



GUIDELINES FOR TWINNING REVIEW MISSIONS

**DG Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations - NEAR
Institution Building TAIEX and Twinning**

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

Twinning is one of the main tools of Institution Building assistance made available by the European Commission to candidate and potential candidate countries, as well as to some partner countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy. It aims to help the beneficiaries in the development of modern and efficient administrations, with the structures, human resources and management skills needed to implement the *Union acquis*. Twinning is an important tool to assist national administrations in reaching the required level of institutional capacity by facilitating the sharing of Member States' experience and expertise.

Procedures related to the preparation and implementation of Twinning projects are defined by the Common Twinning Manual ('the Manual'), regularly updated by DG NEAR. The latest revised version was issued in 2017 (REVISION 2017, UPDATE 2018).

The Manual sets out the basic principles of Twinning. Among them are the pre-definition of concrete operational results (the so called mandatory results) in connection with the *Union acquis* and/or EU policies, and the commitment of Twinning partners (the Member State (MS)) providing the assistance and the beneficiary country (BC) receiving it) to achieve the mandatory results. In practical terms, that means that at the end of the project **a new or adapted system must function under the sole responsibility and ownership of the beneficiary administration.**

The Manual specifies that the achievements of a Twinning project should be maintained as a **permanent asset of the beneficiary administration** after the end of the project. This presupposes, inter alia, that effective mechanisms are put in place by the BC to disseminate and consolidate the project results. Sustainability is one of the main features of Twinning.

1.2 The Twinning Review Missions

Twinning Review Missions (TRM) aim at assessing the **sustainability and long-term impact** of the results and outputs of each Twinning project. The emphasis is on the developments in the BC after the conclusion of project activities. TRMs are not meant to evaluate the Twinning project itself. Separate provisions are included in the Manual for that purpose¹.

TRM are short-term missions organised and financed by the TAIEX instrument according to the rules and procedures applied to TAIEX events, *mutatis mutandi*. The authorities of the BC – and in particular the competent Programme Administrative Office – are expected to provide assistance and cooperation during the preparation and performance of TRM.

¹ "The Commission will in addition, at regular intervals, contract independent experts for evaluating Twinning projects, according to themes or countries or technical aspects. Article 8 of the General Conditions to the Twinning Grant Contract applies in these cases. Such evaluations will follow DG NEAR guidelines on linking planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation". Manual, Section 5.6 Monitoring and evaluation.

The present Guidelines and the Reporting Form Template reproduced hereunder, provide the basic framework for the organisation of a TRM. They integrate the pertinent provisions of the Manual, detailed in section 5.11 Sustainability and Twinning review missions.

2 OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of a TRM is to assess if the achievements of the Twinning project are still present and if they have produced a standing impact, in particular in terms of sustainability. Normally, a TRM should also identify lessons learned and recommend improvements for the management of Twinning projects in the given country and/or sector.

3 SCOPE

TRM will analyse the situation in the area/sector covered by the Twinning project concerned, comparing it to the state of affairs at the outset of the project and taking into account the challenge(s) the project was called in to address. The scope of the analysis will be determined by the mandatory results.

TRM will focus on the developments after the end of the project, particularly with regard to the legal and institutional aspects (legislative progress and administrative adaptation), capacity and skills building (further training of staff and transfer of expertise) and structural changes introduced (irreversibility of the new framework).

4 TRM TEAM

4.1 The Twinning Review Expert

As a rule, a TRM is performed under the leadership of a Twinning Review Expert, i.e. a public administration or mandated body sector expert from a different Member State than the lead or junior Member States of the project concerned.

The Twinning Review Expert(s) should preferably be a former RTA, Project Leader or former Component Leader from a similar Twinning project. In case no experts with Twinning experience from a similar project can be identified or are available, then a TAIEX expert with knowledge in the sector related to the project will be selected..

