



**International Cooperation Research Activities  
- Twinning concept in FP 7-**

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**Summary**

This report highlights in a very practical manner a new instrument to support international cooperation in FP7. The “Twinning” scheme is a flexible, but effective instrument to bridge between project cluster nationally funded by third partner countries and respective project clusters financed under FP7.

This policy brief

- describes the “Twinning” scheme
- indicates activities which can be supported under the “Twinning” scheme
- highlights examples of the use of “Twinning”
- explains in its core chapter how “Twinning” can be implemented
- features two good practice cases of previous implementation and
- informs about planned “Twinning” arrangements.

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# 1. The FP7-Twinning- Instrument at a Glance

Twinning (synchronization of projects) is one of the tools for targeted international cooperation (based on mutual benefit and reciprocity) and 'twinning' represents a way of promoting cooperation between projects independently generated and funded under the FP and under third country research funding schemes. The concept provides multiply opportunities for linking research projects and ideas within scientific community worldwide.

- Promising, flexible instrument building a sustainable and long lasting R&D cooperation between EU and non EU countries (e.g. Canada, Brasil, Japan, New Zealand etc.).
- Twinning of projects between FP7 themes and related programmes/parallel calls from third countries, following FP 7 themes:
  - o Theme 1: Health (in discussion);
  - o Theme 2: Food, agriculture, fisheries and biotechnology (FAFB);
  - o Theme 5: Energy (e.g. Biofuels, in discussion);
  - o Theme 6: Environment (in preparation);
  - o Theme 7: Transport (urban transport, freight transport, logistic safety, in preparation)

In general, the **expectations from twinning concept** are to:

- find partners for future research projects;
- exchange experts between EU and third countries;
- collaborate in human resource training (internships); and to
- share and compare experiences on selected topic.

The twinning mechanism requires (apart from signed bilateral S&T agreements between EC and third countries<sup>1</sup>) an effective communication and information sharing at the level of funding agencies. (see 3 b).

The twinning concept should remain open and should not be:

- limited to pairs of projects (it is possible to envisage project trios, quartets, etc.). It could also be possible to operate under a single umbrella structure for all projects participating.
- limited to participants in the workshop. New interested projects should be allowed to easily join the initiative in a later stage, under overall principle of mutual benefit and reciprocity.

The **basic rules** for implementing Twinning are:

- Each participant (country out of EU and the EC) is using already approved and funded projects (specifically in case of Ex-post Twinning);
- Each participant/project owns their intellectual property (IP) rights;
- No exchange of funds between participants (no additional funding for research);
- Each participant is self-funded;
- Targeted time frame for twinning is three years;
- Funding: app 1% given by the EC to the project, parallel funding it provided by the third country.

In the implementation of Twinning one should differentiate between **two possible procedures**, which are explained in this report:

- 1) ex-ante twinning
- 2) ex-post twinning

!!!!Twinning is not merging; each project remains fully independent, scientifically, legally and financially!!!!

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<sup>1</sup> The existence of a common policy discussion forum has been proven instrumental to find common ground for implementing twinning activities. This is the reason why at present twinning activities have only been implemented with those third countries that have concluded an S&T agreement with the EU. The existence of a legal framework for cooperation and the organisation of regular joint committee meetings providing the basis for the discussion, have considerably eased the setting up/organisational process. Nevertheless, twinning of projects could also be envisaged with countries that do not have an S&T agreement with the EU.

## 2. Activities to be supported under Twinning

The priority is to internationalize the projects and following activities can be supported:

- short term exchanges / visits of researchers;
- organisation of workshops/meeting;
- development of common trainings;
- setting up of common working groups (e.g. on physical mapping of leaf rust resistance genes, mapping populations for traits of common interest; on development of enzymatic material from platforms related to the use of cell wall degrading enzymes and the enzymatic cocktail to degrade cellulose at reduced cost; etc...);
- access to and exchange of tools, analytical methods and databases;
- joint scientific papers;
- common procedures and protocols;
- common literature reviews;
- exchange of data, information, knowledge and material sharing (e.g. germplasm, markets);
- administrative costs for twinning;
- etc...

The costs of these activities are expected to be approximately 1% of the total European Community contribution to these projects. Parallel funding is generated from related research programmes in the third countries for counterpart projects.

