



twinning

TWINNING is winning

PARTNERSHIPS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING





Improving the engagement of ISO members worldwide

International Standards make a positive contribution to the world we live in. They facilitate trade, spread knowledge, disseminate innovative advances in technology, and share good management and conformity assessment practices. Developing high-quality standards through our global membership is a top priority for ISO. We recognize that the quality of the International Standards we develop depends directly on the active participation of all interested ISO members – creating truly globally relevant standards.

This is why it's important to engage all members, and especially those that are less represented in the ISO community and that could benefit from capacity building with the help of more experienced members.



It's important to engage all members, and especially those that are less represented in the ISO community.

What is twinning

Twinning is a voluntary partnership agreement between two ISO members for the purposes of capacity building, where capacity building is defined as the “development of competencies (at NSB level) to be successful in ISO standardization work”. Its aim is to share best practices, strengthen capacity building and to optimize resources through cooperation. 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’.

There are four twinning arrangements that countries can choose from depending on need, context and desired outcomes:

- Twinning between participating (P) members
- Twinning between Convenors and Twinned Convenors
- Twinning between Chairs and Twinned Chairs
- Twinning between Secretariats and Twinned Secretariats

To discover how these arrangements work, see the brochure *Guidance on twinning in ISO standards development activities*.



How twinning helps

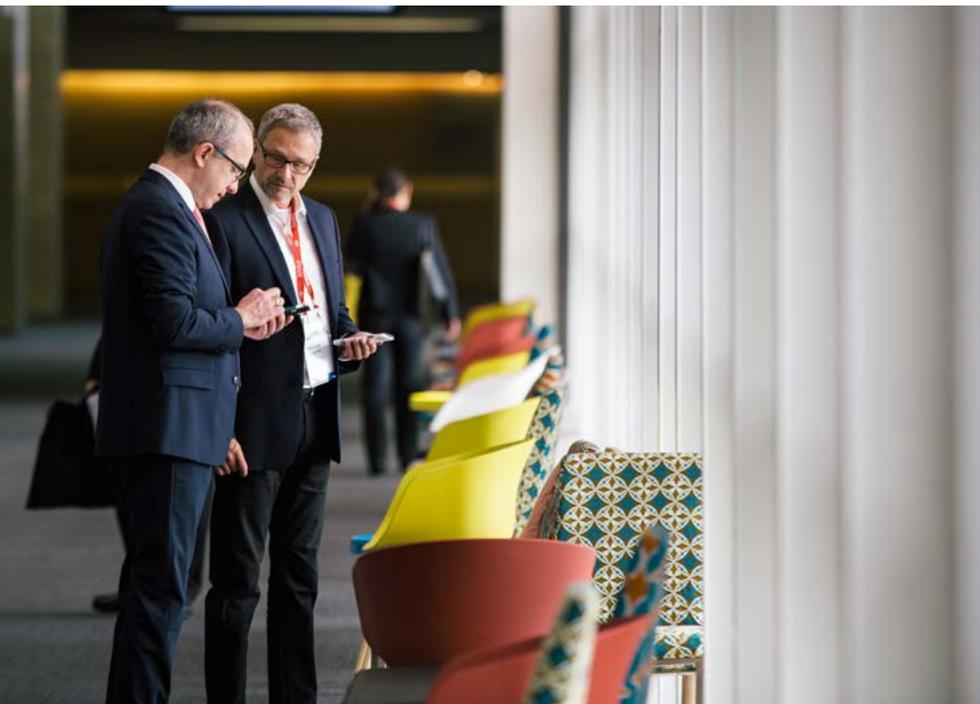
Effective twinning arrangements benefit ISO members by generating inclusive processes that strengthen communication and build commitment and good relationships. For the twinned partner, twinning arrangements also enable them to:

- Increase their participation in the governance and technical work of ISO (this could mean moving from being an observing member to a participating member of a committee; taking on a new leadership role such as Chair or Convenor; or taking on a new organizational role, for example by providing a committee secretariat)
- Improve their standardization infrastructures and capacities

How to start twinning

To build twinning effectively, both partners must be committed to the primary objective of twinning: to build capacity and improve the participation and performance of the twinned partner. Twinning objectives should support those priorities identified by the twinned partner and integrated into their national development plans/strategies.

Effective twinning arrangements benefit ISO members by generating inclusive processes.



Once the aim is understood, the type of arrangement and partner can be determined.

Type of arrangement: You need to identify what type of twinning arrangement interests you most (P-member, Chair, Convenor, or Secretariat) and whether you have the available resources to undertake the partnership.

Partner: Your choice of partner may be based, for example, on common economic interests or on a shared language or culture. The ISO Central Secretariat can facilitate setting up the twinning arrangement by providing contact details of ISO members, or by helping to identify a potential partner. The two partners will then jointly decide on the terms and conditions of their arrangement.

Why it matters

“The key success factor of a twinning arrangement is collaboration and equal footing.

The most important thing is to have a joint vision : Why? What is the real purpose?”

Karl Grün

**Director Standards Development,
Austrian Standards International**

[Twinning with the Ethiopian Standards Agency](#)

“Our project management skills in the development of International Standards have improved a lot. We have learned about communication methods and tools from the ISO Central Secretariat and other national standards bodies. In addition, we have learned about good practices on how to establish and run national mirror committees.

I encourage all developing countries to engage in twinning. There are numerous advantages : it helps build competences and capacities in managing international secretariats, hosting international meetings as well as managing projects effectively.”

Prudence Asamoah-Bonti

**Deputy Director of Operations (2019)
Ghana Standards Authority**

[Twinning with the Royal Netherlands Standardization Institute](#)

More information

Twinning requires careful planning to target the right partners and build the right skills at the right time and over time. To get the most out of such efforts, see the “**Guidance on Twinning**” brochure or contact your Technical Programme Manager (TPM) or the Technical Management Board (TMB) secretariat (tmb@iso.org) at the ISO Central Secretariat.

International Organization for Standardization

ISO Central Secretariat
Ch. de Blandonnet 8
Case Postale 401
CH – 1214 Vernier, Geneva
Switzerland

iso.org

© ISO, 2021
All rights reserved

Image de couverture : Discussion entre membres
lors de la Semaine ISO 2019 (Le Cap, Afrique du Sud)

ISBN 978-92-67-11231-2

