

Centralised Support to the Network of Higher Education Reform Experts (HERE)

Guide for Preparing Technical Assistance Missions (TAM)

Revised - July 2016

1. Purpose of the TAM

What are TAM?

Technical Assistance Missions (TAM) are part of the HERE activities, managed by the SPHERE (Support and Promotion for Higher Education Reform Experts) team, a consortium consisting of the University of Barcelona (UB) and the European University Association (EUA) and acting as service provider for the Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture (EACEA).

What are the objectives of TAM?

TAM provide targeted assistance to National Erasmus+ Offices (NEO) and HERE teams in Partner countries neighbouring the EU. In essence, a TAM is the provision of an international expert for the period of 1.5 - 2 working days. What exactly the experts provide is subject to the needs of the NEO and the HEREs, regarding the themes, activities and also the format. The activities should be part of the national work plan for the HERE and/or part of the planned general higher education reform process underway in a specific country. A TAM must provide a clear added value with regards to national higher education reform objectives.

In terms of what the expert could be asked to do, the following are examples:

- Present in a national or regional workshop on a specific topic
- Provide inputs to a conference that the NEO, a university, or the ministry organises
- Chair a round table discussion on a topical issue, which could contribute to the deliberations of a national committee on higher education
- Present trends and current information in the form of a lecture, to targeted faculty or leadership of institutions
- Facilitate focus groups within different institutions or higher education related organisations
- Assist in national policy discussions with student groups, government officials or other stakeholders
- Support a national HERE team in developing training materials.

How many TAM can each country get?

Each HERE country is entitled to approximately two TAM a year, though this may vary depending on demand and on the quality of applications received. In the 2017 call, NEOs can submit up to five proposals. NEOs should consider their capacity to organise TAM and ensure that those submitted are feasibly organised.

It should be noted that a TAM is not necessarily equivalent to one event (seminar or conference). NEOs and HEREs should think of the TAM in terms of the expert, and what this expert could contribute. As such, the TAM accorded each year could be organised in various ways, for example:

- one expert who provides several visits on the same topic (participating in a seminar and then a follow-up visit),
- two experts participating in one mission at the same time (and both contributing to the same event)
- several neighbouring countries pool their TAM to organise one large regional event with several experts.

It should be stressed again that, ideally, TAM should be done in the context of meetings, events, projects and other activities that are already being planned.

In the 2017 call, NEOs and HERE are encouraged to consider pooling their TAM quota to organise **regional or joint TAM**. This would be a jointly conceived event between two or several countries on a theme of common interest. Several experts may be requested. HERE from countries other than the host country of the event can have their travel covered by the annual HERE national budgets.

2. How to apply for a TAM?

As with the 2015 call, **the process will include two phases**, to ensure the efficient organisation of the TAM and in order to allow for selected TAMs to start early in the calendar year. The process will go as follows:

- **An annual call for proposals will be launched (NEOs will receive a proposal template) during the summer of 2016**
 - The NEO will start preparing the proposal in consultation with the HEREs and other relevant parties (ministries, universities etc.).
 - NEOs may submit up to five proposals, but are encouraged to only submit proposals that are well elaborated and which align to the national higher education reform agenda (TAM that would only benefit one university would generally not be accepted, for example).
- **7 October, 2016: NEOs have to submit their proposals to SPHERE**
 - SPHERE academic experts evaluate the proposals and propose to the EACEA which ones to pre-select.
 - SPHERE will consider the relevance of the proposal and how well it has been developed and pre-planned.
- **NEOs will be notified about the pre-selection.**

- In cooperation with relevant parties, the NEO will prepare a **refined proposal, taking into consideration feedback from SPHERE, with detailed information** on the TAM, such as a draft programme, format, type of event and audience, and **concrete options for dates agreed with the host and other parties** if needed (ministry, etc.).
- NEOs are given **two deadlines** to provide the detailed proposal requested for the TAMs:
 - 15 December for TAM taking place in the first semester (TAMs that would take place between February and June) and
 - 15 May for TAM taking place in the second semester (TAM that would take place between July and December).
- SPHERE will evaluate the refined proposals after the deadlines and compile a final selection list for the EACEA. For all TAM on the final selection list, SPHERE will start identifying and contacting experts. The revised proposal, which will include concrete suggestions for dates, will be sent to experts.
 - If the proposal is not sufficiently precise, it will either be cancelled or sent back to NEO who would be invited to further refine it and re-submit it for the following semester or in the next call.
- Once the proposed expert has agreed and been accepted by the NEO, the NEO/contact point for the TAM and the expert are put in touch to arrange local logistics and fine-tune the programme. SPHERE is copied on the exchange. Date adjustments should be dealt with directly by the expert and NEO/contact point. SPHERE should be immediately informed if the date is changed.
- Note: If an expert is requested in the TAM request form, SPHERE assumes that this expert is the desired expert for the event and has been approved by all parties, including ministries, where relevant.

