

Guidance on Twinning between National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups (NITAGs)

Developed and endorsed in January 2024, revised in August 2025.

Preamble

Evidence-based, independent, transparent, and timely recommendations made by National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups (NITAGs) are instrumental to the success of both current and future immunization programmes. NITAGs advise health authorities on the immunization schedule, the definition of target and at-risk population and, in certain cases, the implementation of national immunization policies and strategies. This most commonly involves new vaccine introductions across all age groups and updates to existing vaccination schedules. Other key areas of focus include monitoring vaccine-preventable disease epidemiology and determining evidence gaps (e.g., in disease surveillance) and outbreak response. NITAGs can also have an important public-facing role, advocating for vaccines on behalf of populations and providing an authoritative and independent voice on issues such as vaccine safety or social and behavioural drivers.

NITAGs are usually supported by secretariats, whose roles include synthesizing relevant evidence for NITAG review, preparing meeting agendas and minutes, and contributing to agenda-setting. Many countries do not have formally appointed secretariats, and these roles may be performed by NITAG members or individuals from other institutions, for example within the immunization department of the Ministry of Health.

It is recommended that all countries have a NITAG to ensure policies are data-driven and country-owned, and that the NITAG should meet the following 6 functionality criteria:

- Have a legal or administrative basis,
- Have formal terms of reference,
- Members should disclose their interests,
- At least 5 areas of expertise should be represented,
- Meet at least once a year, and
- Agenda and background documents should be circulated one week prior to the meeting.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and partners have been supporting the establishment and strengthening of NITAGs since 2010. The past decade has seen remarkable progress in the number of NITAGs globally, increasing from 92 in 2010 to 170 in 2023, with 77% meeting the six process criteria relating to NITAG functionality.¹ However, further progress needs to be made to strengthen NITAGs beyond the six functionality criteria and to ensure sustainability of NITAGs over time.

One strategy to further strengthen NITAGs globally is through institutional twinning between NITAGs and/or their secretariats. This manual gives a brief description of the concept of twinning and how to implement the approach in the context of NITAGs.

¹ Henaff, L., Dumolard, L., Bura, V., Sume, G. E., Ndiaye, S., et al. *Strengthening National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups: Twelve years of progress (2012–2023)*. *Vaccines* **2025**, 13(1), 80; <https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines13010080>

1. Principles and objectives

Definition

Whilst no specific definition exists for NITAG twinning, there are useful definitions of twinning in other domains. Cadée et al² provides an operational definition of twinning in healthcare as *“a cross-cultural, reciprocal process where two groups of people work together to achieve joint goals.”* They identified that improvement through twinning occurred through empowerment, with key attributes of twinning being reciprocity, building of personal relationships, and a dynamic process between two organizations across different cultures. The American International Health Alliance additionally describes twinning as involving *“professional exchanges and mentoring for the effective sharing of information, knowledge, and technology,”* and twinning as best helping to *“develop inherently sustainable health system capacity because it encourages local ownership and synergy with host country goals and strategies from day one.”*

WHO has fostered and coordinated twinning between NITAGs for several years.⁴ The WHO Regional Offices for the Americas and Europe have facilitated twinning arrangements between long-established and recently formed NITAGs. Between 2011 and 2015, several Latin American and Caribbean countries were invited to attend meetings of the United States’ Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). Additionally, between 2014 and 2018, NITAG representatives from Albania, Armenia, Belarus and Georgia participated in mutual visits with the United Kingdom’s Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunization (JCVI), and the Health Council of the Netherlands to share best practices. Other successful twinning programs include the collaboration between the Australian National Centre of Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS)- Australia’s technical NITAG secretariat, and the Timor Leste NITAG, as well as the collaboration between the Mozambique NITAG and the newly established NITAG of Angola.

Types of twinning

The type of twinning depends on the specific goals, resources, and preferences of the NITAGs involved. For example, it may involve more than two NITAGs or be limited to specific sections of the NITAG (e.g. secretariat, Working Group). The flexibility in twinning arrangements also allows for combination of different types of twinning over time that can change based on updated needs. Effective partnerships are ideally developed and sustained over several years (e.g., 3-5 years), although they may be shorter (e.g., one year) or focused on specific outputs (e.g., research project, issuance of one policy recommendation).

Twinning stands out for its long-term, bidirectional collaboration and institutional focus. Unlike direct technical assistance or North-South exchanges, which often face power imbalance critiques, twinning

² Cadée, F., Nieuwenhuijze, M. J., Lagro-Janssen, A. L. M., & De Vries, R. (2016). The state of the art of twinning: A concept analysis of twinning in healthcare. *Globalization and Health*, 12(1), 66. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12992-016-0205-5>

promotes equal partnerships with shared leadership. While peer-to-peer learning involves mutual exchange, it typically occurs at a smaller, individual scale³.