## 3. Examples for Twinning in Work Programme 2008 and Work Programme 2009

Twinning under the Cooperation Programme was/is implemented only in the theme 2 (FP7 Cooperation Work Programme Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology) as follows:

- **1 twinning in 2008:**  
twinning between **EU and Canadian projects** (Act 3, 2 WP 2008) in agriculture and agrifood (focus on bio-products and food)  
Counterpart programme to FP 7: Canadian Agricultural Bioproducts Innovation Programme (ABIP)<sup>2</sup>
- **1 twinning in 2009:**  
twinning between **EU and Argentinean** (Act 1,2, WP 2009) agriculture research projects (focus on plants, soil and food research, BIOTECSUR Platform<sup>3</sup>)  
Counterpart programme to FP 7: Argentinean National Research Programmes (programmes governed by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation - MINCYT)

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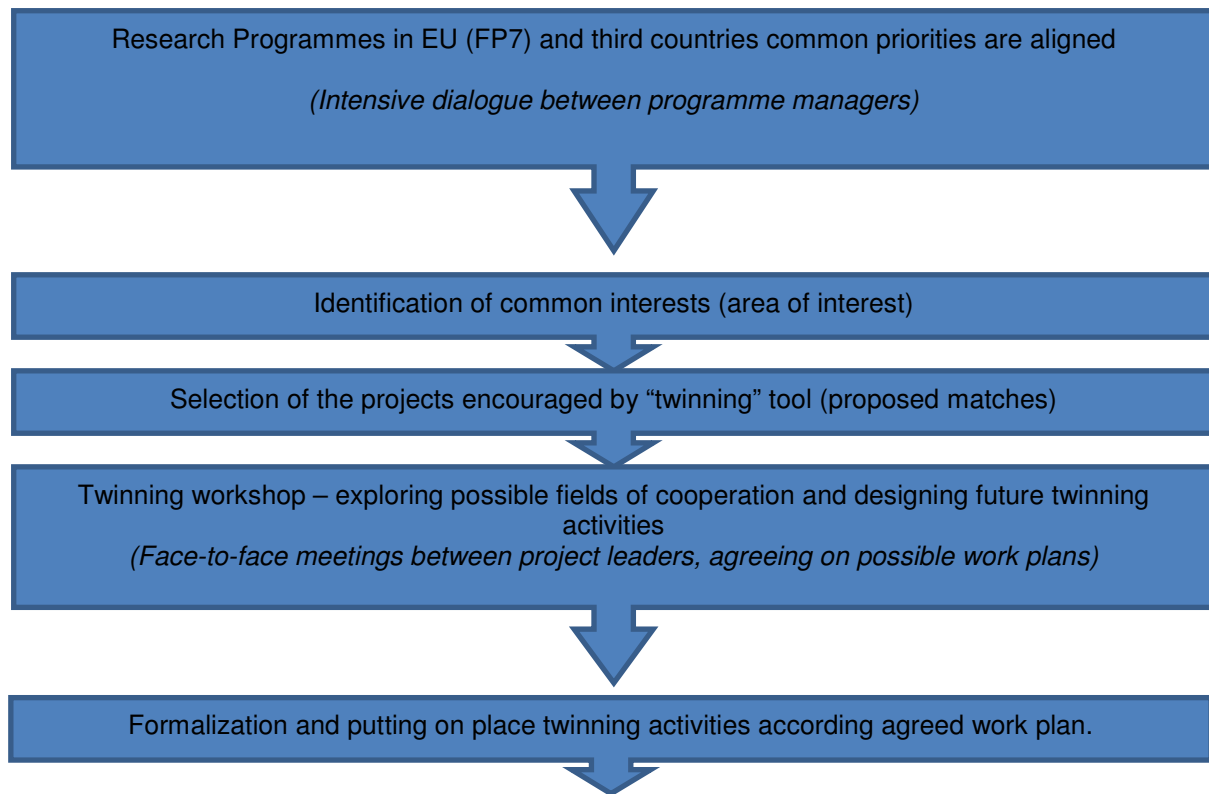
<sup>2</sup> Agricultural Bioproducts Innovation Program (ABIP) is a five-year initiative, seeking to mobilize Canada's creative talent in academia and in the private and public sectors and to integrate resources to build greater research capacity in agricultural bioproducts and bioprocesses. Through supporting networks and clusters, the programme promotes research, development, technology transfer and commercialization activities in areas such as biofuels, other forms of bioenergy, industrial chemicals, biomaterials, and health products.

<sup>3</sup> The BIOTECSUR Platform is institutional mechanism coordinating a network of public and private MERCOSUR actors in order to generate highly competitive biotechnological products and services, internationally recognized. MERCOSUR countries: Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil

## 4. Implementation of the Twinning-Scheme

The idea of twinning is to bring together projects separately funded by the EC on one side and the partner country on the other side. Table 1 provides a general overview of the main Twinning steps. The procedure starts with the identification and alignment of scientific and technological priority areas which are of mutual interest of both parties (EC and partner country). When an agreement has been found, relevant projects, which are separately funded, are selected and encouraged to conclude a Twinning arrangement.