3. To clarify the distribution of tasks:

The NEO will:

- Submit proposals for TAM to SPHERE via an annual call proposals. These proposals should result from consultations with local stakeholders (Ministry, HEREs, Universities) and be as detailed as possible in terms of content, relevance, expected learning outcomes, number and profile of the participants, dates, location, so as to facilitate the selection carried out by the SPHERE team and EACEA
- Subsequently be informed regarding the pre-selection
- Provide SPHERE with a revised proposal if needed, precise details on the event and suggested dates, to be proposed to the expert. The expert will not be proposed until these details can be provided, according to two deadlines (December and May)
- Indicate if the proposed expert is suitable
- Nominate a contact person for the TAM organisation that both the expert and the SPHERE team may liaise with (NEO or other)

- Refine the TAM programme with the help of the selected expert and subsequently send the finalised programme to the SPHERE team, using the form provided in **ANNEX 1**
- **Make all local logistical arrangements for the TAM including organising the venue, local transport and other needs (materials, equipment, etc). The necessary costs need to be covered at the local level, either by the host organisation or from the NEO's HERE budget.**
- Provide a list of hotels for the expert near where the activities take place
- Invite all local participants
- Provide participants any background reading of material that the expert may suggest
- Submit to the EACEA, with the SPHERE Team in copy, an evaluation of the event within three weeks after the event, which may be based on evaluation forms from the participants and/or other means of collecting feedback (template in ANNEX 2)

SPHERE will:

- Prepare, with EACEA, an annual call for proposals for TAM to the NEOs
- Evaluate proposals and make a pre-selection in conjunction with the EACEA
- Inform NEOs of the pre-selected proposals and invite them to provide a refined proposal according to two deadlines (January or May - depending on the date of the event).
- Approve or reject the TAM, based on the refined proposal received.
- Propose experts to conduct the TAM
- Once an expert is confirmed, put the NEO / contact person in touch with the expert so as to refine the programme
- Once all the TAM content and organisational details have been settled between the expert and the organisers, sign a service agreement with the expert and pay the expert a fee and per diem.
- Organise travel and subsistence for the expert (with exception of the hotel, which the expert should book)
- Evaluate the NEOs feedback and the expert's report after the visit
- Update the SPHERE Virtual Community and Website with information on the TAM.
- Provide regularly to EACEA lists of implemented TAMs

The expert will:

- Once confirmed, liaise with the NEO and/or contact point to finalise the details of the visit and the content of the programme (the expert is NOT expected to develop the entire programme, though experts may invest additional time into the event planning at their own will).
- Liaise with the SPHERE team regarding a service agreement and his/her travel and subsistence.
- Prepare input for the TAM and any training materials. Materials to be printed and distributed on site should be agreed with the NEO.

- Prepare a short report after the TAM (template in Annex 3) and deliver this to SPHERE within 15 working days.

The EACEA will:

- Issue an annual call for proposals for TAM to the NEOs
- Make the preselection together with SPHERE and approve the final selection
- Follow the implementation of TAMs on the basis of information received via SPHERE
- Intervene in case of problems in implementation

ANNEX 1

**Centralised Support to the Network of Higher Education Reform Experts (HERE)
Technical Assistance Missions (TAM)**

Finalised programme for TAM (Template)

Name of expert:

Dates of visit:

Arrival and departure dates/times of expert:

Hotel of expert:

Name of contact person in NEO:

Location and venue (s):

Title / Theme of visit:

Objectives:

Learning outcomes:

Number and profile of participants targeted (functions, institutions, etc.):

Materials to be provided:

Please attach the final version of the programme!

ANNEX 2

Centralised Support to the Network of Higher Education Reform Experts (HERE) Technical Assistance Missions (TAM)

Template for NEO Report

To be filled out by the NEO and sent to the EACEA, copied to the SPHERE Team at here@ub.edu

Name of NEO / Country:

Title of Event:

Date and Location:

Format (seminar, round table, etc):

Number and type of participants:

Desired learning outcomes:

Name of expert sent by SPHERE:

1. How would you rate the quality of the trainer/speaker
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Very Good
 - c. Good
 - d. Fair
 - e. Poor
2. What feedback would you like to provide to this speaker/trainer?
3. How would you assess the relevance of the event for the participants?
4. What were the three most important benefits/conclusions from this event in your opinion?
5. How should this event be followed up nationally?
6. What type of international expertise would you need in the future to take this topic forward?

ANNEX 3

Centralised Support to the Network of Higher Education Reform Experts (HERE) Technical Assistance Missions (TAM)

Template for Site Visit Report

To be filled out by the expert and sent to here@ub.edu

1. Public report (to be published on the HERE Portal/Website)

Name, title and affiliation of Expert	
Date and location of Visit	
Themes	
Objectives of the visit	
Format of the activity (seminar, training, etc)	
Brief description of activities conducted	
Participants targeted (<i>HERE/others - please indicate the functions of those who benefited from the TAM and approximately how many</i>)	
Main outcomes/conclusions from the perspective of the expert	

2. Internal part of the report

Please describe in a maximum of 2 pages the following:

- Teaching/training methods utilised during the visit. Did you find these effective? What did the HEREs and the other participants appreciate? What could have been approved?
- Give your feedback concerning the practical arrangements for the event.



- Did you receive any specific feedback from the HEREs or the other participants?
- What were your main observations regarding the current knowledge of the HEREs/the participants of the theme/subject of the TAM?
- Were there themes/subjects that emerged in your discussions that this country and the HEREs should perhaps address?
- How would you recommend that the HEREs and the NEO follow up on the TAM, to ensure that the knowledge gained is disseminated and utilised?
- Do you have suggestions for future TAM?
- If you could give three recommendations regarding reform of higher education in this country, what would they be?