FOLLOW-UP ACTION PLAN OF THE EVALUATION OF THE TWINNING INSTRUMENT IN THE PERIOD 2010-2017

RECOMMENDATIONS, FINAL REPORT	RESPONSES EU SERVICES: (I) ACCEPTED OR NOT, II) ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN	FOLLOW UP (by who ; by when)
ON REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP		
RECOMMENDATION 1 **Increase awareness and understanding of the provisions of TM 2017** Guide, train and support EUDs (especially contracting units) and MS and PC administrations (particularly CFCEs and PAOs) that are still coming to terms with the new TM, as they gain more experience in preparing and implementing TPs under its guidance, including on the effects of the 2018 update; address the divergent understanding of how to interpret TM provisions, particularly in PCs operating under indirect management, with regard to requesting extra information beyond the TM's provisions or disallowing practices that are not explicitly forbidden by the TM (or more essentially, by the Financial Regulation); and make the most of the network of NCPs.	**i) <u>Accepted</u>/Partially accepted/Rejected** Accepted – this is one of the tasks of the Twinning Coordination Team. **ii) Actions to be undertaken** a. Continuous support to EUDs (especially Twinning Coordinators) and MS and PC administrations (particularly CFCEs and PAOs) in the interpretation of the TM provisions by responding to incoming questions. b. Questions and answers sessions organised via VTC with the Contracting Authorities (both EUDs and PC administrations) to answer questions on the rules and procedures outlined in the TM, including on the effects of the 2018 update. c. Bi-annual trainings on the provisions of the TM to RTAs and PLs. d. Missions to PC and MS to further increase awareness and understanding of the provisions of TM (for info in 2019 missions to the following countries took place: Estonia, Italy, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Belarus). e. Publication in the Twinning webpage of Answers to Frequently Asked Questions on Twinning rules and procedures.	DG NEAR Twinning Coordination Team; throughout 2020 and beyond

Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR's IB, TAIEX & Twinning Unit, EUDs, NCPs, PAOs, CFCEs	
What works and should continue?	
The widely-appreciated initial briefings and training provided by DG NEAR's IB, TAIEX & Twinning Unit when TM 2017 was launched should be built upon.	
DG NEAR's ongoing advice regarding the interpretation and application of TM 2017 in response to *ad hoc* enquiries should continue, alongside the measures set out below.	

What should be strengthened?	**How should this be done?**
Systematic and ongoing support should be provided (particularly to the contracting authorities, with a specific focus on EUDs, CFCEs, and PAOs), to help them to address issues arising from early experience of TM 2017 implementation and tackle the 'gold-plating' of TM rules identified in the evaluation.	DG NEAR should organise further workshops/training, ideally in the PCs themselves, but otherwise as a Brussels-based event, to reiterate key messages around the TM, and provide Q&A regarding specific provisions.
Existing and new mechanisms should be utilised to enable EU MS and PC	DG NEAR developing a web-based 'community of practice', potentially using capacity4dev as the platform with the

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administrations to learn from each other, as well as the EC, on a continual basis, as they apply TM 2017 increasingly to new TPs.	agreement of DG DEVCO, so that both PCs and MS administrations can 'Ask NEAR' about specific provisions and their interpretation, possibly on an anonymised basis if the issues are sensitive. DG NEAR should also nurture and use the network of NCPs in PCs, EUDs and EU MSs, and the EUDs themselves to spread information and clarifications, and identify and share any inconsistent, excessive and interpretations of TM provisions.		
RECOMMENDATION 2 **Address Member State barriers to officials' involvement in Twinning** Improve MS legal and institutional environment for Twinning removing barriers for the active participation of civil servants in Twinning projects and other peer-to-peer cooperation. *Main implementation responsibility:* MS administrations **What works and should continue?** Some MS' administrations have adopted a more favourable legal and operational framework for facilitating peer-to-peer cooperation using public sector expertise, which allows, for example STE missions by civil servants / public officials to be considered business trips (or otherwise parts of their duties) and to receive the Twinning daily allowance.		**i) Accepted/Partially accepted/Rejected** Partially accepted - the actual improvement of the MS legal and institutional environment for participating Twinning is beyond the Commission's authority. **ii) Actions to be undertaken** a. Implement a study looking into incentives and disincentives in MSs for the involvement in Twinning of civil servants and assimilated agents. b. Continue dialogue with the NCPs as part of the Twinning Working Group meetings, to enhance their role to advocates and act as facilitators for engaging in Twinning across home administrations.	DG NEAR Twinning Coordination Team; throughout 2020 and beyond
What should be strengthened?	**How should this be done?**		
MS administrations should address blockages in civil service laws, rules and procedures that currently prevent or deter public officials from participating in Twinning (as well as other forms of peer-to-peer cooperation)	The MS' centres of government should consider introducing specific "Twinning" laws (as has happened in Germany, Slovenia and Latvia) or procedural mechanisms to ensure: missions to PCs are considered as part of public duties, so they are not limited either entirely or to a maximum number of days per year; accidents abroad are covered; there are adequate financial incentives, such as flat rate fees and per diem allowances paid to the public officials, or salaries topped-up, rather than retained by the public administration or subjected to double taxation; and years of public service experience abroad are taken into		