**Table 1: General overview of the implementation of twinning**



Usually project leaders are invited to participate in a "Twinning Workshop" to discuss potential areas of scientific cooperation (bilateral discussions, face-to-face). The EC reserves the right to ask the coordinators of FP7 projects (during the grant agreement negotiations) to include collaboration activities with projects financed by third countries. There is no exchange of funding between the participants. From the EC funded research projects, a budget representing 1% of the approved project is set aside to "twin" the project. From the "third country side", the financing body tops up funding for the project with an equivalent amount (parallel funding for counterpart projects). The twinning procedure is finalized upon approval of the joint work plan between the projects.

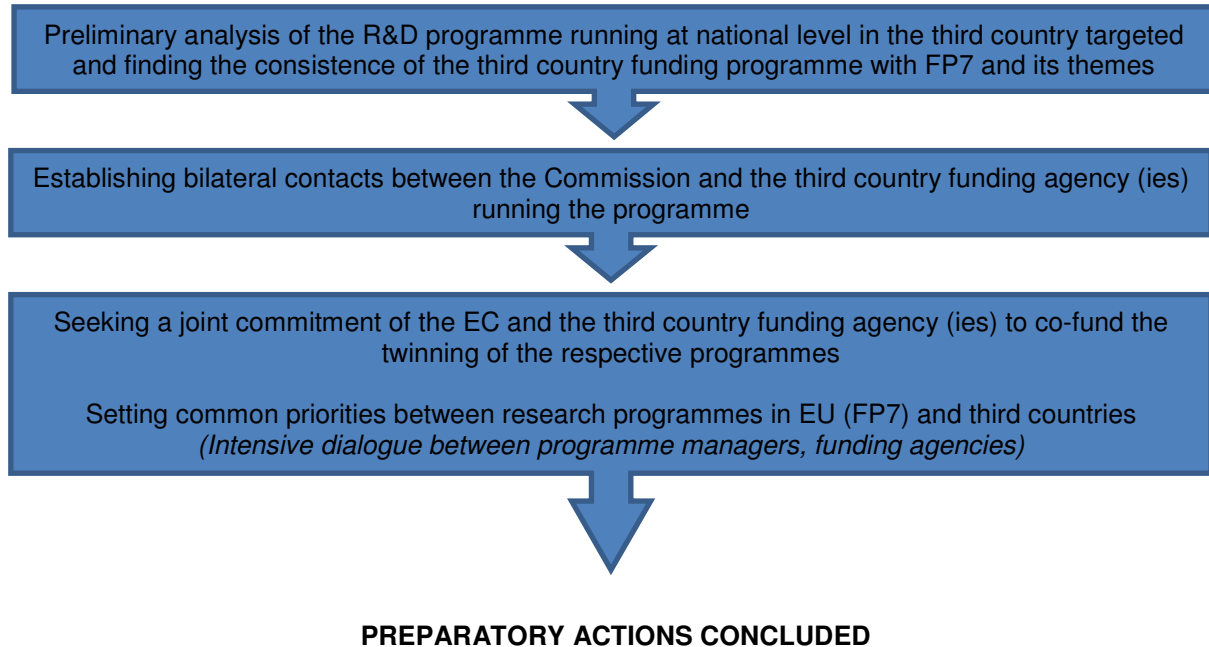
### 4.1. Preparatory Actions for Twinning Implementation

The following steps should be executed before a twinning can start (see also Table 2):

- A preparatory analysis of the programmes running at national and at regional level in the counterpart country/region (identifying priority areas for respective calls for research proposals, public research is a priority);
- The comparison of these counterpart programmes with FP7 (respective theme) in order to identify analogies and areas of mutual interest;
- The bilateral commitment of EC and counterpart agency(ies) from the third country to co-sponsor the twinning (coordinated approach);
- Jointly decide on the list of selected projects for twinning with principal investigators and location (joint events to gather projects selected from both sides in order to initiate links,

- project leaders are invited to participate in twinning workshops to discuss potential areas of scientific cooperation);
- Authorize the twinning.

**Table 2: Implementation of twinning – preparatory actions (equal for both options of twinning: a) twinning through new projects “ex-ante”; b) twinning through existing/ongoing projects “ex-post”)**



## 4.2. Ex-ante Twinning

### A. *Twinning of new projects (ex ante)*

Upcoming calls for proposals both under the programme of a third country and the FP can make provision for twinning activities in the call text. Two kinds of twinning activities could be envisaged (see Table 3):

A 1) *Mandatory twinning*: A project to be funded under FP7 needs to foresee twinning activities with similar projects funded by a given third country funding agency (ies) specified in the text of the call.

