the 2000 Commission decision reaffirms a sustained demand for TAIEX, indicating for instance that “(...) notably since the adoption of Agenda 2000 (...) the workload of TAIEX has increased exponentially”. The document’s summary mentions “the **continuously increasing demand** for TAIEX services”. Point 6 (Objectives) reaffirms TAIEX demand-driven dimension and its general goal: “the assistance under the programme will cover the delivery of information and expertise on the transposition, implementation and enforcement of legislation in the Associated Countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Cyprus and Malta in the pre-accession context (...). **A large part of TAIEX assistance will remain demand-driven** (...)”. Point 7 (Description) provides details about TAIEX types of events and establish that “technical assistance will be constructed as a **flexible** and **rapid** delivery mechanism”.
- The 2005 Council Decision, which enables TAIEX extension to ENPI, reaffirms TAIEX demand-driven dimension: “**TAIEX is a demand-driven programme** based on specific requests from the beneficiary countries. The objectives that will be covered cannot be distinguished in terms of their financial costs in advance.”
- The 2011 Commission Decision, which enables the continuation of TAIEX IPA-ENI, states that “over the last ten years, the TAIEX instrument has been very well received in the beneficiary countries. Evidence of its success is that its geographical scope has been extended to the European Neighbourhood Policy countries and Russia (...) assistance under TAIEX will continue to respond to requests from the beneficiary countries with particular attention to needs identified through the annual Regular Reports the national programming frameworks and the ongoing assessment and monitoring by the Commission services and other EU institutions.” (Point 2. Priority axes/ (measures)/ projects).

I-1.4.2 –	Extent to which stakeholders confirm the importance of having a rapid, and service-oriented instrument with both demand-driven and policy-driven options.
-----------	---

¹⁸² In particular: COM(2015) 321, Annex 1 to the Commission Implementing Decision on the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Programme 2015, Annex 1 to the Commission Implementing Decision on the Technical Assistance And Information Exchange (TAIEX) action programme 2015-2017 under the European Neighbourhood-wide measures, C(2011) 8131, Annex 1 to C(2018) 6604.

Evidence gathered from documentation, interviews and surveys:

- The 1998 Commission Decision states that “the response of the beneficiary countries to the contribution made by TAIEX is **extremely positive**. (...) Administrations stress the usefulness of **the rapid response which TAIEX can give**, answering questions and resolving **difficulties in a pragmatic and efficient manner.**”
- According to one of the interviewees (MN_300), “**TAIEX is extremely useful**, brings knowledge and knowhow of Member States. **There is some bureaucracy, but not so much** (not nearly as much as project). **It is easy to have activity in place in few weeks or maximum one month and a half**. Most colleagues were satisfied, experts were of a high level. (...) TAIEX allows to use expertise of all member states, including the smallest ones, not only from the main MS. **It is flexible.**”
- Another interviewee (MN_055) confirmed the importance of a demand-driven instrument, while being much more sceptical about the importance of TAIEX strategic instrument: “TAIEX strategic are useful but if I had to choose between demand-driven and strategic, I would choose demand-driven”; “For me, demand-driven requests were shrinking at the same time strategic was expanding. From my personal point of view, I was against development of TAIEX strategic (...) **Demand-driven should be preserved, as it is really useful.**”
- Interviews and surveys indicate there is overall interest and continuing demand for TAIEX’s unique features i.e. peer-to-peer, demand-driven, quick to implement, low bureaucracy/administrative burden.
- More than three quarters of the TAIEX participants’ survey respondents stated their institution would definitively or likely ask for a TAIEX event in the future.
- Within interviews, both (non-TAIEX) EU officials and beneficiaries explained how TAIEX is often the only available practical alternative to address some needs: particularly, those characterized by the need to address an issue **limited in scope** (and not covered within larger programmes) in a **timely way**, and in a way that either requires or can productively leverage on **EU MS public official expertise**. (It was also noted that the range of needs that TAIEX is used to address also tends to depend on the availability of alternative instruments with similar characteristics – e.g. Twinning.)¹⁸³
- A decrease in the number of applications and events organized by TAIEX was observed during the 2015-2020 period, particularly in the IPA-ENI and TCc strands; however, this appears to be only in small part associated with a decrease in needs that could be addressed through TAIEX.
- Two factors were associated with decrease of the need for TAIEX in the IPA-ENI regions:¹⁸⁴
 - Lesser relevance of the Accession agenda (Western Balkans countries and Turkey, TAIEX IPA) compared to the previous periods – which resulted in lesser urgency placed on transposition and incorporation of the EU *acquis* and best practices.
 - The availability of a progressively wider range of support instruments for Western Balkans countries and Turkey (TAIEX IPA) (and ENI countries), some of which are used in alternative to TAIEX.
- Other than that, the decline in number of applications and increase in rejections seems to be rather attributable by factors driven by the EU Commission:
 - In the case of IPA-ENI, TAIEX went through a “Recalibration” process (in 2016-2018), which aimed at better focusing its scope towards EU priorities. This coincided with the introduction of TAIEX Strategic (i.e. the possibility for events to be organized upon demand of EU Services – in practice possible and in use even before, but at a lesser scale and without being actively promoted); but was also characterized by the

¹⁸³ MN757, MN700, MN733, MN738, MN739, MN741, MN743, MN744, MN753, MN755 among others.

¹⁸⁴ MN 167, MN 746.

introduction of more strict rules and priorities concerning the eligibility of topics for events (in line with EU priorities), motivated among others by the need to cope with capacity issues within the TAIEX team (particularly: headcount reductions). These ultimately resulted in a lower number of applications.¹⁸⁵

- In the case of TAIEX TCc, investment in TAIEX was purportedly slowed down by DG REFORM following delays and failures to pass legal texts whose drafting had been supported by TAIEX previous to 2018. Also, in the 2015-2020 period the political scenario evolved in a direction that made the prompt Reunification of Cyprus¹⁸⁶ less likely, resulting in alignment with the EU *acquis* becoming a less relevant/ urgent matter from the standpoint of the Turkish Cypriot community.¹⁸⁷
- Last, rotations in the TAIEX team personnel seem to have affected applications – in consideration of perceived lower capacity to support the process.¹⁸⁸
- Uptake (in terms of number of applications received and events organized) was also lower than budgeted for all “new” strands (i.e. other than TAIEX IPA-ENI and TAIEX TCc). In fact, budget utilization for new strands ranged from 58% to 79% in the August 2016-July 2020 period¹⁸⁹; and that, with the exception of TAIEX SRSP in 2019 and TAIEX PI in 2017, the number of events organized was lower, often significantly, than the maximum numbers mentioned in SLAs.^{190,191} The following were identified as contributing factors:
 - The insurgence of the COVID19 pandemic (limited to 2020) significantly affected all strands¹⁹², but perhaps even more so TAIEX INTPA – which was only then starting to get piloted.
 - Within TAIEX REGIO, TAIEX INTPA and TAIEX EIR, insufficient awareness of the instrument is deemed a contributor for low demand.¹⁹³
 - Within TAIEX REGIO, it is deemed that demand was initially overestimated (in the first SLA).¹⁹⁴
 - As mentioned above, temporary staffing issues within the TAIEX team also seem to have affected, particularly, within the TAIEX PI strand.
- The uptake of programmatic features (possibility to plan events in advance, often several at a time, towards a same objective – instead of reacting to emerging needs) was used significantly, in particular:
 - Within TAIEX SRSP: the “planned” nature of the SRSP (not TSI) reform exercises supported makes the use of such feature logical and adequate.¹⁹⁵
 - Within TAIEX TCc: the use of Medium Term Assistance (MTA) allows supporting extensive administrative/ legislative capacity building exercises – for which, due the particularities of the political setting, few alternative

¹⁸⁵ Internal user guide on TAIEX and TAIEX recalibration. Interviews: MN746, MN747, MN770.

¹⁸⁶ Within the meaning of Article 1.1. of Council Regulation 389/2006.

¹⁸⁷ MN158, Evaluation of the Aid Programme to the Turkish Cypriot community (2013-2018) (Economisti Associati).

¹⁸⁸ This appears to have been particularly the case of TAIEX PI, where the dedicated case handler position was vacant for 6 months between 2018 and 2019, which corresponded with a significant decrease in the number of events (MN870, TMS). However, the issue of rotation and its consequent loss of know-how was also mentioned in other interviews. (MN746)

¹⁸⁹ Source: financials provided by DG NEAR. The numbers above do not include TAIEX INTPA (16%) which was only operative for six months during the period – the last months of which were affected by COVID.

¹⁹⁰ Source: TMS data and SLAs.

¹⁹¹ It is also worth noting that, in the case of TAIEX PI, the original yearly budget set was increased by 75% following initial high consumption. However, ultimately only 79% of TAIEX PI’s total available budget was used.) Source: TAIEX PI SLAs and relative amendments.

¹⁹² TMS data.

¹⁹³ Sources: internal SLA reports for periods ending in 2020; MN32, MN900, 2020 Evaluation of TAIEX REGIO (PPMI).

¹⁹⁴ Commentaries of the ISG to the intermediary report.

¹⁹⁵ MN63.

	<p>programs and instruments are available. It also facilitates aligning TAIEX efforts within the wider Aid Programme to the TCc.¹⁹⁶</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Within TAIEX IPA-ENI, substantial use was made of Training Maps, particularly in agriculture-related topics.¹⁹⁷ ● The possibility for EU Services to directly request TAIEX events was given more prominence (limited to TAIEX IPA-ENI) since TAIEX Recalibration. However, albeit there was some uptake from line DGs, the usage of the instrument on the part of EU Delegations appears sporadic, and often linked to merely procedural reasons (i.e. overcome recent limitations placed on the topic/ number of events which can be organized in benefit of a specific sector when requested by beneficiaries; obtain a higher level of priority/ faster processing for a specific event)¹⁹⁸. This said, the possibility is considered interesting for the organization of multi-country and other multi-beneficiary events.¹⁹⁹ Also, the option of EU services submitting applications may be useful in cases in which local administrations' competences or previous awareness/ knowledge on a specific topic are very low – as beneficiaries may have lesser ability to identify precisely their needs and what is needed to address them.²⁰⁰
JC 1.5	Peer working was a suitable way (or the most suitable way) to develop capacities/knowledge
I-1.5.1 –	History and rationale (documented) behind the peer working approach
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The 1995 White Paper states that “the expertise on which the associated countries need to draw is concentrated in a relatively small number of officials and practitioners, mainly in the Member States. (...) Special attention needs to be given to ensuring that all these efforts are mutually reinforcing and well-focused. Improved information exchange and transparency concerning developments in the associated countries and the assistance on offer will help match supply and demand and provide common services where common needs are identified. (...) Assistance could include the following: (...) advice from legal and technical experts (...) information concerning implementation and enforcement mechanisms in the Member States and first-hand experience of their functioning through participation in exchange programmes” (Point 5.5) ● The 1998 Commission Decision mentions “multi-country workshop sessions and bilateral contacts to transfer know-how and to engage in problem solving”. It states that TAIEX “mobilises experts from the public and the semi-public sectors in each Member State through its expert pool database. This allows beneficiary countries to gain assistance from their counterparts in the Member States dealing with the same tasks of transposition and application of European Union legislation.” ● The 2000 Commission Decision reaffirms TAIEX specific approach, using the same words as the 1998 Commission Decision quoted above (“assistance from their counterparts (...) dealing with the same tasks”, “bring knowledge and experience”, Point 5). It also states that “...support from MS is even more vital, since they are the only ones with real experience in implementing the Acquis”. ● The original intervention logic of TAIEX stressed the relevance of peer-to-peer exchanges for addressing practical issues in the transposition of the EU acquis, being EU MS public sector experts the only ones with hands-on experience in the matter.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶ MN158, MN750, MN505, Evaluation of the Aid Programme to the Turkish Cypriot community (2013-2018) (Economisti Associati).

¹⁹⁷ MN10, MN63.

¹⁹⁸ MN745.

¹⁹⁹ Survey with NCPs and Contact Points within EU Delegations, MN500.

²⁰⁰ MN733, MN747.

²⁰¹ 2000 Commission decision, paragraph 5: “... support from MS is even more vital, since they are the only ones with real experience in implementing the Acquis”.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2011 Commission Decision reminds that “TAIEX has performed well as an instrument for providing expertise and know-how transfer”. Peer-to-peer approach is commented in Point 2.3 (Overview of past and on-going assistance): “the constant flow of new applications and the positive feedback provided by the participants indicates the beneficiaries’ appreciation of this instrument. Particular praise has been afforded to the use of public sector experts in implementing “peer-to-peer” training”.
I-1.5.2 –	Stakeholders’ views and argumentation on peer working as an appropriate approach to develop capacities/knowledge in the different contexts
<p>Evidence gathered from surveys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When asked to provide details or comments on TAIEX usefulness, 24 respondents of the participants’ survey answered that peer-to-peer exchanges and discussions with experts are very useful, as it improved their knowledge of the topic/ of the EU legislation. When asked which characteristics of TAIEX make it most useful/ unique compared to other EU tools for capacity building, 11 respondents of the experts’ survey explicitly referred to the peer-to-peer dimension. To the same question, 7 respondents of the participants’ survey mentioned the advantages of sharing experiences and practices, related to the peer-to-peer format. 81,2% of respondents to the experts’ survey consider that TAIEX allows benefitting from peer-to-peer experience and advice better than it would have been possible through other options. <p>Evidence gathered from interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to one of the interviewees (MN_951), “EU delegations rely on TAIEX support and it is how they are used to work. TAIEX offers an additional, different support. Cooperation between equals – which is very useful if used on time and with clear objectives”. For another interviewee (MN_900), “why is TAIEX good for that, it is because you have a lot of good practices, good quality legislation and the possibility to share these experiences with countries that are struggling. (...) You start looking at examples, at how it has been done somewhere else.” In another interview (MN_500), an interviewee expressed that “peer-to-peer is so valuable because there is collected knowledge in specific policies” and that “peer-to-peer is based on best practices. It is an exchange. There is no right way, each member state has different ways of reaching the goals. The peer-to-peer approach is key. It is what makes TAIEX different.” Later, the person added that “in peer-to-peer exchange, you get the experience of implementing something. It is not only a scientific discussion about specific points. You discuss with people who already have had issues implementing policies. (...) There was discussions between all the participants. Everyone discussed how they could implement it. It was very useful for them” Interviewees often described interchanges within practitioners as unique way to gain practical, hands-on knowledge on the “how to” of the EU acquis or EU best practices, that could not be obtained from other sources. Expertise from countries that recently joined the EU was often mentioned as particularly valuable – as such experts were most likely to have specific experience on how to introduce the acquis and practices in new contexts.²⁰² Peer-to-peer exchanges were also talked about as a “soft” way for the EU to influence policy in beneficiary countries and/or gain insight.²⁰³ <p>Evidence gathered from documentation:</p>	

²⁰² Among others: with EU officers, both within and outside the TAIEX team, and with beneficiaries.

²⁰³ Particularly: MN770. It is also worth noting that TAIEX is also used for country screening exercises.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2011 Commission Decision precises that “the constant flow of new applications and the positive feedback provided by the participants indicates the beneficiaries' appreciation of this instrument. Particular praise has been afforded to the use of public sector experts in implementing "peer-to-peer" training.”
JC.1.6	The current catalogue of TAIEX activities (study visits, expert missions, workshops, peer review, work from home, online initiatives, hybrid initiatives and series of events) allows to address the range of beneficiaries needs in the different contexts
I-1.6.1 –	Rationale of how the current catalogue of activities was built (particularly in terms of the ability to address needs, including context specific)
Evidence gathered:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The initial catalogue (originally designed based on TAIEX IPA’s needs) was enriched with new features aimed at better serving needs/ objectives in new strands, allow a more “policy driven” use of the instrument and adapt to emerging circumstances (i.e. the COVID 19 pandemic)²⁰⁴. No document currently appears to exist outlining the whole “menu” of options and features that TAIEX can currently offer. No guide as to which type of event/ features may be best in each circumstance/ for each purpose appears to exist. 	
I-1.6.2 –	Documentary evidence on the relevance of the current catalogue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No strategic document issued during the 2015-2020 period (among those made available to the evaluation team) offers specific insights on the rationale of the catalogue of events. No clear reference to how the catalogue was built was found in previous documents either. However, in the Commission Decision of 2000 (Extending the operations of TAIEX for 2001), the catalogue is briefly described and it is noted that “technical assistance will be constructed as a flexible and rapid delivery mechanism for expertise from Member States’ public and semi-public bodies to their countries in Associated countries. Within this period any combination of the following technical assistance means, individually or as a package, can be delivered by TAIEX... [description of catalogue] These elements will enable TAIEX to provide a coherent approach to providing assistance that fits the need expressed by the Candidate Countries.” Previous evaluations do not offer specific insights on the catalogue, other than stating that all types of events are perceived as useful – albeit with different nuances (different types adapt best depending on the specific type of needs).²⁰⁵ 	
I-1.6.3 –	Stakeholders’ view on the extent to which the catalogue allowed to cover the range of potential beneficiary needs
Evidence gathered from surveys and interviews:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders interviewed²⁰⁶ perceived the catalogue as sufficient given the scope of TAIEX. For instance, one interviewee (MN_300) declared that “for the type of facilities, for the short amount of time, it is more than enough”. Nonetheless, two suggestions for changes/ extensions were made: 	

²⁰⁴ Source: strategic documents, interviews (MN167, MN746, MN770. See also JC 1.1.

²⁰⁵ Evaluation of TAIEX Instrument, Final Evaluation Report, August 2015 (AETS), paragraph 3.4.

²⁰⁶ Various interviews both with EU officers and beneficiaries.

- Addition of (online) modalities for even shorter term and more immediate consultation of experts (i.e. one-session events, immediate expert consultation through email or chat.)²⁰⁷
- Better adaptation/ flexibilization of study visits to needs – where tight limitations on number of participants (generally 3, 5 in the case of TAIEX SRSP only) were perceived to rest effectiveness, as not all people whose participation was considered important could take part. (Note: there are indications that in some cases, this was also due to the selection of participants being in part oriented towards higher ranking or more politically relevant figures – leaving fewer spots for technical-level practitioners.)²⁰⁸
- Regarding the online options that were introduced in 2020, stakeholders identify as main advantages the lower participation costs for both experts and beneficiaries; lower barriers to participation; the possibility for experts to get involved even for very short interventions (thus also extending the range of accessible experts); higher flexibility on the timing of specific sessions (that can also be spread over a longer period of time); lower environmental impact.
- They identify as main disadvantages the significant difficulties in building relationships and allowing/ fostering both discussions and informal conversations (often key to spontaneous exchange of experiences); much scarcer spontaneous learning of/ adaptation to the context on the part of experts; relative unfriendliness of the virtual media.

²⁰⁷ MN755.

²⁰⁸ MN745, MN755, MN757.

EQ 2 – Did specific interventions address needs?

To what extent were TAIEX events in line with and adapted to specific country, sector, and EU needs? How did the TAIEX support made sure this was the case and what factors played a role in this perspective?	
Judgment criteria and indicators	
JC.2.1	The TAIEX approach was geared towards identifying and formulating well-conceived and country-owned TAIEX activities
I-2.1.1 –	Strategy of TAIEX (documented or not) to identify and formulate TAIEX activities that were well-conceived from a results point of view, addressing needs, and country-owned
<p>Evidence gathered from documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 1998 Commission Decision states that “the establishment of the Office’s databases in 1997 will allow a comprehensive overview to be gained of compatibility of legislation with that of the Community, and of the underlying enforcement structures. This constantly updated overview will be valuable in ensuring that technical assistance efforts will become “accession driven” and focus on the most pressing needs of the candidate countries’ accession.” The document also states that “it is clear that the services provided through the Office are meeting needs which other technical assistance measures do not accommodate. These needs will continue to exist, and will become stronger in the foreseeable future. The reinforcement and extension of the TAIEX throughout the pre-accession period is a logical answer to these demands.” • The 2000 Commission Decision identifies the different types of TAIEX events (“Mobilisation of national expert(s) in a given field for a series of missions; Workshops in either Brussels, the Member States or the relevant Candidate Country; Study visits to the European Institutions and Member States; Short term mobilisation of national experts”). It defines also the limits of the “internal market” in legislative terms, which contributed to delimit and prioritize TAIEX activities. • The 2017 Internal user guide on TAIEX and TAIEX recalibration states that “the aim of recalibrated or strategic TAIEX is to ensure that TAIEX supports EU’s key priorities on fundamental and structural reforms that are needed, both in the enlargement and neighbourhood regions, functioning as a catalyst for reforms where possibilities arise. (...) There is definitely room to better anticipate, sequence, frame and monitor DG NEAR’s reform support for better efficiency and enhanced credibility. Strategic TAIEX is about forecasting and sequencing activities in support of policy reform to make them more operational and better targeted”. <p>Evidence gathered from interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TAIEX application review process included several features aimed at ensuring that the design of events responded to needs <u>and</u> was aligned with EU priorities and other EU actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In non-EU beneficiary countries, local EU Delegations tended to get involved from the early application process, even in events demanded by the beneficiary. This was either a required step of the process (TAIEX INTPA); or standard practice, part of 	

ongoing relations²⁰⁹. In practice, this resulted in a first quality check of applications.²¹⁰

- Even in cases in which events are requested by EU officers, steps were taken to ensure the beneficiary country(ies) were committed to them. In particular, this included discussing their interest in the event before the submission of the application and involving them closely in the agenda setting process.^{211,212}
 - TAIEX applications were then reviewed by the TAIEX team, which also consulted with EU stakeholders who are deemed relevant, including both in-country personnel and line DGs. This process was aimed at verifying the relevance of the proposed event for both EU priorities and beneficiary country needs and the lack of overlap/ conflict with other activities; as well as surfacing other concerns or suggestions for the event design (including the possibility of synergies with other actions).²¹³
 - The TAIEX team’s know-how also contributed to optimize the design of the event (in particular but not limited to identifying suitable experts). In fact, the specialization of TAIEX case handlers (in a specific strand or topic) was mentioned as a factor favouring quality of events; with TAIEX personnel rotation/ vacancies being identified as an issue negatively affecting quality.²¹⁴
- The above-described process was adjusted to some extent among strands, reflecting the different role played by events within them and the level of content ownership retained by the DGs responsible of each SLA. Most notably:
 - In the case of TAIEX TCc, the role of the TAIEX team was limited to verifying the conformity of the event to the SLA and coordinating the event administration and logistics. No formal content approval or consultations was required – oversight in this sense is retained by DG REFORM (which also formally submits the applications).²¹⁵
 - In the case of TAIEX SRSP, while the application process is maintained, SRSP officers retain a higher degree of control over the event design – often including the selection of experts.²¹⁶ There appears to be lesser emphasis on consultations according to relevant interviewees..
 - According to a TCc TAIEX team member (interviewee MN_012), regarding TCc, key areas were determined “together with the beneficiaries, during the final assessment of an ongoing MTA. We identified what had been achieved for each sector and sub sector. We wrote a one-page summary showing what has been achieved compared to what has been planned, with percentage of achievements. Together, we decided which sector should be kept (...). In 2022, there were just 12 sectors because assistance was stopped in 5 sectors. These 12 are the ones in which the beneficiaries are more engaged.”

²⁰⁹ MN167, MN734, MN741, MN951.

²¹⁰ In fact, particularly in TAIEX INTPA, it was observed that consultations with the EU delegation may in fact lead to significant reworking of applications before submission. Applications not supported by the local EU delegation would also normally be rejected by the TAIEX team. Source: MN734, MN741, MN951.

²¹¹ In practice, requests only came from EU officers in the case of TAIEX PI and TAIEX IPA-ENI - this last in the strategic version. In the cases of TAIEX SRSP and TAIEX TCc, although the applications were formally submitted by EU officers they were ultimately based on broader frameworks requested and agreed upon by beneficiaries.

²¹² MN167, MN700, MN733.

²¹³ MN167, MN743, application templates (as filled for events reviewed in depth).

²¹⁴ MN870. Anecdotally, an approximately 6-month vacancy in the TAIEX PI case handler seemed to coincide with a drop in TAIEX PI applications as well as a loss of interest in the instrument within a specific topic as reported by a TAIEX PI officer. (MN700)

²¹⁵ MN158, also confirmed by documentation included in TCc events’ files.

²¹⁶ MN63.

I-2.1.2 –	Stakeholder’s view on whether TAIEX’ approach was sufficiently geared towards well-conceived, addressing needs, and country owned TAIEX activities
<p>Evidence gathered from interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In an interview, a beneficiary offered the consideration that the “strategic” approach may prove more effective than the “classic” approach in identifying and designing relevant and sound events in contexts in which local administrations’ competences are low. This because local beneficiaries with low competences may have lesser ability to identify precisely what their needs are and how they could be addressed. Awareness of TAIEX among potential beneficiaries does not appear to be consistent among potential beneficiaries, nor (to a lesser extent) among EU officers (particularly: within EU Delegations). Efforts to stop it were largely left to each strand and, to some extent, to local officers (from EU Delegations, and NCPs); and were often deemed insufficient (particularly after 2018, and even more so in 2020 – in consequence of the COVID-19 pandemics, which made it impossible to organize in-presence events to raise awareness about TAIEX).²¹⁷ Also, while the TAIEX team was generally described as responsive by in-country stakeholders, the general materials (not event-specific) and information shared were at times referred to as insufficient, and the website complicated to navigate.²¹⁸ This clearly affected the quantity of applications submitted from each country: in the words of an interviewee, the use of TAIEX “really depends on the people of the ground [Delegations’ staff] – whether they perceive TAIEX as useful, or just see it as more work that they may not want”.²¹⁹ <p>Evidence gathered from participants’ survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TAIEX is perceived to promote country ownership. This is largely true for both events requested by EU services and beneficiaries, although more so for the latter: in the case of events requested by beneficiaries 100% of survey respondents (participants) agreed that TAIEX promoted national government ownership, compared to 86% in the case of events requested by EU services. Among experts surveyed, 94% agreed that the beneficiary institutions demonstrated significant ownership of events.²²⁰ 97% of respondents agreeing that TAIEX events promoted country ownership for “classic” events, and 84% agreeing that it was the case for “strategic” events. See also I-2.2.1. and I-2.2.2 	
JC.2.2	Overall, the events funded addressed well the needs of beneficiary countries, sectors, and individuals
I-2.2.1 –	Satisfaction of beneficiaries on the extent to which events where in line with needs
<p>Evidence gathered from documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 1998 Commission Decision states that “the response of the beneficiary countries to the contribution made by TAIEX is extremely positive. (...) Progress towards integration has, in the opinion of the beneficiaries of the assistance, been accelerated and facilitated by TAIEX activities.” The annex to the Commission Decision of 11.11.2011 states tht “the TAIEX instrument has been very well received in the beneficiary partner countries”. Annex 1 of the Commission Implementing decision on TAIEX 2018-2020 and Annex 1 of the Commission Implementing decision on TAIEX 2015-17 state that TAIEX is “well received 	

²¹⁷ Based on commentaries from EU officers (both at headquarters and within EU delegations) and NCPs. Particularly: MN08, MN700, MN734, MN740.

²¹⁸ MN736, MN737.

²¹⁹ MN743.

²²⁰ Expert survey data does not allow for differentiation based on which stakeholders requested the events.

and perceived, as feed-back provided by the participants following the organization of TAIEX events has shown” – specifically referring to NEAR countries.

- According to the document “Instrument for pre-accession assistance – IPA II – 2014-20”: “feedback received from IPA II beneficiaries (the Western Balkans and Turkey) in 2017 showed that the quality of the expertise provided through TAIEX is excellent for 59.5% of the respondents, good for 33%, satisfactory for 6.3% and poor for only 1.2%”.
- Within the 2015 evaluation of TAIEX, beneficiaries in all countries surveyed perceived the instrument as very relevant. Other past evaluations of TAIEX as a whole or specific strands mention high beneficiary satisfaction with the instrument.

Evidence gathered from participants’ survey:

- Among beneficiaries, 97% strongly or mostly agreed that contents were relevant to their needs; and over 95% agreed that experts were both knowledgeable on the topics and able to convey information well.
- Among beneficiaries, 91% strongly or mostly agree that the design of individual TAIEX events was sufficiently tailored to the specificities of the beneficiary country/ institution.
- As mentioned above (see JC 2.1), TAIEX was perceived to promote country ownership in the majority of cases, denoting that they were tailored to local needs (97% of respondents to the participant survey agreed that this was the case when events are requested by beneficiaries; while 84% of respondents agreed that it was the case for events requested by the EU).

Evidence gathered from interviews:

- All beneficiaries interviewed (across strands) expressed that TAIEX events were in line with needs and concretely helpful. (MN01, MN04, MN509, MN733, MN738, MN739, MN751, MN752, MN753, MN754, MN758). One beneficiary noted that fully answering needs would have required complementing TAIEX with other instruments of different nature (e.g. with a financing component) (MN 739 – the comment was also sustained in interviews with EU officers).

I-2.2.2 –	Stakeholders’ views (not only beneficiaries) on the extent to which TAIEX addresses well needs across countries, sectors, and individuals
-----------	---

Evidence gathered from Participants’ and Experts’ surveys:

- Almost all stakeholders surveyed agree that events adequately addressed the needs targeted.
 - Over 95% of experts agreed that the design of events, including the choice of type of event, were adequate to needs; and that events had the right audience²²¹. Also, 94% agreed that the beneficiary institution demonstrated significant ownership of events.
 - Among beneficiaries, 97% strongly or mostly agreed that contents were relevant to their needs; and over 95% agreed that experts were both knowledgeable on the topics and able to convey information well.
 - 81,4% of experts that responded to the survey assessed TAIEX events as very useful for beneficiary participants (at the individual level). 72,1% assessed them as very useful for beneficiary institutions and 65,9% as very useful for themselves. 27,9% assessed TAIEX events as very useful for their own institution and 51,9% as very useful for the European Union.

²²¹ More precisely: 97% agreed that the types of events were the most appropriate to address beneficiary needs; 97% agreed that the overall design of the event was adequate; and 95% agreed that the events had the right audience.

- Interviews²²² generally confirmed these findings.
- Expert reports reviewed²²³ showed coherence of topics covered with the stated purpose of events and often commented on high interest on the part of participants.
- 97% of the respondents to the participants' survey strongly or mostly agree that the information provided/ discussed during the event(s) was relevant to the beneficiaries' needs/ beneficiary institutions' needs. Over 95% of them strongly or mostly agree that the experts' knowledge on the topics covered was adequate. 81,6% of the respondents strongly or mostly agree that TAIEX events helped advance EU priorities and objectives in beneficiary countries/ territories and 80,8% that TAIEX events helped beneficiary countries/territories to advance along their national needs, priorities, and interests. In terms of overall usefulness, 75,5% of them assessed TAIEX events as very useful for beneficiary participants (at the individual level) and 63% as very useful for beneficiary institutions.
- In some cases (in particular regarding INTPA), it was pointed out that time allowed was insufficient. Some feedback in this sense also emerged in the experts' survey.

Evidence gathered from interviews:

- According to one of TAIEX programme officers (interviewee MN_300), "TAIEX is extremely useful, brings knowledge and know-how of Member States (...) Most colleagues were satisfied. (...) TAIEX allows to use expertise of all Member States, including the smallest ones, not only from the main Member States. (...) TAIEX fits perfectly for specific projects or knowhows."
- Another TAIEX team member (interviewee MN_951) considers herself a "a really big fan of TAIEX, which in Lithuania is very much valued and used. (...) TAIEX offers an additional, different support. Cooperation between equals – which is very useful if used on time and with clear objectives".
- Another interviewee part of TAIEX EIR (MN_500) stated, about "the 50 events that EIR had the last three years": "it was very successful. I don't speak only as a manager, but also as a client from the past. The instrument is still strongly needed, either to promote the European policy, to clarify, to support the Member States implementing it, or for Member States to get knowledge on specific fields, even if they are advanced in some fields." Later, regarding the 5 events organized by that person: "Maybe I could ask for events to be longer. Online events, because of the lack of physical contacts, does not give all the aspects of the assistance that is needed. All participants were very satisfied. There are some disadvantages, weaknesses. Technical issues must be solved, presentations and interpretations of needs must be ensured, organization must be well done... But they managed to organize it well."
- One TAIEX TCc team leader (interviewee MN_012) stated that there were no disadvantages of using TAIEX in TCc context. "It would be very difficult to address the two specific objectives without TAIEX instruments. On EU acquis, it's best to have experts from EU MS, they have the expertise on how they do it in their country and then conduct study visits. When experts from new MS are involved, they also share main lessons learnt. Another advantage is that it's very easy to mobilise other experts apart from MTA experts from the database (very quick and efficient). On COVID for example it was very easy to do. From many angles there are many advantages, and I can't see disadvantages."

JC.2.3 -

Specific factors that contributed to enhancing or hampering TAIEX's capacity to target needs

²²² With all types of stakeholders.

²²³ All expert reports associated with events included in case studies which were stored in TMS.

I-2.3.1 –	Documentary evidence on specific factors that enhanced or hampered TAIEX in addressing needs
-----------	--

Evidence gathered from documentation:

- The following tables present the number of TAIEX rejected requests by strand/ type of event. The data stems from TMS database.

Table 7: Total number of rejected tasks, by strand and by year

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
EIR	0	0	3	3	1	12	19
SRSP	0	0	1	5	3	1	10
REGIO	19	13	10	7	9	3	61
TCc	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ENPI SOUTH	37	27	38	94	52	11	259
ENPI EAST	119	60	124	194	88	37	622
INTPA	0	0	0	0	0	6	
PI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
IPA	232	224	185	229	162	68	1100
Multicountry	8	3	3	8	5	2	
total	407	324	361	532	315	138	

Source: ADE computations based on Teams database

Table 8: Share of rejected applications by strand and type of event

	Expert Mission	Home Assignments	Study Visit	Workshop	Average per strand
REGIO	16%		16%	26%	19%
IPA	20%	0%	38%	24%	28%
ENPI SOUTH	25%	0%	28%	24%	26%
ENPI EAST	31%	0%	44%	36%	38%
EIR	27%		14%	31%	24%
Average per type of event	23%	0%	36%	28%	29%

Source: ADE computations based on TMS database

- According to the 2016-2020 TAIEX report, TAIEX SRSP received 178 requests for technical assistance from August 2017 to end of July 2020. Annual distribution is as follows: 13 in 2017, 70 in 2018, 78 in 2019 and 17 in the first seven months of 2020. From the 178 applications received during the reporting period, 10 requests resulted in rejection. The main reasons are a merger of multiple events, requests not endorsed by the SRSP work plan, undefined terms of the request and non-eligible beneficiary institutions.
- Regarding EIR: according to the emails and documents available in the TMS database, 47% of the rejected requests were caused by “human resources issues”. For instance, email An_30826 (for the Task No 30826) sent by a TAIEX team member to a beneficiary contains the following statement: “Dear Sir, We would like to apologise for the delay in replying to your applications N° 30826 & 30831 - HU - TAIEX Study Visit on Deposit-Return Systems for Beverage Containers, **which was caused by human resource issues**. A new colleague has recently joined the TAIEX – EIR team as such operations will shortly recommence. In the meantime, we would be grateful if you could advise us if the requested assistance is still needed, in which case we will expedite the approval process and advise you accordingly.”

The same reason was provided to explain the treatment delays for requests No 30548, 30642, 30867, 30920, 31107, 31109 and 31339.

- The 1998 Commission Decision states that “an important risk in the area of approximation of legislation, as in other fields of Technical Assistance is that of duplication and even competing advice. TAIEX aims to diminish this risk notably through its databases (...). The TAIEX programme (...) will rely to a considerable extent on the willingness of Member States administrations and institutions to make experts available for shorter or longer missions to the Associated Countries as well as for participation in seminars, training meetings etc” The same statement is provided by the 2000 Commission Decision.

I-2.3.2 – Extent to which there appear to be correlations between satisfaction surveys and specific characteristics of events (i.e. type, programmatic approach, others) or the context in which they happen (i.e. country, sector, political situation)

Evidence gathered from the surveys:

The following graphs rely on the answers to the surveys. Respondents were asked to what extent they agree that the TAIEX event(s) for which they provided expertise or to which they participated in led to different outcomes – and this was analysed (among others) by type of event and in consideration of whether those were requested by beneficiaries (TAIEX classic) or by EU officers (TAIEX strategic).

Different types of events were indicated to be similarly effective across outcomes, with perhaps the exception of study visits – which respondents indicated as noticeably more effective in leading to improved internal working procedures and organizational changes. They also more often resulted in the preparation of reports or dissemination materials and the organization of internal presentations and/or specific training courses (probably also in consideration of the limited number of beneficiaries who are allowed to participate).

For every type of outcome, the perception of achievement was a bit better for classic vs. strategic events.

Figure 81: Respondents’ level of agreement that the TAIEX event(s) for which they provided expertise or to which they participated in led to the following.

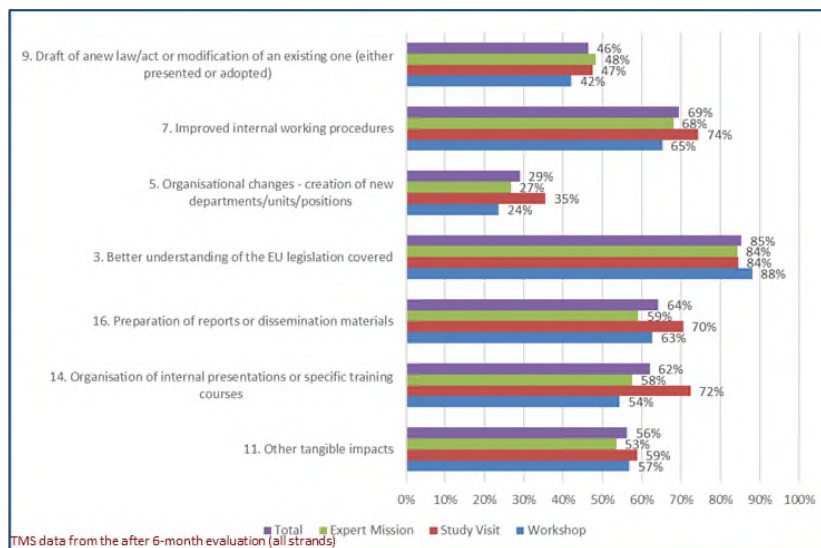
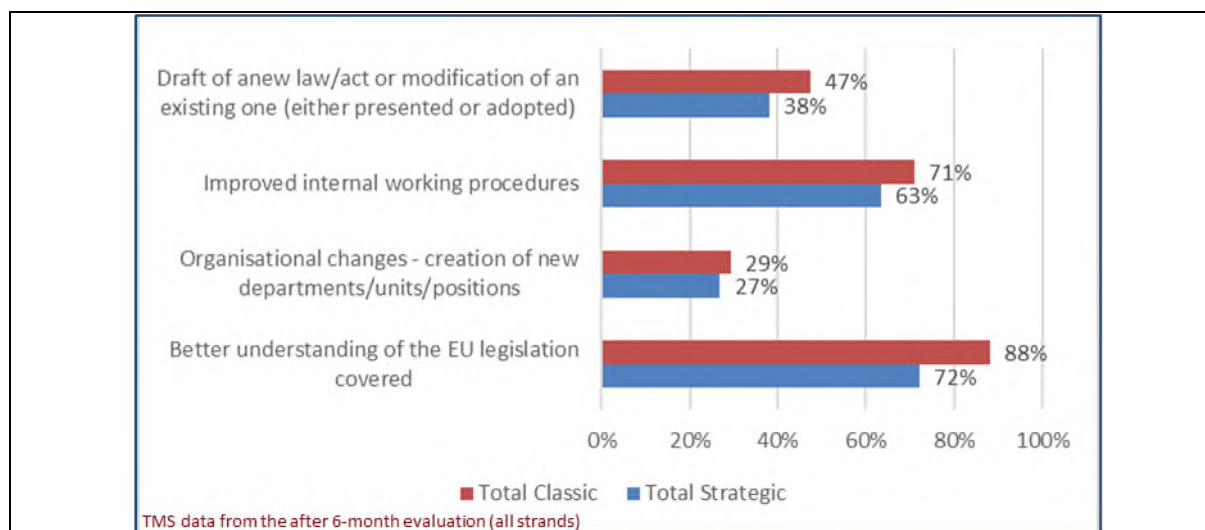


Figure 82: Respondents’ level of agreement that the TAIEX event(s) for which they provided expertise or to which they participated in led to the following.



Evidence gathered from interviews:

Interviewees reported that different types of events can be best suited depending on the specific outcomes sought – with workshops being better at raising awareness (often with large audiences) on specific topics, expert missions better suited to specific, targeted work, and study visits at observing how something is concretely implemented in another country (these were mentioned as most useful when knowledge has already been substantially established in the beneficiary country and implementation has also been launched. (Particularly: MN739, MN740, MN755) These findings are also in line with the 2015 evaluation of TAIEX.

Concerning TAIEX strategic, it has been noted that it is often used to generate awareness/ tackle new topic, often through a multi-country approach (particularly: MN510), which may contribute to explain less frequent immediate results.

I-2.3.3 –	Stakeholders' view on specific factors that enhanced or hampered TAIEX in addressing needs
-----------	--

Evidence gathered from Experts' survey:

68 answers were submitted by experts to the question on contextual factors that enhanced or hampered TAIEX effectiveness. The most frequently mentioned factors concerned the **extent of political and institutional willingness of beneficiary/ participants to support the event** (28 answers) and the level of **understanding on the part of the expert of context and culture** – either because of similarity or previous knowledge (16 answers). In addition, 7 answers mention the **lack of possibility of physical interaction** as a negatively affecting factor (for virtual events) and the **identification of a clear narrow focus** as a positively affecting factor (3 answers).

Evidence gathered from interviews:

The following factors were identified as affecting TAIEX's capacity to address needs:

- **Level of involvement and commitment of beneficiaries** (along with, if relevant, EU actors - particularly, EU Delegations) **throughout the whole event application and design phases.** A stronger involvement is associated with better capacity of events to address needs.²²⁴
- Clarity of understanding of the need to be addressed; and coherently with it, of the definition of the focus/ objective of the event, which should be realistic given both the time available and the capacity of the beneficiary.²²⁵

²²⁴ MN700, MN733, MN741, MN748, MN757 expert reports and project documents (particularly: TCc MTA final reports covering the period ending in 2020), review of specific events.

²²⁵ MN167, MN756, MN757, MN741, review of specific events. The theme was also repeatedly mentioned in commentaries in the expert survey.

- **Timely organization** of events. (Delays may cause topics to lose relevance.)²²⁶
- **Level of preparation of participating experts.** In this sense, several specific sub-factors were raised:
 - **Experts' topic expertise:** this condition is generally considered as satisfactorily met by both beneficiaries and EU stakeholders.²²⁷ However, the TAIEX team and other EU officers involved in the organization of events reported some difficulties in finding suitable experts (in particular: for novel topics) and/or in securing their availability.²²⁸
 - **Capacity of experts to adapt their advice to the beneficiary context:** in this sense, **previous experience in similar contexts** (size of country, level of economic development, political system, type of culture/ history etc.) was deemed an asset. For events with objectives related with the transposition of the EU *acquis*, experts from countries that most recently become MS were often mentioned as being particularly appreciated.²²⁹
 - **Extent of the support provided by TAIEX to experts in preparing for events.** This was reported as being at times inconsistent. In particular, according to experts information packages should be provided to experts at least one week in advance, but this was not always the case.²³⁰ A best practice cited was the possibility to meet and be briefed by EU officers (including the beneficiary country's EU Delegation) in advance to the event, particularly in cases in which the context presents elements or sensitivities that the expert should be aware of.²³¹ Further best practices mentioned were from TAIEX TCc (where experts get an induction at the beginning of each MTA²³²) and from TAIEX INTPA (which implemented remote pre-event diagnostic tools to facilitate better contextualization of events – including questionnaires prepared by experts and responded by beneficiaries, pre-event calls and videos of beneficiary facilities.)²³³
 - **Experts' capacity and willingness to engage** with the audience and the problem at hand.²³⁴
- **Experience of the TAIEX case handler** on the topic and beneficiary context: it was noted that gaps (prolonged vacancies) and rotations among case handlers (each of which specializes on specific strands or topics) tended to result in lower quality of events (e.g. because of lower capacity to understand the beneficiary needs and timely identify adequate experts).²³⁵
- The existence of **restrictions to the organization of in-person events** (particularly, associated to COVID-19). Albeit online events were seen as having some advantages, not having the option of organizing in-person implied clear limits on interactions (i.e. videoconferencing was perceived as less friendly to interactive conversations, particularly in large groups; and the possibility of informal conversations was severely limited) and to

²²⁶ MN738, MN745, MN755.

²²⁷ Participants' survey (58% of participants strongly agreed that the experts' knowledge was adequate, and a total of over 96% either strongly or mostly agreed), MN300, MN700, MN733, MN739, MN 746, MN758.

²²⁸ MN501, MN770.

²²⁹ Within the experts' survey, 16 out of 77 experts' commentaries on contextual factors that enhanced or hampered effectiveness of events concerned the fact that experts would come from/ have experienced a situation with similar characteristics to that of the beneficiaries. Also: MN756, MN751, MN755.

²³⁰ MN756. However, in the survey over 95% of experts agreed to having received adequate information to prepare for events, and over 94% agreed that it was provided sufficiently in advance.

²³¹ MN756, MN743, MN746.

²³² MN158, MN757.

²³³ MN757, MN739, MN741.

²³⁴ MN756, MN755, MN758.

²³⁵ MN870. Anecdotally, an approximately 6-month vacancy in the TAIEX PI case handler seemed to coincide with a drop in TAIEX PI applications as well as a loss of interest in the instrument within a specific topic as reported by a TAIEX PI officer. (MN700)

the possibility to experience the counterpart's context (for either beneficiaries or experts, depending on the type of events). In some contexts, online events were also negatively affected by sub-optimal internet connections and other IT-related challenges.²³⁶

- Availability of **high quality translation**, where necessary (in particular, familiarity of the interpreters with the topic and knowledge of technical language was mentioned as an important asset).²³⁷
- Level of **staff rotation in beneficiary countries**, which may lead to loss of knowledge while changes sought have not yet taken place; also associated with political instability. (MN03, MN733) *Quote: "I am sceptical on whether it has changed the way we work because of intern problems. Not so much how this was delivered, more how it was received. Political situation is unstable, salaries low – so people are not there for long term. Every one or two years, the staff changes a lot. That is one of the reasons why the knowledge did not get disseminated."*
- Level of **skills of beneficiaries**, which deeply affects to what extent topics can be covered (MN_158) *Quote: "their number and their skills are low. In facts, when experts from Western Europe are involved they say we have to start from scratch, even to do their education." "There is a lot of expertise among the experts that is not used because beneficiaries don't have the capacity to absorb it. It leads to missed opportunities, frustration among experts."*

(See also I-1.2.3.)

²³⁶ MN504, MN505, MN738, MN741, MN745, MN755; the issue was also repeatedly mentioned in commentaries to the experts' survey.

