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**THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**ANNEX VI**

of the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan in favour of the NDICI Neighbourhood East Region part 1 for 2021-2022

**Action Document for the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) 2021-2022**

**MULTIANNUAL ACTION PLAN**

This document constitutes the multiannual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and action plan/measure in the sense of Article 23(2) of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

**1. SYNOPSIS**

**1.1. Action Summary Table**

<b>1. Title</b> <b>CRIS/OPSYS</b> <b>Basic Act</b>	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) action programme 2021-2022 for the Eastern Neighbourhood under the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation. Multi-annual action plan in favour of the Eastern Neighbourhood. NDICI-GEO-NEAR/2021/043-058 NDICI-GEO-NEAR/2022/043-059 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe)
<b>2. Team Europe Initiative</b>	Yes.
<b>3. Zone benefiting from the action</b>	The action shall be carried out in all Eastern Neighbourhood partner countries covered by the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine). In accordance with Article 43(1) of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation, in line with the priorities of the Eastern Partnership and the aims of ensuring the coherence and effectiveness of EU financing and fostering regional and trans-regional cooperation, the Commission may decide that other countries, territories or regions different to partner countries in the Eastern Neighbourhood may be associated to the activities foreseen in this action, if duly justified by the specific circumstances of the activity and on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, if it is required by the subject matter of the activity in order for the Eastern Partnership beneficiaries to fulfil their objectives and in order to provide a comprehensive regional assistance, Iran Kazakhstan and/or Turkmenistan, as neighbouring countries to the Caspian Sea and the beneficiaries in

	the Eastern Partnership, may be eligible. For the same reasons, the Republic of Turkey may be associated to the activities foreseen in this action, in which case its participation will be funded through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).			
<b>4. Programming document</b>	Regional Multiannual Indicative Programme for the Eastern Neighbourhood (2021-2027) <sup>1</sup> ; East Regional Action Programme 2021. <sup>2</sup>			
<b>5. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting regional cooperation on priorities that go beyond borders and are better addressed in a regional context.</li> <li>• Contributing to confidence-building, foster exchanges, dialogue and political cooperation between the EU and partners as well as intraregional; and</li> <li>• Supporting social, cultural and economic integration through people-to-people contacts, regional market integration for goods and services, and coherent sectoral approaches.</li> </ul>			
<b>PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION</b>				
<b>6. Priority Area(s), sectors</b>	1. Resilient, sustainable and integrated economies. 2. Accountable institutions, the rule of law and security. 3. Environmental and climate resilience. 4. Resilient digital transformations. 5. Resilient, gender equal, fair and inclusive societies. 6. Regional cooperation. Sector: 430 – Other Multisector			
<b>7. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	All 17 SDGs.			
<b>8 a) DAC code(s)</b>	43010 – Multisector aid.			
<b>8 b) Main Delivery Channel</b>	European Commission – Development share of budget – 42001.			
<b>9. Targets</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance			
<b>10. Markers (from DAC form)</b>	<b>General policy objective</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<sup>1</sup> C(2021)9370 adopted on 15/12/2021

<sup>2</sup> NDICI – Neighbourhood East Regional Action Programme 2021, 26/02/2021.

	Aid to environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>11. Internal markers</b>	<b>Policy objectives</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	<u>Digitalisation</u> Tags: digital connectivity digital governance digital entrepreneurship job creation digital skills/literacy digital services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	<u>Connectivity</u> Tags: transport people2people energy digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	Migration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reduction of Inequalities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	COVID-19	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>BUDGET INFORMATION</b>			
<b>12. Amounts concerned</b>	Budget line(s) (article, item): BGUE-B2021-14.020111-C1-NEAR Total estimated cost: EUR 4 000 000.00. Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 4 000 000.00.			

	The contribution is for an amount of EUR 2 000 000.00 from the general budget of the European Union for 2021 and for an amount of EUR 2 000 000.00 from the general budget of the European Union for 2022, subject to the availability of appropriations for the respective financial years following the adoption of the relevant annual budget, or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.
<b>MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION</b>	
<b>13. Implementation modalities (type of financing and management mode)</b>	Project modality. <b>Direct management</b> through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement.</li> </ul>

## 1.2. Summary of the Action

The overall aim of TAIEX, as part of the Institution Building Instruments, is to provide peer-to-peer technical assistance and capacity building to support the Eastern Neighbourhood beneficiaries in the harmonisation of their regulatory frameworks and sharing best practices in EU policy related fields, according to the demands of beneficiaries and the strategic priorities of the EU.