Characteristics:

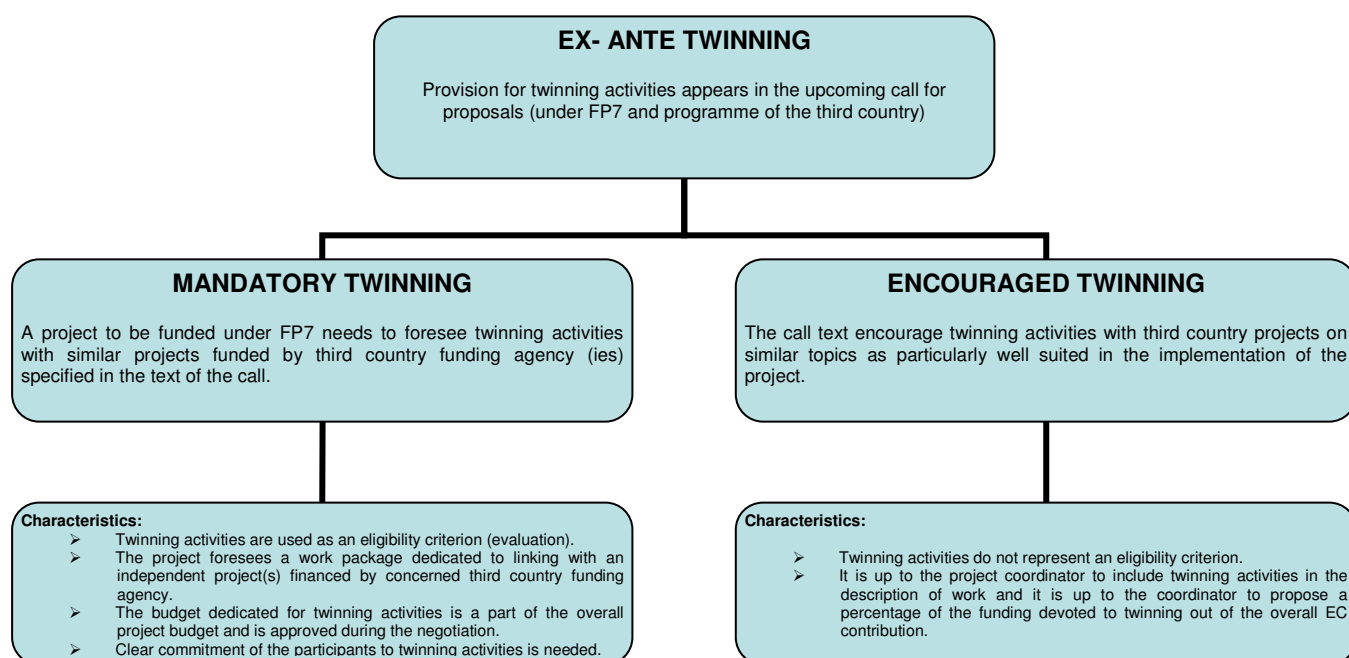
- Twinning activities are used as an eligibility criterion and therefore reflected in the evaluation;
- The project foresees a work package dedicated to the linking with an independent project(s) financed by the concerned third country funding agency;
- The budget to finance those twinning activities is part of the overall project budget and approved during the negotiation;
- Clear commitment of the participants to engage in twinning activities.

A2) *Encouraged twinning*: The call text encourages twinning activities with third country projects on similar topics as particularly well suited in the implementation of the project.

Characteristics:

- Twinning activities do not represent an eligibility criterion;
- It is up to the project coordinator to include twinning activities in the description of work and he can propose a percentage of the funding devoted to it out of the overall EC contribution.

**Table 3: EX ANTE TWINNING - twinning of new projects**



### 4.3. Ex-post Twinning

#### B. Twinning of existing projects (ex post)

Twinning activities could be also organised with already ongoing projects. In this case the project coordinators will be asked to enlarge their programme of work including twinning activities with project(s) funded by a given third country funding agency (ies) (see Table 4).

However, the financing of twinning of existing projects presents a number of administrative hurdles from the Commission side. These obstacles are linked to the fact that for already running projects it is more difficult for the Commission to fund additional cost for twinning activities. The cases of ongoing and already concluded contract negotiations have to be distinguished.

*B1) Ongoing contract negotiations:* The Commission can ask the project coordinators to reserve a fixed percentage of the overall project budget to twinning activities. The project's description of work and the work packages have to be adjusted accordingly. This implies:

- Project coordinators need to agree to organise twinning activities.