The TRE is selected by the DG NEAR's Institution Building Unit in consultation with MS National Contact Points (NCP) and other relevant stakeholders. He/She is invited directly by the European Commission to perform the TRM.

The Twinning Review Expert is responsible for preparing the Reporting Form. The Reporting Form, which the Twinning Review Expert timely distributes to all members of the TRM Team, re-calls the project's mandatory results/outputs and (if applicable other deliverables) and the recommendations as in the final report. The Twinning Review Expert drafts the review report.

4.2 The TRM Team

For all or parts of the TRM the Twinning Review Expert can be assisted and accompanied by a team of persons who were involved in the project concerned:

- the RTA, who should always be associated to the TRM;
- the Beneficiary RTA counterpart;
- the Member State PL (when appropriate and if available);
- the Beneficiary country PL (or the official who might have replaced him/her in the same position);
- the task manager of the EUD and/or of the CFCE/PAO who followed the project or the sector involved (or the person who might have replaced him/her in the same position).

In the situation that the former RTA and/or the Beneficiary country RTA counterpart is/are not available, these will be replaced on a case by case basis by the IBU in close consultation with the Member State lead PL and the Beneficiary country having implemented the project being reviewed.

5 ACTIVITIES

5.1 Preparation

Before the actual TRM takes place, direct preliminary contacts will be established between the members of the Team at the initiative of the TRE. The Institution Building Unit will put at the disposal of the Team the pertinent documentation related to the Project concerned and in particular the project fiche, work plan, final report and the monitoring reports, if any. Other relevant documents will be provided if requested and available.

The preliminary contacts will be used to define the details of the TRM, including the draft programme of visits and meetings; possible questions/requests to be addressed to the competent authorities of the BC before the mission; time and duration of the visit (in principle 3 to 5 days) to the BC; etc.

5.2 Mission in the BC

The TRM will start with a briefing meeting of the Team, when possible in the premises of the EU Delegation. The briefing meeting can include a session with stakeholders from the BC administration in order to confirm and/or fine-tune the programme of the TRM.

The TRE will perform the planned activities (visits, meetings, etc.) accompanied by some or all of the other members of the Team. The BC administration is expected to provide all necessary support to facilitate the execution of the TRM.

A de-briefing meeting of the Team will take place at the end of the TRM, when possible at the premises of the EU Delegation. On this occasion, the Team members will have the opportunity to discuss with the TRE the findings of the TRM, preliminary outcomes and the main lines of the Report.

5.3 Visits and meetings

Visits and meetings that take place during the TRM shall focus on the follow-up of the activities and results of the Twinning project concerned; commitment of the beneficiary administration in pursuing the implementation effort; level of ownership of the new structures and processes put in place and possible persistence in the medium and long term of the project's impact.

6 REPORTING

Within two weeks following the TRM, the TRE prepares and circulates to the Team members for their comments a draft Report based on the Reporting Form's questions and grids complemented by a narrative part. The latter provides the space to elaborate on the level of ownership of outputs and their application by the beneficiaries; continuity of the reform process after the conclusion of the project; permanence and further sharing of skills and know-how acquired during the implementation of the project; persistence of significant gaps in structures, systems and capacities that might undermine the sustainability; etc.

The TRE integrates the comments of Team members in the draft and sends the final version of the Report to the Institution Building Unit, which will share it with the relevant stakeholders.

7 LOGISTICS

All logistical arrangements related to TRM (flights, accommodation, payment of allowances) will be centrally managed by the Institution Building Unit through the TAIEX Instrument.

8 CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

The TRE and the other Team members will be asked to sign a declaration of confidentiality. The views expressed in the Report will be those of the TRE and the TRM Team members and will not necessarily reflect those of the Commission. A corresponding standard disclaimer will be included in the Report.

The Report will remain the property of the Commission. No document based, in whole or in part, upon the Report or upon information collected during the TRM may be published except with the prior written approval of the Commission.