



# twinning



## **Guidance on twinning** in ISO standards development activities

**Greater global participation  
of ISO members**



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# Glossary and abbreviations

## **DEVCO**

The ISO Committee on developing country matters

## **ISO/CS**

ISO Central Secretariat

## **Lead partner**

The member providing the guidance, expertise and training is known as the lead partner

## **Leadership twinning**

Twinning at the level of Convenor, Chair or Secretariat

## **NMC**

National mirror committee

## **NSB**

National standards body

## **O-member**

Observing member to the work of a committee

## **P-member**

Participating member in the work of a committee

## **P-member twinning**

Twinning at the level of P-membership of a committee

## **TC**

Technical committee

## **TPM**

Technical Programme Manager

**TMB**

ISO Technical Management Board

**Twinned Convenor**

The twinned partner representative participating in a twinning at the level of Convenor of a working group

**Twinned partner**

The member seeking to build capacity is known as the twinned partner

**Twinned Secretariat**

The twinned partner participating in a twinning at the level of Secretariat of a technical committee or subcommittee

**Twinning Agreement**

The informal contract negotiated and signed by the two partners in a twinning

**Vice-Chair**

The twinned partner representative participating in a twinning at the level of Chair of a technical committee or subcommittee

**Zoom**

Internet conferencing system – details and user guidance can be found on ISO Connect : <https://connect.iso.org/display/it/Video+Conferencing>

**WG**

Working group (of an ISO committee)

# Twinning: an introduction

ISO and its members have developed the concept of **twinning**, by which an ISO member seeking to build its capacity may enter into an arrangement with an ISO member that is in a position to share its knowledge.

The twinning partners need to conclude a written Agreement (**using the template provided by ISO/CS**) to formalize the partnership. ISO/CS shall be notified of all new twinning arrangements. The lead partner has the important role of providing training, guidance and assistance to build the capacity of the twinned partner.

Twinning arrangements do not necessarily involve any form of financial support from one ISO member to another, but rather focus on knowledge transfer – on “learning by doing”.

By contrast, twinning is NOT designed to be used as a mechanism for members to increase the number of leadership roles they hold with the intent of augmenting their membership status within ISO. Nor is it to be used as a means to compromise and settle disputes between members over who should be awarded a leadership position. The twinning system should NOT be regarded as a means to dilute the requirements for the appointment of Chair, Committee Manager and Convenor specified in Annex D of ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, and Annex SQ of the Consolidated ISO Supplement.

## **1** **Twinning between P-members**

Allows a member body, that may not yet have the level of competency required to cooperate on a leadership position, to participate actively in the technical work of standards development. P-member twinning allows members to gain specific targeted experience related to the work of a committee at the international and national levels (including the role of national mirror committees) and insight into the obligations of a P-member.

## **2** **Twinning between Convenors and Twinned Convenors**

The twinned partner has the opportunity to gain the skills and experience needed to assume the convenorship of a working group in the future (e.g. leading meetings, building consensus, managing projects at working group level).

## **3** **Twinning between Chairs and Vice-Chairs**

The twinned partner has the opportunity to learn the skills and responsibilities needed to assume the chairmanship of a committee or subcommittee in the future (e.g. leading meetings, building consensus, managing projects at the technical committee level).

## **4** **Twinning between Secretariats and Twinned Secretariats**

The twinned partner has the opportunity to learn the skills and responsibilities needed to assume the role of a Committee Manager in the future (e.g. preparing meetings, managing projects, promoting the committee).





The aim of twinning arrangements is threefold :

- To improve the standardization infrastructures and capacities of the twinned partner
- To increase the participation of the twinned partner in the governance and technical work of ISO
- To promote the exchange of experience between members, optimize the use of resources through cooperation, and develop long-term strategic partnerships

There are four different types of twinning arrangements, each offering the potential for knowledge transfer and capacity building in a different area, or at a different level of competency. Three of these types of twinning arrangements are referred to as “**leadership twinning**” arrangements, because they involve learning the competencies relevant to leadership roles in the development of International Standards (Convenor, Chair, Committee Manager).

The choice of twinning arrangement should be made based on the results of a self-assessment by the twinned partner of its competencies, the expertise/ experience that it wishes to acquire, and its available resources.

Regardless of the type of arrangement chosen, there are a number of key principles that must guide the development, implementation and revision of twinning arrangements, as well as a number of key steps that must be taken throughout the life of the twinning.

The purpose of this document is to provide clear and concise guidance to ISO members that may wish to enter into a twinning arrangement. It outlines the key principles and steps to be followed.