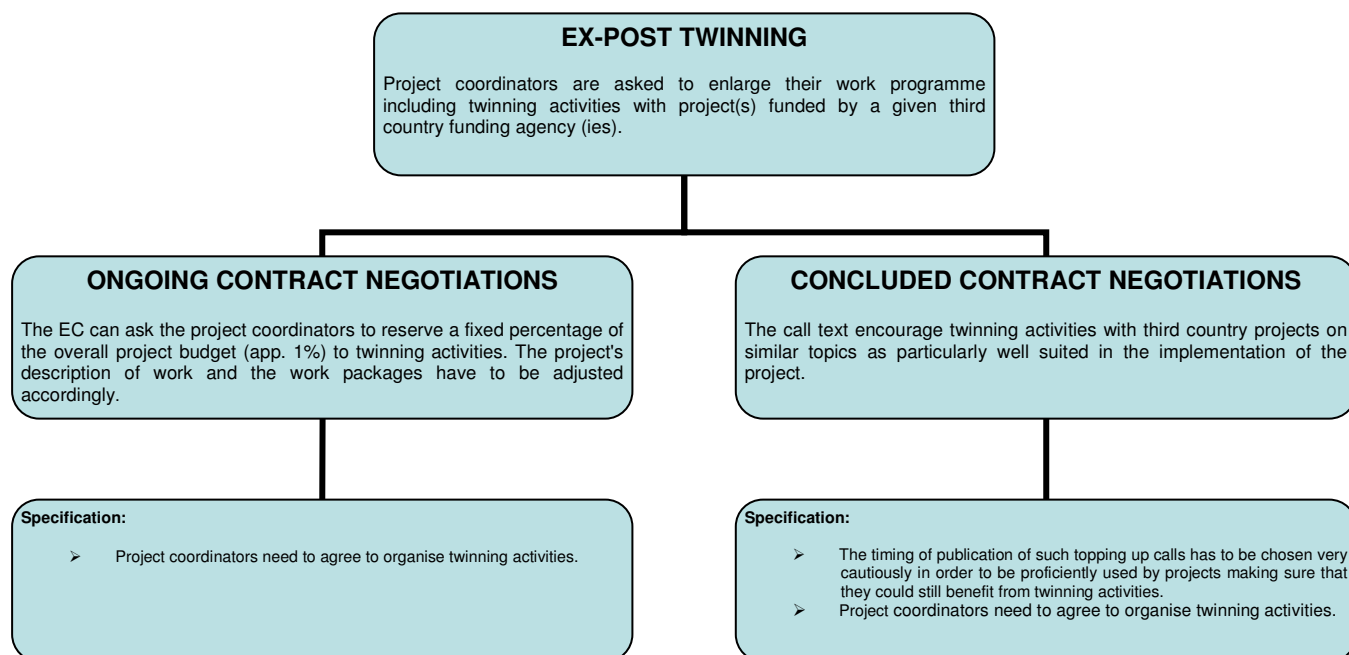
*B2) Concluded contract negotiations:* Twinning activities can not be fund with the project's fund as the overall negotiated budget covers already all the activities that the project is supposed to carry out and that are detailed in the work packages.

In order to fund the additional costs related to the twinning activities, the Commission can publish a "top up" call (for instance via a call for coordination and support actions)<sup>4</sup>. This implies:

- The timing of publication of such topping up calls has to be chosen very cautiously in order to be proficiently used by projects making sure that they could still benefit from twinning activities;
- Project coordinators need to agree to organise twinning activities.

<sup>4</sup> It has to be clarified whether such a "top up" call could be granted without a specific call for proposal, using the exception provided for in Art 14 (a) of the FP7 Rules for Participation.

**Table 4: EX-POST TWINNING - twinning of existing projects (used in case of Canada and Brasil)**



**Future plans to implement twinning:**

Currently co-funding of twinning with the following countries/regions possible:

**USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Brasil, Mexico, Egypt**

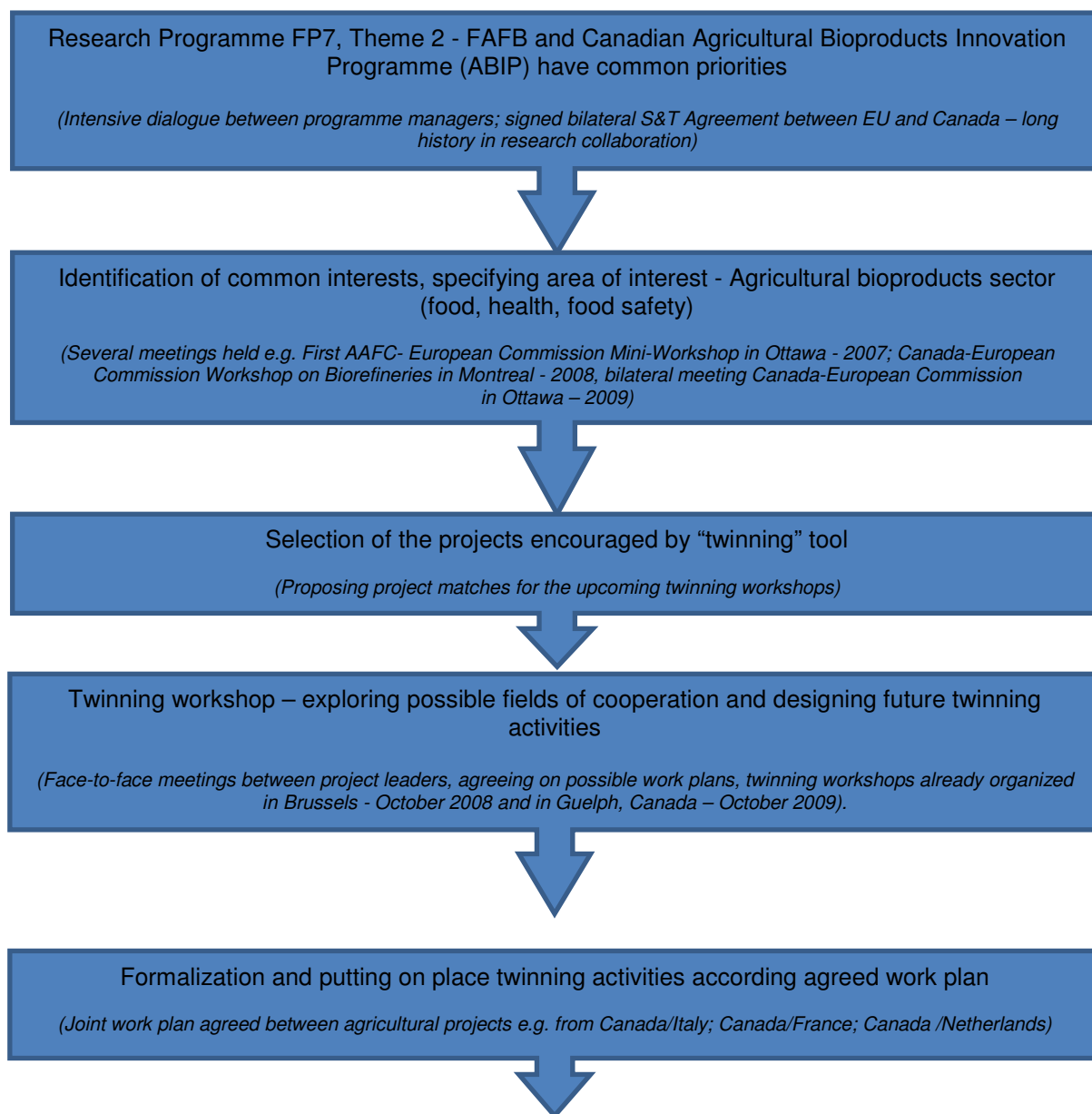
Twinning in WP 2010:

- still open, no results available yet;
- currently discussion on twinning with other countries/regions in FAFB theme – case of New Zealand and Australia)

## 5. Good Practice Cases

**A) The SUCCESS STORY of EU/Canada<sup>5</sup>** (pioneer in twinning): jointly initiated by Agriculture and AgriFood Canada and the Food, Agriculture, Fishery and Biotechnology theme of the FP 7 (see Table 5):

**Table 5: Case of implementation of twinning concept in Canada (ex-post twinning)**



### **TWINNING (project synchronization) – LASTING UP TO 3 YEARS**

#### **Planned “twinning workshops” Canada/EU in upcoming months:**

- 3rd Canada-European Commission Twinning Workshop “Canada-EC Coordinated Call on Food and Health”, Brussels, October 2010 (TBC)
- 3rd Canada-European Commission Workshop on Biotechnologies Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, October 2010

<sup>5</sup> See article: “Can you twin my project? The Canadian experience” <http://www.biocircle-project.eu/dnn4/News/tabid/56/Default.aspx?mid=372&ctl=red&ItemID=21>; “From Brokerage to Twinning: A Recipe for Success”: <http://www.biocircle-project.eu/dnn4/News/tabid/56/Default.aspx?mid=372&ctl=red&ItemID=36>

This twinning arrangement resulted from the **First AAFC- European Commission Mini-Workshop** held in Ottawa in May 2007. Canadian and European Officials realised that the FP7 FAFB theme and Canada's new **Agricultural Bioproducts Innovation Programme (ABIP)** share a number of points in common.

The "twinning" initiative has been formalised in the EC 2008 Work Program for the FAFB theme:

- *With a view to promoting international co-operation with third countries that are signatories of S&T bilateral agreements with the European Community, initiatives towards collaboration between projects selected respectively under this FP7 theme and under related research programmes from those third countries will be encouraged, on the basis of principles of mutual benefit and reciprocity. As an example, collaboration activities with Canadian projects from the Agriculture Bioproducts Innovation Programme (ABIP) of Agriculture and Agre-food Canada could be supported.*

**Canada-European Commission Workshop on Biorefineries: Biofuels & Bioproducts**, Montreal, Quebec (February 2008)

Participants: 35 Canadian and European officials and scientific coordinators of research projects. The workshop identified twelve opportunities for twinning research projects involving at least one research institution in Europe and in Canada.