Objectives

Objectives of a NITAG twinning arrangement can vary depending on the context and the specific goals of the collaboration. However, some common objectives include:

- **Knowledge Exchange:** Facilitate the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and best practices between NITAGs and/or related institutions.
- **Capacity Building:** Enhance the technical capacity and capabilities of both NITAGs through mutual learning and skill development.
- **Policy Advice Development:** Contribute to the development and refinement of evidence-based recommendations and strategies by sharing policy-making experiences, evidence and approaches.
- **Quality Improvement:** Improve the quality of the NITAG by evaluating the performance of current systems and processes and implementing continuous improvement initiatives.
- **Networking and Partnerships:** Foster relationships between NITAGs, institutions hosting the secretariat and MoH to promote long-term peer support and other collaborations, e.g. research.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Collaborate on advocacy efforts to promote certain policies or initiatives, including efforts to enhance recognition of the role of NITAGs, which may contribute to NITAG impact.

2. Pairing

Pairing refers to the initial stage of the twinning process, involving the identification and matching of two NITAGs that will engage in the twinning. Coordinators oversee setting up and monitoring the twinning. They could be the NITAG, WHO regional or country offices, or technical agencies leading the twinning program.

Identifying interest

Coordinating institutions such as WHO regional offices or a NITAG interested in initiating a NITAG twinning program should consider distributing a brief survey (see Annex 1), taking no more than 10 minutes, to NITAG secretariats and chairs to gauge their interest in twinning.

Selecting the pairing

Coordinators should consider the following criteria to identify pairs:

³ Fjellström, H., Sandberg, E., Blomgren, J., Grahn, M., Hanson, F., Ackon, N., Baidoo, G., Nordström, L., & Bogren, M. (2025). A twinning initiative between midwife associations in Ghana and Sweden: A process evaluation study. *Global Health Action*, 18(1), 2457824. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16549716.2025.2457824>

- **Common language:** Effective communication is crucial for a successful twinning partnership. Consider partners with a common language or strong understanding of one of the languages.
- **Previous experience in working together** (including in fields unrelated to immunization): Building on previous relationships can leverage existing trust.
- **Similar context or challenges:** Look for NITAGs facing similar challenges or working in comparable contexts. This similarity can enhance the effectiveness of knowledge exchange and collaboration as both parties can relate to each other's experiences.
- **Complementary strengths:** Seek a NITAG with strengths and capabilities that complement your NITAG's weaknesses or gaps. This can be identified through the NITAG Maturity Assessment results.
- **Cultural aspects:** Consider factors related to cultural sensitivities to ensure cultural safety and potential applicability.
- **Commitment and willingness:** Assess the commitment and willingness of NITAGs to engage within a specific timeframe and reciprocal relationship. A successful twinning arrangement requires dedication from both parties.
- **Capacity for mutual learning:** Look for NITAGs who are open to mutual learning. A successful twinning arrangement involves a two-way exchange of knowledge, experiences, and best practices.

The coordinator should oversee matching the NITAGs based on the survey results and the criteria listed above. The coordinator may establish a selection committee with country expertise to look at the different NITAGs and survey results.

3. Stepped approach

Initiating the relationship

An initial orientation teleconference, organized by the coordinators, can serve as the starting point to build the relationship. Coordinators should set up a meeting with all or key members who will be involved in the twinning project. The orientation teleconference will help clarify and discuss:

- The twinning purpose
- The expected roles, responsibilities and key points of contact on each side of the twinning parties
- Goals to be established within the set timeframe
- Communication channels and preferred methods for ongoing collaboration
- Any potential challenges which may need to be considered or mitigated

A needs analysis of the twinning institutions should be conducted after the first orientation meeting to help shape the scope of the twinning. The needs analysis can be done through surveys or key informant interviews. If the budget allows, the first in-person travel could serve as a scoping visit and would ideally include attendance at a NITAG meeting. In the context of twinning between an experienced NITAG and a recently established one, it would be preferable to visit the recently established NITAG to better understand the scope of work and identify areas where the experienced NITAG can provide support. It is

recommended to complete the NITAG Maturity Assessment Tool ([NMAT](#)) at the outset of the project, to guide priorities and assist with future impact evaluation.

Formalizing the relationship

Formalizing the relationship through terms of references (ToR) or a memorandum of understanding is not mandatory and should not be a pre-requisite for initiating collaboration or identifying activities. In fact, it may be challenging to formalize such agreements early on if the NITAGs have not yet had the opportunity to determine objectives based on each NITAGs needs and experiences. However, once trust and shared goals are established, formalizing the twinning through ToR and an institutional agreement can provide clarity, strengthen accountability, and support long-term sustainability. It also reinforces commitment, facilitates resource mobilization, and provides a strong foundation for tracking progress and measuring impact.

Twinned NITAGs are recommended to develop a formal ToR to define the scope of work for the project and assign roles and responsibilities to individuals and institutions. The ToR serves as a baseline, listing vital information about the twinning arrangements, such as its purpose, duration, participating members, frequency of meetings, level of administrative support, expected outcomes and dispute resolution processes. The ToR may be updated as needed with the agreement of all parties involved. Annex 2 provides an example that can be adapted to formalize the relationship.