# Requirements

## for participation in twinning arrangements



- Full membership of ISO (or participation in the ISO Council's New member rights pilot, in the case of P-member Twinning). For more information on ISO membership, see the **ISO membership manual**
- Requirement to be a lead partner: demonstration of sufficient knowledge and experience (at NSB level) of the role in question
- Requirement to be a twinned partner: demonstration of a need for capacity building, as evidenced by a lack of experience holding secretariats/appointing chairs or convenors/participating actively in technical committees
- Adherence to the key principles of twinning, as described in the next section
- For leadership twinning (Convenor, Chair, Committee Manager), the prospective twinned partner must be a P-member of the committee concerned

# Key principles of twinning

The following principles should guide the development, implementation and revision of twinning arrangements :

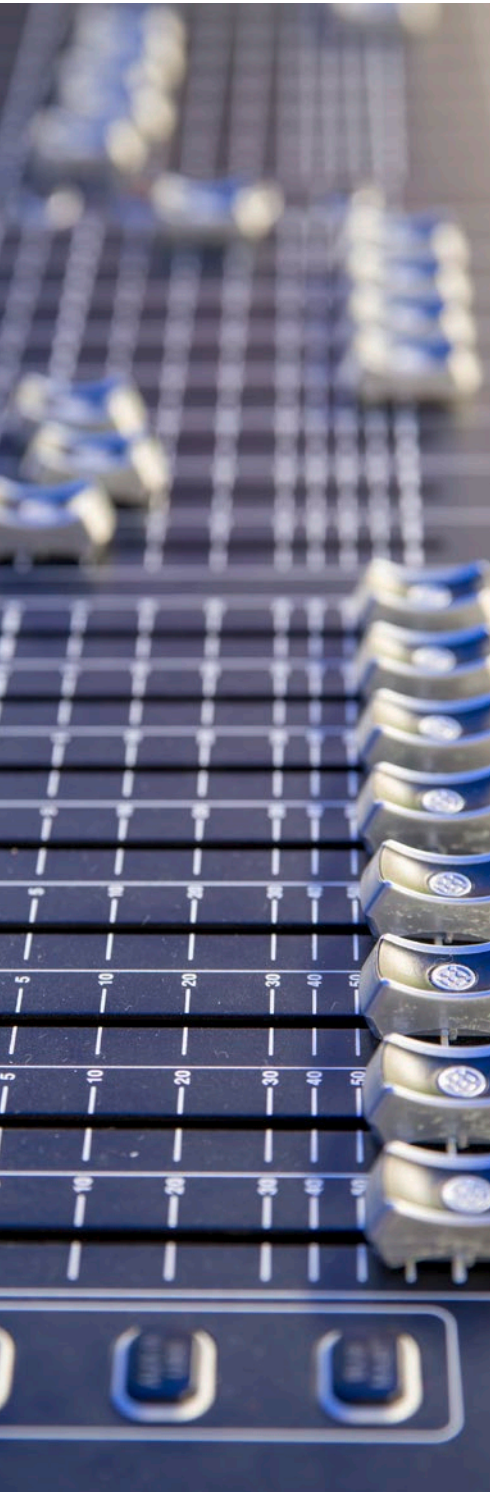
## Objectives

- Both partners to the arrangement must be committed to the primary objective of twinning : to build capacity and improve participation and performance in the twinned partner
- Twinning objectives should support those priorities identified by the twinned partner and integrated into their national development plans/strategies

## Obligations and responsibilities

- Twinning arrangements are to be entered into voluntarily and there is no expectation that one country will provide financial support to the other country
- Cooperation should be viewed as broadly as possible, with a flexible approach, and include technical, strategic and policy-level activities between member bodies
- The commitment of both ISO member bodies to the twinning arrangement should be sustained for the duration of the arrangement
- Twinning arrangements shall not jeopardize the principle of “one country, one vote” in ISO (and proxy voting is not allowed)
- Twinning arrangements shall have no influence in terms of national position. There should be no expectation that one member will support the positions and views of the other partner
- By mutual agreement of the two ISO member bodies, the developed country partner may also assume other specific administrative tasks beyond providing training and guidance





## Progress

- Twinning arrangements should embrace the continual improvement concept. There should be mechanisms in place to ensure that, for each action, there is a possibility for follow-up and, if necessary, corrective action
- Projects should include indicators to measure/monitor the progress of a twinned country's participation and leadership in ISO, with progress reviewed on an annual basis

## Outcome

- The knowledge and experience gained through the twinning arrangement should be used to train other staff in the twinned partner to build capabilities in a sustainable manner
- Participation in twinning should reduce, or remove altogether, the need for twinning of the twinned partner so that, once the twinning arrangement is finished, the twinned partner can participate independently