**First Canada/EU Twinning Workshop, Brussels** (October 2008)

Theme: Food and Health

Participants: Canadian and EU universities and networks (AAFC Summerland Research Centre in British Columbia, University of Bologna in Italy)

Another **bilateral meeting Canada-European Commission (EC), Ottawa** (29 – 30 June 2009)

Participants: EU and various Canadian agencies and departments discussing further scientific cooperation under Theme 2/FP7.

**Second Canada/EU Twinning Workshop, Guelph, Canada**<sup>6</sup> (23 October 2009)

Theme: Food and Health but also Food Safety related science issues

Participants: relevant Canadian networks (Advanced and Food Material Network, AFMNet) and another federal department (Public Health Agency of Canada)

There were 6 areas of interest presented by project leaders from Canada and EU. Then the EC and Canadian science leaders working on similar projects had private discussions to evaluate possibilities for cooperation and later shared with the group the results of their discussions.

**Planned "twinning workshops" Canada/EU:**

- 3rd Canada-European Commission « Twinning Workshop » Canada-EC Coordinated Call on Food and Health » Brussels, October 2010 (TBC)
- 3rd Canada-European Commission Workshop on Biotechnologies Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, October 2010 (TBC)

**Examples of successfully twinned projects** (joint work plan agreed e.g. between projects from Canada/Italy; Canada/France; Canada/Netherlands):

FORBIOPLAST (EU) "Forest resource sustainability through bio-based composite development", Pisa, Italy; and Canada ABIP BioPotato Network, Fredericton

BASELINE (EU) "Selection and improving of fit-for-purpose sampling procedure for specific foods and risks", Almamater Studiorum – University of Bologna, Italy; and

Canada "Mitigating dissemination of bioterrorism agents in Canadian food system & Ecology of human enteric pathogens in fresh horticultural products", AAFC, Summerland

More precise information of twinned projects missing.

<sup>6</sup> A Second Twinning Workshop on Food and Health, Food Safety and related science issues: <http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1260991545330&lang=eng#Toc247507747>

## B) The SUCCESS STORY of EU/Argentina<sup>7</sup>

Following the recommendations of the **Third Meeting of the European Commission-Argentina Science and Technology Agreement Steering Committee** held in Brussels on April 17, 2008, a new activity to develop cooperation in the area of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology, was proposed for promoting the “twinning” on-going projects from the 7th EU Framework Programmes and **Argentinean National Research Programmes (MINCYT)**.

Emphasis was placed on making the fullest use of existing instruments and on combining bilateral cooperation between EU and Argentina with bi-regional cooperation such as BIOTECSUR platform, being implemented with support by the EC the MERCOSUR countries.

- **First Workshop on Twinning opportunities, Buenos Aires** (7 – 8 May 2009)

Theme: Soil, Plant and Food research

Participants: scientists and officials from Argentinean and other MERCOSUR countries and European Union (in total 7 EU and 8 Argentinean / BIOTECSUR leading research projects were represented).

- **Second Workshop on Twinning opportunities, Athens** (June 30 & July 1, 2010)

Theme: Soil, Plant and Food research

### Projects to be twinned (no reports available yet):

ENDURE (EU), University of Aarhus, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Aarhus, Denmark  
INTA-IPM and No-Till, Instituto de Fitopatología y Fisiología Vegetal – INTA

GLIP and GL-TTP (EU), John Innes Centre, Norwich, United Kingdom  
Soybean-BIOTECSUR, Estacion Experimental Agroindustrial Obispo Colombes

4F CROPS (EU), Center for Renewable Energy Sources, Biomass Department, Greece  
Sunflower-Argentina Facultad de Bioquímica y Ciencias Biológicas, Universidad Nacional del Litoral, Santa Fe

Sweetfuel (EU), CIRAD, Biological Systems Department, Montpellier, France  
Eucalyptus-BIOTECSUR, Instituto de Biología, INTA-Castelar

TriticacGenome (EU) INRA, Department of Genetics, Diversity and Ecophysiology of Grains, Clermont-Ferrand, France  
WheatBiotechnology-Argentina, Estacion Experimental Agropecuaria – Marcos Juarez, Cordoba

VALORAM (EU), PROINPA Foundation, Cochabamba, Bolivia; Stephan Declerck, Catholic University of Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium  
SoilGeneticResources-Argentina, INDEAR/Facultad de Ciencias Exactas y Naturales - UBA

BIOSPAS-Argentina, Universidad Nacional de Quilmes  
MycoRed (EU), National Research Council, Institute of Sciences of Food Production, Bari, Italy

Mycotoxins-Argentina, Facultad de Ciencia Exactas, Fisico-Química y Naturales – Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto

<sup>7</sup> Website for twinning opportunities: <http://www.ec-argentina.eu/buenos.html>

## 6. Planned Twinning Activities

### **Twinning EU – Brasil in “Transport”**

Based on the minutes<sup>8</sup> of the Viajeo Seminar: EU – Brazil Cooperation on Urban Mobility and ITS (Rio de Janeiro, 2 June 2010), the “synchronization of projects between EU and Brazil: twinning, Coordinated Calls for Proposals” should be used as a key instrument in EU-Brazil science cooperation.

