

TACU ADVISORY BOARD – ELECTION MATERIALS

PLEASE READ THOROUGHLY AND CAREFULLY!!

The following pages contain the election manifestos of the ten candidates for the five positions on the Advisory Board. The candidates are listed in alphabetic order of their last name.

After you have decided which candidates you wish to vote for (up to a maximum of five) please open the other attachment to this email, the Ballot Paper, and follow the instructions there.

This is a very important development in the life of YOUR professional association, so please give this matter your most serious attention.

Tony Barry



Nationality: British

Biographical information: I am a civil engineer and for the last 18 years as an independent consultant have been based in Malaysia, from where I have undertaken projects throughout Central and South East Asia, and the Pacific. My activities have in recent years focused on infrastructure development with an increasing content of climate change adaptation. I am currently working as an Infrastructure Specialist in Tonga on the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience, funded by the Climate Investment Fund.

Election manifesto: I do not believe that TACU needs an advisory board.

Stephen and Henry have until now addressed issues which they have identified as important to TA Consultants, particularly for EU work - where we seem to be agreed the greatest of the problems occur.

I am expecting to see that at the June Brussels get-together some priorities are set for other areas. I have previously identified the areas that I think are important, but will repeat them here:

- TACU website: members' section
- Contractor Questionnaire and ranking
- Communication & Wiki
- Standard Contract or Checklist
- Clarification of Scope of Legal Advice offered
- Marketing of TACU
- Membership drive

After the priorities are set, I want the Advisory Board to become an actions committee, and to push forward the actions agreed in June. Members of the Board, together with Stephen and Henry, should become subcommittee leads, to deliver the agreed priorities.

I am unable to attend the June meeting, and I consider it important that Advisory Board members are at that meeting, and agree to become subcommittee leads.

I do not have any significant experience relating to EU TA. However what I can offer is experience in TA with other funding agencies, and where I believe better practices exist.

There is a strong candidate list for the election, and I shall be very content to serve on subcommittees focusing on the key areas listed above, if I am not elected to the Board.

Coert van der Burg

Nationality : Dutch



Biographical information: I have TA experience since 1992; Mostly in EU but also WB and bilateral funding. As creator of the TA Consultancy Networking group on LinkedIn, I became involved in pre-TACU activities with supporting Henrys initiative and trying to provide concrete solutions to the then embryonic organization.

Election manifesto: TACU needs a new campaign

I appreciated the BanSoEA campaign to be targeting the “EuropeAid procedural system”. I have seen the EuropeAid system declining from a relatively well working donor system to what it has become today. The system has output of low quality, not enough value for money, suffers from over administration and yes the position of the individual expert - who seems to be taking upon most of the field work and risks- is not taken into account. Now I find that the defined TACU topics are, understandably, more focused on the individual expert.

At the same time, the EC officials do seem to recognize that the quality of the EuropeAid projects is poor. During the SoEA meetings in Brussels in 2010, the EC has mentioned the FWC outputs as a concern. However, despite concerns, the EC has missed the opportunity to abandon the SoAE altogether. The complete EuropeAid cycle is affected with the structural low quality of these FWC output. As most of the long term EC ToRs and specifications are defined under these FWCs. Note that the EC is now in process of contracting for the FWC 2013 – 2017. Therefore the outlook on improvements in this system is very poor, let alone for the expert position.

When TACU wants to make a difference, TACU needs a new campaign that is catching the attention of a wider public than just the individual expert. In that context, I believe that the FWC process is the topic to go for, since it affects much more than just a contract between an expert and consultancy.

But we do not need just a list of issues. We are Key Experts and we need to provide the solutions at the same time. When we do not provide them, no one will. A new public campaign should be started to analyse the complete FWC procedures, provide (important) alternatives for the EC. TACU should not wait for top-down decisions. The individual expert issues as they are prioritized by TACU can be tagged along within these solutions.

As elected member of the Advisory Board, I would focus on facilitation of the processes in relation to the FWC process analyses and provisions of solutions with members of TACU, but also outside of TACU; i.e. non committed experts. At the same, time I do not consider it compulsory to be on the TACU Advisory Board to do so.

Michael Gericke



Nationality: German

Biographical information: I was born in 1959 and studied Law in Germany.