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	account in the career development system.		
All key MS stakeholders should act as advocates for Twinning across their home administrations.	NCPs and foreign ministries / embassies should pro-actively encourage their home administrations to see Twinning as an opportunity for both personal development and career advancement of staff, as well as the chance to build institutional relationships with PC administrations. They should also emphasise the potential for Twinning grants to be used to replace key experts and preserve the overall staff complement.		
RECOMMENDATION 3 **Reinforce European Commission's capacities to manage Twinning** Increase the staffing of the Twinning element of the IB, TAIEX and Twinning Unit, and ensure the relevant EC Twinning stakeholders (EUD Twinning coordinators, DG NEAR CoTEs) have sufficient resources, so that they can carry out current duties plus the recommendations contained in this report. *Main implementation responsibility:* DG NEAR senior management, EUD management **What works and should continue?** The existence of a dedicated Institution-Building, TAIEX and Twinning Unit, with a specific Twinning team, is a valuable central source of knowledge and guidance for Twinning stakeholders. The establishment of the Centres of Thematic Expertise has created focal points within DG NEAR as the conduits of sectorial intelligence in key policy areas, benefitting not only DG NEAR, but also other Commission Services and EUDs. The presence of Twinning coordinators[1] in EUDs acts as an interface between DG NEAR and the (other) EUD programme / task managers, PC NCPs and other stakeholders (e.g. CFCEs, Embassies), and particularly as an in-country source on Twinning principles, rules and experiences. The involvement of the line DGs in receiving and commenting on draft TPFs makes a valuable contribution to ensuring that the proposed TPs are relevant and well-designed, especially in relation to EU acquis, standards and norms in their sectors, and ensuring complementarity / avoiding duplication and overlap with other planned and ongoing interventions (see also recommendation		**i) Accepted/<u>Partially accepted</u>/Rejected** **Partially accepted** – the Twinning instrument is implement in close co-operation between the Twinning Coordination Team and colleagues in charge of programming and managing Twinning projects in the Geo-Coordination Units and in the EU Delegations. Horizontal Units and line DGs support the quality checks of the Twinning fiches and projects and advice on the financial and legal issues. With regard to the Twinning Coordination Team in NEAR C3, in 2020 the capacity of the Team has been increased with one colleague in charge of the DEVCO (now INTPA) countries. **ii) Actions to be undertaken** a. Continue consultation of CoTE PAR in the context of the Inter-service Consultation Procedures about the Twinning fiches. b. Continue cooperation with CoTE PAR and facilitating their presentations on mainstreaming PAR principles at the regular trainings for RTAs and to the EUDs via the PARNET meetings.	DG NEAR Twinning Coordination Team; throughout 2020 and beyond CoTE PAR; throughout 2020 and beyond

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[1] As a position, irrespective of the precise job title

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6). In some cases, the line DGs also follow the progress of the active TPs through their engagement in the PCs (e.g. through policy dialogue and informal contacts with PLs and RTAs), which should be encouraged and extended.		c. Continue outreach to line DGs and Country Units to encourage their active involvement in assessing and commenting on draft Twinning fiches in the context of the Inter-service Consultation Procedures.	
What should be strengthened?	**How should this be done?**	d. Continue providing training sessions to EUDs representatives on logic of intervention and indicators, specifically focused on Twinning projects.	
The staffing of the Twinning team should be increased, both to manage the current workload and to take forward the recommendations of this evaluation.	DG NEAR's leadership should perform a functional and workload analysis to assess the right level and mix of staff in the IB, TAIEX and Twinning Unit to provide the policy direction of Twinning, and oversight of its implementation, including guidance, monitoring, capitalisation and dissemination of lessons learned. Considerations should also be given to the demarcation of responsibilities within DG NEAR to ensure better links between public administration reform and institution building, which are split between two different directorates (Directorate A and C respectively). *See also recommendation 1 and recommendations 4-12.*	e. Strengthen information sharing/coordination between TAIEX/twinning teams and CoTEs. f. CoTE PAR: Gradually coach the DG NEAR Twinning team to be able to mainstream the Principles of Public Administration in the Twinning fiches	
The specialist guidance role of the CoTEs, bringing together topical knowledge with awareness of the geo-political context and administrative culture in enlargement and neighbourhood regions, should be maintained and reinforced.	DG NEAR's leadership should assess, and increase as necessary, the resource levels of the CoTEs, given they cover policy fields where the reform process can take many years to achieve substantive change, such as strengthening the quality of public administration and the rule of law. *See also Recommendations 5-7.*		
EUDs should raise the capacities of programme managers / Twinning managers / Twinning coordinators, as applicable within the EUD's structure, to steer Twinning strategically in their countries.	This could be achieved through tailoring job profiles and/or job specifications to focus on quality control and effective coordination across sectors, and additional training. This should cover, in particular: developing their understanding and promotion of the results-based orientation and simplified rules in TM 2017 *(see Recommendation 1)*; developing processes (e.g. grids) to assess Twinning systematically against other options (and vice versa) and to integrate Twinning with other modalities within the sector approach *(see Recommendation 4)*; enhancing their capacities to interpret and apply the principles of public		