TAIEX provides short and medium-term, needs-driven and strategically oriented assistance and is complementary to and works alongside other programmes to help partner countries in the implementation of EU bilateral cooperation related agreements (such as Association or Partnership and Cooperation Agreements or any other bilateral agreement or cooperation framework with the EU).

TAIEX has a longstanding and successful track record deploying public expertise since 1996. The assistance is provided mainly by EU public sector experts, who share their knowledge and experience with beneficiaries through workshops, expert missions, study visits and work from home. The purpose of these activities is to share with the Eastern Neighbourhood beneficiaries experience, know-how and information on EU policies, EU legislation and its application in order to assist beneficiary institutions to implement their commitments under their country's agreement or cooperation framework with the EU.

In specific circumstances, when expertise from beneficiaries is of particular significance to other partner countries and it provides an added value, experts from beneficiary countries can take part in the activities to provide expertise in the approximation to EU legislation, standards and practices (*e.g.* implementation of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas –DCFTAs-, adoption of green transition measures etc.). This participation comes as an effective complement to the knowledge provided by the EU Member States' experts, which remains the core of the activities of TAIEX, while developing a multi-stakeholder approach enriching the instrument with other forms of peer learning (triangulation or “*South-South*”)

## 2. RATIONALE

### 2.1. Context

TAIEX provides short and medium-term technical assistance and peer-to-peer capacity building concerning the alignment, application and enforcement of EU legislation as well as advice about EU best practices.

According to the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation, the specific objectives for the Neighbourhood area include:

- supporting the implementation of association agreements or other existing and future agreements, and jointly agreed association agendas and partnership priorities or equivalent documents, including through institutional cooperation and capacity building;

- achieving progressive integration into the Union internal market and enhanced sectoral and cross-sectoral cooperation, including through legislative approximation and regulatory convergence towards Union and other relevant international norms and standards, and improved market access, including through deep and comprehensive free trade areas, related institution building and investment.

For these purposes, effective administrative and institutional capacity requires that sector institutions operate under the same or approximated standards, rules and procedures that the governments have either already adopted or are committed to adopt under ongoing public administration reform efforts. As part of the Institution Building Instruments, TAIEX is key to these objectives, providing targeted capacity building to Neighbourhood countries in order to support and foster development and reform implementation. These aims fully align with the European Commission's 2019-2024 policy priorities<sup>3</sup> to achieve a Stronger Europe in the World (having an impact on Governance, Peace and Security and Human Development; or on Green Alliances and Partnerships, among others), while promoting the respect for the fundamental values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. At the same time, TAIEX helps advancing the green and digital transition of the Eastern Neighbourhood economies in accordance with the regional priorities.

TAIEX is instrumental in providing the necessary expertise and best-practices tailored to the needs of the partner countries/beneficiary institutions in support of regulatory convergence and institution capacity building. It is mobilised in a flexible way and complementary with other forms of technical support deployed through a range of tools at the EU disposal, such as Twinning. It also builds on complementary peer learning methods involving, in specific circumstances and when most suitable, experts from beneficiary countries to encourage triangulation and fostering a multi-stakeholder approach.

TAIEX supports the Eastern Neighbourhood beneficiaries with demand-driven activities and strategically oriented initiatives and facilitates the delivery of appropriate tailor-made public sector expertise to address issues at short notice. Technical assistance through the TAIEX instrument comes in different formats and across all areas of EU policies. Partner administrations can benefit from TAIEX's flexibility to help meet wider training needs in EU legislation, standards, policies and best practices through the organisation of workshops and seminars (face-to-face, online or hybrid), which can reach a significant number of officials. Narrower, more specialised needs can be met through the expert mission format. Study visits to EU Member States are a complementary institution-building tool, which allows Eastern Neighbourhood beneficiaries to see first-hand best-practice models of EU legislation and standards implementation. More in depth requests can be treated by written input of TAIEX experts in the form of work from home.