²³⁷ MN745, MN755. It is worth noting that interpretation did not emerge as a significant issue in surveys – though it is deemed possible that this may be due to self-selection bias of respondents. (participants not understanding the language the survey was presented in – English, Spanish, French and Turkish – not answering it.)

EQ 3 - Contribution to and role of capacity development and institutional strengthening

<p>To what extent did TAIEX contribute to individual and institutional capacity development and strengthening of institutions in the medium to long run? What role did such strengthening play in bringing about structural reforms/ advancing the EU interest, in different contexts and circumstances? To what extent was the introduction of TAIEX strategic in 2016 beneficial in this regard?</p>	
<p>Judgment criteria and indicators</p>	
JC.3.1	A clear or direct link can be established between TAIEX events and changes in individual capacities and strengthening of institutions in the medium to long run in their capacity to design, formulate and/or implement their reform processes and /or manage funds
I-3.1.1 –	<p>Extent to which TAIEX events were designed to improve individual capacities and strengthen institutions with a view to improve capacities for reform processes, management of funds, approximation to EU interests etc..</p> <p>I.e. Event applications (and/or other documentation elaborated for the event) make a clear case for how the event and its design will allow capacity development and, through it, the achievement of objectives. Also, but with a somewhat lesser weight: stakeholders interviewed and surveyed report (and ideally, can clearly explain) the case for how the event supports capacity development and the achievement of outcomes</p>
<p>Evidence gathered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In application forms, beneficiaries are asked to indicate the objective of the event. One of the options is institutional development (others included legislation and implementation, although there is variation in the application forms across strands). • In most of the application forms reviewed for the case studies whereby institutional development was selected as the objective, there was a clear explanation of how the event was expected to contribute to the capacity of the beneficiary institutions. For instance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the request for a series of events in Lebanon on illicit trafficking, the selection of different types of event was clearly justified in terms of objectives pursued. For the Expert mission it was stated that: “A week-long expert mission to Lebanon will take place at the end of July (17-21 July) to assess the conditions. (including legislation), national focal point and networking of the different security agencies, inter-alia Internal Security Forces, General Security, Lebanese Armed Forces, State Security, Customs, and likewise the Defense Commission of the Lebanese Parliament, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants and the Ministry of Justice. • In the request for a workshop in Turkey on Supporting Individual Projects of Young Farmers in line with National and EU Rural Development, it was indicated that the event would serve to Support Programs “Determination of deficiencies, weaknesses and strengths of Young Farmer Programs Under Rural Development. Supports in Turkey according to similar programs in EU member states. Creating a road map to strengthen the institutional capacity of MoFAL for implementing and monitoring rural development programs targeting young farmers in compliance with the Common Agricultural Policy.” • When a study visit is selected, beneficiaries were asked to explicitly justify how the particular nature of the event would be advantageous for capacity development 	

	<p>relative to other types of events. E.g. follow-up TAIEX Study Visit on School Inspection Management (64347) requested by Azerbaijan to allow a small number of beneficiaries to closely observe how school inspections were conducted in EU MS, strengthening their knowledge in the field and allowing them to adopt relevant practices back at home.</p>
I-3.1.2 –	<p>Extent to which there are clear examples of how TAIEX events have contributed to changes in individual capacities and strengthening of institutions. Examples should be stories in this sense, which could be gathered through answers to open-ended questions in the survey focused on case studies (these may be followed up upon, if of interest) or in interviews. (Non exhaustive)</p>
<p>A number of clear examples of how TAIEX events have contributed to changes in individual capacities and strengthening of institutions have emerged through the review of events' documentation, surveys and interviews.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Enabling the National Bank of Moldova to abide by Basel III requirements: Under the 2014 Association Agreement with the EU, Moldova is required to abide by the Basel III standards. In 2018, following a two-year Twinning project with the Central Banks of Romania and the Netherlands, the National Bank of Moldova (NBM) successfully adopted a new regulatory framework in line with the EU Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR) and Directive (CRDIV) - the EU implementing acts of Basel III. However, the NBM lacked key expertise to implement the new framework. Although a second Twinning project was initially approved for these purposes, due to political reasons, it was cancelled. After extensive dialogue with the EUD it was decided to have multiple TAIEX events instead. The series of TAIEX events enabled beneficiaries to make significant progress in the implementation of the framework, leading among other things to the adjustment of the NBM's internal procedures regarding the assessment of market and interest rate risk in non-trading activities; the drafting, approval and implementation of a new methodology for assessing capital adequacy of banks; and the development of a complex macroprudential stress testing framework for the banking system. Although initially hesitant about the capacity of the instrument to address the magnitude of their needs, the beneficiaries appreciated "the instant results", "low bureaucracy" and "flexibility" of TAIEX, that allowed them to each time to select the most appropriate type of events for their constantly evolving needs. Source: Interviews, Documentary Review, Survey, After 6 month evaluation.</p> <p>Enabling Armenia's police to carry out cybercrime investigations and use digital forensics: Armenia faced rising levels of cybercrime starting from 2009, but with limited capacities for cybercrime investigation, only one cybercrime case had been resolved by 2014. In 2017, the Investigative Committee of the Police of Armenia decided to turn to TAIEX for support in strengthening its capacity for cybercrime investigation and the use of digital forensics. A TAIEX expert mission (2017 TAIEX Expert Mission on EU Key Standards and Practices for Cyber-crime Investigations) and a study visit (2018 TAIEX Study visit on EU Standards on Cybercrime and Practices of Digital Forensics Investigations) were therefore organised. The two events allowed beneficiaries to better understand EU standards and learn from EU best practices. This triggered several reforms in line with observations and experts' recommendations including the development of new training processes of investigators and candidate investigators, the establishment of a new department in the Investigative Committee focused on cybercrime and finally the development of software and of a number of implementation tools for digital forensics investigation. (Source: event's documentation, after-6 month evaluation, beneficiaries survey)</p> <p>Strengthening School Inspection Management in Azerbaijan: In Azerbaijan, the series of events on school inspection played a key role in the adoption of new practices by the national authorities. The initial workshop on School Self Evaluation was described as having "changed the environment and [making directors] positive to have inspection in their school and to get feedback from inspectors as well". The follow-up TAIEX Study Visit on</p> 	

	<p>School Inspection Management (64347) allowed beneficiaries to closely observe how school inspections were conducted, strengthening their knowledge in the field and allowing them to adopt relevant practices back at home. (Source: event’s documentation, after-6 month evaluation, beneficiaries survey)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening Risk Analysis in the Border Police of Bosnia & Herzegovina: In 2017, the TAIEX Workshop on Border Police Risk Analysis took place in Bosnia & Herzegovina was reported to a drastic change in the capacity of the involved institutions to carry out risk analysis with the practices adopted following the event having been sustained almost 4 years after the organization of the event. (interview, event documentary review) • Strengthening capacities for fighting corruption and organized crime in Bosnia & Herzegovina: In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a number of events were organized to support the country’s fight against corruption and organised crime. In particular to support its efforts to build a more independent and accountable judiciary, in September 2016, TAIEX sent officials of the Bosnian High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council (HJPC) to Rome on a study visit. The participants “had the opportunity to exchange best practice with colleagues from the Italian Superior Council of Magistrates and other key judicial institutions”, and according to beneficiaries this enabled them “to learn from the Italian experience in combatting organised crime and terrorism”. As a result, a series of follow-up TAIEX activities was organised in Bosnia and Herzegovina so as to continue supporting the country’s EU integration process. (AAR 2016) • Enabling the development of a knowledge-based and innovative economy in Serbia, in line with EU best practices: Officials from the Innovation Fund of the Republic of Serbia visited the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation in Helsinki. Finnish experts provided practical advice on the establishment and operation of an innovation ecosystem in line with EU best practice, on performance and impact indicators and on evaluation mechanisms for nationally funded start-ups. The study visit succeeded in bringing together experts from one of the best performing EU Member States according to the European Innovation Scoreboard, with colleagues from Serbia seeking exactly that expertise. According to the beneficiaries, the event was key in allowing the beneficiaries to strengthen their knowledge and capacity in the area, contributing to the government’s efforts to develop a knowledge-based and innovative economy. (Event documentary Review, after 6 month Evaluation Survey)
I-3.1.3 –	<p>Stakeholders’ overall views on the extent to which TAIEX events contributed to strengthen individual and institutional capacities in the long run for reform processes and management of funds</p> <p>(Both general perception and specific examples gathered through answers to open-ended questions in the survey focused on case studies, and interviews.)</p>
	<p>Evidence gathered from the survey results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the individual level: 96.8% of participants agreed that the events had increased their knowledge, 90.5% that they had increased their capacity to do their work, and 76.8% that it had concretely changed their way of working. • At the institutional level: 89% of beneficiaries and 97% (38% strongly) of experts agreed that TAIEX events had led to improvements in beneficiary institutions’ administrative capacities • On sustainability of contributions to capacity building: 25% of beneficiaries reported that TAIEX driven improvements in administrative capacity had lasted or were expected to last for more than 3 years, 40% between 6 months and 3 years, and 13% less than 6 months. <p>Evidence gathered from interviews and open questions to surveys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, consensus among interviewed beneficiaries that TAIEX was an effective instrument for capacity building.

- However, interviewees and respondents to surveys identified a number of factors that undermined the effectiveness of the instrument:

Follow-up of events by beneficiaries:

- Comments that in some cases beneficiaries did not follow-up on results but follow-up identified as essential for effectiveness and sustainability of results. As one expert put it: “the improvements highly depend on the willingness of beneficiaries to make such improvements. During the visits all information on possible improvements was provided, meetings with other institutions organized, however no further activities from beneficiary side were done.”
- In the surveys, 76% of beneficiaries indicated that to their knowledge in at least one of the events they had participated in there was no internal follow-up of the event. On the other hand, 16% indicated that there had been one or multiple meetings after at least one of the events they had participated in to define how to apply the knowledge developed/recommendations received, 27% that one or more internal debrief sessions were conducted to share the knowledge gained during the event, 12% that a TAIEX follow-up event was requested/organised and 45% that materials used/produced during the event were circulated internally.
- Significant variation across strands in terms of follow-up by beneficiaries according to former and current TAIEX Teams staff interviewed.
- A few of the interviewees and survey respondents suggested that the TAIEX Team should be more actively engaged in the follow-up of the results of the events by for example organising follow-up meetings six months after the organisation of the events. In the surveys, 8% of respondents disagreed that TAIEX provided sufficient support for the follow-up of events, with 8 beneficiaries explicitly commenting that the TAIEX Team should systematically organise follow-up sessions to check progress and provide support for the implementation of recommendations.
- One of the EUDEL respondents to the survey also suggested that for the Enlargement Region the implementation of TAIEX recommendations should be closely monitored and that “another mission should not be organized [on the same topic] until requirements from previous ones are completed. Piling up recommendations from multiple missions makes no sense and is just wasting of resources”.
- Interviewed Commission staff highlighted that a more active engagement of the TAIEX Team in the follow-up of events would require a significant number of additional resources and that it would be particularly challenging given the large volume of events.

Agenda of events:

- Comments in surveys that the content of the event was in some cases too general to allow beneficiaries to achieve concrete changes. This was mostly the case for workshops.
- “It will be better if all speakers/experts talk more specifically about the steps that we should follow, not only in principle. Which are the most important policies to be met etc” or as several others indicated “we need some practice and not only presentations to be able to review legislation”. (Beneficiary survey response.

Attendance of the event by the most appropriate participants:

- One of the respondents to the survey explicitly linked the sustainability of TAIEX results to “the choice of right topics and the engagement of the right participants”, arguing that these elements are more important than follow-up to ensure that results are sustained.
- In one of the events of the case studies it was reported that the key person for the targeted reforms was last minute unable to attend due to time constraints/ conflicting obligations and this meant that discussions could not sufficiently advance.
- In the after 6-month evaluation, experts suggested that 8% of the events were not attended by the most appropriate participants (this share was particularly high for workshops).

Contextual Factors:

- Comments by interviewees from the Commission that political context and “political will” as important for the effectiveness of TAIEX.
- In Armenia, one of the experts commented that the fragile political context partially constrained the effectiveness of the instrument. According to him “keeping in mind the highly fragile political situation and therefore only partial readiness to implement the reform ideas in Armenia, the aim of the mission was achieved partially and is a subject to possible next missions”.
- In Uzbekistan, one interviewee commented that political instability meant that the staff of national authorities changed every 1-2 years, and as a result administrative capacity was lost before it could be institutionalized through structural reforms.

Multi-country events:

- Comments in the survey that some multi-country events described were general, the number of participants as too large to allow for meaningful engagement, and the simultaneous interpretation into many languages as problematic.
- In one case English was used as a universal language, but there were a number of beneficiaries complaints by some who did not understand.

Online Events:

- A number of challenges were identified through surveys and interviews:
 - Lack of informal interactions and tendency for one-way communication: Informal interactions were identified as key for trust building and network formation. Similarly, Q&A sessions were identified as important for the effectiveness of TAIEX but in online events people seemed to be less likely to engage with them.
 - Difficulties in internet connection/ technical issues: A number of solutions were employed including the option to have events organised in EU Delegations where connection was ensured. Test runs were organised before events to ensure that speakers knew how to access and use the platform and extensive technical support was provided to all participants. Nevertheless, technical/ connection issues persisted, with a number of events facing significant delays because of them.
 - Challenges in translation: A platform that allowed for simultaneous interpretation was employed. However, a number of challenges were reported including the difficulty in having interpreters in individual break out rooms.

JC.3.2	TAIEX support has triggered discussions and concrete actions for structural reforms
--------	---

I-3.2.1 –	Overview of TAIEX events in case studies that triggered discussions and concrete actions for structural reforms.
-----------	--

Evidence gathered from documentation and case studies:

- In Croatia, a series of three events in 2019 and 2020 on strategic policy making and performance assessment of public policies and programmes (1 workshop, 1 study visit in Finland and 1 in Ireland) were reported to have led to reforms in the beneficiary Ministry for Regional Development and EU Funds. The three events resulted in the following: a) design and implementation of new internal working procedures and coordination mechanisms both in the beneficiary institution and at national Government level; b) drafting of new Impact assessment guidelines, driven by an increased awareness of the importance of Impact Assessment and building on the good practices identified during the workshop; and c) the establishment of a New Independent Sector for Strategic Development Management and Coordination of EU Investments and the introduction of regular trainings to ensure that the sector would continue to pursue the identified good practices.
- In Kosovo, the series of three TAIEX Expert Missions in 2016 on Review of the Strategy on Biodiversity 2011-2020 and Development of an Action Plan 2016-2020 played a key role in the development of the action Plan on Biodiversity according to beneficiaries. The first one

had been used to identify gaps between the Kosovo Biodiversity Strategy and the EU Biodiversity Strategy. The second one to discuss concretely changes to be made in the strategy and the third one to review the draft strategy and New Action Plan. The participants came from NGOs and the University of Pristina as well as senior officers from different departments of the government and the same expert was used for all three events. The three events built directly on the findings of one another and directly contributed to the development of the draft Action Plan and the revision of the Strategy. They also encouraged the establishment of a small working group to discuss and draft a project concept for a future IPA project, taking the outcomes of the ECRAN activities ('Assessment of State of Implementation and Identification of Steps Towards SPA and pSCI Designation in Kosovo') into account while relying on the expertise of the TAIEX expert. It also encouraged the collaboration with SIDA on several small projects.

- In Cyprus, an interviewee stated (MN_012) stated that through the TAIEX event "they developed the primary legal text on statistics with experts to lay the foundation for establishment of an independent statistic institute (...). Institute was established and TAIEX experts helped build capacity and showed how to do statistics with EU standards. As a result, they could give more assistance from the aid program side. They are now contracting out for the supply of IT infrastructure and mobilising technical assistance from MS to get the institute up and running. The relevance was much beyond the legal text, it had a multiplier effect on more specific and solid assistance. This shows that it's relevant not only for specific objectives, but also for other objectives like social and economic development of the community. Another example is Halloumi - registered as PDO: TAIEX helped raise the standards so that producers would be able to sell it as PDO."
- In Moldova, during the period 2015-2020, the National Bank (NBM) benefitted from approximately 13 TAIEX missions. According to the beneficiaries, these led to the adoption of an effective model for the national system of preventing and combating counterfeiting of the national currency based on the EU legal framework; improved knowledge of best practices on enforcement and alignment with EU legislation in the field of Anti Money Laundering/Combating Financing Terrorism; adjustment of its internal procedures regarding the assessment of market risk and interest rate risk in non-trading activities both from on-site and off-site perspective; drafting, approval and implementation of a new methodology for assessing capital adequacy of banks; reviewing of internal methodologies with a view to developing a complex macroprudential stress testing framework of the banking system.
- **Enabling the adoption of a new law on cybersecurity in Ukraine:** Cybersecurity was one of the key strategic priorities for the EU's cooperation with Neighbourhood partners as set out in the Joint Communication on the ENP review (JOIN(2015) 50 final) adopted on 18 November 2015. A series of events were organized to strengthen cybersecurity capacity of the relevant authorities in Ukraine. The initial TAIEX workshop in 2016 in the area of cyber security of civilian critical infrastructure led to the identification of a number of steps Ukraine had to take in the area. The 2017 study Visit on Resilient and Efficient Institutions working on Cyber-Security in Ukraine allowed beneficiaries to observe key EU practices in the field. Beneficiaries reported that following the series of events the cyber capacity of the relevant national authorities was significantly strengthened, fostering the necessary environment to the adoption of a new law on cybersecurity in the end of 2017. Source: Interviews, Documentary Review, Survey, After 6 month evaluation
- In Azerbaijan the 2019 TAIEX Workshop on Carrying out Efficient Customs Control of Travelers was conducted to assist the frontline customs officers in carrying out customs controls of travelers and goods more effectively in line with EU legislation. The beneficiaries reported that based on the knowledge obtained during the workshop, it was decided to create a special department specifically dealing with travelers within the customs' authority. In addition, new instructions to the local customs departments were issued and amendments to the existing guidelines for travelers' control were made. The participants conducted dissemination activities at their working places to ensure the

institutionalization of the knowledge they had acquired including the sharing of all the workshop materials and the production of an additional report summarizing the workshop's findings.

- In Armenia, the 2019 TAIEX Peer Review Mission on Police reform was reported to have significantly strengthened participants understanding of EU Police-related legislation. A number of organisational changes were reported to have been initiated on the basis of the recommendations of the TAIEX event and the mission was overall described as “crucial for the ongoing Police Reform in Armenia”.

Significant differences across strands in terms of their contributions to structural reforms as attested both the documentary reviews and by the after-6 month evaluations.

- In the South Neighbourhood no concrete examples of structural reforms have been identified as emanating from TAIEX. According to interviewees, the political context, the local capacity and commitment of the beneficiaries at the local level, as well as the differences in the types of events organized appear to account for the differences in those strands.
- Under TAIEX REGIO, as identified by a recent evaluation of peer-to-peer capacity building instruments of DG REGIO, structural reforms i.e. changes in “the overall national system managing the Funds” are not frequently observed, and two reasons are presented for this: lack of strategic approach and lack of inclusion of the events in the local administrative capacity plans. Results most frequently achieved are the improvement of professional knowledge and expertise, networking and soft skills at the individual level. Results in capacity building at the institutional level are less frequent, but are favoured by narrowing the scope and targeting changes that are quick to implement.

Evidence gathered from interviews:

- One of the interviewees (MN_230) declared that “there were times when the government knew exactly what they needed to do to meet the conditions but couldn't make it happen. Having peers come and explain how to turn theory into practice was necessary for the reforms to take place.”

I-3.2.2 –	Stakeholders' overall views on the extent to which TAIEX has triggered discussions and concrete actions for structural reforms and towards other TAIEX objectives
-----------	---

Evidence gathered from the surveys and the after months evaluation:

- After 6 month evaluations: 46% of events led to drafting a new law/act or modification of an existing one (either presented or adopted), 29% to organisational changes - creation of new departments/units/positions , and 69% to improved internal working procedures. In the case of TAIEX REGIO, in particular, 59% of events led to improvements in the management and control system of funds and, more broadly, 71% to improved administrative capacity of body(ies) involved in the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds.
- Beneficiary surveys: 65% of beneficiaries indicated that at least one of the events they had participated in had contributed to formal changes in working procedures or organizational structures in their institution, 47% to adoption of new public policy, 45% to modification of existing public policy, 59% to improved application or enforcement of legislation, 63% to adoption of EU standards, norms and practices, and 80% to informal but significant changes in the ways of working.
- FGD with ENI EAST TAIEX NCPs and EUDEL TAIEX Focal Point: TAIEX effective as an instrument to support reforms but less so than capacity building. Differences across sectors. Depends on strong commitment by beneficiary institutions. Need of follow-up.
- FGD with IPA TAIEX NCPs and EUDEL TAIEX Focal Point: TAIEX effective as an instrument to support reforms but less so than capacity building. Several examples of reforms in the context of the accession process.
- Interviews with EUDEL in ENI SOUTH : Consensus that TAIEX is not an instrument for reforms in the region.

JC 3.3	TAIEX support was of sufficient critical mass or leverage in the different regions and countries in which it intervened to contribute to structural reforms
I-3.3.1 –	Comparison of TAIEX support (budget) to overall support for structural reforms in a region or country

Evidence gathered:

- In the period 2015-2020, a total of about 120 million were committed for TAIEX, and a total of EUR 67 million were spent for the completion of events. (Inventory data)
- The table below details the TAIEX budget by strand as a share of the funds allocated to the corresponding financial instruments over the period 2015-2020:

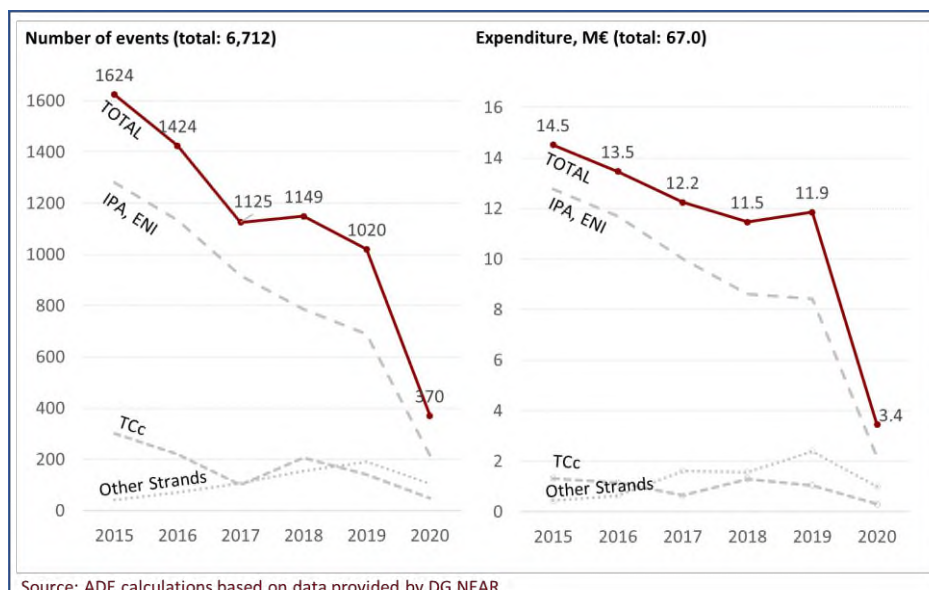
Table 9: The TAIEX budget by strand as a share of the funds allocated to the corresponding financial instruments over the period 2015-2020

TAIEX STRAND	Average TAIEX budget per year, EUR million	Average budget of supported instrument, per year, EUR million	Average budget of supported instrument, per year, share
IPA	13.4	1,561	0.9%
ENI	6.8	2,200	0.3%
TcC	1.4	33	4.2%
SRSP	0.5	36	1.3%
EIR	0.4	n.a.	n.a.
REGIO	0.3	n.a.	n.a.
PI	0.9	136	0.6%
INTPA	0.7	75,200	0.001%

Source: ADE

- The number of TAIEX expenditures and the number of TAIEX events have significantly been declining since 2015. This decline has been primarily driven by TAIEX IPA, ENI and TcC strands. The following graph illustrates the Number of events and expenditure, total and detail of largest strands (IPA, ENI and TcC).

Figure 83: The Number of events and expenditure, total and detail of largest strands (IPA, ENI and TcC)



Source: ADE calculations based on data provided by DG NEAR

- A large share of TAIEX's contracted funds (38%) was not used over between 1st of August 2016 and 31st of July 2020. There was large variation across strands, The table below presents the share of contracted funds used over this period:

Table 10: The share of contracted funds used over this period

Domain	Contracted	Funds Used	Funds Used (%)
IPA	36,278,554	19,626,483	54%
ENI South	10,120,000	6,362,154	63%
ENI East	9,820,000	8,351,292	85%
FPI	3,500,000	2,768,390	79%
REGIO	2,120,000	1,222,195	58%
TCc	5,591,560	3,522,540	63%
SRSP	2,848,500	1,939,837	68%
ENV	650,000	502,138	77%
INTPA	200,000	32,121	16%
Total	71,128,614	44,327,150	62%

Source: ADE

I-3.3.2 – Extent to which TAIEX provided sufficient leverage to play a role in structural reforms

Evidence gathered:

- Clear evidence from after 6 months evaluations that TAEIX led to structural reforms in the different countries and regions where it intervend. (See JC 3.2 for more details)
- Significant variation across strands and across types of events. (See JC 3.2 for more details)
- TAIEX often described as critical for a number of structural reforms during interviews, surveys, and after 6-month evaluation comments.
- One of the interviewees (MN_230) declared that “there where times when the government knew exactly what they needed to do to meet the conditions but couldn’t make it happen. Having peers come and explain how to turn theory into practice was necessary for the reforms to take place.”

JC 3.4 TAIEX has contributed to the specific objectives in the different EU Ms and Partner Countries in which it intervened²⁷

I-3.4.1 – Extent to which TAIEX was effectively geared towards these specific objectives in the different regions

Evidence gathered from survey results:

- TAIEX was designed to support specific objectives through its different strands were introduced to support: namely a) strengthening the administrative capacity of public institutions to design, formulate and/or implement their reform processes and/or manage funds; b) aligning partner countries with EU norms, standards and regulatory frameworks; c) strengthening policy dialogue and advancing specific bilateral framework agreements (TAIEX PI).
- The application approval process included a requirement that the events are aligned with EU priorities. According to interviews events not intended to contribute to such objectives were rejected.
- In the surveys targeting TAIEX participants, 93.6% (41.4% strongly) of beneficiaries and 10 out of 11 (9 strongly) of Commission/EEAS staff agreed that TAIEX events contributed to advancing EU priorities; 91.9% of beneficiaries and 10 out of 11 (5 strongly) of Commission/EEAS staff agreed that TAIEX events helped beneficiary countries/territories to advance along their national needs, priorities, and interests.
- In the surveys, 94% of beneficiaries and 97% of experts agreed that TAIEX events had led to higher awareness of EU norms and standards among involved public institutions.

- In the after 6 months evaluations, 85% of events were described as having led to a better understanding of relevant EU legislation within beneficiary public institutions.

I-3.4.2 – Examples of specific contributions made by TAIEX in achieving these objectives

On TAIEX's strengthening the administrative capacity of public institutions to design, formulate and/or implement their reform processes and/or manage funds: See JC 3.1

On TAIEX's support for aligning partner countries with EU norms, standards and regulatory frameworks:

- There is a plethora of evidence suggesting that TAIEX supported the alignment of Partner countries, in particular in the region of Western Balkans and Turkey whereby alignment was a strong requirement for accession negotiations to advance. The instrument supported alignment in a number of ways beside administrative capacity building and structural reforms including identification of gaps, design of reform plans, increased awareness of EU Norms, standards and practices:

Identification of gaps:

- Between 2015 and 2020, a total of 136 peer-review missions and work from home events in support of peer-review missions took place in the region of Western Balkans and Turkey (TAIEX IPA) and a total of 8 bilateral screening events were organized. These events served in identifying the gaps between EU beneficiaries' regulatory frameworks and the EU acquis, in assessing the progress beneficiaries had made in view of the Copenhagen Criteria, and in providing concrete recommendations about how identified gaps could be addressed. They were a key source of information for policy planning, including for the organization of other follow-up actions (including other TAIEX events) by both the Commission/EEAS and beneficiaries themselves, to ensure that the identified gaps were addressed.
- Even when the identification of gaps was not the explicit objective of the TAIEX expert missions, it was often a result thereof, with several of the final reports of expert missions reviewed for the case studies (across all strands) identifying areas for further action either through TAIEX or other EU and non-EU capacity building instruments.

Support for the design of Economic reform plans

- A total of 16 TAIEX expert missions (4 in Bosnia & Herzegovina, 4 in Albania, 4 in North Macedonia, 3 in Montenegro, 1 in Kosovo) and one multi-country workshop took place to support the preparation of the Annual ERPs. These are a key Commission requirement for candidate and potential candidate countries.
- Several beneficiaries commented on how TAIEX had made them realize the importance of some EU practices which then led them to adopt them.

There is much more limited evidence of use of TAIEX for the identification of gaps outside TAIEX IPA. This partly reflects the different objectives of strands and EU priorities in the different regions. In TAIEX IPA, it was envisaged from the beginning that TAIEX would support the assessment of progress towards alignment and transposition of the different chapters of the Acquis. However, the difference is also partly explained by a lack of communication/ insufficient clarity. EUDEL staff in the ENI South and ENI East, during the FGDs and interviews expressed a clear interest in using TAIEX as a tool for policy planning and gaps assessment but it was not clear to them to what extent they could do so.

Increase awareness of EU legislation, norms and standards

- For example, in Azerbaijan, the workshop on School Self Evaluation was described as having strengthened beneficiaries understanding of EU practices in the field and in doing so having "changed the environment and [making directors] positive to have inspection in their school and to get feedback from inspectors as well". The follow-up TAIEX Study Visit on School Inspection Management (64347) allowed beneficiaries to closely observe how school inspections were conducted, strengthening their knowledge in the field and allowing them to adopt relevant practices back at home. (documentary review)
- After 6 months evaluations: 85% of events were described as having led to a better understanding of relevant EU legislation within beneficiary public institutions a key

precondition for their implementation. In the surveys, 94% of beneficiaries and 97% of experts agreed that TAIEX events had led to higher awareness of EU norms and standards among involved public institutions.

Concerning TAIEX PI's support for Policy and Political dialogue (Source: TAIEX PI final report, interviews, documentary review for case study on TAIEX in the rest of the world)

- A number of examples have been identified whereby TAIEX PI paved the way to further policy and political dialogue. The workshop organised in support of the countries of the Quito Process in order to build a coordinated response to the regional mobility of migrants and refugees from Venezuela, resulted in closer cooperation with the EU. As a positive outcome of these exchanges, the EEAS was invited to the IV International Technical Meeting on Human Mobility of Venezuelan Citizens, within the framework of the Quito Process. Similarly, the study visit on the application of satellite positioning with Brazil, Chile and Mexico, according to the final report “contributed to pave the way for further dialogue and possible actions in these three countries. Brazil showed a strong interest in pursuing a dialogue on the European Global Navigation Satellite System (EGNSS). Chile signed an agreement on Copernicus to host a regional hub for Earth Observation data. Mexico suggested to start building future collaboration around some concrete Galileo-related physical/testing for research purposes.” Finally, the Workshop on EU-Kazakhstan Climate Action which was described as important for a longer-term engagement with the partner country because it “served as a deliverable under the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement” was a first step in developing closer cooperation between the EU and Kazakhstan on climate action.”
- In addition, TAIEX PI events have in several instances been used to support High Level Dialogues. The Regional Workshop Building a Pacific Alliance Common Visa was organised to pave the way for HR/VP Federica Mogherini's visit to Mexico in September 2019. The series of TAIEX Workshops on Security and Resilience in a Damaged Climate World, implemented in Australia were used to pave the way for Director-General of DG DEVCO Stefano Manservigi's visit to discuss more cooperation on development aid in the Pacific. The Workshop on Strengthening Women's political participation in Kuwait, which a follow-up to the EU-Kuwait ad hoc informal Human Rights Dialogue. The expert mission in Support of the High-Level dialogue on Security and Justice held in Mexico in 2016 was explicitly organized to follow-up on the High-Level dialogue conducted.

Concerning TAIEX's support for EU specific country and thematic area objectives:

- Within the different countries and thematic areas where TAIEX intervened, it supported the specific objectives dictated by the different country, regional and thematic strategies. For example, in the Western Balkans it supported the Economic Reform Plans, in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, the implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement in Ukraine and in Lebanon and Jordan the fight against the trafficking of illicit arms.
 - Support for the EU-Armenia CEPA: The EU-Armenia CEPA was signed in 2017 to strengthen political and economic cooperation and strengthen trade relations while also supporting EU broader objectives in the East Neighbourhood. Two of the events of the case studies in 2020 were explicitly requested by Armenia to enable it to abide by the requirements of the CEPA. The 2020 TAIEX Online Expert Mission on the approximation to the Environmental Liability Directive (70456) was requested to allow the fulfilment of the relevant obligations under the CEPA. The event resulted in concrete recommendations about what the country needs to do to achieve the approximation. Similarly, the 2020 TAIEX Online Expert Mission on Harmonisation of International Road Freight Regulations with EU requirements (70718) provided direct support for the harmonization of the regulatory framework of the transport sector in line with Armenia's obligations. (Source: Documentary Review, Surveys, After-6-month evaluations)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support for the EU-Georgia Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA): The 2020 TAIEX Online Expert Mission on development of a National Maritime Single Window (70633) in Georgia was requested by the beneficiaries to allow them to address key gaps in the implementation of the Association Agreement (AA) and DCFTA. This was also seen as an EU priority with DG NEAR C1 and the EUDEL having strongly endorsed it. The punctual support provided by TAIEX was described as very helpful although the online format of the event created a number of challenges. (Source: Documentary Review, Surveys, After-6-month evaluations) ▪ Support for the design of the Economic Reform Plans (ERPs) in Pre-Accession Countries: TAIEX was systematically used in order to support countries in the preparation of their annual ERPs, which as of 2015, all candidate countries and potential candidates, in order to facilitate the convergence process, are requested to submit to the European Commission. A total of 16 TAIEX expert missions (4 in Bosnia & Herzegovina, 4 in Albania, 4 in North Macedonia, 3 in Montenegro, 1 in Kosovo) and one multi-country workshop took place to support the preparation of the Annual ERPs. The use of TAIEX in the context of the ERPs has highlighted the importance of its rapid and short-term nature: The countries need to submit the ERPs on 31st January of each year but they are often unaware of the specific gaps until only a couple of months before the deadline. (Source: Documentary Review, Interviews)
JC 3.5	The creation of TAIEX strategic enhanced TAIEX's capacity to contribute to structural reforms and, more in general, pursue EU priorities
I-3.5.1 –	Rationale of TAIEX strategic in terms of contributing better to structural reforms/ other EU priorities
<p>Evidence gathered: Source: Interviews with current and former TAIEX Team staff, Annual Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations for the TAIEX strategic were done on different levels: note for the senior management of DG NEAR; meetings with all NEAR Head of Units; meetings with all NEAR directors; letters sent out to each beneficiary country and EU Delegations. In these letters countries were informed of the need to agree on the strategic orientations in a country and prioritisation of TAIEX events, including better filtering of demand-driven applications. • It was also on the agenda of the Institution Building Days in 2019 (annual gathering of all beneficiary countries and EUDs). • Main objective was better thematic prioritisation of TAIEX assistance and coordination with other Units. 	
I-3.5.2 –	Degree of alignment of TAIEX strategic initiatives with EU priorities within the sector/ region in which they are implemented
<p>Evidence gathered:</p> <p>TAIEX Strategic was a priori aligned with EU priorities. A number of concrete examples have been identified through the case studies of how TAIEX Strategic pursued key EU priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 200 TAIEX events were organized under TAIEX Strategic to support key environmental programs of the EU such as ECRAN, EPPA, RIPAP. • TAIEX IPA strategic event used to support countries in designing their Annual Economic Reform Programs – a requirement by the European Commission for candidate and potential candidate countries. • In TAIEX ENI, TAIEX Strategic was used to support the DCFTA and Association Agreements. For example, the 2020 TAIEX Online Expert Mission on development of a National Maritime Single Window (70633) in Georgia was strongly endorsed by the C1 and the EUDEL which identified it as very important in the implementation of the Association Agreement (AA) and DCFTA. 	

- Assistance to Jordan and Lebanon on the fight against illicit trafficking of firearms. Both countries were identified as key partners within the EU action plan on the fight against illicit trafficking of firearms and explosives and the EU Policy Cycle 2014-17.
- The 2017 TAIEX Regional Workshop on Circular Economy (65386) under TAIEX ENI was organised in support of the strategy elaborated by DG NEAR to strengthen collaboration with DG ENV and promote the Circular Economy agenda. The workshop provided updates on the developments of the circular economy in the EU and in the countries of the Eastern Partnership and contributed to the identification of possible areas of further cooperation with a view of promoting the circular economy in the context of the EU regional cooperation with the countries of the Eastern Partnership.

I-3.5.3 – Perception of the extent to which TAIEX strategic increased the capacity to contribute to structural reforms and other EU priorities
(Both general comments and specific examples will be sought in interviews)

Evidence gathered:

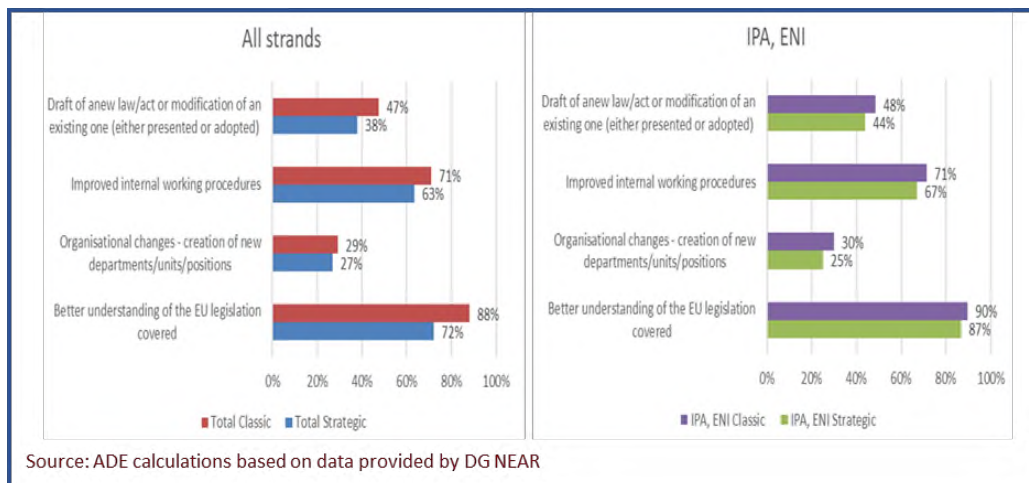
The following advantages of TAIEX Strategic were identified through interviews with Commission staff:

- Improved forecasting and sequencing of activities in support of given policy objectives.
- Improved coordination with other DG NEAR Units in the case of TAIEX IPA and ENI. This enabled the TAIEX Team to better anticipate and match DG NEAR priorities set up for different regions and countries.
- Improved prioritisation of events in the context of the staff constraints the TAIEX team was facing. TAIEX strategic events were given priority in terms of organisation and allocation of human resources.
- Use of TAIEX to pursue a number of issues of strategic importance of the EU that may not have been actively pursued by national authorities even though they are aligned with their priorities. Inventory analysis confirms a focus of TAIEX strategic on different thematic areas as compared to TAIEX classic.
- Organisation of multi-country events on issues of regional concern that are unlikely to have been requested by individual administrations and fostering of regional cooperation.

However:

- On Government Ownership: Some interviewees expressed concern about the implications of TAIEX Strategic on government ownership. In the surveys, 84.3% of respondents see TAIEX strategic as promoting government ownership of reform as compared to 97% for events requested by the Commission (EEAS).

Figure 84: Concerns about the implication of TAIEX Strategic on government ownership (All Strands, IPA, ENI)



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On capacity to lead to structural reforms: In the after 6-month evaluation evaluations, TAIEX strategic events were reported to be slightly less likely to lead to reforms and to a better understanding of EU legislation than TAIEX classic events. This was the case even when comparing within the same strands (TAIEX IPA, ENI). On contribution to pursuit of EU priorities: In the surveys, TAIEX events requested by the Commission do not appear to be seen as more effective in advancing EU priorities than TAIEX events requested by beneficiaries. 94% of respondents having participated in events requested by beneficiaries agreed that TAIEX events helped advance EU priorities and objectives in beneficiary countries/ territories as compared to 92% for respondents having participated in events requested by the Commission.
I-3.5.4 –	Extent to which the possibility to combine different programmatic approaches within the same country/institution enhanced the capacity of the instrument to promote structural reform as well as contribute to other objectives. Concrete examples of cases in which the two programmatic approaches were used in combination will be sought.
Evidence gathered:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is very limited evidence of efforts to combine different programmatic approaches Only two instances have so far been identified whereby a TAIEX Strategic event was followed up by a TAIEX Classic event and vice versa.
JC 3.6	TAIEX has contributed to reaching other objectives (also unexpected ones), including but not limited to the creation of public sector networks, reinforcing the EU's visibility as a global player, strengthening of the EU's normative power
I-3.6.1 –	Specific examples provided in documents or by stakeholders on TAIEX's contribution to advancing non-core objectives (such as the ones indicated above)
Evidence gathered:	
A. Strengthening EU's normative power and reinforcing EU visibility as a global player	
<u>TAIEX PI</u>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 TAIEX PI activities implemented in the field of space applications (Galileo and Copernicus) in 2017 and 2018. According to Commission staff: the event promoted European initiatives on space applications and informed about opportunities for stakeholders from the respective regions, placing the European Commission in the relevant influence arena. In particular, the TAIEX PI study visit on the application of satellite positioning with Brazil, Chile and Mexico “fulfilled the strategic interest of ‘exporting’ Galileo system beyond the EU borders.” (final event report). 2 TAIEX events were organized in India on Combatting Terrorism and Countering Radicalisation in 2018 and 2019. According to involved stakeholders, made the EU Delegation in the country a reference point for those issues as compared to other actors (source: case study on TAIEX in the Rest of the World, event reports, MN). 1 workshop on Security and Resilience in a Damaged Climate World in Australia, complemented by film screenings and exhibitions. Over 1000 participants and 57 speakers participated including several State Ministers and EU Heads of Missions. According to TAIEX PI final report: it allowed strong visibility of “climate and security, strong promotion of European leadership on climate action and facilitated contacts between practitioners.”
<u>TAIEX INTPA</u>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2020, the Ministry of Justice of Uzbekistan sought support from the EU to improve its capacities in terms of regulatory impact assessment and systematization of legislation. For reasons linked to negotiations with a previous government, EU cooperation funds in the country focused almost exclusively on the agricultural sector; leaving limited options to respond to support requests in other areas, including in particular Justice and Rule of Law. The flexibility of TAIEX funding, unlike other EU instruments, allowed the EU to support the Ministry of Justice in its endeavour. The organized event contributed directly to

capacity building as well as to the drafting of a Presidential decree on the comprehensive systematization of the national legislative base. The event also contributed to building a positive, strong working relationship between the EUDEL and the Ministry of Justice, with EUDEL staff being subsequently invited to contribute to discussion tables on Justice and Rule of Law, a topic from which they were previously absent. (Interview, Survey, Event documentary review).

Other strands

- No specific examples have so far been identified.
- Interviewees from Tunisia, India and Bosnia & Herzegovina indicated that the events they had participated in had led to a strengthening of the relations between the beneficiaries and the EUDEL in the country and in doing so had increased the likelihood that the beneficiaries would turn to the EU for further support.

Development of peer-to-peer-networks between Experts and Beneficiaries

A number of examples from case studies:

- 2020 TAIEX Workshop on Best practices in the field of public order and security in crisis management caused by COVID-19 (80006): assistance could have been delivered by the ongoing TA project as well but TAIEX was selected as it “presents a good occasion to bring closer together the Moldovan Carabinieri and its peers from EU MS (here: IT Carabinieri and FR Gendarmerie)”;
- 2019 TAIEX Study Visit on Macropudential Policy Instruments in Moldova (69096) the beneficiaries maintained contact with the Belgian Cadastre Department of Public Services Agency to support another one of their projects related to the creation of the national registry of real estate transaction, which will help in closing data gaps for real estate market.
- In the survey, an expert from TAIEX PI commented about how he had stayed in touch with the beneficiaries long after the event. The beneficiaries had asked him for support in the follow-up of the TAIEX event but also in the implementation of another project.
- An interviewee from Bosnia & Herzegovina, commented that the beneficiaries had developed their own network of EU MS experts following their participation in TAIEX events and as a result knew whom to contact to get help for each of the issues they faced.

Development of peer-to-peer-networks among Beneficiaries from different countries and Fostering of

Regional Cooperation

- In the Western Balkans and Turkey (TAIEX IPA) and in ENI, the fostering of regional cooperation repeatedly described as a key objective of the strand (Source: Commission Decisions, Annual Activity reports). Examples of events organized to promote cooperation and exchanges on common problems: the 2017 regional workshop on debating transport ahead of the Western Balkans Summit; the 2018 regional workshop on Restoring Trust and Supporting Reconciliation in the Western Balkans, the 2017 regional workshop on employment policies for young people who are not in employment, education or training for Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia; the 2017 regional workshop to assist all Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries in establishing Asset Recovery and Management Offices (ARO/AMO). (AAR 2017, AAR 2018, documentary review)
- In TAIEX PI beneficiary administrations emphasized the role of TAIEX in fostering regional cooperation. (Source: TAIEX PI Final Report). Examples of events include regional workshops on Space Applications with ASEAN and Central, Latin America; the regional workshop on EU-South Asian Cooperation on Combating Terrorism; the regional workshop on Intellectual Property Rights in Central America, the regional workshop on the Schengen System in Latin America; the regional workshop on Venezuelan Migration in Latin America; and the regional workshop towards building a Pacific Alliance common visa in Latin America. As highlighted in one final report, the regional workshop on Space Applications with ASEAN countries in Bangkok, Thailand constituted “a great tool for convening a regional level event. The financing of two participants of each ASEAN countries proved to be the key to success of the event to get a targeted audience together, to provide a space

for targeted networking and to inspire follow up actions from the participants.” (TAIEX PI 2019)

Gender Equality

- Over 50 strategic events have been organised under TAIEX IPA-ENI, TAIEX PI and TAIEX TCc between 2015 and 2020. The focus was mainly on gender-based violence as well as on the economic empowerment of women and the promotion of equal opportunities. For example, in 2019, a workshop in Turkey sought to boost the entrepreneurship of women in rural areas, economic diversification, and improved access to finance with the experts presenting a number of EU best practice and regulatory initiatives in this areas.
- A number of policies were adopted:
 - In 2016, in line with the EU Gender Action Plan II (2016-2020), TAIEX adopted the objective of promoting the equal participation of men and women in TAIEX events as both participants and experts. It also started calling on involved partner countries and EU Member States to take gender balance into consideration when nominating participants or proposing experts.
 - In 2017, a section was introduced in Expert mission reports, requesting experts to provide inputs on gender inequality in the areas covered by the event.
 - In 2019, to support future action on gender equality, questionnaires identifying obstacles in the area were circulated among National Contact Points from Member States and a sample of pre-selected experts. (AAR 2019).
 - In 2020, a Work-from-Home on the Gender Gap in experts in events organized under TAIEX IPA, ENI was organized.
- Mixed evidence on effectiveness of these policies:
 - In case studies, only 3 examples were identified where the dedicated section of final reports of expert missions on gender equality were filled in detail. In most cases this was left uncompleted and deemed irrelevant.
 - The share of events with less than 50% female participants has declined since 2016 from 51% to 40%. The decline is driven by the high participation of women in event in EU MS. The share of events with less than 50% women increased in the ENI South region and remained constant in the ENI EAST region and the TCc.
 - The use of female experts has consistently increased, rising from 34% in 2016 to 44% of experts recruited in 2020, partly reflecting the increased availability of female experts in the EDBE.