Once the ToR has been endorsed, the relationship could be formalized through written agreements, including signature of an institutional agreement with a confidentiality clause (see Annexes 2 and 3). The formalization of the relationship could also allow the introduction of the twinning project to key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Health, NITAG members, WHO, funders (e.g., GAVI), and other technical partners.

Developing a workplan

An initial work plan should be developed with clearly defined goals, activities, and timelines (see Annex 3).

Potential activities listed in the workplan could include:

- 1) Technical support:
 - Assist in establishing the NITAG structure, function, legal foundation, and operations,
 - Determine specific policy or vaccines topics to include in the NITAG workplan,
 - Support the development of NITAG outputs such as clinical guidelines,
- 2) Delivering training on:
 - NITAG structure, function, legal foundation, and operations,
 - Evidence-Based Decision Making,
 - Vaccinology
- 3) Working together
 - Jointly address a similar policy question using the Evidence to Recommendation (EtR) process
 - Connect twinned NITAGs with other external partners and create synergies
 - Build research capacity through collaborative research initiatives

- Share experiences on similar challenges such as bottlenecks following recommendations

The workplan should be developed and updated to align with the defined goals of the twinning project. It constitutes a living document and must regularly be updated considering progress made, unforeseen developments and availability of institution members. The initial and the subsequent updates of the workplan should be formalized at each meeting of the twinning working group.

The workplan should explicitly outline all goals associated with detailed activities, specifying the sequence and deadlines for their accomplishment. Goals must be specific and clear, in order to facilitate a clear assessment of their fulfillment.

Financing

Institutions that wish to participate in a twinning project are encouraged to apply for financing from governments or NGOs. Partners such as WHO or GAVI may also have dedicated funding to sponsor twinning activities. NITAGs from high-income countries taking part in the twinning may be able to support the logistics of in-country visits (e.g., venue, transport, catering).

4. Management and monitoring

The twinning working group

The implementation of each twinning project may be overseen by a twinning working group (TWG). The composition may vary depending on the type of twinning. The TWG should include a lead, the NITAG chairs and NITAG secretariats from both sides or any other designated focal points from each NITAG. The TWG may also include representatives from the Ministry of Health, if distinct from the NITAG secretariat. Health ministries should be closely engaged where possible, and consideration given to expanding the twinning to other areas of the immunization program.

Ideally, the lead should be a member of the NITAG Secretariat. However, in the case of newly established NITAGs or those without a dedicated secretariat, the coordinator may instead be a member of the NITAG itself, the Ministry of Health (even if not part of the Secretariat), or a representative from a technical or donor organization such as WHO or Gavi. The support of a coordinator is critical in managing and monitoring a TWG, as the coordinator plays a central role in scheduling and planning meetings, tracking progress, facilitating communication, and preparing documentation and progress updates.

To maintain a comprehensive perspective within twinned NITAGs, it is advisable to periodically invite other relevant technical organizations and donors. This approach helps ensure coherence and coordination between the twinning project and other related initiatives. Consequently, the TWG may involve organizations actively engaged in funding or enhancing NITAGs, such as GAVI, UNICEF, and WHO, or organizations that serve as liaison members in the NITAG.

The primary responsibilities of the TWG include reviewing progress and accomplishments in relation to the defined results, fostering effective coordination among stakeholders, and revising the workplan along with identifying focal points and experts set to carry out upcoming activities.

Regular engagement

The TWG should meet regularly, e.g., monthly or bimonthly and report to the coordinator when there is one at defined intervals. The report includes progress of activities, unforeseen challenges and adherence to the workplan. The workplan and budget should be reviewed and revised if needed.

Documentation

Twinning activities should be systematically documented through meeting minutes and concise activity reports to ensure transparency, continuity, and institutional learning. Whenever appropriate and in line with the confidentiality agreement, these documents could be shared with relevant stakeholders to foster collaboration, accountability, and visibility of the partnership's progress.

However, it's important to recognize that the twinning arrangement represents a shared space between the partnering institutions. As such, not all documents or communications need to be shared with all stakeholders. Some materials may remain internal to respect the collaborative nature of the twinning, protect sensitive information, and allow for open, trust-based exchanges between the partners.

Duration

The duration of the twinning project may vary depending on the type of twinning, typically between one to five years. In all cases, the execution of a twinning project must respect the deadlines set in the initial agreement.

The implementation period corresponds to the time allocated to the execution of the project activities and the achievement of the mandatory results/outputs. Following the end of the implementation period, the twinning partners should prepare a final report and draft a final evaluation of the project.

Risks analysis

To proactively address and potentially prevent issues during the implementation of a twinning project, all partners, especially the TWG, must have a comprehensive understanding of the assumptions, risks, and constraints related to the activities undertaken. Consequently, the workplan should include a risk analysis with clear references to all factors that could affect the optimal execution of each activity, along with suggested remedies and/or precautionary measures.