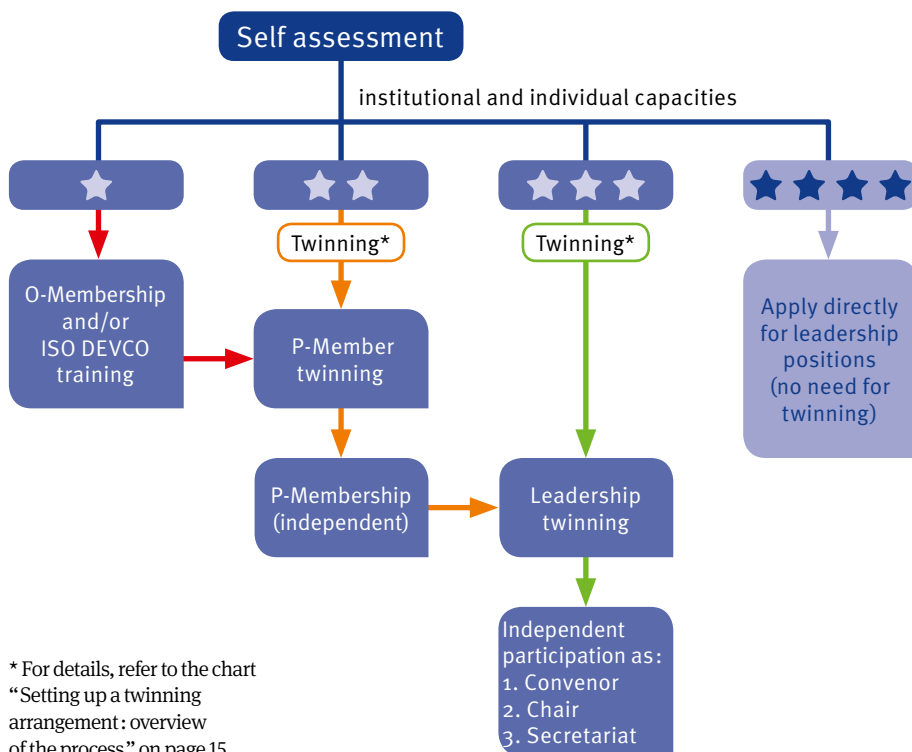
# Instructions

## for the lead partner

Twinning requests do not necessarily come from ISO members who are in need of capacity building : existing P-members, Committee Managers, Chairs and working group Convenors who are interested in taking part in a twinning arrangement and feel they are in a position to share their knowledge are strongly encouraged to make contact with twinned partners and begin the process to negotiate a Twinning Agreement. Member bodies who want to offer capacity building and knowledge transfer and are interested in taking part in a twinning are also encouraged to contact ISO/CS, either through their Technical Programme Manager (TPM) or the Technical Management Board (TMB) secretariat ([tmb@iso.org](mailto:tmb@iso.org)). For the lead partner, the existence of a twinning arrangement can, in some cases, lighten the administrative load (through task sharing with the twinned partner). But above all twinning partnerships serve as a tool for including more stakeholders from all over the world in standardization, to create better standards with increased global relevance.

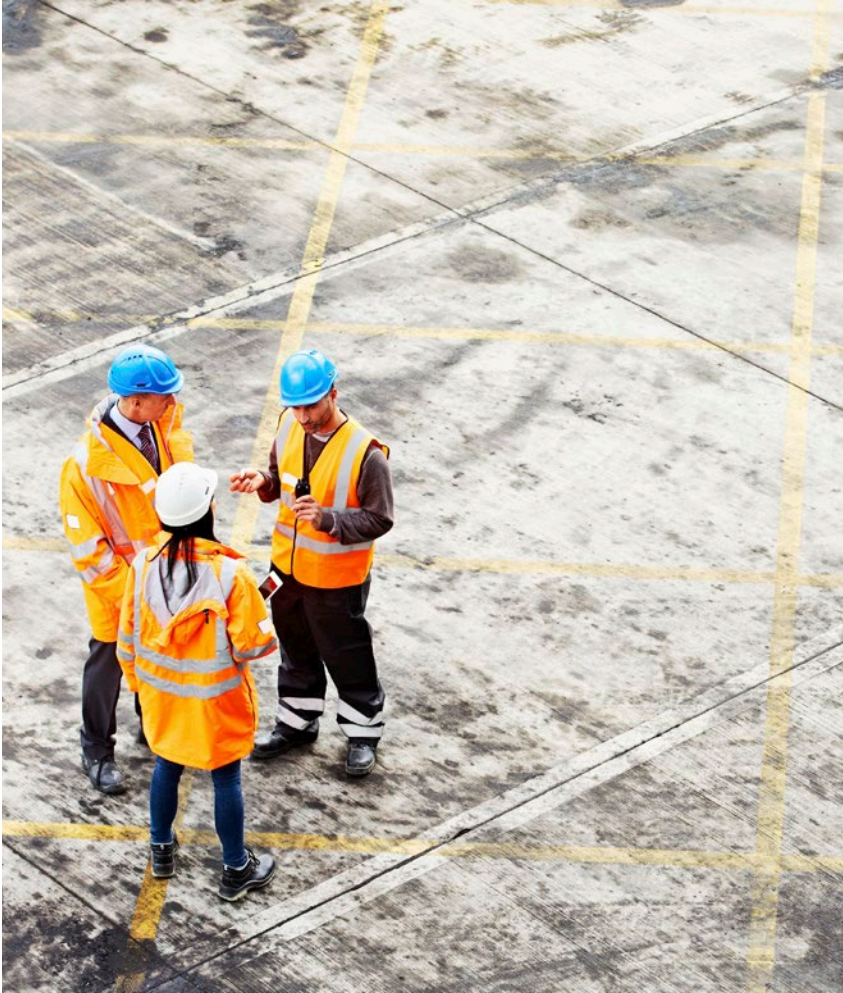
# A stepwise approach to greater global participation

This section of the guidance document describes how to set up a twinning arrangement, including how to identify a partner and negotiate the Agreement. As shown in the flowchart below, twinning forms part of a stepwise approach towards greater participation of more ISO members. There are several different pathways that may be followed depending on a member's existing capabilities and ambitions. The first step is a self-assessment by the twinned member to determine which pathway is appropriate.



# Setting up a twinning arrangement: **overview of the process**

The chart opposite sets out the suggested steps to follow when setting up a twinning arrangement. You can also learn more in the **Revised requirements and process on twinning**.





