

## E-tray: AST-SC

### What is an e-tray?

An e-tray exercise is a computer-based simulation of a real work situation and replicates an email inbox which contains information relating to a particular issue. Candidates need to find solutions in the best way possible within a fixed amount of time. The exercise is taken in language two of the candidate and is designed to measure three competencies:

- Analysis and Problem Solving
- Delivering Quality and Results
- Prioritising and Organising

Candidates are presented with 17 to 21 questions based on the background information provided in a number of emails.

Each question has 3 options and candidates are requested to rank each of the options using a 5-point scale, for example:

- totally disagree
- disagree
- + neutral
- + agree
- ++ totally agree

Each ranking symbol can only be selected once per question, which means that you will have to indicate your order of preference (i.e. best, middle, and worst) among the 3 options. See example below.

Within the limited time available, how do you ensure that you have a complete overview of the things that need to be discussed at the CGG seminar? Rank the following responses on a scale ranging from totally disagree (--) to totally agree (++)

|   |    |   |     |   |    |
|---|----|---|-----|---|----|
| A. I send an e-mail to the CGG project team members asking them to send me an overview of the area they are most involved with. I then incorporate all of these into one global overview.   | -- | - | -/+ | + | ++ |
| B. During the next internal meeting, I try to develop a first draft version of an overview with the help of the CGG project team members. They have already been working on the CGG project for a long time, so it will be easier for them to make a start on this. | -- | - | -/+ | + | ++ |
| C. I group all the information I have already received into one overview and send this to the CGG project team members. They will be able to give their comments and feedback on it at the next internal meeting.   | -- | - | -/+ | + | ++ |

### How are the questions scored?

The points awarded for each question are based on:

- 1) how you rank each option on the 5 point-scale;
- 2) your order of preference for the 3 options;
- 3) the competencies being tested.

As part of the development process, Subject Matter Experts (SME's) defined:

- 1) the ideal ranking for each set of 3 options for each question, and;
- 2) the order of preference for the three options.

This scoring system is agreed by the Selection Board.

Marks are awarded according to how closely your answers are to the ideal ranking and the order of preference defined by the SME's and the Selection Board. Both are combined to give the final score.

Unlike the verbal, numerical and abstract reasoning, there is no single right or wrong answer for each question rather there are ideal answers per competency defined per question. Unlike the situational judgment test, neither is there a simple scoring range per question (e.g. 0-2 points).

### **How is the score per competency calculated?**

There is no pass mark for this exercise. Each competency is marked out of 10.

Each competency is tested up to 8 times and multiple competencies may be tested per question. Your responses to all of the questions are combined and then rescaled to give a mark out of 10 for each competency. Your score may therefore include a decimal place.

You should try to answer each question as honestly as possible, as individual answers will score differently depending on the competencies tested.

The test is automatically scored to ensure objective assessment for all candidates.

### **Why is the e-tray being used as part of the assessment process?**

Unlike a work sample exercise, e.g. a presentation exercise where you are asked to present on a topic, an e-tray is designed to assess procedural knowledge which is the extent to which you know the right thing to do in a given situation. This type of assessment provides very valuable information for the Selection Board, as a candidate who is aware of the most appropriate action within a scenario will be able to use this awareness when recruited and required to perform within the role.

### **How can candidates be confident that the e-tray represents what is required in the institutions?**

The e-tray is developed by subject matter experts with a broad expertise in the field of the particular exercise in behavioural competencies and in test design. As part of the development process, the e-tray undergoes comprehensive testing and development, including with EU officials of an equivalent grade. The final content and most suitable replies are validated by the Selection Board.

The e-tray is being used as exercises of this type have been shown to accurately predict job performance through objective assessment of the relevant competencies.

Stringent quality assurance was built into the design of the exercise:

- Subject Matter Experts developed the content and scoring guide for the e-tray informed by best practice in competency and test design;
- The exercise was extensively trialled before it was used to ensure it worked effectively and was appropriate for use in the European institution context;
- The exercise content and scoring was validated by Selection Board.

## *Example of instructions for an e-tray exercise*

Please pay attention to the following:

- You are advised to answer all 17 questions, within 50 minutes. The time remaining will be visible at the top of the screen during the whole exercise.
- Work quickly, but carefully.
- Rank the 3 responses on the **scale indicated in the question**: -- (totally disagree), - (disagree), + (neutral), + (agree) and ++ (totally agree).
- Each ranking symbol can only be selected once per question, which means that every complete answer must contain a combination of 3 different symbols. In this way, your answers indicate not only **what ranking you assign to each individual response**, but also your **order of preference among the 3 responses**.
- Answers will only be recorded if you have ranked all 3 responses.
- You may **change your answer at any time** by clicking on another button.
- **Each question must be considered on its own** – when answering one question you do not need to take the other questions into account.
- **Navigation through the mailbox and navigation between the questions are separate**. So the question you see is not necessarily linked to the e-mail that is visible on the screen at that time. A question can be related either to several e-mails or just to one.
- To navigate through the mailbox displayed in the top half of the screen, **click on the e-mail titles** at the left.
- Only use the **'Previous' and 'Next' buttons at the bottom** of the screen to navigate between the questions in the bottom half of the screen.
- To see an **overview** of the questions you have already answered and the questions you have skipped, click on the 'Overview' button. The questions you have already answered are marked with a tick. Click on the number of the question that you want to answer. Click on 'Previous' to return from the overview to the last question you viewed.

