

TAIEX and Twinning 2018 Highlights





Sear Institution Guilding Friends,

Another successful year of institution building is behind us. In 2018, three TAIEX activities took place each day, and each week a new Twinning project was awarded.

Moreover, TAIEX and Twinning continued their evolution. The introduction of a new strand of TAIEX has allowed us to complement demand driven activities with the strategic pursuit of urgent EU policy priorities. Similarly, Twinning has updated and simplified its rules in line with principles of better regulation and public administration reform. It now operates in a more efficient and user-friendly way. Most notably, we managed to reduce the average time between a Twinning proposal and the start of the project from 12 to 5 months since 2012.

The Enlargement and Neighbourhood regions remain the principal beneficiaries of TAIEX assistance, but the instrument has significantly expanded its geographical and policy scope. Its advantages – peer expertise and quick deployment – are now being used to support EU internal policies, as the Commission and the Member States use TAIEX to support regional and environmental policy, and structural reform development as agreed in the European semester. Similarly, the partnership with the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments allows countries on all continents outside of Europe to benefit from TAIEX assistance.

I am proud to say that TAIEX and Twinning are more efficient, adaptable, and tuned in to EU political priorities than when I started my term in 2014. Over the last five years, we have managed to make the institution building tools fit for purpose in a rapidly changing world. We have raised our ambition significantly on the issues of migration, rule of law, and economic growth. We have supported the EU as a global actor by helping to export its standards for democracy and good governance to all corners of the world. We have acknowledged that climate change is a key issue in the neighbourhood as well as in the Union, and increased our efforts to promote circular economy. Finally, we have continued to work assiduously towards improving our political and trade relations with our immediate neighbours.

It has been my privilege to follow and promote the development of the Institution Building instruments over the past five years. I have witnessed the positive impact that over 7000 TAIEX activities and 350 Twinnings have made for citizens, national administrations, jobs and growth. This is what EU solidarity looks like in practice, and none of it could have been achieved without the unwavering support of the Institution Building community of experts in Member States, Partner Countries, and EU Delegations.

Under the incoming Commission, the Union's determination to be a global actor will continue to define our foreign policy. Thanks to our reforms, I have no doubt that TAIEX and Twinning will continue to underpin our endeavours to bring about prosperity, stability, sustainable development and inclusive societies within the Union, in our immediate neighbourhood, and beyond.

Johannes Hahn, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations



Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations

TAIEX Activities in 2018

TAIEX in short

- TAIEX Technical Assistance and Information Exchange – offers peer-to-peer technical assistance and policysupport between public experts in EU Member States and Neighbourhood and Enlargement countries.
- In recent years, TAIEX assistance has also become available to countries covered by the Partnership Instrument, and to EU Member States in certain policy areas.
- TAIEX assistance can be requested by beneficiaries (Classic) or EU services (Strategic).
- The instrument targets public administrations, judiciary and law enforcement authorities, parliaments and their civil servants, representatives of social partners, trade unions, and employers' associations.
- TAIEX offers short-term assistance in three main ways: Study Visits, Expert Missions, and Workshops (single or multi-beneficiary).
- It is funded from the EU budget and managed by the European Commission.

In 2018, on average, TAIEX organised 95 activities every month, deployed 52 Member State experts every week, and provided expertise to 57 participants every single day.

A total of 1149 TAIEX activities took place in 2018. 2018 also saw a 18% increase in the use of Multi-Country Workshops, reflecting our growing focus on supporting intra-regional cooperation. In the ENI regions, TAIEX operations increased in Palestine (29%), Tunisia (14%), Ukraine (5%) and Libya, which registered six events in 2018 after cooperation resumed in late 2017. The IPA region accounted for almost 40% of all events. Montenegro and North Macedonia were the frontrunners, reflecting the strong link between TAIEX activities and the ongoing EU-related reform processes in both of these candidate countries.

