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TAIEX - Guide for Participants in Study Visits

1. Introduction

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

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

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

You have been selected as a participant in a TAIEX study visit and this guide explains what TAIEX will arrange for you, such as transport and accommodation (according to the rules explained below) and also what is expected from you. Therefore we invite you to read the following carefully to help ensure efficient organisation of the event. Please note that email is the preferred method of communication, and all emails regarding an event should include the five-digit event reference number.

Please also note that TAIEX relies on an external service provider for the organisation of the logistical aspects of the event, which will be made on the basis of the information you provide in the participant attendance form as well as other documentation. In addition, the service provider will neither finance nor reimburse any arrangements made by the participants themselves unless pre-approved in writing by TAIEX.

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

2. Participant attendance form

The Local Co-Organiser (LCO) is the person in the beneficiary/recipients' institution that is indicated in the TAIEX application form.

TAIEX will provide LCO a link to allow the LCO to register the proposed participants or to allow the participants to register themselves. The link will remain active within the given deadline. The registered participants will subsequently need to be accepted or may be refused by TAIEX. The email will also contain a link to the guide for online registration of participants, however in case of difficulty TAIEX project officer should be contacted.

In cases where this automated system does not function then participant's attendance form in Word document may be utilised. In either case: names and other required details of all participants must be encoded as required within the given deadline (four weeks before the start of the event). Participants should fill in the form making sure that they provide the exact spelling of their name as written in the passport they will be travelling on.

When completing the "participant attendance form" no changes to the format should be made and attention should be paid to the following:

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- All data must be in English only;
- All names must be written with Latin letters;
- Accents or other symbols such as (), ", *, ' must not be used;
- Title Case (only use capital letters to start the principal words) is to be used (not lower and uppercase); Full and accurate job titles have to be provided;
- Only the following titles can be used Mr., Mrs. or Ms. (no Prof., Dr. etc. can be accepted);
- No abbreviations will be accepted;
- Surnames and names have to be encoded exactly as written in the passport of the participants;
- One valid email address, preferably a professional email address as opposed to a private email address (Yahoo, Gmail, Hotmail, etc.), and phone numbers, including a mobile phone number for participants requiring travel arrangements (for use in case of emergency), have to be provided;
- The same email address cannot be used for all participants;
- Full and accurate address and contact details (street name and number, city and postal code) have to be provided.
- The provision of a copy of the passport (name and document number only) may also be requested by the Service Provider to ensure correctness of flight tickets. Where an event is organised in an EC building the provision of the passport or identification card number will also be required.

3. International travel arrangements

All international travel arrangements are organised by the service provider according to the information provided in the participant registration/attendance form and the agenda of the event.

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

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

Train: TAIEX will either approve the booking and issuance of tickets for the participants or the reimbursement of the real cost of the ticket purchased by the participants upon receipt by the service provider of the original ticket and proof of purchase. Participants may travel in "first class" except on high-speed train services such as TGV, Thalys or Eurostar, where "second class" tickets shall be booked. Premium tickets can only be used if they are not more expensive than "first class" tickets, or in the case of high-speed train services, not more expensive than "second class" tickets.

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

4. Accommodation arrangements

The service provider will book a 4-star (if available) international standard hotel, covering the duration of the event and as required by the travel schedule. Extra overnight stays before or after the event are not accepted by TAIEX, unless required by the flight schedule booked by the service provider.

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

5. Visa arrangements

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

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

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

6. Daily Subsistence Allowance (Per Diem)

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

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

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

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

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

7. Additional expenses to be paid by the participants

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

8. Local transport expenses

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

9. Insurance arrangements

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

- travel;
- full coverage for health care costs due to sickness and accident (in-patient and emergency out-patient);
- emergency repatriation;
- transportation to medical centre;
- sending of a medical service provider;
- emergency dental care costs;

- in case of death, repatriation of the body to the place of origin.

The costs for insurance arrangements will not be reimbursed by TAIEX.

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

10. Confirmation letter

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

13. Event's attendance

The names of all participants and experts are included on a signing in attendance list which needs to be signed by the participant or expert on every day of the event in the morning and in the afternoon. The photographing or copying of the list is prohibited. For any persons who do not wish to have their names included on the list, alternative arrangements may be put in place; affected persons should inform the TAIEX Project Officer at the time of registration or before the preparations of the event have been concluded.

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

14. Evaluation

After the study visit, the participants will send a mission report back to TAIEX within 15 days of the end date of event. They will be also requested to provide feedback via an online questionnaire on the quality of the study visit.

15. Reimbursement

If a travel ticket or any other cost is to be reimbursed, this must be agreed in advance with TAIEX, and a duly completed and signed expense report and the supporting documents (original tickets and proof of payment) should be provided to the service provider within 30 days of the end date of the event. In such cases, complete bank account details, including the full account name, SWIFT code, IBAN code, and address of the bank should be provided.

16. Personal Data Protection

Personal data related to the participants will be processed in accordance with the privacy statement of the TAIEX instrument (see https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/taiox_privacy_statement_online.pdf) and in compliance with 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.

The chairperson of the TAIEX event is asked to advise all persons attending the event that photographs/pictures should only be taken during a set period of time to allow those persons, who do not agree to have their photograph taken, to leave the room; unless all of the attendees agree to having their photograph taken.

In the case of live web streaming and video recording, the alternative to the participants attending the event is to provide them with the opportunity to watch the live web streaming or the opportunity to watch the video of the event.

Participant are also advised that the agenda which may include the name of both participants and experts is also made available through the TAIEX website. Participants who do not wish to have their name included on the agenda should inform the TAIEX Project Officer at the time of registration or before the preparations of the event have been concluded.

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