Potential risks include:

- Human resources risks including staff turnover and recruitment difficulties,
- Disease outbreak risks
- Country safety,
- Financial mismanagement,
- Political risks e.g., change in leadership/policy priorities,
- Lack of sharing of information, and
- Concerns around confidentiality.

5. Project budget

A budget should be developed with estimated costs for:

- Staff remuneration, including the working group, administrative support and invited experts,

- Travel costs for project activities including transport, accommodation, per diem allowances, insurance, and visa,
- Translation/interpretation services,
- Access to databases for evidence review,
- Program support costs/fees e.g., for administrating institutions, and
- Miscellaneous costs.

The budget should be reviewed and updated periodically.

6. Evaluation

Progress review survey

At agreed intervals, (for e.g., monthly for short twinning, or mid-term/ yearly for longer twinning) a progress review survey should be completed by both parties. The survey could include some of the following elements:

- Commitment of each twinning partner,
- Relevance of the project to the needs of the NITAG,
- Potential barriers and constraints faced by the NITAG/s involved,
- Benefits of the initiative,
- Sustainability of the proposed initiatives,
- Networking benefits relating to the type of links that have been established with various partners, and
- Transferability of the activities so that any lessons learnt can be shared with others for additional positive outcomes
- Achievement of the twinning goals and workplan

A Progress Review Survey is included in Annex 5.

The Impact Framework

At the end of the project, the impact of the twinning should be assessed and recorded. It is advisable to gather data from the TWG leads of each paired NITAG, the meeting minutes and the progress review survey. For the final category—personal benefits and job satisfaction—a questionnaire should be distributed to all NITAG members who took part in the twinning initiative.

Category	Indicator	Data collection methods
Operations	Developed or revised operational documents (SoP, Col, ToR)	Document analysis
	Changes in structure (secretariat, working group, members)	Stakeholder feedback Changes in ToR and SoP
	Increased maturity of NITAG	NMAT at the start and at the end of the project
Recommendation-making	Number of policy recommendations issued with the support of the twinning	Policy recommendations NITAG member/secretariat feedback

	Use of/ or change in standardized EtR framework	Policy recommendations and background tables
	Number of commissioned research projects or identified research needs (modelling, economic studies, surveillance)	Progress review survey and interview
Organization & national benefits	Number of trainings provided through the twinning	Progress review survey & meeting reports
	Number of NITAG members and other people involved in policy-making trained	LoPs
	Number of research outputs (e.g., abstracts, articles, conference presentation)	Document analysis
	New or updated clinical guidelines as a result of the twinning	Document analysis
	New partnership/collaboration created in other areas	Stakeholder feedback
Personal benefits & job satisfaction	Interpersonal fit at work	Questionnaire
	Thriving at work	
	Feeling of competency in their role	
	Desire for involvement in their role	

Annex 6 contains a questionnaire to assess job satisfaction. NITAG members and the secretariat are encouraged to complete it both at the start and at the conclusion of the twinning program to measure changes over time.

7. Suspension and/or termination

Under exceptional circumstances, a NITAG may suspend or terminate the twinning arrangement. Before making such a decision, it is essential to thoroughly assess the situation and consult all relevant parties. Open communication, transparency, and a clearly defined exit strategy are critical to ensure a smooth and constructive process. The NITAG initiating the suspension or termination must promptly notify the other NITAG and the coordinator, clearly explaining the reasons for the decision and, in the case of a suspension, indicating the expected duration.

The twinning project may be suspended or terminated prematurely for various reasons, e.g.,

- Lack of commitment or issues in communication,
- Geopolitical factors,
- Change in the structure or composition of a NITAG,
- Non-compliance with the signed agreements or breach of confidentiality,
- Unforeseen events, such as public health emergencies,
- Discontinuation of funding.

8. Communication and promotion

If agreed by both NITAGs involved, a report on the twinning project could be presented in various forums such as partners' meetings, regional NITAG workshops, WHO meetings or the Global NITAG Network meeting. Effectively promoting the twinning project is vital to recognize the contributions and endeavors of the involved experts, underscore the partnership's impact, share lessons learned, and encourage other NITAGs to participate in similar initiatives. Additionally, the twinning report can be posted on the NITAG resource center and, where applicable, on Regional NITAG platforms.

The dissemination of the work can also be done through the publication of peer-reviewed articles in relevant journals.

Annex 7 provides the twinning reporting tool.

9. Annexes

Annex 1: Survey to identify interest

Survey to establish a twinning program between NITAGs

This survey aims to find out about your NITAGs preference in being involved in a NITAG Twinning experience supported by (name the coordinator). The responses will be used to guide twinning arrangements between interested NITAGs.

It is exclusively for the NITAG Chair and Secretariat to complete together and submit only one form for each country.

The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete and involves branching of questions based on your response.

The survey is completely voluntary.