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administration *(see Recommendation 5)* and to check rigorously that the TPF intervention logic is sound *(see recommendation 6)*; using the comprehensive Management Information System (MIS) *(see Recommendation 9)* to capitalise Twinning practices and achievements *(Recommendation 10)*; and raising the visibility of Twinning and the EU's role *(Recommendation 11)*.		
ON ADDED VALUE, COMPLEMENTARITY & COHERENCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PRINCIPLES		

RECOMMENDATION 4

Optimise Twinning's synergies with other modalities to strengthen its contribution to realising long-term reform goals

Promote a strategic approach to Twinning, by ensuring that Twinning is embedded in more extensive and long-term sector programmes as the framework for coordination with other modalities (SIGMA, TAIEX, (S)BS, technical assistance, delegation agreements and action grants) to maximise its added value.

Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR, EUDs, PC institutions responsible for IPA and ENI programming	
What works and should continue?	
The use of evaluation grids by some PCs when programming IPA and ENI enables them to weigh up the pros and cons of Twinning as a modality for each intervention and decide whether it is the most appropriate mechanism given the strategic / reform context and the operational conditions.	
The use of the sector approach to programming IPA and ENI should take a medium-long term perspective, particularly in policy areas where the reform process is complex and transformation takes time (e.g. public governance, anti-corruption, judiciary).	
What should be strengthened?	**How should this be done?**
The use of evaluation grids, or an equivalent system, should be mainstreamed, so that it is a common and consistent practice in	DG NEAR should issue methodological instructions to EUDs, and programming coordinators in the IPA and ENI regions (NIPACs, PAOs, etc.), on assessing the merits of Twinning against other modalities, based on the

i) Accepted/Partially accepted/Rejected

Accepted – this is an ongoing process of repositioning Institution building instruments towards strategic objectives and reform processes. To be noted however that the Twinning Coordination Team can act as one of the contributors. The programming exercise and the choice of delivery modality ultimately is led by the respective Country Coordination Units and the EUDs.

ii) Actions to be undertaken

a. Continue linking Twinning with the key EU policy objectives and reform processes

b. Increase participation in joint programming mission together with colleagues from the Country Coordination units of DG NEAR.

c. Intensify participation in Quality Support Group meetings to promote the choice of Twinning as an aid delivery modality whenever Twinning can fit best.

d. Further encourage EUDs to actively involve the Twinning Coordinators in the programming exercises.

e. Enhance awareness about the potentialities of the

DG NEAR Twinning Coordination Team; throughout 2020 and beyond

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IPA and ENI programming in all PCs.	characterisation of superior and preferable options for Twinning in conclusion 7, alongside the criteria in the Commission's 2011 evaluation[2] as a starting point to decide whether the PC administration is ready for Twinning.	Twinning tool in the context of the cooperation toolbox made available to EUDs and Country Units.	
The abovementioned evaluation grids and methodology for deciding systematically whether Twinning is the most suitable delivery mode, should be fully integrated into the sector approach.	DG NEAR should issue instructions on programming IPA and ENI, either within an existing framework (e.g. "Guidelines on linking planning/programming, monitoring and evaluation", first issued in July 2016) or separately, to ensure that Twinning assistance is deployed where it is most appropriate in medium-long term sector strategies, to play a complementary role within an overall portfolio of interventions that will deliver institutional capacity-building and reform objectives, in line with EU-PC agreements. Furthermore, the EUD should ensure the participation of Twinning Coordinators (or equivalent) in the programming exercise within sector working groups.		
RECOMMENDATION 5 **Provide support to PCs in applying the principles of public administration** Provide further advice, guidance and training on the principles of public administration in TPs, particularly in the programming of Twinning and preparation of TPFs with intensive assistance, and verifying that the principles are applied in actuality to ensure that TPs are connected to PCs' ongoing reform efforts and enhance the impact and sustainability of project results. *Main implementation responsibility:* DG NEAR's IB, TAIEX and Twinning Unit, CoTE on PAR, line DGs, EUDs. **What works and should continue?** The guidance on the principles of public administration for enlargement and neighbourhood countries, prepared by SIGMA with the European Commission, continues to provide a valuable framework.		**i) <u>Accepted</u>/Partially accepted/Rejected** Accepted - The Twinning Coordination Team is already engaged with the CoTE PAR in relevant actions, see also Recommendation 3 above. **ii) Actions to be undertaken** a. Continue consultation of all received Twinning Project fiches with CoTE PAR as part of the ISC process b. Continue involvement of CoTE PAR to deliver a session on mainstreaming PAR at the regular RTA trainings c. Continue participation of CoTE PAR to present the Principles at the annual Institution Building Days and	DG NEAR Twinning Coordination Team; throughout 2020 and beyond CoTE PAR ; throughout 2020 and beyond