On Climate Change mitigation and adaptation

- Changes in internal policy (Source: AAR and interviewees):
 - Privileging direct flights for experts and participants
 - Find accommodation within walking distance of the venue.
 - Paperless events
 - Limited use of plastic bottles.
 - Reliance on goods and services with reduced environmental impact throughout their lifecycles and comply with green public procurement principles and the commission’s guidelines for sustainable meetings and events – for example by giving preference to environmentally certified hotels and catering services focused on reducing food waste.
- No clear evidence on the results of these policies: TAIEX’s high environmental impact (carbon footprint) due to large number of flights.

I-3.6.2 –	Stakeholders’ views on the role and contribution of TAIEX with respect to non-core objectives
-----------	---

Evidence gathered from the surveys:

Visibility of the EU and strengthening of relations with the EU

- According to the surveys, 68 % of beneficiaries and 75% of Commission/EEAS staff agreed (strongly or mostly) that TAIEX events led to the strengthening of relationship between the Commission/ EEAS and the beneficiaries.
- 86.8% of beneficiaries and 86.5% of Commission/EEAS staff agreed that the events had strengthened the perception of the EU as a valuable partner among beneficiary institutions.

Development of peer-to-peer-networks between beneficiaries and experts

- In the surveys, 86% of beneficiaries agreed that the TAIEX events had strengthened the relations between their institution and public institutions from the countries of origin of experts.
- 89% of the experts agreed that TAIEX events strengthened their network of professional connections with peers/ public officers from other countries. 42% of the experts listed the possibility to build/expand their professional network of peers as one of the three most attractive aspects of their participation in TAIEX events. In their comments, both in the surveys as well as in the projects' reports, the experts seemed to indicate that not only they had shared their knowledge but also in many cases that they had learnt a lot from beneficiaries.
- 52% of the experts reported having remained involved in some form with the beneficiary institutions/ participants after the conclusion of the event(s) they had participated in.

Development of peer-to-peer-networks among beneficiaries from other countries

- 80% of participants agreed, in the surveys that the events had led to a strengthening of relations between beneficiaries from different countries during multi-country events.
- Beneficiaries under TAIEX SRSP, TAIEX REGIO and TAIEX EIR commented on the ability of TAIEX multi-country events to foster cooperation across EU MS. Some also commented on how TAIEX multi-country events had strengthened their common EU identity. Under TAIEX EIR, 1/3 of events were multi-country.

Evidence gathered from Interviews:

- Several examples of peer-2-peer network formation.
- FGD experts reported having stayed in touch with beneficiaries in several occasions
- No progress on gender equality.
- FGD experts complained about lack of clear guidelines on how to fill in the section on gender. MN 756. "We did not know what to put there so we just improvised, sometimes we just recorded how many women had participated.
- High environmental footprint

EQ 4 - Effectiveness of the TAIEX implementation modalities

To what extent was TAIEX support flexible, service oriented and swift, as well as demand driven/policy oriented, and what factors enhanced or hampered such approach?

Judgment criteria and indicators

JC.4.1 The TAIEX institutional set-up and its approach to programming favoured being service oriented, flexible and swift

I-4.1.1 – Extent to which clear linkages can be established between the institutional set-up and approach to programming and being service oriented, flexible and swift

Evidence gathered:

- Quantitative analysis by approach to programming (classic vs strategic) and institutional set up (that varies by strand):
 - For request approval: 100% of TCC requests are approved within one or two weeks as they are introduced (TMS dataset), as described in figure 85 and 86.

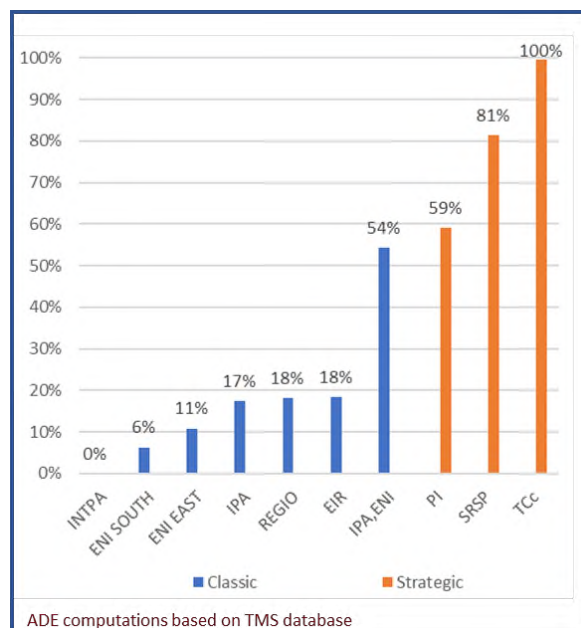
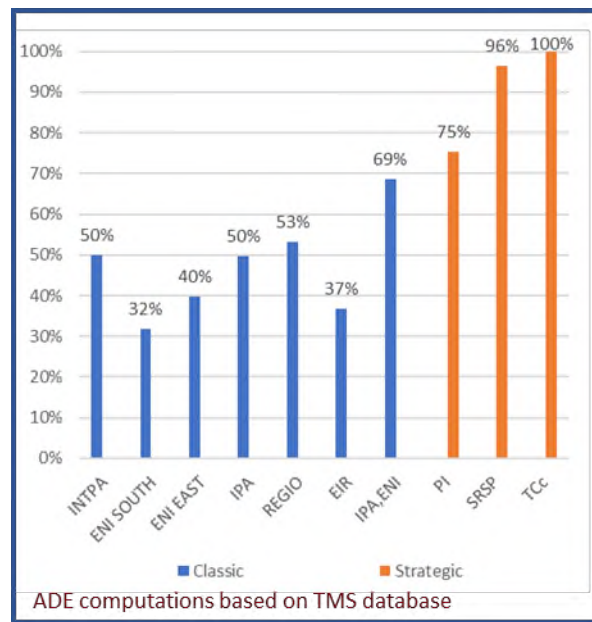
Figure 85: Share of requests approved in 1 week

Figure 86: Share of requests approved within 2 weeks



- For event organization after approval: the figures below describe that 96% of TCc events were organized within 3 months after approval and that over time, including and excluding 2020, just 1% of TCc events was organized more than 1 year after the approval.

Figure 87: Share of events organized within 3 months after approval

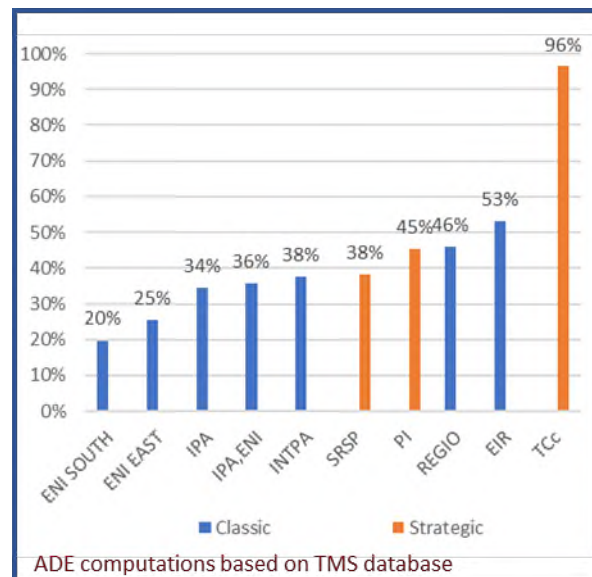


Figure 88: Share of events organized more than 1 year after approval

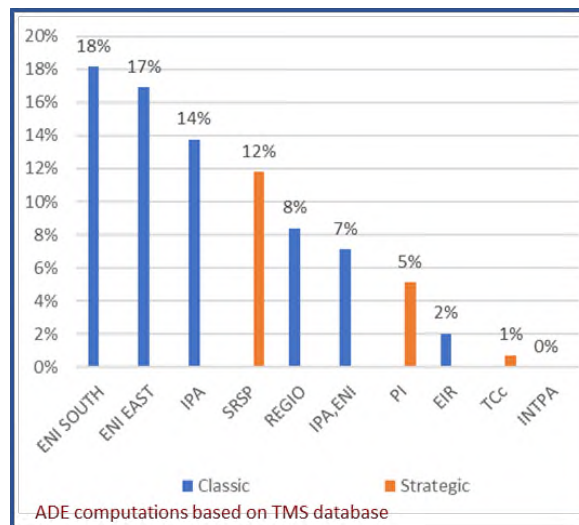
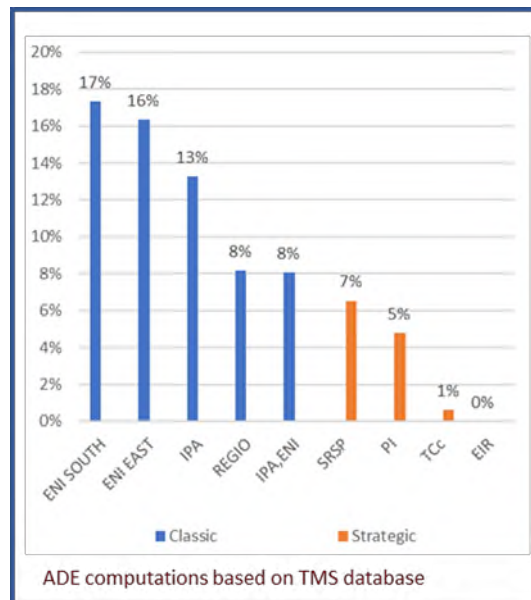


Figure 89: Share of events organized more than 1 year after approval, excluding 2020



I-4.1.2 – Extent to which stakeholders confirm that the institutional set-up and approach to programming favoured such reaching of objectives

Evidence gathered:

- Participant survey: 94% of participants agree (mostly or strongly) with the following statement: “Adequate support was provided by the EU delegation/ NCPs/ the TAIEX team during the application process”. 77% of participants agree (mostly or strongly) with the following statement: “TAIEX allowed the following better than it would have been possible through other options (including available EU and EU member states tools and initiatives)?: Rapid organization of events”
- The SRSP policy officers get in touch with TAIEX after the specific TAIEX component is identified within the larger project. TAIEX SRSP officer do not wait until they have all details, they submit the request as early as possible to indicate that there is project in the pipeline.
- The TAIEX team input little in the project, TAIEX is more considered as a system, which is considered more burdensome than other options used by the SRSP officer: “We find the process of taieux very burdensome and administrative at TSI. We are used to delivering projects on the grounds very quickly, going through procurement very fast. For taieux, so

many emails created, requirements on 45 days, ... it should be optimized.” (Interview MN_501). Changes that the officer would bring to TAIEX: “simplification of process and flexibility”

- Process for request: “there is a preparation work, in cooperation with the beneficiary. If we suppose that beneficiary know exactly which are the needs, they apply, the CE discusses the content of the application form with the technical staff of the DG Near, and then the DG Near approves it or not. There are criterias (justification, connection with EIR reviews...) There might be a consultation with beneficiaries, but mainly for details. After the approval of the event, which could be also expert mission, there is close cooperation with beneficiaries, often with experts. Sometimes, the technical staff of DG ENV is also asked to give its opinion. Then, agenda, names, title of presentation are defined.”
- “There is also the possibility that the beneficiary wants technical assistance, but without having prepared specific and concrete requests. They know they need help, but they need more help even to prepare the request. Then, the EIR team works with DG Environment and technical units to help beneficiaries.” Besides, the “role of project officer starts once the application has been approved. If we receive emails from people of ministries, asking how they can apply, the conversation starts but always with assessment of technical units.” (Interviewe MN_500)

JC.4.2	TAIEX was service oriented, flexible and swift
I-4.2.1 –	Number of events included in the case studies that can be considered service oriented, flexible and swift (based mostly on stakeholders’ perceptions)

Quantitative evidence gathered:

- The following graphs present TAIEX’s results in terms of speed of approval, from the moment the request was submitted to the final approval.
 - Figure 90 shows that 92.88% of requests were approved in one month. However, according to Figure 91, between 2015 and 2020, requests approved in 1 or 2 weeks increased, while requests approved in one month declined slightly.

Figure 90: Cumulated % of requests approved

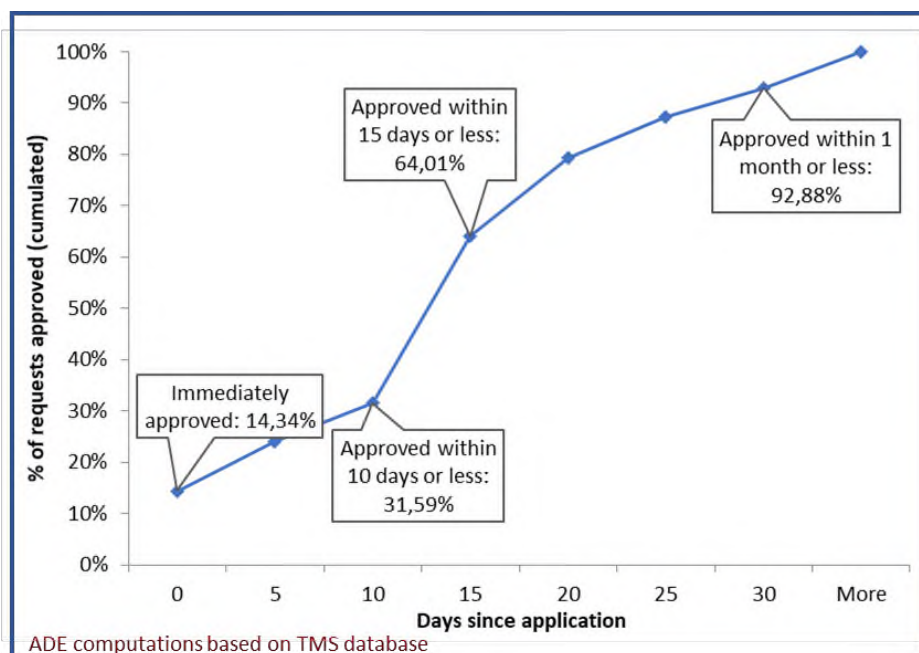
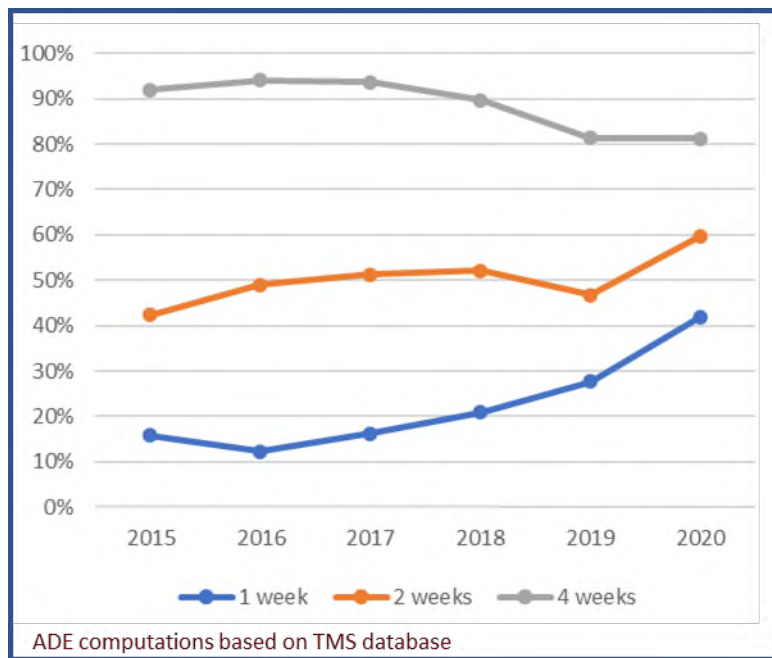
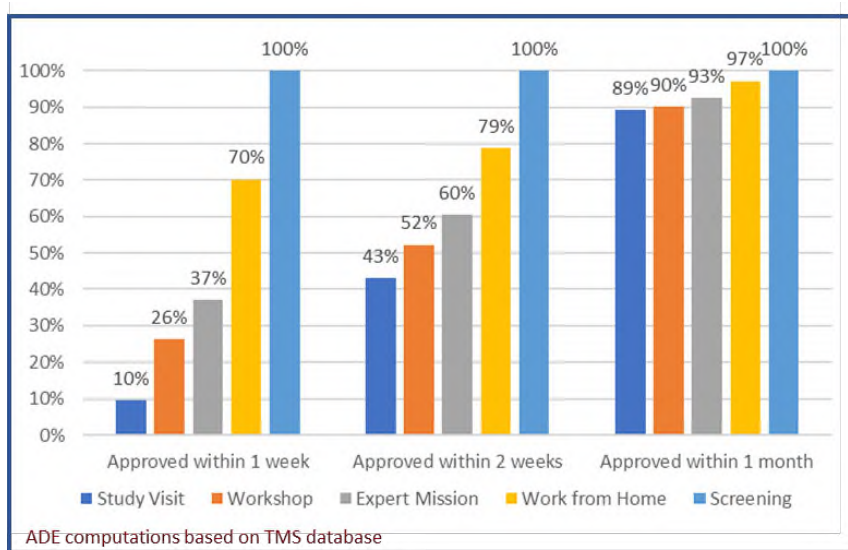


Figure 91: Request approval rate: % of requests approved within 1, 2 and 4 weeks; excluding TCc



- Figure 92 show the share of request approved within 1 week, 2 weeks and 1 month:100% of screening requests were approved.

Figure 92: Approval time by type of event: share of requests approved within 1 week, 2 weeks and 1 month



- As described below in figure 93, 94 and 95, the “work from home” requests approved within 1 week largely increased over time; workshop and study visit requests also witnessed an increase, while the expert mission request slightly decreased. Of these requests, 100% have been approved by TCc within 1 week, as well as within 2 weeks.

Figure 93: Share of requests approved within 1 week

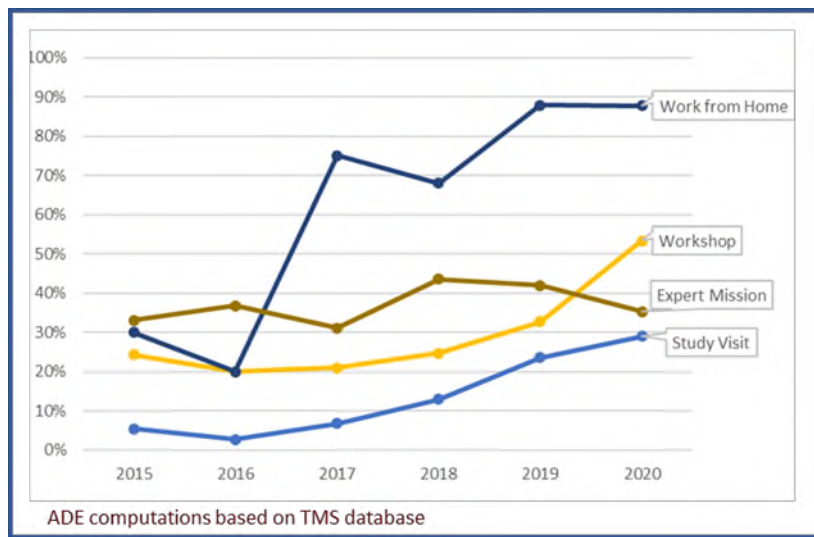


Figure 94: Share of requests approved within 1 week

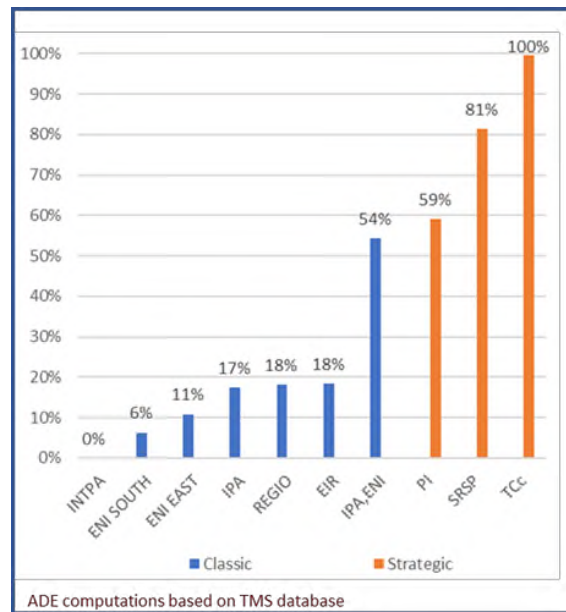
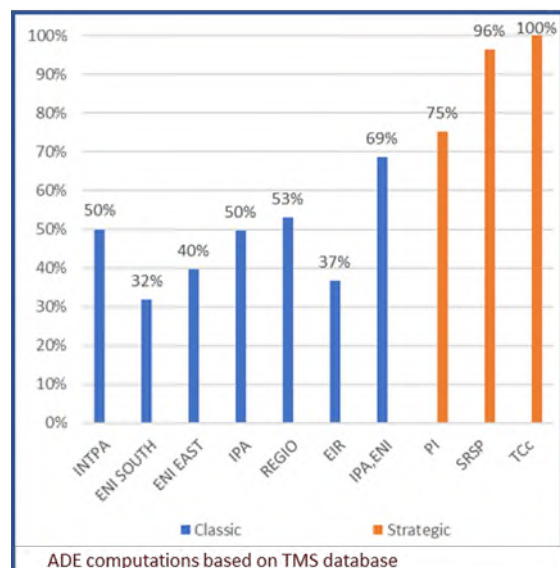


Figure 95: Share of requests approved within 2 weeks



- The next graphs present TAIEX’s results in terms of speed of organization, from the moment the request was approved to the organization of the event.
 - After 6 months 64,84% of events were organized (figure 96); between 2015 and 2020 (figure 97), the percentage of organized events in less than 6 weeks remained stable, while the percentage of events organized in less than 3 months or 6 months have slightly declined.

Figure 96: Cumulated % of events organized over time since approval

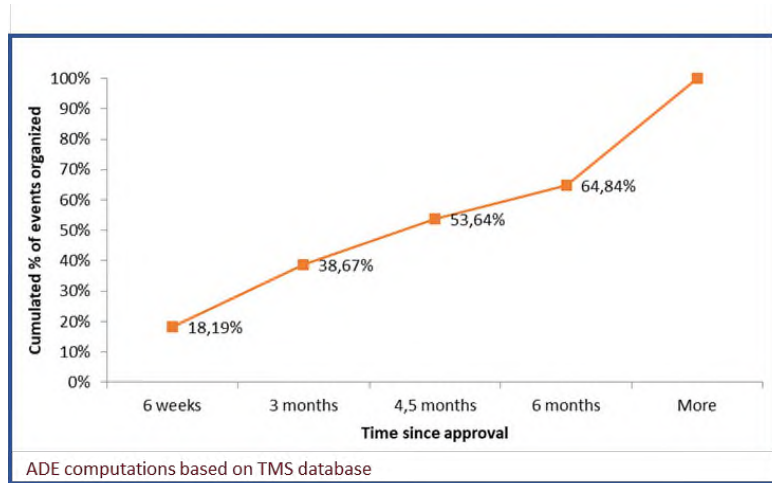
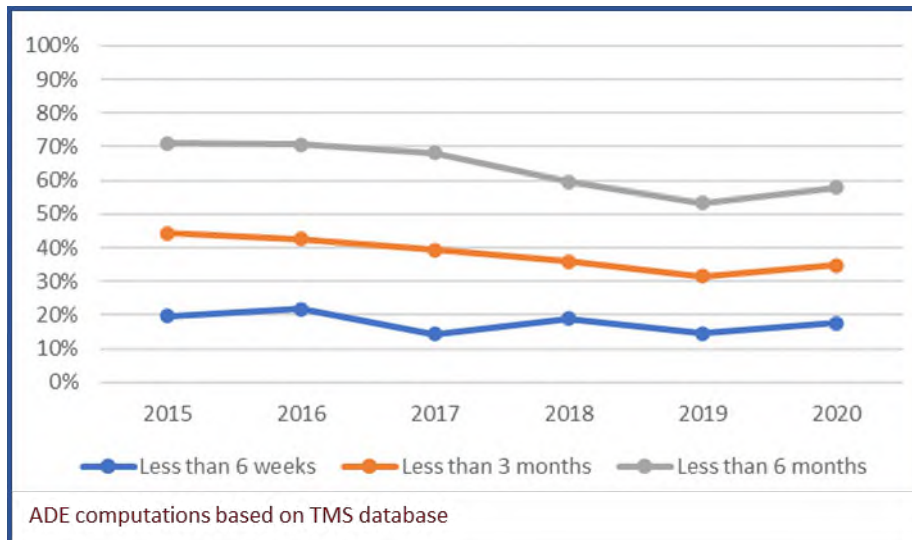


Figure 97: Share of events organized in less than 6 weeks, 3 months and 6 months after approval



- Figures 98, 99 and 100 reveal the share of events organized within 3 months after approval and 1 year after the approval, including and excluding 2020. 96% of events by TCc were organized within 3 months after the approval and just 1% within 1 year after the approval.

Figure 98: Share of events organized within 3 months after approval

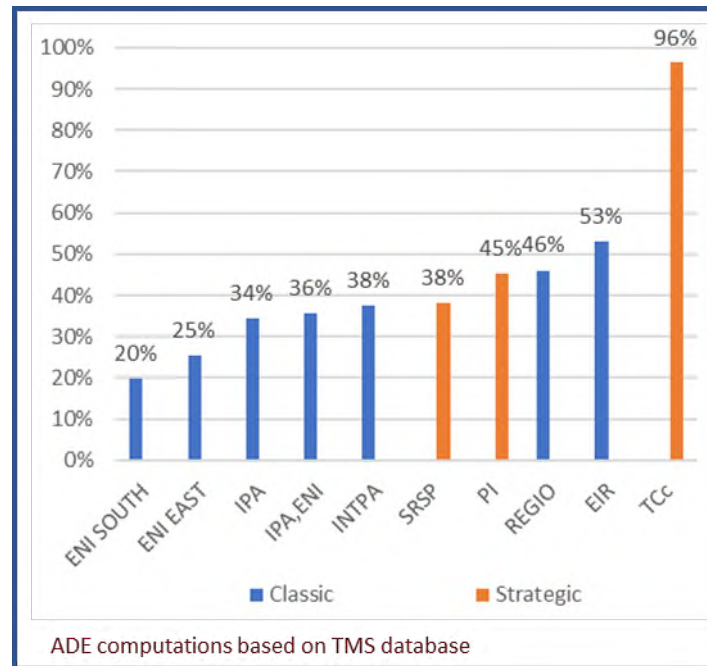


Figure 99: Share of events organized more than 1 year after approval

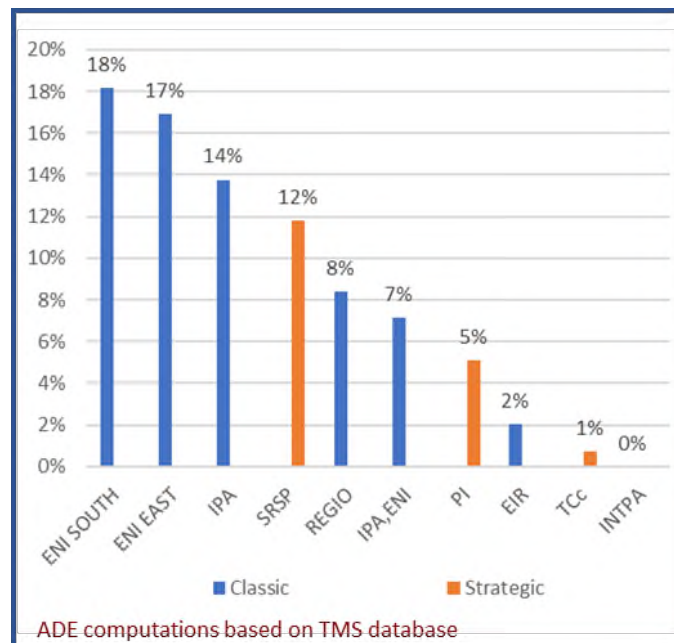
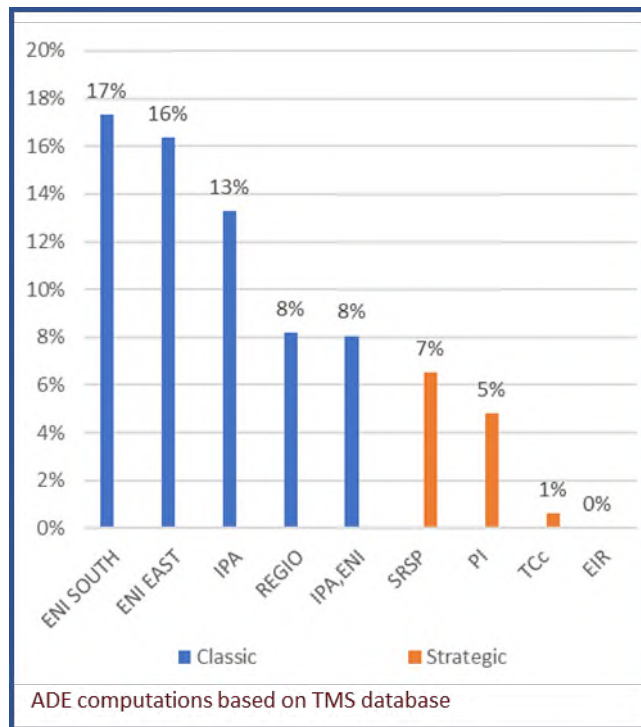
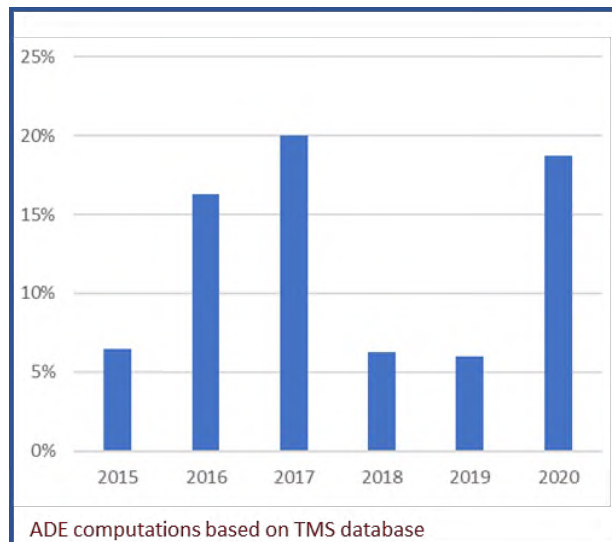


Figure 100: Share of events organized more than 1 year after approval, excluding 2020



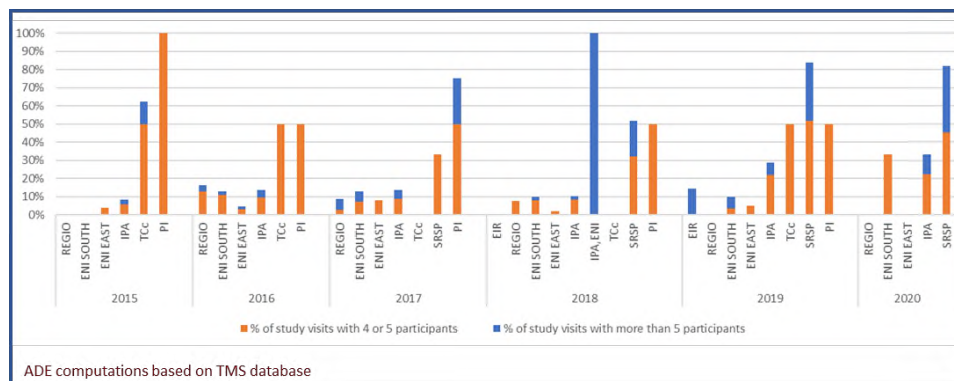
- There is a possibility to derogate to the maximum duration of events (5 days): as described in the figure below, TAIEX TCC offline events lasting more than 5 days are about 5 or 20% between 2015 and 2020.

Figure 101: TAIEX TCC: % of offline events lasting more than 5 days



- Participants also had the possibility to derogate to the maximum number of participants to study visits (3, or 5 within SRSP), as illustrated by the following graph.

Figure 102: Percentage of study visits with 4, 5 or more participants by strand and over time (excluding online events)



Possibility to derogate to the minimum delay between submitting the Authorization Form and the date of the event (21 days) and to the minimum delay between submitting the Order Form and the date of the event (10 days): in almost 40% of all cases, the Authorization Form has been sent less than 21 days before the event, in around 25% of the cases, the Order Form has been sent less than 10 days before the event.

I-4.2.2 – Overall view of stakeholders on the extent to which TAIEX was service oriented, flexible and swift

Evidence gathered from survey results:

- According to the results of the participants survey, participants involved in application or organization process of TAIEX events are highly satisfied with the speed of the process: for classic strands, 94% (77 responses out of 82) of respondent to the participant survey agreed (strongly or mostly) that TAIEX events were quick to organize. For strategic strands, this percentage decreases to 76% (35 responses out of 42 non-blank responses). Besides, 81% (out of 127 responses in total) for classic strands and 83% (out of 54 responses) for strategic strands agree that TAIEX allowed for quicker event organization than other options.
- More than 90% of participants who responded to the survey as having been involved either in the application or in the organization process agree (strongly or mostly) that sufficient flexibility was granted for the organization of TAIEX events. This figure increases to 95% among respondents for classic strands and decreases to 82% for strategic strands.
- More than 90% of respondent to the participant survey agreed (mostly or strongly) that events were well organized from a logistical point of view, that languages issues were adequately addressed²³⁸, that the IT support was adequate, both for in-person and online events. Among respondent to the expert survey, 95% of experts agreed that the TAIEX event were well organized from a logistics standpoint, with 71% strongly agreeing.

Evidence gathered from interviews:

- 300, 501, 506, 734, 743, - **setup as a single unit** allowed the capitalization on accumulated the knowledge and know-how - service oriented, flexible and swift.
- According to an interviewee (MN_300), the application to an event “is simple, it is fine. It is relatively quick to use” and that “Sometimes it is quite useful having a person following the whole project”.
- MN 734: Having DG NEAR leading TAIEX allows not duplicating the list of experts, and simplifies much the communication with experts/ MS and institutions as there is only one contact point.
- MN 734: Interviewee mentions TMS and the way they register participants as areas of improvement.

²³⁸ The findings from the survey should be interpreted with great caution regarding satisfaction with language issues as participants with a too limited command of one of the survey languages (English, French, Spanish, Turkish) will be less represented in the survey results.

- MN 743: Interviewee comments on TAIEX PI: “Some delegations understood how versatile and flexible the instrument is and started using it.” Talking about the added value of TAIEX interviewee mentioned flexibility, speed and tailored-made character as interesting features. Interviewee highlighted that application process and capacity to find experts worked well enough and that DG NEAR’s leadership was flexible, while TAIEX PI worked in an inclusive manner, involving relevant DGs and gathering knowledge.
- The design of the instrument allowed for **immediate assignation of budget to approved events**. - a single contractor managed the organization of all events under a multi-year procurement contract MN 501, 507.
- MN 501 “when a project is approved for funding, we have already identified the need. One we have identified the component within overall project (for example study visit), then we get in touch with TAIEX case handlers at DG NEAR. We discuss the process. We are expected to submit an application through their system, as early as possible, we don’t wait for the full information to be gathered, we want to indicate that in the pipeline there will be some project. We try to respect the requirement in terms of procedure to allow smooth organization.” Interviewee also mentioned “Whenever a working visit is needed, we use TAIEX. We also use it when single, one-off exchange with expert (expert mission) is needed”.
- MN 507: Interviewee mentioned that TAIEX was sufficiently flexible and service oriented, accommodating requests of the participants to the extent possible.
- Interviewees reported that in some strands, the support expected from the TAIEX unit is much higher (in TAIEX INTPA for example) than in other strands where support relies relatively more on the line DG (such as TAIEX SRSP): MN 63: “In the SRSP version, TAIEX is really just an instrument part of a bigger program. DG REFORM does essentially all the substantive work (including selecting the expert and how to intervene); DG NEAR’s job is mostly limited to making logistic arrangements (contacting the experts, organizing the event)”; MN 167: Interviewee mentions that SRSP allows more planning as they get more or less detailed information with anticipation. DG REFORM comes to TAIEX with the support of consultants. Interviewee highlights how the process is different from DEVCO where TAIEX unit need more time to set up events because of limited instructions ex case of Gabon: “the request basically says they need TAIEX to work on corruption, and that is it.”; MN 734: Talking about TAIEX INTPA interviewee said “Since nobody has much knowledge on the ground, the TAIEX team is much more involved since the very beginning”.
- Interviewees reported confusion around the communication tools and branding of the events, sometimes hampering the degree of service orientation: MN 506: Interviewee highlight how there is room for improvement on communication and that there is currently some confusion: “For example the promotional videos for 25 anniversary. They put the taix logo and then the name of policy. For us it is TAIEX – regional policy. Our tool is called Taix Rregio peer to peer. People wonder whether it is the same thing. It is not a big issue, most people will get it, but some get confused.”; MN 509: Interviewee highlighted issues with communication and branding: “Taix voulait absolument qu’on diffuse l’évènement comme un évènement taix.” And “Si l’évènement est nommé « taix »: les gens ne comprennent rien. On n’a jamais associé TAIEX aux discussions de fond.”; “Dans les pancartes à l’hôtel avec TAIEX uniquement, nos invités ne trouvaient pas la salle car ils ne connaissaient pas TAIEX.”
- Interviewees reported on effects of strategic events on swiftness: MN 010: On strategic vs classical events interviewee mentioned: “If you increase strategic, beneficiaries get less chances for demand-driven requests”; “If the beneficiary comes to you with a demand, they you know that they will really cooperate. With TAIEX strategic, it is less sure because they did not demand it.”; MN 503: On resource intensity of strategic events, interviewee said: “One year, we had above 350 requests in my team, there no way to deal with that with 3 project officers. We told everybody to be more mindful with their request.”; “Moving to strategic has also decreased the number of events because they take longer to

organize. There are many more stakeholders. We need to talk to geographical unit, EU delegation, need to agree on agenda, there is a lot of back and forth with everybody.”

- Interviewees expressed satisfaction with the speed of organization, except for TAIEX SRSP stakeholders: MN 02: “The main strength of TAIEX was speed. From approval to implementation in 6 weeks.”; MN 05: “Demand-driven events get what they need, faster”.
- MN 63: “TAIEX adds value because it has in place procedures that allow for easy contracting for very short terms”; MN 158: TAIEX is “able to adapt to needs on a short term basis.”; “For the service change, this instrument is able to adapt to fast changes.”; MN 300: “). It is easy to have activity in place in few weeks or maximum one month and a half.”; “TAIEX goes fast, but targeted.”; MN 501: Interviewee reported discontent with the speed of the procedure: “We find the process of taieux very burdensome and administrative at TSI. We are used to delivering projects on the grounds very quickly, going through procurement very fast. For taieux, so many emails created, requirements on 45 days, ... it should be optimized.”; Changes that the officer would bring to TAIEX included “simplification of process and flexibility”.
- MN 507: Interviewee pointed out TAIEX ability to adapt the needs: TAIEX events are flexible as to “meet expectations of the beneficiaries in terms of topics and dates”.
- MN 757: Interviewee mentioned issues related to interpretation: “Translators were not always of good quality”.
- limitations to the degree of flexibility that could be granted - •For study visits: While there appeared to be a good reason for it (host institution capacity), this has not been sufficiently communicated to beneficiaries – MN 502, 503. MN 502: “for study visits there was supposed to be 4 visits, but 3 were cancelled due to covid, done online using another instrument in taieux. The last one is organized with all participants who should have taken part in the original 4 visits.”; MN 503: “Limited number of participants in study visits because it is difficult to find host institution to host/accommodate so many participants.”
- MN 501: Interviewee commented on flexibility on TAIEX SRSP: “We find the process of taieux very burdensome and administrative at TSI. We are used to delivering projects on the grounds very quickly, going through procurement very fast. For taieux, so many emails created, requirements on 45 days, ... it should be optimized.”; Changes that the officer would bring to TAIEX included “simplification of process and flexibility”.
- MN 509: Interviewee commented on flexibility on TAIEX TSI: “Sur le plan logistique pur, c’est pas toujours facile.” “Le template du programme est très compliqué : la personne de taieux voulait un format spécifique qui devait être communiqué aux invités belges.”
- Interviewee commented on decreasing number of case-handlers and turnover: MN 02: “in 2017 everything worked well, but in 2018 and 2019 when the new managers came there were a lot of places not filled there was a lot of turnover in the unit”; MN 10: “TAIEX faced quite a lot of challenges, namely a reduction of staff: from 14 members to 1 member.”; MN 167: “Now 7 ppl on SLAs and 14 people working on NEAR TAIEX. It was always 7 on SLAs, but 21 working on NEAR”; MN 502: “Staffing is a constraint for organizing events: each case-handler should organize 5 events every month. There are replacements along the way, quite some turnover.”; MN 503: Outreach events have not taken place since 2019 because of staff turnover.; MN 507: Interviewee reported that change of project officer in taieux unit; missing casehandler in taieux unit; no one in counterpart DG “could be an explanation to rejection”. As for casehandlers interviewee reported shrunk from more than 40 people to 30 with many more SLAs.
- The peer-to-peer nature of the instrument played against the speed of implementation as the experts were employed by public administration and had to be discharged of their usual tasks for several days, which could not always be organized quickly - MN 735: “Low capacity of PA. Often experts are willing to participate but have a lot of activities and either do not respond immediately to TAIEX invitation or do not do it because they would not be able to organize their participation.”

- Online events effective solution for the continuation of service-provision when travel was not possible or not advised - MN 02, 230, 509, 734, 738; MN 02: “Last year we had a very big workshop the flagship and it made it possible for 100s and hunders of people to connect”.
- MN 230: “By default, online is okay and better than nothing but some topics cannot be shared online”; MN 509: on SRSP “Si pas online, on aurait toujours pas pu le faire.”; MN 734: Interviewee commented on online events: “not always the best, but very good alternative. Experts are more available and more participants can join.”; MN 738: Interviewee commented on online events: “A good solution at the moment (and they were positively surprised at TAIEX’s fast reaction to COVID)”.
- MN 744: Interviewee mentioned that online events “were able to crowd in more people”.
- Interviewees mentioned that online events facilitated the participation of high-profile experts who would otherwise not attend in-person events: MN 300: Interviewee commented on online events: “Mix seminars or activities can be very useful and avoid costs, particularly for short interventions. For experts who cannot travel, it could be very useful for persons who have limited agenda. It would also extend the roster of experts available, because many have limited time.”; MN 510: Interviewee mentioned that online events made possible to host “director generals who would never attend offline event. We have also had commission dropping in events for only 20 minutes.”
- Interviewees mentioned how online events gave rise to new practices: MN 506: Interviewee reported that online events gave possibility to do more series; MN 507: “We will not go back to full offline, for environmental reasons”; “To motivate experts to attend online events, were they had to do a lot of preparation for online events, we offered to pay for this extra work, and to motivate experts. This will remain, once you start to be more generous, it is hard to go back.”; “We allowed more experts. Expert mission normally not more than 2 or 3. Now we could accept 5.”; MN 870: Interviewee commented on online modality: “Once it worked you can become much more flexible. You do not have to go there physically: you can schedule over a longer period. It is a new way of doing.”

I-4.2.3 –

Factors that appear to have enhanced or hampered swiftness, flexibility and service orientation

Evidence gathered:

- See under I-4.2.1, disaggregated figures by type of event, strand and programmatic approach as 3 factors of swiftness, flexibility and service orientation.

EQ 5 - Cost Efficiency/effectiveness and administrative burden

To what extent were TAIEX events cost-efficient and cost-effective and implemented with limited administrative burden?

Judgment criteria and indicators

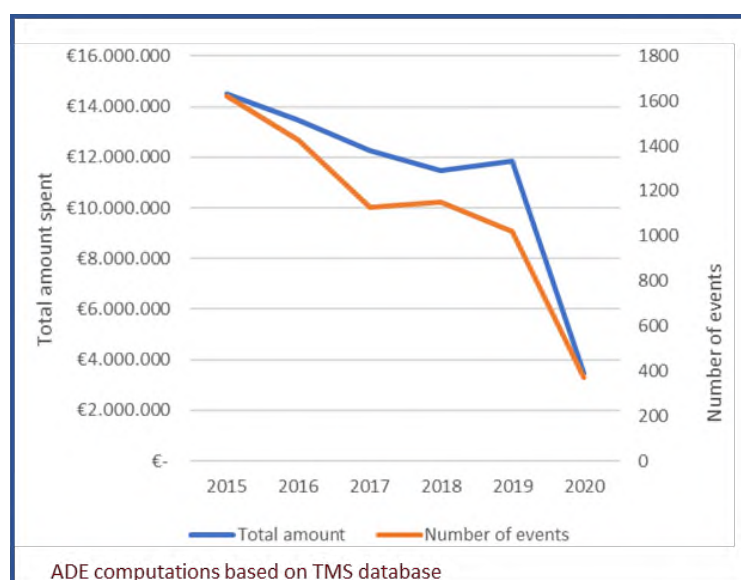
JC.5.1 TAIEX events were organised at a reasonable cost

I-5.1.1 – Cost of events, evolution

Evidence gathered:

- TMS recordings: Over the period under review (2015-2020), as described in the following figures, a total of 66.994.751,90€ has been spent on TAIEX events (excluding overheads). Figure 103 reveals a strong decrease of total amount spent over time by all strands and consequently the decrease of number events.

Figure 103: Number of events and total amount spent over time (all strands)



- The total amount spent by year by all strands is drastically decreased over time for all kind of events except for “work from home” which has slightly increased since 2019, as described in figure 104 below. Figures 105, 106 and 107 reveal the decrease within time trend in the region of Western Balkans and Turkey (IPA) with ENI strands and in non-IPA, with non-ENI strands. TAIEX strands’ percentage of participation in the events’ expenditures have generally decreased since 2015, except for PI, SRSP and REGIO.

