

Evaluation of TAIEX instrument	
Evaluation Mandate	
Directorate General/Unit	DG ELARG, Unit A.3
Type of evaluation	Retrospective evaluation External (to be contracted)
Planned start date	September 2014
Planned completion date	January 2015 (indicative)
Budget/budget line:	IPA/2013/23681
Indicative budget	85 000 EURO
Type of procedure	Framework procedure

## 1. Why do we need this evaluation?

### 1.1 Justification

The European Council meeting in Copenhagen identified alignment to the European Union *acquis*, in particular with regard to the internal market, as one of the main elements of the pre-accession strategy. The European Commission White Paper on 'Preparation of the Associated Countries of Central and Eastern Europe for Integration into the Internal Market of the Union' emphasised the importance of the implementation and control structures, the establishment of which must accompany the adoption of legislation in the internal market. The White Paper provided for the establishment of a Technical Assistance Information Exchange Office (TAIEX) "...inside the Commission in order to provide for the exchange of information and to give direct advice to associated countries."

The TAIEX Office was created on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 1995 and commenced operations in January 1996. It was originally set up for a two-year period to provide complementary and focussed technical assistance to public administrations in the areas of legislation covered by the White Paper. Importantly, following adoption of Agenda 2000, the remit of TAIEX was extended to cover the entire *acquis*. Subsequently TAIEX was made available to Cyprus and Malta (2001), Turkey and the Western Balkans (2003), and to the Turkish Cypriot community (2004) and has since become an integral feature of the pre-accession strategy. In 2006, TAIEX's original scope in candidate countries and potential candidates was extended to the Neighbourhood countries. TAIEX activities are now directly linked to the implementation of the overall cooperation objectives of the European Union with these partners:

<sup>1</sup> The European Neighborhood Instrument ([ENI](#)) has replaced the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument ([ENPI](#)), so that it reflects real needs and considerations that have emerged over the years.

it provides short-term EU public sector expertise to IPA and ENI<sup>1</sup> beneficiary countries, as well as Russia and the northern part of Cyprus. The expertise assists in understanding, transposing, and implementing the EU *acquis*.

Although TAIEX is driven by demand, the requests submitted in 2012 by beneficiary public administrations largely matched the policy priorities set by the European Union. In recent years, enlargement strategy and ENPI policy papers have attached increasing importance to strengthening the rule of law and countering corruption and organised crime. In particular, assistance requests submitted by IPA beneficiaries have focused precisely on this policy area, i.e. freedom, security and justice. TAIEX assistance has also covered other areas, namely internal market (IM), agriculture and food safety (AGRI) and environment, transport and telecommunications (ETT). As for the ENI region, there has been a decrease in the events held in the Neighbourhood South countries that is likely to be linked to the political events that unfolded in the Arab world. At the same time the number of activities has increased in the Neighbourhood East beneficiaries, showing the popularity of the instrument.

Through IPA II DG Enlargement will continue the TAIEX Technical Assistance and Information Exchange in the Enlargement region. The evaluation will be used for monitoring of future progress in the effectiveness of assistance delivery in the concerned area and for making TAIEX more strategic and instrumental to the implementation of sectoral approaches. The evaluation focuses on a sample of IPA Financing Decisions and will cover IPA assistance from 2007 to date, in particular IPA Financing Decisions 2011 and 2013.

## **1.2 Purpose of the evaluation**

The overall objective of this evaluation is to enhance EU value added and cost-effectiveness in delivering assistance while addressing beneficiary needs. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the capacity of the TAIEX Technical Assistance and Information Exchange in making available the expertise of Member States' public officials and administrations to countries wishing to align their standards with those of the EU in the most relevant and effective way. In particular it aims to assess the contribution of TAIEX:

- To improvements in the performance of candidate and potential candidate countries in transposing, implementing and enforcing legislation in the pre-accession context
- To enhancing transparency and information flow, and to building institutional capacity
- To assist for furthering key institutional reforms, approximating to EU legislation and deepening trade agreements

On the basis of measurable indicators, the evaluation will provide relevant recommendations to improve the design, programming and implementation of TAIEX assistance, with the view to improving its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability.