The outburst of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 forced TAIEX activities to adapt and look for innovative solutions in order to continue the implementation of the instrument. By now, TAIEX has successfully undertaken a digital leap which includes new ways of working and implementing activities. Even after lifting all pandemic restrictions, a digital component (*e.g.* fully online or hybrid events) will continue to enrich the instrument, organising activities with the same high-quality features which will complement the in-person activities.

The innovation brought by the digital leap proves the flexibility and resilience of TAIEX and brings new advantages such as wider accessibility to the activities and an enhanced greening of the instrument.

## 2.2. Problem Analysis

The process of implementation of the relevant cooperation agreements with the Eastern Neighbourhood countries and the alignment of their frameworks with the EU legislation and standards is unique for each country and progresses according to individual needs, and on a sector-by-sector basis. Moreover, new policies with an external dimension require further exchanges and knowledge transfer together with the sharing of best practices. TAIEX precisely facilitates this task responding to the needs identified by Eastern

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<sup>3</sup> [The European Commission's priorities | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eip/eip-priorities/).

neighbouring countries and requests for specific and targeted assistance. TAIEX also targets specific fields following the assessment and identification by the relevant Commission services and the European External Action Service, therefore fostering strategic priorities.

The instrument's flexibility means that assistance can be adapted and tailored to a beneficiary's specific needs – whether they require one-off expertise on a very precise policy area, or a series of assistance events in order to support them to achieve a broader and longer-term goal. Given TAIEX's assistance model, assistance actions can be put in place very swiftly in order to meet a specific and urgent beneficiary need.

In all these cases, as well as for wider public administration reforms, mobilisation of added value public sector expertise is needed with a clear benefit for beneficiaries to also exchange among themselves. Therefore, in exceptional circumstances and when relevant, participation of experts from beneficiaries will complement the core of TAIEX activities implemented by EU public sector experts, fostering regional cooperation and contributing to a more effective assistance. New forms of peer exchange will build on a multi-stakeholder approach and provide meaningful experience in tackling similar challenges and implementing similar agreements (*e.g.* in the context of DCFTAs).

The request for public sector expertise from Partner Countries may be low due to a lack of proper awareness raising as regards of the Institution Building Instruments (including TAIEX and Twinning). In this regard, operational complementarity and synergies among instruments will contribute to a more effective capacity building strategy.

The priorities and objectives targeted by TAIEX have a strong international dimension and take part in overarching EU key priorities with strategic repercussions like the Green Deal, building resilient and sustainable economies and influencing post-pandemic policies. In all of them, a proper and efficient functioning of strong and reliable public institutions is critical and the public expertise brought by TAIEX activities, essential.

The digital leap undertaken by TAIEX needs to be supported by increased on-line capacities and digital ways of working which require constant adaptation.

Identification of main stakeholders and corresponding institutional and/or organisational issues (mandates, potential roles, and capacities) to be covered by the action

Partner countries covered under the NDICI-Global Europe within the Eastern Neighbourhood (*i.e.* Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine) are eligible for TAIEX assistance in the Neighbourhood East.

In accordance with Article 43(1) of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation, in line with the priorities of the Eastern Partnership and the aims of ensuring the coherence and effectiveness of EU financing and fostering regional and trans-regional cooperation, the Commission may decide that other countries, territories or regions different to partner countries in the Eastern Neighbourhood may be associated to the activities foreseen in this action, if duly justified by the specific circumstances of the activity and on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, if it is required by the subject matter of the activity in order for the Eastern Partnership beneficiaries to fulfil their objectives and in order to provide a comprehensive regional assistance, Iran, Kazakhstan and/or Turkmenistan, as neighbouring countries to the Caspian Sea and the beneficiaries in the Eastern Partnership, may be eligible. For the same reasons, the Republic of Turkey may be associated to the activities foreseen in this action, in which case its participation will be funded through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

TAIEX assistance is provided mainly by EU public sector experts who share their knowledge and experience with beneficiaries through workshops, expert missions and study visits. These activities target

national administrations, the judiciary, parliaments, regional and local administrations, public and semi-public entities as well as 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. When needed and in specific cases, experts from beneficiaries will take part in TAIEX activities, contributing to a multi-stakeholder approach in the peer sharing and providing added value in relation to the implementation of certain agreements and adaptation to particular policies.

