

Twinning between NITAGs in the Americas



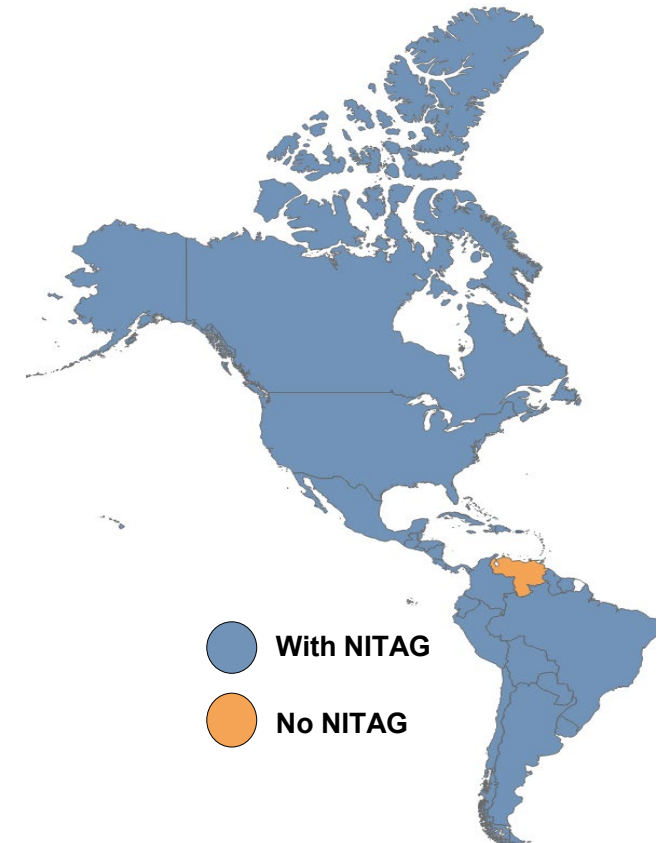
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GNN Webinar
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NITAGs in the Americas, 2025

Year Created	45 Countries	24 NITAGs
1964	CANADA, UNITED STATES	National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)
1985	URUGUAY	National Advisory Commission on Vaccination (CNAV)
1989	CUBA	National Committee on Immunization Practices (NCPI)
1991	BRAZIL, MEXICO	Câmara Técnica de Assessoramento em Imunizações (CTAI) Technical Advisory Group on Vaccination (TAGV)
1999	HONDURAS	National Advisory Council on Immunization (NACI)
2000	ARGENTINA, BOLIVIA	National Commission on Immunization (CoNaIn) National Immunization Committee (CNI)
2001	COSTA RICA, EL SALVADOR, PANAMA, PARAGUAY, PARAGUAY	National Commission on Vaccination and Epidemiology (CNVE) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (NITAG) National Advisory Commission on Immunization Practices (CONAPI) Technical Advisory Council on Immunization (COTENAI)
2003	ECUADOR	National Immunization Committee (CNI)
2004	PERU, NICARAGUA	Advisory Committee on Immunization (CCI) National Committee on Immunization Practices (CNPI)
2009	CHILE, COLOMBIA	Advisory Committee on Vaccines and Immunizations (CAVEI) National Committee on Immunization Practices (CNPI)
2013	GUATEMALA	National Advisory Council on Immunization (CONAPI)
2018	22 Caribbean countries & territories	Caribbean Immunization Technical Advisory Group (CiTAG)
2019	HAITI	Groupe Consultatif Technique sur la Vaccination (GTCV)
2021	BELIZE	National Immunization Technical Advisory Group (NITAG)
2022	SURINAME	Nationale Immunisatie Technische Adviesgroep (NITAG)
2024	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	National Technical Advisory Committee on Immunizations (CNATI)

All countries have a NITAG except one



Source: eJRF country reports, 2024 | 1 June 2025

Collaborations between NITAGs over the years

NITAG chairs participation to RITAG meetings (2000 - 2019)

Exchanges between mature and recently established NITAGs (2011 - 2015)

Central American NITAG Network meetings (2016 - 2025)

GNN participation (2017 – 2025)



Evidence-based decision making

TAG Recommendations – 2019

Governments should support their NITAGs, which play a critical role in providing independent expertise and guidance that enhance and lend credibility to immunization programs.

TAG commends countries and territories for their progress in establishing NITAGs and recognizes their role in strengthening evidence-based decision making, program sustainability, and promoting confidence in immunization.