Figure 104: Total amount spent by year and type of event (all strands)

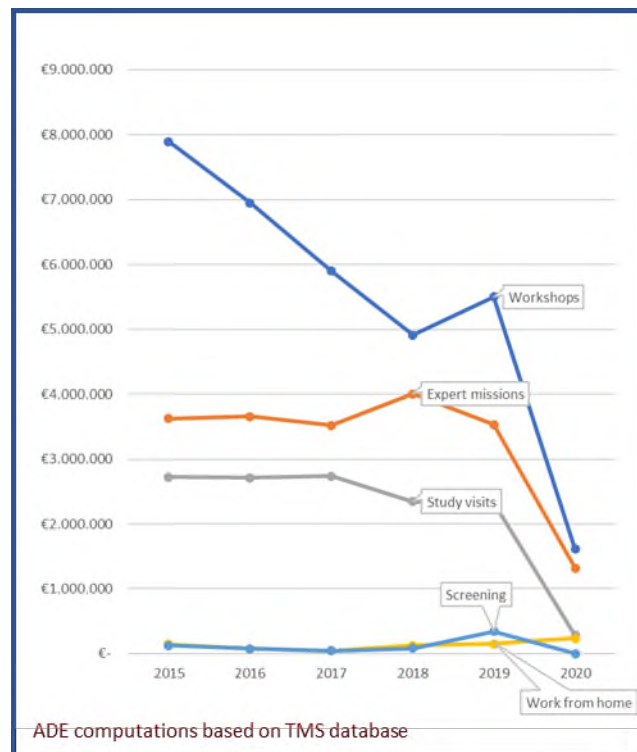


Figure 105: Total amount spent by year and by strand in IPA, ENI strands

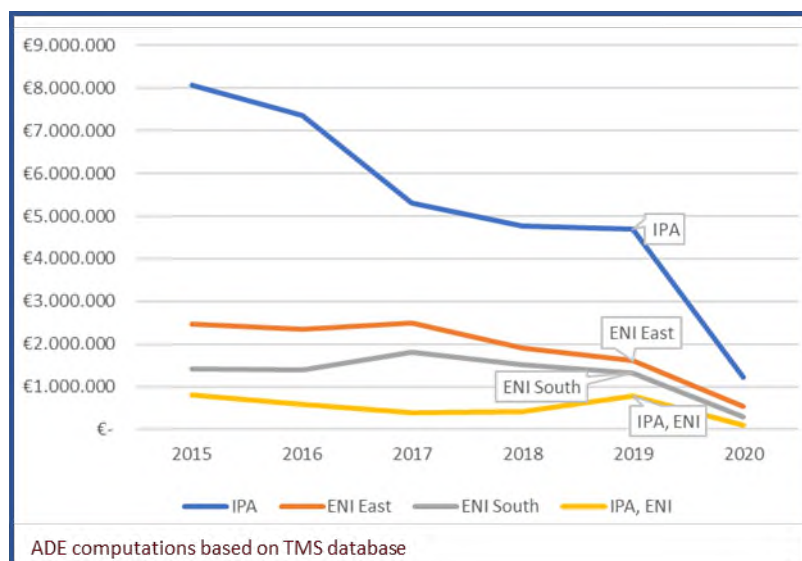


Figure 106: Total amount spent by year and by strand in non-IPA, non-ENI strands

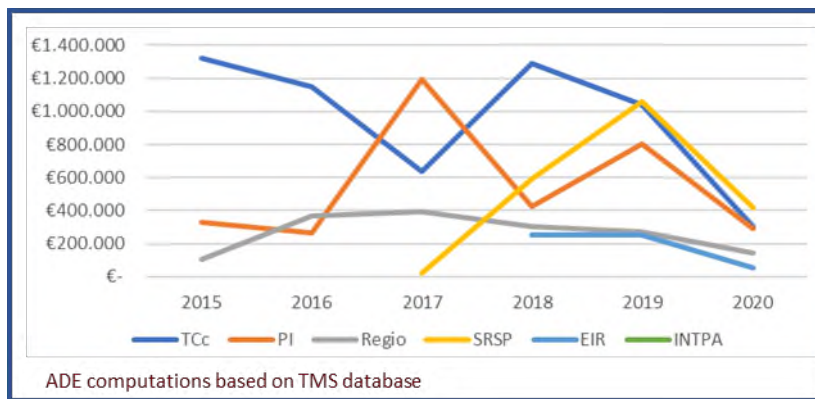
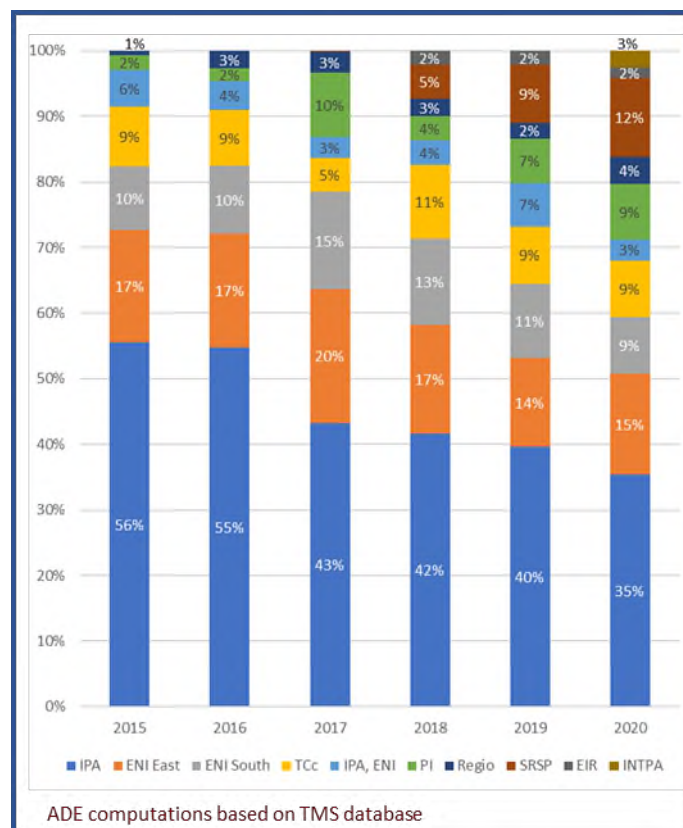


Figure 107: Share of TAIEX strands in total event expenditures over time



Besides, available organigrams indicate that the size of TAIEX team decreased over the years, from a total of 44 people in 2006, 56 in 2011 to 34 in 2018 and 24 in 2019.

I-5.1.2 – Appreciation of cost

Evidence gathered:

- TMS recordings: the average cost per event between 2015 and 2020, excluding online and multicountry, is of 8.715,35€. In the following tables the average cost, duration, number of experts and number of participants per in-person events is reported. In term of average cost per event, the table below highlights that workshop events have been the more expensive in term of costs, of which the average is 17.500.75€.

Table 11: Average cost per event, excluding online and multicountry

	Expert		Study Visit	Work from		Average per year
	Mission	Screening		Home	Workshop	
2015	5.476,98 €	2.241,57 €	6.421,76 €	1.185,29 €	16.150,67 €	7.497,01 €
2016	5.562,39 €		7.462,51 €	1.431,25 €	16.564,45 €	8.157,38 €
2017	6.878,84 €		8.735,85 €	1.436,50 €	19.068,33 €	9.790,18 €
2018	7.039,54 €		8.689,64 €	1.816,97 €	17.341,17 €	8.813,12 €
2019	7.749,64 €		9.406,20 €	2.867,84 €	19.580,66 €	10.211,26 €
2020	7.856,38 €		9.391,83 €	4.252,82 €	16.183,12 €	8.401,78 €
Average per type of event	6.456,21 €	2.241,57 €	7.958,50 €	1.961,99 €	17.500,75 €	8.715,36 €

Source: ADE based on TMS database

Table 12: Average duration (in days) for all in person events

	Expert		Study Visit	Work from	
	Mission	Screening		Home	Workshop
2015	4,04	1,58	3,37	89,48	2,12
2016	3,98	2,00	3,29	68,02	2,07
2017	3,96	2,00	3,24	65,39	2,04
2018	3,85	1,50	3,27	71,01	2,09
2019	3,91	2,17	3,22	50,48	2,10
2020	4,67		3,07	38,57	1,97
Average per type of event	3,97	1,96	3,28	68,84	2,08

Source: ADE based on TMS database

Table 13: Average number of experts, excluding multicountry and online events

	Expert		Study Visit	Work from	
	Mission	Screening		Home	Workshop
2015	1,63	1,00	1,10	2,28	4,07
2016	1,65		1,08	2,08	4,34
2017	1,75		1,04	2,06	4,29
2018	1,78		1,06	2,15	4,31
2019	1,99		1,11	2,49	4,30
2020	1,99		1,03	2,13	5,72
Average per type of event	1,75	1,00	1,08	2,22	4,28

Source: ADE based on TMS database

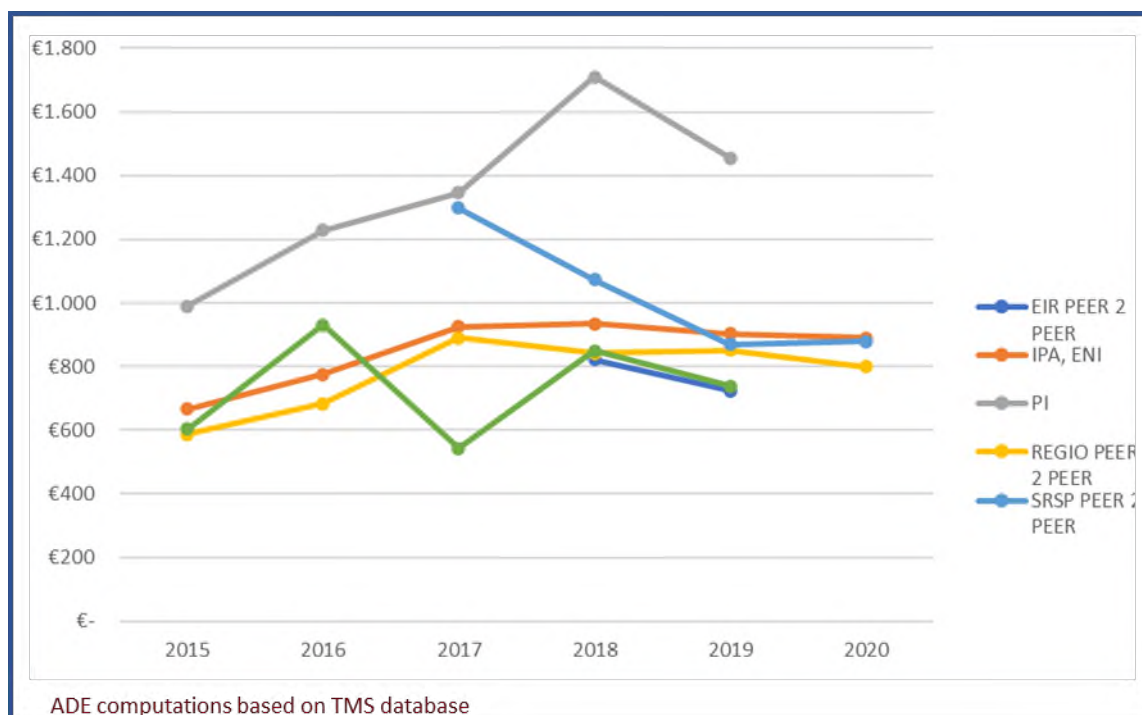
Table 14: Average number of participants for in-person events

	Expert		Study Visit	Work from	
	Mission	Screening		Home	Workshop
2015	9,66	38,33	3,08	0,37	47,17
2016	10,96	69,50	3,17	0,81	47,57
2017	13,02	31,50	3,23	0,19	49,37
2018	13,17	74,75	3,17	0,00	51,64
2019	12,70	54,30	3,68	0,00	51,59
2020	14,93		3,93	0,00	51,77
Average per type of event	11,82	51,80	3,25	0,25	49,11

Source: ADE based on TMS database

- The following graphs present the average cost per strand and over time for study visits, work from home, workshops and expert missions. Excluding online events, the average cost of those has generally increased since 2015.
 - As showed by figure 108, the average cost of study visits per participant/day has increased from 2015 to 2020, except for the once organized by SRSP PEER2PEER. A decrease of the average cost for all strands occurred in 2018, to then rise again starting 2019.

Figure 108: Study visits: average cost per participant/day excluding online and multicountry events



- Figure 109, 110 and 111: The evolution of the average cost per expert for work from home assignments, workshops and expert missions since 2015. The average cost of work from home assignments has slightly increased over the years.
- All strands increased the average cost for workshops, except for SRSP, IPA ENI and TCc, which has remained below \$2.000. On the other hand, concerning expert missions, the average cost has been increased by all strands, except for REGIO PEER 2 PEER.

Figure 109: Work from home assignments: average cost per expert, excluding online events

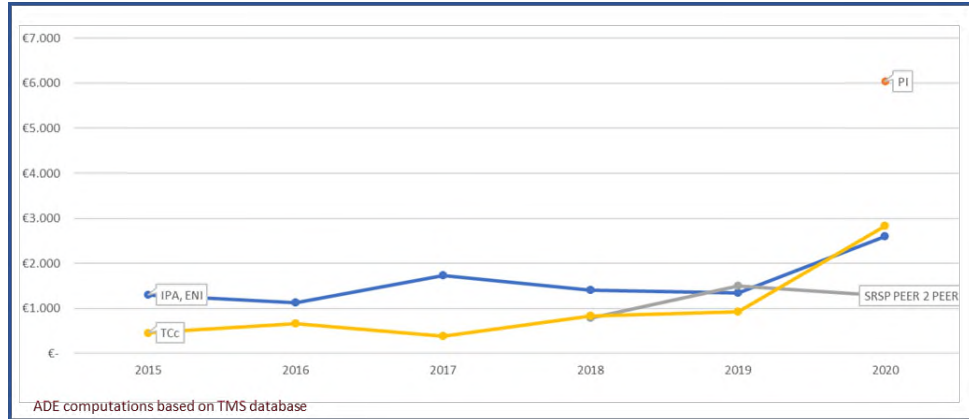


Figure 110: Workshops: average cost per expert/day, excluding online events

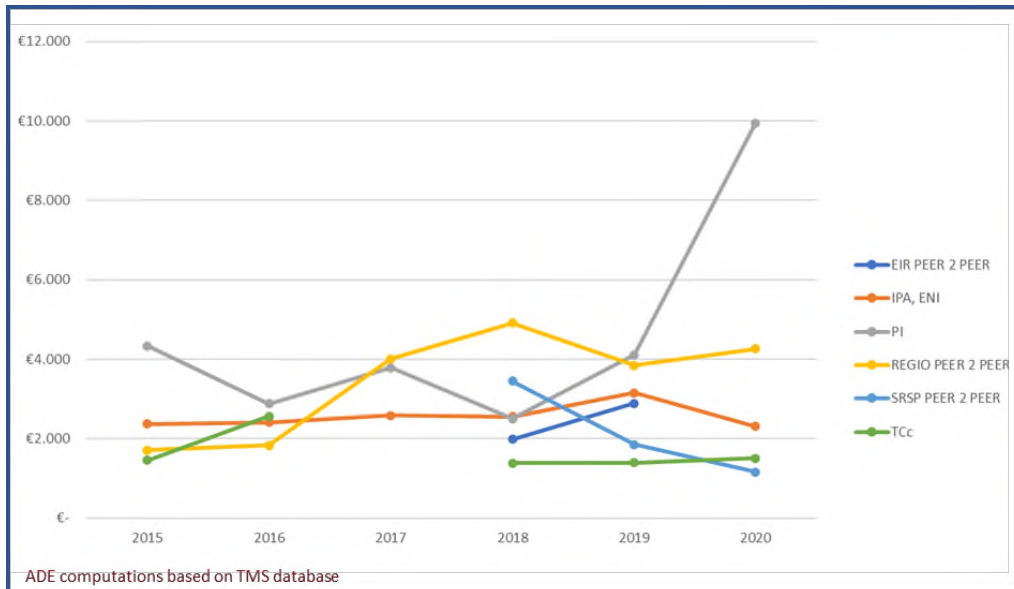
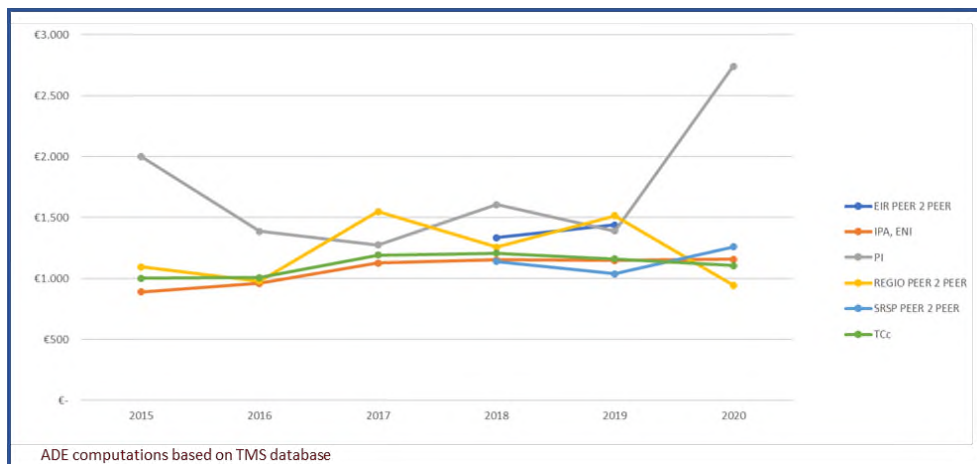


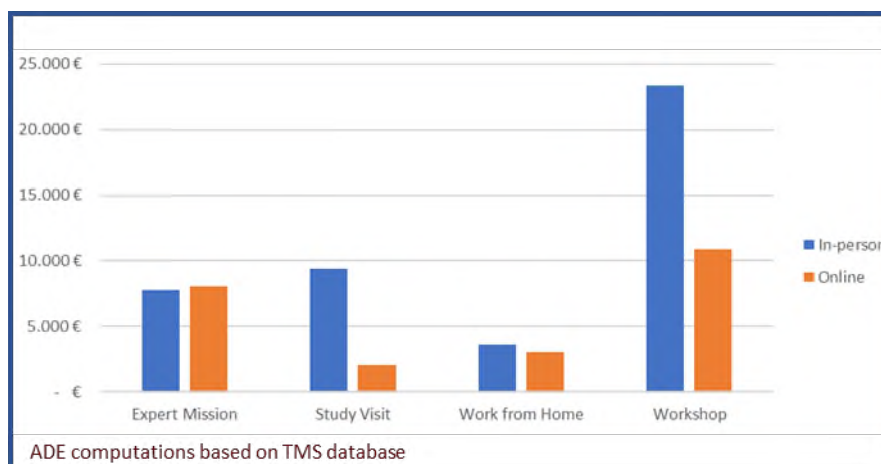
Figure 111: Expert missions: average cost per expert/day, excluding online events



- As described by the Figure below, the difference of the average cost for online vs in-person events is remarkable in terms of Study Visit event and Workshop event. The

average cost of in-person events compared to online events in the latter two cases is more than double.

Figure 112: Average cost for online vs in-person events



Evidence gathered from interviews

- MN 167: Interviewee commented on work-from home costs: “Work from home were more expensive because it got longer, these are fully fledged studies now.”
- MN 167: Interviewee commented on increasing costs for study visit: “Everything was overbudgeted, they got more generous as time passed because they had more budget”.
- MN 08: Interviewee explained increasing costs for TAIEX REGIO saying that they did not reimburse the venue nor interpretation costs initially, they started doing only as of December 2019
- MN 503: Interviewee explained increasing costs for TAIEX REGIO saying that the increase in cost is due to introduction of interpretation for all events since 2017; “We also introduced possibility to pay experts for preparation. We also started to pay for venues beginning of 2020, and they cost a lot (for physical events).”
- MN_02: Interviewee explained the increasing cost of online events: “Before the pandemic we did not pay experts for preparation but rather for the days they were travelling there. We also did not pay people for reporting. But now we do both.”

JC.5.2	The administrative burden for different stakeholders participating in TAIEX was reasonable
--------	--

I-5.2.1 –	Description of the administration linked to TAIEX
-----------	---

Documentary evidence gathered:

- Administrative process, documents recollected by event:
 - Request form
 - Approval form
 - Approval/refusal message sent to organizer
 - Agenda submission
 - Authorisation form
 - Order form
 - Reports
 - Short survey to participants
 - 6-month survey to local contact point
- Introduction of training maps whereby beneficiary institutions in consultation with DG NEAR can request with the same application up to 20 events on a specified chapter of the acquis. These events are planned for the same year and are by default expert missions unless the beneficiary provides a justification for a different type of event.
- Introduction of TAIEX Strategic offering the possibility to Commission/EEAS staff to complete the application. In some cases, the beneficiaries appear to have requested the

	<p>EUDEL or EU Office in the country (in the case of Kosovo) to directly submit their application for them even though the event emanated from their own initiative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the COVID pandemic, a simplified and tailored application form was developed for the request of events to support the management of the pandemic by beneficiary institutions.
I-5.2.2 –	Documentary evidence on the administrative burden
<p>Evidence gathered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, applications forms in particular displayed large variation in quality, in some cases because the administrative burden to fill in the application for in full was deemed too burdensome by applicants (in particular SRSP), as was found out through interviews (cfr I-5.2.3 below). • According to the 2019 TAIEX Guide for colleagues, subject to the approval of the application and the availability of TAIEX project officers, the organisation of an expert mission or study visit requires around 6 weeks in advance of the anticipated date of the event; setting up a workshop requires around 10 weeks in advance of the anticipated date of the event. All information relevant to logistics must be available at the latest four weeks ahead of the event. • A series of SRSP event display a very low level of completeness of the application form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRSP 69849: very low level of description of the event requested. • SRSP 67285: Topic for 1st one was "kick off mission", other missions's objectives remained "tbc" at time of request. • SRSP 69286: Request not correctly filled in: field visits box is ticked whereas Expert mission should be. • SRSP 66206: Originally a request for a series of events, event id 66004, task 28390). 1st request doc mentions "series of events" but lists only 1. Then it appears that separate requests were introduced for each specific event. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In multiple instances, comments made by officers reviewing the applications were not taken into account. • SRSP 67285: Topic for 1st one was "kick off mission", other missions's objectives remained "tbc" at time of request. Reply from Taiex: "I am pleased to inform you that your request has been accepted. Please note that TAIEX - SRSP does not undertake consultancy type work and that a kick off meeting is not acceptable – a full expert mission will need to be undertaken instead of this."In Agenda, second day was 4 sessions with same topic: "Discussion and agreeing on the contents, target group and timetables of the Training on Change Management for the Management of CTD" • SRSP 66479: Approval doc by SRSP notes that the time period between two of the expert mission is too short and should be extended --> indeed appears as if 2 workshops were organized at the same time, including this event. • SRSP 67443: SRSP aproval given with reserve that 1 participant does not provide value for money as it concentrates the knowledge in 1 person, length of time between study visit and expertion mission is too short <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other events in ENI also displayed poor completion of the application form: • ENI South 65845: application was really badly filled in, but the event still took place lots of exchanges and support in the process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example of use of the specific Covid application form: • ENI East 80006: use of the specific covid application form. 	
I-5.2.3 –	Stakeholders' views on the administrative burden
<p>Evidence gathered from survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey respondents (who identified as local organizers or having had a role in the event request) particularly appreciated (above 95% mostly or strongly agree): • Communication with the Commission 	

- Support by EU Delegation, National Contact Point and/or TAIEX team
- Administrative burden being reasonable compared to results
- Language availability of documents
- Overall, application process being not too cumbersome.
- According to the results of the survey shared with TAIEX experts, 60% of respondents strongly agreed with the registration process being quick and straightforward, 36% mostly agreed, and 4% mostly disagreed, without any particular comment on the issue in the open questions.

Evidence gathered from interviews

- One the interviewee (MN_32) expressed that “TAIEX is generally very appreciated, both within REGIO and among beneficiaries. The main reason is because it is simple. That is not the usual at the European Commission, other instruments tend to be complex and burdensome.”
- Interview (MN_501): “We find the process of taieux very burdensome and administrative at TSI. We are used to delivering projects on the grounds very quickly, going through procurement very fast. For taieux, so many emails created, requirements on 45 days, ... it should be optimized.” Changes that the officer would bring to TAIEX: “simplification of process and flexibility”.
- TAIEX events required a significant commitment on the content political side – which tended to absorb a significant portion of the time of the designated TAIEX Contact Point, 741-.
- MN 741: Interviewee commented time absorption for political dialogue: “It was very helpful to get the Ministry of Justice reflect on what exactly they wanted/ needed. It is positive, yet takes time. But should be retained.”
- Interviewees commented on administrative burden. MN 01: “The application is quick, with no bureaucratic challenges. The assessment of the mission is quick and to the point.”; MN 08: “TAIEX generally very appreciated both within REGIO and beneficiary [...] because it is simple”. The interviewee commented that in general there were not many challenges; MN 700: Interviewee mentioned low bureaucracy as added value of TAIEX: “There is no administrative nonsense and response is very quick”; MN 742: Interviewee pointed out “quick and low admin burden to organize”, yet mentioned participant registration process as aspect to improve; MN 750: In terms of admin, interviewee mentioned that “the structure is better now”; MN 751: Government stakeholders mentioned that “For all correspondence undertaken by EUCC for TAIEX activities, we define the content and they deal with all administrative work. On the positive side, we do not have administrative burden.”
- Excessive number of emails being sent to participants previous to events; although apparently, it has been addressed in the meantime - MN 741: “Service provider: Annoying. Too many emails. But it has changed.” ; MN 501: . For TAIEX, so many emails created,”
- Interviewees commented on the speed of process for TAIEX SRSP: MN 501: “We find the process of TAIEX very burdensome and administrative at TSI. We are used to delivering projects on the grounds very quickly, going through procurement very fast. For TAIEX, so many emails created, requirements on 45 days, ... it should be optimized.”; MN 502: “Applications are done by policy officer, approved by management in Near C3. Would be beneficial if those administrative steps would be simplified.” “What takes more time compared to other tasks in the process is search for experts but also coordination with many stakeholders”.
- Interviewees commented that the administrative burden of online event was not as reduced as it could have been: MN 501: “Virtual events involve testing sessions, it is ridiculous, under TAIEX we are still asking people if they know zooms and teams.”; MN 505: “Il semblait que ce serait plus simple en ligne car il ne faut pas organiser de déplacement mais ce fut quand même compliqué car il y avait un nombre limité de participants à inscrire

fort à l'avance dans un système en ligne. La procédure était assez lourde.”; MN 734: “Virtuality created additional complexity”.																																									
JC.5.3	The process to apply and support the organization of TAIEX events was reasonably accessible and straightforward for beneficiaries and other applicants																																								
I-5.3.1 –	For “classic” and other “on demand” events only: stakeholders’ views on the easiness of applying to TAIEX and subsequently collaborating to the organization of events, including barriers, incentives and disincentives to applications and positive/negative evolutions through time																																								
<p>Evidence gathered from survey (TAIEX-classic participant survey):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 93% of the respondents to the participants survey agreed that the application process was not too cumbersome. 93% of respondent agreed that adequate support was provided by the EU Delegation/NCP/TAIEX team during the application process, with 63% <i>strongly</i> agreeing to this statement. 97% of respondents mostly or strongly agreed that the administrative burden for their institution of organizing a TAIEX event was reasonable compared to the result. <p>Evidence gathered from interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviewees indicated that the application process has been mostly appreciated: When asked about the application process, one interviewee (MN_300) said that “it is simple, it is fine. It is relatively quick to use. I did not have specific problems.” According to one of the interviewees (MN_03), “it would be good to streamline [the application form], to make it more to the point. Applicants often find it difficult, talk about very general things rather than explaining concretely what they want and why.” One EU DEL commented that: “Smooth with experience of the application” (MN 05). One beneficiary commented that “Smooth when support could be provided, for instance by EUDEL” (MN 01). One EU stakeholder commented that “Countries need coaching/training on how to make a good application. In Moldova, they used to call the ED to try to help them.” MN 167. One EU stakeholder, on the role of TAIEX case handlers: “They make sure the application form has enough information and is correctly filled. (Sometimes it is very poor.)” MN010. One EU DEL commented: “They need support in application. They have the ability to identify challenges, but in terms of identifying solutions in addressing, they still need assistance.” MN 740 “Language is a big barrier. They do not speak English. Application was in practice translated by delegation”. MN741 “Application (...) does not require much effort in preparing. What you need to know is what you want out of the event”. MN 700 The Tables below present the share of requests that were rejected by strand and over time and the share of rejected requests by strand and type of event, highlighting the higher percentages of rejected requests by strand and per year. Most requests were rejected in 2017, especially by EIR. In 2020 an average of 38% of rejected requests was recorded. Study visits’ applications are the most rejected, with an average of rejected applications by strand of 36%. <p style="text-align: center;">Table 15: Share of rejected tasks</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2015</th> <th>2016</th> <th>2017</th> <th>2018</th> <th>2019</th> <th>2020</th> <th>Average</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>PI</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TCC</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SRSP</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>8%</td> <td>7%</td> <td>4%</td> <td>5%</td> <td>6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>REGIO</td> <td>32%</td> <td>15%</td> <td>22%</td> <td>13%</td> <td>18%</td> <td>10%</td> <td>18%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Average	PI	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	TCC	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	SRSP			8%	7%	4%	5%	6%	REGIO	32%	15%	22%	13%	18%	10%	18%
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Average																																		
PI	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%																																		
TCC	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%																																		
SRSP			8%	7%	4%	5%	6%																																		
REGIO	32%	15%	22%	13%	18%	10%	18%																																		

ENPI SOUTH	21%	16%	18%	37%	37%	23%	25%
EIR			60%	12%	4%	44%	30%
IPA	24%	25%	23%	34%	34%	40%	30%
ENPI EAST	36%	22%	33%	50%	54%	29%	37%
INTPA						38%	38%
Average	30%	24%	39%	32%	31%	38%	

Source: ADE

Table 16: Share of rejected applications by strand and type of event

	Expert Mission	Home Assignments	Study Visit	Workshop	Average per strand
REGIO	16%		16%	26%	19%
IPA	20%	0%	38%	24%	28%
ENPI SOUTH	25%	0%	28%	24%	26%
ENPI EAST	31%	0%	44%	36%	38%
EIR	27%		14%	31%	24%
Average per type of event	23%	0%	36%	28%	29%

Source: ADE computations based on TMS database

- Elements collected in the TMS database and during interviews as well provide information about reasons of rejections.
- According to the TSM documentation, the high rejection rate of TAIEX INTPA in 2020 is due to a lack of coordination with the EU Delegation in the country. The documents also indicate that the few rejected tasks for SRSP (10 in total) are in part due to the request being introduced before the formal approval of TAIEX SRSP (3 cases in 2018). Still according to the TMS database, in 2019, 8 out of the 10 rejected TAIEX EIR tasks are due to the lack of human resources in the TAIEX EIR team to deal with the request. According to interviews, applicants are supported by DG ENV through the whole process.
- According to interviews with Commission staff (MN_951), applications are rejected mainly due to their poor quality.

I-5.3.2 – For “on demand” events only: stakeholders’ views on the easiness of applying to TAIEX, including barriers to applications and positive/negative evolutions through time

Evidence gathered from survey (TAIEX strategic participant survey):

- 85% of the respondents to the participants survey agreed that the application process was not too cumbersome. 13% mostly disagreed with this statement.
- 97% of respondent agreed that adequate support was provided by the EU Delegation/NCP/TAIEX team during the application process, with 67% *strongly* agreeing to this statement.
- 91% of respondents mostly or strongly agreed that the administrative burden for their institution of organizing a TAIEX event was reasonable compared to the result.
- Evidence gathered from interviews:
 - According to an interviewee (MN 951), language has been a barrier to application in some cases for TAIEX INTPA.
 - During interviews, TAIEX SRSP stakeholders mentioned their dissatisfaction with the administrative request procedure (interview MN_501): “we find the process of TAIEX very burdensome and administrative at TSI. We are used to delivering projects on the ground very quickly, going through procurement very fast. For TAIEX, so many emails are created, requirements on 45 days... It should be optimized.”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One TAIEX SRSP case-handler: “Most of the time, try to have call and meeting for each event, to discuss it with policy officer. I help them in the application process, because they do not know what field is for what, how to fill the application process” MN 502 • Interviewees commented on shortage of staff and time linked to introduction of TAIEX strategic: MN 503: “One year, we had above 350 requests in my team, no way to deal with that with 3 project officers.” And “Moving to strategic has also decreased the number of events because they take longer to organize”; MN 02: Interviewee indicated that TAIEX Strategic affected his workload: “Had a lot of meetings by managers to discuss TAIEX Strategic. And we as project officers we would have to prepare, even when we do not participate”; MN 05: “The main barrier is the lack of staff. They do not have enough people in order to apply and participate in TAIEX events”. Interviewee also mentioned staff shortage in C3 unit. MN 10: “If you increase strategic, beneficiaries get less chances for demand-driven requests.”; MN 167: Interviewee reported decrease in staff mentioning that “another factor may be that with new things (strategic) it takes longer, so productivity went down”. 					
JC.5.4 -	The events were an accessible and economic way to generate individual and institutional capacity building, and in turn contribute to structural reforms and other objectives.					
I-5.4.1 –	Stakeholders’ views on the advantages/ disadvantages of TAIEX events compared to other available or potential means to generate individual and institutional capacity building					
<p>Evidence gathered from the interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the interviewee MN_012, there were “no disadvantages” of using TAIEX in the TCc context. “It would be very difficult to address the two specific objectives without TAIEX instruments. On EU acquis, it’s best to have experts from EU MS, they have the expertise on how they do it in their country and then conduct study visits. When experts from new MS are involved, they also share main lessons learnt. Another advantage is that it is very easy to mobilise other experts apart from MTA experts from the database (it is very quick and efficient. On COVID for example, it was very easy to do. From many angles, there are many advantages and he can’t see disadvantages.” • The use of more expensive types of events was justified by the results targeted or the constraints faced, with only few exceptions MN 05: Interviewee reported that they try to discourage study visits except when they are important for implementation and enforcement; MN 167: “There was definitely a travel agency component, which has helped drive the success” ; MN 230: “We approve them (study visits) only when they are really mandatory. For example, when things are on a good track on implementation, if something remains unclear and unresolved, we recommend the study visit and approve it”. 						
I-5.4.2 –	Stakeholders’ views on leverage of events and capacity building on structural reforms					
<p>Evidence gathered:</p> <p>The following tables stem from the results of the participants’ survey.</p>						
<p>C3. To what extent do you agree that the TAIEX event(s) you participated in contributed to the following in the beneficiary institution and country/territory? If you have participated in more than one event, please provide us your general/ average impression.</p>						
	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
Generating impulse for significant changes or reforms (policy/ regulatory/	31.2%	43.0%	11.2%	1.3%	13.4%	314

organizational/ others) in beneficiary institutions					
C5. Based on your knowledge, did the TAIEX event(s) you participated in contribute to any of the following concrete results?:					
	Do not know	No	Yes	Total number of responses	
Adoption of new public policy: new laws or important government programmes (at the national or sub national level)	35.4%	17.7%	46.9%	333	
Modification of existing public policy: changes to existing laws or important government programmes (at the national or sub national level)	38.1%	16.5%	45.3%	333	
Improved application and/or enforcement of existing public policy	30.3%	10.2%	59.4%	333	
Adoption of standards and practices in line with EU practice or requirements	28.0%	8.7%	63.2%	332	
ADDITIONAL NOTES					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission decision of 2011 explains decision to outsource to external services providers in terms of efficiency – it says that it enables fast and effective response while still ensuring financial transparency, accountability and efficient management. [GS] 					

EQ 6 - Complementarity with other instruments

To what extent did TAIEX complement other instruments pursuing similar goals, and to what extent were there duplications and synergies?

Judgment criteria and indicators

JC.6.1	The design and evolution of TAIEX aimed at optimizing the complementarities and synergies with other instruments
I-6.1.1 –	TAIEX's approach (including its evolution) towards optimisation of complementarities and synergies with other instruments

Evidence gathered:

- The 2000 Commission Decision states that “an important risk in the area of approximation of legislation, as in other fields of Technical Assistance is that of duplication and even competing advice. TAIEX aims to diminish this risk notably through its databases, that will be developed to function as a co-ordination tool both for the Associated Countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Cyprus and Malta and other bodies, so as to prevent overlaps.”
- The 2005 Council decision also states that “the TAIEX management system **ensures that actions financed through TAIEX are coherent** with other activities.” It also describes the instrument as a “one-stop shop to assist the countries in understanding and drafting EU-related legislation and to help them with implementation and enforcement.”
- In the annex to the 2011 Commission Decision, it is noted that “incoming requests are reviewed on a continuous basis and decided upon following a consultation with relevant EC services, including the EU Delegations and the NCPs for TAIEX in the beneficiary country **in order to ensure complementarity with national programmes and other technical assistance instrument**”.
- According to the TMS-stored material, the request form includes the following question: “Is there any planned or currently running project financed by EU funds and/or other international programmes dealing with the issues covered by the request? Has any such project been implemented in the last two years?” (Question 3.6)
- According to the TMS-stored material, the approval document includes the following question: “Is it ensured that there is no overlap/ duplication with on-going or previous assistance?” (Question 7).
- No mention of other options appear in TAIEX annual reports.
- In the available leaflets (the TAIEX EIR leaflet, the general TAIEX leaflet, the TAIEX PI leaflet, the TAIEX SRSP leaflet, the TAIEX INTPA leaflet and the TAIEX REGIO peer-to-peer leaflet), there does not appear to be promotion of other EU options.

I-6.1.2 –	Stakeholders' views on whether TAIEX is well conceived to optimise complementarities/synergies with other instruments
-----------	---

The following table stems from the results of the survey that was addressed to TAIEX experts.

G1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
TAIEX events were used to complement and enhance other existing EU tools	39.5%	35.7%	0%	0%	24.8%	129

In addition, the next table stems from the results of the survey that was addressed to TAIEX participants.

F1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?:						
	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
TAIEX events were used to complement and enhance other existing EU tools	36.7%	46.2%	3.2%	0%	13.9%	18
JC.6.2	There is a general tendency of complementarities and/or synergies					
I-6.2.1 –	Extent to which specific events analysed generally show complementarities and/or synergies with other instruments					
Evidence gathered from case studies:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding TAIEX SRSP: according to the SRSP event application review, including link to the linked SRSP/TSI internal project number, TAIEX SRSP events are part of the SRSP projects, and as such they are being coordinated with the other components by the SRSP project officer who ensures that the TAIEX events are optimally designed in terms of complementarities and synergies. According to TAIEX PI documentation (TAIEX PI Action Fiches), TAIEX PI instrument is complementary to the Policy Support Facility (PSF). According to the TAIEX PI Final Report 2016-2020 and to events documentation, TAIEX PI events complementarity is high with EU official visits in the country. According to the interviews (MN_32), DG REGIO has a competence center, and TAIEX is one option that has an overview on capacity building options (See I-6.2.2). As far as TAIEX INTPA is concerned, there is no clear evidence of how possibilities of complementarities with other instruments have been explored. Until 2020 there appears to have been no overlap between countries where TAIEX INTPA and Twinning INTPA events have been organized. Regarding TAIEX IPA: according to the ECRAN Results Brochure 2016, to EPPA and RIPAP websites and to TAIEX PI Final Report 2016-2020, 119 TAIEX events were organized to support the ECRAN project in 2015 and 2016. In 2019 and 2020, 19 TAIEX workshops were organized to support the EPPA project. According to the documentation, it is currently mandatory for all Twinning missions to be followed by TAIEX Peer-review missions 6 months after their completion in order to assess their results and identify remaining gaps. Work from home missions have also been used to support the drafting of the Twinning reports. Annual meetings are organised with National Contact Points (NCPs) in the form of TAIEX screening events to support the coordination, improved management and promotion of TAIEX and Twinning activities in Enlargement Countries. Even when synergies were not actively pursued many complementarities emerged as the beneficiary administrations also benefitted from other EU instruments promoting institutional capacity building, including Twinning, DG NEAR Technical Assistance, OECD-SIGMA, budget support, and other thematic projects. Evidence collected through interviews and TAIEX event documentation is provided below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characteristic is the case of the Anti-Corruption Agency of Tunisia which simultaneously with TAIEX was benefitting from Twinning as well as a very large number of technical assistance projects financed by both the EU and other donors such as the Appui institutionnel à la mise en œuvre de la stratégie de modernisation de la fonction publique tunisienne (2019-2021); the Projet d'Appui aux Instances Indépendantes en Tunisie (PAII-T)- (Tunisia Anti-corruption Project (TAC)) (36 mois. Janvier 2019 – Décembre 2021); the Programme d'appui à la gouvernance économique (PAGE) (72 mois, en cours). The coordination was promoted by a very active coordination officer that overlook all EU programs benefitting the institution. 						

- The Ministry of Environment of Armenia, received TAIEX support on the approximation to the Environmental Liability Directive while also simultaneously benefitting from “European Union for Climate” (EU4Climate) Action and the European Union Water Initiative Plus for the Eastern Partnership (EUWI+) project.
- The Public Procurement Bureau of North Macedonia had over the years benefitted from a number of different instruments following its launch in 2005. In 2006-2008, it was the beneficiary of a technical assistance project financed by the EU that accompanied its establishment as well as of a USAID technical assistance project that supported the development of an e-procurement system. In 2012-2013, it was supported by the German administration in a Twinning project, “Support to the Public Procurement System”. Throughout the years it was also supported by TAIEX and SIGMA and pre-covid was expected to benefit from another twinning project in 2020. These instrument build on one another and provided complementary support that allowed for the expansion of the Bureau and its gradual adoption of new administrative functions.

I-6.2.2 – Stakeholders’ view on extent to which there were generally complementarities and synergies

Evidence gathered from surveys:

- For strategic events, 100% of Commission/EEAS staff and 85.7% of beneficiaries agreed that TAIEX complemented and enhanced other EU tools (with the rest indicating that they do not know/have no opinion rather than disagreeing). For Classic events, 76.7% of Commission/EEAS staff agreed (while 6.7% disagreed) and 81.8% of beneficiaries agreed (while 3.2% disagreed).
- Between 25% and 40% of the respondents (both among experts and participants) expressed no opinion regarding existence of complementarities and/ or duplications. When experts were asked to give specific examples of how TAIEX has been used to complement or in coordination with other EU or EU member states tools, a total of 22 answers were provided for this question. Twinning is the most frequently mentioned program (5 answers). Respondents also referred to BTSF (Better Training for Safer Food), SRSS and Community of Practitioners. When participants were asked the same question, 46 answers were provided. 24 respondents provided a negative answer. Twinning was the most frequently mentioned EU tool (8 respondents mentioned it). A couple of respondents gave other examples like EUMS.
- Within the survey, out of 12 respondents who participated in the TAIEX INTPA event included in the sample to be reviewed in depth 6 did not offer an opinion, 5 agreed, and one disagreed on whether the TAIEX instrument was used to complement and enhance other EU tools.

