



ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission
for Asia and the Pacific



ESCAP Twinning Programme for the Voluntary National Reviews



What is the VNR Twinning Programme?

The Twinning Programme connects two or more countries in the region that are preparing their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) in the same year. ESCAP provides financial, facilitation and coordination support to link the countries during their VNR process. The Programme involves study tours, online workshops, and joint presentations and side events at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) and regional forums such as the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD).



What does the Twinning Programme aim to achieve?

The aim of the Twinning Programme is to strengthen the preparation of VNRs through peer learning. Through promoting the exchange of good practice, lessons and knowledge among partner countries, the Programme aims to support partnerships and cooperation that can strengthen the VNR process, improve SDG practices and implementation, and enhance leadership on the SDGs.



What makes it unique?

The Twinning Programme is unique because...



Facilitates learning opportunities through the VNR process. Through innovative study tours, peer review workshops on the VNR drafts, and focused 'learn & share workshops', the Programme connects countries to exchange good practice on topics and issues that matter to them.

Adopts a multi-stakeholder approach. In addition to connecting VNR government officials and national statistical offices, the Programme also engages stakeholders involved in the VNR process (such as civil society organizations, the private sector, human rights institutions, and parliamentarians). This unique multi-stakeholder approach can lead to a more inclusive VNR process and greater involvement of stakeholders in SDG monitoring beyond the VNR process.



How does it work?

1

Match potential twinning countries that are presenting their VNR in the same year

2

Identify VNR coordinating bodies and key stakeholders to connect

3

Decide on key learning priorities and key reforms/ good practice to share from twinning countries

4

Facilitate virtual workshops & online platform

5

Study tour and visit to key institutions and stakeholders in host country

6

Support for peer exchange at the HLPF and organisation of side events

What are the benefits of being part of the Twinning Programme?

Better VNR Preparation: 'live' learning from peers and exchange of approaches

Shared problem-solving: tips & advice on navigating VNR process and tricky issues

Improved tacit knowledge of reforms undertaken by peers: visiting institutions and meeting officials in charge of social and economic reforms can support SDG acceleration

Increased profile of VNR presentation: joint events at the HLPF and regional forums can increase the profile and outreach of the VNR

Improved confidence: increase momentum in implementing a multi-stakeholder approach to the VNR and SDG monitoring and implementation

Stronger connections: with stakeholders and counterparts in the country and beyond

Key elements of the Twinning Programme



Online workshops & connecting stakeholders

Study tour to visit key institutions and exchange good practices



Peer review of VNR drafts

Joint side events at APFSD & HLPF & side-by-side VNR presentations at HLPF



Twinning in practice: study tour to Pakistan in March 2022 & peer review workshop



Study tour to Pakistan, 2022

In 2022, following a successful study tour of the Sri Lankan multistakeholder VNR delegation to Pakistan, an innovative peer review workshop was held online. The success of the peer review workshops was underpinned by the connections made during the study tour. The countries provided frank and constructive feedback on each other's VNR drafts in an online workshop facilitated by ESCAP. They completed the Twinning Programme by presenting their VNRs side-by-side at the HLPF and asking questions to their peers.

How are Twinning countries identified?

Twinning arrangements vary between countries depending on their interests. The following criteria are used to identify twinning partners:

Belong to the **same region or sub-region**

Language and cultural similarities, or a similar economic context (e.g., LDC graduation)

Committed to multi-stakeholder approaches to the VNR

Identify **common challenges and priorities** for SDG implementation

Engagement and interest of **UN Resident Coordinator Offices**

Interest in learning from other countries and sharing their good practices

What results has the Twinning Programme contributed to?

South-South and Triangular Cooperation: tangible contribution to bilateral or multilateral cooperation. 11 countries have participated in the three cycles of the Twinning Programme since 2020

Greater engagement of stakeholders, including of new actors/stakeholders (such as parliaments and human rights institutions) in the VNR process and in SDG monitoring through exposure to multi-stakeholder approaches during the study tour

Establishment of new SDG monitoring institutions such as replicating institutions visited during the study tour

Strengthened leadership on the SDGs and increased impact of the VNRs on the policy-making process

Supported SDG acceleration through exposure to and increased momentum for social and economic reforms

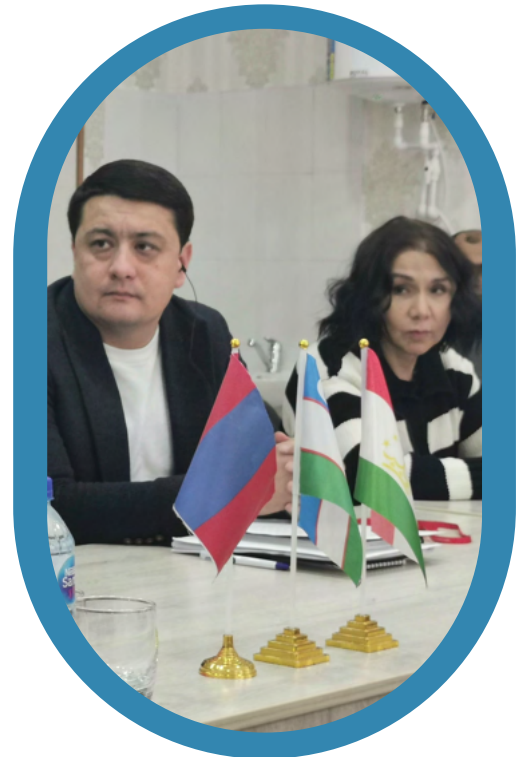
Twining in practice: study tour to Uzbekistan in January 2023 & peer review workshop in April 2023

In January 2023, a multi-stakeholder VNR delegation from Tajikistan and Mongolia visited Uzbekistan as part of the Twining Programme. The aim of the study tour was to expose each country delegation to different approaches, institutional structures, and reforms to support SDG acceleration and the VNR process.

During the study tour, VNR government teams and stakeholders connected from all three twinning countries including national statistics offices, civil society organisations, private sector actors and human rights institutions.

Each country shared experiences and lessons learned during the 1st and 2nd reviews; presented good practices in SDG monitoring and the VNR process and exchanged innovative new reforms and approaches to support SDG implementation.

Following the visit, the three countries connected again in an online peer review workshop, facilitated by ESCAP, where they provided peer feedback on each other's VNR drafts, some of which was incorporated into the final versions.



Study tour in Samarkand Uzbekistan, visit with local government/authorities, 2023

How to get involved in the Twining Programme?



Contact ESCAP or the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in your country



Visit the VNR page on the ESCAP [website](#)



For more information,
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