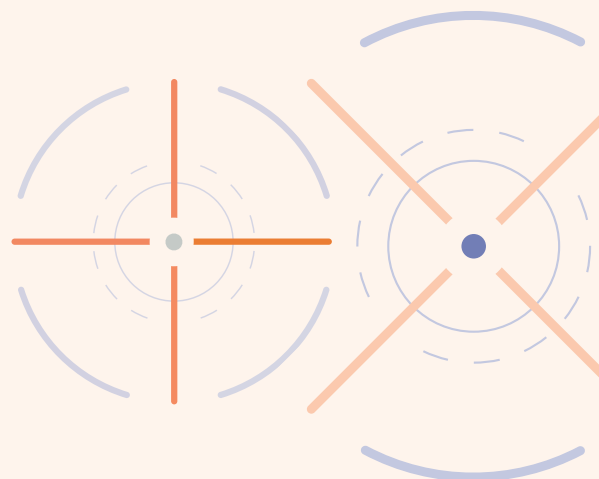




# Evaluation of the TAIEX Instrument 2015-2020

## Purpose and Scope

The objective of the evaluation was to provide an independent assessment of how TAIEX contributed to reform processes in partner countries and EU Member States. The evaluation had a stock-tacking, lesson-learning and forward-looking dimension. It covered all support provided through TAIEX in 2015-2020, in all thematic areas and countries of intervention.



## The TAIEX Instrument

TAIEX is a short-term, peer-to-peer, demand-driven institution building instrument of the European Commission.

It supports public administrations in the approximation, implementation, and enforcement of the European Union (EU) legislation (*acquis*) and good practices. It organises five types of events: workshops, study visits, expert missions, peer-review assessments, and work-from-home.

TAIEX was set up in 1996 to support countries that were candidates for EU accession in transposing and implementing EU *acquis* related to the single market. Over the years, the scope of TAIEX was extended to cover more regions and thematic areas, for example the green and digital transitions.

TAIEX activities are now organised along 9 strands:

- ✓ three strands for the enlargement and neighbourhood countries;
- ✓ one focusing on the Turkish Cypriot community;
- ✓ three strands for EU Members States concerning regional, environment and structural reform policies;
- ✓ and two strands for the rest of the world.

Until 2016, only potential beneficiaries could initiate TAIEX requests. Since then, Commission services could also initiate TAIEX support.

TAIEX is implemented by the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations.

## TAIEX in Numbers (2015 -2020)

111

beneficiary countries



6,712

events organised



103,011

participants



8,584

experts deployed



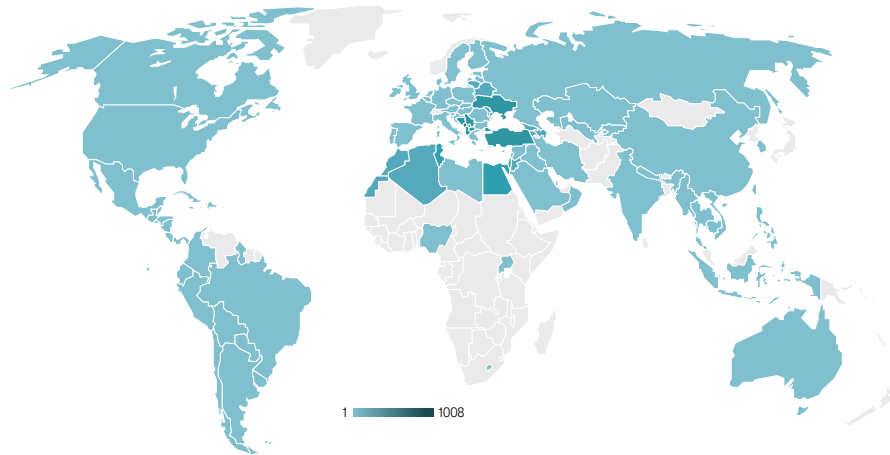
4 months

median time between approval and organization

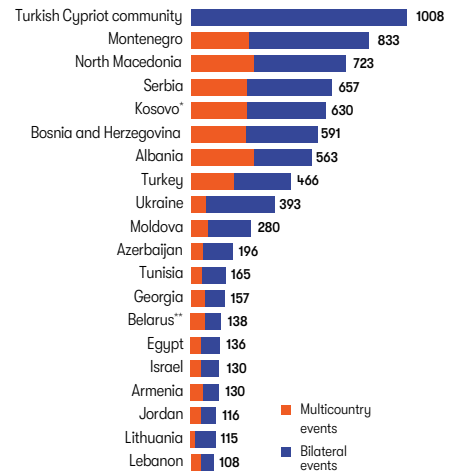


## COUNTRIES COVERED

EUR 67 million spent between 2015-2020



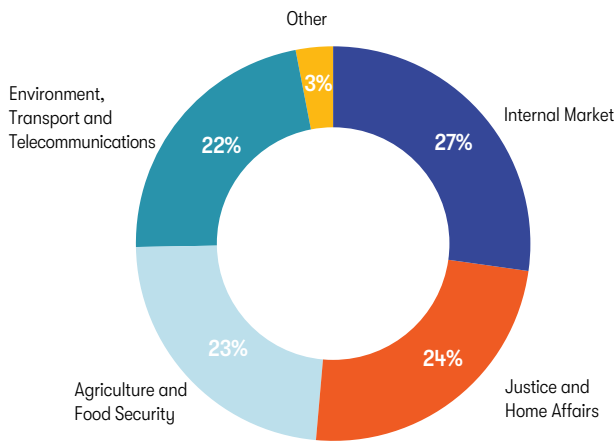
## TOP 20 BENEFICIARIES (EVENTS)