TAIEX numbers in 2018





Approximating Lebanon's food safety requirements with EU and international standards is key to ensuring higher hygienic control standards and more stringent inspection procedures, and in turn eliminating technical trade barriers between the EU and Lebanon. TAIEX has paved the way for increased food exports from Lebanon to the EU, reinforcing the close cooperation outlined in our Association Agreement.

Lina Assi, Head of the Standards and Inspection Division, Ministry of Industry of Lebanon and coordinator of the TAIEX Expert Mission on Conducting Inspections in the Area of Food Safety

² "Other" includes TAIEX activities organised within the framework of cooperation agreements with other Commission services.

* 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.

** This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue

Twinning Activities in 2018

Twinning numbers in 2018













Twinning in short

- A policy-driven instrument, Twinning supports institutional cooperation between public administrations in EU Member States and Partner Countries in the NEAR regions.
- Bringing together public sector expertise, the instrument aims to achieve concrete, mandatory, operational results through peer-to-peer exchanges.
- Twinning relies on a network of stakeholders in Member States, Partner Countries, and EU Delegations or Offices.
- The instrument is funded from the country envelope and jointly implemented by Member States and administrations in the Partner Countries.

185 Twinnings were ongoing in 2018, including 54 new projects. A slight majority (55%) of projects took place in the Neighbourhood regions, while 45% of projects took place in the Western Balkans and Turkey. In the IPA region, Croatia - until recently on the receiving end of Twinning assistance - most frequently took the lead on new projects. Across the region, Justice and Home Affairs was once again the most popular sector. In ENI East, Georgia initiated the most new projects, and Austria was the Member State most often in the lead. Finance and Internal Market was the primary sector of choice. To the South, Tunisia was the top recipient of new Twinnings, with Justice and Home Affairs the most popular sector in the region. Lithuania, Spain, and Italy were the only Member States with Twinnings in all three regions.

The Twinning project "Capacity Building of the Assembly of People's Representatives" supports administrative reforms in the Tunisian Parliament in most of its areas of activity. We have been working with experts from parliaments in France, Italy, Germany, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Greece, and the diversity of the European and Tunisian experiences has been a strength and a source of exceptional enrichment.

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Mr Jean-Baptiste Leclère, Administrator of the Assemblée Nationale, Resident Twinning Adviser 🖊

The aim is to strengthen the administration in order to improve its support for parliamentary work in this new post-revolution context. The project has also created frameworks for peer-to-peer exchange – the methodology best suited to carry out reforms. The quality of working relations, and even friendship between Tunisian and European colleagues, has been exceptional. Together, we have focused on ownership in order to ensure the effectiveness of our joint efforts and continuous improvement.

Ms Faten Sliti, Deputy Director of International Cooperation Department of Assemblée des Représentants du Peuple, Resident Twinning Adviser Counterpart

TAIEX 2018 in depth

TAIEX activities per sector



In 2018, 32% of TAIEX activities were organised within the framework of cooperation agreements (Service Level Agreements) with other Commission services. These agreements ensure that an even wider range of citizens and public administrations can benefit from the expertise of EU Member States.

TAIEX-REGIO PEER 2 PEER provides expertise to EU Member State bodies responsible for managing and implementing the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund. 41 activities were implemented in 2018.

TAIEX-SRSP helps Member States to implement growth-sustaining structural reforms to address challenges identified in the European Semester process or other national reforms. 77 activities were implemented in 2018.

TAIEX-EIR facilitates peer-to-peer learning between environmental authorities in EU Member States. 19 activities were implemented in 2018.

TAIEX-Partnership Instrument supports the alignment of partner countries with EU standards, norms and regulatory frameworks to carry out the EU's bilateral agendas in line with its own interests. 18 activities were implemented in 2018.

TAIEX assistance to the Turkish Cypriot community supports the preparation of legal texts aligned with the EU acquis and the community's ability to apply the acquis upon the entry into force of a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. 207 activities were implemented in 2018.