## SELF-ASSESSMENT

Results of self-assessment =  
decision to seek P-member OR leadership twinning

## PARTNERSHIP

Identify a lead partner by:

- a. Direct contact with the partner OR
- b. Submitting a request to ISO/CS

## APPLICATION

**(for leadership twinning only)**

Fill in the Twinning Request form and seek approval of nominated individuals/member body for:

**Twinned Convenor** (Parent TC)

**Vice-Chair** (approval by TMB/TC)

**Twinned Committee Manager** at TC, SC and PC level  
(approval by TMB/TC)

## TWINNING AGREEMENT

Arrange initial meeting to:

- a. Fill in and sign the **Twinning Agreement template**
- b. Draft a **detailed collaboration plan**.

The Agreement and collaboration plan need to be submitted within 3 months after the twinning request has been approved

## NOTIFICATION & IMPLEMENTATION

Submit Twinning Agreement and Collaboration Plan to ISO/CS.  
Implement the twinning arrangement and review it annually by completing the annual performance assessment form to assess progress

# Step 1

## Guidance on self-assessment (for the twinned partner)

Participation and leadership in ISO's technical work is a right of all ISO member bodies ; however, it comes with a certain number of obligations. A country wishing to enter into a twinning arrangement should first carry out a self-assessment of its capacity to participate in or lead international standardization work and therefore fulfil the associated obligations. It should be noted that a higher level of expertise and more resources are required to assume leadership positions – Twinned Convenor, Vice-Chair, Twinned Committee Manager – as compared to participation (P-member). There are four possible outcomes of the self-assessment, three of which may lead to twinning arrangements (see flowchart on page 13).

### **Which type of leadership twinning should be chosen ?**

The results of the self-assessment indicate that the green pathway is the appropriate one... but which type of leadership twinning should be chosen ? The choice between a Convenor, Chair or Secretariat twinning should be made according to two main criteria :

- The sort of skills that the twinned partner most needs to acquire (see page 31 for specific guidance for each type of twinning)
- The available resources for the twinning arrangement (human and financial)

In terms of resources, twinning at the level of Secretariat is the most resource-intensive of the leadership twinings, due to the heavy administrative responsibilities. Twinning at the level of Convenor of a working group is the least resource-intensive and may therefore serve as a good starting point.

The ISO member considers itself:

1. To have insufficient capabilities and/or knowledge for direct participation (Red pathway O-membership or further training, later entering the orange pathway)
2. To have sufficient capabilities for direct participation, but without sufficient experience and/or knowledge about P-membership obligations (Orange pathway P-membership twinning, later entering the green pathway)
3. Able to participate directly in international standardization work (already a P-member of the committee in question), but not necessarily to lead (Green pathway leadership twinning, later resulting in independent leadership roles)
4. Able to participate and to lead international standardization work (No twinning required – may directly apply for leadership roles)

Both the institutional and individual competencies must be evaluated as part of the self-assessment. The lists of competencies that follow are provided to assist ISO members in performing a self-assessment, but should be considered neither complete nor mandatory – the specific circumstances of the twinning arrangement shall always be taken into consideration.





## **Institutional competencies**

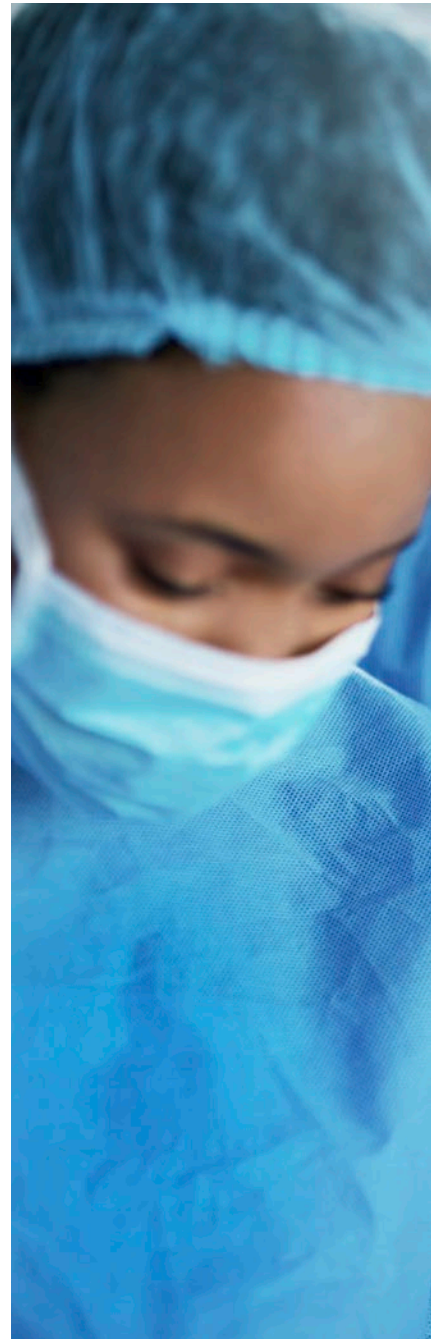
- A legal/institutional framework to allow for the adoption of International Standards as national standards
- Infrastructure and processes to effectively communicate information on both national standards and International Standards, and to collect input from a wide range of relevant stakeholders
- Existence of infrastructure and processes to develop national positions and comments on ISO work. For example, national mirror committees (NMCs) – national infrastructures of associated representation so that all stakeholder interests can be considered
- Processes for the identification of national standards body delegations and experts to participate in international meetings
- The necessary financial resources to enable the nominated representative(s) to travel to meetings when required

NOTE Remote participation (e.g. Zoom) is often possible through the use of electronic communication tools.