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[2] Ecorys (2011), "Evaluation on Twinning versus Technical Assistance", client: DG Enlargement

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RECOMMENDATIONS, FINAL REPORT		RESPONSES EU SERVICES: (I) ACCEPTED OR NOT, II) ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN	FOLLOW UP (by who ; by when)
The integration of the principles into TM 2017 guidance and training should be maintained (see also Recommendation 1).		other relevant forums, including question and answer sessions.	
DG NEAR's CoTE on PAR should continue to present the principles at Institution-Building Days and other forums, to reach the target audience, remind them of the principles' importance, and enable them to raise questions about the principles' application.		d.CoTE PAR: Gradually coach the DG NEAR Twinning team to be able to mainstream the Principles of Public Administration in the Twinning fiches	
What should be strengthened?	**How should this be done?**		
DG NEAR's current investment in awareness-raising and training on the principles of public administration in EUDs and PC administrations should be extended to other countries in both regions.	In addition to explanatory briefings, especially those by the CoTE on Public Administration Reform, including a presentation at the Institution-Building Day in February 2018, DG NEAR is currently implementing a framework contract (FWC SIEA 2018) on 'mainstreaming of key principles of public administration in sector policy work and EU financial assistance'. The FWC covers the Western Balkans enlargement countries and Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, including 1-day awareness-raising and training workshops in each PC. Following the FWC's completion, DG NEAR should undertake a similar initiative in Turkey in the enlargement region and the other neighbourhood PCs.		
DG NEAR's programme awareness-raising and training workshops through the FWC should be followed up with hand-holding help.	The EUDs should disseminate the materials to relevant public institutions in each beneficiary country, especially those that were unable to participate in the workshops. Furthermore, the EUDs and NCPs, backed up by the CoTE on PAR, should initiate follow-up events (roundtables, workshops, etc.) with the bodies responsible for programming IPA and ENI, as well as individual PC administrations preparing and implementing TPs, to support them in taking on board the principles in practice.		
The European Commission should verify that TPs are taking account of the principles in their design and implementation.	The EUD in the first instance should vet each TPF, followed by DG NEAR and line DGs, to ensure the principles are rigorously followed. The implementation of the principles should be built into the template for ROM missions and TRMs.		

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ON PROJECT DESIGN, SELECTION AND IMPLEMENTATION		

RECOMMENDATION 6

Help PCs improve the quality of Twinning project design

In the context of TM 2017, supporting PC administrations to increase the relevance of Twinning projects to the EU-PC agreements, and the theory of change underpinning them, to strengthen the TP's focus, elevate its influence on impacts, and improve the likelihood of its sustainability.

Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR's IB, TAIEX and Twinning Unit, CoTEs, line DGs, EUDs, NCPs from PCs
What works and should continue?
The quality control of draft TPFs, which involves NCPs, EUDs, DG NEAR and line DGs, enables different aspects of TP design to be checked and fed back to the PC administration, but could be strengthened to improve the project's relevance to the acquis, standard and norms, intervention logic, synergies with other interventions within wider sector strategies (*see recommendation 4*) and alignment with the principles of public administration (*see recommendation 5*).
The ROM missions should continue to identify any flaws in intervention logic, so that they can be highlighted with EUDs and the PC administrations.

What should be strengthened?	How should this be done?
All relevant CoTEs and line DGs (at an earlier stage than present) should provide inputs during the preparation of TPFs, to check whether they are fully aligned with EU acquis, standards and norms.	This will require effective coordination with EUDs and DG NEAR's Twinning team, so that TPFs are circulated to the CoTEs and line DGs at a sufficiently early stage that they can check the relevance, quality and likely impact of activities - in the context of the sector, applicable EU acquis, and principles of public administration - and feedback their findings with enough time for the PC administrations to address any concerns. *See also recommendation 10.*
EUD and NCPs should check consistently that the intervention logic is robust and coherent before	DG NEAR's Twinning team should provide additional training to NCPs, EUDs and PCs on intervention logic, in line with the 2016 Guidelines on linking planning /

i) <u>Accepted</u>/Partially accepted/Rejected

Accepted - the Twinning Coordination Team will strengthen its engagement in relevant actions.