I often attend TAIEX missions in the Balkans and the MENA region to exchange views on the challenges arising from the digitisation of the communications sector. The flexibility and simplicity of TAIEX offer a unique opportunity to provide swift answers to specific requests from our neighbouring institutions, such as the discussion on protection of minors in Tunisia, but also to more general needs, such as assessing freedom of expression of the media in Kosovo.



$\mathcal{Q}\mathcal{S}$ Supporting gender equality

The EU promotes equal opportunities, and has made significant progress in this area over the last few decades through a range of initiatives and measures. The current framework for these efforts is the strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019, which seeks, among other things, to promote equality between women and men in decision-making.

This was the focus of a 2018 TAIEX Study Visit on the Integration of Gender Mainstreaming in Public Administration and Public Policies. Three female representatives of the Government Presidency of Tunisia travelled to Emakunde, the Basque Institute for Women, to exchange best practices on mainstreaming gender equality and enforcing gender budgeting in the public administration. The Emakunde, whose activities have been recognised as best practice by the Council of Europe in a 2005 report on gender budgeting, displayed examples of successful tools and policies implemented with the support of civil society aimed at closing the gender gap within public policies.

Francesco Sciacchitano, Senior Expert at the Italian Communications Regulator

The share of women among TAIEX experts increased from a third to approximately 40% between 2017 and 2018. Meanwhile, the proportion of female participants remained unchanged at 46%.

TAIEX 2018 Success stories

Fighting African Swine Fever with our Eastern partners Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus

February 2018

In the past decade, African Swine Fever (ASF) has spread from the Caucasus, becoming a common threat for pork production in Ukraine and in the neighbouring countries of Belarus and Moldova. African Swine Fever has put these



countries' pork sectors at risk, and with it the food security and livelihoods of many.

In the absence of an effective vaccine to ASF, its spread to domestic and EU pig farms can only be prevented by strict compliance with certain control measures. That is why representatives of State Food and Veterinary Services from Latvia, Lithuania, Germany, and Spain met their Ukrainian, Moldovan, and Belarusian peers in February 2018 to exchange best practices on the prevention and elimination of African Swine Fever.

The *Regional Workshop on African Swine Fever* represented a mutually beneficial exchange to contain African Swine Fever through epidemiology, surveillance, prevention measures, diagnostics and epizootic investigation, communication, and cooperation with the stakeholders.

Towards a More Sustainable Circular Economy

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*,
Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey

July 2018

After two successful strategic regional workshops with Southern and Eastern Neighbours, TAIEX organised the last high-level regional workshop on Circular Economy with representatives from the Western Balkans and



Turkey in July 2018. Circular Economy is defined as an economy that seeks to maintain the value of products, materials, and resources for as long as possible and therefore helps decoupling growth in manufacturing, production and consumption from the use of natural resources.

The EU is on the front line when it comes to promoting Circular Economy, and it needs to cooperate with partners to promote adoption and implementation of this concept worldwide. The workshop helped to substantiate preliminary knowledge and identify possible areas for further cooperation to promote the circular economy in the context of the EU's regional cooperation with the enlargement countries.

Matching Skills with Needs in the Labour Market





November 2018

In November 2018, TAIEX organised a *Strategic Workshop on Matching Skills Shortages in Tunisia.* The workshop was organised by the European Commission, the European Training Foundation (ETF), and local stakeholders.



In line with the EU-Tunisia Mobility Partnership, one of the objectives of the workshop was to improve information flows on employment, education, and training opportunities in the EU available to young and qualified Tunisian citizens. The workshop explored possible ways to improve the matching and the effectiveness of labour mobility flows between Tunisia and EU Member States, with a perspective of mutual benefits for employment, skills gains and economic growth.

The workshop gathered representatives of relevant Tunisian ministries, agencies and social partners, speakers from Germany, France, Italy, Portugal, and Austria, and from the ETF. It successfully mapped skills shortages, exploring possible ways to improve training and learning opportunities vital for employment.