TAIEX instrument interventions are closely coordinated with EU Delegations and the relevant regional units in Commission services and the European External Action Service. Attention is given to the assessment of each incoming assistance request in terms of purpose and fit with national and regional strategies and priorities in ongoing policy and technical cooperation. Therefore, all priorities targeted in the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation are supported, including good governance, environment, stability and partnership.

To ensure high quality expertise, a network of National contact points in EU Member States and partner countries assist in the implementation and takes part in the vibrant institutional building community to ensure the strategic implementation of TAIEX.

### **3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION**

#### **3.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs**

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is:

To support Eastern Neighbourhood beneficiaries in implementing their commitments made under EU-related agreements through an intensified cooperation and in achieving regulatory convergence and legislative approximation towards high standards, aligning to the EU policies through a better understanding of the EU legislation and the adoption of best practices.

The Specific Objective (Outcome) of this action is:

Contributing to the institution building of the beneficiary countries meeting their needs by delivering demand-driven peer to peer public expertise and assistance in line with the commitments and agreed priorities with the EU, as well as fostering the strategic priorities of the EU.

The Output to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objective (Outcome) is:

Tailor-made and peer-to-peer technical assistance to the Eastern Neighbourhood beneficiaries in the short and medium-term by sharing experience, know-how and information on EU policies, legislation, projects and public administration reforms and practices in the widest sense.

#### **3.2. Indicative Activities**

Activities related to Output:

Mobilising sectoral experts, mainly from EU Member States, and if relevant regional experts, to give the beneficiaries' public officials the possibility to learn from their peers. The experts mobilised belong to the public administration (or assimilated institutions, such as mandated bodies) of EU Member States, and in specific circumstances of partner countries. Besides, senior experts having experience with the direct technical or political steer of public administrations and their reforms may also be invited to contribute, as can officials of EU institutions, agencies or international organisations.

TAIEX experts share their knowledge and experience with beneficiaries through seminars, workshops, expert missions, including peer-based assessment missions, study visits, and work from home; according to the needs of the beneficiary and the scope and nature of the intervention. Assistance will continue to be delivered in-person when appropriate and possible, but the instrument will be enriched with digital activities building from the experience gained during the COVID-19 pandemic and benefitting from the digital leap undertaken. Therefore, in-person, digital and hybrid activities will be considered and combined to provide effective assistance and to better contribute to the aims of the instrument.

Moreover, the involvement of private sector experts specialised on assessing public administration needs could support partner countries in their participation in the Institution Building Instruments (notably TAIEX and Twinning) and how such instruments could foster their reform agendas, as part of longer term assignments.

TAIEX targets officials and public servants of Eastern Neighbourhood beneficiaries' institutions. It intervenes at the request of beneficiary countries and is also mobilised at the initiative of the European Commission services and the European External Action Service to support strategic objectives. For that purpose, all relevant services in the European Commission, EU Delegations, as well as the European External Action Service are involved in the identification and formulation of TAIEX activities.

TAIEX supports reform processes, assists in developing practices building on the EU best practices, aligning and approximating when relevant legislation with the EU policies and standards, helps to implement EU policies and to introduce required changes to align with the priorities and commitments set between the partner countries and the EU.

### **3.3. Mainstreaming**

The EU standards and policies are applicable horizontally across TAIEX activities, according to the area and field of each intervention/activity.

## **Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity**

When it comes to Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity, the TAIEX instrument is relevant both taking into account the content and the implementation of the activities.

As part of the regional priority to foster resilient, sustainable, circular and integrated economies, TAIEX supports beneficiary countries to make progress in this field according to their needs and specific situation and context. Therefore, TAIEX is a key instrument to boost the green transition of the Eastern Neighbourhood countries, helping them reaching their climate goals and contributing to more resilient and better adapted to climate change economies.

TAIEX has taken stock of the successful experience during COVID-19 pandemic, where all interventions were implemented through online means. TAIEX will continue to offer this digital alternative to beneficiaries after the pandemic when this is considered relevant and possible, to reduce its own carbon footprint.

When face-to-face activities are planned, the external service provider has been instructed to consider opting for eco-friendly suppliers and supplies, as well as using other means of reducing carbon footprint; *e.g.* use



of trains instead of planes, no printing, using tap water etc. More specifically, the external service provider has been instructed to comply with the Green Public Procurement principles understood as a process whereby public authorities seek to procure goods, services and works with a reduced environmental impact throughout their life cycle when compared to goods, services and works with the same primary function that would otherwise be procured.