ii) Actions to be undertaken

a. Continue to deliver workshops on Twinning project design at the regular Twinning Working Group meetings and annual Institution Building Days

b. Continue to quality check TPFs as part of the ISC process, especially with geographical units, CoTEs and line DGs in terms of alignment with relevant *EU acquis*, standards and norms.

c. Providing training sessions on logic of intervention and indicators, specifically focused on Twinning projects

DG NEAR Twinning Coordination Team; throughout 2020 and beyond

CoTE PAR; throughout 2020 and beyond

M&E team; throughout 2020 and beyond

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submitting TPFs to DG NEAR, and after the PCs have received feedback from relevant CoTEs and line DGs.	programming, monitoring and evaluation. *See also recommendation 1.*		

RECOMMENDATION 7 **Promote EU benchmarking tools to PC administrations** Assemble and promote existing EU benchmarking tools and studies to guide PC administrations in their choice of MS partners.		**i) Accepted/Partially accepted/Rejected** Partially accepted – The Twinning Coordination Team will promote the dissemination of the mentioned available benchmarking studies, while reminding to the PC administrations that the selection of the MSs rests primarily on the evaluation of the elements provided in the offer of the MSs which responded to the competitive Call for Proposals which is a distinctive feature of the tool.	DG NEAR Twinning Coordination Team; throughout 2020 and beyond CoTE PAR; Full assessments every three/four years (next full assessments in 2021) and more targeted partial assessments every two years
Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR's IB, TAIEX and Twinning Unit, CoTEs, line DGs			
What works and should continue?		**ii) Actions to be undertaken**	
Not applicable – this is a new proposal.		a. Regular dissemination of relevant studies - if not in duplication of similar action already taken by the thematic CoTEs.	
What should be strengthened?	**How should this be done?**	b. CoTE PAR: Benchmarking is regularly done through the SIGMA monitoring assessments against the Principles of Public Administration	
PC administrations should utilise all the available contextual information that they can access in evaluating the submitted proposals in front of them, and selecting the most suitable MS partner for their TP.	DG NEAR's Twinning team should request from each CoTEs and relevant line DG that they identify benchmarking and other studies within their spheres of operation, which assess MS' performance and progress against various criteria, including the harmonisation, implementation and enforcement of EU acquis and norms/standards, such as the EU Justice Scoreboard, the Single Market Scoreboard, which includes market openness / trade in goods and services and public procurement *inter alia*, and the findings of the European Public Administration Country Knowledge (EUPACK). This request should be repeated every 6 months to ensure that the Twinning team has access to the most up-to-date information. The Twinning team should then assemble the EC benchmarking tools and studies and signpost EUDs and NCP in the PCs towards them.		

RECOMMENDATION 8 **Encourage consortiums and exchange of expertise across TPs**		**i) Accepted/Partially accepted/Rejected** Partially accepted - The possibility of forming consortia of MSs is already foreseen by the rules of the TM. The	DG NEAR Twinning Coordination Team; throughout 2020 and

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Broaden the perspectives of PC administrations by encouraging consortia of MS, despite the higher upfront 'costs' (time taken to find partners and prepare the proposal) and consider enabling projects to transfer experience from one PC to another by allowing study visits to PCs and bringing in civil servants/experts who were involved in a similar project, either to share experience or even provide short-term advice.		choice of forming, or not, consortia shall rest with the MSs, as well as it shall be granted that single EU MS proposals could apply for a project. Also, it has to be noted that it is also possible that, in case of more than one proposal, the Evaluation Committee can encourage the cooperation among MSs suggesting de facto the establishment of consortia ex-post. The current set-up therefore encourages participation and enables the possibility of establishing consortia, if deemed appropriate, at the Evaluation stage. The current rules do not enable the transfer of expertise among PCs, and for that purpose a significant reform of the tool is required.	beyond
Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR's IB, TAIEX & Twinning Unit, EUDs, PC administrations			
What works and should continue?			
The use of EU MS consortiums to deliver Twinning projects should continue and, furthermore, DG NEAR's Twinning team and EUDs should explicitly encourage the PC administrations to make clear in the TPF that they would welcome a consortium approach.		**ii) Actions to be undertaken**	
The practice of offering observer status on the project steering committee to RTAs from other TPs in the same country should be maintained and pursued more systematically across all PCs.		a. Continue raising awareness vis-à-vis MSs of the possibility and implications of forming consortia.	
Multi-country events, such as TAIEX seminars and FISCALIS 2020, should continue to open up opportunities for PC administrations to meet their counterparts in other enlargement and neighbourhood countries, as well as MS administrations.		b. Establish a working group to explore the feasibility of introducing rules that enable within Twinnings the sharing of expertise not only between MSs and a given PCs but also among PCs ("triangular Twinning")	
What should be strengthened?	**How should this be done?**		
The exchange of expertise across TPs in the same PC should be enhanced.	EUD Twinning coordinators should formalise contacts and networking between TPs, by organising regular (e.g. quarterly) round tables in the EUD for all PLs / RTAs and relevant programme managers for their sectors, where they can find out about each other's project activities.		
The exchange of expertise across TPs in different PCs should be enabled.	DG NEAR should allow and encourage Twinning teams to conduct study visits to other PCs (not just MS), so they can see the results of successful TPs and meet and discuss with the PC counterparts there.		
	Beneficiary PC administrations should encourage the selected MS / consortium to recruit STEs from other MS' who have implemented well-performing TPs in other countries with relevant experience, as well as those from their home administrations that are crucial to building the institutional relationship.		