TAG stresses that NITAGs must be independent and have written policies for the declaration and management of potential conflicts of interest.

TAG encourages Member States with an established NITAG to document the lessons they have learned and requests PAHO to facilitate exchanges and support among NITAGs, both within the Region and globally.

NITAG needs assessment, 2020

- **Increase the exchange of experiences and support among NITAGs in the region.**
 - **Receiving more regionally adapted guidelines from neighboring countries**
 - For more publications and guidelines in Spanish and Portuguese, please visit
 - Provide a digital space for NITAGs to communicate and exchange immunization information in real time.
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- Improve the understanding of the role of the NITAG by the EPI managers
 - Promoting the legal or administrative basis of the NITAG
 - Strengthen NITAG's capacity to advise on immunization issues.
 - Provide more technical training on evidence generation to strengthen evidence-based decision making.
 - Improving communication between the NITAG and stakeholders

Launch of the Regional NITAG Network (RNA), Oct 2022

Vision

An environment in which each country in the Americas easily exchanges information on immunization policies and practices and collaborates and learns from others to achieve strong and sustainable national immunization programs.

MISSION

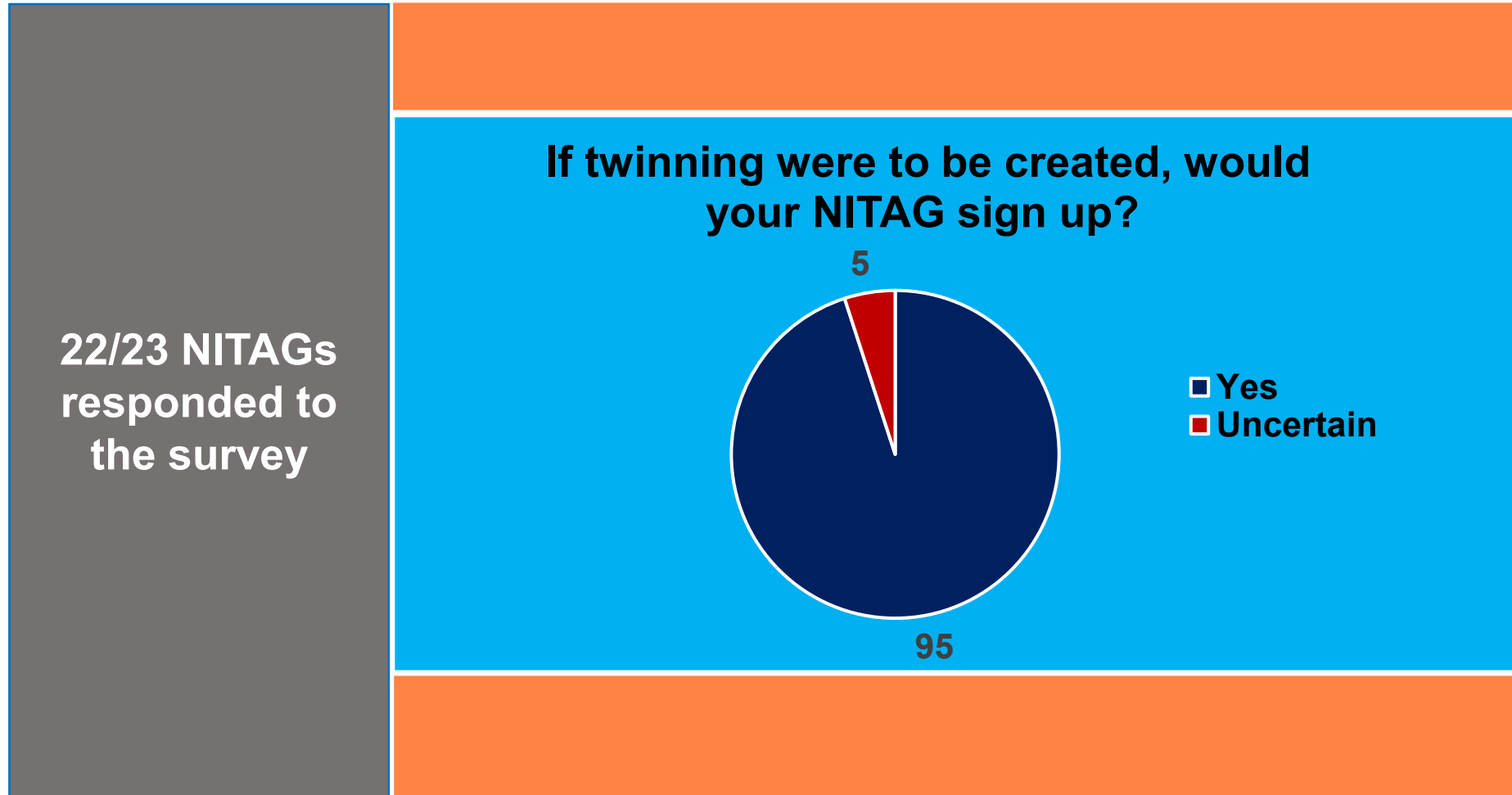
Increase the capacity of NITAGs of the Americas to effectively formulate evidence-based immunization recommendations through regional collaboration and cooperation.