Evidence gathered from interviews:

- For one of the interviewees (MN_501, part of TAIEX SRSP): “TAIEX is complementary to our project, the core of our projects is delivered through private consultancy (...) TAIEX is for short-term missions as complement. (...) Once we have identified the component within overall project, then we get in touch with TAIEX case handlers at DG NEAR. We discuss the process. We are expected to submit an application through their system, as early as possible, we don’t wait for the full information to be gathered, we want to indicate that in the pipeline there will be some project. We try to respect the requirement in terms of procedure to allow smooth organization.”
- For one of the interviewees (MN_950), “in the area of JHA, no synergies with other instruments were actively pursued although complementarities naturally emerged as they were all working on the same issues”.
- According to another interviewee (MN_500, part of TAIEX EIR), broad consultations are conducted during the approval phase of the events “there is a preparation work, in

	<p>cooperation with the beneficiary. If we suppose that beneficiary know exactly which are the needs, they apply, the Commission discusses the content of the application form with the technical staff of DG NEAR, an then the DG NEAR approves it or not. (...) There might be a consultation with beneficiaries (...). After the approval of the event, which could also be expert mission, there is close cooperation with beneficiaries, often with experts. Sometimes, the technical staff of DG ENV is also asked to give its opinions. Then, agenda, names, title of presentation are defined.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MN_32 (TAIEX REGIO): “The unit we work in is a competence center. The main task is to support MS in building or enhancing admin capacities to better manage the funds.”
I-6.2.3 –	Extent to which stakeholders’ who participated to events can provide concrete examples of complementarities and/or synergies
<p>Evidence gathered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The survey targeting TAIEX experts asked the following question: Could you provide any specific examples of how TAIEX has been used to complement or in coordination with other EU or EU member states tools? 22 answers were provided for this open question. Twinning was the most frequently mentioned program (5 answers). Respondents also referred to BTSF (Better Training for Safer Food), SRSS and Community of Practitioners. • The survey targeting TAIEX participants asked the same question and 46 answers were provided for this open question. 24 respondents provided a negative answer. Twinning was the most frequently mentioned EU tool (8 respondents mentioned it). A couple of respondents gave other examples like EUMS. Some concrete examples are provided below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “TAIEX event was used to complement and enhance EU's Guidance for Economic reform program and its complementary Monitoring tool for tracking progress of the reform implementation (OECD)” ▪ “Several times follow-up of a twinning project with a specific TAIEX mission on specific subject” ▪ “As part of twinning project, a need was pinpointed and it was not covered by the twinning project. This need was covered by TAIEX” ▪ “We also use the TAIEX findings in IPA programming and in cooperation with other EUMS and other international partners, e.g. US/ICITAP/DoJ, OSCE, IOM etc.” ▪ “TAIEX allows reflecting on gap analysis; follow-up to fill this gap comes then often, naturally, under the form of a Twinning or TA project” • TAIEX PI regional events (several) on space EU Flagship programmes (Copernicus and galileo). INTPA + DEFIS + GROW were setting up a regional data hub in Latin America and TAIEX PI supported in signing agreements. • « En el momento de realización de la actividad a través de TAIEX, el Poder Judicial dominicano se encontraba en proceso de formulación de un twinning o hermanamiento, y estos acercamientos sirvieron de base para la contextualización y enfoque de la propuesta. » • “A specific example to reflect the situation in which EU assistance instruments complement each other effectively is the assistance received by the NBM in the field of Strengthening banking sector and risk-based supervision implementation. The Twinning project "Strengthening the NBM's capacity in the field of banking regulation and supervision in the context of EU requirements" in synergy with the following TAIEX missions and the assistance of The European Union High-Level Advisers Mission to the Republic of Moldova, brought remarkable results on banking supervision reform - creating a modern and effective supervisory framework in line with EU standards (Basel III).” • “After the completion of Twinning project the TAIEX instrument was used to complement the following aspects in order to build up beneficiaries capacities and additionally 	

	<p>contribute to the consolidation of national framework and practices in line with EU standards”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “EU EPPA Project, ECRAN project supported under IPA multi - country programme” • “TAIEX was used for technical assistance in developing methodology or improving understanding of the needed tool. Software development for the tool was funded under IPA project.” • “The legislation of EU member states contributed to IPARD measures implementation.”
JC.6.3 -	There are little or no examples of duplication between TAIEX and other instruments ²⁸
I-6.3.1 –	Extent to which specific events analysed generally show no examples of duplications
<p>Evidence gathered from TMS database:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The request form submitted by event organizers includes a question on whether the elements to be targeted by the TAIEX event are covered by any other EU programme. • For an application to be approved, TAIEX processes dictate that there needs to be a confirmation by consulted stakeholders that there is no overlap/duplication with previous or ongoing assistance. • According to the rejected tasks documents - within the TMS database - that were considered to this point (EIR, SRSP, INTPA), no requests were rejected because of duplication issues. The rest of the rejected tasks (REGIO, ENI and IPA) still needs to be reviewed. <p>Evidence gathered from case studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the TMS database, in some of the events reviewed as part of case studies 1 & 2, small adjustments were made to the events relative to what was requested after the consulted Commission services remarked possible areas of duplication with ongoing technical assistance projects and. • Interview MN_951 (TAIEX INTPA) highlighted that potential event organisers are mostly not aware of TAIEX options. • The main P2P alternative is the Community of Practitioners. According to the 2020 REGIO Evaluation Report by PPMI (Study on peer learning tools for the administrative capacity building of Member State bodies involved in the management of funds from the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund), “regarding external coherence between TAIEX REGIO Peer 2 Peer, Cops and other ACB-related networks and tools managed by DG REGIO, no duplication of activities was identified. However, some risks of overlaps exists in terms of the themes covered.” Besides, “the synergies between TAIEX REGIO Peer 2 Peer and CoPs are limited (e.g. participants of TAIEX REGIO Peer 2 Peer exchanges are not systematically invited to join Cops), even though the schemes have similar aims and target similar groups.” • Interviewees MN_32 stated that “TAIEX works very well in chartered territory, when some countries already know how to do something better than others. But there are also many uncharted territories, where nobody and not even the European Commission, has developed competence. Here is the Community of Practitioners. The idea is that they can go the extra mile and work on new tools or new pieces of legislations. (...) We (DG REGIO) would like to create even more links between CoPs and TAIEX. Idea is that all that participate to TAIEX should become members of communities, and that communities should be facilitated in using TAIEX. The idea is to create “passerelles” between the two.” • The 2020 REGIO SLA indicates that “the indicative implementation volume of TAIEX events is estimated to be maximum 70 events per year per TAIEX Project Officer. This indicative figure is based on the results of the implementation of REGIO P2P from 2016 to March 2020 (...). This takes also into account that the majority of the multi-country workshop implemented per year are organized under the ‘REGIO Communities of Practitioners’, where an external facilitator takes care of all preparatory work (finding experts, liaising 	

	with host and participants, defining the agenda, coordinating the implementation of the event) reducing the workload for the TAIEX Project officer in NEAR.”					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding TAIEX PI, according to the PI action fiches documents and the interviews, the Policy Support Facility (PSF) can provide technical assistance through experts from the private sector. Plus, according to the TMS database, during the application process of a TAIEX PI event, DG INTPA advises close coordination with the EU Delegation to ensure the avoidance of duplications with a specific action. 					
I-6.3.2 –	Stakeholders’ view on extent to which there were duplications					
	<p>Evidence gathered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When asked to comment the existence of Aquacoope, another P2P mechanism for specific topics, TAIEX EIR interviewees appeared to be not aware of its existence (interview MN_500). When asked to comment TAIEX peer-to-peer dimension, another interviewee (MN_501) answered: “Beneficiaries request it. There is no other way to engage very short peers than through TAIEX.” 					
I-6.3.3 –	Extent to which stakeholders’ who participated to events cannot provide concrete examples of duplication					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None of the consulted stakeholders during interviews, surveys, and FGDs were able to provide examples of duplication. The perception of all stakeholders was that there was no duplication. 					
JC 6.4	There are specific benefits brought by TAIEX as compared to other instruments					
I-6.4.1 –	Extent to which there are specific reasons / incentives (financial, technical, public vs private expertise, flexibility/speed, other.) for partner countries and EU MS to use/choose the TAIEX Instrument as compared to other instruments					
	<p>Evidence gathered:</p> <p>See I-6.4.2.</p>					
I-6.4.2 –	Extent to which stakeholders consider that TAIEX had specific benefits as compared to other instruments (linked to type of support, implementation mode, etc.)					
	<p>Evidence gathered from surveys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following tables present results of the survey that was addressed to TAIEX experts. 					
G1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?						
	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
The needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through other existing EU tools	23.4%	29.7%	6.3%	2.3%	38.3%	128
The needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through EU member states bilateral initiatives (without involving the EU)	31.3%	32.0%	6.3%	0%	30.5%	128
F1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?:						
	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses

The needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through other existing EU tools	22.2%	36.2%	6.0%	2.1%	33.5%	334
The needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through existing EU member states initiatives (without involving the EU)	25.5%	32.9 %	6.9%	1.5%	33.2%	334

- When experts were asked to comment which characteristics of TAIEX make it most useful/ unique compared to other EU tools for capacity building, 38 answers were provided. 14 respondents praised the technical expertise and professionalism of experts. 11 respondents referred to the peer-to-peer dimension. 7 respondents mentioned the low level of bureaucracy and administrative requirements, making TAIEX events easy to organize. 5 respondents referred to TAIEX's adaptiveness to beneficiary's needs (length, content, format of events), including one respondent that mentions the possible combination between online and physical events. One respondent praised the increased feeling of being part of a community within the European Union.
- The survey targeting TAIEX participants asked the same question. 60 answers were provided by participants for this open question. Respondents praised the flexibility of TAIEX, whose organization is fast and demand driven. 15 respondents mentioned the high quality of experts and 7 respondents mentioned the advantages of sharing experiences and practices, related to the peer-to-peer format.

Evidence gathered from interview notes:

- Interview MN_500: "[Peer-to-peer] is based on best practices. It is an exchange. There is no right way, each MS has different ways of reaching the goals. The peer-to-peer approach is key. It is what makes TAIEX very different."
- Interview MN_501: "Beneficiaries request it [peer-to-peer]. There is no other way to engage very short peers than through TAIEX."
- Interview MN_951: "Focus is on spreading experiences/ cooperation, not on imposing the EU way. There is no one correct way to do things, rather experts come together to meet "wise" people working in the same areas. It is not copy pasting. It is about learning and adapting." Later, the person added that "TAIEX offers an additional, different support. Cooperation between equals – which is very useful if used on time and with clear objectives."
- MN_230: "there were times when the government knew exactly what they needed to do to meet the conditions but couldn't make it happen. Having peers come and explain how to turn theory into practice was necessary for the reforms to take place."
- Interview MN_700: "There is no administrative nonsense, the response is very quick. (...) They did not have to do any administration. (...) They could have organized the event otherwise, but not so quickly. Concept note, approval, preparation with TOR, procurement... It would have taken months. For one event to test waters, it was only possible via TAIEX, or with possibly existing contracts (...). They use them on other occasions, but they get external consultants, it can be a hit or a miss, they could not have afforded them. Indians would not have agreed. So TAIEX is the only option and the faster."

- Interview MN_32: “TAIEX is generally very appreciated both within REGIO and beneficiary. The main reason is because it is simple. That is not the usual at the European Commission, other instruments tend to be complex and burdensome.”
- Interview MN_012: “It would be very difficult to address the two specific objectives without TAIEX instruments. On EU acquis, it’s best to have experts from EU MS, they have the expertise on how they do it in their country and then conduct study visits. When experts from new MS are involved, they also share main lessons learnt. Another advantage is that it’s very easy to mobilise other experts apart from MTA experts from the database (which is very quick and efficient).” Plus, “it’s difficult to see any other player than EU doing this job. In raising standards for example, EU added value is very high.”
- Interview MN_158: “the most obvious added value of TAIEX is flexibility”. Thus, the TAIEX instrument is “able to adapt to needs on a short-term basis”, and “able to adapt to fast changes”.
- Interview MN_900: “TAIEX adds value and is appreciated for its unique characteristics in terms of logistics, organization and budget flexibility capacities - rather than substantive stuff.”

I-6.4.3 – Extent to which stakeholders consider that TAIEX had a specific value added to other instruments to address staff competences

Evidence gathered:

The following table presents results of the survey that was addressed to TAIEX experts.

G4. To what extent do you agree that TAIEX allowed the following better than it would have been possible through other options (including available EU and EU Member States tools and initiatives)?

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
Tailoring events to specific needs	55%	25.6%	1.6%	0%	17.8%	129
Rapid organization of events	40.3%	35.7%	3.9%	0%	20.2%	129
Meaningful involvement of beneficiary institutions	48%	34.1%	1.6%	0%	16.3%	129
Benefitting from peer-to-peer experience and advice	54.3%	27.9%	1.5%	0.8%	15.5%	129

In addition, the following tables presents results of the survey that was addressed to TAIEX participants.

F4. To what extent do you agree that TAIEX allowed the following better than it would have been possible through other options (including available EU and EU member states tools and initiatives)?:

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
Tailoring events to specific needs	40.3%	43.0%	2.1%	0.6%	14.0%	335
Rapid organization of events	36.1%	41.2%	5.4%	0.3%	17.0%	335
Meaningful involvement of	40.6%	40.9%	2.4%	0.3%	15.8%	335

beneficiary institutions						
Benefitting from peer-to-peer experience and advice	42.4%	38.8%	1.5%	1.2%	16.1%	335

C2. To what extent do you agree that the TAIEX event(s) you participated in contributed to the following? If you have participated in more than one event, please provide us your general/average impression.:						
	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
Strengthening/ forming new professional connections among public officers from different countries	36.5%	41.6%	9.0%	1.8%	11.1%	334
Improving beneficiaries' knowledge on the topics covered	51.0%	42.4%	2.4%	0.9%	3.3%	335
Improving beneficiaries' capacities/ skills to do my work	43.0%	42.1%	7.8%	1.2%	6.0%	335
Changing concretely the way beneficiaries do their work	23.4%	42.8%	16.8%	2.7%	14.4%	334
JC 6.5	There are specific factors that contributed to favouring such complementarities or synergies					
I-6.5.1 –	Documentary evidence on specific factors that enhanced or hampered TAIEX being complementary / having synergies with EU and other relevant instruments					
No evidence was found to back up judgment criteria 6.5 for either TAIEX PI or TAIEX INTPA.						
I-6.5.2 –	Stakeholders' view on specific factors that enhanced or hampered TAIEX in being complementary / having synergies with EU and other relevant instruments					
No evidence was found to back up judgment criteria 6.5 for either TAIEX PI or TAIEX INTPA.						

EQ 7 – Working with peers and EU internal cooperation**To what extent did working with peers offer specific (EU) added value and to what extent has TAIEX built on the potential benefits of the EU internal Cooperation?**

Rationale and coverage of the EQ:

Peer working is at the heart of TAIEX. This question aims at verifying to what extent peer working allowed to offer a specific EU added value.

It also aims at understanding how and to what extent TAIEX has contributed to maximising the EU internal cooperation potential establishing and/or effectively implementing co-ordination mechanisms among European actors (Commission and MS)

Last, it also aims at examining to what extent TAIEX has also generated other types of EU value added, beyond the peer working.

Evaluation criteria covered: EU value added

This question is focused on the issue of the EU value added.

Judgement criteria and indicators Description

JC.7.1	Organising peer working via TAIEX in the EU context offered a specific value added
I-7.1.1 –	Extent to which peer working generated specific benefits (e.g. technical know-how, range of available experts, flexibility in choice, etc.) that would have been more difficult to reach through other means in choice, triggered interest in further cooperation, building sectoral cooperation and partnerships

Evidence gathered:

- The peer-2-peer nature of TAIEX added value by contributing to network formation. For more details on this see JC.3.
- The following table stems from the expert survey.

D2. To what extent did the TAIEX event(s) for which you provided expertise led to the following benefits to you personally?

	Strongly agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion / Cannot judge	Total number of responses
Strengthened my network of professional connections with peers/ public officers from other countries	48.8%	40.3%	5.4%	0.8%	4.7%	129
Improved my relations with/ visibility to institutions of the EU and EU member states	34.9%	45%	4.7%	1.6%	14%	129

The next table presents answers to the participants survey.

C2. To what extent do you agree that the TAIEX event(s) you participated in contributed to the following? If you have participated in more than one event, please provide us your general/ average impression.:

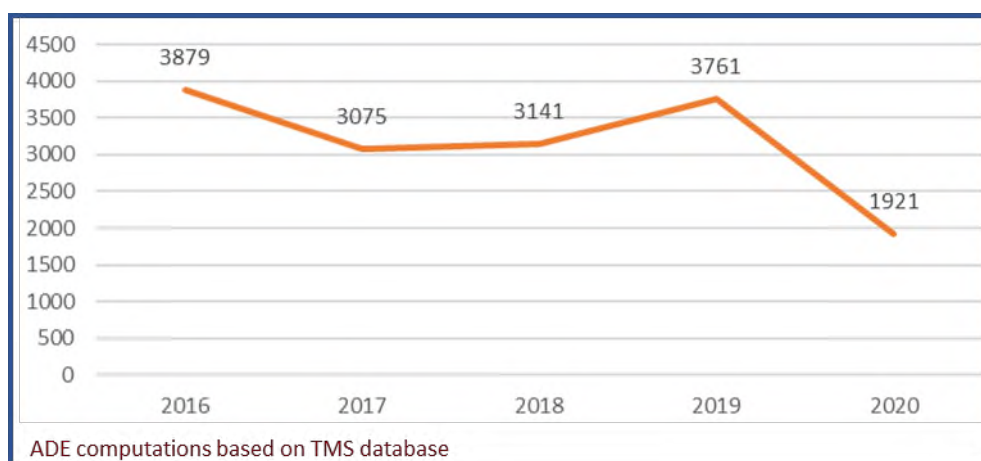
	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
Strengthening/ forming new professional connections among public officers from different countries	36.5%	41.6%%	9.0%	1.8%	11.1%	334

I-7.1.2 – Extent to which stakeholders describe peer working as a specific asset of TAIEX and consider there is a value added of peer working in the EU context

According to the TMS database, 5 473 experts were registered in 2020.

The following table presents the number of individual expert assignments.

Figure 113: Total number of expert assignments per year



Interviews confirm that the size of TAIEX database is large enough to cover a sufficient number of fields. Also, MN_012 declared: “Another advantage is that it’s very easy to mobilise other experts apart from MTA experts from the database (which is very quick and efficient).”

For more details on this see JC.2 and JC.6. For instance, I-2.3.3 indicates that similarities between beneficiaries and experts are key to enhance advantages of peer-working methods, as illustrated by the survey open questions: The most frequently enhancing or hampering factors to TAIEX usefulness that were mentioned was similar context and culture (or the fact that the event is taking it into account) (16 answers), right after the political and institutional willingness of beneficiary/ participants (28 answers).

The following table presents results of the survey that was addressed to TAIEX experts.

D1. To what extent do you agree that the TAIEX event(s) for which you provided expertise led to the						
	Strongly agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion / Cannot judge	To of
Strengthened participants’ networks with public officers from different countries	38.8%	44.2%	3.1%	0.8%	13.2%	
Strengthened relations between the beneficiary institution(s) and the Commission/ EEAS	23.3%	38%	7.8%	0.8%	30.2%	

Strengthened relations between the beneficiary institution(s) and your institution	21.7%	34.1%	17.1%	3.9%	23.3%		129
Strengthened relations among different beneficiary institutions (in the case of multi-country events)	25.0%	47.2%	2.8%	0%	25.0%		36

D2. To what extent did the TAIEX event(s) for which you provided expertise led to the following benefits to you personally?

	Strongly agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion / Cannot judge	Total number of responses
Strengthened my network of professional connections with peers/ public officers from other countries	48.8%	40.3%	5.4%	0.8%	4.7%	129
Improved my relations with/ visibility to institutions of the EU and EU member states	34.9%	45%	4.7%	1.6%	14%	129

G4. To what extent do you agree that TAIEX allowed the following better than it would have been through other options (including available EU and EU Member States tools and initiatives)?

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
Benefitting from peer-to-peer experience and advice	54.3%	27.9%	1.5%	0.8%	15.5%	

In addition, the following table presents results of the survey that was addressed to TAIEX participants.

F4. To what extent do you agree that TAIEX allowed the following better than it would have been possible through other options (including available EU and EU member states tools and initiatives)?:

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
Benefitting from peer-to-peer experience and advice	42.4%	38.8%	1.5%	1.2%	16.1%	335

C3. To what extent do you agree that the TAIEX event(s) you participated in contributed to the for the beneficiary institution and country/territory? If you have participated in more than one event provide us your general/ average impression.:

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/	Total number of responses

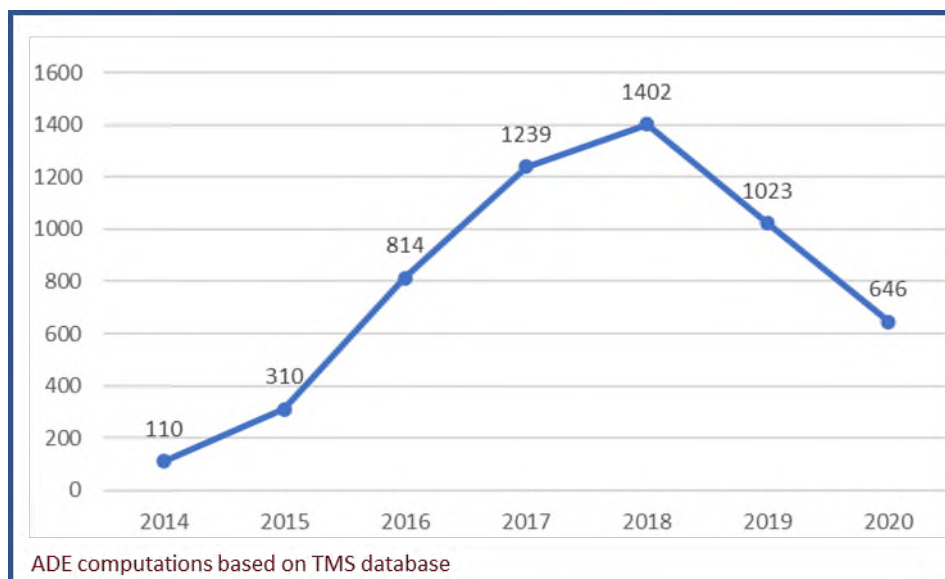
					Cannot judge	
Strengthening of the relations between the beneficiaries and the Commission and/or the EEAS	31.2%	36.3%	11.2%	1.0%	19.8%	
Strengthening of the relations between the beneficiary institution and public institutions from the countries of origin of experts	32.2%	45.1%	11.4%	0.6%	10.7%	
Strengthening of the relations among beneficiary participating public institutions during multi-country/regional events	29.4%	50.6%	7.5%	0.0%	12.5%	
I-7.1.3 –	Specific examples of how doing peer working in an EU context offers a value added					
<p>A TAIEX PI workshop in India was meant to advance cooperation between the EU and India in the field of countering online radicalization. It was high stakes by the PI as, through it, they were hoping to help position the EU as a partner of reference for India in this topic. A key ingredient to achieving this objective was the EU approach: MS embassies were also involved in the organization, and collaborated, through their police attachés, in selecting and obtaining the presence of the best and most fit public sector expertise in the EU.</p> <p>Croatia, a former beneficiary of TAIEX IPA, managed in 2013 to join the European Union. As a result, it was used as a success story and its experts were highly sought after by beneficiaries in the Enlargement Region who wished to learn from Croatia's experience in the transition process. Overall, most of the experts²³⁹ participating in TAIEX IPA events came from Croatia (16.7%), Italy (12.8%) and Slovenia (9.3%) which was often cited as being institutionally and culturally similar to Western Balkan countries.</p> <p>According to an interview with a TAIEX team leader (MN_500), a workshop took place in Athens and addressed the issue of separate collection of waste. Greek stakeholders could benefit from the experience of 12 experts coming from different countries (Italy, Spain, Islands, Sardinia...) The event was interactive and led to discussions between all the participants.</p>						
JC.7.2 -	TAIEX has realised to the maximum the potential of working at EU level					
I-7.2.1 –	Extent to which TAIEX had a strategy and implementation modalities to maximise such potential					
<p>Evidence gathered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2011 Commission Decision defines TAIEX as “an ongoing, peer-based instrument complementing Western Balkans and Turkey's national programmes (IPA) and other institution building instruments”. It states that “the approach is based on the axiom that certain national issues may benefit from being supported through multi-beneficiary programmes rather than multiple national programmes. The TAIEX instrument falls under the category of horizontal projects, whose aim is to address common needs across the Western Balkans and Turkey (IPA beneficiaries) while seeking to attain efficiencies and economies of scale in implementation and where coherence and experience can be 						

²³⁹ This calculation is based only on experts that are registered in the EDBE database.

effective and efficient in providing technical assistance.” (Source: Commission decision of 2011)

- No evidence was found of TAIEX having a specific strategy to maximize the potential of working at the EU level; nor of having a coordination role in the provision of overall support (beyond TAIEX) to partner countries.
- No evidence was found of benefits of working at the EU level that were not sufficiently exploited.
- 96% of experts surveyed agreed that the TMS process to register as an expert was “quick and straightforward”. The next table presents the number of new registrations in the database each year.

Figure 114: New registration on the Expert Database per year



I-7.2.2 – Extent to which the use of TAIEX contributed to establishing and/or effectively implementing co-ordination mechanisms among European actors (Commission +MS) on their respective support to partner countries

- According to TAIEX internal documents, Service Level Agreements (SLA) have been signed with the Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI) in 2014 and with DG INTPA in 2019.
- Evidence does not really point towards TAIEX playing a role in this respect.

I-7.2.3 – Extent to which the use of TAIEX contributed to establishing and/or effectively implementing co-ordination mechanisms among European actors (Commission + MSs) towards achieving stronger structural reforms at the MS-level

- Service Level Agreements (SLA) have been signed with DG REGIO in 2015, with DG REFORM (TAIEX SRSP) in 2016, and with DG ENV (TAIEX EIR) in 2017.
- SLAs have entailed significant levels of coordination. Nevertheless, evidence does not really point towards TAIEX playing a role in the implementation of co-ordination mechanisms beyond the precise scope of the SLAs.

I-7.2.4 – Extent to which stakeholders cannot provide examples of potential benefits of such working at EU level that were not sufficiently exploited

Evidence does not really point towards TAIEX playing a role in this respect.

JC.7.3 - TAIEX added other benefits to what would have resulted from action taken by the EU MSs on their own in both EU MSs and partner countries

I-7.3.1 – Extent to which stakeholders consider that actions could have been undertaken by EU MS on their own

Evidence gathered from surveys:

- Among TAIEX event participants' surveyed (TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA only), all but one among those who responded agreed on the fact that needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through existing EU member states initiatives (without involving the EU).
- When asked to provide specific example of how TAIEX has been used to complement or in coordination with other EU or EU member states tools, experts mentioned often Twinning (5 answers among 22 open answers). Respondents also referred to BTSF (Better Training for Safer Food), SRSS and Community of Practitioners.
- In the participants survey, Twinning was also the most frequently mentioned EU tool (8 answers among 46 open answers). 22 persons answered that they could not provide any example.

The next tables present answers to the experts' survey (first table) and to the participants survey (second table).

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
TAIEX events were used to complement and enhance other existing EU tools	39.5%	35.7%	0%	0%	24.8%	129
The needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through existing EU tools	23.4%	29.7%	6.3%	2.3%	38.3%	128
The needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through EU member states bilateral initiatives (without involving the EU)	31.3%	32.0%	6.3%	0%	30.5%	128

F1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?:

	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion/ Cannot judge	Total number of responses
TAIEX events were used to complement and enhance other existing EU tools	36.7%	46.2%	3.2%	0%	13.9%	18
The needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through other existing EU tools	22.2%	36.2%	6.0%	2.1%	33.5%	334

The needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through existing EU member states initiatives (without involving the EU)	25.5%	32.9%	6.9%	1.5%	33.2%	334
I-7.3.2 –	Extent to which stakeholders provide clear examples of benefits added by TAIEX, additional to what would have resulted from action taken by EU MS on their own					
<p>Evidence gathered from interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviewees provided several arguments based on which having a specific, sole instrument that specializes in organizing peer-to-peer events among public officials that operates across sectors and at the EU level constitutes a clear advantage. For more details, see I-1.5.2., I-6.4.2, I-7.1.2 et I-7.1.3. According to interviewees, the large choice of experts is a key benefit provided by TAIEX, allowing flexibility in selecting and combining expertise from several countries. For more details, see I-7.1.2. Other interviewees feedbacks during interviews confirmed that having a sole instrument with significant scale allowed it to improve logistic mechanisms – among others, for temporarily hiring and compensating public officers that would otherwise not be easily available, as occupied with their regular jobs (MN_733, MN_700). TAIEX generates benefits in the area of cross-border exchanges and networking: 88% of the survey respondents agree that TAIEX strengthened their network of professional experts abroad. For more details, see JC 6. During an interview with one of TAIEX team leaders (MN_012), the interviewee declared that “it’s difficult to see any other player than EU doing this job. (...) In raising standards for example, EU added value is very high. Approximation with EU acquis is the core of the work of TAIEX. In terms of sectors, in environment and food safety there is even more relevant value added.” According to an interviewee (MN_300), “TAIEX allows to use expertise of all the Member States, including the smallest one, not only from the main one. It is flexible.” Later, the person adds that “sometimes, it is difficult to get on board Member States for long term projects (for three or four years) and TAIEX helps for that.” 						

ANNEX 7: FINDINGS AT JUDGEMENT CRITERIA LEVEL

EQ 1 – The instrument’s ability to address needs

To what extent were the key features of TAIEX as an instrument in line with the needs of beneficiary regions/countries and EU policy priorities in which it intervened? To what extent did those features evolve to enhance TAIEX’s capacity to address needs, including by introducing TAIEX strategic and by expanding TAIEX to other regions and contexts of intervention?

JC 1.1 The design of TAIEX and the evolution of the instrument were based on an analysis of the type of needs the instrument would address in the beneficiary regions/countries, in the intervention sectors and in relations to priorities of the different DGs and the EU more broadly

The initial design of TAIEX was based on a structured need analysis to deal with the specific challenges of transposing the *acquis* related to the internal market in accession countries. However, its evolution was based on a more pragmatic approach (i.e. response to demand, and experimentation towards potential new uses).

- TAIEX’s initial design was studied to respond to practical expertise needs emerging from Accession candidate countries engaged in the transposition of the *acquis* as it concerned the internal market.²⁴⁰
 - Its role was designed as a **problem solver and catalyst**. It was meant to **complement** the national Phare programmes by responding with tailor-made actions to emerging individual requests for assistance, not otherwise covered but potentially blocking progress.
 - It was **demand based** – as initiative for legal transposition needed to come from candidate countries: the EU could not impose it other than as a prerequisite for accession. However, all requests were to be **verified for their compatibility with** the overall pre-accession strategy and the **priorities of the Accession Partnerships**.²⁴¹
 - One of its core functions was to facilitate **leveraging on EU Member States public officers as providers of expertise**, in consideration of them being the only ones with first-hand experience in the implementation of the *acquis*.²⁴²
 - Its original activities included the operation of a system to maintain a systematic diagnostic of needs/ progress on transposition of the EU *acquis* – within which activities for sharing EU expertise on the *acquis* were broadly framed.²⁴³
- TAIEX IPA was subsequently expanded/ adapted in response to sustained demand and positive feedback in terms of its usefulness towards accelerating and facilitating reform and progress towards integration to the EU, by both beneficiaries and the Commission.
 - Scope extension to all *acquis*.²⁴⁴
 - Focus on organization of short term, peer-to-peer (i.e. featuring MS public officers as experts) events only.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁰ See particularly: 1995 White Paper.

²⁴¹ 2000 Commission Decision, paragraph 6.

²⁴² 2000 Commission Decision: “Member States experts are vital in this process, particularly as assistance becomes more and more detailed and specialized - as they are the only ones with real experience in implementing the *acquis*.”

²⁴³ This diagnostic feature included databases and mechanisms to maintain them updated, including peer review missions – which are organized as TAIEX events. Although the overall diagnostic feature was later abandoned, peer review missions continued to take place in the Western Balkans and Turkey (TAIEX IPA), including throughout 2015-2020 period; also, they were taken up by TAIEX EIR. (Other strands also made use of them, though only very occasionally.)

²⁴⁴ 1998 Commission Decision.

²⁴⁵ No specific document makes the case for forgoing other activities. However, in practice from the 2011 Commission Decision onwards activities other than the organization of events are not mentioned anymore. Also, long term

- It is worth mentioning that the 2000 Commission decisions seems to allow for the **possibility** for events that are **not requested by beneficiaries**.²⁴⁶
- The extension of TAIEX to new geographical areas was made mostly based on the case for the potential value added of the instrument – given its features as well as the infrastructure built/ know-how accumulated.²⁴⁷ The usage of TAIEX in other strands was not necessarily oriented towards *acquis* transposition needs, extending towards other purposes as well. However, the main features of the instruments – namely, it being **short term**, based on the provision of **peer-to-peer MS public sector expertise**, and **adaptable to a wide range of contents** – were universally maintained.
 - Coherence of each strand with different DGs and strands priorities’ was ensured through the establishment in SLAs of application and eligibility/ priority rules (designed to fit the needs of/ purpose to be played within the instruments supported).
In some cases, eligibility rules are framed by official diagnostics²⁴⁸ and bi/multi-lateral agreements²⁴⁹ (similarly to what happened in the original TAIEX version with the Phare programs).
 - Some TAIEX features were adapted for better serve the purposes envisaged for new strands: in particular, in the case of TAIEX PI events were to be requested (primarily) by EU officers²⁵⁰; and the use of TAIEX events in series, following a programmatic approach (specifically: the Medium Term Assistance (MTA) approach) for TAIEX TCC^{251,252}.

JC 1.2 The institutional set-up favoured TAIEX’ ability to address needs

The setup of TAIEX within a single team with significant know-how favoured TAIEX’s ability to address needs.

- The case for a single TAIEX structure serving multiple services was advocated almost universally in interviews with EU officers – as it allowed all to benefit from the accumulated (and potentially still increasing) know-how.
- Stakeholders of non-NEAR strands²⁵³ mentioned the following as key advantages of TAIEX:
 - Administrative/ logistic capabilities – which enable the quick, low bureaucracy organization of events – including the pre-existing agreement with a logistic

secondments of experts (Twinning) are not mentioned in documentation after the 1998 Commission decision – it is understood that Twinning was at some point separated from TAIEX operations.

²⁴⁶ 2000 Commission Decision, paragraph 6: “A large part of TAIEX assistance will remain demand-driven...”

²⁴⁷ Some preliminary analysis and assessment were conducted in some cases, i.e. for TAIEX Regio (Assessment of Demand and Supply in Administrative Capacity to Manage European Structural and Investment (ESI) funds and explore interest in a new staff exchange instrument called “Common Expert Exchange System (CEES)) and for TAIEX INTPA (MN744). Support arguments for extensions to new TAIEX strands can be found in COM(2005) 321 (TAIEX-ENI), the note to the file “TAIEX activities under Partnership Instrument (PI) – 24/07/2014, C(2015) 4109 (TAIEX-PI) and in all SLAs concerning TAIEX signed by DG NEAR and other DGs.

²⁴⁸ Organized and maintained by entities external to TAIEX. This is in particular the case of TAIEX EIR – where events must be coherent with needs identified in the EIR’.

²⁴⁹ SLAs and interviews with EU Services’ officers (including the TAIEX team).

²⁵⁰ Note to the file “TAIEX activities under Partnership Instrument (PI) – 24/07/2014. As the PI’s mission is to promote the EU interest, it was deemed more logical that events’ requests would come from EU officers.

²⁵¹ The specific approach taken by TAIEX TCC allows the Aid Programme to the TCC to support the territory with capacity development in a structured, medium-term way; which would not be feasible through other programs due to the specific political situation.

²⁵² In principle, neither the possibility of TAIEX requests by actors other than beneficiaries nor the possibility of sequencing events were previously excluded, though they were not the typical *modus operandi*. See in particular the Commission Decision of 2000, , paragraph 6: “A large part of TAIEX assistance will remain demand-driven...” and paragraph 7. (“... these activities will, where appropriate, be gained to gain continuity.”)

²⁵³ Interviews with non-NEAR (EU) stakeholders: MN300, MN700, MN734, MN741, MN743, MN744.

provider, pre-arranged agreements to recruit MS experts from multiple countries and institutions, and the consolidated database of experts (EDBE).

- Accumulated know-how in designing events fit to needs (application/ event design processes), which – with adjustments – can be leveraged on among strands.
 - Within the TAIEX team, specific strand/ sector/ geography responsibilities are assigned to each member, which was considered very favourably in interviews. In fact, this allowed TAIEX team members to develop expertise and understanding as to the specificities of each strand/ sector/ geography, and thus respond more pertinently and efficiently to requests.²⁵⁴ Also, team members responsible for non-NEAR strands are seconded from EU Services associated with each strand, which favors them maintaining a close tie with such services and thus being fully aware of their priorities and needs.²⁵⁵
 - From a know-how and extent of use standpoint, the case for the location of TAIEX within DG NEAR could be easily made. DG NEAR²⁵⁶ has been operating TAIEX since 1996, being until 2014 the only user of TAIEX (as the Aid Programme to the TCc was originally under its umbrella, and SLAs setting up other non-NEAR strands were only launched afterwards). To date, it is still by far the largest user of TAIEX (though decreasing in importance)²⁵⁷.
 - The possibility of moving TAIEX to a different type of structure, less tied to DG NEAR, has been considered to some extent (in particular, to the SecGen, or to an agency). A key disadvantage perceived is that it could become more difficult for it to be used as a DG NEAR policy tool.²⁵⁸
- A disadvantage of TAIEX's current location is that it is characterized by high personnel rotation.²⁵⁹

JC 1.3 The objectives pursued were suitable to contribute to reaching broader beneficiaries and EU objectives in the different regions, countries, and sectors

The TAIEX instrument has specific features to allow it to address well the EU needs and broader needs it tackles in each of the different regions, countries and sectors. These are to a certain extent different in each strand. These essentially revolve around the TAIEX application process review; as well as, for EU-demand based events, the fact that these are requested as part of a wider strategy to achieve priority objectives.

- As part of the application review process, TAIEX verifies the eligibility of TAIEX events in terms of coherence with EU priorities and objectives within the specific region, country and/or sector, as well as eligibility rules set by SLAs when applicable. The convenience of the event, including its non-duplication with other actions, is also verified through consultation (mostly by email) with relevant EU stakeholders (i.e. DGs, EU delegations).²⁶⁰ (Note: this process is simplified in the case of TAIEX TCc, where due to the specific nature/ setup events are approved without going through the consultation process.)²⁶¹
- In terms of specific eligibility requirements set for different SLAs²⁶²:

²⁵⁴ With EU officers (both within and outside the TAIEX team).

²⁵⁵ MN734, MN744, MN770, ISG notes to the intermediary report.

²⁵⁶ Previously: DG ELARG.

²⁵⁷ Based on TMS data.

²⁵⁸ MN746.

²⁵⁹ MN746, review of organigrams, observations from the Evaluation Team while reviewing events documentation.

²⁶⁰ MN167, verified through various other interviews and review of documentation referring to all events included in the case studies.

²⁶¹ TAIEX TCc events documentation (emails referencing agreements based on which approval by DG NEAR is not necessary), verified through interviews – particularly, MN158.

²⁶² SLAs, final reports for SLAs (periods ending in 2020), MN63, MN158, MN700.

- TAIEX EIR: the purpose of the event addresses areas for improvement identified through EIR country diagnostics.
- TAIEX PI events are implemented within the scope of the PI instrument (they must be associated to priority EU objectives/ part of strategies to promote the EU interest).
- TAIEX SRSP events are defined as components of broader strategic reform plans to be implemented within EU MS.
- TAIEX TCc events are defined coherently with the Aid Programme to the TCc, as well as as part of three years Project Action Plans (PAPs).

JC 1.4 There was (and still is) a need for a demand-driven, rapid, and service-oriented instrument in the different regions, countries, and sectors; there was also a need to introduce a more strategic / programmatic approach

Throughout the whole period, there was need for a demand driven, rapid and service-oriented instrument across the different regions, countries and sectors where TAIEX operates. The need for programmatic features also existed; as well as – to a more specific/ lesser extent – the need for the possibility of organizing events upon EU-demand.

- TAIEX documentation concerning the need for an instrument with its characteristics is essentially limited to documentation cited in JC 1.1 above; along with subsequent Council and Commission Decisions, which attest to continuing demand for the instrument as well as its functionality, given uniqueness and complementarity with other instruments available.²⁶³
- Interviews and surveys indicate there is overall interest and continuing demand for TAIEX's unique features i.e. peer-to-peer, demand-driven, quick to implement, low bureaucracy/ administrative burden.
- More than three quarters of the TAIEX participants' survey respondents stated their institution would definitely or likely ask for a TAIEX event in the future.
- Within interviews, both (non-TAIEX) EU officials and beneficiaries explained how TAIEX is often the only available practical alternative to address some needs: particularly, those characterized by the need to address an issue **limited in scope** (and not covered within larger programmes) in a **timely way**, and in a way that either requires or can productively leverage on **EU MS public official expertise**. (It was also noted that the range of needs that TAIEX is used to address also tends to depend on the availability of alternative instruments with similar characteristics – e.g. Twinning.)²⁶⁴
- A decrease in the number of applications and events organized by TAIEX was observed during the 2015-2020 period, particularly in the IPA-ENI and TCc strands; however, this appears to be only in small part associated with a decrease in needs that could be addressed through TAIEX.
- Two factors were associated with decrease of the need for TAIEX in the IPA-ENI regions:²⁶⁵
- Lesser relevance of the Accession agenda (the Western Balkans and Turkey, IPA) compared to the previous periods – which resulted in lesser urgency placed on transposition and incorporation of the EU *acquis* and best practices.
- The availability of a progressively wider range of support instruments for the Western Balkans countries and Turkey (IPA) (and ENI countries), some of which are used in alternative to TAIEX.

²⁶³ In particular: COM(2015) 321, Annex 1 to the Commission Implementing Decision on the European Neighbourhood wide Action Programme 2015, Annex 1 to the Commission Implementing Decision on the Technical Assistance And Information Exchange (TAIEX) action programme 2015-2017 under the European Neighbourhood-wide measures, C(2011) 8131, Annex 1 to C(2018) 6604.

²⁶⁴ MN505, MN700, MN733, MN738, MN739, MN741, MN743, MN744, MN753, MN755 among others.

²⁶⁵ MN 167, MN 746.

- Other than that, the decline in number of applications and increase in rejections seems to be rather attributable by factors driven by the EU Commission:
 - In the case of IPA-ENI, TAIEX went through a “Recalibration” process (in 2016-2018), which aimed at better focusing its scope towards EU priorities. This coincided with the introduction of TAIEX Strategic (i.e. the possibility for events to be organized upon demand of EU Services – in practice possible and in use even before, but at a lesser scale and without being actively promoted); but was also characterized by the introduction of more strict rules and priorities concerning the eligibility of topics for events (in line with EU priorities), motivated among others by the need to cope with capacity issues within the TAIEX team (particularly: headcount reductions). These ultimately resulted in a lower number of applications.²⁶⁶
 - In the case of TAIEX TCc, slower than planned progress on some topics in the MTA which ended in 2019 prompted a decision on the part of the EU Commission to focus on fewer priorities in the subsequent MTA; and to adopt a stricter approach, conditional among others to demonstrated commitment and provision of adequate staffing on the part of the beneficiary. Also, in the 2015-2020 period the political scene evolved in a direction that makes reunification of Cyprus less likely, resulting lesser relevance of alignment of legal texts with the EU *acquis* (essential for integration in the EU) from the standpoint of local beneficiaries.²⁶⁷
- Last, rotations in the TAIEX team personnel seem to have affected applications – in consideration of perceived lower capacity to support the process.²⁶⁸
- Uptake (in terms of number of applications received and events organized) was also lower than budgeted for all “new” strands (i.e. other than TAIEX IPA-ENI and TAIEX TCc). In fact, budget utilization for new strands ranged from 58% to 79% in the August 2016-July 2020 period²⁶⁹; and that, with the exception of TAIEX SRSP in 2019 and TAIEX PI in 2017, the number of events organized was lower, often significantly, than the maximum numbers mentioned in SLAs.^{270,271} The following were identified as contributing factors:
 - The resurgence of the COVID19 pandemic (limited to 2020) significantly affected all strands²⁷², but perhaps even more so TAIEX INTPA – which was only then starting to get piloted.
 - Within TAIEX REGIO, TAIEX INTPA and TAIEX EIR, insufficient awareness of the instrument is deemed a contributor for low demand.²⁷³
 - Within TAIEX REGIO, it is deemed that demand was initially overestimated (in the first SLA).²⁷⁴
 - As mentioned above, temporary staffing issues within the TAIEX team also seem to have affected, particularly, within the TAIEX PI strand.

²⁶⁶ Internal user guide on TAIEX and TAIEX recalibration. Interviews: MN746, MN747, MN770.

²⁶⁷ MN158, Note to the File “Final assessment of TAIEX support to the Turkish Cypriot community under the Medium-Term Assistance 2017-19, Evaluation of the Aid Programme to the Turkish Cypriot community (2013-2018) (Economisti Associati).

²⁶⁸ This appears to have been particularly the case of TAIEX PI, where the dedicated case handler position was vacant for 6 months between 2018 and 2019, which corresponded with a significant decrease in the number of events (MN870, TMS). However, the issue of rotation and its consequent loss of know-how was also mentioned in other interviews. (MN746)

²⁶⁹ Source: financials provided by DG NEAR. The numbers above do not include TAIEX INTPA (16%) which was only operative for six months during the period – the last months of which were affected by COVID.

²⁷⁰ Source: TMS data and SLAs.

²⁷¹ It is also worth noting that, in the case of TAIEX PI, the original yearly budget set was increased by 75% following initial high consumption. However, ultimately only 79% of TAIEX PI’s total available budget was used.) Source: TAIEX PI SLAs and relative amendments.

²⁷² TMS data.

²⁷³ Sources: internal SLA reports for periods ending in 2020; MN32, MN900, 2020 Evaluation of TAIEX REGIO (PPMI).

²⁷⁴ Commentaries of the ISG to the intermediary report.

- The uptake of programmatic features (possibility to plan events in advance, often several at a time, towards a same objective – instead of reacting to emerging needs) was used significantly, in particular:
 - Within TAIEX SRSP: the “planned” nature of the SRSP (not TSI) reform exercises supported makes the use of such feature logical and adequate.²⁷⁵
 - Within TAIEX TCc: the use of Medium Term Assistance (MTA) allows supporting extensive administrative/ legislative capacity building exercises – for which, due the particularities of the political setting, few alternative programs and instruments are available. It also facilitates aligning TAIEX efforts within the wider Aid Programme to the TCc.²⁷⁶
 - Within TAIEX IPA-ENI, substantial use was made of Training Maps, particularly in agriculture-related topics.²⁷⁷
- The possibility for EU Services to directly request TAIEX events was given more prominence (limited to TAIEX IPA-ENI) since TAIEX Recalibration. However, albeit there was some uptake from line DGs, the usage of the instrument on the part of EU Delegations appears sporadic, and often linked to merely procedural reasons (i.e. overcome recent limitations placed on the topic/ number of events which can be organized in benefit of a specific sector when requested by beneficiaries; obtain a higher level of priority/ faster processing for a specific event)²⁷⁸. This said, the possibility is considered interesting for the organization of multi-country and other multi-beneficiary events.²⁷⁹ Also, the option of EU services submitting applications may be useful in cases in which local administrations’ competences or previous awareness/ knowledge on a specific topic are very low – as beneficiaries may have lesser ability to identify precisely their needs and what is needed to address them.²⁸⁰

JC 1.5 Peer working was a suitable way (or the most suitable way) to develop capacities/knowledge

The peer-to-peer aspect was a distinguishing (and in several contexts unique) feature of TAIEX, which was deemed either necessary or very useful in all the contexts in which the instrument is used – particularly, but not only, in relation to the development of capacities and practical knowledge in line with the EU *acquis* and EU best practices.

- The original intervention logic of TAIEX stressed the relevance of peer-to-peer exchanges for addressing practical issues in the transposition of the EU *acquis*, being EU MS public sector experts the only ones with hands-on experience in the matter.²⁸¹
- Interviewees often described interchanges within practitioners as unique way to gain practical, hands-on knowledge on the “how to” of the EU *acquis* or EU best practices, that could not be obtained from other sources. Expertise from countries that recently joined the EU was often mentioned as particularly valuable – as such experts were most likely to have specific experience on how to introduce the *acquis* and practices in new contexts.²⁸²
- Peer-to-peer exchanges were also talked about as a “soft” way for the EU to influence policy in beneficiary countries and/or gain insight.²⁸³

²⁷⁵ MN63.

²⁷⁶ MN158, MN750, MN505, Evaluation of the Aid Programme to the Turkish Cypriot community (2013-2018) (Economisti Associati).

²⁷⁷ TMS, Interviews.

²⁷⁸ MN745.

²⁷⁹ Survey with NCPs and Contact Points within EU Delegations, MN500.

²⁸⁰ MN733, MN747.

²⁸¹ 2000 Commission decision, paragraph 5: “... support from MS is even more vital, since they are the only ones with real experience in implementing the *Acquis*”.

²⁸² Among others: with EU officers, both within and outside the TAIEX team, and with beneficiaries.

²⁸³ Particularly: MN770. It is also worth noting that TAIEX is also used for country screening exercises.

JC 1.6 The current catalogue of TAIEX activities (study visits, expert missions, workshops, peer review, work from home, online initiatives, hybrid initiatives and series of events) allows to address the range of beneficiaries needs in the different contexts

The catalogue of event options was deemed adequate to address the range of beneficiaries' needs in different contexts. Nonetheless, a few suggestions have been extended.

- The initial catalogue (originally designed based on TAIEX IPA's needs) was enriched with new features aimed at better serving needs/ objectives in new strands, allow a more "policy driven" use of the instrument and adapt to emerging circumstances (i.e. the COVID 19 pandemics).²⁸⁴
- Previous evaluations do not offer specific insights on the catalogue, other than stating that all types of events are perceived as useful – albeit with different nuances (different types adapt best depending on the specific type of needs).²⁸⁵
- Stakeholders interviewed²⁸⁶ perceived the catalogue as sufficient given the scope of TAIEX²⁸⁷. Nonetheless, two suggestions for changes/ extensions were made:
 - Addition of (online) modalities for even shorter term and more immediate consultation of experts (i.e. one-session events, immediate expert consultation through email or chat.)²⁸⁸
 - Better adaptation/ flexibilization of study visits to needs – where tight limitations on number of participants (generally 3, 5 in the case of TAIEX SRSP only) were perceived to rest effectiveness, as not all people whose participation was considered important could take part. (Note: there are indications that in some cases, this was also due to the selection of participants being in part oriented towards higher ranking or more politically relevant figures – leaving fewer spots for technical-level practitioners.)²⁸⁹

²⁸⁴ Source: strategic documents, interviews (MN167, MN746, MN770). See also JC 1.1.

²⁸⁵ Evaluation of TAIEX Instrument, Final Evaluation Report, August 2015 (AETS), paragraph 3.4.

²⁸⁶ Various interviews both with EU officers and beneficiaries.