I worked 18 years as civil servant within Germany's Public Employment Service and Ministry of Labour. Since 9 years I am working as freelance consultant mainly on EuropeAid contracts related to labour market and employment policy, social security, EU Structural Funds administration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

I have worked in Eastern and South Eastern Europe as well as Asia, pre-dominantly in China. For more information see my profile on LinkedIn

Election manifesto:

I have been a member of the "gang of six" that followed up on Henry Leerentveld's initial post on LinkedIn's TA forum related to the EU's SoE&A obligations. We started the "Ban SoE&A" campaign with a view to giving the silent majority of consultants working on EuropeAid contracts a voice. The feedback was encouraging and demonstrated that consultants in this area desired a sort of cooperation scenario in which they were able to exchange experience and opinions and take up concrete action in order to force their points related to EuropeAid and the contractors involved.

It was a logical next step to launch TACU as a kind of "consultants' union" – but at this stage the disappointment started: although a small group of consultants – in particular: Henry and Stephen – invested an amazing amount of voluntary efforts into this start-up (and mind you: besides the necessity to make a living through paid consultancy work) the number of colleagues actually signing up for membership remained relatively small. It seemed that the majority of those who had signed up for the online petition on banning SoE&As felt that an investment of 180€ per annum was no equivalent to the results they could expect from being a member of the union. I think that's a misconception.

Practically all the achievements made by TACU so far – and I don't want to mention them again, they can be found in TACU's newsletters – have proven the usefulness of such an institution. But all these achievements have been made by just two experts based on intensive discussions with a small group of colleagues who use the TA forum on LinkedIn as a useful tool for exchanging their thoughts and views. We are now at a stage where the energy and creativity of two colleagues alone will no longer be sufficient if TACU is to achieve more for the benefit of consultants. I fully agree with Tony's list – and I do think that Henry and Stephen as the driving force of development in TACU need more active support in the future. I have been a member of a political party in Germany for more than 20 years and I know that commitment is a must if you want to progress. Those who watch TACU doing something for their benefits need to do more in a pro-active way. If this important work will not be shared by more activists TACU will fail. And that would really be a pity.

That's the reason why I put my name on the list of nominees. Those of you who feel they can commit themselves to this work are very welcome. I don't necessarily have to be a member of the board – and I will certainly remain an active contributor to the discussion forum. But as long as the commitment and active contribution to TACU's efforts is low I am happy to do what I can.

David Hepburn O.B.E.



Nationality: British

Biographical information: Following a 25-year career in the British Army, which took me to many countries in the Northern Hemisphere including 2.5 years as the British Military Attaché in Moscow from 1985-87, I took early retirement in order to carve out a new career before it was too late. The USSR at that time proved to be most interesting and I witnessed at first-hand the funeral of Chernenko (carried Margaret Thatcher's handbag for it!) and the birth of Gorbachov's perestroika & glasnost'. A short stint as a volunteer took me to the 1st Gulf War and, following my second 'retirement', I became the Area Co-ordinator for SE Croatia, Herzegovina and

Monte Negro during the Serbo-Croat War.

Having got the 'steely-eyed killer' thingy out of my system, I picked up a procurement TL assignment for two years in Kyrgyzstan. What did I know about Procurement? Not a lot. But I do now. Following a number of Aidco/EuropeAid assignments (Tajikistan {1995-97} Mongolia {1997-2003} as Tacis Co-ordinating Unit) and a short spell for UNOPS (not to be repeated!), I ended up as TL/Procurement Adviser in Juba, South Sudan and now Senior Procurement Adviser/TL at the Ministry of Health & Population in Nepal for the past three years – about to be extended by a further two years. That should probably see me out.

I was one of the 'Gang of Six' who started this show.

Nothing more to say, really! If anyone wants more detail, just ask...

Election manifesto:

It seems to me that the priorities for TACU are:

1. A determined effort to increase the (paying) membership. No money, we go nowhere. This may involve a discussion as to the fees. I have it on good authority that many feel the EUR 180 is too steep. Debate required.
2. Continue and build upon the excellent work so far achieved by Henry and Stephen.
3. Hold EuropeAid to its commitments. Nagging may prove necessary.
4. In due course, expand the interventions to include ab initio the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the African Development Bank. There will be others further down the line.
5. Standard 'template' for Individual Contracts. This will not be accepted by Contractors of course but it may help Experts to know what to look for and to avoid any pitfalls.
6. Advice to 'newcomers' into the Consultancy sector – our replacement generation.
7. Continue with advice to those 'wronged' by unscrupulous Contractors.
8. Attempt to get rid of/reduce the number of the Body Shops.
9. Level the playing field for Experts.