About

- Managed by PAHO Headquarters
- Spreading across the United States
- Managed by a Board of Directors made up of nine representatives
- Open to all NITAGs and partners interested in NITAGs in the region.
- Members share
 - Knowledge
 - Technical reviews
 - Lessons learned
 - Trends and innovations

Twinning Programs Survey, 2023

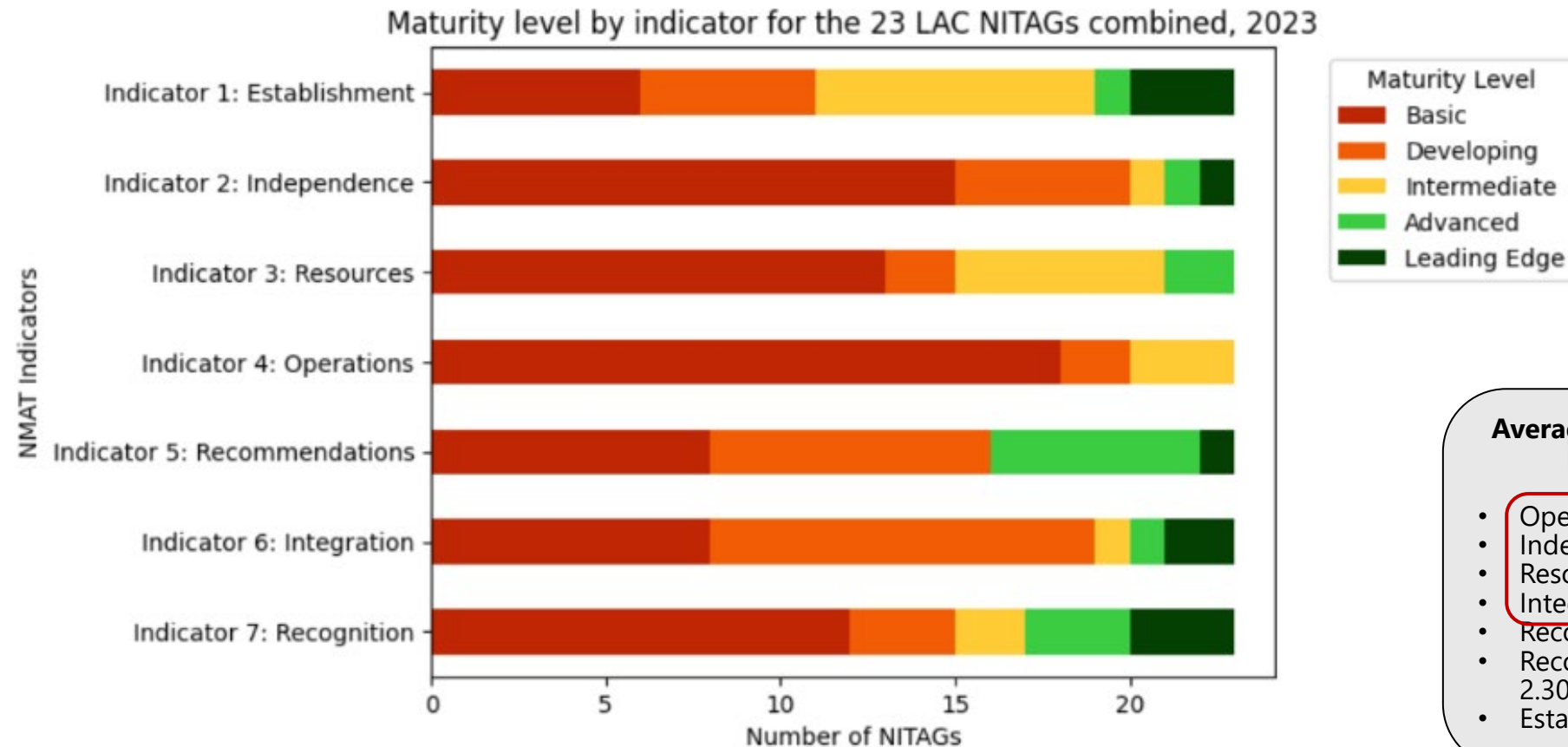
21 NITAGs would sign up "without hesitation" for a twinning program.