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See also recommendation 10.		

RECOMMENDATIONS, FINAL REPORT	RESPONSES EU SERVICES: (I) ACCEPTED OR NOT, II) ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN	FOLLOW UP (by who ; by when)
RECOMMENDATION 9 **Build a comprehensive management information system (MIS)** Ensure the Twinning community, especially DG NEAR, line DGs, EUDs, CFCEs and NCPs, have access to information and intelligence on the performance of Twinning, and promote monitoring and evaluation practices, including (but not only) by means of TRMs. *Main implementation responsibility:* DG NEAR's IB, TAIEX & Twinning Unit, EUDs, network of NCPs	**i) Accepted/_Partially accepted_/Rejected** Partially accepted – Accessibility and optimisation of available e-tools are not under the sole authority of the Twinning Coordination Team. The TMS database is internal and is managed by Twinning Coordination Team. Other corporate Commission information systems already contain the mentioned information such as ROMs, evaluations, contracts, etc.) **ii) Actions to be undertaken** a. Further support the efforts of the EUDs to launch the requests for TRMs b. Develop an electronic application form is in TMS to facilitate the introduction of requests for TRMs. c. Continued improvement of the data quality in the internal TMS database. d. Explore possibilities to enhance and implement interface between TMS and other systems, notably such as PROSPECT and the upcoming OPSYS.	DG NEAR Twinning Coordination Team; throughout 2020 and beyond

What works and should continue?

The requirement in TM 2017 that all TPs should be subject to Twinning Review Missions (TRMs) should be enforced by EUDs, but DG NEAR should consider introducing TRMs for Twinning light projects and extending the 'earliest date' for TRMs to 12 months to increase the probability of capturing outcomes and impact, as well as confirming the achievement and sustainability of mandatory results and their sustainability.

The practice of commissioning country evaluations should be extended, so that all enlargement and neighbourhood countries have been covered at the conclusion of the 2014-2020 financial perspective.

What should be strengthened?	How should this be done?
DG NEAR should develop a web-based MIS, accessible by key stakeholders to facilitate exchange of project information, monitoring, evaluation and capitalisation of Twinning results.	DG NEAR should first develop a comprehensive web-based information database of TPs, structured so that it can be interrogated by country, sector and sub-sector, with access to key project documentation (TPF, contracts, reports, ROM, TRM, evaluation) and contact details (including EUD Twinning Coordinator and PC's NCPs). This would provide the foundation for a monitoring system, to enable the EUDs to track all TFR recommendations of existing (ongoing) and future TPs, and to follow up these TPs to see if their objectives and mandatory results have, in fact, been achieved (as claimed by TFRs) and whether the mandatory results create sustainable assets, as required by the TM.

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DG NEAR and EUDs should ensure that the TP database and tracking system are continually updated, and linked to the EVAL module and the Operational Information System (OPSYS), which is shared by DG NEAR, DG DEVCO and the service for Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI). *See also Recommendation 10.*		

RECOMMENDATIONS, FINAL REPORT		RESPONSES EU SERVICES	FOLLOW UP
RECOMMENDATION 10 **Capitalise the results of Twinning and promote exchange of inspiring practices** Make more effective use of lessons learned from recent and ongoing Twinning projects, using the comprehensive MIS (see 0), to avoid duplication of activity (projects in the same sector, covering similar topics with overlapping timescales which could usefully learn lessons from each other, by sharing and comparing approaches, and drawing on prepared methodologies and curricula), generate interest in designing new TPs to replicate or follow-up their successes (by highlighting actual outputs and outcomes), and help stakeholders to interpret TM rules creatively to make best use of resources, irrespective of the sector.		**i) Accepted/<u>Partially accepted</u>/Rejected** Partially accepted – NEAR policy and limited resources don't allow for the immediate development of a comprehensive Twinning MIS open to a wider community. **ii) Actions to be undertaken** a. Continue to share information from EUDs about successful Twinning projects in the monthly newsletter circulated internally within DG NEAR	DG NEAR Twinning Coordination Team; throughout 2020 and beyond
Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR's IB, TAIEX & Twinning Unit, EUDs, network of NCPs		b. Continue to highlight Twinning success stories in the annual activity report.	
What works and should continue?		c. Continue to include Twinning success stories in the regularly updated internal country fact sheets. Continue exchanging experiences and good practices during the NCP working group meetings.	
The Commission's *Twinning webpage* should be continually maintained as an accessible central locus of information, including the Twinning newsletters that contain useful information, short success stories, and the lessons learned and good practices from TRMs.		d. Update the TFR template to allow MSs to report on developments in their administrations arising from the TP.	
What should be strengthened?	**How should this be done?**		
EUDs should identify and disseminate inspiring practices and achievements in ongoing and recent TPs, to add value to the plans and activities of PC administrations.	EUDs should first identify innovative approaches and success stories by drawing upon their ROM reports, TRM reports, TFRs and other sources (including the NCPs), and flagging these cases with DG NEAR, so that they can be assessed as prospective subjects for profiling and promotion (*see recommendation 11*), and the 'network of NCPs' from PC administrations, so that they can draw attention to them among potential beneficiary administrations. *In order to capture the benefits to MSs, DG NEAR should*		