<b>2. What might it include?</b>
<b>2.1 Scope (indicative)</b>
<p>The evaluation is foreseen as a strategic, policy-oriented evaluation and to this extent, it should be launched at the DG Enlargement HQ level, but it requires support of EU Member State experts mobilised by TAIEX, the EUDs, the CTT, the final beneficiaries and main interlocutors at national level.</p> <p>The recent Evaluation of EU support for <i>acquis</i> alignment and preparation that is implemented and funded through the TAIEX instrument for encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community and preparing it for the future application of the EU <i>acquis</i>, is a specific exercise and it is expected to complement the on-going TAIEX evaluation.</p> <p>For the sake of providing a thorough assessment of the performance of TAIEX assistance to enlargement countries in the programming period 2007-2013, the evaluation should cover Croatia<sup>2</sup>/beneficiary countries, at different level of development, representing the leading applicants for TAIEX assistance. The tentatively suggested countries to focus on are Montenegro, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Croatia. The evaluation shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a SWOT analysis on targeted <i>acquis</i> assistance funded by TAIEX which has been carried out in the IPA region concerned by the annexed Financing Decisions;</li> <li>• Assess the cost-efficiency of its management mode;</li> <li>• Appreciate the advantages and disadvantages of the demand driven nature of the instrument;</li> <li>• Assess the feasibility of making it more instrumental to the implementation of sectoral approaches and more strategic.</li> </ul> <p>Based on relevant findings, conclusions and lessons learned above, it will provide relevant operational and concrete recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To fine-tune TAIEX setup and methodology in line with the necessities of preparations for the <i>acquis</i>;</li> <li>• To make TAIEX more instrumental to the implementation of sector approaches in the framework of IPA II;</li> <li>• To identify the most suitable progress indicators and implementation methodologies according to the future design and implementation of possible EU funded assistance in the <i>acquis</i> targeted sector.</li> </ul>
<b>2.2 Objectives (indicative)</b>
The global objective of this contract is to provide the European Commission with relevant findings

<sup>2</sup> As new EU Member State Croatia will still be benefitting TAIEX assistance until July 2016

and conclusions showing the overall relevance of TAIEX, its contribution to the achievement of objectives set out, as well as recommendations to enhance the TAIEX's efficiency and effectiveness.

<b>3. How we will do it?</b>	
<b>3.1 Tentative timing</b>	
Consultation with the stakeholders, Steering Group set up and elaboration of the draft ToR	April – June 2014
Validation of the ToR	June 2014
Signature of the external contract	July 2014
Kick-off meeting	September 2014
Organisation of a briefing (end of desk and field phase meeting, if relevant), dedicated to present the preliminary results and to consult on the findings with the stakeholders	November/December 2014
Delivery of final evaluation outputs. Debriefing of results; Dissemination at HOFOs/NIPACs meeting.	December 2014 / January 2015
Debriefing	December 2014 / January 2015
<b>3.2 Stakeholders and Steering group – Who should be involved?</b>	
<p>The beneficiary of the evaluation is the European Commission, DG ELARG.</p> <p>The stakeholders for this evaluation include:</p> <p><i>National stakeholders include (non-exhaustive list):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TAIEX National Contact Points in EU Member States and in Beneficiary Countries</li> <li>• EU Member State experts mobilised by TAIEX</li> <li>• National IPA Coordinators (NIPAC)</li> <li>• Relevant Ministries, (Montenegro, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Croatia)</li> </ul> <p><i>COM stakeholders include (non-exhaustive list):</i></p>	

- DG ELARG Directorate A and D, namely A1, A4, D2 and D3
- DG AGRI and/or DG SANCO and/or DG MARKT and/or DG ENV and/or DG ENTR and/or DG MOVE
- TAIEX National Contact Points in EU Member States and in Beneficiary Countries, EU Delegations in beneficiary countries

#### **Quality control of the evaluation**

The launching and the implementation of the evaluation will be supported an advisory Reference Group that will ensure the quality of the evaluation and will have responsibilities, as follows:

- Guiding the planning and implementation of the evaluation to comply with the quality standards and pre-determined criteria (it will be consulted on the evaluation mandate, draft terms of reference and all draft report);
- Assisting the evaluation manager (DG ELARG Unit A.3) in implementation of activities
- Providing an assessment of the quality of the work of the consultant; including endorsement of the inception report, interim report and the final report
- Ensure proper follow-up action plan after completion of the evaluation

The Reference Group will include representatives from DIR A and D of DG Enlargement and other EC's services, DGs (DG AGRI and/or DG SANCO and/or DG MARKT and/or DG ENV and/or DG ENTR and/or DG MOVE), if necessary other relevant stakeholders.