If elected, I will do my best towards achieving the above. I am also available as a Procurement Adviser for Goods and Consultants' Services according to WB rules and less so to PRAG – but I can read them again and interpret them.

Ad van Herk



Nationality: Dutch

Biographical information: Born in Amsterdam on the 9th of February 1948. Read International Law, EU law and Public Administration at the University of Leiden. Worked for more than 25 years for a leading Dutch shipping company and then shifted to the Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management of the Netherlands. Worked there until 2005 in policy development and lastly as project manager to improve the mobility of elderly people and people with disabilities.

Have been a member of various international working groups (including the Transportation Research Board of the USA) and been seconded as national expert to the General Directorate of Transport of the European Commission. (Co-) author of numerous publications on accessibility and member/chair of international research projects. Worked for two years as team leader of a joint Dutch-German-Turkish project on road transport policy at the Turkish Ministry of Transport and since the Turkish ministry apparently appreciates my approach, have done a further two technical assistance projects at the same ministry; one for a road transport strategy and the other for an analysis on the mobility of people with mobility restraints. Live alternately in the South of France and at Ankara.

Election manifesto:

From the discussions over the past months follows that the biggest problem we face is the confrontation with unreliable “consultancy” companies. That problem has first and foremost to be addressed in cooperation with the donors (EU, UN a.o.) and with the association(s) of consultancy companies. TACU cannot solve the problem without their commitment. The donors should realise that ratbags are damaging the reputation of the donors and often do not deliver the quality both donors and recipients would expect and/or require. The associations of consultancy companies should realise that ratbags are damaging the reputation of their profession both towards the donors and the recipients. Working together on a standard contract would be beneficial to us, but that is not enough. What is required also is a Code of Good Practice which reputable companies will adopt and adhere to. Also, the donors should re-think their modus operandi and, in particular, the way they use to (pre-) select candidates for the tender processes. Within TACU we should focus on enhancing the awareness of the members as to their possibilities and assist them wherever we can. With sufficient membership one can also negotiate a risk and liability insurance with a mutual insurance company.

Leszek Jakubowski



Nationality: British and Polish

Biographical information: Leszek Jakubowski is an international consultant with over thirty years experience in leadership, SME and institutional development. After completing a Masters qualification in Corporate Governance at Hallam University in UK Leszek developed his own group of companies in East Anglia. Under Leszek's leadership his companies grew from start up and in fourteen years to employing 150 people with a turnover of £7million per year. In 1991 Leszek's passion for the international scene and his ability to make things happen lead to his foray into management consultancy in countries in transition.

His international work started as personal advisor to Polish Prime Minister Jan Krzysztof Bielecki. During the past twenty years Leszek has lead a range of EU enterprise and capacity building TA projects in Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Armenia, China and Croatia where he is currently Team Leader of an EU E-business Competitiveness Improvement Programme.

Leszek is a Fellow of Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators and has undertaken many voluntary posts such as Director of the Board and President of Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry; UK Regional Chairman of Jaycees; Chairman of CambsTEC Training and Enterprise Council; Chairman of British Polish Chamber of Commerce; Chairman of Krakpol Supervisory Board in Poland and many more. Leszek has a love of music and plays blues guitar.

Election manifesto: "Action speaks louder than words!"

This is, I believe, the motto that the newly elected Board of Advisors should adopt and I agree entirely with a number of my colleagues that members of the board should lead subcommittees, play an active role and become fully engaged in the successful development of TACU.

I have already made a commitment to lead the Code of Conduct subcommittee and am prepared to commit myself to assist in membership growth as this is without a doubt the critical factor in the successful development of TACU. With increased membership our voice becomes louder, our lobby stronger and our resources greater. We need to implement further initiatives to expand and retain membership and thereby build a stronger financial foundation. This can be done by maintaining an aggressive marketing and selling campaign that will result in expanding our membership base, increase retention whilst at the same time enhancing visibility and developing further public awareness of TACU. A practical approach, which I strongly recommend, is to challenge each elected board member to pledge to bring in twenty members each within six months of being elected!

We need to articulate more clearly what the benefits are to the members at large not just those with a specific issue. We should look into using all forms of communication tools to enhance networking opportunities and membership activities that provide a quality, enjoyable environment for fellowship, membership relations and expanded participation. Members need to feel a part of the TACU community.