## **Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls**

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G1.

This implies that TAIEX instrument comprises a gender perspective and that gender issues remain high in TAIEX activities' agenda. TAIEX will continue to effectively promote equality, inclusion and combat discrimination as well as to take measures to achieve gender equal opportunities in all aspects of its activities.

In addition to the specific interventions on gender-related issues that will keep addressing issues of discrimination and fostering the adoption of legislation in line with European standards (with activities related to anti-discrimination policies, legislation and institutions) the implementation of the TAIEX activities will remain sensitive in ensuring gender balance in the mobilisation of experts sharing their expertise through TAIEX activities.

These aims align with the regional priority to achieve resilient, gender equal, fair and inclusive societies.

## ***Human Rights***

TAIEX activities fully align with a strong support to EU fundamental values, including respect for human rights, in line with the regional priority of supporting accountable institutions, the rule of law and security. The activities contribute to the capacity building of the beneficiary institutions by strengthening and facilitating the implementation of internationally agreed human rights, and taking into account the specific needs of each beneficiary and their progress.

## ***Disability***

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0. This implies that disability is not a directly targeted issue although the organisation of all TAIEX activities takes due regard to accessibility and the inclusion of participants and experts as needed. In addition, the content of the activities, when relevant for the partner countries, supports the beneficiary institutions by sharing good practices and knowledge in this area.

## ***Democracy***

TAIEX activities fully align with a strong support to EU fundamental values, especially democracy, in line with the regional priority of supporting accountable institutions, the rule of law and security. It contributes to the capacity building of the beneficiary institutions regarding participation and pluralism, taking into account the specific needs of each beneficiary and their progress.

## ***Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience***

TAIEX activities adapt to the specific context and needs of each beneficiary, both on the content of the activities as well as concerning organisational issues, taking due regard of regional and/or local specificities. At the same time, TAIEX has a track record of bringing public administrations together, building in a common project and cooperation with beneficiaries.

### ***Disaster Risk Reduction***

TAIEX instrument fully aligns with the EU policies and priorities in which disaster risk reduction plays a significant role as part of the regional priority to foster environmental and climate resilience. Therefore, as an instrument which both responds to the demands of beneficiaries and supports the strategic priorities of the EU, this is an area which is streamlined into the content of TAIEX activities.

### **3.4. Risks and Lessons Learned**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Likelihood (High/ Medium/ Low)</b>	<b>Impact (High/ Medium/ Low)</b>	<b>Mitigating measures</b>
1	<u>Risk 1:</u> Unpredictability of the political context of the Neighbourhood countries.	Medium	Medium	TAIEX instrument is flexible and allows for timely mitigations when faced with a difficult context, to limit damages to mobilised resources.
1	<u>Risk 2:</u> TAIEX activities cannot happen face-to-face due to continued COVID-19 pandemic restrictions	Medium	Low	TAIEX activities adapted to the pandemic context and continued to be implemented using digital means and new methods. These methods and adaptations will continue with the intensity required and as appropriate.
2	<u>Risk 3:</u> TAIEX flexibility and the wide range of expertise available may generate requests not in line with EU policies in a given beneficiary	Medium	Low	In addition to the consultation process in Headquarters, the relevant EU Delegation is asked to agree on each TAIEX request prior to its final approval.
2	<u>Risk 4:</u> Beneficiaries may not submit enough/high quality requests for TAIEX assistance	Low	Medium	Awareness raising by DG NEAR geo units and EU Delegations will target Eastern Neighbourhood countries.

3	<u>Risk 5:</u> Experts in the existing TAIEX database do not match the required needs for assistance	Low	Low	Outreach activity will target the National Contact Points for TAIEX in each EU Member State or institution of origin to identify the most relevant and adequate expertise.
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### Lessons Learned:

The TAIEX instrument was set up in 1996 as a follow-up to the European Commission’s White Paper on the preparation of the associated countries for integration into the internal market. Its mission has since been broadened to provide short and medium-term institution building assistance in all areas of the EU *acquis*, to support the transposition, application, and enforcement of the EU *acquis*. Since 2006 TAIEX is also available to the European Neighbourhood partner countries, where it is well received and perceived, as feedback provided by the participants following the organisation of TAIEX events has shown.