²⁸⁷ The need for longer term support instruments such as Twinning was manifested in TAIEX TCc. (In particular: MN 755, MN505)

²⁸⁸ MN755.

²⁸⁹ MN505, MN745, MN755.

EQ 2 – Did specific interventions address needs?

To what extent were TAIEX events in line with and adapted to specific country, sector, and EU needs? How did the TAIEX support made sure this was the case and what factors played a role in this perspective?

JC 2.1 The TAIEX approach was geared towards identifying and formulating well-conceived and country-owned TAIEX activities

The TAIEX application review process was geared towards formulating well-conceived and country owned TAIEX activities. However, awareness of TAIEX among potential beneficiaries (and to some extent, EU officers) was not consistent – which influences the emergence of applications.

- The TAIEX application review process included several features aimed at ensuring that the design of events responded to needs and was aligned with EU priorities and other EU actions:
 - In non-EU beneficiary countries, local EU Delegations tended to get involved from the early application process, even in events demanded by the beneficiary. This was either a required step of the process (TAIEX INTPA); or standard practice, part of ongoing relations²⁹⁰. In practice, this resulted in a first quality check of applications.²⁹¹
 - Even in cases in which events are requested by EU officers, steps were taken to ensure the beneficiary country(ies) were committed to them. In particular, this included discussing their interest in the event before the submission of the application, and involving them closely in the agenda setting process.^{292,293}
 - TAIEX applications were then reviewed by the TAIEX team, which also consulted with EU stakeholders who are deemed relevant, including both in-country personnel and line DGs. This process was aimed at verifying the relevance of the proposed event for both EU priorities and beneficiary country needs and the lack of overlap/ conflict with other activities; as well as surfacing other concerns or suggestions for the event design (including the possibility of synergies with other actions).²⁹⁴
 - The TAIEX team’s know-how also contributed to optimize the design of the event (in particular but not limited to identifying suitable experts). In fact, the specialization of TAIEX case handlers (in a specific strand or topic) was mentioned as a factor favouring quality of events; with TAIEX personnel rotation/ vacancies being identified as an issue negatively affecting quality.²⁹⁵
- The above-described process was adjusted to some extent among strands, reflecting the different role played by events within them and the level of content ownership retained by the DGs responsible of each SLA. Most notably:
 - In the case of TAIEX TCc, the role of the TAIEX team was limited to verifying the conformity of the event to the SLA and coordinating the event administration and

²⁹⁰ MN167, MN734, MN741, MN951.

²⁹¹ In fact, particularly in TAIEX INTPA, it was observed that consultations with the EU delegation may in fact lead to significant reworking of applications before submission. Applications not supported by the local EU delegation would also normally be rejected by the TAIEX team. Source: MN734, MN741, MN951.

²⁹² In practice, requests only came from EU officers in the case of TAIEX PI and TAIEX IPA-ENI - this last in the strategic version. In the cases of TAIEX SRSP and TAIEX TCc, although the applications were formally submitted by EU officers they were ultimately based on broader frameworks requested and agreed upon by beneficiaries.

²⁹³ MN167, MN700, MN733.

²⁹⁴ MN167, MN743, application templates (as filled for events reviewed in depth).

²⁹⁵ MN870. Anecdotally, an approximately 6-month vacancy in the TAIEX PI case handler seemed to coincide with a drop in TAIEX PI applications as well as a loss of interest in the instrument within a specific topic as reported by a TAIEX PI officer. (MN700)

logistics. No formal content approval or consultations was required – oversight in this sense is retained by DG REFORM (which also formally submits the applications).²⁹⁶

- In the case of TAIEX SRSP, while the application process is maintained, SRSP officers retain a higher degree of control over the event design – often including the selection of experts.²⁹⁷ There appears to be lesser emphasis on consultations.
- TAIEX is perceived to promote country ownership. This is largely true for both events requested by EU services and beneficiaries, although more so for the latter: in the case of events requested by beneficiaries 100% of survey respondents (participants) agreed that TAIEX promoted national government ownership, compared to 86% in the case of events requested by EU services. Among experts surveyed, 94% agreed that the beneficiary institutions demonstrated significant ownership of events.²⁹⁸
- Awareness of TAIEX among potential beneficiaries does not appear to be consistent among potential beneficiaries, nor (to a lesser extent) among EU officers (particularly: within EU Delegations). Efforts to strengthen it were largely left to each strand and, to some extent, to local officers (from EU Delegations, and NCPs); and were often deemed insufficient (particularly after 2018, and even more so in 2020 – in consequence of the COVID-19 pandemics, which made it impossible to organize in-presence events to raise awareness about TAIEX).²⁹⁹ Also, while the TAIEX team was generally described as responsive by in-country stakeholders, the general materials (not event-specific) and information shared were at times referred to as insufficient, and the website complicated to navigate.³⁰⁰ This clearly affected the quantity of applications submitted from each country: in the words of an interviewee, the use of TAIEX “really depends on the people of the ground [Delegations’ staff] – whether they perceive TAIEX as useful, or just see it as more work that they may not want”.³⁰¹

JC 2.2 Overall, the events funded addressed well the needs of beneficiary countries, sectors, and individuals

- Expert reports reviewed³⁰² showed coherence of topics covered with the stated purpose of events and often commented on high interest on the part of participants.
- Almost all stakeholders surveyed agree that events adequately addressed the needs targeted.
- Over 95% of experts agreed that the design of events, including the choice of type of event, were adequate to needs; and that events had the right audience³⁰³.
- Among beneficiaries, 97% strongly or mostly agreed that contents were relevant to their needs; and over 95% agreed that experts were both knowledgeable on the topics and able to convey information well.
- Interviews³⁰⁴ generally confirmed these findings.
- As mentioned above (see JC 2.1), TAIEX was perceived to promote country ownership in the large majority of cases, denoting that they were tailored to local needs.

²⁹⁶ MN158, also confirmed by documentation included in TCc events’ files.

²⁹⁷ MN63.

²⁹⁸ Expert survey data does not allow for differentiation based on which stakeholders requested the events.

²⁹⁹ Based on commentaries from EU officers (both at headquarters and within EU delegations) and NCPs. Particularly: MN08, MN700, MN734, MN740.

³⁰⁰ MN736, MN737.

³⁰¹ MN743.

³⁰² All expert reports associated with events included in case studies which were stored in TMS.

³⁰³ More precisely: 97% agreed that the types of events were the most appropriate to address beneficiary needs; 97% agreed that the overall design of the event was adequate; and 95% agreed that the events had the right audience.

³⁰⁴ With all types of stakeholders.

JC 2.3 Specific factors that contributed to enhancing or hampering TAIEX's capacity to target needs

The following factors were associated with enhancing or hampering TAIEX events' capacity to target needs

- Strong involvement and commitment of beneficiaries (along with, if relevant, EU actors - particularly, EU Delegations) throughout the whole application/ design phase.³⁰⁵
- Clear definition of the need to be addressed and, coherently with it, of the focus/ objective of the event (which should be realistic given time available and capacities of the beneficiary).³⁰⁶
- Timely organization of events. (Excessive delays may cause topics to lose relevance.)³⁰⁷
- Level of preparation of participating experts. In this sense, several types of issues and considerations were raised:
 - Experts' topic expertise: this condition is generally considered as satisfactorily met by both beneficiaries and EU stakeholders.³⁰⁸ However, the TAIEX team and other EU officers involved in the organization of events reported some difficulties in finding suitable experts (in particular: for novel topics) and/or in securing their availability.³⁰⁹
 - Capacity of experts to adapt their advice to the beneficiary context: in this sense, previous experience in similar contexts (size of country, level of economic development, political system, type of culture/ history etc.) was deemed useful. For events with objectives related with the transposition of the EU *acquis*, experts from countries that most recently become MS were often mentioned as being particularly appreciated.³¹⁰
 - Support provided by TAIEX to experts in preparing for events. This was reported as being at times inconsistent; with the request that information packages should be provided to experts at least one week in advance.³¹¹ An additional best practice cited was the possibility to meet and be briefed by EU officers (including the beneficiary country's EU Delegation) in advance to the event, particularly in cases in which the context presents elements or sensitivities that the expert should be aware of.³¹² Further best practices mentioned were from TAIEX TCc (where experts get an induction at the beginning of each MTA³¹³) and from TAIEX INTPA (which implemented remote pre-event diagnostic tools to facilitate better contextualization of events – including questionnaires prepared by experts and responded by beneficiaries, pre-event calls and videos of beneficiary facilities.)³¹⁴
- Related commentaries concerned, beyond the experts' topic expertise, their capacity and willingness to engage with the audience and the problem at hand.³¹⁵

³⁰⁵ MN505, MN700, MN733, MN741, MN748, expert reports and project documents (particularly: TCc MTA final reports covering the period ending in 2020), review of specific events.

³⁰⁶ MN167, MN504, MN505, MN741, review of specific events. The theme was also repeatedly mentioned in commentaries in the expert survey.

³⁰⁷ MN738, MN745, MN755.

³⁰⁸ Participants' survey (58% of participants strongly agreed that the experts' knowledge was adequate, and a total of over 96% either strongly or mostly agreed), MN300, MN700, MN733, MN739, MN 746, MN758.

³⁰⁹ MN501, MN770.

³¹⁰ Within the experts' survey, 16 out of 77 experts' commentaries on contextual factors that enhanced or hampered effectiveness of events concerned the fact that experts would come from/ have experienced a situation with similar characteristics to that of the beneficiaries. Also: MN504, MN751, MN755.

³¹¹ MN504. However, in the survey over 95% of experts agreed to having received adequate information to prepare for events, and over 94% agreed that it was provided sufficiently in advance.

³¹² MN504, MN743, MN746.

³¹³ MN158, MN505.

³¹⁴ MN505, MN739, MN741.

³¹⁵ MN504, MN755, MN758.

- Experience of the TAIEX case handler on the topic and beneficiary context: gaps (prolonged vacancies) and rotations among case handlers (each of which specializes on specific strands or topics) affected the quality of events.³¹⁶
- The restriction (associated to COVID-19) to online events only. Albeit these last were seen as having some advantages, the impossibility of in-person options was seen as implying clear disadvantages – particularly, related to the impossibility to personally experience another context (for either beneficiaries or experts) and barriers posed by the medium towards interactive conversations and informal interactions. Online events were also negatively affected by sub-optimal internet connections and other IT-related challenges.³¹⁷
- Availability of high quality translation, where necessary (including knowledge of technical language on the part of interpreters).³¹⁸

³¹⁶ MN870. Anecdotally, an approximately 6-month vacancy in the TAIEX PI case handler seemed to coincide with a drop in TAIEX PI applications as well as a loss of interest in the instrument within a specific topic as reported by a TAIEX PI officer. (MN700)

³¹⁷ MN504, MN505, MN738, MN741, MN745, MN755; the issue was also repeatedly mentioned in commentaries to the experts' survey.

³¹⁸ MN745, MN755. It is worth noting that interpretation did not emerge as a significant issue in surveys – though it is deemed possible that this may be due to self-selection bias of respondents (participants not understanding the language the survey was presented in – English, Spanish, French and Turkish – not answering it.).

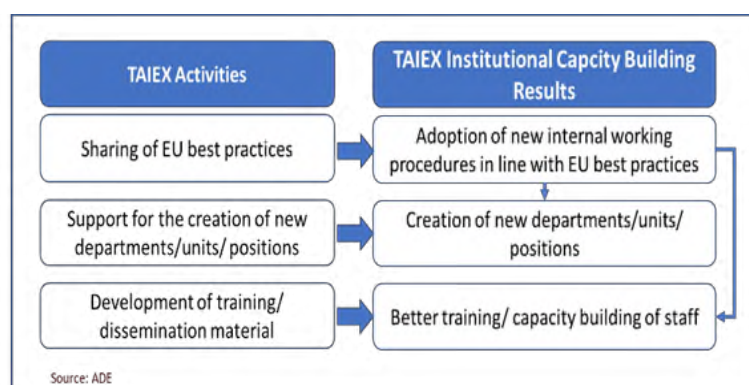
EQ 3 – Contribution to and role of capacity development and institutional strengthening

To what extent did TAIEX contribute to individual and institutional capacity development and strengthening of institutions in the medium to long run? What role did such strengthening play in bringing about structural reforms/ advancing the EU interest, in different contexts and circumstances? To what extent was the introduction of TAIEX strategic in 2016 beneficial in this regard?

JC 3.1 A clear or direct link can be established between TAIEX events and changes in individual capacities and strengthening of institutions in the medium to long run in their capacity to design, formulate and/or implement their reform processes and /or manage funds.

Institutional Capacity building was one of TAIEX’s principal roles. Across all strands, TAIEX contributed to the capacity building of beneficiary institutions, thanks to the work of high quality MS experts, that explained EU regulatory frameworks, shared EU best practices, and provided direct support for organisational change as well as for the development of training and dissemination materials. TAIEX’s capacity to contribute to capacity-building has been reaffirmed across sources including case studies, focus group discussions, interviews, surveys and after 6 months evaluations.

Figure 115: Mapping of how TAIEX has contributed to institutional capacity building



The case studies led to the identification of several examples of success stories.³¹⁹ In some cases however, frequent staff turnover and lack of follow-up limited the sustainability of results. For a minority of events implementation challenges have also affected the quality of events.³²⁰

³¹⁹ See annex 5 for more examples from the case studies. Two of those include the following: the strengthening of the Capacity of the Croatian Ministry for Regional Development and EU Funds to carry out strategic policy making and performance assessment of public policies and programmes under TAIEX IPA and the support for Kyrgyzstan in the implementation of the Registered Exporter System (RES) under TAIEX PI; In Croatia three events on strategic policy making and performance assessment of public policies and programmes (1 workshop, 1 study visit in Finland and 1 in Ireland) have led to reforms in the beneficiary Ministry for Regional Development and EU Funds (including the design and implementation of new internal working procedures; the drafting of new Impact assessment guidelines; the establishment of a New Independent Sector for Strategic Development Management and Coordination of EU Investments). In Kyrgyzstan, the 2017 expert mission and the 2018 workshop on aligning to the EU on Import/ Export standards under TAIEX PI led to knowledge gains that enabled the implementation of a Registered Exporter System (RES) in the country. This was deemed critical for commercial relationships between the country and the EU.

³²⁰ See section E of the response to this EQ for more details.

Box 72: Enabling Armenia’s police to carry out cybercrime investigations and use digital forensics- TAIEX as a Short-Term Capacity Building Instrument

Armenia faced rising levels of cybercrime starting from 2009, but with limited capacities for cybercrime investigation, only one cybercrime case had been resolved by 2014. In 2017, the Investigative Committee of the Police of Armenia decided to turn to TAIEX for support in strengthening its capacity for cybercrime investigation and the use of digital forensics. A TAIEX expert mission and a study visit were therefore organised. The two events allowed beneficiaries to better understand EU standards and learn from EU best practices. This triggered several reforms in line with observations and experts’ recommendations including the development of new training processes of investigators and candidate investigators, the establishment of a new department in the Investigative Committee focused on cybercrime and finally the development of software and of a number of implementation tools for digital forensics investigation.

Source: Interviews, survey, events’ documentary review, inventory analysis

Although TAIEX was mostly a short-term tool, the case studies revealed that, in some cases, it successfully provided more medium to long-term support through long series of events (in IPA and ENI EAST) or MTA (TCc). TAIEX’s longer term support often proved critical in cases where Twinning or OECD Sigma were not available due to political or other reasons such as availability of experts, as illustrated in the box below.

Box 73: Enabling the National Bank of Moldova to abide by Basel III³²¹ requirements – TAIEX as a Medium-Term Capacity Building Instrument

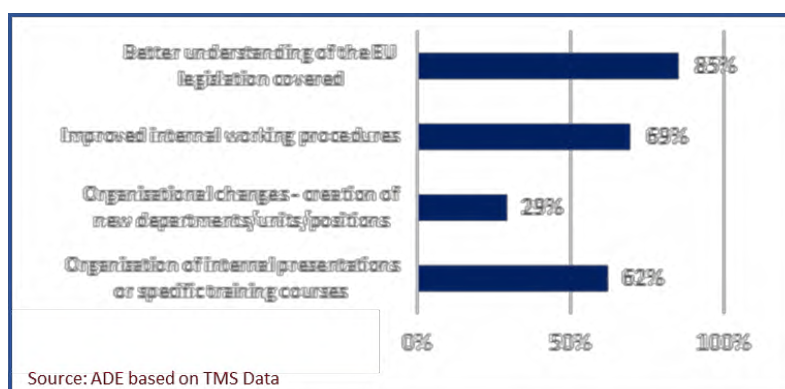
Under the 2014 Association Agreement with the EU, Moldova is required to abide by the Basel III standards. In 2018, following a two-year Twinning project with the Central Banks of Romania and the Netherlands, the National Bank of Moldova (NBM) successfully adopted a new regulatory framework in line with the EU Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR) and Directive (CRDIV) - the EU implementing acts of Basel III. However, the NBM lacked key expertise to implement the new framework. Although a Twinning project was initially approved, it was cancelled due to political reasons. After extensive dialogue with the EUD it was decided to address the existing needs through multiple TAIEX events. These enabled beneficiaries to make progress in the implementation of the framework, leading among other things to the adjustment of the NBM’s internal procedures regarding the assessment of market and interest rate risk in non-trading activities; the drafting, approval and implementation of a new methodology for assessing capital adequacy of banks; and the development of a complex macroprudential stress testing framework for the banking system. Although initially hesitant about the capacity of the instrument to address the magnitude of their needs, the beneficiaries appreciated “the instant results”, “low bureaucracy” and “flexibility” of TAIEX, that allowed them to each time to select the most appropriate type of events for their constantly evolving needs.

Source: Interviews, survey, documentary review, inventory analysis

Survey results have also reaffirmed the capacity of the instrument to provide institutional capacity building. 75% of NCPs, EUDEL TAIEX focal points, TAIEX PI Applicants and TAIEX INTPA contact points, agreed that TAIEX was instrumental in reinforcing administrative capacities in critical areas. Similarly, 89% of beneficiary respondents and 97% of experts agreed that TAIEX events led to improvements in beneficiary institutions’ administrative capacities, with 76.8% of beneficiaries stating that TAIEX had concretely changed their way of working.

³²¹ Basel III is a comprehensive set of reform measures in banking prudential regulation developed by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, to strengthen the regulation, supervision and risk management of the banking sector. Its implementing act in Europe is the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR) and Directive (CRD).

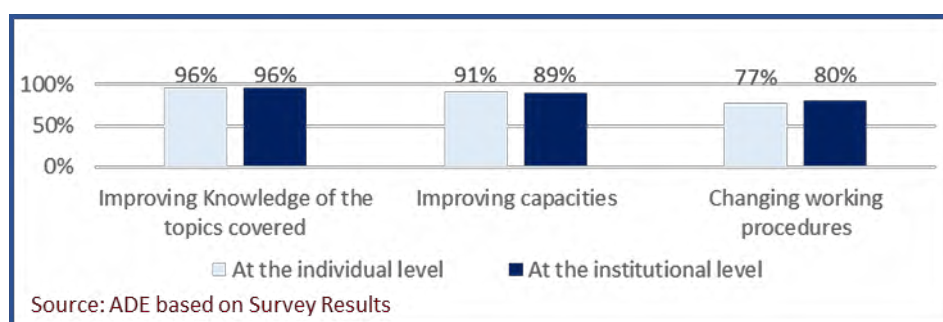
Figure 116: Perceived share of TAIEX events that led to institutional capacity building outcomes (after 6 months evaluation survey, all strands)³²²



The administrative capacity building results were generally deemed as sustainable, although there were several exceptions and variation across strands. For example, the 2017 TAIEX Workshop on Border Police Risk Analysis in Bosnia & Herzegovina provides a clear example of sustainable results. According to interviews the event led to a drastic change in the capacity of the involved institutions to carry out risk analysis. Practices adopted following the event having been sustained almost 4 years after the organization of the event. The surveys, respondents revealed that they expected TAIEX results of all types to be sustainable. Most of them expected them to last for more than 6 months, with at least a 1/3 of them expecting them to last over three years. Improved institutional knowledge and capacity as well as organizational changes were deemed as the most sustainable results of TAIEX.

A key constraint to both the capacity of the instrument to bring about institutional capacity building and the sustainability of its results, was the lack of internal follow-up by beneficiaries. In some cases, low levels of political commitment as well as low absorption capacities, meant that no action was taken to disseminate and institutionalise knowledge and skills gained during the events. As a result, even when TAIEX was successful in strengthening individual knowledge and skills, this did not always translate in concrete changes in working procedures.

Figure 117: Beneficiary survey responses to the question “Did the TAIEX event(s) you participated in contribute to any of the following concrete results?” (N=322)



The survey results confirmed the lack of follow-up in a significant number of cases, with 76% of beneficiary respondents indicating that in at least one of the events they participated in there was no internal follow-up of the event. Some beneficiaries, experts, NCPs and EUDEL staff argued that the TAIEX Team should be more actively engaged in the follow-up of the results of the events as an integral part of its support by for example providing guidelines/ good practices for follow-up or by organising follow-up meetings six-months after the organisation of the events. However, interviewed Commission staff highlighted that this would be very resources intensive.

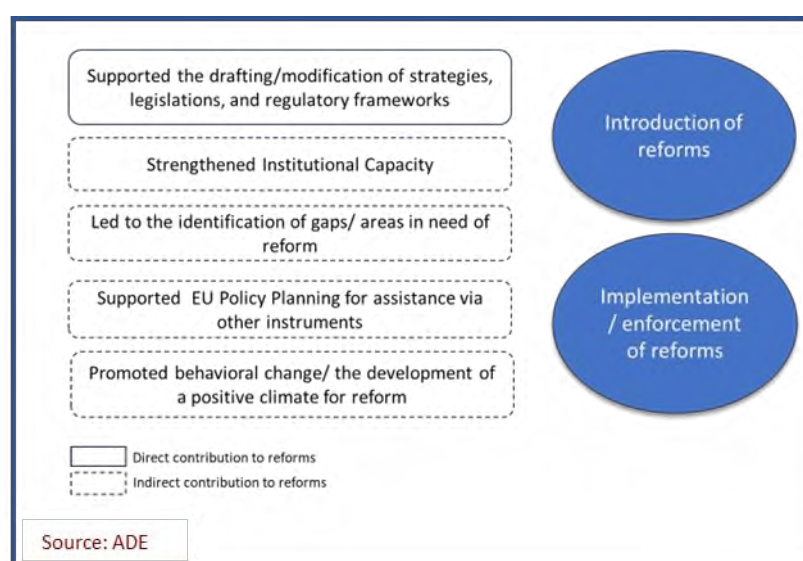
³²² The after-6 months evaluations are completed by evaluation correspondents (1 person per event). These are members of staff from beneficiary administrations involved in the organisation of events. The after-6-month evaluations were completed for about 40% of events conducted during the evaluation period.

Frequent staff turnover and political instability in most non-EU regions also led to loss of progress made through TAIEX or even shift in political momentum. **Study visits** posed particular challenges to sustainability. The limited number of involved participants rendered internal follow-up even more critical.

JC 3.2 TAIEX support has triggered discussions and concrete actions for structural reforms

In some cases, TAIEX played an important role in supporting reforms in beneficiary countries. As a mostly short-term and rather ad-hoc instrument, of limited financial weight, its role was obviously not to carry such reforms but to create a leverage effect and/or play a gap filling role. TAIEX's contributions to reforms varied significantly across strands, with some strands being more than others focused on such reforms. Low political commitment, limited absorption capacities of beneficiary institutions proved to be key constraints for TAIEX's effectiveness outside the EU. TAIEX's implementation modalities and strategic approach across strands also played a role.

Figure 118: Mapping of how TAIEX has supported reforms in beneficiary countries



The case studies led to the identification of a number of examples whereby TAIEX in synergy with other instruments, played an important and in some cases critical role in promoting reforms in beneficiary countries either directly by supporting beneficiaries in the design of strategies, legislations, and regulatory frameworks, when they lacked the capacity to do so on their own, or indirectly by strengthening institutional capacities for reform, by supporting EU policy planning, by contributing to the identification of areas in need of reform, and also by encouraging behavioural/cultural change. TAIEX's indirect support for reforms was considered by all interviewed stakeholders as important but was less immediate and its results were harder to measure and disentangle from the rest of EU support in the country.

Outside of the EU, low levels of political commitment to reforms, political instability and low absorption capacities, were key constraints to TAIEX's capacity to bring about reforms. This is highlighted by the examples below.

Box 74: TAIEX's contribution to the design and implementation of Kosovo's Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2020

In 2016 Kosovo, revised its 2011-2020 Strategy on Biodiversity and developed an Action Plan for 2016-2020 to ensure alignment with the EU acquis. In the announcement of the revisions, the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning thanked DG NEAR for supporting the process through three TAIEX Expert missions which were seen as critical for achieving the desired reform. The first mission was used to identify gaps between the Kosovo Biodiversity Strategy and the EU Biodiversity Strategy. The second one to discuss concretely changes to be made in the strategy and the third one to review the draft strategy and New Action Plan. Given the sensitive political context and financial challenges of Kosovo, beneficiaries highlighted that TAIEX was not only highly effective, but also the only instrument available to address their needs. Thanks to this series of TAIEX events Kosovo's legislative framework on Biodiversity reached EU Standards. However, staff shortages and limited funding the degree to which the Action Plan was implemented. Additional TAIEX events were used by different units of the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning to strengthen their capacity to implement the New Strategy, with key staff shortages however, limiting achieved progress. The TAIEX experts also provided support for beneficiaries to apply for other longer-term capacity building instruments to support the implementation process including an IPA TA project and smaller SIDA projects.

Sources: Interviews, Survey, Review of Events documentation, Review of Government of Kosovo publications, after-6- months evaluation.

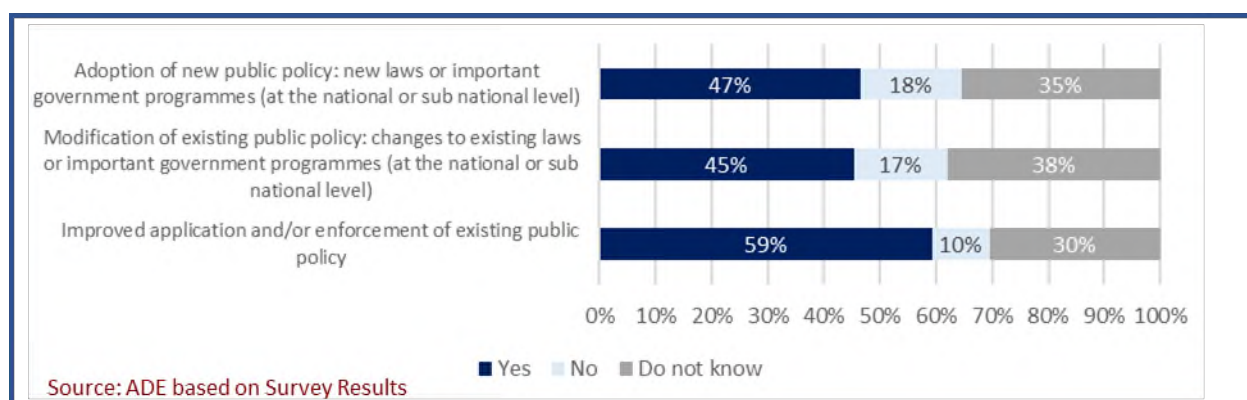
Box 75: TAIEX's contribution of a new Statistical legal text and in the creation of a Statistical office in TCc

TAIEX provided strong support to the TCc in the field of statistics in the 2017-2020 period, with 23 expert missions and 7 workshops having been organised. This was arguably the most successful of the sectorial PAPs implemented in the TCc in the period – with around 95% of planning activities having been completed. According, to interviewed stakeholders, TAIEX played a critical role in the passing of a new Statistical legal text and in the creation of a Statistical office – which as of March 2020 was functioning with a director and 15 employees (with a plan to hire 11 more in the months immediately following). However, despite the significant progress made, full approximation to the EU acquis has not been achieved and the Statistical office has yet to become fully operational. According to experts, this is mostly due to a lack of human resources in the Statistical office and insufficient IT infrastructure. Limited collaboration between the Statistical office and other areas of TCc bodies, which led to continuously changing levels of political commitment towards the issue and dilated the time needed for the passing of legal texts, have also posed important constraints.

Sources: Interviews, FGDs, Survey, Review of Events documentation, after-6- months evaluation.

In the surveys, 63% of the TAIEX NCPs, EUDEL TAIEX focal points, TAIEX PI and INTPA applicants, agreed that TAIEX was instrumental in the achievement of structural reforms in beneficiary countries. The share was the lowest among ENI South respondents, with 46%. Beneficiaries also agreed that TAIEX events often contributed to reforms although this agreement was much lower compared to other results.

Figure 119: Beneficiary survey responses to the question “Did the TAIEX event(s) you participated in contribute to any of the following concrete results?” (N=322)



TAIEX’s contribution to reforms was constrained by its mostly short-term and ad-hoc nature and its limited critical mass.³²³ Nevertheless, when successfully integrated within broader EU programming and used in synergy with other instruments, the short-term and ad-hoc nature of the instrument became a key source of its strength allowing it to provide flexible and immediate support that could not be delivered through other instruments.

TAIEX’s contribution to reforms varied significantly across strands. Beyond the importance of the political context in each region, differences in the objectives pursued as well as the selected implementation modalities across strands played an important role. TAIEX EIR and REGIO did not target reforms at all while for TAIEX IPA, ENI and TCc contributing to reforms promoting alignment with EU standards, norms and regulatory frameworks, was the strands’ *raison d’être*.

The table below summarises the identified differences across strands:

Table 17: TAIEX’s Contribution to Reforms- Differences across strands³²⁴

TAIEX Strand	Degree to which reforms were targeted	TAIEX as a share of the average budget of the supported instruments	Overall effectiveness for reforms	Strand specific strengths	Limiting factors
IPA	Contribution to reforms was a key objective to promote alignment with EU standards, norms and regulatory frameworks	0.9%	Highly effective. Several examples of events directly or indirectly contributing to reforms.	Extensive use of series of events, use of training maps/ workplans, peer-review missions for policy-planning	Political context and limited national capacities
ENI EAST		0.3%		Highly active NCPs and subsequent high visibility. Extensive use of series of events, use of training maps/ workplans, peer-review missions for policy planning	
ENI SOUTH			Limited effectiveness No examples of direct contribution to reforms but evidence of indirect contribution.	-	Very high levels of institutional resistance to reforms. Political context and limited national capacities.
TCc		4.2%	Effective. Several examples of reforms supported by TAIEX but also multiple examples where objectives were not reached.	MTA approach (longer-term support and higher financial weight)	
PI	Partly targeted along with other objectives	0.6%	Effective. Some examples of contribution to reforms when these were explicitly targeted.	-	Political context and limited national capacities
SRSP	Contribution to growth-promoting reforms was a key objective	1.3%	Highly effective. Several examples of events directly contributing to structural reforms	High levels of coordination & synergies; systematic involvement of beneficiaries in the identification of needs despite strategic nature; use of TAIEX as an instrument of last resort.	No identified strand-specific limiting factors
REGIO	Not targeted	Not Available	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

³²³ This was less the case for TAIEX TCc where the MTA approach was implemented.

³²⁴ For more details refer to the case studies.

EIR	Not targeted	Not Available	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
INTPA	Partly targeted along with other objective	0.001%	Limited effectiveness. Evidence of potential to contribute to reforms when these are explicitly targeted but no concrete examples identified. ³²⁵	-	Pilot phase, limited visibility, low awareness of the possibilities offered by TAIEX, Political context and limited national capacities

Source: ADE based on documentation.

JC 3.1 & 3.2 Factors affecting TAIEX's capacity to strengthen institutional capacities and support forms

II. Factors affecting TAIEX' effectiveness at the events' level

Across strands, the reaching of results was facilitated by key factors such as high-quality experts, well-tailored agenda to the specific needs of beneficiaries, use of series of complementary TAIEX events and synergistic use of TAIEX with other instruments. Conversely factors like delays, challenges with interpretation, experts, insufficiently tailored agenda, occasionally hampered implementation. Online and multi-country events tended to be less effective. Outside the EU, low political commitment, limited national capacities and political instability; acted as important barriers, in particular for TAIEX's support to reforms. More specifically:

National context:

- a. Low political commitment: For instance in the TCc, although TAIEX events were successful in providing the necessary support, in most cases they did not translate in reform in the community due to the political context. For example, a number of draft laws that were prepared with TAIEX's support, were stalled for a significant time in Parliament, often rendering them obsolete before they could be passed.
- b. Limited national capacities: These limited capacities for internal follow-up and/or the implementation of adopted reforms.
- c. Political instability and frequent staff turnovers: These led to loss of progress made through TAIEX or even shift in political momentum

In contexts of low political commitment, TAIEX was not used to directly promote reforms but rather to create an environment that could possibly make reforms possible in the future. It was used to support best practices in particular in highly technical areas, for supporting change in institutional culture, for creating a sentiment of proximity, and for paving the way for further collaboration including the use of other more long-term instruments. Series of events were particularly helpful in this regard.

³²⁵ It must be noted that the number of events conducted under TAIEX INTPA during the evaluation period was too low to allow for conclusions.

Box 76: Strengthening School Inspection Management in Azerbaijan – TAIEX as a tool for creating a positive environment for reforms

In Azerbaijan, there was initially strong resistance to the proposed reforms on School Inspection. A series of TAIEX events were organised to support the reforms. The initial workshop on School Self Evaluation was described as having “changed the environment and [making directors] positive to have inspection in their school and to get feedback from inspectors as well”. The follow-up TAIEX Study Visit on School Inspection Management, allowed beneficiaries to closely observe how school inspections were conducted, strengthening their knowledge in the field and allowing them to adopt relevant practices back at home.

Sources: Survey, Review of Events documentation, after-6- months evaluation.

Implementation challenges

- a. Low quality of experts (very rare, only 5 case study events): Experts incapable of transmitting/ communicating their messages or with insufficient awareness of the local context.
- b. Low quality or absence of interpretation undermined communication and the possibility to create meaningful interactions.
- c. Too broad/generic or too ambitious agenda: Insufficient time dedicated on each issue and lack of concrete guidelines. Beneficiaries felt unable to follow up with specific actions.
- d. Failure to engage the right participants, in particular for study visits that allowed for a very limited number of individuals. Need for technical/operational staff directly involved in the implementation of the issues covered, but also high level staff to support political momentum.
- e. Delays: political momentum waned, issue no longer seen as a priority/ need

Type of event

- a. Multi-country events: often too broad/failure to adapt to the specific needs/ capacities of individual countries. interpretation/ communication challenges
- b. Online events: Loss of informal interactions, technical issues, limited engagement of participants, increased challenged with interpretation.

II. Factors affecting TAIEX’ effectiveness at the instrument’s level

Beyond event specific factors, at the instrument’s level the following factors limited the instrument’s potential for achieving results:

- 1) **Failure to integrate in a broader strategic framework and use in synergy with other instruments for some strands:** In TAIEX REGIO and EIR the lack of a clear strategic vision and the failure to integrate TAIEX in the broader cooperation framework and promote its synergistic use have undermined its capacity to achieve concrete results.
- 2) **Insufficient visibility/ understanding of all the possibilities** provided by the instrument by potential applicants (NA, EUDELs, line DGs). This was particularly the case in certain strands (ENI South, INTPA, IPA) and among smaller beneficiary institutions. In surveys, 29% of NCPs and EUDEL TAIEX focal points disagreed that TAIEX was sufficiently known among potential users (applicants) within public institutions (only 15% fully agreed).
- 3) **Lack of a standardised function and concise guidelines for NCPs and EUDEL focal points in NEAR strands:** NCPs and EUDEL focal points played a key role in the take-up and effectiveness of TAIEX across countries. Yet, this was highly variable and contingent on level of seniority of the appointed staff and their personal interest in the instrument. During the focus group discussions, some NCPs and EUDEL focal points expressed a need for a TAIEX for them – to exchange best practices on how to best promote TAIEX and support beneficiary institutions to apply.

- 4) **Problematic monitoring and reporting:** The TAIEX monitoring and evaluation system was very well organised and consists of several instruments, including evaluation surveys, final reports of events, attendance of TAIEX team members to certain events, the TMS database, etc.³²⁶ However, the implementation of this systems faced a number of challenges: low completion of surveys by participants (the after-6 month evaluation is completed for only 43% of events), lack of submission/uploading of a final report for some events; diverging quality of those reports, partly associated with a lack of clear guidelines for their completion; absence of a system whereby all parties with the Commission (line DGs for example) have access to reports in order to use them for follow-up.
- 5) **Lack of a clear strategy for lessons learning:** There are very few well-defined occasions for lessons learning and sharing of best practices across strands. The Institution Building days were important in this regard but were insufficient to allow for systematic reflections. No evidence of produced reports has been identified.

JC 3.3 TAIEX support was of sufficient critical mass or leverage in the different regions and countries in which it intervened to contribute to structural reforms

TAIEX's budget was very small compared to that of the financial instruments it sought to support under each strand, varying between 0,001% (foreseen for INTPA pilot period) and 4.2% (TCc), with most strands being under 1%.

TAIEX's mostly short-term and ad-hoc nature, and its limited financial weight naturally constrained the magnitude of results the instrument could achieve on its own, but was simultaneously a key source of its strength. When successfully integrated within broader EU programming and used in synergy with other instruments, TAIEX's design, unlike other more-long-term instruments, allowed it to provide flexible, swift, and well targeted support to beneficiaries, playing an important gap-filling role.

As indicated in the previous sections, the specificity and short-term nature of TAIEX was often what was needed for significant progress to be made. As one of the interviewees from Bosnia & Herzegovina put it "there were times when the government knew exactly what they needed to do to meet the conditions but couldn't make it happen. Having peers come and explain how to turn theory into practice was necessary for the reforms to take place."

It must be noted that the budget doesn't appear to have been a constraint, with the budget remaining unspent across most strands. The share of unspent budget ranged from 84% under TAIEX INTPA to 15% in TAIEX ENI EAST.

JC 3.4 TAIEX has contributed to the specific objectives in the different EU Ms and Partner Countries in which it intervened

TAIEX, by strengthening the administrative capacity of beneficiary institutions and by promoting structural reforms, contributed to the specific EU objectives targeted by the strand in the different countries and regions where it intervened, namely a) strengthening the administrative capacity of public institutions to design, formulate and/or implement their reform processes and/or manage funds (TAIEX IPA, ENI, TCc, PI, INTPA, SRSP, REGIO, EIR); b) aligning partner countries with EU norms, standards and regulatory frameworks (TAIEX IPA, ENI, TCc, PI, INTPA); c) strengthening policy dialogue and advancing specific bilateral framework agreements (TAIEX PI). However, it must be noted, that as TAIEX is a short-term and rather ad-hoc instrument, aimed at filling certain gaps and often used to

³²⁶ The TAIEX monitoring and evaluation system includes: An evaluation survey sent to all participants in TAIEX events (beneficiaries, experts, local co-organisers) immediately after the event); an evaluation survey sent to one evaluation correspondence per event 6 months after the completion of the event to indicate the results achieved; final reports of events (submitted by experts in the case of expert missions and submitted by local co-organisers for workshops); attendance to events by members of the TAIEX Team (DG NEAR C3);TMS database whereby there is a record of all applications and events organised.

support other EU instruments and actions, it is hard to assess its specific contribution to the overall priorities in the countries where it intervened. The success of individual events was contingent on the effectiveness factors discussed under JCs 3.1 and 3.2.

TAIEX contributed to the alignment of Partner countries with EU norms, standards and regulatory frameworks (TAIEX IPA, ENI, TCc, PI, INTPA), albeit to different extents across strands. It did so in different ways, beyond its contribution to administrative capacity and its direct support for structural reforms discussed under JC 3.1 and 3.2:

1. By enabling the identification of areas of divergence of beneficiaries with EU norms, standards and regulatory frameworks and supporting EU policy planning.

- In the IPA and ENI strands, EUDEL staff reported that TAIEX expert missions were highly valued as EU policy-planning tools. According to them, they were regularly used by EU Institutions in an “exploratory” fashion when support was requested by beneficiaries but it was not clear for the EU whether it should commit to long-term support or exactly what kind of support was most appropriate. In these cases, TAIEX served to: assess the magnitude and kind of support needed; identify the most suitable instrument to be used (TAIEX, Twinning, TA, OECD sigma etc.); and examine the level of commitment and preparedness of beneficiaries to undertake longer-term projects.

Box 77: Supporting the 2020 Armenia Police Reform – TAIEX as an EU Policy Planning and Gap-Assessment Tool

In 2019, the Armenian Government requested EU support for police reform. Following consultations between DG NEAR, the Government of Armenia, DG HOME, EEAS, and the EUDEL in Yerevan, it was decided that prior to any EU support, a TAIEX Peer-review mission of the sector would be conducted to identify the needs for a future reform and the possible areas for EU support. Stakeholders described the mission as critical for advancing police reforms in Armenia. The recommendations of the mission directly informed the Reform Strategy and the 2020-2022 Action Plan of the Police of the Republic of Armenia that were adopted in 2020 as well as EU programming in the country. Representatives from the beneficiary institutions argued that the report and recommendations produced through TAIEX were broadly disseminated and provided an “eye-opening” account of the large differences between Armenia and the EU in terms of police-related legislation and practices. They also explained that this triggered several organisational changes in line with EU best practices even before the official implementation of the strategy.

Box 78: TAIEX’s contribution to the Serbia’s Law on protection of the freedom and liberties of the national minorities

For the advancement of the Pre-Accession Negotiations on Chapter 23 with Serbia, the EU called for the effective application of Serbia's domestic and international obligations on the protection of the freedom and liberties of the national minorities. TAIEX provided critical support to ensure this was achieved.

A first peer-review mission was organised in the beginning of 2017 on the protection of minorities and cultural rights. This provided an assessment of the status quo and led to the identification of a number of gaps and challenges. On this basis, the government of Serbia developed a Draft Law on the Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities. A follow-up Expert Mission was requested last minute to ensure that the prepare law was aligned with EU requirement and ensure its alignment with relevant sectoral laws. The same expert was used to capitalise upon her experience. The recommendations provided the basis for a number of amendments to the proposed legislation which was eventually successfully adapted.

Sources: Survey, Review of Events documentation, after-6- months evaluation.

- In Pre-accession countries, a specific type of expert missions - peer-review missions- were systematically used to assess the progress made towards the implementation of different chapters of the EU acquis and for the identification of remaining gaps. This was one of the key roles of TAIEX in the region as identified in relevant strategic documentation with a total of 124 peer-review missions taking place between 2015 and 2020 missions under TAIEX IPA. The produced reports played a key role in informing the opening and closing of negotiation chapters and provided a key source of information for policy planning, including for the organization of other follow-up actions (including via TAIEX) by both the Commission/EEAS and beneficiaries themselves, to ensure that the identified gaps were addressed.
- Even when the identification of gaps was not the explicit objective of the TAIEX expert missions, it was often a result thereof, with several of the final reports of expert missions reviewed for the case studies (across all strands) identifying areas for further action either through TAIEX or other EU and non-EU capacity building instruments.

2. By contributing to the design by public authorities of reform plans in line with the EU Acquis.

For instance in the enlargement region, TAIEX was systematically used in order to support countries in the preparation of their annual Economic Reform Plans (ERPs), which as of 2015, all candidate countries and potential candidates, in order to facilitate the convergence process, are requested to submit to the European Commission.³²⁷ The use of TAIEX in the context of the ERPs has highlighted the importance of its rapid and short-term nature: The countries need to submit the ERPs on 31st January of each year but they are often unaware of the specific gaps until only a couple of months before the deadline.

3. By increasing the visibility of EU norms, standards and regulatory frameworks among beneficiaries and strengthened beneficiaries' understanding thereof, creating incentives for and enabling their adoption. Several beneficiaries commented³²⁸ on how TAIEX had made them realize the importance of some EU practices which then led them to adopt them.³²⁹ In the after 6 months evaluations, 85% of events were described as having led to a better understanding of relevant EU legislation within beneficiary public institutions a key precondition for their implementation. In the surveys, 94% of beneficiaries and 97% of experts agreed that TAIEX events had led to higher awareness of EU norms and standards among involved public institutions.

TAIEX PI contributed to paving the way to further policy and political dialogue. For instance the workshop organised in support of the countries of the Quito Process in order to build a coordinated response to the regional mobility of migrants and refugees from Venezuela resulted in closer cooperation with the EU. The study visit on the application of satellite positioning with Brazil, Chile and Mexico, according to the event's final report, "contributed to pave the way for further dialogue and possible actions in these three countries. Brazil showed a strong interest in pursuing a dialogue on the European Global Navigation Satellite System (EGNSS). Chile signed an agreement on Copernicus to host a regional hub for Earth Observation data. Mexico suggested to start building future collaboration around some concrete Galileo-related physical/testing for research purposes."

³²⁷ The Enlargement countries have often needed last-minute, short-term assistance to draft their economic reform programs and TAIEX has been instrumental in enabling countries to complete them. A total of 16 TAIEX expert missions (4 in Bosnia & Herzegovina, 4 in Albania, 4 in North Macedonia, 3 in Montenegro, 1 in Kosovo) and one multi-country workshop took place to support the preparation of the Annual ERPs.

³²⁸ In both interviews, surveys and after 6-month evaluations.

³²⁹ For example, in Azerbaijan, the workshop on School Self Evaluation was described as having strengthened beneficiaries understanding of EU practices in the field and in doing so having "changed the environment and [making directors] positive to have inspection in their school and to get feedback from inspectors as well". The follow-up TAIEX Study Visit on School Inspection Management (64347) allowed beneficiaries to closely observe how school inspections were conducted, strengthening their knowledge in the field and allowing them to adopt relevant practices back at home.

TAIEX PI events have in several instances also been used to support High Level Dialogues. For example, the Regional Workshop Building a Pacific Alliance Common Visa was organised to pave the way for HR/VP Federica Mogherini's visit to Mexico in September 2019. The series of TAIEX Workshops on Security and Resilience in a Damaged Climate World, implemented in Australia were used to pave the way for Director-General of DG DEVCO Stefano Manservigi's visit to discuss more cooperation on development aid in the Pacific.

Within the different countries and thematic areas where TAIEX intervened, it supported the specific objectives set by the different country, regional and thematic strategies.³³⁰ For example, in the Western Balkans it supported the Economic Reform Plans, in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, the implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement in Ukraine and in Lebanon and Jordan the fight against the trafficking of illicit arms.³³¹

Box 79: Supporting the implementation of the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

The EU-Armenia CEPA was signed in 2017 to strengthen political and economic cooperation and strengthen trade relations while also supporting EU broader objectives in the East Neighbourhood.

Two of the events of the case studies in 2020 were explicitly requested by Armenia to enable it to abide by the requirements of the CEPA. The 2020 TAIEX Online Expert Mission on the approximation to the Environmental Liability Directive (70456) was requested to allow the fulfilment of the relevant obligations under the CEPA. The event resulted in concrete recommendations about what the country needs to do to achieve the approximation. Similarly, the 2020 TAIEX Online Expert Mission on Harmonisation of International Road Freight Regulations with EU requirements (70718) provided direct support for the harmonization of the regulatory framework of the transport sector in line with Armenia's obligations.