Restoring Trust and Supporting Reconciliation in the Western Balkans



Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*,
Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia

September 2018

In September 2018, TAIEX organised a *Multi-Country Workshop on Legacies of the Past.* In the context of the Western Balkans Strategy, this workshop discussed processes contributing to the reconciliation



and restoration of trust among individuals and societies.

The workshop was attended by approximately 50 participants from the Western Balkans, as well as from the EU and the international community. It provided a unique opportunity to discuss processes of promoting truth and justice, reparations, memory preservation and sharing. Through a multi-disciplinary and gender-inclusive approach, the experts and participants had the opportunity to discuss and compare experiences in Europe and beyond.

The workshop contributed to increasing awareness on the importance of dealing with legacies of the past, and on developing inclusive approaches to this end, while enhancing cooperation between local, regional, EU, and international stakeholders. More importantly, it reaffirmed the importance of fostering reconciliation and good neighbourly relations as part of the accession process, but also as fundamental European values.

Twinning 2018 Success stories

Introducing Mandatory Health Insurance

Azerbaijan

Ongoing since August 2017

The Twinning project *Support to the Implementation of the Mandatory Health Insurance System* in Azerbaijan has been under implementation by a French-Lithuanian consortium since August 2017. The nationwide implementation of the



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mandatory health insurance system in Azerbaijan aims to mobilise funds for health care services in an effective and efficient manner. It seeks to increase the efficiency of health care providers through the introduction of new payment mechanisms and improved access to and quality of health care services.

The Government of Azerbaijan has decided to apply a mandatory health insurance system from 1 January 2020, and the Twinning project continues to support its implementation and application. Among other things, the project has defined the architecture of the mandatory health insurance scheme; proposed service delivery configuration in order to improve efficiency and quality of services; provided recommendations on the organisational structure and functions of the State Agency on Mandatory Health Insurance; and developed recommendations regarding data processing on the level of the health care provider and the Agency.

Enhancing Parliamentary Capacity in the EU Accession Process

Albania

May 2017 – May 2018

The Parliament of Albania plays a key role in the enlargement process, and the Twinning Project, Further Strengthening the Assembly of Albania in the context of EU Accession, aimed to increase the efficiency,



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liability, and transparency of Parliament in the accession process. By strengthening the regulatory oversight functions of the Assembly, the project enhanced Parliament's ability to monitor the implementation of obligations arising from the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU.

The Twinning project, led by experts from Greece, Italy, Romania, and Croatia, resulted, inter alia, in a parliamentary database of relevant acquis legislation, a draft law on the budget of the Assembly, and several capacity building activities for members of the Assembly staff. Finally, the experts produced a range of recommendations on transparency, budgetary independence, civil society inclusion in the legislative process, and more.

Ensuring the Safe Transportation of Dangerous Goods

O Morocco

Ongoing since November 2017

A Twinning project, Securing the Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road on the Basis of the International Regulatory Framework, helped Morocco upgrade its legislation on the transport of dangerous goods



by road in line with the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road. A large and growing number of dangerous materials, such as gas and chemicals, needs to be transported by road in Morocco, including to and from the EU. It is therefore in the interests of both businesses and citizens that all stakeholders involved at each step of the transport chain follow the same rules and are equipped to deal with cases of emergency.

This Twinning, which was implemented by the Spanish Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, focused on legal interpretation and approximation, implementation of relevant provisions, and practical training. Since November 2017, more than 150 professionals have received training as part of the Twinning project – from lorry drivers to police, producers, controllers, and civil protection staff.



finalised in December 2018, successfully assisted the Moldovan Agency for Intervention and Payment in Agriculture (AIPA) in applying business processes to the administration of advance



payment subsidy measures, in line with EU methodology and standards.