- Resources and competencies necessary to manage the distribution of committee documentation, for example to members of NMCs, relevant ISO committees and ISO/CS

## Individual competencies

- Acknowledged expertise in the subject field and commitment to contribute actively to the ISO standards development activity
- A working knowledge of ISO procedures and the various stages of the development of ISO standards, as well as the drafting rules for ISO standards
- Ability to maintain good relations and communication with all delegates and experts at meetings and via e-mail, telephone and teleconferencing in between meetings
- Readiness/flexibility to resolve issues through side discussions without holding back the main discussion
- Ability to be goal-oriented and comply with agreed timelines and target dates
- Strong understanding of national positions and concerns via effective engagement and communication with the NMC
- Time, financial resources and willingness to travel
- Computer literacy and access to sufficient IT tools
- English-language skills (spoken and written)
- Regular evaluations and reports of progress with those supporting the individual's participation
- Succession planning and the ability to build capacity in order to ensure ongoing effectiveness of participation from the ISO member



## **Additional competencies relevant for Convenor and Chair twinings**

- Knowledge of how to conduct and lead a meeting, including the ability to lead participants to consensus on points raised while allowing for full discussion of the various issues
- Very good knowledge of English
- Support and approval by the organization employing the person selected to take on a participation or leadership role, followed by approval given by the ISO member

## **Additional competencies relevant for Committee Manager twinings**

- Adequate financial resources, secretariat support and qualified human resources

If the results of the self-assessment show that the twinned member organization is not yet ready to actively participate, it may begin by following the **red pathway** indicated in the flowchart on page 13. Here, the first step is to request Observer (O) membership in the desired committee for a period of time (up to 12 months) so the member may become familiar with the operations of the selected committee and its work programme. During this time, it should also consider participating in available training offered by ISO to increase its effective participation. Further information about training courses and how to participate is available on the ISO Website.

If the results of the self-assessment indicate that the member body seeking to build its capacities would benefit from a twinning arrangement, the member shall decide which of the four types of twinning would help it most – a **P-member twinning** or a **leadership twinning** (i.e. Convenor, Chair or Secretariat twinning). Please see the following sections for a description of how to submit a twinning request and how to negotiate a Twinning Agreement.

# Step 2

## Identifying a partner for the twinning arrangement

Having completed a self-assessment and decided what kind of twinning arrangement is best suited to its needs, the member seeking to build its capacities shall identify a lead partner for the twinning arrangement.

Here, there are two possible routes depending on whether or not the member seeking to build its capacities already has a potential partner in mind.

### **No lead partner identified**

If the member body has not identified a potential partner, but knows what sectors or which specific committees or working groups it is interested in, it may submit a twinning request to ISO/CS, which will endeavour to find a suitable partner.

Twinning requests submitted to ISO/CS ([tmb@iso.org](mailto:tmb@iso.org)) must include the following information :

- Member submitting the request
- Nature of the request (P-member, Convenor, Chair or Secretariat twinning)
- Sectors of interest or, if known, specific committees or working groups to which the request relates
- Based on the results of the self- assessment, a text detailing the competencies and commitment of the ISO member to support the twinning arrangement requested

- A statement of the goals and outcomes expected to be achieved by the twinning arrangement
- Desired time frame and target dates for the achievement of the goals and outcome
- In the case of leadership twinning, the names, contact information and qualifications of individuals proposed for committee leadership roles
- Name and contact information of an ISO member body representative for further processing/negotiation of the requested arrangement

A twinning request form may be downloaded at [www.iso.org/forms](http://www.iso.org/forms).

In order to help identify a lead partner, ISO/CS may take the completed twinning request form and:

- Share the request with the relevant Committee Manager or Managers in the sector(s) of interest in the case of twinning on committee leadership roles
- Advertise the request in the TMB communiqué

Requests will be valid for six months from the time of submission, by which time, if no suitable partner has been identified, the request shall be reviewed and re-submitted (if still desired).







### **Lead partner identified**

If the member seeking to build its capacities has already identified a partner who is currently a P-member of the committee of interest, or holds the convenorship, Chair or secretariat of the committee/working group of interest, it should get in touch directly with the potential partner to ascertain its interest. If both parties agree, they should proceed directly to Step 3 in the case of leadership twinning, or Step 4 in the case of P-member twinning.

The member providing the guidance, expertise and training is known as the **lead partner**. The member seeking to build capacity is known as the **twinning partner**.



# Step 3

## Approval of nominated ISO member or individual

NOTE This section is only relevant in the case of leadership twinings. For P-member twinings, please proceed directly to Step 4.

The ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, and Consolidated ISO Supplement set out clear rules and procedures for the allocation of leadership roles. These processes of nomination and approval shall also take place when setting up a twinning arrangement. Approval of nominees should be sought from the relevant body before entering into detailed negotiation of the Twinning Agreement.

### **Twinings between Convenors and Twinned Convenors**

A working group reports to its **parent technical committee** or subcommittee through a Convenor, who is appointed by this parent committee (ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Clause 1.12.1).