1. Do you think a twinning program would be of interest to your NITAG?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Uncertain

Specify:

2. For what areas would your NITAG like support through twinning?

- ☐ Establishment and composition
- ☐ Independence and non-bias
- ☐ Secretariat support and resources
- ☐ Operations (e.g., SOPs, evaluation, etc.)
- ☐ Making evidence-based recommendations
- ☐ Integration into policy-making processes
- ☐ Stakeholder recognition
- ☐ Other skills (soft skills), specify:

NB: The categories listed above correspond to the indicators used in the NITAG Maturity Assessment Tool (NMAT) evaluation. You can find the definitions [here](#)

3. For what areas would your NITAG be willing to provide support through a twinning program?

- ☐ Establishment and composition
- ☐ Independence and non-bias
- ☐ Secretariat support and resources

- ☐ Operations (e.g., SOPs, evaluation, etc.)
- ☐ Making evidence-based recommendations
- ☐ Integration into policy-making processes
- ☐ Stakeholder recognition
- ☐ Other skills (soft skills), specify:

4. What are your NITAG expectations of a twinning program?

- ☐ Establish a long-term relationship with another NITAG
- ☐ Have the opportunity to engage in group interactions with multiple experts to gain different perspectives.
- ☐ To help improve the knowledge, skills, and capacities of another NITAG on a specific aspect/project
- ☐ Have a better understanding of vaccine policy development in another country.
- ☐ Other, please specify:

5. If your NITAG were to participate in a twinning program, how much time would it be willing to commit to it (on average per week)?

- ☐ 1-2 hours per week
- ☐ 1-2 hours every two weeks
- ☐ 1-2 hours per month
- ☐ 1-2 hours every quarter
- Other (please specify):

6. If your NITAG were to participate in a twinning program, would it be willing to invite representatives of the twinned NITAG (e.g., chair, secretariat, designated members) to participate in one or more of your NITAG meetings in person or virtually?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Uncertain
- Specify:

7. If your NITAG were to participate in a twinning, would representatives (chair, secretariat, designated members) be willing to participate in one or more NITAG meetings of the twinned NITAG in person or virtually?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Uncertain
- Specify:

8. If your NITAG were to participate in a twinning program, what modality would it prefer?

☐ In person

☐ Virtual

☐ Hybrid

Specify:

9. How would your NITAG rate its motivation to participate in a twinning? If not motivated, specify potential barriers to participation.

☐ Motivated and enthusiastic

☐ Rather motivated

☐ Not motivated

Specify:

10. Other Comments:

Annex 2: Twinning Partnership Agreement

Twining Partnership Agreement

between the NITAGs of

Click here to enter country A and *Click here to enter country B*

Period of Twinning Partnership

From *Click here to enter start date* to *Click here to enter end date*

NITAG Chair, *Click here to enter country*

Name: *Click here to enter text*

Signature: *Click here to enter text*

Date: *Click here to enter text*

NITAG Chair, *Click here to enter country*

Name: *Click here to enter text*

Signature: *Click here to enter text*

Date: *Click here to enter text*

Contents

1. Background	173
2. Document purpose	173
3. Key principle and confidentiality	173
4. Twinning arrangements	173

4.1	Type of twinning.....	173
4.2	Goal.....	173
4.3	Objectives of twinning	184
4.4	Scope of the twinning	184
4.5	Terms of reference of the twinning	195
4.6	Expected outcomes	195
5.	Duration	195
6.	Modality.....	195
7.	Oversight.....	195
8.	Monitoring and evaluation	206
9.	Workplan	206
10.	Budget.....	206
11.	Risks and mitigation	206
12.	Suspension and termination	217
13.	Annexes.....	217

1. Background

National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups (NITAGs) are an independent group of national experts that advise the Ministry of Health on vaccines and immunizations. All 22 countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) have NITAGs with varying functionality and maturity levels.

One strategy adopted by the World Health Organization (WHO) to further enhance NITAGs globally is through institutional twinning between NITAGs and/or their secretariats. Twinning is a mutually beneficial partnership between at least two NITAGs and/or their secretariats that aims to improve the overall performance and output of participating NITAGs through mutual peer learning experiences.

NITAGs in the EMR that agree to be twinned require three pre-requisites:

- Having conducted at least one NITAG evaluation assessment using the NITAG Maturity Assessment Tool (NMAT)
- Participated in the Regional Twinning Survey
- Preparing a Twinning Partnership Agreement

After the information shared by the regional office on Twinning, including the webinar in March 2025, the NITAGs of **Enter country name** and **Enter Country name** have agreed to be twinned.

2. Document purpose

The purpose of this Twinning Partnership Agreement document is to outline the collaborative efforts and mutual areas of work between the two NITAGs, over a given period of time, using the WHO global NITAG Twinning guidance as a foundation⁴. This is a non-legally binding agreement and does not create enforceable obligations

3. Key principle and confidentiality

Twinning involves a mutually beneficial collaboration between at least two NITAGs and/or their secretariats, fostered through regular, meaningful, and respectful exchanges and engagements. Maintaining confidentiality is essential to building the trust necessary for a successful twinning relationship.