Implemented by a consortium of Austria, the Czech Republic, and Poland, the Twinning project, *Capacity Building of the Moldovan Agency for Intervention and Payment in Agriculture (AIPA) for the Application of EU Norms and Standards for the Administration of Agency for Regional Development (ARD) Support Schemes*, ensured that Moldovan farmers now receive subsidies in a fair and transparent manner. The transparent subsidies scheme encouraged the creation of small enterprises by young farmers and women, and improved their economic performance by creating new jobs and increasing investments in innovative technologies.

Twinning 2018 in depth

Twinning Manual Reform: Effects Beginning to Show

The 2017 Twinning Manual represented the first harmonised set of rules for projects in the IPA and ENI regions. The 2017 Manual also added flexibility to the instrument, making it more adaptable to changes taking place during implementation and simplifying its administrative management.

The new provisions were welcomed by the Twinning community of Member States and Partner Countries, and the effects of the changes were already beginning to be felt in 2018. Many new initiatives were introduced. Most notably, Twinners are now invited to draft work plans at the beginning of the projects and to update them on a rolling basis, allowing them to respond to developments on the ground and to reassess their approach and progress regularly. Moreover, the average time between the deadline for proposals and the start date of the project has been reduced dramatically: From 12 months in the context of the 2012 Manual to only 5 months under the 2017 Manual.

The November 2018 update of the Twinning Manual further clarified the 2017 reform and simplified the Twinning contract procedure.

Better Together: The Ohrid Cherry and the Benefits of Pairing Institution Building tools

In the context of the political dialogue with the EU, the government of North Macedonia decided to request Commission assistance in order to increase the competitiveness of the country's agricultural sector in the integrated EU and Western Balkan markets. To this end, the EU Twinning Project *Organic Agriculture Production and Quality Protection of Agriculture Products* helped the national administration develop expertise on Geographical Indication quality schemes. Building on the lessons from the Twinning Project, the partner institutions (mainly the Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy) established a comprehensive system for developing and ensuring the quality of organic agricultural products and foodstuffs.

In 2016, the Ohrid Cherry – one of the main fruit crops in the Ohrid region in the southwest of North Macedonia – became the first product in the country to achieve Protected Geographical Indication status. The Twinning was subsequently followed by two TAIEX Expert Missions to Bitola and Novaci in 2018. These missions sought to identify ways of encouraging producers to register for Geographical Indications as well as how to develop quality and control standards for honey and bee products.

The Ohrid Cherry illustrates how employing Twinning and TAIEX in tandem allows the Partner Country to build on its achievements and ensure the sustainability of reforms. As a result of the combined use of the Institution Building tools, many more agricultural products may follow in the footsteps of the Ohrid Cherry, allowing farmers in North Macedonia to offer high quality products distinctive from those of their competitors.



Twinning: The View from Vienna



What was your first experience of Twinning, and how do you see its development since then?

Around the time when I joined the Twinning Community, Twinning had already existed for 10 years. It had proved to be an excellent opportunity for all stakeholders, and new partnerships were arising as a result of successful Twinning projects between 'old' and 'new' Member States in the context of the 2004 and 2007 enlargements. Recent years have shown that the instrument needs a blow of fresh air, but the 2017 Twinning Reform and the findings of the last evaluation of Twinning activities 2010-2017 are good starting points for this recalibration.

What is the added value of Twinning from the point of view of the Austrian administration?

Good and close relations with its neighbours was always a foreign policy priority for Austria. Twinning is an additional tool to this end. Twinning plays a significant role in bringing people from different parts of the EU and the European Neighbourhood together to exchange views on issues of shared interest or concern. It is fair to say that over the past 20 years, the Twinning instrument has contributed substantially to the development of Europe, and to the successful integration of new countries into the European Union.

What is the key to a successful Twinning?

Twinning is one of the most tangible forms of European co-operation, and the success of a project comes down to the communication and commitment of the involved stakeholders. Twinning at its best is, after all, about teamwork. A Twinning project can create an ideal environment for developing new cooperation techniques, as well as reinforcing relationships between the partner countries.