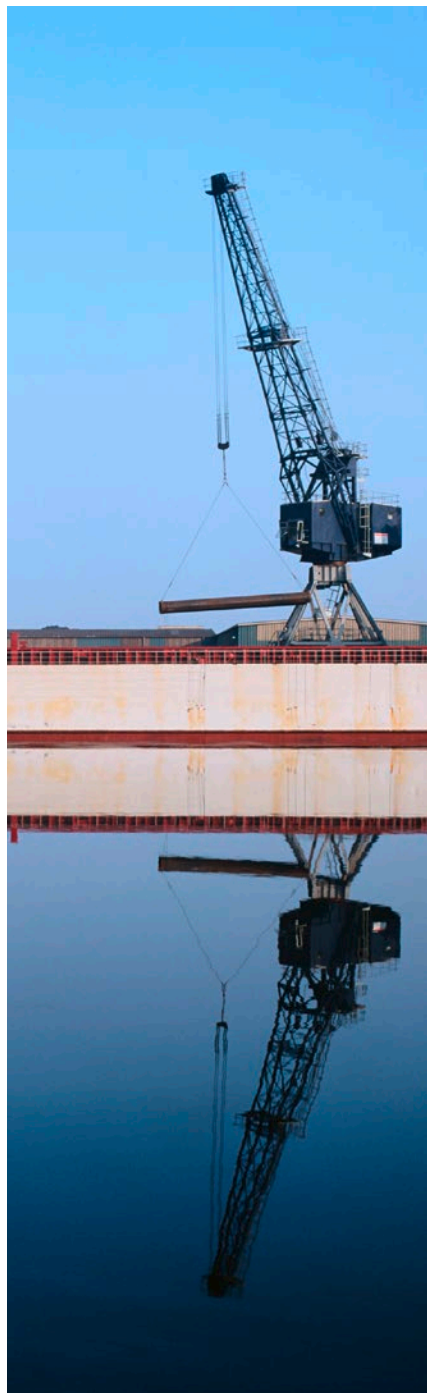
The above also applies to the appointment of Twinned Convenor. The candidate for Twinned Convenor shall be approved by the parent committee. Once the Twinned Convenors is appointed by the parent committee, the Twinning Agreement and Collaboration plan shall be negotiated and signed. These need to be submitted to the ISO/CS TPM within 3 months of the registration of the Twinning arrangement.

## Twinnings between Chairs and Vice-Chairs

The Chair of an ISO technical committee shall be **nominated by the secretariat of the technical committee and approved by the TMB**. The Chair of an ISO subcommittee shall be nominated by the secretariat of the subcommittee and approved by the technical committee (**Consolidated ISO Supplement, Clause 1.8.1**).

In the case of a twinning between a Chair and Vice-Chair at both the technical committee and subcommittee level, these need to be approved by the TMB using the same procedures followed for the appointment of Chairs.

Following the appointments, the Twinning Agreement and Twinning Collaboration plan shall be negotiated and signed. These need to be submitted to the ISO/CS TPM within 3 months of the registration of the Twinning arrangement.





## Twinnings between Secretariats and Twinned Secretariats

The secretariat of a technical committee shall be **allocated to a member body by the TMB**. The secretariat of a subcommittee shall be allocated to a member body by the parent technical committee (unless there are two or more offers to undertake the secretariat, in which case the TMB will decide). Once the secretariat of a technical committee or subcommittee has been allocated to a member body, the latter shall appoint a qualified individual as Committee Manager (**ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, Clause 1.9.1**).

The above also applies to the allocation of twinned secretariats and the appointment of Twinned Committee Managers. In the case of a twinning between a Committee Manager and Twinned Committee Manager for a technical committee, the allocation of the twinned secretariat to a member body shall be approved by the TMB. The member body to which the twinned secretariat has been allocated is then responsible for appointing a qualified individual as Committee Manager, following which the Twinning Agreement and Twinning Collaboration plan shall be negotiated and signed. These need to be submitted to the ISO/CS TPM within 3 months of the registration of the Twinning arrangement.



# Step 4

## Negotiation of the Twinning Agreement

The **Twinning Agreement template** outlines the objectives, responsibilities and training associated with the four types of twinning arrangements, as well as general expectations related to communication, financial support, periodic review, duration and termination. It is mandatory to fill in the Twinning Agreement template within 3 months of the registration of the Twinning arrangement. By signing this Agreement, the partners indicate that they agree with the key principles of twinning as outlined in this guidance document, as well as the relevant parts of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, and Consolidated ISO Supplement. The lead partner should return a signed copy of the Agreement to the TPM of the committee in question. The **Twinning Agreement template** is available for download at [www.iso.org/forms](http://www.iso.org/forms).

As the name suggests, however, this Agreement is only a template. Details of the specific twinning arrangement should be entered into the Agreement template by the two partners with a special focus on the details related to objectives, responsibilities and training.

In addition to the template Agreement, it is mandatory that – at this initial meeting – the two partners draw up a **collaboration plan** for the twinning arrangement that expands upon some of the information entered into the Twinning Agreement template and specifies such things as:

- The division of tasks and responsibilities between the two parties (human resources)
- Specific objectives that the twinned partner wishes to achieve (expected outcomes)
- Modes of communication and information sharing practices
- Performance metrics ; indicators that will be used to measure/monitor progress
- The timeline for achieving goals
- Dates for quarterly meetings

Every arrangement will be different. It is important that both partners negotiate the specific details of the Agreement and that there be a clear understanding of what one party can expect from the other.