4. Twinning arrangements

4.1 Type of twinning *(choose as appropriate and delete those that do not apply)*

The Twinning will be between:

- NITAG & Secretariat **Enter country name** AND NITAG & Secretariat **Enter country name**
- NITAG **Enter country name** AND NITAG **Enter country name**
- Secretariat of **Enter country name** AND NITAG of **Enter country name**

4.2 Goal *(indicate in writing, the goal(s) of the twinning)*

⁴ World Health Organization. Guidance on twinning between National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups (NITAGs). Developed and endorsed in January 2024, revised August 2024

4.3 Objectives of twinning *(keep or modify as appropriate, delete those that do not apply, add additional if required)*

- Knowledge exchange: Facilitate the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and best practices between NITAGs and/or related institutions.
- Capacity building: Enhance the technical capacity and capabilities of both NITAGs through mutual learning and skill development.
- Institutional strengthening: Strengthen the institutional strategic and/or operational capacity of participating NITAGs or institutions by evaluating governance and operations to identify opportunities for improvement.
- Problem solving: Collaboratively address challenges and solve problems by leveraging the combined strengths and experiences of the twinning partners.
- Quality improvement: Improve the quality of the NITAG processes by evaluating the performance of current systems and processes and implementing continuous improvement initiatives.
- Networking and partnerships: Expand professional networks and foster long-term partnerships between organizations or institutions.
- Policy advice development: Contribute to the development and refinement of evidence-based recommendations and strategies by sharing policy-making experiences, resources and approaches.
- Policy advocacy: Collaborate on advocacy efforts to promote certain policies or initiatives, including efforts to enhance recognition of role of NITAGs, which may contribute to NITAG impact.
- Peer support: Create a platform for peer support where organizations facing similar challenges can learn from each other's experiences and successes.
- *Add as appropriate, be as clear as possible*

4.4 Scope of the twinning *(keep or modify as appropriate, delete those that do not apply, add additional if required)*

The scope of the twinning will include the areas of NITAG:

- Establishment and composition (official status, terms of reference, diversity in expertise, membership)
- Independence and non-bias (disclosure and conflict of interest process, transparency, independence from primary workplace of members)
- Secretariat support and resources (secure funding, access to relevant data and other necessary tools, access to external technical expertise and capacity building tools, secretariat support)
- Operations (meeting logistics, standard operating procedures, evaluation)
- Making evidence-based recommendations (decision making, documentation and communication)

- Integration into policy-making processes (government consideration and solicitation, implementation)
- Stakeholder recognition (relationship with stakeholders, public recognition)
- *Add as appropriate, be as clear as possible*

4.5 Terms of reference of the twinning *(This should describe in detail how you intend to meet the goal of the twinning with respect to the agreed scope. The highlighted text are examples only, remove and modify as appropriate)*

- Conduct peer support in the area of...
- Exchange best practices between NITAGs in the areas of..
- Support the development of Terms of Reference and Standard Operating Procedures by...
- Build capacity on how to conduct evidence search by..
- Support and build skills in evidence-based decision making by...
- Conduct virtual meetings every two months...
- Conduct one in-country visit meeting to each country each year..

4.6 Expected outcomes *(indicate what outcome you expect from the twinning)*

- Short term (after 12 months of implementation): *Click to enter text*
- Long term (after two years): *Click to enter text*

5. Duration *(Each twinning pair will determine the duration of the twinning. Nonetheless, for this initial experience in EMR, the minimum duration should be 12 months and the maximum duration will be 24 months).*

The duration of the agreement will be for *Enter duration in months or years as agreed upon*

6. Modality *(keep as appropriate and delete those that do not apply)*

The Twinning modality will be:

- In-person
- In-person and virtual
- Virtual

7. Oversight *(keep as appropriate or add if necessary, but make small)*

The Twinning Oversight Committee will be made up of

- NITAG chair of *Enter country A*
- NITAG secretariat of *Enter country A*
- NITAG chair of *Enter country B*
- NITAG secretariat of *Enter country B*
- WHO Country offices representatives of *Enter country A* and *Enter country B*
- WHO EMR NITAG focal person or representative

Roles and Responsibilities of the Twinning Oversight Committee:

- Prepares and signs off on the Twinning Partnership Agreement;
- Oversees the implementation of the Twinning Partnership Agreement;
- Coordinates all activities in the twinning workplan;
- Supports resource mobilization for twinning;
- Reports on progress to the NITAG members;
- Initiates midterm and end of partnership agreement evaluation;
- Documents the process, learnings, and achievements.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring: The Twinning Oversight Committee will oversee monitoring and evaluation which includes monthly monitoring of the workplan. Status updates will be provided to other NITAG members quarterly. The purpose of the monitoring is to support effective implementation of the workplan and to identify and address any challenges that may require additional support.

End of Twinning Partnership Agreement evaluation: Depending on the duration of the partnership, the Twinning Oversight Committee will conduct a mid-term and an end of agreement evaluation using NMAT or workplan. Additionally, they will participate in a post Twinning Regional survey and document their experience in a narrative report.