Continuous efforts are made to adapt and improve the way TAIEX assistance is implemented. Improvements in the medium-term shall include, but not be limited to, increasing an environmentally-friendly approach to TAIEX assistance, wherever appropriate, and improved knowledge management.

Furthermore, the final report of a specific evaluation of the TAIEX instrument in Belarus, requested by the EU Delegation, was released in February 2015. The outcome of this evaluation is generally very positive for TAIEX, highlighting its flexibility and efficiency, but stresses the importance of safeguarding the flexibility of the instrument, what is considered when planning and outlining the activities.

In countries where the demand is generally low, measures have been and will continue to be envisaged, together with respective TAIEX National Contact Points and EU Delegations, in order to increase awareness of potential beneficiary institutions about the possibilities that TAIEX can offer.

After the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, TAIEX instrument adapted to the new reality and enforced new working methods and digital solutions which will continue to enrich the activities offered even after the pandemic restrictions will be lifted. This digital leap will contribute to a more effective assistance complementing in-person activities with other digital means (such as online and hybrid activities). It will result in a wider accessibility to the activities implemented and greening the instrument while maintaining the same high-quality features.

At the same time, the participation in certain circumstances of experts from partner countries will provide a new multi-stakeholder approach to TAIEX activities, while expertise from EU Member States remains the core of the assistance. Triangulation (or “*South-South*” cooperation) of experts will complement and enrich regional peer learning among partners who face similar challenges and processes.

### 3.5. The Intervention Logic

The TAIEX instrument will deliver high quality technical assistance if EU Member States, and institutions from partner countries involved when applicable, continue supporting the scheme and facilitating the use of public sector expertise and if the beneficiary countries continue finding relevant the expertise proposed.

Sharing knowledge and peer-to-peer experience among administrations will contribute to the institution building of the beneficiaries because TAIEX will promote a better understanding of EU legislation and an alignment of their regulatory frameworks to EU standards, as the track record of the instrument evidences.

This reinforced capacity and increased cooperation obtained through TAIEX will support beneficiaries in complying with their EU related compromises and in harmonising their legislations to the EU policies and

standards. Therefore, TAIEX activities will keep promoting and building on EU strategic policies and priorities in the Eastern Neighbourhood area by providing tailor-made assistance to partner countries.

### **3.6. Indicative Logical Framework Matrix**

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
<b>Impact</b>	To support Eastern Neighbourhood beneficiaries in implementing their commitments made under EU-related agreements through an intensified cooperation and in achieving regulatory convergence and legislative approximation towards high standards, aligning to the EU policies through a better understanding of the EU legislation and the adoption of best practices.	Recognition of ongoing reform processes related to public administration in various internationally recognised composite indicators and the level of economic integration with the EU, measured by % of exports and imports going to/coming from the EU.	Baseline year 2020	2022 values	World Bank, IMF, EUROESTAT, progress reports and country analysis.	<i>Not applicable</i>
<b>Outcome</b>	Reinforced institution building of the beneficiary countries meeting their needs with demand-driven peer to peer public expertise assistance in line with the commitments and agreed priorities with the EU as well as fostered EU strategic priorities.	Beneficiaries' overall satisfaction on the quality of TAIEX activities.	Baseline year 2020 (92% of experts rated "excellent" or "good")	2022 values	Replies to feedback questionnaires sent to TAIEX participants following event conclusion, as gathered in TMS (TAIEX Management System)	EU Member States, and institutions from partner countries when applicable, continue to support the scheme and facilitating the

		% of TAIEX activities contributing to climate action	-	At least 30% of the events	TMS (TAIEX Management System)	use of public sector expertise; beneficiary countries continue to find relevant the expertise proposed.
<b>Output 1</b>	Tailor-made and peer-to-peer technical assistance delivered to the Eastern Neighbourhood beneficiaries in the short and medium-term by sharing experience, know-how and information on EU policies, legislation, projects and public administration reforms and practices in the widest sense.	Number of TAIEX requests submitted by the Eastern Partnership countries and activities organised, both as a result of countries' requests and also driven by the European Commission services/European External Action Service initiative (i.e. TAIEX strategic).	Baseline year 2020	2022 values	TMS (TAIEX Management System)	

## **4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

### **4.1. Financing Agreement**

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the partner countries.