Developing a mutually beneficial relationship with the best consultancy companies may open the door to achieving sponsorship as an alternative source of revenue. Finally I have had a very successful and happy twenty one years in international consultancy and feel it's time to give a little back. If elected I will share with you my time, energy, enthusiasm and more!

Maria Paalman



Nationality: Dutch

Biographical information : I am an independent consultant in the health sector and do short term consultancies, mostly on planning and financing of health systems in developing countries (Africa, Asia and Middle-East). I have previously worked long-term in Tanzania, Vietnam, Palestine and Ukraine. I work for several (mostly small) consultancy companies that know their business and treat me well. I have worked for different clients, including the EU, the UN agencies and the World Bank, but also for DFID, the Dutch government, GTZ (now GIZ), BTC, as well as for NGOs. I have a positive outlook both in life in general and also on my work. I refuse to become cynical, although I have of course had my moments of doubt about how useful it all is what we try to do. I still enjoy my work. I live with my husband in Groningen, a university town in the North of the Netherlands. A detailed profile can be publicly visited on LinkedIn.

Election manifesto:

If I get elected I will:

1. Support Henry and Stephen on any arising issues
2. Look into the possibility to get more young colleagues interested in TACU – where are these Internet/ LinkedIn wiz-kids? Are we old rags and our discussions not interesting to them?
3. Try to get more women interested in TACU. There are many female consultants, but only a few are active on the LinkedIn discussion websites that discuss the issues that TACU deals with. And I seem to be the only woman on the candidate list!
4. Pay more attention to positive experiences. Maybe we could learn from them. I noticed that many people 'like' my contributions that relate positive experiences.
5. Try to work towards minimum fees (or fee ranges) for junior, mid-career and senior consultants, in order to prevent consultancy companies lowering their bids to win a tender and translate that into lower fees for consultants (with lower quality of work as a result in the long run).
6. Regularly follow related discussions on LinkedIn and use that information to inform TACU members
7. Just as companies have their terms and conditions, consultants, in particular TACU members, should also have sth like that to be sent to companies that want to hire them (maybe more useful than draft contracts).
8. Try to convince clients/donors that allowing consultants to be on only one bid lowers their chance to get quality work and the best person for the job.
9. Look into the possibility to team up more with companies on issues of joint interest when talking to clients/donors.

PS I did not put myself forward as a candidate. Other people did, but I am more than willing to donate time and energy for the cause. A strong TA platform (union?) is long overdue. TACU could become just that, if enough consultants join and inject their ideas.

Robert Peacock



Nationality: British

Biographical information: I am 57, British and based in London. I worked for the British Standards Institution (BSI) for 15 years and Crown Agents for 6 years before setting up on my own. I have run my own company (Benma Limited) for the last 13 years.

I have been working in technical assistance since 1987: on the contractor's side for 11 years and on the expert's side for 15 years. I now work either as a key expert or as a short-term expert on EuropeAid Technical Assistance, Framework Contract (FWC) and Twinning projects in the quality infrastructure field. I have also worked on project identification and evaluation assignments for EU-funded projects in the Internal Market (including technical regulations and conformity assessment) & Standardization sector. I have worked in Eastern Europe, particularly in the Western Balkans, the Mediterranean countries, the Middle East, Africa and East and South-East Asia.

In addition, I work as a contractor for a number of European companies bidding on restricted tenders for EuropeAid TA projects, ranging in value from 600,000 Euro to 7 million Euro. I am engaged as a bid writer and, in addition to preparing all parts of the Technical Offer, I act as a strategic advisor throughout the tendering process. This includes identifying and negotiating with potential key experts. I have a 77% contract award success rate over the last 10 years.

I believe that this experience combined gives me a comprehensive insight into the tendering and operation of EU-funded technical assistance projects.

Election manifesto:

Clearly, in 2-3 years, TACU (and, before that, the 'Ban the SoE&A' campaign) has achieved a considerable amount with extremely limited resources. There are a number of important activities on the table which have been debated in the members' LinkedIn group. However, I believe that, without a viable membership, TACU will never have the resources to move forward.

The issue of the membership fee has been raised exhaustively online but the fact remains that not enough people are prepared to pay €180 per annum. This means that either TA experts do not see any value in subscribing to TACU or they think that it's just too much to pay. This argues for an overhaul of the basis for funding TACU and the development of a marketing campaign. For example, one option might be to offer experts an unlimited service for an annual membership fee and to charge experts, who choose not to subscribe, a commercial rate for dealing with their specific problems.