FOLLOW-UP ACTION PLAN OF THE EVALUATION OF THE TWINNING INSTRUMENT IN THE PERIOD 2010-2017

RECOMMENDATIONS, FINAL REPORT		RESPONSES EU SERVICES: (I) ACCEPTED OR NOT, II) ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN	FOLLOW UP (by who ; by when)
consider amending the TFR template to invite the MS side to record any developments, underway or planned, in their home administrations arising from practices developed in the host administration during the TP. *When it is developed*, DG NEAR should ensure that the TP database and tracking system (see 0) can be accessed online by all EUDs and CFCEs in enlargement and neighbourhood regions, every NCP, and all relevant line DGs. EUDs, along with PC NCPs, should also foster contacts between ongoing projects to discuss common administrative and management issues and exchange inspiring practices that can facilitate implementation and enhance results. (By way of illustration, the example under conclusion 5 from Croatia shows a flexibility of thinking that could be showcased and spread among the actual and prospective Twinning community). *See also Recommendation 8.*			
RECOMMENDATION 11 **Improve visibility of Twinning and the EU's role** Raise the profile of Twinning among EU MS, PCs and stakeholders, to elicit greater interest and recognition, including EU's profile (in particular in the South). *Main implementation responsibility:* DG NEAR's IB, TAIEX & Twinning Unit, EUDs, MS' NCPs **What works and should continue?** The Commission's *Twinning webpage* should be continually maintained as an accessible central locus of information, including the Twinning newsletters that contain useful information, short success stories, and the lessons learned and good practices from TRMs.		**i) Accepted/<u>Partially accepted</u>/Rejected** Partially accepted – limited resources within Twinning Coordination Team to regularly produce and include the Twinning newsletters with useful information, short success stories, and the lessons learned and good practices from TRMs on DG NEAR Twinning website. **ii) Actions to be undertaken** a. Continue to contribute to annual activity report with short success stories from the implementation of Twinning projects b. Continue to update internal country fact sheets with success stories c. Continue to exchange information about Twinning projects at the regular Twinning Working Group	DG NEAR Twinning Coordination Team; throughout 2020 and beyond
What should be strengthened?	**How should this be done?**		
DG NEAR should use EUD's inspiring practices and successes stories to increase the profile among MSs and	DG NEAR should prepare publicity materials around selected Twinning case studies, which can be used both online as short eye-catching profiles in Twinning News and		