Source: Documentary Review, Surveys, After-6-month evaluations

JC 3.5 The creation of TAIEX strategic enhanced TAIEX's capacity to contribute to structural reforms and, more in general, pursue EU priorities

Developed in early 2016, TAIEX strategic was introduced to improve the "forecasting and sequencing [of] activities in support of policy reform to make them more operational and better targeted" in the Neighbourhood and Enlargement regions. **TAIEX Strategic served as a useful diplomacy, outreach and policy planning tool. In some contexts, it contributed to better anticipating, sequencing, framing and monitoring TAIEX activities. However, this often came at the cost of limiting the flexibility and immediacy of TAIEX support. In addition, strategic events requested by DG NEAR and line DGs were limited in their capacity to support capacity building and reforms.**

Although there is a lack of strategic documentation and guidelines, as to the concrete changes introduced, the team understands from interviews that the following activities have been associated with the recalibration:

- Introduction of training maps and workplans in the fields of JHA and AGR and increased emphasis on annual planning of events.
- Strengthening of the visibility of TAIEX among Commission services (country units, EU Delegations or line DGs) and the EEAS and simplification of the process for request of events by them.

³³⁰ The priorities for action towards meeting objectives in the relevant policy areas which will be supported under this Regulation should be defined in indicative strategy papers established by the Commission for the duration of the Union's multiannual financial framework for the period from 2014 to 2020 in partnership with the beneficiaries listed in Annex I, based on their specific needs and the enlargement agenda, in line with the general and specific objectives defined by this Regulation and taking relevant national strategies into due account."

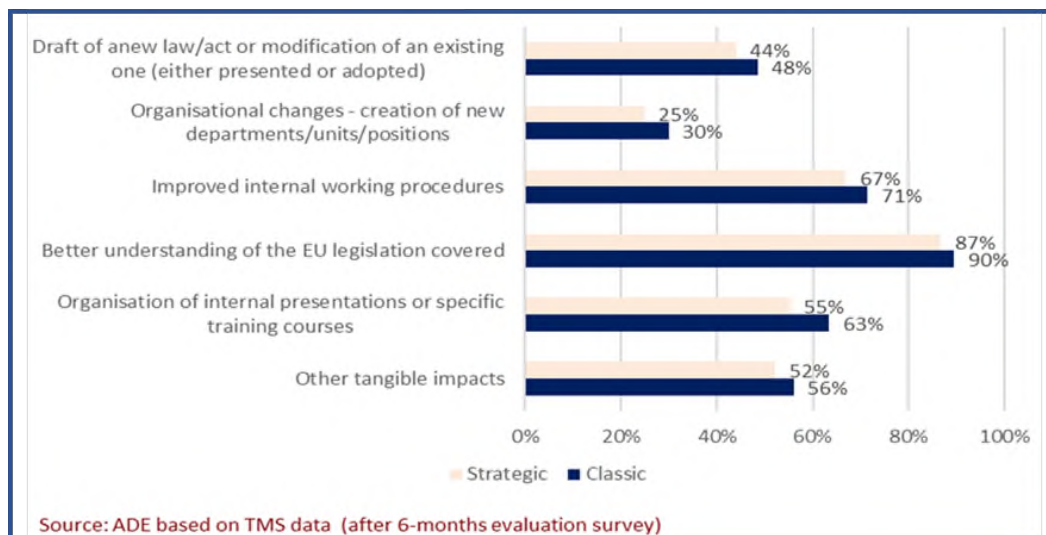
³³¹ For more details please refer to the case studies.

- Promotion of the use of TAIEX as a gaps-assessment, policy-planning tool in support of IPA/ENI programming or Twinning. Expert missions and in particular peer-review missions were highlighted in their capacity to provide focused audits of the situation of a country in any given area, providing a critical mass of information to fund longer term and broader-reaching programmes.

Firstly, the introduction of training maps/ workplans in the Western Balkans and Turkey (TAIEX IPA) and ENI EAST helped in planning, coordination, and improved sequencing of events, and was very appreciated by beneficiaries. This was the case for Agriculture and to a lesser extent for Justice & Human rights. However, the increased emphasis on in-advance, yearly planning of events came at the expense of the flexibility of the Instrument and its capacity to respond in an immediate and ad-hoc fashion to the needs of beneficiaries. In particular in the ENI EAST, whereby a requirement was introduced (in 2019) to pre-identify all events in the beginning of each year, beneficiaries complained that there were significant delays in addressing more urgent needs that emerged during the year and were not included in the yearly plans.

Secondly, TAIEX strategic enabled Commission Services/ EEAS to request events for the pursuit of key EU priorities that may not have been undertaken by the national authorities. For instance, across regions, a total of over 30 strategic events were used to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Similarly, TAIEX Strategic events were used to support a number EU programs in particular in the field of environment such as ECRAN, EPPA and RIPAP. However, TAIEX Strategic events requested by Geo-desks or line DGs tended to be broader in content and with lower levels of involvement by beneficiaries in their design. As such, albeit playing an important role in exposing beneficiaries to those issues, they were described as less likely to be associated with government ownership or concrete results (capacity building and reforms). This is also reflected in the after-6 months evaluations and survey results.³³²

Figure 120: Comparison of perceived results of TAIEX Strategic and TAIEX Classic Events in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood region, after 6-months evaluation³³³



³³² In the surveys, there was a difference between the extent to which events requested by beneficiaries and those requested by the Commission (EEAS) were seen as promoting government ownership of reform (97% for TAIEX classic vs 84%), even if government ownership remained high.

³³³ It must be noted that when filling in the evaluation respondents were not aware of whether the event had been classic or strategic. The matching was done on the basis of how events were classified on TMS. On TMS, TAIEX Strategic events includes training map/workplan events as well as events for which the application was only submitted by the EUD for operational rather than strategic reasons. These events were associated with higher levels of effectiveness, creating a positive bias.

Thirdly, although TAIEX Strategic boosted the use of TAIEX by Commission Services/EEAS there was a lower-than-expected take-up, in particular by EUDELS, due to both low levels of awareness and, as appears from interviews, a disbelief in the capacity of TAIEX strategic to achieve intended results. In TAIEX IPA and ENI South, there was very limited awareness of the possibility for EUDELS to request directly TAIEX events, outside the context of training maps and workplans, with none of the NCPs and EUDEL TAIEX Focal Points participating in FGDs being aware of it. To the extent that TAIEX Strategic was used by EUDELS in these regions, this was mainly a practical decision rather than a strategic choice—with the request still emanating from beneficiaries. In TAIEX ENI East, although there were high levels of awareness of TAIEX Strategic, this was only used exceptionally when the number of events that beneficiaries could request directly was exhausted. There was consensus among EUDEL focal points and NCPs in the region on the importance of the request emanating from beneficiaries. The general message was that EUDELS cannot force beneficiaries to pursue topics that do not interest them. They can bring topics on the table, but the beneficiary has to be willing to pursue them on their own.

Finally, although TAIEX expert missions and in particular peer-review missions requested by Commission services were indeed an effective tool for gaps-assessment and policy planning, the formal introduction of TAIEX Strategic did not contribute to improving or boosting their use which was in place from the beginning of the instrument. In ENI South, the opportunity to carry peer-review missions was not provided, with some EUDEL focal point highlighting their need.

JC 3.6 TAIEX has contributed to reaching other objectives (also unexpected ones), including but not limited to the creation of public sector networks, reinforcing the EU's visibility as a global player, strengthening of the EU's normative power

In addition to the objectives that were explicitly targeted, TAIEX contributed to a number of other non-core objectives including the formation of peer-to-peer networks, the development of the skills and knowledge of MS experts and the fostering of regional cooperation.

1. Peer-to-peer-network formation:

- 86% of beneficiaries and 89% of experts agreed that TAIEX events strengthened their network of professional connections with peers/ public officers from other countries. This was highly valued by experts, with 42% of those responding to the survey listing the possibility to build/expand their professional network of peers as one of the three most attractive aspects of their participation in TAIEX events.
- Interviewed beneficiaries explained that this network formation allowed them to revert to experts for further advice on the targeted issues even after the event. This was corroborated by the surveys, whereby 52% of experts reported that they continued to provide support to beneficiary institutions/ participants on a voluntary basis after the event. This was described as having played an important role in both the effectiveness and sustainability of TAIEX.

2. Strengthening of skills and knowledge of MS experts: Although intended as an instrument for strengthening the capacities of beneficiaries, it also had the unexpected consequence of strengthening the knowledge and skills of MS public officials that acted as TAIEX experts. During interviews and FGDs, experts explained that they learned a lot from beneficiaries, highlighting TAIEX's contribution to their personal and professional development. In the surveys, 95 % of experts agreed that they events had contributed to improving their knowledge.

3. Fostering of regional cooperation: A few beneficiary administrations emphasized the role of TAIEX PI events in fostering regional cooperation. Examples from TAIEX PI included the regional workshops on Space Applications with ASEAN and Central, Latin America; the regional workshop on EU-South Asian Cooperation on Combating Terrorism; or the regional workshop on Intellectual Property Rights in Central America. A number of similar examples were identified for the Western Balkans and Turkey (TAIEX IPA) and ENI, for which the fostering of regional cooperation was an important objective. In TAIEX ENI South, a number of stakeholders indicated that they valued the

opportunity offered by TAIEX multi-country events to exchange on best practices with peers in their region that often faced similar constraints and challenges. Across strands, 92% of survey respondents having benefitted from multi-country events, indicated that the events had led to a strengthening of their relations with beneficiaries from other countries, although this did not necessarily foster cooperation.

4. Reinforcing the EU's visibility as a global player and strengthening the EU's normative power:

- TAIEX PI: Support EU outreach and public diplomacy was one of the key roles of TAIEX PI. Over the years, there are several examples of how TAIEX PI successfully promoted and supported policy and political dialogue in beneficiary countries, contributed to strengthening EU's role or position in a specific sector or context, reinforced the profile of the EU as a key global player; and promoted EU visibility.³³⁴

Box 80: Promoting EU Leadership on Space Applications in Latin America – TAIEX PI as a tool for strengthening EU Normative Power

The 7 TAIEX PI events implemented in the field of space applications (Galileo and Copernicus) in 2017 and 2018 promoted European initiatives on space applications and informed about opportunities for stakeholders from the respective regions, placing the European Commission in the relevant influence arena. Following the TAIEX PI study visit on satellite positioning involving Brazil, Chile and Mexico, important milestones for cooperation with the EU were reached. Chile signed an agreement on Copernicus to host a regional hub for Earth Observation data. Mexico suggested to start building future collaboration around some concrete Galileo-related physical/testing for research purposes. Brazil showed a strong interest in pursuing a dialogue on the European Global Navigation Satellite System (EGNSS). All three countries are still today active in EU space applications.

Source: Interview, Event documentary review, TAIEX PI report.

- For TAIEX INTPA, a key objective was to address underlying governance and public administration aspects of Team Europe Initiatives while strengthening political dialogue with partner countries and developing partnership cooperation. Although the number of events conducted so far is too small to draw conclusions, there are already cases where TAIEX has played important public diplomacy role.

Box 81: Building EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation on Justice and Rule of Law – TAIEX INTPA as a tool for strengthening EU Normative Power

In 2020, the Ministry of Justice of Uzbekistan sought support from the EU to improve its capacities in terms of regulatory impact assessment and systematization of legislation. For reasons linked to negotiations with a previous government, EU cooperation funds in the country focused almost exclusively on the agricultural sector; leaving limited options to respond to support requests in other areas, including in particular Justice and Rule of Law. The flexibility of TAIEX funding, unlike other EU instruments, allowed the EU to support the Ministry of Justice in its endeavour. The organized event contributed directly to capacity building as well as to the drafting of a Presidential decree on the comprehensive systematization of the national legislative base. The event also contributed to building a positive, strong working relationship between the EUDEL and the Ministry

³³⁴ Additional Examples: The two TAIEX events in India on Combatting Terrorism and Countering Radicalisation in 2018 and 2019, according to involved stakeholders, made the EU Delegation in the country a reference point for those issues as compared to other actors. Similarly, the workshop on Security and Resilience in a Damaged Climate World in Australia, gathered over 1000 participants and staged 57 speakers including several State Ministers and EU Heads of Missions, allowed strong visibility of "climate and security, strong promotion of European leadership on climate action and facilitated contacts between practitioners."

of Justice, with EUDEL staff being subsequently invited to contribute to discussion tables on Justice and Rule of Law, a topic from which they were previously absent.

Source: Interview, Survey, Event documentary review

- Other non-EU strands: In other non-EU strands the strengthening of visibility and EU normative power, were not explicitly pursued. Nevertheless TAIEX positively contributed to them. Several interviewed beneficiaries indicated that the events improved their perception of the EU and resulted in a strengthening of their relations with EU DELs/ EU offices. As a result of this strengthening of relations, it was attested that beneficiaries were more likely to turn to the EU for guidance and assistance and to utilise EU norms and practices as an example to be followed. This was corroborated by the surveys: 68 % of beneficiaries and 75% of Commission/EEAS staff agreed (strongly or mostly) that TAIEX events led to the strengthening of relationship among them. In addition, 87% of beneficiaries and of Commission/EEAS staff agreed that the events had strengthened the perception of the EU as a valuable partner among beneficiary institutions. Among NCPs and EUDEL focal points, TAIEX PI Applicants, TAIEX INTPA contact points, 92% agreed that the use of the TAIEX tool supported the visibility of the EU as a united global player.

5. TAIEX's alignment with EU cross-cutting priorities: The TAIEX Team undertook a number of actions to promote the instrument's alignment with key EU cross-cutting priorities - namely gender equality & empowerment and climate change mitigation & adaptation. However, several stakeholders questioned the sufficiency of the undertaken actions, with limited progress having so far been achieved.

- On Climate Change mitigation and adaptation: TAIEX has a very high carbon footprint, primarily due to the large number of flights it entails. In 2020, prior to the pandemic, the TAIEX Team had launched a series of efforts to reduce TAIEX's environmental footprint, including booking direct flights for experts and participants, finding accommodation within walking distance of the venue, limiting the use of plastic bottles, and keeping events paperless.³³⁵ However, some interviewees explained these measures were insufficient, with the few events taking place in-person since their adoption also revealing a lack of systematic implementation. None of the interviewed beneficiaries and experts from recent in-person events were aware of active efforts to limit TAIEX's footprint.
- On Gender Equality & women's empowerment: The TAIEX Team has adopted a series of measures over the years to promote gender equality. In 2016, in line with the EU Gender Action Plan II (2016-2020), TAIEX adopted the objective of promoting the equal participation of men and women in TAIEX events as both participants and experts. It also started calling on involved partner countries and EU MS to take gender balance into consideration when nominating participants or proposing experts. In 2017, a section was introduced in Expert mission reports, requesting experts to provide inputs on gender inequality in the areas covered by the event. In 2019, to support future action on gender equality, questionnaires identifying obstacles in the area were circulated among National Contact Points from Member States and a sample of pre-selected experts. (AAR 2019). In 2020, a Work-from-Home on the Gender Gap in experts in events organized under TAIEX IPA, ENI was organized. These actions contributed to a large increase in the availability of female experts in the EDBE, but results have overall been limited.³³⁶ The lack of clear

³³⁵ In addition, a commitment was made for future TAIEX events to increasingly rely on goods and services with reduced environmental impact throughout their lifecycles and comply with green public procurement principles and the commission's guidelines for sustainable meetings and events – for example by giving preference to environmentally certified hotels and catering services focused on reducing food waste. (AAR 2020)

³³⁶ While female experts accounted for 37% of newly registered experts in 2015, this systematically rose to 46% by 2020.

guidelines on how to complete the gender-equality section of expert mission reports led to inconsistencies and low-quality reporting. Only 3 of the expert mission reports reviewed for the case studies was filled with relevant and useful information for this section, with experts during FGDs reporting being puzzled about what kind of information to provide. Moreover, although between 2016 and 2020, the share of female experts employed by TAIEX rose from 34% in 2016 to 44% and the share of events with less than 50% female participants declined from 51% to 40%, the improvements were driven by the expansion of the EU MS strands rather than improvements in the rest of the world. The involvement of women in TAIEX ENI South events declined over the years.³³⁷ Inclusion of female participants tended to reflect the local culture and context and was unresponsive to the encouragements of the TAIEX Team.

³³⁷ The share of events with less than 50% women increased in the ENI South region and remained constant in the ENI EAST region and the TCc.

EQ 4 – Effectiveness of the TAIEX implementation modalities

To what extent was TAIEX support flexible, service oriented and swift, as well as demand driven/policy oriented, and what factors enhanced or hampered such approach?

JC 4.1 The TAIEX institutional set up and its approach to programming favoured being service oriented, flexible and swift.

TAIEX’s specific setup of as a single unit and the instrument’s administrative and financial set-up provided clear advantages in terms of swift organization of events.

- The **setup as a single unit** allowed the capitalization on accumulated the knowledge and know-how, as evidenced by:
 - the processes reviewed, including the common use of the same expert database,
 - the organization of the TAIEX unit with thematic team leaders that often have an overview of more than one strand. As one interviewee put it: *“SLAs were added little by little, but still everyone (in TAIEX team) can make his opinion heard, also for strands covered through SLAs”*
 - and confirmed by stakeholders from all the strands outside the neighbourhood region (TAIEX REGIO, TAIEX INTPA, TAIEX PI, TAIEX TCc, TAIEX SRSP)³³⁸.
- The design of the instrument allowed for **immediate assignation of budget to approved events**. In fact, the budget of events was pre-approved based on multi-year agreements for each strand, as evidenced by the various SLAs. In addition, a single contractor managed the organization of all events under a multi-year procurement contract, as evidenced by event documentation and exchanges between the TAIEX team and the contractor stored in the TMS database and confirmed by stakeholders³³⁹.
- A **well-oiled system** (including specific arrangements with each MS) **facilitated “pulling out” MS experts** for the time needed for participation in TAIEX events, and to compensate them for that.

The existence of the **expert database** (comprising 5473 experts in 2020) and of a network of NCPs in MS countries³⁴⁰ significantly facilitated and streamlined the task of finding suitable and available experts for each event – which has been the main obstacle for swiftness. This is less the case in new areas where new experts had to be identified, such as many TAIEX SRSP events. In these cases, SRSP often suggested new experts, allowing other strands to also capitalize on this identified new expertise.

The establishment of specific Service-Level Agreements (SLAs) with other units contributed to flexibility and service orientation, as did the problem-solving and adaptability-to-change approach adopted by the team.

- The establishment of strand-specific SLAs allowed to **adapt the instrument to the specific needs of each strand** outside DG NEAR and their increasing number contributed to the extent to which TAIEX serviced other programmes and DGs. Six SLAs existed, among which three new were signed for strands within EU Member States: with DG ENV (TAIEX EIR Peer-2-Peer), DG REGIO (TAIEX Regio Peer-2-Peer) and DG REFORM (TAIEX SRSP (then TAIEX TSI)). A new SLA was also established with DG INTPA (TAIEX INTPA), further extending TAIEX’ activities outside the EU and its neighbourhood region (which already existed through TAIEX PI). The two SLAs with DG REFORM were late merged into a single SLA covering both TAIEX TCc and TAIEX SRSP/TSI.

³³⁸ MN 167, 300, 500, 501, 506, 734, 743, 746.

³³⁹ MN 501, 507.

³⁴⁰ In charge of facilitating the identification of suitable expertise in their MS in view of their participation to TAIEX events.

- The SLAs allowed to establish different targets of events per year and per case-handler³⁴¹, based on the effort expected from TAIEX unit in the set up of the events. For instance, in some strands, the support expected from the TAIEX unit is much higher (in TAIEX INTPA for example) than in other strands where support relies relatively more on the line DG (such as TAIEX SRSP)³⁴². The SLAs also allowed to differentiate between the strands in terms of certain rules, such as the maximum number of participants. Finally, each SLA determined the approval process as adapted to the specific context (involving in some cases technical experts from line DGs in the case of TAIEX EIR, or EU delegations in the case of TAIEX INTPA).

The institutional set-up as a distinct unit from the ones served through SLAs (referred to as line DGs) sometimes led to confusion around the communication tools and branding of the events, sometimes hampering the degree of service orientation. Several cases of communication issues surfaced for at least two strands (TAIEX REGIO and TAIEX SRSP) where TAIEX is embedded in a programme that has its own branding and visual identity. This was not reported for other strands. Interviewees noted lack of coordination on the communication around TAIEX in general and in both strands where issues arised, these concerned TAIEX pushing its own, centralized, branding and image to the detriment of the branding of the supported programme. Issues included the programme name in promotional videos, invitation letters to participants, agenda and signposts in conference venues that were not allowed to carry the name and logo of the programme supported, confusing participants³⁴³.

The development of the strategic approach to programming, whereby applications can be submitted by EU services directly favoured service orientation. It however decreased the swiftness for non-strategic events.

- Two specific SLA, for TAIEX SRSP/TSI and TAIEX PI were developed based on the strategic approach only.
- In a resource-constrained environment (as per the decreasing number of staff in the TAIEX unit), events better aligned to EU priorities received priority treatment for organization (following TAIEX recalibration). The increase in the number of strategic events, by design better aligned to EU priorities, generated a backlog for the organization of other events, decreasing the swiftness for non-strategic events. This phenomenon was amplified by the complexity of strategic events which are more resource intensive and was evidenced by the rates of rejection observed and confirmed in interviews³⁴⁴.

JC 4.2 TAIEX was service oriented, flexible and swift.

Overall, TAIEX has proved to be swiftly implemented, although this varied by strand and by type of event. The speed however decreased over time. There was no systematic monitoring of performance in terms of implementation modalities (for instance, there was no system of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)). The evaluation reconstructed a series of KPIs to measure the following two elements: the speed with which events are approved and the speed with which events are implemented after approval. Over the period 2015-2020, events were approved faster but took longer to be implemented. Important differences were however observed across strands.

Speed of approval, which depended mostly on administrative processes:

- 64% of events were approved in 2 weeks or less. The percentage rises to above 90% of events approved within one month.
- This speed varies by type of event: study visits take longer to be approved, with less than half of events approved within two weeks, followed by workshops (around half of events

³⁴¹ SLAs.

³⁴² MN 63, MN 167, MN 734.

³⁴³ MN 506, 509.

³⁴⁴ MN 10, 503.

approved within 2 weeks) and expert missions (60% of events approved within two weeks).³⁴⁵

- Strategic events, requested directly by EU services, are approved faster, in matter of hours in some cases.
- In the case of TAIEX TCc, events were pre-approved and are hence immediately and automatically processed.
- Over time, events were approved faster. This is due to the increase in strategic events.

Speed of organization, which depended mostly on identification of experts:

- 65% of events were organized within 6 months of the approval date. From 2015 to 2017, around 70% of events were organised in the 6-month period, pointing to a slowing down of the organization process.
- This varies by type of event, with only 33% of screenings, 56% of study visits and 60% of workshops being organized within 6 months after the approval, compared to 68% of work from home assignments and 73% of expert missions
- There appear to be a backlog of events to be organized, with more than 10% of events taking more than a year to be organized in ENI (East and South) and IPA strands³⁴⁶.
- Strategic events were organized faster, because these events were by design better aligned to EU priorities, which is a prioritization criterion for the TAIEX unit.

Participants involved in the application and/or organization of TAIEX events appear mostly satisfied with the speed of the organization process.

- Within survey results, some differences were observed between events demanded by beneficiaries (94% of participants involved in the application and/or organization of TAIEX events strongly or mostly agreed that TAIEX events were quick to organize³⁴⁷) and events requested by EU officers (76%³⁴⁸). However, overall, around 80% of participants agreed that TAIEX allowed for quicker organization compared to other options.
- Satisfaction with the speed of organization was generally confirmed in all interviews³⁴⁹, except for TAIEX SRSP stakeholders³⁵⁰.

³⁴⁵ Work from home assignments and screening mission are faster to approved, which has to do with most of ofthem being organized in pre-approved schemes, for instance in TAIEX TCc.

³⁴⁶ These figures exclude 2020 and thus cannot be explained by the Covid pandemic.

³⁴⁷ Out of 82 non-blank responses.

³⁴⁸ Out of 42 non-blank responses.

³⁴⁹ Including very explicitly mentioning speed one of the main added value of TAIEX. MN 2, 5, 63, 158, 167, 300.

³⁵⁰ MN 501.

Figure 121: Speed with which requests were approved

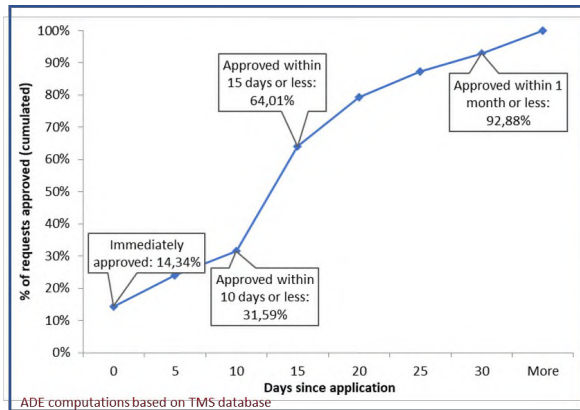


Figure 122: Share of events approved within one week, two weeks and one month, by event type.

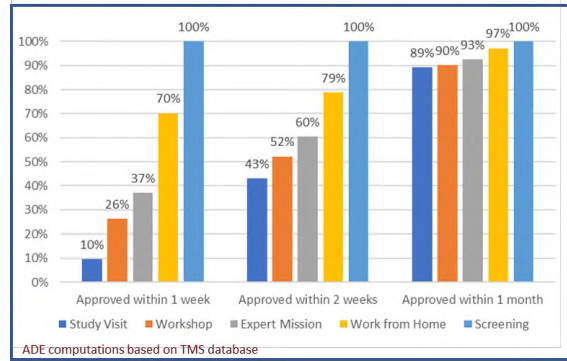


Figure 123: Evolution over time of the share of events approved within one week, by type of event.

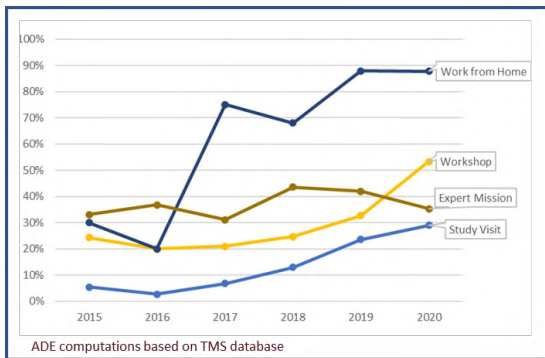


Figure 124: Speed with which events were organized.

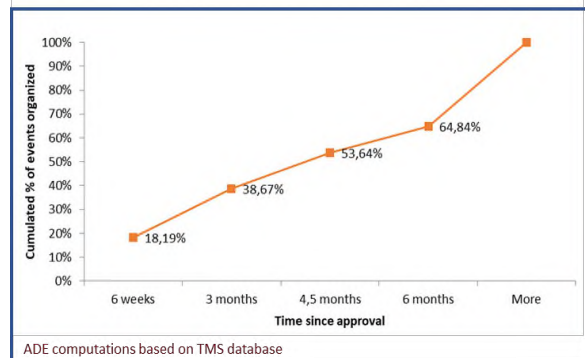
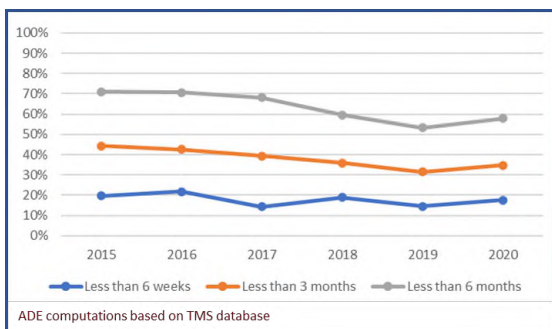


Figure 125: Evolution over time of the speed of event organization.



TAIEX proved to be a flexible instrument, in the sense of being able to adapt to the needs for each specific event. There existed no precise definition nor specific objectives or monitoring of “flexibility” and “service orientation”. Flexibility was understood as the ability to adapt the needs and requirements of each event (such as meeting expectations of the beneficiaries in terms of topics and dates³⁵¹). There were many occurrences of flexibility, as documented by exchanges between the TAIEX unit and beneficiaries around derogations to the established guidelines. Many of the granted flexibility requests concerned for instance the number of participants to events (and in particular study visits), the duration of events (in theory 5 days) or the timing for registering participants or modifying the list

³⁵¹ MN 507.

of participants (in theory three weeks before the event). Some strands required more derogations than others. The most recurrent derogations are listed below³⁵².

- TAIEX TCc events tend to last more than 5 days. In 2017, this was the case for around 20% of events in this strand.
- TAIEX PI events also often lasted more than 5 days in 2015 and 2016, but this is no longer the case in recent years.
- The ENI East, South and IPA strands each have only a few events lasting more than 5 days over the 2015-2020 period.
- The number of participants allowed to participate in each study visit was formally raised to 5 for the TAIEX SRSP strand (compared to 3 for other strands)³⁵³. In 2018, around 20% of study visits in TAIEX SRSP allowed more than 5 participants. The percentage rose to 30% in 2019 and 2020 (excluding online events).
- TAIEX PI study visits allowed more than 3 participants in more than 70% of the cases in 2017 and still in 50% of the cases in 2018 and 2019.

“We try to organize the events following rules. But if we have a good reason to deviate, for example number of people at study visits, or private sector participants, as long as exception is proportionate, we adopt a common sense approach” (MN 507)

This was largely confirmed by stakeholders (except for TAIEX SRSP), both in surveys and in interviews. 90% of surveyed respondents who were involved either in the application or organization of events strongly or mostly agreed that sufficient flexibility was granted for the organization of TAIEX events. This figure increases to 95% among respondents for classic strands and decreases to 82% for strategic strands. Several comments in interviews pointed at how the instrument proved to be flexible and capable to swiftly adapt to different type of needs, sectors, contexts and circumstances (including, in 2020, the emergence of the COVID-10 pandemics)³⁵⁴.

“The main strength of the tool include its flexibility related to other instrument” which was related to the instrument not being part of the programming process (MN 02)

“TAIEX was very flexible, for instance the selected experts can easily be replaced if needed because there are no contracts” (MN 07)

“It’s necessary instrument. First of all, because it is very flexible. You can easily deploy it. Proof of it is the way it has been used during Covid crisis.” (MN 63)

“TAIEX went very quickly online. In two months they were up. Very flexible and quick to adapt.” (MN 735)

While the flexible approach adopted by the team was confirmed by most stakeholders, there was a notable exception for TAIEX SRSP/TSI stakeholders who perceived the overall flexibility to be low. Issues around flexibility were raised in the as evidence in the report³⁵⁵ and confirmed by stakeholders.

Beneficiaries were less aware of the specific institutional setup of TAIEX; however, in several interviews they pointed at the TAIEX’s team resourcefulness and capacity to support the design of events adequate to needs and fitting circumstances (flexibility). In particularly, the swiftness in devising and

³⁵² Source of the data: TMS database.

³⁵³ The limit in the number of participants to study visits was indicated as a clear limitation of the instrument during an interview with a SRSP officer. In fact, she claimed that virtual study visits were a better option compared to in-person study visits (in spite of the medium limitations), because in those cases the participants’ limit does not apply.

³⁵⁴ See specific comments made below, but also MN 02, 230, 509, 734, 738.

³⁵⁵ European Commission. TAIEX SLA: DG NEAR – DG REFORM Final Report. Reporting Period 2016-2020.

setting up solutions implementable during the COVID pandemics was noted and appreciated. Issues related to interpretation were mentioned, in particular for TCC³⁵⁶.

In some cases, there were limitations to the degree of flexibility that could be granted.

- For study visits: While there appeared to be a good reason for it (host institution capacity), this has not been sufficiently communicated to beneficiaries³⁵⁷.
- Regarding the restricted set of public officials qualifying as TAIEX beneficiaries (excluding sub-national authorities for instance).
- Over the period 2015-2020, the introduction of the requirement to pre-identify events on a yearly basis (for ENI East) decreased the perceived level of flexibility and swiftness of the instrument.
- While most stakeholders expressed satisfaction with the flexibility, this is not the case for TAIEX SRSP/TSI where stakeholders complained (in survey and interviews³⁵⁸) about TAIEX not being as flexible as the other technical assistance options of the SRSP/TSI programme.

Besides the institutional set up of TAIEX, the availability of staff in the TAIEX unit played an important role in the speed of implementation, while the peer-to-peer nature of the instrument played against it. When experts cannot be identified immediately either by the beneficiaries (who can suggest experts in the request) or through the database, the availability of case-handlers in the TAIEX team was crucial to identify suitable experts. However, the number of case-handlers has been decreasing over time, and some positions were at times left unfilled for several months, which affected the speed of implementation³⁵⁹. In addition, the development of more complex TAIEX strategic events, required more resources for the TAIEX team.

“Few years ago, it sometimes took to three months between the moment beneficiary submitted application and the moment expert came in the country. It can be even shorter. But because of reduction of staff, introduction of TAIEX strategic, it takes more time now.” (MN 10)

“Make TAIEX fast again” (MN 02)

The peer-to-peer nature of the instrument played against the speed of implementation as the experts were employed by public administration and had to be discharged of their usual tasks for several days, which could not always be organized quickly³⁶⁰.

TAIEX reacted swiftly to the unfolding of the Covid-19 pandemic. Online events started to be organized as early as end of April 2020, with the first online event taking place on April 24th, followed by 5 online events in May and 19 in June. Online events allowed the continuation of activities as well as the provision of an answer to emerging needs related to the pandemic, offering a rapid and effective solution for the continuation of service-provision when travel was not possible or not advised³⁶¹.

“If it would not be for online events, it would just not have happened yet” (MN 509).

Online events allowed for additional flexibility regarding the number of participants, and indeed more participants were on average registered for online events³⁶². In some cases they also facilitated the participation of high-profile experts who would otherwise not attend in-person events³⁶³. However, some of the potential features of online events regarding flexibility were not fully exploited. Indeed, online events offered the potential to release some of the administrative constraints, including related

³⁵⁶ MN 757.

³⁵⁷ MN 502, 503.

³⁵⁸ MN 501, 509

³⁵⁹ Based on TAIEX organigrams, the team shrunk from 44 people in 2006 to 56 in 2011 then 34 in 2018 and 24 in 2019. Confirmed my MN 02, 10, 167, 502, 503, 507.

³⁶⁰ MN 300, 735.

³⁶¹ MN 02, 230, 509, 734, 738.

³⁶² TMS database, confirmed by interviewees, includ. MN 744 for instance.

³⁶³ MN 300, 510.

to the date for registering participants, which were not formally implemented, as reported by stakeholders in several strands.

Online events presented advantages in terms of cost, allowing more experts and/or more participants to take part for an unchanged budget, as detailed in EQ 5. Online events were also deemed less effective by the participants (as detailed in EQ 3). More precisely, online events were most often deemed as effective as in-person events concerning the 'formal' objectives of TAIEX events, including sharing of knowledge and practices, but participants deplored the loss of the less formal results expected in terms of informal exchanges and networking. Also, on-site visits were obviously not possible, which led to a loss of quality in some cases. Effectiveness was conditional on the quality of the moderation and preparation work by the moderator and the experts, requiring more work from the TAIEX unit. Finally, they gave rise to new practices, specifically in terms of the preparation given to experts and were appreciated as a more environmentally-friendly implementation modality³⁶⁴.

³⁶⁴ MN 506, 507, 870.

EQ 5 – Cost Efficiency/effectiveness and administrative burden

To what extent were TAIEX events cost-efficient and cost-effective and implemented with limited administrative burden?

JC 5.1 TAIEX events were organized at a reasonable cost.

The direct financial costs of TAIEX events presented large differences across types of events, and it increased over time for all types of events. TAIEX events were organized at an average cost of EUR 10,000, ranging from EUR 2,000 for work-from-home assignments to EUR 20,000 for workshops (See Table 18).

- In-person workshops are the most expensive (average: EUR 20,761), followed by in-person screening events (average: EUR 13,465).
- Work-from-home assignments' costs can vary significantly, presumably largely based on the extent of their scope³⁶⁵. On the overall, individual work-from-home assignment have tended to become more expensive, with the average cost increasing by 142% between 2015 and 2019. (No clear trend has been picked up in terms of number of work-from-home assignments, except for a sharp increase in 2020.)
- Multi-country events tend to be significantly more expensive than single-country ones, particularly in their in-person versions. Multi-country workshops were the most expensive type of event, as they gathered many participants travelling from abroad, and required larger, more expensive, venues. The average multi-country workshop costed slightly above EUR 30,000.

The difference in cost per type of event can be explained by the differences in the number of participants and experts typically mobilized, and by variations in the duration of events (See Table 19 **Error! Reference source not found.**). For instance, the higher cost of workshops is driven by the larger number of participants and experts, which requires larger venues as well. However, **the number of participants, experts and duration has remained stable over time and cannot reasonably explain the increasing cost of events.**

Table 18: Average cost per type event, excluding online events

	Expert Mission	Screening	Study Visit	Work from Home	Workshop	(single-country workshops)	Average per year
2015	5.477 €	10.679 €	6.422 €	1.185 €	19.591 €	(16.151€)	8.939 €
2016	5.583 €	39.223 €	7.484 €	1.431 €	19.685 €	(16.564€)	9.458 €
2017	6.879 €	21.698 €	8.916 €	1.436 €	21.602 €	(19.068€)	10.884 €
2018	7.040 €	20.251 €	8.726 €	1.817 €	20.542 €	(17.341€)	9.980 €
2019	7.750 €	11.409 €	9.406 €	2.808 €	23.615 €	(19.581€)	11.621 €
2020	7.856 €		9.316 €	4.498 €	21.065 €	(16.183€)	9.366 €
Average per type of event	6.460 €	13.465 €	8.004 €	2.030 €	20.761 €	(17.501€)	10.003 €

Source: ADE based on TMS database

³⁶⁵ MN 167: "Work from home were more expensive because it got longer, these are fully fledged studies now."

Table 19: Average duration, number of experts and number of participants per type of event, excluding online events.

	Expert			Work from		Overall average
	Mission	Screening	Study Visit	Home	Workshop	
Average duration (in days)	4,0	2,0	3,3		2,1	3,3
Average number of experts	1,7	22,1	1,1	2,2	4,9	2,5
Average number of participants	11,8	51,8	3,2	0,2	49,1	18,1

Source: ADE based on TMS database

Direct costs also vary by strand, with in-person events outside the EU and NEAR zone significantly more expensive on average. **All strands, except TAIEX EIR, saw their average cost of event increase over the period** (See Table 20 Error! Reference source not found.).

- TAIEX PI events were significantly more expensive on average. Excluding the lowest and highest 5% tails, direct costs were comprised between EUR 5,625 and EUR 58,009 (with outliers reaching 139,256), averaging at EUR 24,214 and with a median of EUR 19,409. All types of events (i.e., workshops, expert missions, study visits, work from home assignments) tend to be more expensive than in other strands. This trend is associated to higher travel costs.
- TAIEX INTPA and TAIEX EIR events also had a tendency to be more expensive than other strands (average cost: EUR 11,068 and EUR 11,312, respectively) – albeit their total number is quite limited (respectively, 8 and 33.)
 - For TAIEX INTPA, all events took place online (making the case for geographical distance less relevant).
 - In the case of TAIEX EIR, the higher cost may be justified by a proportionally larger use of workshops (the most expensive type of event) and of multi-country events. However, TAIEX EIR workshops were on average more expensive than workshop in other strands (excluding TAIEX PI), both in the single-country and multi-country versions.
- TAIEX TCc events were on average cheaper than all other strands. That appears to be mainly driven by the fact that most are expert missions (cheaper compared to workshops).
- TAIEX REGIO and, to a smaller extent, TAIEX SRSP events appeared to be cheaper on average, across all types of events.

Table 20: Average cost per strand, excluding online events

	EIR P2P	IPA, ENI	PI	REGIO P2P	SRSP/TSI	TCc	Average per year
2015		9.965 €	14.979 €	5.406 €		4.373 €	8.939 €
2016		10.308 €	17.749 €	6.632 €		5.218 €	9.458 €
2017		10.890 €	24.403 €	7.013 €	7.389 €	6.434 €	10.884 €
2018	13.191 €	10.933 €	23.702 €	7.371 €	7.707 €	6.228 €	9.980 €
2019	10.060 €	12.244 €	38.389 €	7.403 €	9.794 €	7.377 €	11.621 €
2020		9.600 €	55.740 €	8.232 €	7.429 €	6.541 €	9.366 €
Average per strand	11.412 €	10.684 €	24.934 €	6.954 €	8.699 €	5.641 €	10.003 €

Source: ADE based on TMS database

Regarding study visits, the increasing trend in the financial cost of events remained, even once the type of event, strand and number of participant and duration were accounted for. For instance, the cost per participant and per day of study visits increased in TAIEX IPA/ENI, in TAIEX PI and in TAIEX REGIO (See Table 21). A reasonable explanation could not always be provided, and one stakeholder

mentioned that this may be explained by overbudgeting, with left over budget which allowed to spend more by event³⁶⁶.

- For TAIEX REGIO, the explanation lied in the increasing resort to paid translators (in 2017) and in the fact that the strand started paying fees to hosting institutions and paying for venues (in 2019)³⁶⁷.
- Regarding the increase in the cost per participant and per day within TAIEX PI (from around 1,000€ per participant/day in 2015 to around 1,700€ in 2019), no explanation could be provided.

Table 21: Average cost per participant and per day for study visits, excluding online events and multicountry events.

	EIR P2P	IPA, ENI	PI	REGIO P2P	SRSP /TSI	TCC	Average per year
2015		667 €	991 €	587 €		604 €	665 €
2016		776 €	1.229 €	682 €		930 €	772 €
2017		926 €	1.346 €	889 €	1.299 €	543 €	927 €
2018	823 €	935 €	1.711 €	842 €	1.073 €	850 €	946 €
2019	724 €	904 €	1.455 €	851 €	869 €	739 €	893 €
2020		890 €		800 €	879 €		880 €
Average per strand	760 €	812 €	1.399 €	797 €	946 €	724 €	822 €

Source: ADE based on TMS database

All other things remaining equal, online events could reasonably be expected to generate a lower cost per event as there were no travel costs. While this is indeed observed for workshops, it is not the case of expert missions, due to online events lasting longer and mobilising more experts. Online events tend to be cheaper than their in-person versions; however, this is not always the case (See Figure 126).

- While online workshops indeed cost less than half the price of in-person events, costs of online expert missions are however similar to those of in-person expert missions.
 - Expert mission: The total event cost is slightly higher for online events, which typically last longer (6 days as compared to 4 days for in-person events) and involve more experts (3,2 vs 2). Still, the number of expert and length cannot explain the whole difference as the average cost per expert per day is slightly higher for online events (1281€ per expert per day on average for online events, 1158€ for in-person events).
 - Workshops: Online events are much cheaper, at about 50% of the price of offline events. Online and in-person events tend to have the same average duration (2 days), and online events have a higher average number of experts (7,8 vs 4,8). The average cost per day and per expert for online events is only about one third of that of in-person events (1,105€ per expert per day for online events, 3070€ per expert and per day for in-person events).
- In fact, online workshops are significantly cheaper than in-person ones, particularly if multi-country (average cost: EUR 10,481 online vs. EUR 17,501 offline for single-country workshops, and EUR 11,915 online vs. 31,844 offline for multi-country)³⁶⁸; however, online expert missions are on average more expensive in the online version (average cost: EUR 8,060 online vs. EUR 6,450 offline)³⁶⁹. This appears in part connected to a tendency to invite

³⁶⁶ MN 167: "Everything was overbudgeted, they got more generous as time passed because they had more budget".

³⁶⁷ MN 08, 503.

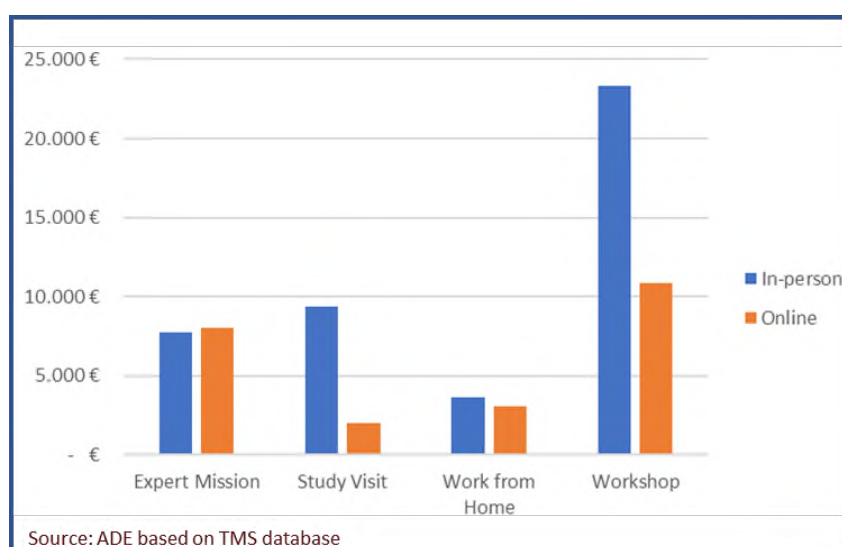
³⁶⁸ This trend was not observed within TAIEX REGIO's single country workshops, whose cost remained approximately the same (+3% online vs offline). No online workshops classified as multi-country were organized under the strand in the period.

³⁶⁹ No similar conclusion was drawn for study visit, as only one online study visit was conducted in the 2015-2020 period, for TAIEX SRSP. Nonetheless, the feedback on SRSP virtual study visits appears to be largely positive – particularly in consideration of the fact that the limit of maximum 5 participants has been waived for these. Also, the evaluation team did not consider appropriate comparing among work from home events, as these are highly variable in nature depending on the scope.

more experts and participants in online expert missions (+83% experts and +30% participants took part in online expert missions compared to offline ones; while for workshops, the increase was +49% and +8%); as well as to the increased duration of online expert missions (+47% days on average – in comparison, workshops remained approximately stable).

- Another important factor driving up the cost of online expert is the practice to pay experts for the preparatory work, reporting, as well as pay the experts and contractor for an IT test day³⁷⁰.

Figure 126: Cost of online and in-person events in 2019-2020



JC 5.2 The administrative burden for different stakeholders participating in TAIEX was reasonable.

The administrative/ bureaucratic burden implied by TAIEX is light, which is a clear point of strength of the instrument.