9. Workplan *(Complete the table below. The highlighted text are examples only, remove as appropriate)*

SN	Activities	Expected outcome	Responsible	Timeline	Budget
1	Provide remote support to NITAG of country A/B during monthly meetings			Monthly for 20 months	
2	Two NITAG members from country A attend NITAG meeting in country B			June 25	
3	Two NITAG members from country B attend NITAG meeting in country A			Sept 25	
4	Conduct virtual meetings every 2 months				
5					
6					

10. Budget *(indicate the total cost of budgeted workplan in USD and source of funding)*

11. Risks and mitigation *(keep or modify as appropriate, delete those that do not apply, add additional if required)*

Potential risk	Mitigation
Complete change in NITAG membership and secretariat	Inform WHO Regional Office to assess the situation and advise accordingly
Delays or non-issuance of visa in case of in-person visit	Commence preparations for in-person visits at least 3 months before date
Public health emergencies, outbreaks etc	Delay travels, ensure those to travel are vaccinated
Humanitarian crisis, wars, political crisis	Put on hold project implementation, assess situation before re-initiation
Poor quality of internet or unavailable	Liaise with WHO country office on possibility to use country office internet on meeting days

12. Suspension and termination

The present twinning project can be suspended under exceptional circumstances such as lack of commitment or issues in communication, non-compliance with the signed agreements or breach in confidentiality, geopolitical factors, unforeseen circumstances such as public health emergencies, absence of funding etc. The NITAG requesting for suspension should inform the twinned NITAG and the WHO regional office.

13. Annexes *(Attach if required)*

Annex 3: confidentiality clause

CONFIDENTIALITY UNDERTAKING

1. Commercial, academic and other research institutions and individual scientists often submit or present for discussion by **the NITAG** on research, products and processes (hereafter referred to as "Information") which the institutions and individuals consider proprietary. To help ensure the appropriate use by **the NITAG** of such Information whilst protecting the institutions' or individual's proprietary rights, **the NITAG** undertakes to release such Information only to persons who have signed this agreement.
2. Information submitted by such institutions or individuals through the **secretariat** to **NITAG members** for review, discussion, or comment, whether at meetings, on internet-based collaborative workspaces, during telephone conferences or otherwise, shall be regarded by the Undersigned as confidential, unless clearly stated otherwise, by the institution, individual concerned and/or the **NITAG Secretariat**.
3. The Undersigned undertakes to treat such confidential Information as proprietary information and agrees not to make copies of it, nor to disclose or use the same in whole or in part.
4. If requested to do so, the Undersigned agrees to return to the NITAG secretariat any and all Information identified as confidential.
5. The Undersigned shall not be bound by confidentiality if he/she is able to demonstrate that the Information:
 - (a) was in the public domain at the time of disclosure by the institution or individual,
 - (b) becomes part of the public domain through no fault of the Undersigned, or
 - (c) becomes available to the Undersigned from a third party not in breach of any legal obligations of confidentiality to the institution, individual or WHO.
6. This Confidentiality Undertaking is valid during the entire time the Undersigned participates in the twinning program, in whatever capacity, and for a period of 5 years thereafter.

Date:.....

Signature.....

Name.....

(print or type)

Annex 4: Workplan template

(Complete the table below. The highlighted text are examples only, remove as appropriate)

SN	Activities	Expected outcome	Responsible	Timeline	Budget
1	Initial planning and preparation			Monthly for 20 months	
2	Study visit			June 25	
3	Remote meeting			Sept 25	
4	Remote support on policy question				
5	Immunization and NITAG training				
6	Presentation of twinning results and evaluation of project				

Twinning Progress Review Survey

Thank you for participating in the Twinning Program. Your feedback is crucial to help enhance the program and ensure it meets the needs of all NITAGs. We appreciate you taking a few minutes to complete this short survey.

Section 1: Participant Information

1. Who is completing this survey:

- ☐ NITAG Chair
- ☐ NITAG secretariat
- ☐ NITAG member
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

2. Duration of Participation:

- ☐ 1 year
- ☐ 2 years
- ☐ 3 years or more

Section 2: Program operations

1. The coordination between our NITAG and the twinned NITAG has been effective.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

2. Joint activities (meetings, workshops) were well organized and timely.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

3. There has been clear communication between the twinned NITAGs.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

4. How often did you communicate with your twinned NITAG?

- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Bi-weekly (every 2 weeks)
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Every three months
- ☐ Other:

5. What operational aspects of the twinning have worked well so far?

[Open text field]

Section 3: Program Impact

1. Please rate the effectiveness of each aspect of the Twinning Program in contributing to your overall experience.

Aspect	Not effective	Slightly effective	Moderately effective	Very effective	Extremely effective
Operational changes to the NITAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical skills strengthening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge sharing with different experts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Long-term relationship with another NITAG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Networking opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Research collaborations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify): _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. What areas of your NITAG have you improved so far through the Twinning Program?

- ☐ Establishment and composition

- ☐ Independence and non-bias
- ☐ Secretariat support and resources
- ☐ Operations (e.g., SOPs, evaluation, etc.)
- ☐ Making evidence-based recommendations
- ☐ Integration into policy-making processes
- ☐ Stakeholder recognition
- ☐ Other skills (soft skills), specify:

3. has a policy question been developed through the support of the twinning program?