- Mexico did not respond to the survey.
- Uruguay is not sure about signing

Assessment of 23 NITAGs using the Maturity Assessment Tool (NMAT)

Most NITAGs are Basic or Developing in all indicators except indicator 1 (*establishment & composition*)

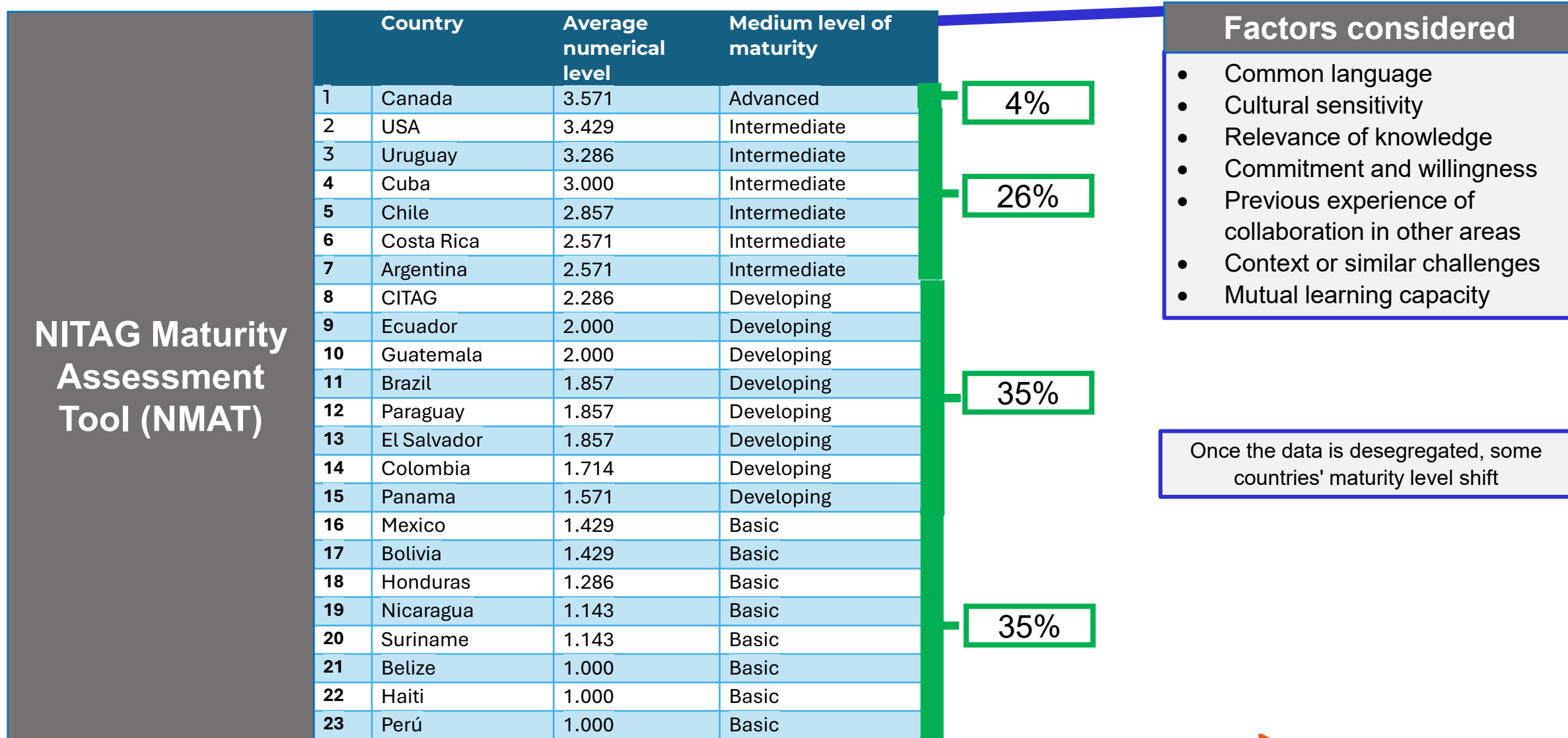


Average maturity levels by indicator

- Operations: 1.35
- Independence: 1.61
- Resources: 1.87
- Integration: 2.04
- Recognition: 2.22
- Recommendations: 2.30
- Establishment: 2.57

- Indicators 2, 3, and 4 have the highest proportion of NITAGs at the Basic level.
- NITAGs show a higher level of maturity in the indicators related to establishment, formulating recommendations, and stakeholder recognition.

Average level of NITAG maturity by country, 2023



Twinning Group Suggestions

Presented during the second regional meeting of the NITAGs in Brazil, December 2023

Argentina & Ecuador	Intermediate - Developing
Caribbean & Belize/Suriname	Developing - Basic/Basic
Costa Rica & Bolivia	Intermediate - Basic
Cuba & Nicaragua	Intermediate - Basic
Chile & Paraguay	Intermediate - Developing
Colombia & Uruguay	Developing - Developing
El Salvador & Panama	Developing - Developing
USA & Guatemala	Intermediate - Developing
Honduras & Mexico	Basic - Basic
Canada & Haiti	Advanced - Basic
Brazil & Peru	Developing - Basic

RNA Board of Directors

- Selected in July 2022
- Composed of 9 representatives
- Rotation every 3-4 years
- Voluntary position
- President: Elected by consensus
- President: Also, a member of GNN
- One AHG member serves as co-chair or member



President and co-president: Drs Mario Melgar, Pablo Bonvehí

Members: Drs. Daniel Stecher, Eduardo Verne, Greta Munoz, Rakesh Bansie, Renato Kfour, Renato Valenzuela, Tracy Evans-Gilbert.

- Establishing RNA priorities
- Develops annual activity plans
- Schedules meetings
- Formulates and implements fundraising strategies.
- Oversees periodic evaluations of the network
- Recommend NMAT assessment strategies
- Contribution to the development of the twinning survey