### **4.2. Indicative Implementation Period**

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 96 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this Action Document.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer by amending this Action Document and the relevant contracts and agreements.

### **4.3. Implementation Modalities**

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures.

#### **4.3.1. Direct Management (Procurement)**

The TAIEX instrument will be implemented in direct management by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations.

The support services to roll out the instrument are procured. The implementation is done under the project modality and involves two service contracts (procurements). The first one is for the management of the IT platform of TAIEX (TMS); and the second one is for the logistics of TAIEX activities that will be implemented by a service provider which has to further procure all good and services needed for events according to the relevant procedures laid down for external aid of the Commission (PRAG: <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/prag/>).

### **4.4. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants**

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply, subject to the following provisions.

In accordance with Article 28 of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation, the Commission may decide that natural and legal persons from other countries, territories or regions different to partner countries in the Eastern Neighbourhood may be eligible for participating in procurement and grant award procedures, if and where relevant in order to meet the needs of the TAIEX instrument. All supplies and materials financed by this action may originate from any country.

The Commission's authorising officer responsible may also extend the geographical eligibility on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of services in the markets of the countries or territories concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where application of the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

Regarding procurements for TAIEX instrument (service contracts for the IT platform and for the logistics of the activities), the geographical eligibility is global.



TAIEX activities involve EU Member States public experts and potentially relevant regional experts if deemed necessary: they receive a financial compensation for their participation to TAIEX activities. In this regard, the geographical eligibility for this compensation is the EU Member States and, if applicable, the country of origin of the expert.

#### 4.5. Indicative Budget

<b>Indicative Budget components</b>	<b>EU contribution (amount in EUR) 2021</b>	<b>EU contribution (amount in EUR) 2022</b>
<b>TAIEX</b> –composed of		
<i>Procurement (direct management)</i>	EUR 4 000 000.00	
<b>Procurement</b>	EUR 2 000 000.00	EUR 2 000 000.00
<b>Budgetary guarantee – amount of annual provisioning</b>	N.A.	N.A.
<b>Evaluation</b>	Will be covered by another Decision	Will be covered by another Decision
<b>Audit</b>		
<b>Communication and visibility</b>	N.A.	N.A.
<b>Contingencies</b>	N.A.	N.A.
<b>Totals</b>	EUR 2 000 000.00	EUR 2 000 000.00

#### 4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities

The European Commission is the contracting authority. Unit C.3 is in charge of TAIEX –as well as for Twinning- within the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations and responsible for both the analysis and assessment of requests and for the content of TAIEX short and medium-term assistance, including the identification of experts from EU Member States’ public administrations and other institutions willing to engage in this type of peer to peer assistance. Throughout the implementation of TAIEX assistance excellent cooperation and coordination with all actors involved is key to the success of the instrument.

Requests for TAIEX actions are generated by beneficiaries and/or driven by the EU involved stakeholders. Incoming requests are reviewed on a continuous basis and decided upon following consultation with relevant European Commission services and the European External Action Service, including EU Delegations, in order to ensure complementarity with national programmes and other technical assistance instruments and to safeguard that TAIEX measures are in line with the priorities set in the:

- Action Plans in the Neighbourhood area, Association Agendas, Association Agreements or Partnership, Cooperation Agreements and formally defined Regional cooperation frameworks;
- Country and regional Neighbourhood multi-annual programming documents (Single Support Frameworks and Multi-annual Indicative Programmes).

Upon confirmation of the incoming requests, Unit C.3 is in charge of identifying the relevant public experts from EU Member States or other institutions (if relevant) to address the needs of the requests. This is done through the existing database of public experts of TAIEX. When the pool of registered experts is not providing the appropriate expertise, the established network of National Contact Point (NCPs) in the EU Member States is mobilised to identify the appropriate experts.

For the provision of the logistical means needed for TAIEX events, the European Commission concludes a contract with an external service provider. This service provider organises all logistical arrangements - including travel, accommodation, conferences and meeting organisations – and also related payment

services that are required for the implementation of the action. This implementation approach has proved to be efficient and effective. In particular, it allows for a swift and effective response to incoming requests and evolving needs, whilst ensuring financial transparency, accountability and efficient management.