Henry Leerentveld and Stephen Dewar need assistance in the development of TACU and the establishment of an Advisory Board would provide both valuable support to the management team and a useful forum to determine policy and direction. I would also envisage the members of the Advisory Board providing executive support in driving forward agreed initiatives and taking account of members' wishes. This will require all members of the Advisory Board to be prepared to give up a reasonable amount of their time on a pro bono basis.

If I am elected, I would wish to address urgently the basis of the membership: both the fee structure and how to attract new members. If TACU is to continue providing a valuable service to TA experts, it needs to be established on a more permanent basis so that it can operate efficiently and be both proactive and reactive to the needs of its members.

Jan de Voogd



Nationality: Dutch

Biographical information: I am 66 years old, and a senior-consultant in the areas of labour market, education, social policies and monitoring & evaluation of projects. I have more than 20 years experience in international consultancies in the Netherlands on labour market, educational and social issues. I worked in about 20 countries in eastern and Central Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia.

I worked both as a Long term and short term consultant.

I have international Team Leader experience in Central and Eastern European countries as well as the Middle East, by managing multi disciplinary teams of international and local staff with a size of more than 30 and branch offices in other countries.

I worked for about ten years as an employee for (now) Ecorys in international assignments. This means that I also understand the business from the point of view of a Contractor, allowing me to take their viewpoints into account when TACU makes proposals for improvement of the position of consultants.

Election manifesto:

I was a member of the Dutch major trade union FNV for about 15 years, but when I started to work abroad in 2004 as a free lance consultant I decided to stop this membership since FNV was no longer willing to take care of my (contractual) interests when working abroad. I have since then always felt the need to be backed up by a union which would really understand the international consultant business. I was, hence, very happy when Stephan Dewar and Henry Leerentveld took the initiative to establish TACU. I became a member at its very start. I followed, albeit mainly passive, the forum discussions started by TACU on a range of subjects. Continuation of these discussions should be stimulated as they reveal a lot of bad consultants' (and sometimes good) experiences.

As a Team leader in the Tacis monitoring business for several years I have got an extra keen eye for the demanding and often difficult position of international consultants. Through this and personal experience I got well aware of The flaws in experts' contracts, deficiencies in ToRs, but even more the practical difficulties for consultants in dealing with Contractors, project management, formal clients and beneficiaries. I have several times dealt with issues like no show up of selected staff in a starting project, the influence of beneficiaries on the position of international consultants, breaking of contract rules or even full contracts by Contractors, etc. I do think that TACU should also take care of the interests of national consultants working in internationally funded projects, more than is evident from its documents and initiated discussions until now.

I am well aware of the many different tax and social security aspects of working in an international environment, either resident in your work country or not. I have given advice to colleagues in this regard, albeit mainly in linkage with Dutch legislation. This issue should be higher on the agenda of TACU.

I have advised, and still am advising, retired (Dutch) persons abroad, mainly those living in the EU with regard to health insurance issues. From this perspective I have deepened my know how in European law. In this framework to me power of attorney has been given from several retired persons to represent them in court and take care of their interests in court procedures.

In representing the interests of international consultants I would like to gradually widen the scope of TACU to:

- As said above, national consultants working in international projects;

- Not only EU funded projects, but projects funded by a range of international donors, or in general: projects with an international dimension;
- (International) consultants working as employees as well as free lance consultants;
- Improvement of consultants' contracts, e.g. by making some standard contracts for LT and ST consultants and bring them for negotiation with donor organisations and Contractors' associations;
- Rules of conduct for consultants, but also of clients and beneficiaries towards consultants, of which key elements are to be included in their contracts;
- If financially possible: strengthening legal expertise in order to enable TACU to take care of a range of interests (labour law and contracts, but also taxation and social security, etc.) of individual consultants

of course the work in improving tendering procedures for the benefit of consultants should continue, including the abolishment of the SofE. Some harmonisation of now diverging recruitment and tendering practices and rules between donors may be an objective.

Further institutionalisation of TACU, with statutes and rules, participation meetings of members etc. should in my opinion be (gradually) realised, depending on its growth and future capacity. Expansion of the daily management (now done by two persons only as I understand) is recommendable.

I stress that all this should be done gradually, depending on the strategy chosen and the financial and administrative capacity of TACU in its development.

Further promotion of TACU, as much as possible based on demonstration of its success stories, is necessary.

I have about 15% of my full working time available for the Advisory Board of TACU. For the remaining time I should like to continue to work as a ST consultant, and spend on several types of voluntary work.