Good luck!

Click **'Next'** to start the exercise.

You can navigate through the mailbox and between questions:

- To navigate through the mailbox, click on the email titles at the left;
- To navigate through the questions, use the 'Previous' and 'Next' buttons at the bottom.

## Example of emails in the mailbox and one sample question

**WELCOME**  
Mark Wilson

**CGG KICK-OFF**  
Mark Wilson

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From: Mark Wilson, Commission Goes Green (CGG) Project Coordinator  
 To: <your name>  
 Date: 12/09/201X  
 Subject: Welcome

Dear (your name),

Up to now, I have been coordinator of the CGG project, acting as the general contact person for everyone involved. However, I will not be able to complete the task myself because I will be off work for two months as from tomorrow in order to undergo surgery.

I am very grateful to you for agreeing to take over my responsibilities in this project. With the help of the project team, you will be responsible for the coordination and follow-up of the CGG project. This is an excellent opportunity for you, as a new member of staff in DG Climate, to get to know people from both your own and other sections.

Although many aspects have already been taken care of, a lot still remains to be done in the coming weeks. All relevant stakeholders have been invited to a seminar on Thursday 3 October 201X at which the CGG project team needs to (a) present a complete and solid action plan and (b) be able to defend a clear position to the different stakeholders.

I will, of course, ensure that you receive all background information and details on the current state-of-play as quickly as possible. I have already scheduled the next internal CGG project team meeting for 23/09/201X from 1 to 2 pm. Please keep in mind that priorities should be set based on their budgetary implications, especially in the current financial situation.

Kind regards,  
Mark Wilson

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**WELCOME**  
Mark Wilson

**CGG KICK-OFF**  
Mark Wilson

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From: Mark Wilson, Commission Goes Green (CGG) Project Coordinator  
 To: <ALL CGG Project Team>  
 Date: 07/08/201X  
 Subject: CGG Kick-off

Dear CGG project team members,

The European Commission has decided to make dealing with climate change the cornerstone of the EU 2020 strategy. This strategy includes, among other objectives, the goal of reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that are having such a serious impact on the climate by 20 % or even 30 % if the conditions are right.

The Commission therefore wants to set an example by reducing the transport-related CO2 emissions generated by Commission staff in Brussels and has set up a 'Commission Goes Green' (CGG) project team to coordinate and follow up on this.

You have all been appointed as project team members. So first of all, I would like to thank you for your interest in the project. I am convinced we will be able to achieve great results together.

In order to decide on the actions that Commission staff should take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, a CGG seminar will take place on Thursday 3 October 201X. At the seminar our project team needs to present a proposal to the relevant stakeholders on the specific policies and actions to be taken by staff.

This means that in order to be able to present a solid proposal and answer the different questions during the seminar, we will have to start collecting information and understanding the advantages and disadvantages of all the possible courses of action as soon as possible.

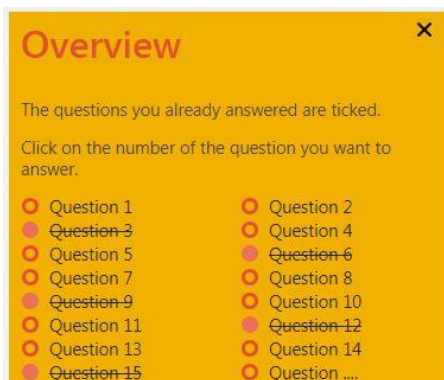
I will schedule a first meeting next week, so that we can get to meet each other and start sharing out the tasks.

Kind regards,  
Mark Wilson  
Project Coordinator CGG

Within the limited time available, how do you ensure that you have a complete overview of the things that need to be discussed at the CGG seminar? Rank the following responses on a scale ranging from totally disagree (-) to totally agree (++)

|    |  |    |   |     |   |    |
|----|--|----|---|-----|---|----|
| A. | I send an e-mail to the CGG project team members asking them to send me an overview of the area they are most involved with. I then incorporate all of these into one global overview.   | -- | - | -/+ | + | ++ |
| B. | During the next internal meeting, I try to develop a first draft version of an overview with the help of the CGG project team members. They have already been working on the CGG project for a long time, so it will be easier for them to make a start on this. | -- | - | -/+ | + | ++ |
| C. | I group all the information I have already received into one overview and send this to the CGG project team members. They will be able to give their comments and feedback on it at the next internal meeting.   | -- | - | -/+ | + | ++ |

## *Example of the overview of questions for an entire e-tray*



An overview of the questions that you have already answered, and of the questions you may have temporarily skipped, can be found in 'Overview'. The questions you have already answered will be crossed out. You can access the question you want to answer next by clicking on the number of that question in the overview. Clicking on 'x' will close the sidebar.