- ☐ Yes, several – please specify number
- ☐ Yes, one
- ☐ No

4. If yes, the twinning has improved the quality of our evidence-based recommendations.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

5. We have applied tools, approaches, or templates shared by the twinned NITAG to issue our recommendations.

☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree

6. has a policy question developed through the support of the twinning program been adopted by MoH ?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Not applicable (no policy question was developed yet)

☐ No, please explain why

Section 4: Program Improvement

1. What challenges have you faced during the program so far? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Time constraints
- ☐ Communication issues
- ☐ Lack of resources
- ☐ Misalignment of goals
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

2. How would you rate the support provided by the coordinator if there was one?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

3. what could the coordinators do differently to better provide support moving forward?

[Open text field]

4. What suggestions do you have for improving the overall Twinning Program?

[Open text field]

Thank you for your valuable feedback! Your responses will help us enhance the Twinning Program.

Annex 6: Psychological well-being questionnaire

Psychological well-being Questionnaire

This questionnaire is drawn from Dagenais-Desmarais, V., Savoie, A. (2012)⁵ and presents a list of statements describing how people may feel when working as NITAG member/secretariat. Considering your work over the past 4 weeks, please indicate to what extent you agree with each statement. When responding to the questionnaire, ensure that respondents focus on their duties as NITAG member/secretariat and not on their primary work place.

Response Scale:

| 0 Strongly Disagree | 1 Disagree | 2 Slightly Agree | 3 Agree | 4 Moderately Agree | 5 Completely Agree

- 1 I value the people I work with.
- 2 I find my role exciting.
- 3 I know I am capable of doing my job as NITAG member/secretariat.
- 4 I feel that my work is recognized.
- 5 I want to take initiative in my work as NITAG.
- 6 I enjoy working with the people within the NITAG.
- 7 I like being part of the NITAG.
- 8 I feel confident at work.
- 9 I feel that my work efforts are appreciated in the NITAG.
- 10 I care about the good functioning of my NITAG.
- 11 I get along well with the people within the NITAG.
- 12 I am proud of my role as NITAG member/secretariat.
- 13 I feel effective and competent in my work.
- 14 I know that people believe in the NITAG activities I work on
- 15 I like to take on challenges in my work.
- 16 I have a relationship of trust with the NITAG members and secretariat.

⁵ Dagenais-Desmarais, V., Savoie, A. (2012). What is Psychological Well-Being, Really? A Grassroots Approach from the Organizational Sciences. *J Happiness Stud* 13, 659–684. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10902-011-9285-3>

- 17 I find meaning in my work.
- 18 I feel that I know what to do in my role.
- 19 I feel that the people I work with recognize my abilities.
- 20 I want to contribute to achieving the mandate of my NITAG.
- 21 I feel that I am accepted as I am by the people I work with.
- 22 I have a great sense of fulfillment at work.
- 23 I know my value as a NITAG member.
- 24 I feel that I am a full member of my NITAG.
- 25 I want to be involved in my NITAG beyond the meetings.

Cotation Procedure

The questionnaire analyses the five primarily eudaimonic dimensions, namely, Interpersonal Fit at Work, Thriving at Work, Feeling of Competency at Work, Perceived Recognition at Work, and Desire for Involvement at Work

- **Interpersonal Fit at Work:** Items 1, 6, 11, 16, 21
- **Thriving at Work:** Items 2, 7, 12, 17, 22
- **Feeling of Competency at Work:** Items 3, 8, 13, 18, 23
- **Perceived Recognition at Work:** Items 4, 9, 14, 19, 24
- **Desire for Involvement at Work:** Items 5, 10, 15, 20, 25

Scores by dimension and/or total score may be used. Dimensional or total scores are obtained by averaging the scores for dimensional or total questionnaire items.

TWINNING REPORTING TOOL

1.0 Participant Name, Organizational Affiliation and Contact Information

2.0 Activities undertaken as part of twinning program

Please mention the key people met/involved.

Date	Location	Activity	People involved

3.0 Purpose of the Twinning

Insert objectives here from original agreement

4.0 Lessons Learned

4.1 How has the twinning benefited you and **XX-NITAG**? Considering the purposes of the twinning (Section 3.0), what are the 3-5 most valuable lessons you learned or gained through this twinning?

4.2 What new issues or questions emerged that remain unanswered from the twinning program?

5.0 Results (Follow-up Activities and Schedule)

5.1 Are there any actions or practices you will do differently as a result of the twinning activities so far? If so, please describe these.

5.2 Are there any ways in which learnings from the twinning activities have or are planned to be shared with other important immunization stakeholders in your country (e.g. MOH immunization staff)? If so, can you please describe?

5.3 What future activities or plans would you like to occur to further strengthen **XX-NITAG**? These may include further twinning activities between **XX-NITAG** and [enter twinning partner], or be separate activities and plans.