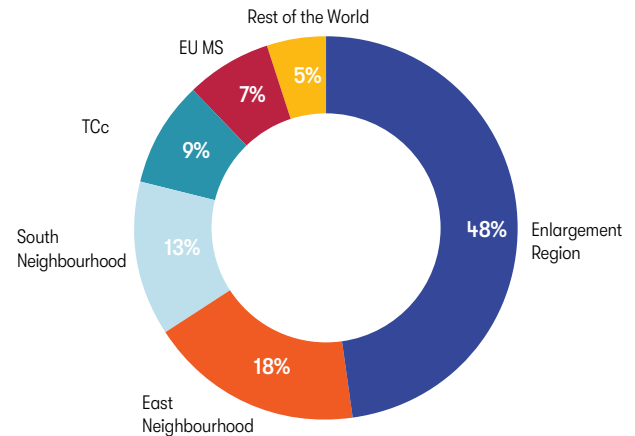
\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

\*\* Following the October 2020 Council conclusions (11660/20), TAIEX cooperation with Belarus is suspended.

## POLICY AREAS



## REGIONS



## Highlights from the Evaluation

### 1. An effective, gap-filling tool for supporting reforms in partner countries

TAIEX has crucially supported public administrations in partner countries. It has sustained the approximation, application and enforcement of the EU acquis and the achievement of broader reforms. It has played an important gap-filling role, providing punctual and tailor-made technical assistance to beneficiaries in a short notice. **It was particularly effective when integrated in broader EU strategies and when used in synergy with other instruments.**

In some cases, however, adverse political contexts, political instability, lack of follow-up and frequent staff turnover in beneficiary administrations have hampered results. Implementation issues arose only for a minority of events, particularly online and multi-country ones.

### 2. An increasingly global instrument, benefitting more than 100 countries

TAIEX has expanded beyond its original function and geographic scope through the introduction of new

strands. It has not only supported reforms in partner countries, in the EU Neighbourhood, and beyond, but also provided a platform for public sector cooperation in highly specialised policy areas amongst Member States. It has additionally served as a **policy-driven instrument supporting the EU's external relations toolbox across the world**. This expansion has been largely successful, demonstrating the versatility of the instrument and the effectiveness of DG NEAR's centralised management. However, TAIEX could benefit from a more clearly defined strategy for SLAs and from increased exchanges and lesson learning across strands.

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### 3. A rapid and flexible instrument with low administrative burden

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TAIEX was a swift EU technical assistance instrument. Most events were organised in 4 months or less and some were set up as quickly as 10 days after the submission of a request. TAIEX was accessible for beneficiaries thanks to **its low administrative burden and flexibility**, as compared to other EU instruments. In recent years, TAIEX faced human resource constraints and challenges in the identification of experts, which impacted swiftness and should be addressed.

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### 4. High quality peer-experts, key for success

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TAIEX's peer-to-peer nature and high quality of experts were highly appreciated by beneficiaries. TAIEX had quick access to expertise from all EU Member States thanks to **more than 5,000 active experts enlisted in the TAIEX expert database in 2020**. However, proper maintenance and updating of the database should continue to be ensured to avoid delays. Additional expert recruitment is needed especially given the rapid thematic expansion of the instrument.

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### 5. A declining demand for TAIEX events calling for better communication

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Despite high levels of satisfaction with the instrument, the demand for TAIEX has decreased over the years in the enlargement and neighbourhood regions. Uptake under newer strands has been lower than expected and the budget has been underspent. A limited awareness of the instrument and understanding of it the opportunities have been a factor behind this declining trend. **More strategic and thorough communication on TAIEX is needed.**

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### 6. A strategic recalibration enabling a more proactive role for EU actors

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The possibility for Commission services to initiate events since 2016 has allowed TAIEX to play a **proactive role in the necessary structural reforms** in the enlargement and neighbourhood regions, while fostering synergies with other EU instruments. In some cases, however, it has posed challenges for the ownership and follow-up of events by beneficiaries.

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### 7. A digital TAIEX extending its reach

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**Within three months from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, TAIEX transitioned into a fully digital instrument.** This allowed for the continuation of the instrument and supported partner countries throughout the crisis. The transition has also made TAIEX even more flexible, accessible and resilient to ongoing and future disruptions. It also contributed to the greening of activities.

Although face-to face interactions remain a key strength of TAIEX, the complementary use of online events can be an effective and rapid option for follow-up when experts and beneficiaries have already established a relationship. Online events also allow for exchanges between beneficiaries and experts unable to travel long distances.

