ESCAP Twinning Programme for the Voluntary National Reviews

What is the Twinning Programme?
ESCAP Twinning Programme involves connecting two countries in the same region or sub-region that are both preparing their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) in the same year.

Objectives
To support VNR countries in their VNR preparation through peer-to-peer support and exchange of best practices and approaches for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda.

Goals
- To strengthen VNR preparation;
- To enhance partnerships through South-South cooperation;
- To strengthen leadership on the SDGs.

Benefits
- Experiential peer-to-peer learning for better VNR preparation;
- Shared problem-solving, tips & advice on navigating VNR process and emerging issues;
- Hands-on knowledge of good practices;
- Increased profile of VNR presentation and role at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF);
- Tangible contribution to South-South Cooperation.

What does it involve?
Joint activities:
- Twinning of two VNR partner countries presenting in 2023;
- Twinning of VNR coordinating bodies and stakeholders;
- Study tours, regular communication, joint virtual meetings, online platform;
- Reviewing VNR drafts and plans;
- Side-by-side HLPF presentations and twinning side events at the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) and HLPF.

Study tour:
- Visiting each other’s country in different stages of the VNR process;
- Connecting stakeholders from the twinning countries;
- Sharing experiences and lessons learnt during the 1st and 2nd reviews;
- Visiting institutions and agencies involved in the VNR process;
- Connecting the VNR drafting teams and holding feedback workshops;
- Discussions on relevant policy reforms.
Twinning criteria

- Twinning countries should possibly belong to the same sub-region;
- Language and cultural similarities, or a similar context;
- Countries should have established a multi-stakeholder partnership for the preparation of the VNR;
- Countries should have identified common challenges and priorities for the VNR preparation.

How is a twinning arrangement set up?

Twinning arrangements vary between countries depending on their interests. The steps could include:

**Identify twinning partners**

1. ESCAP to identify the new VNR countries interested in the Twinning Programme in coordination with Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs) and national counterparts;
2. Countries to propose suitable partners according to national priorities and interests;
3. Twinning countries are identified and finalized with the assistance of ESCAP and the RCOs.

**Identify key stakeholders**

4. Identify key stakeholders to be involved in the twinning. Stakeholders could include representatives from the SDG Coordinating bodies/VNR units, representatives from the VNR working groups, local government, national statistics offices, civil society organisations, private sector, and parliamentarians among others.

**Twinning plan and study tour**

5. Set-up an online community platform for twinning countries to communicate and share information;
6. Create a joint twinning plan with specific activities and objectives;
7. If feasible, set dates for the study tour and start planning in cooperation with the RCO.

**Twinning activities:**

8. Involvement in twinning workshops and peer review of VNR draft;
9. Participation of selected stakeholders in cross-country national trainings and workshops as resource person;
10. Virtual meetings between twinned stakeholders before and after the study tour;
11. Peer review and feedback workshops on the VNR roadmap, stakeholder engagement plan and VNR draft.

**Outreach**

12. Organization of joint side events at the APFSD and HLPF;
13. Side-by-side presentations at the HLPF.