An initial meeting between the two partners to negotiate the Twinning Agreement should be arranged as a first priority, to be followed by regular quarterly meetings.

NOTE: Meetings can be held electronically, e.g. using Zoom.

Though the format of the collaboration may vary from arrangement to arrangement, all twinning arrangements must include an annual performance assessment. The **annual performance assessment** form consists of a self-assessment by the twinned partners, an assessment by the P-members of the committee and an assessment by the TPM. The arrangements may evolve over time thanks to training and the acquisition of skills by the twinned partner. In this case, the collaboration plan- and perhaps even the objectives and expected outcomes of the twinning arrangement – will need to be updated.

The annual performance assessment allows the partners to assess how the twinning arrangement is going, whether they want to continue the arrangement or adjust their objectives.

Details of all confirmed twinning arrangements shall be made available to ISO/CS and, in the interests of openness and transparency, can be made available to ISO members upon request. In addition, the details of any arrangements shall be communicated to all P-members of the relevant ISO committee or working group to which the arrangement relates.

The maximum duration of a Twinning Agreement is five years at which point it is automatically terminated. Extensions/renewals of Twinning arrangements are not possible.



# Specific guidance

## for the four different types of twinning arrangements

### Additional guidance on P-member twinning

#### 1. Specific objectives

The specific objectives are to:

- Provide the twinned country P-member with insight into, and knowledge of, the obligations of P-members
- Provide advice and good practice on the establishment of national mirror committees and enhancing stakeholder engagement

The collaboration plan should contain metrics to measure the achievement of the objectives.

#### 2. Responsibilities

##### a. Of the lead country P-member

The lead country P-member's main responsibilities are to:

- Alert the twinned country P-member each time a vote shall be issued
- Share with the twinned country P-member information relating to these votes and other positions that may be of interest
- Explain to the twinned country P-member the structure and working methods of the committee
- Explain how national consensus can be built

- Share good practices on the establishment and running of national mirror committees
- Share good practices on stakeholder engagement

**b.** Of the twinned country P-member

The twinned country P-member's main responsibilities are to:

- Participate actively in the work of the committee
- Share with the lead country P-member information relating to votes and other positions that might be of interest

### **3. Training**

To achieve the objectives of the twinning and to allow the twinned country P-member to effectively carry out the delegated responsibilities, the lead country P-member will train the twinned country P-member in the following areas:

- Roles and obligations of the P-members in committee participation
- Use of IT tools (e.g. electronic balloting, e-committees, etc.)

## Additional guidance on Convenor twinning

### 4. Specific objectives

The specific objectives are to :

- Provide the twinned partner with the skills and experiences needed to independently assume a working group convenorship in the future (i.e. without a twinning arrangement)
- Strengthen the twinned partner's ability to support Convenors from other member bodies in its region

The collaboration plan should contain metrics to measure the achievement of the objectives.

### 5. Responsibilities of the Twinned Convenor

The Convenor retains ultimate responsibility for the convenorship of the working group (WG) as described in the **ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, and Consolidated ISO Supplement, Clause 1.12, Working groups**. However, the following responsibilities pertaining to the work of the WG can be delegated to the Twinned Convenor :

- Monitor specific work items of the WG
- Convene all or parts of meetings of the WG, at the request of the Convenor
- Assist in the secretariat-related functions associated with the working group (e.g. document preparation, circulation)

### 6. Training

To achieve the objectives of the twinning and to allow the twinned partner to effectively carry out the delegated responsibilities, the lead partner will provide training in the following areas :

- ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, and Consolidated ISO Supplement
- Leading effective meetings
- Consensus building
- Leading the management of projects in accordance with the project plan

## **Additional guidance on Chair twinning**

### **7. Specific objectives**

The specific objectives are to:

- Provide the twinned partner with the skills and experiences needed to independently assume a committee or subcommittee chairmanship in the future (i.e. without a twinning arrangement)
- Strengthen the twinned partner's ability to support other Chairs of committees and subcommittees held by the lead partner

The collaboration plan should contain metrics to measure the achievement of the objectives.

### **8. Responsibilities of the Vice-Chair**

The Chair retains ultimate responsibility for the chairmanship of the technical committee in question, as described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, and Consolidated ISO Supplement. However, the Vice-Chair shall be delegated specific tasks by the Chair and he/she should have distinct responsibilities, for example, to:

- Monitor specific work items of the committee
- Prepare/update the business plan in cooperation with the Committee Manager and Chair
- Chair all or parts of meetings, at the request of the Chair



## 9. Training

To achieve the objectives of the twinning and to allow the twinned partner to effectively carry out the delegated responsibilities, the lead partner will provide training in the following areas:

- Leading effective meetings
- Consensus building
- Leading the management of projects in accordance with the project plan

## **Additional guidance on secretariat twinning**

### **10. Specific objectives**

The specific objectives are to :

- Provide the twinned partner with the skills and experiences needed to independently assume the role of Committee Manager in the future (i.e. without a twinning arrangement)
- Strengthen the twinned partner's ability to support other secretariats held by the lead partner

The collaboration plan should contain metrics to measure the achievement of the objectives.