Christine Kivinen, National Contact Point for Austria from November 2008 to January 2019

TAIEX: From Political Priorities to Tangible Change

The success of the TAIEX instrument stems from its ability to connect the macro level, at which EU priorities for the enlargement and neighbourhood regions are formulated, and the micro-level, at which these ideas are operationalised, implemented, and translated into visible reforms. Understanding both levels is key to successfully supporting reforms and bringing about visible results in people's lives.

In the Enlargement region, the Strategy for the Western Balkans constitutes the main political and strategic framework. The strategy puts a strong focus on the rule of law, security and migration, socio-economic development, connectivity, digitalisation, and good neighbourly relations. The rule of law is particularly important in the context of the ongoing EU accession negotiations with Serbia and Montenegro. TAIEX has been used extensively to support these negotiations; for example, an expert mission to Serbia helped to fight corruption and increase the effectiveness of criminal proceedings by developing a methodology for involving different state agencies and clarifying their roles in the proceedings.

The 2015 Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit sets out the priorities for the Eastern Neighbourhood, and forms the basis of the Commission's 20 Deliverables for 2020, adopted in 2017. The Deliverables demand tangible results for citizens across the Eastern Partnership region in four areas: governance, connectivity, society, and economy. In 2018, for example, TAIEX helped to reinforce Financial Investigation capacities in Belarus



by organising a workshop on the country's banking system, with focus on money laundering and counterfeiting transactions.

In the Southern Neighbourhood, TAIEX focuses on the implementation of bilateral agreements and policy dialogues between the EU and partner countries. Key activities take place in the areas of energy, transport, environment, climate change, trade, education and employment, migration and security. For example, a regional workshop on preventing and countering violent extremism brought together experts and practitioners from the Middle East, North Africa, and EU Member States to share experiences and best practices in tackling this common challenge.

TAIEX and Twinning bringing Eastern Partners closer to the EU: an interview with Lawrence Meredith



As Director for Neighbourhood East & Institution Building in the European Commission, you have a privileged overview of both the Eastern Partnership and the Institution Building Instruments. A number of important anniversaries have marked your mandate: the 20th anniversaries of TAIEX and Twinning, and this year the 10th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership (EaP).

What are your views on the latest innovations brought to the Institution Building instruments?

Both instruments were already very popular with our Eastern partners (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine). Since I became responsible for them, my team and I have actively worked together towards a modernisation of both of these instruments. I am happy to say that through a general simplification of procedures, the implementation of Twinning and TAIEX activities has become more clearly linked with policy objectives to maximise their impact on reforms agreed between the EU and our partners.

Do you see an increased impact of the Institution Building instruments in the EaP?

TAIEX and Twinning support public administrations in countries which have committed to structural reform along EU best practices, but lack experience with implementation. In 2018 alone, 52 Twinning projects were ongoing, and 14 TAIEX events took place every month across the region. I am committed to incorporating TAIEX and Twinning tools into the broader regional strategy, which focuses on bringing tangible benefits to the lives of citizens across the region. With our Eastern Partners, we have a unique format of cooperation based on continuous political dialogue and, thanks to the 20 Deliverables for 2020, we have now an agenda that includes clear and measurable deliverables.

Can you give two examples of successful institution building activities in EaP?

TAIEX and Twinning have been particularly helpful in the key priority areas of good governance, economic development, and connectivity – which includes energy efficiency and environment. A series of TAIEX activities on energy efficiency in Azerbaijan contributed to the reform of the sector, taking inspiration from the reforms undertaken in the Baltic countries. A Twinning project aligned the procedures of the Parliament's Commissioner for Human Rights with EU best practices to better protect citizens' rights in Ukraine. People working together are at the core of TAIEX and Twinning success – creating positive synergies and jointly pushing for reforms.

For more information visit our websites or contact directly the Institution Building Unit:

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