## **5. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT**

### **5.1. Monitoring and Reporting**

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its results (Outputs and direct Outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix (for project modality) and the partner's strategy, policy or reform action plan list (for budget support).

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring:

In the specific case of TAIEX, monitoring is understood as a permanently ongoing process by way of receiving direct feedback from participants and experts.

Following each event participants and experts receive an automatic feedback questionnaire in order to assess their overall impression of the assistance provided and of the logistics of the event. Furthermore, following expert missions, EU Member State officials are requested to submit short mission reports summarising the objective of their intervention and formulate recommendations. The beneficiary institutions also receive an evaluation form six months after the end of the TAIEX activity to comment on the impact of the intervention.

Therefore, the day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process.

Under direct management of this action, the collection of data and analysis is carried out by the European Commission. To this effect, the necessary technical arrangements are set in place to collect and aggregate data from participants of the beneficiary entities and the experts of the EU Member States as described above.

On an annual basis, the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations is publishing an annual report that is made public through its website and shares flash reports with statistics on a bi-annual basis to the network of National Contact Points for TAIEX in EU Member States.

### **5.2. Evaluation**

Having regard to the nature of the action, an evaluation will not be carried out for this action or its components by the Commission.

However, the European Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of a partner. The evaluations should be carried out following the guidelines of the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations on linking planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation. The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly

decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

When appropriate, the financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a Financing Decision.

Since its creation in 1996, the TAIEX instrument has been evaluated twice, in 2007 and in 2015. In 2021, a new evaluation process by independent consultants was launched as part of the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations multi-annual strategic evaluation work programme 2020-2024. This latest evaluation is expected to assess the TAIEX instrument during the period 2015-2020.

### **5.3. Audit and Verifications**

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audit or verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

## **6. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY**

Communication and visibility is a contractual obligation for all entities implementing EU-funded external actions to advertise the European Union's support for their work to the relevant audiences.

To that end they must comply with the instructions given in the [Communication and Visibility Requirements of 2018](#) (or any successor document), notably with regard to the use of the EU emblem and the elaboration of a dedicated communication and visibility plan, to be completed for every action at the start of implementation.

These obligations apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, the partner country (for instance, concerning the reforms supported through budget support), contractors, grant beneficiaries or entrusted entities. In each case, a reference to the relevant contractual obligations must be included in the respective financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

Communication and visibility measures may be funded from the amounts allocated to the action. For the purpose of enhancing the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this action, the Commission may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements, as part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union. Visibility and communication measures should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds.

Effectiveness of communication activities on awareness about the action and its objectives as well as on EU funding of the action should be measured.

Implementing partners shall keep the Commission and concerned EU Delegation/Office fully informed of the planning and implementation of specific visibility and communication activities before work starts. Implementing partners will ensure adequate visibility of EU financing and will report on visibility and communication actions as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.

For communicating on Team Europe Initiatives, the EU and its Member States can rely on the specific guidance on the Team Europe visual identity.

When relevant, the communication and visibility plan will be based on an agreed communication narrative and master messages customised for the different target audiences (stakeholders, business community, civil society, general public, etc.). Communication actions should aim to show the link between the funds invested

and the policy priorities behind them and should ensure that all relevant stakeholders, and where possible also final beneficiaries, are informed of the donor's involvement.

In the case of TAIEX, as well as Twinning, the implementation of the instrument is accompanied by a communication strategy with a view to increase the visibility and availability of the instrument to all stakeholders. The implementation of the communication activities shall be the responsibility of the service providers, and shall be funded from the amounts allocated to the action. In addition to TAIEX-branded and information material distributed during each event, new tools have been introduced over recent years to improve the communication and the dissemination of information:

- **TAIEX website:** compiles all relevant information on the functioning and on the implemented activities.
- **Social media:** through the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations accounts, key events are advertised (#EUTaiox).
- **TAIEX annual activity report:** presents an overview of the activities.
- **Biannual "Flash Report":** with statistics which are sent to all TAIEX National Contact Points.

**Institution Building Days:** the annual meeting gathers the National Contact Points from beneficiary partners and EU Member States.