- TAIEX implied minimal administrative burden, mostly borne by the TAIEX team.
 - **Beneficiaries** introduced their requests through an online platform form accessible to all, which does not require any other identification than an email address. The request is then reviewed, and a response is sent by email, within one month in more than 90% of the cases. Once the event is approved, beneficiaries' main administrative constraint is to provide participants' information and participation to post-event surveys (though the latter is not enforced). In some cases, beneficiaries may also support with logistic arrangement, though most of the work is normally done by TAIEX's implementing partners
 - For **experts**, the administrative burden mainly concerns signing up and providing necessary personal information within the expert database; submitting a report at the end of the mission; and collecting per-diem and compensation.
 - **Other actors** that intervene in supporting events (and in specific cases, in applying) are in-country EU personnel, i.e. from delegations. Their involvement in the administration of events appears mainly concerned with supporting beneficiaries, and is thus light in principle. The need to support in translations was at times signalled as an issue. **EU in-country personnel** interviewed noted that, while little administrative burden was felt, TAIEX events required a significant commitment on the content/ political side – which tended to absorb a significant portion of the time

³⁷⁰ MN 02, 503 among other.

of the designated TAIEX Contact Point.³⁷¹ However, the level support and the indirect costs generated were valued by beneficiaries and significantly contributed to both the identification of event opportunities and the success of the events, contributing to making TAIEX cost-effective.

- **TAIEX team members** are the main stakeholders involved in administration – required to process applications for approval and verify their compliance with TAIEX/SLA specific rules, solicit and check reception of all necessary inputs from beneficiaries and experts, select and confirm experts, and coordinate with the event implementer. However, their task is facilitated by the existence of pre-defined mechanisms and budget agreements with the implementer.
- Stakeholders largely indicated that the administrative burden implied by TAIEX was reasonable compared to the result and largely supported by the TAIEX team.
 - Within the survey, 97% of participants to events requested by beneficiaries and 93% of events requested by EU officers agreed with a statement in this sense. On the expert side, 97% of those that reported being registered in the expert database commented that the registration process was quick and straightforward.
 - Interviews and events’ feedback forms generally confirmed the above findings, highlighting a few issues³⁷²:
 - The participant registration process is perceived to be more burdensome than strictly necessary. (Issue reported only by EU officers, in interviews.)
 - An issue emerged with an excessive number of emails being sent to participants previous to events; although apparently, it has been addressed in the meantime³⁷³.
 - Stakeholder from TAIEX SRSP commented that the speed and ease of registration and approval processes still had room for improvement; and that in general, other options to bring expertise through private consultancies were significantly less burdensome³⁷⁴.
 - The administrative burden of online event was not as reduced as it could have been³⁷⁵, in particular regarding the registration of participant and delay to do so (the 21 days advance notice was less relevant when no travel was required).

JC 5.3 The process to apply and support the organization of TAIEX events was reasonably accessible and straightforward for beneficiaries and other applicants.

The degree of accessibility of TAIEX varied a lot between strands (Error! Reference source not found.). Accessibility was particularly high for TAIEX TCc (where events are pre-approved on an annual basis and DG NEAR approval is thereafter not needed anymore), and in strategic strands. For TAIEX PI and SRSP (both strategic strands where the requests are introduced by EU Commission services), approval appears to be granted as long as events comply to formal requirements³⁷⁶ - pointing at the process either being a “tick-the-box” exercise, or else focused in another direction – such as could be surfacing all perspectives relevant for an optimal design of the events.³⁷⁷

³⁷¹ It also appears that, in general, the level of commitment of local EU personnel is a differentiating factor for the emergence and success of events. References include MN 739, 741.

³⁷² Including MN 01, 08, 700, 742, 750, 751.

³⁷³ MN 741.

³⁷⁴ MN 501, 502.

³⁷⁵ MN 501, 505, 734.

³⁷⁶ In the case of the TAIEX SRSP rejected tasks, 3 out of 10 were due to the application being submitted previous to the formal entry into force of the SLA. Other cases point to lack of compliance with TAIEX’s constraints in terms of eligible beneficiaries and experts.

³⁷⁷ It is worth noting that, during interviews, TAIEX SRSP stakeholders mentioned their dissatisfaction with the administrative request procedure; while on the opposite, TAIEX PI stakeholders mentioned their satisfaction with the easiness of the procedure.

Table 22: Share of tasks that are rejected by strand and over time.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Average
PI	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
TCc	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SRSP			8%	7%	4%	5%	6%
REGIO	32%	15%	22%	13%	18%	10%	18%
ENPI SOUTH	21%	16%	18%	37%	37%	23%	25%
EIR			60%	12%	4%	44%	30%
IPA	24%	25%	23%	34%	34%	40%	30%
ENPI EAST	36%	22%	33%	50%	54%	29%	37%
INTPA						38%	38%
Average	30%	24%	39%	32%	31%	38%	

Source: ADE computations based on Teams database

The degree of accessibility also varied across types of events. Study visits were also most often subject to rejection (36% of requests rejected on average, excluding SRSP, PI and TCc strands).

Table 23: Share of rejected application by strand and type of event

	Expert Mission	Home Assignments	Study Visit	Workshop	Average per strand
REGIO	16%		16%	26%	19%
IPA	20%	0%	38%	24%	28%
ENPI SOUTH	25%	0%	28%	24%	26%
ENPI EAST	31%	0%	44%	36%	38%
EIR	27%		14%	31%	24%
Average per type of event	23%	0%	36%	28%	29%

Source: ADE computations based on TMS database

For regular TAIEX events (events request by beneficiaries in the neighbourhood region), the degree of accessibility decreased over time as evidence by the increase in rejected requests. For instance, about 50% of requests were rejected in the years 2018 and 2019 in TAIEX ENI East. Other reasons for rejecting applications included their poor quality. There appeared to be a learning curve with this regard, as new strands were more prone to high rejection rates during their first year of implementation. In the case of TAIEX INTPA, reasons pointed at insufficient quality and lack of coordination with the local EU Delegations. Those rates should, however, be read with caution, given the low total number of applications submitted during that first year (in INTPA, 6 out of 14 applications were rejected in 2020).

The main factor for rejections in the IPA and ENI strands was the lack of human resources. The main reason for this high rejection rate was the unavailability of staff in the TAIEX unit to deal with the incoming requests (albeit poor quality of applications was also cited). The shortage of staff was in part due to the increasing time-commitment that the introduction of TAIEX strategic implied for the TAIEX team³⁷⁸. Efforts have been done by the TAIEX team (particularly, focused on TAIEX IPA-ENI) to simplify the administrative steps required. Novelties included the introduction of training maps, whereby beneficiary institutions in consultation with DG NEAR can request with the same application up to 20 events on a specified chapter of the acquis, planned for the same year. Also, the introduction of TAIEX Strategic offered the possibility to Commission/EEAS staff to complete the application. In some cases, the beneficiaries appear to have requested the EUD or EU Office in the country (in the case of Kosovo) to directly submit their application for them even though the event was initiated by them. Lastly, during the COVID pandemic, a simplified and tailored application form was developed for requesting events to support the management of the pandemic by beneficiary institutions.

³⁷⁸ MN 02, 05, 10, 167, 503.

*“One year, we had above 350 requests in my team, no way to deal with that with 3 project officers.”
(MN 503)*

*“Moving to strategic has also decreased the number of events because they take longer to organize”.
(MN 503)*

Stakeholders perceived the processes to apply and support the organization of events to be accessible, well-designed and straightforward.

It is worth considering, though, that they required a considerable effort from EU stakeholders (including EU delegation personnel), particularly for new strands. It is also worth noting that there are still issues with awareness of TAIEX on the part of delegation/ in country personnel for non-NEAR countries.

- Beneficiaries and other stakeholders consistently reported that the process of application, design and organization of the event was straightforward and that they were well supported throughout it. *It is worth noting, however, that the survey by design centered on people that had, at some point, access to the instrument: it cannot thus be considered indicative of the accessibility – particularly for what concerns awareness of the instrument – of their colleagues in different areas or context.*
 - Survey respondents who identified as local organizers or having had a role in the event request had largely positive opinions on the following elements³⁷⁹:
 - Communication with the Commission³⁸⁰;
 - Support by NCPs, EU Delegation and the TAIEX team;
 - Availability of documents in accessible languages³⁸¹;
 - The application process not being too cumbersome.
 - Beneficiaries interviewed reiterated the responsiveness of the TAIEX team; and valued the support received from EU in-country personnel in preparing applications and supporting the organization of events.
- EU in-country personnel interviewed noted that, while little administrative burden was felt, TAIEX events required a significant commitment on the content/ political side – which tended to absorb a significant portion of the time of the designated TAIEX Contact Point.³⁸² Support provided to TAIEX included:
 - The organization (or support to the organization) of activities aimed to generate local awareness of the instrument³⁸³.
 - Support to beneficiaries in preparing solid applications: in particular, in identifying the specific topics that events should support.
 - Support in the organization/ within the event, including in particular the preparation and welcoming of experts³⁸⁴.

³⁷⁹ 9% or more of respondents mostly or strongly agreed on their adequateness.

³⁸⁰ It is worth noting that appreciation rates tended to be higher for beneficiary-requested rather than EU-requested events.

³⁸¹ In this respect, some findings from interviews were contradictory. It is worth noting that the survey was offered in English, Spanish, French and Turkish – it is very well possible that beneficiaries not fluent in those languages may not have participated, creating a bias on this point.

³⁸² It also appears that, in general, the level of commitment of local EU personnel is a differentiating factor for the emergence and success of events.

³⁸³ In NEAR countries, NCPs (who are officers of the local government) may also collaborate or take the leadership in these.

³⁸⁴ Interview commentaries point at “induction” of experts being a success factor for events – particularly in cases in which issues went beyond merely technical or the context was particularly different, or difficult; and is even more the case in online events, where the expert cannot personally experience the context. This was particularly noted for TAIEX TCC, TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA events. TAIEX TCC events are currently the only ones for which a structured process for induction of experts is foreseen.

Factors such as the novelty of the use of TAIEX in a specific context (e.g. as in the case of TAIEX INTPA) and the introduction of online events (which required a stronger effort in the preparation of experts, particularly if these did not have a pre-existing, specific knowledge of the context) appear to increase the need for such commitment on the part of EU staff (in-country, but also at the TAIEX team level).

JC 5.4 The events were an accessible and economic way to generate individual and institutional capacity building, and in turn contribute to structural reforms and other objectives.

The use of more expensive types of events was justified by the results targeted or the constraints faced, with only few exceptions³⁸⁵. In particular, the very expensive multi-country workshops were most often used for the purpose of gaining visibility and raising awareness on specific topics. Such objectives could not be targeted by other, less expensive, types of events. Similarly, study visits, which were very expensive per beneficiary involved, proved to be necessary in some specific cases where visit to infrastructure for instance was needed in the context of implementation of changes/reforms. In general, common sense within the TAIEX team made sure that these expensive visits were duly justified and used only when no other option was possible. This practice was however not institutionalized and there does not exist an official guidance as to when study visits are mostly advisable. Some stakeholders also pointed at study visit being requested when they were not strictly needed.

EU stakeholders generally considered TAIEX a cost-efficient instrument – even while acknowledging that its effective costs go well beyond direct costs, encompassing the efforts of all stakeholders involved in events’ design and implementation³⁸⁶.

The study did not find any clear indication that event costs be related with their capacity of generating results (in other words that more expensive events would lead to more results). Nonetheless, within each type of event the main drivers of cost identified (duration, number of expert and number of participants) may be expected to be positively correlate with higher results (i.e. longer events may allow covering a wider range of topics, or the same with a higher level of depth; in fact, data from the survey, interviews and expert reports points at events being at times too short to cover desired issues in full); though with some limitation, i.e. a high number of participants in an expert mission could limit the possibilities of hands-on training, or the possibility of one-on-one discussions.

In this sense, it is worth mentioning that although sources also occasionally evidenced beneficiary interest in involving more participants (and the ease of doing so was considered a clear advantage of online events, particularly workshops and study visits³⁸⁷), no particular interest in increasing the average number of experts participating to any single event has been identified.

The simple administrative procedures and flexibility allowed timely organization of events in contexts where the speed of implementation was a key factor to facilitate the provision of capacity building. This greatly contributed to TAIEX’s ability to fulfil its role.

- Unlike other instruments, which tend to be tightly limited by budget allocation, TAIEX is – within its scope – universally accessible. In fact, INTPA and PI stakeholders often reported using it more often in countries/ topics that they would not have otherwise been able to cover, due to the lack of budget assigned through long term programs.

Stakeholders largely indicated that the administrative burden implied by TAIEX was reasonable compared to the result:

- Within the survey, 97% of participants to events requested by beneficiaries and 93% of events requested by EU officers agreed with a statement in this sense. On the expert side,

³⁸⁵ Including reference of study visits being used as prize if beneficiaries managed to reach some results and an overall reference of TAIEX being used as a “travel agency”. MN 05, 167, 230.

³⁸⁶ Survey.

³⁸⁷ The reference to online study visits was made by an SRSP interviewee, and likely refers to events that took place after the 2015-2020 timeframe.

97% of those that reported being registered in the expert database commented that the registration process was quick and straightforward.

The presence of significant amounts of unused budget in all strands hampered the degree to which TAIEX was able to provide service within its budgeted resources. The particularly low percentage for TAIEX INTPA could be attributed at least in part with the strand starting in 2020, simultaneously with the outbreak of the pandemic. For the rest, the unused budget was attributed in large part to a lack of visibility and promotion of the instrument and to the impossibility to organize some events due to human resource constraints.

Table 24: Percentage of allocated funds that were contracted, by strand, over the period 2016-2020.

Strand	Funds Used (%)
IPA	54%
ENI South	63%
ENI East	85%
FPI	79%
REGIO	58%
TCc	63%
SRSP	68%
ENV	77%
INTPA	16%
Total	62%

Source: ADE computations based on DGNEARC3 data.

Last, it is worth noting that, under equal conditions in terms of main drivers of cost (same duration, number of experts and of participants), online events appear cheaper to organize; and that the marginal cost of stretching them across any of those dimensions is lower. A further advantage of online events is more flexibility in scheduling (particularly in events in which the number of participants is reduced); which was clearly appreciated in TAIEX TCc. This said, online events have potential significant drawbacks in terms of effectiveness, given the lower opportunities they offer for direct observation (for both experts and participants) and building personal relationships.

EQ 6 – Complementarity with other instruments

To what extent did TAIEX as an institution-building instrument complement other instruments pursuing similar goals, and to what extent were there duplications and synergies?

JC 6.1 Extent to which “The design and evolution of TAIEX aimed at optimizing the complementarities and synergies with other instruments”

The use of TAIEX in complementarity to other instruments was part of TAIEX’ initial design. TAIEX was meant, among others, to coordinate the overall provision of technical assistance on transposition of the *acquis*. This role was later abandoned and currently its approach does not include features specifically aimed at achieving complementarities or synergies.

- TAIEX was initially designed as a “single entry point” for all pre-accession technical assistance concerning the *acquis*. At the time, its scope included activities beyond the organization of events such as the setup and maintenance of a database on the status of approximation of the *acquis* within all Accession Candidate Countries and Twinning. Since its launch in 1996, TAIEX was not meant to be a standalone instrument but rather to act complementarily and work alongside other instruments and programmes towards broader objectives – which initially concerned the approximation with and implementation of the EU *acquis* within the Western Balkans and Turkey (IPA). (As of 2020, this goal was still actual for the region of Western Balkans and Turkey IPA.) More in general, the role of TAIEX was described as that of a “facilitator”, “driver”³⁸⁸ or “catalyst” within broader programmes and reform projects.
- The 2000 Commission Decision and the 2005 Council decision concerning TAIEX highlighted the instrument’s role in avoiding duplication and ensuring coherence, noting the key role of the database in this respect.
- The database was never extended beyond the Accession Candidate Countries. Twinning and other activities were later abandoned or spun off. These changes have not been officially formalized and can only be inferred from subsequent documents.
- Currently, TAIEX’s features are not fully geared towards promoting the achievement of complementarities or synergies, but they favour these in two steps of the event application/ approval process:
 - Applications need to indicate any other EU/other assistance received or about to be received related to the issues to be covered by the TAIEX event. If synergies or complementarities are foreseen, this information may be considered favourably during the application review process.
 - During the application review, consultations take place with DGs and other Commission Services whose activity is deemed relevant to the issues to be covered in the event. Potential synergies and complementarities may arise and be considered during the design of the event (or of other activities).
 - Leaflets, websites and other TAIEX marketing material did not mention potential complementary or alternative instruments to address needs – except for the EIR website, which presented different funding options to support in addressing gaps identified in EIR report.
 - Despite the above, stakeholders express the aspiration to generate synergies with other instruments, particularly Twinning (TAIEX INTPA) and several initiatives within DG REGIO. The latter go beyond the use of TAIEX REGIO for Communities of

³⁸⁸ Internal user guide on TAIEX and TAIEX Recalibration.

practitioner's events. the DG Regio's Communities of Practitioners³⁸⁹ (no information was yet found on how such synergies are promoted in practice). There is also a will within DG REGIO to inscribe TAIEX events more in a broader strategic framework and exploring more complementarities.

JC 6.2 Extent to which "There was a general tendency of complementarities and/or synergies"

- The scope of eligible events within each of the TAIEX strands that were operational in the 2015-2020 period was defined in terms of support to an overarching objective, which often coincided with that of the EU service in charge of the strand and which was also pursued through the use of a range of other instruments³⁹⁰. **In most cases, strands did not contemplate systematic mechanisms to define individual TAIEX events or how they would complement with other instruments; TAIEX SRSP and TAIEX TCc were exceptions in this sense** – as in these strands TAIEX events were defined within wider sector reform plans developed in collaboration with specific EU MS countries or the TCc, often spanning multi-year periods and in combination with other instruments. Somewhat similar event planning processes also occasionally took place through peer-review missions within IPA-ENI (use of TAIEX on EU demand in a diagnostic fashion): as a result of such events, comprehensive plans of interventions were developed and launched, encompassing the use of TAIEX as well as of other instruments.
- A few exceptions in terms of recurrent use of TAIEX in combination with or support to other instruments promoted by the EU Commission nonetheless existed. In particular, TAIEX was regularly used in combination with Twinning, particularly in three ways:
 - To assess the need for a Twinning mission and/or set the basis for it. (In cases, this also happened in events originally non-related to Twinning but where the opportunity of a Twinning mission was discussed, e, g, upon suggestion of a participating experts.)
 - To assess and draft reports on Twinning's results. The use of TAIEX events (requested by the EU Commission) in this sense was systematic, following all Twinning events.
 - To fill gaps that a Twinning missions could not address.
- Another important area of synergy with Twinning is the EDBE, which is shared between the two instruments.
- Last, synergies with Twinning were also pursued in generating awareness of the instruments. Often NCPs and CPs within EU Delegations were in charge of both instruments; and annual meetings were organized with NCPs in Enlargement countries for both instruments, in the form of TAIEX screening events – to support the coordination, improved management and promotion of both TAIEX and Twinning activities.³⁹¹
- DG REGIO's Communities of Practitioners³⁹² also regularly leveraged on TAIEX to organize meetings.
- TAIEX was also often used, in its EU-demand version, in support of policy development: most notably, as a diagnostic tool and/or a way to assess the opportunity and recommended extent of broader interventions or collaborations within IPA-ENI countries.
- In some cases, the unique and distinctive characteristics of TAIEX (see also EQ1) led it to be used as a standalone instrument in situations which could not be addressed through any other available instrument. This at times resulted in issues, as capacity building could also

³⁸⁹ It was explained to us by a DG REGIO representative that TAIEX was used in synergy with the transnational network on simplification and was for instance used within the framework of a wider capacity building programme in Bulgaria.

³⁹⁰ In some cases, TAIEX was also used more specifically to support other EU projects and instruments – such as EPPA, ECRAN, RIPAP and IPARD, in the region of Western Balkans and Turkey (TAIEX IPA); though also in those cases, support was broadly defined and did not contemplate a specific plan.

³⁹¹ Inventory analysis, documentary review of screening events for NCPs

³⁹² Networks of administrators from different EU countries, who are involved in managing EU funding under the ERDF and Cohesion fund.

not be followed up through other complementary types of support that were also necessary for the fulfilment of the beneficiary need – potentially ultimately leading to a waste in resources.³⁹³

- TAIEX PI purportedly coordinated some TAIEX events so as to coincide with the presence in the beneficiary country of high level EU or MS officers, which briefly intervened.³⁹⁴ Although the two actions were not necessarily complementary towards a same objective, this allowed for mutual benefits – as the event could gain a higher profile/ visibility and the visit could be enriched with a tangible cooperation element. For example, within the events reviewed in-depth, Mrs. Federica Mogherini, then High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and Vice-President of the Commission, intervened in the opening of a TAIEX event on security and justice that took place in Mexico in 2016.
- Further efforts at generating synergies were also pursued by beneficiaries, through the setup of local structures to coordinate the request and use of different types of EU instruments. In particular:
 - **Ukraine** set up a centre to ensure the coordination and effective implementation of TAIEX, Twinning and OECD-sigma Instruments in the country. The centre is in charge of gathering information, facilitating and supporting the organization of different forms of support to public administration development, institutional capacity strengthening and actions towards adaptation to the standards of the EU.
 - In **Tunisia**, an EU Coordination officer is responsible for all EU-backed Technical Assistance programs, including TAIEX. One of its tasks is to generate awareness on which programs can complement TAIEX and how, particularly at the moment of application.

Survey respondents mostly agreed that TAIEX was used in complementarity with other EU instruments (79% of participants and 75% of experts strongly or mostly agreed). However, a large share expressed no opinion/ knowledge about the existence of complementarities (25% in the case of experts, and 19% in the case of participants) and only in a few cases concrete examples of synergies emerged in commentaries (included in the examples outlined above).

Box 82: Supporting pesticide management in Uganda

Several events were organized in Uganda to support pesticide management, to support it in meeting requirements for exporting agricultural produce to the EU. The events were deemed highly successful by all stakeholders involved in generating local capacities and developing a legal framework, including a pesticide monitoring plan. In order to fully implement the plan and achieve the broader objective of meeting EU export requirements, however, the country now needs to pursue accreditation for its Pesticide Residue laboratory – an endeavour for which necessary resources (most notably: financial) have not been yet identified.

Source: Interview with beneficiaries, event documentation

JC 6.3 Extent to which “There were little or no examples of duplication between TAIEX and other instruments “

- No instances of duplication with other instruments were in fact observed during this study; however, little evidence emerged of synergy ideas emerging and being pursued as a result of this process.

³⁹³ This issue was mentioned by stakeholders within TAIEX PI and TAIEX INTPA, mostly in connection of TAIEX support extended to sectors that were not contemplated in MIPs. (MN739, MN741, MN743)

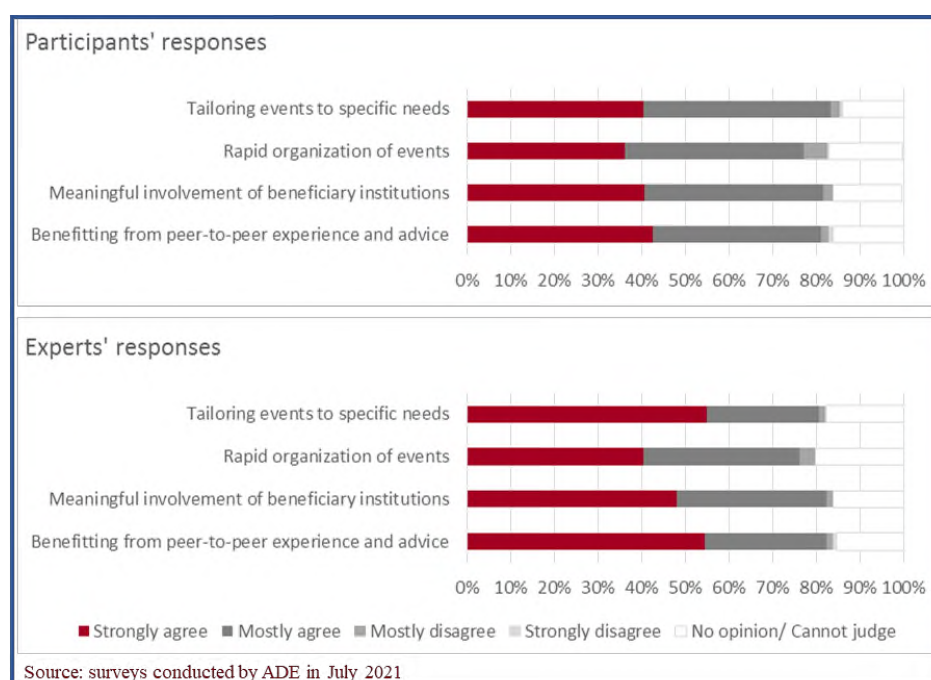
³⁹⁴ TAIEX-Partnership Instrument Final Report, July 2016-July 2020.

JC 6.4 Extent to which there were “Specific benefits brought by TAIEX as compared to other instruments”

TAIEX brought specific features and benefits that were complementary and additional to those of other instruments. This concerned the capacity to organize demand-driven, short events which leverage on peer-to-peer, public sector expertise by EU MS officers, and to do so in a relatively quick and low bureaucracy fashion.

- Stakeholders interviewed explained that TAIEX offered features that were otherwise not available, notably in terms of the capacity to organise:
 - On-demand events rapidly, and with a reduced level of bureaucracy: alternatives would generally require significantly more extensive processes.
 - Events short in duration which leverage on EU MS public officers’ expertise (peer-to-peer).
- Survey results (illustrated in the following graphs) confirm that stakeholders considered that TAIEX offered specific benefits compared to alternatives. About 80% of respondents among participants and experts strongly or mostly agreed that TAIEX was better than other options to tailor events to needs; rapidly organise events; involve beneficiary institutions and benefit from peer-to-peer experience and advice (in

Figure 127: TAIEX stakeholders’ response to the question: to what extent do you agree that TAIEX allowed the following better than it would have been possible through other options (including available EU and EU MS tools and initiatives)?



Interviewees and focus group participants underlined that ³⁹⁵ the peer-to-peer approach added a specific value added in terms of staff competences: interacting with peers allowed beneficiaries to gain practical, hands-on knowledge, different from and potentially complementary to knowledge acquired through other sources. Few other instruments available facilitate this type of interaction, and none in the form of short term, on demand events.

³⁹⁵ With participants to TAIEX events – both beneficiaries and EU officers.

JC 6.5 Extent to which “Specific factors contributed to favouring or hampering such complementarities or synergies”

The evaluation has found no specific evidence as to which factors contributed to favouring TAIEX being used in a complementary fashion or in synergy with other EU instruments. Such complementarities/synergies occurred when TAIEX is used as part of a wider strategy to achieve a set objective, and when the entity requesting the event has a good level of knowledge of and the possibility to use and combine different types of EU assistance.

- No documentary evidence on specific factors that enhanced or hampered TAIEX being complementary or having synergies with EU or other relevant instruments was found, nor relevant insight obtained from interviews in this sense.
- As described in the above paragraphs, complementarities and synergies with other EU instruments is easily observed in cases in which two conditions (both) apply:
 - TAIEX is used as part of a wider strategy to achieve specific objectives (defined by either the beneficiary or the EU);
 - TAIEX applicants have a good knowledge and understanding of the range of assistance options that the EU offers, and the possibility and capability to combine them. This was mostly observed either when the request comes from EU services, or when beneficiaries have some institutional structure in place to manage and coordinate EU TA support.

EQ 7 – Working with peers and EU cooperation

To what extent did working with peers offered specific (EU) added value and to what extent has TAIEX as much as possible built on the potential benefits of the EU Cooperation?

JC 7.1 Extent to which “Organising peer working in the EU context offered a specific value added”

Organizing peer working via TAIEX at the EU level (as compared to MS or specific DG/ EU service level) allowed for higher effectiveness in channelling EU MS expertise needed by beneficiary countries and contributed to the positioning of the EU as an important, united actor on the international scene. The developed database was a key asset and value added in this respect.

- Organizing peer-to-peer assistance at the EU level (rather than at the MS and/or at the specific DG and EU service level) offered three substantial benefits at the organizational level³⁹⁶:
 - It offered a consolidated database of expertise³⁹⁷ at EU level, with a critical mass of experts on a range of topics and from different MS and hence contexts. This allowed finding fits for specific events (i.e., expertise from a specific topic, but also from a variety of settings that offer different contexts of implementation; and with availability on the foreseen event’s date).
 - Development of know-how and experience, and thus efficiency, in negotiating arrangements to enable the availability of such expertise for a limited number of days, with different countries and institutions (one-stop-shop).
 - Achievement of sufficient scale to enable the TAIEX team to include officers specializing on different strands/ topics – which enables them to provide a more effective and efficient service.
- The management of TAIEX at the EU level had advantages from an image/ perception perspective.
 - Most stakeholders surveyed agreed that TAIEX events strengthened participants’ perception of the EU as a valuable partner (88% of experts and 86% of participants³⁹⁸).
 - The provision of assistance to non-EU countries at the EU level is highly coherent with the recent Team Europe approach.
 - The in-depth revision of a TAIEX PI event (including interviews) revealed that the EU-wide approach enabled the possibility to use TAIEX for events that, in addition to “traditional” objectives, supported the positioning of the EU, as a whole, as a political/ commercial partner.
- Complementarities and synergies with other EU assistance (as described in EQ 6) would likely be lost if TAIEX like actions were implemented at the MS level.

³⁹⁶ Interviews with EU officers (TAIEX team and TAIEX users).

³⁹⁷ Including 5,473 experts as of March 2021.

³⁹⁸ It is worth noting that 9% of experts and 10% of participants did not provide an opinion. Of those that provided an opinion, 97% of experts and 95% of participants agreed with the statement.

JC 7.2 Extent to which “TAIEX has realised to the maximum the potential of working at EU level”

TAIEX did play a limited role in fostering cooperation at EU level.

- De facto the implementation of TAIEX entailed high level of cooperation across DG NEAR, EUDs, and EU MS (ENI South);
- The evaluation did not find evidence that TAIEX contributed to establishing and/or effectively implementing coordination mechanisms among European actors. (Cooperation was organic and the degree of maximisation depended on individuals in EUDs, national administrations, their level of seniority and their personal commitment to TAIEX. And indeed, TAIEX is not necessarily the best instrument to foster cooperation at EU level: it has to be non-MS related.

JC 7.3 Extent to which “TAIEX added other benefits to what would have resulted from action taken by the EU MSs on their own in both EU MSs and Partner countries.”

TAIEX added benefits with respects to what would have resulted from action taken by EU MS on their own, since no current MS action was identified that operates in a way that is like TAIEX or overlaps with it.

- Survey respondents mostly stated that the needs targeted by the TAIEX events could not have been addressed as effectively through existing EU MS initiatives (without involving the EU). (58% of participants agreed with a statement in this sense, though 33% offered no opinion; 8% strongly or mostly disagreed. Among experts, 62% agreed, 30% offered no opinion, and 6% disagreed.)
- No evidence emerged from interviews of action taken by individual MS which overlaps with TAIEX or operates in a similar way.

ANNEX 8: LIST OF INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS CONDUCTED**1 Interviews**

Stakeholder type	Organization	Position
TAIEX TEAM	DG.NEAR.C3	TAIEX EIR Project Officer
TAIEX TEAM	DG.NEAR.C3	TAIEX INTPA Project Officer
TAIEX TEAM	DG.NEAR.C3	Team Leader
TAIEX TEAM	DG.NEAR.C3	Policy Officer
TAIEX TEAM	DG.NEAR.C3	Technical Officer
TAIEX TEAM	DG.NEAR.C3	Ex-Team Leader
TAIEX TEAM	DG.NEAR.C3	TAIEX Project Manager
TAIEX TEAM	DG.NEAR.C3	Ex-Team Leader – Ex-Project Manager
TAIEX TEAM	DG.NEAR.C3	TAIEX SRSP Case Handler
TAIEX TEAM	DG.NEAR.C3	Project Officer
TAIEX TEAM	DG.NEAR.C3	Project Officer
TAIEX TEAM	DG.NEAR.C3	TAIEX TCc Project Officer
TAIEX TEAM	DG.ENV.F2 - Bilateral and Regional Cooperation	Policy Officer
TAIEX TEAM	DG.NEAR.C3	TAIEX EIR Team Leader
TAIEX TEAM	DG.NEAR.C3	TAIEX INTPA Project Officer
TAIEX National Contact Point	Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	TAIEX National Contact Point - Croatia
TAIEX National Contact Point	Government of Montenegro – European Integration Office	TAIEX National Contact Point for Montenegro
TAIEX National Contact Point	Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Republic of Lithuania	Development Cooperation Department
TAIEX National Contact Point	Montenegro Ministry of Foreign Affairs	TAIEX National Contact Point - Montenegro
SLA- EU Officer	DG.ENV.E2	Project Officer
SLA- EU Officer	DG.REFORM.A3 - Cyprus Settlement Support	Team Leader TAIEX & Aid Coordination
SLA- EU Officer	DG.INTPA	Team Leader
SLA- EU Officer	DG.REGIO.E1	Policy Officer
SLA- EU Officer	DG.REGIO.E1	Policy Officer
SLA- EU Officer	DG.REGIO.A2	Project Officer
SLA- EU Officer	DG.REFORM.A3	Legal Officer
SLA- EU Officer	DG.DEVCO.A2	Policy Officer
SLA- EU Officer	DG.ENV.F2	Coordinator
SLA- EU Officer	DG.ENV.F2	Policy Officer
SLA- EU Officer	FPI Unit 4	Policy Officer
SLA- EU Officer	DG.NEAR.C3	TAIEX PI Project Officer
SLA- EU Officer	FPI Regional Team - Americas	Programme Officer
SLA- EU Officer	DG.REFORM	Policy Officer
SLA- EU Officer	EU Commission - Cyprus Settlement Unit	Programme Manager
SLA- EU Officer	DG.REFORM.A3	TAIEX SRSP Case Handler
SLA- EU Officer	DG.REFORM.A3	Cyprus Settlement

SLA- EU Officer	DG.REFORM.A3 - Cyprus Settlement Support	Policy Officer
SLA- EU Officer	DG.NEAR.C3	Team Leader
SLA- EU Officer	DG.ENV.E2	Head of Unit
SLA- EU Officer	DG.ENV.E2	Technical Expert
SLA- EU Officer	DG.FPI.4	Head of Unit
SLA- EU Officer	DG.NEAR.A1	Head of Unit
SLA- EU Officer	DG.NEAR.C1	Head of Unit
SLA- EU Officer	DG.NEAR.C3	Director
Expert	Federal Ministry of Finance - Austria	Senior Officer
Expert	Ministry of Justice Sweden	Director of Division for Police Issues- TAIEX Expert
Expert	Belgian ministry of environment	National Contact Point TAIEX EIR & policy officer
Evaluation Manager	DG.NEAR.A4	Evaluation Manager
EUD TAIEX Focal Point	EU Delegation Thailand	Policy Officer
EUD TAIEX Focal Point	EU Delegation – Bosnia and Herzegovina	Rule of Law Adviser/Rule of Law Section
EUD TAIEX Focal Point	EU Office Kosovo	TAIEX Focal Point
EUD TAIEX Focal Point	EU Office Kosovo	Former TAIEX Focal Point
EUD TAIEX Focal Point	EU Delegation Serbia	TAIEX Focal Point
EUD TAIEX Focal Point	EU Delegation Lebanon	TAIEX Focal Point
EUD TAIEX Focal Point	EU Delegation Jordan	TAIEX Focal Point
EUD TAIEX Focal Point	EU Delegation Tunisia	Former TAIEX Focal Point
Beneficiary	UNDP	National Project Coordinator
Beneficiary	Tunisian National Anti-Corruption Authority	Senior Expert
Beneficiary	Tunisian National Anti-Corruption Authority	Director of the International Cooperation Department
Beneficiary	Ministry of Justice - Uzbekistan	
Beneficiary	National Bank of Moldova- External Relations and European Integration Service	Head of Service
Beneficiary	National Bank of Moldova	
Beneficiary	National Bank of Moldova	
Beneficiary	EU Environment Partnership Programme for Accession	Key Expert 1: Team Leader
Beneficiary	EU Environment Partnership Programme for Accession	EPPA Secretariat
Beneficiary	Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency - Kosovo Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning	Senior Officer
Beneficiary	Department of Environment Protection and Waters - Kosovo Ministry of Environment,	Senior Officer

	Spatial Planning and Infrastructure	
Beneficiary	EU Cooperation Center	Director
Beneficiary	“Ministry of Justice” - TCc	Minister
Beneficiary	“Ministry of Health” - TCc	EU Relations Department Officer
Beneficiary	EU Cooperation Center - TCc	Officer
Beneficiary	Ministry of Environment - Environmental Protection Unit - Natural Life Division	Programme Officer
Beneficiary	Chamber of Commerce (KTTO) - Trade Development Specialist	Programme Officer
Beneficiary	Communauté française de Belgique	Policy Officer
Beneficiary	Communauté française de Belgique	Policy Officer
Beneficiary	Uganda Ministry of Internal Affairs - Directorate of Government Analytical laboratory	Head of Pesticide Residue Laboratory
Beneficiary	EUDEL Uganda	Agricultural Specialist

2 Focus Group Discussions

5 Focus Group Discussions were conducted as part of this Evaluation:

- 2 with EUDEL TAIEX Focal Points and TAIEX National Contact Points (1 for TAIEX IPA? 1 for TAIEX ENI EAST)
- 2 with TAIEX Experts (1 for TAIEX TCc and 1 for TAIEX IPA, ENI, PI, INTPA)
- 1 with staff from the TCc EU Coordination Center

Stakeholder type	Organization/Unit	Country
TAIEX ENI EAST	TAIEX National Contact Point	Azerbaijan
	EUD TAIEX Focal Point	Georgia
	EUD TAIEX Focal Point	Ukraine
	TAIEX National Contact Point	Azerbaijan
	EUD TAIEX Focal Point	Georgia
	TAIEX National Contact Point	Moldova
	EUD TAIEX Focal Point	Ukraine
	TAIEX National Contact Point	Georgia
	EUD TAIEX Focal Point	Azerbaijan
TAIEX IPA	EUD TAIEX Focal Point	Turkey
	TAIEX National Contact Point	Serbia
	TAIEX National Contact Point	Montenegro
	EUD TAIEX Focal Point	North Macedonia
	TAIEX National Contact Point	Bosnia & Herzegovina
	EUD TAIEX Focal Point	Kosovo
	TAIEX National Contact Point	North Macedonia
	TAIEX National Contact Point	Albania
	EUD TAIEX Focal Point	Montenegro
TAIEX National Contact Point	Turkey	

	EUD TAIEX Focal Point	Albania
EXPERTS TAIEX IPA, ENI, PI, INTPA	Migration and asylum expert	Belgium
	Water and Marine director	Romania
	Legal Counsellor- Ministry of Justice	Spain
	Accreditation Organization Officer	Belgium
	Director of Procurement office	Poland
	Railway/postal regulatory authority officer	Lithuania
	Professor of Law and Economics	Italy
	Public Administration Expert	United Kingdom
	Environmental expert	Italy
EXPERTS TAIEX TCc	Competition council Officer	Croatia
	Head of chemical inspection department	Slovenia
	Food and Veterinary Service Department Officer	Latvia
	Statistics Expert	Finland
	Copyright lawyer - Former Assistant Director General for WIPO	Hungary
	Ministry of Agriculture, Head Sustainable Department	Croatia
	Senior inspector	The Netherlands
	Statistics Expert	Finland
	Competition Council	Romania
	Head of technical environment and protection department of upper Bavaria	Germany
TAIEX TCc	EU Coordination Center Officer	TCc
	EU Coordination Center Officer	TCc
	EU Coordination Center Officer	TCc
	EU Coordination Center Officer	TCc
	EU Coordination Center Officer	TCc
	EU Coordination Center Officer	TCc
	EU Coordination Center Officer	TCc

ANNEX 9 : BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following groups of documents have been consulted (excluding documents related to specific events):

1 Strategic Documents

- *Service-Level Agreement between DG Regional and Urban Policy and DG NEAR on the implementation of a cross-sub delegation between the two Directorates-General concerning TAIEX support to Member State.* European Commission, January 2015, Ref. Ares(2015)503227 – 06/02/2015.
- *Amendment n 0 1 to the Service Level Agreement between DG REGIO and DG NEAR for TAIEX support to Member States,* Ref. Ares(2015)503227 - 06/02/2015.
- *Service Level Agreement between the SRSS and DG NEAR concerning the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) support to Member States.* European Commission, August 2017, European Commission, Ref. Ares(2017)4174215 - 25/08/2017.
- *Service Level Agreement between DG Environment and DG NEAR concerning the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) support to Member States.* European Commission, July 2017, Ref. Ares(2017)4174215 - 25/08/2017.
- *Service Level Agreement between the SRSS and DG NEAR concerning the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) support to the Turkish Cypriot community and Member States.* European Commission, December 2018, Ref. Ares(2018)6626928 - 21/12/2018.
- *Service Level Agreement between the SRSS and DG NEAR concerning the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) support to the Turkish Cypriot community and Member States.* European Commission, November 2019, Ref. Ares(2019)7303932 - 27/11/2019.
- *Service Level Agreement between DG REFORM and DG NEAR concerning the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) support to the Turkish Cypriot community and to Member States.* European Commission, June 2020, Ref. Ares(2020)3653227.
- *TAIEX – Guidelines for European Commission and European External Action Service (EEAS) Colleagues.* TAIEX, European Commission, 2019.
- *Internal user guide on TAIEX and TAIEX recalibration.* TAIEX, European Commission, 2017.
- *TAIEX Service Level Agreement: DG NEAR – DG REFORM Final Report. Reporting period: August 2016 – July 2020.* European Commission, Neighbourhood and enlargement negotiations, 2020.
- *Service Level Agreement between the FPI and DG NEAR, on the implementation of a co-delegation between the two Services concerning TAIEX support to third countries, regions and territories eligible for measures supported by the Partnership Instrument.* European Commission, June 2016.
- *Service Level Agreement between FPI and DG NEAR, concerning the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) support to third countries, regions and territories eligible for measures supported by the Partnership Instrument.* European Commission, June 2017.
- *Organising TAIEX Activities for the cooperation between the Partnership Instrument FPI.4 and NEAR.C.3, Workflow Chart.* Annex to FPI-NEAR SLA of June 2017.
- *Amendment n. 2 to the Service Level Agreement between FPI and DG NEAR, concerning the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) support to third countries, regions and territories eligible for measures supported by the Partnership Instrument.* June 2018.
- *Service Level Agreement between FPI and DG NEAR, concerning the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) support to third countries, regions and territories eligible for measures supported by the Partnership Instrument.* European Commission, 2020.
- *COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 26.2.2020 on the financing of the Structural Reform Support Programme and the adoption of the work programme for 2020 and repealing Commission Implementing Decision C(2019)8197.* European Commission, C(2020)1026, 2020.

- *COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 22.6.2015, on the 2015 Partnership Instrument Annual Action Programme for cooperation with third countries to be financed from the general budget of the European Union – main text and Annex 6 (Action Fiche for Technical Assistance and Information Exchange – TAIEX)*. European Commission, 2015.
- *COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 22.5.2017, on the 2017 Partnership Instrument Annual Action Programme for cooperation with third countries to be financed from the general budget of the European Union – main text and Annex 19 (Action Fiche for Technical Assistance and Information Exchange – TAIEX)*. European Commission, 2017.
- Note to the file, with subject: TAIEX activities under Partnership Instrument (PI). Brussels, 24/07/2014.
- Note to the attention of Mr. Daniel Hachez, Head of Unit, DG ELARG/D2. Brussels, 24 September 2014. *Only the cover was transmitted to the evaluation team, the actual note could not be found.*
- Republic of Kosovo, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning. 2016. *“Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020): Action Plan for Biodiversity 2016-2020”*. Prishtina.

2 TAIEX annual reports

- European Union (2012), *TAIEX Annual Activity Report 2011*.
- European Union (2013), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2012*.
- European Union (2014), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2013*.
- European Union (2015), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2014*.
- European Union (2016), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2015*.
- European Union (2017), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2016*.
- European Union (2018), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2017*.
- European Union (2019), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2018*.
- European Union (2020), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2019*.
- European Union (2021), *TAIEX and Twinning Annual Activity Report 2020*.

3 Other reports

- ECRAN Working together towards alignment with the European Union environmental and climate policies and legislation in EU Candidate Countries and Potential Candidates: Results Brochure 2016. http://www.ecranetwork.org/Files/ECRAN_Results_Brochure.pdf
- TAIEX-SRSP PEER 2 PEER. Sharing EU Member States’ expertise on structural reforms. European Union, 2020.
- Study on peer learning tools for the administrative capacity building of Member State bodies involved in the management of funds from the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund. European Union, December 2020.
- TAIEX-Partnership Instrument Final Report, July 2016-July 2020. DG NEAR, September 2020.
- Programme Statement – Partnership instrument for cooperation with third countries (PI). Accessed July 26th, 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/about_the_european_commission/eu_budget/db_2021_programme_statement_partnership_instrument_for_cooperation_with_third_countries_pi.pdf.
- K. Menczer, Z. Veselaj and E. Hajredini. July 13th, 2018. *“Kosovo Biodiversity Analysis – Foreign Assistance Act 119”*. USAID.

4 **Web resources**

- “Center for Adaptation of the Civil Service To the standards of the European Union”. Accessed August 24, 2021. <http://www.center.gov.ua/en/>
- “Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network ECRAN”. Accessed August 24, 2021. <http://www.ecranetwork.org/Steering-Committee>
- “EPPA Eu Environment Partnership Programme for Accession. Project.” Accessed August 24, 2021. <https://eppanetwork.eu/project/>
- “Regional Implementation of Paris Agreement Project. About the project.” Accessed August 24, 2021. <https://www.ripap.eu/about/the-project>
- “European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations. TAIEX.” Accessed August 26, 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/tenders/taieux_en
- “European Commission. Overview of funding programmes: Technical Support Instrument (TSI).” Accessed June, 29, 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/info/overview-funding-programmes/technical-support-instrument-tsi_en
- “European Commission. EU Economic governance: monitoring, prevention, correction. The European Semester.” Accessed August 26, 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester_en
- “European Commission. Recovery from the coronavirus. Recovery and Resilience Facility.” Accessed August 26, 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en
- “Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia. Police Reform Strategy of the Republic of Armenia – Approved”. Accessed February 28, 2022. <https://www.moj.am/en/article/2706>

GETTING IN TOUCH WITH THE EU

In person

All over the European Union there are hundreds of Europe Direct information centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you at: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en

On the phone or by email

Europe Direct is a service that answers your questions about the European Union. You can contact this service:

- by freephone: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (certain operators may charge for these calls),
- at the following standard number: +32 22999696, or
- by electronic mail via: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en

FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT THE EU

Online

Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at:

https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en

EU publications

You can download or order free and priced EU publications from EU Bookshop at: <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publications>.

Multiple copies of free publications may be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local information centre (see https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en).

The European Commission Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations - NEAR

NEAR Mission


The mission of DG NEAR is to take forward the EU's neighbourhood and enlargement policies, as well as coordinating relations with EEA-EFTA countries insofar as Commission policies are concerned. DG NEAR works closely with the European External Action Service and the line DGs in charge of thematic priorities. By implementing assistance actions in Europe's eastern and southern neighbourhood, DG NEAR supports reform and democratic consolidation, and strengthens the prosperity, stability and security around Europe. DG NEAR helps to promote EU values, policies and interests in this region, and to contribute to developing the special relationship of the EU with its neighbouring countries

Follow us:

 :@[add Twitter account]

 : [add Facebook account]

 : [add Instagram account]

 : [add YouTube account]