FOLLOW-UP ACTION PLAN OF THE EVALUATION OF THE TWINNING INSTRUMENT IN THE PERIOD 2010-2017

RECOMMENDATIONS, FINAL REPORT		RESPONSES EU SERVICES: (I) ACCEPTED OR NOT, II) ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN	FOLLOW UP (by who ; by when)
PCs.	as standalone 1-page hand-outs to sell the benefits of Twinning. Inter alia, MS' NCPs should utilise these inspirational materials, including those promoting the benefits to MS themselves, to promote Twinning at the national and sub-national levels in their home administrations.	meetings and the annual Institution Building Days	
EUDs should ensure the EU's role in Twinning is well recognised among both the administration and population of PCs.	EUDs should ensure that all TPs follow the EU's visual identity guidelines, including preparing a communication and visibility plan at the outset of the project in line with TM 2017, (see section 5.7), agreed by the two PLs and approved by the EUD, promote the contribution of the EU throughout the TP (not just at the launch and closure events), and communicate activities and benefits to key stakeholders and the wider public, which will require close cooperation with the Twinning partners and also DG NEAR. The EUDs should include Twinning in the communication and visibility strategies, and wider media promotional programmes (e.g. looking at the example of the EUD in Ukraine, which has developed communication strategies and campaigns to publicise the EU's involvement in the reform agenda).		
RECOMMENDATION 12 **Review Twinning's state of play in 2021 and explore the merits of alternative scenarios which would strengthen the interest of MS administrations and their engagement in Twinning, thereby increasing Twinning relevance and effectiveness in matching PC needs with MS public sector expertise. Such a review is essential to ensure the future of the mechanism, particularly in the context of a possible geographical extension of Twinning beyond the enlargement and neighbourhood regions.** Conduct a review of Twinning's state of play, and specifically the new TM after three years of implementation, especially in the context of considerations of possible geographical extension of Twinning beyond the enlargement and neighbourhood regions in 2021-2027, spreading existing capacity in EU public sector expertise more thinly; explore scenarios which would encourage interest and engage more MS administrations, bringing their expertise to bear on identifying institution-building needs and proposing creative solutions at the post-programming TP design stage, while reinforcing the PC-MS partnership principle from the earliest possible moment, compatible with the		i) <u>Accepted</u>/Partially accepted/Rejected Accepted – a full review of the Twinning tool to be conducted in 2021. **ii) Actions to be undertaken** a. Gather the experiences of the MSs and PCs in the implementation of Twinning projects under the TM 2017. b. Gather the experience of the EUDs / Contracting Authorities in the implementation of Twinning projects under the TM 2017. c. Consult DG NEAR and DG BUDG services, on the	DG NEAR Twinning Coordination Team, in dialogue with DG INTPA; throughout 2021

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RECOMMENDATIONS, FINAL REPORT	RESPONSES EU SERVICES: (I) ACCEPTED OR NOT, II) ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN	FOLLOW UP (by who ; by when)
FR's provisions on grants; consider greater flexibility in TP implementation, building on the changes in TM 2017, so that standard Twinning becomes more manageable for PCs and EU MSs and more effective for administrative capacity-building.	possible changes identified on the basis of the exchanges above regarding the experience of one full cycle of application of the TM 2017 and on the initial experience gathered with the DEVCO (now INTPA) Twinning pilot projects.	

Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR's IB, TAIEX & Twinning Unit
What works and should continue?
Not applicable.

What should be strengthened?	**How should this be done?**
DG NEAR should consider ways in which Twinning can be made more relevant to the needs of MSs and PCs, and thereby enhance its take-up as a modality in the context of multi-mode sector strategies and long term reform agendas.	DG NEAR should commission a policy review of Twinning rather than a full evaluation, by organising roundtables with CoTEs, line DGs, EUDs, NCPs from both EU MS' and PC, CFCEs, and a sample of PC and MS administrations with experiences of preparing and implementing TPs under TM 2017. The policy review should produce concrete recommendations to adjust the TM and/or take more far-reaching steps, including potentially:
	• Pre-competitive 'calls for interest and ideas' by Member States, which would allow them to express their interest in the TP (alerting PCs to potential bidders beyond the usual applicants), and to propose relevant and innovative approaches that, if attractive to the PC, could be integrated into the TPFs sent out by PCs and subject to competitive bidding[3];
	• An approach to competitive proposals that is closer to the standard 'action grant' approach of the PRAG, based on guidelines for applicants to propose their vision of how the PCs' project objective could be met, and subject to a concept note (which could be the basis of an alternative mechanism to the 'call for interest and ideas') followed by full application;

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[3] In some MS, public authorities (for example, DFID) make an initial announcement of their intention to seek consultancy services, setting out the overall aims and an outline of the project that will be subject to competitive tender, and invite feedback from potential providers as to whether it is viable or other approaches might be more appropriate. The public authority then collects this feedback, consider its plans further, refines them where it sees best, and issues an open call for proposals.

FOLLOW-UP ACTION PLAN OF THE EVALUATION OF THE TWINNING INSTRUMENT IN THE PERIOD 2010-2017

	RECOMMENDATIONS, FINAL REPORT	RESPONSES EU SERVICES: (I) ACCEPTED OR NOT, II) ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN	FOLLOW UP (by who ; by when)
	• Revised Twinning parameters that permit projects to spread their activities over a longer and less intensive time period, to allow time for the PC to absorb the lessons learned, and, without the full-time / permanent presence of RTAs (mixing characteristics of standard and light TW), possibly by phasing the RTA's inputs out before the TP is completed, and/or allowing the TP to 'pause' while the PC adjusts and adapts their policies and practices, and/or allowing the EU MS to employ an in-country project manager to relieve RTA of organisational duties to focus on the advisory role, and/or budgeting for a follow-up session by the EU MS up to 12 months after the TP to provide "after-care" on TFR recommendations; and • Exploring the scope for a dedicated Twinning regulation and/or amendment to the Financial Regulation, to recognise the specificities of Twinning to improve flexibility, including the possibility to increase the budget to reflect higher or unforeseen costs, in order to better achieve the objectives through expanded or new activities.		