### **11. Responsibilities of the Twinned Committee Manager**

The Committee Manager retains ultimate responsibility for the secretariat duties for the TC, as described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1, and Consolidated ISO Supplement. However, the following responsibilities pertaining to work of the technical committee can be delegated to the Twinned Committee Manager :

- Assist in the preparation of committee meetings, including document preparation
- Assist in the management of projects under the responsibility of the committee
- Replace the Committee Manager in regional and national meetings, as requested by the Committee Manager
- Assume other duties of the Committee Manager on an ad hoc basis, as requested by the Committee Manager
- Chair all or parts of meetings (e.g. preparatory meetings), as requested by the Committee Manager
- Provide verbal reports at plenary meetings
- Promote the committee in general and in particular at the Twinned Committee Manager's national level
- Organize various committee-related activities

## 12. Training

To achieve the objectives of the twinning and to allow the twinned partner to effectively carry out the delegated responsibilities, the lead partner will provide training in the following areas:

- Management of secretariats of international technical standardization bodies, including the use of IT tools (Livelink platform), support to Chairs and Convenors, standards development procedures, communication with the TMB, ISO/CS and committee national delegations, etc.

The main topics to be covered in the training process will be:

- Development of business plans
- Management of secretariats
- Role and responsibilities of participants in the different technical bodies
- Development of International Standards, including document development and use of relevant IT tools
- Development of other deliverables
- Organization of meetings

To increase training opportunities, the twinned partner is encouraged to attend meetings of other technical committees held by the lead partner.





# Twinning, the story so far

progress and  
challenges



Despite the concept of twinning having been established for a few years, the number of actual cases being implemented is relatively low. One reason for this is that the concept of twinning has probably not been sufficiently promoted. Thus, many member bodies may not be aware of the existing opportunities. ISO/CS is currently working to remedy this situation and to make twinning more visible and accessible.

Among the twinning projects that have taken place, many have been successful and feedback collected from participating members has been used to improve this guidance document. However, as is to be expected, some members that participated in a twinning arrangement reported encountering barriers and challenges along the way. In order to help members who are considering entering into a new twinning arrangement, we have compiled below a list of these barriers or challenges, along with suggestions from past participants on how these may be overcome.

## **Challenges**

How can the challenges be overcome?

### **Miscommunication and misunderstandings**

#### **Lack of communication**

Clearly define the roles and responsibilities (division of labour) between the two partners – *including responsibilities relating to communication and information sharing* – when negotiating the Twinning Agreement and collaboration plan. This will help to minimize misunderstandings.

In the collaboration plan, also clearly define the modes and frequency of communication, making sure that each partner has the resources to access the required modes of communication.

## **Lack of IT/computer skills**

### **Insufficient access to Internet/IT tools**

An evaluation of IT skills and resources is an important part of the self-assessment. Basic IT skills and access to Internet and IT tools are necessary for effective participation in the standards development process, as much work is done by correspondence and e-communication.

If specific IT/computer skills are lacking, it would be advisable to negotiate, as part of the collaboration plan of the Twinning Agreement, that the lead partner provide some training related to the use of IT tools in standards development.

## **Cultural differences**

### **Differences in meeting techniques, observance of deadlines, ways of thinking**

Discuss expectations on both sides, in as much detail as possible, at the initial meeting to negotiate the Twinning Agreement. This should include expectations related to how meetings will be arranged/managed and how deadlines will be met.

Choosing a twinning partner with a similar culture or from the same geographical region (where countries may already be familiar with each other's cultures) may allow participants to avoid this challenge.

### **Language barrier**

#### **Insufficient English-language skills**

An evaluation of English-language skills is another important part of the self-assessment. If language skills are insufficient for effective communication and comprehension of committee work, further language training should take place before a Twinning Arrangement is considered.

## **Insufficient financial resources**

### **Lack of resources for full participation on the part of the twinned member (e.g. for travel to attend meetings)**

*An evaluation of financial resources should form part of the self-assessment.*

If it is evident (or likely to become the case) that financial resources will be lacking, the twinned partner should discuss this with the lead partner as early as possible. There is no obligation for the lead partner to provide financial aid, but this can be discussed on a case-by-case basis between the partners and other sources may also need to be considered.

It is best that any financial arrangement be clearly outlined in the Twinning Agreement signed by both parties in the very beginning. Financial support should not be considered without objectives. The parties should agree on the specifics of how the financial support will be used to support participation in the twinning.

## **Staff turnover**

Fluctuation of staff during the twinning arrangement

Frequently changing the staff members who are participating in the twinning arrangement on one or both sides can lead to inefficiencies and loss of knowledge.

To ensure the sustainable transfer of knowledge, it is recommended that both partners agree at the outset on the group of people to be engaged in the twinning arrangement, and that these people commit to the role for the duration of the twinning arrangement.

### **Useful links**

Twinning forms and templates are available for download from ISO online at:

#### **Twinning request form :**

- Secretariat or Chair
- WG Convenor
- P-member

#### **Twinning Agreement template**

#### **Twinning collaboration plan template**

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ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is an independent, non-governmental international organization with a membership of 164\* national standards bodies. Through its members, it brings together experts to share knowledge and develop voluntary, consensus-based, market-relevant International Standards that support innovation and provide solutions to global challenges.

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