- Twinning strategies and methodologies



Twining between NITAGs

January 2024 - June 2025

Twining	Met	Type of twinning	Duration
1. Canada & Haiti	13	NITAG & Secretariat	2 years
2. Chile & Paraguay	11	Working group	5 years
3. USA & Guatemala	11	Secretariat & Working Group	3 years
4. Argentina & Ecuador	5	NITAG	1 year
5. Caribbean & Belize Suriname	5	NITAG	∞ years
6. Bolivia & Costa Rica	5	NITAG & Secretariat	2 years
7. Cuba & Nicaragua	3	NITAG & Secretariat	TBD
8. Brazil & Peru	3	NITAG & Secretariat	TBD
9. Colombia & Uruguay	3	NITAG & Secretariat	TBD
10. El Salvador & Panama	4	TBD	TBD
11. Honduras & Mexico	1	TBD	TBD
12. Brazil & Cape Verde	1	TBD	TBD

Frequency of meetings vary from once a month to once a year

Topics Discussed in Twinning Meetings

- Legal basis, structure, function, location, and organizational support
- Current priorities and challenges
- Standard operating procedures and administrative processes (conflicts of interest...)
- Policy and challenges in interaction with the pharmaceutical industry
- Data on the burden of disease of interest
- How the Evidence to Recommendation (EtR) Framework is used for a vaccine
- Analyze the results of the NITAG self-assessment and their level of maturity
- Identify priorities and define next steps to strengthen the twinning

Lessons Learned

Twinning Experiences

- Innovative strategy to strengthen evidence-informed immunization policy
- Pan Americanism and unity
- Relationship between NITAGs and their secretariat is key
- Secretariat support determines long term commitment and sustainability
- Political will and dynamics influence twinning establishment and effectiveness
- PAHO plays an important role in providing coordinating and/or financial support



Argentina-Ecuador



Chile-Paraguay



Guatemala-United States



The world changes as networks of relationships form among people who discover they share a common cause and vision of what's possible.

Margaret Wheatley and Deborah Frieze

THANK YOU