No more information available at the moment.

### **Twinning EU - Australia in “Food, Agriculture, Biotechnologies”**

(21 Jul 2009<sup>9</sup>) The EC and Australia agreed that twinning would be the main new tool for cooperation in this area. Officials meet via videoconference in February 2009 to identify suitable projects and advance the arrangements. Australian funding to participate in this Twinning pilot has been approved under the International Science Linkages programme.

According to EU/AUS Road map: *“Finally, in terms of cooperation mechanisms all avenues will be explored in particular the Twinning support mechanism that, if successful, could be envisaged in several thematic areas of mutual interest and benefit.”*

No information about twinning in the communiqué Australia - European Union Joint Science and Technology Cooperation from June 2010 anymore. No information available.

### **Twinning EU – Japan and EU - US in “Energy”**

In the course of training preliminary information<sup>10</sup> about probable content of Work Programme “Energy” 2011, pilot action for exchange of researchers with US and Japan and twinning of projects is planned. There will be three calls launched in the frameworks of the Work Programme FP7-ENERGY-2011. Project’s requirements: Rules: 2 and more organisations from Member States or Associated Countries and 1 or more organisation from Japan or USA.

### **Twinning EU – Russia in “Energy” and “Environment”**

The Energy Directorate in DG Research is currently examining possibilities for twinning of EU and Russian projects in the area of energy efficiency and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation biofuels, which are of most interest to the Russian side.

According to the EU/Russia Roadmap 2009 – 2011, twinning is preferred cooperation mechanism between RU/EU. As a pilot project on twinning, the Federal Agency for Science and Innovation (FASI) proposed to initiate a Russian project which could be twinned with an existing FP7 project, MEGAPOLI (Megacities: emissions, urban, regional and global atmospheric pollution and climate effects, and integrated tools for assessment and mitigation). No more information available at the moment.

Important role in assisting the EC to identify suitable projects for twinning (through organisation of themed workshops) could play E-URAL<sup>11</sup> and BILAT – RUS<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.viajeo.eu/download/meetingsevents/Rio\\_Seminar\\_02\\_06\\_2010/viajeo\\_rio\\_seminar\\_02062010\\_minutes.pdf](http://www.viajeo.eu/download/meetingsevents/Rio_Seminar_02_06_2010/viajeo_rio_seminar_02062010_minutes.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.delasus.ec.europa.eu/scienceandtech/RoadmapCooperation.htm>

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.fp7-energy.ru/8.4\\_en.php](http://www.fp7-energy.ru/8.4_en.php)

<sup>11</sup> E-URAL supports individual partner search assistance for joint participation in FP7 proposals or in national (MS and Russia) programmes in each region (target partner search for twinning or participation in FP7 calls). Matching of Russian needs in ENV research (based on E-URAL deliverables) with one of the Member States with the view of launching joint calls under national research programs and foundations. Website <http://www.e-ural.vsu.ru/en/e-ural>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.bilat-rus.eu/>

## Other references:

A new initiative between Canada and the European Commission: "The Twinning Concept":  
<http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1221138641782&lang=eng>

International cooperation: [http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/capacities/international-cooperation\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/capacities/international-cooperation_en.html)

EU and Canada to 'twin' agricultural bioproduct projects:  
[http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=KBBE\\_NEWS&ACTION=D&DOC=3&CAT=NEWS&RCN=28886](http://cordis.europa.eu/fetch?CALLER=KBBE_NEWS&ACTION=D&DOC=3&CAT=NEWS&RCN=28886)

Senior Managers EU-FP7 Discuss Twinning Cooperation with Canada:  
<http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1253577352217&lang=eng#anc3>

Food\_N-CO:  
<http://www.abe-bao.be/ContentFiles/43fef5f5-ee0-4906-9530-1466a92eed0f.pdf>

Can you twin my project? The Canadian experience:  
<http://www.biocircle-project.eu/dnn4/News/tabid/56/Default.aspx?mid=372&ctl=red&ItemID=21>

From Brokerage to Twinning: A Recipe for Success  
<http://www.biocircle-project.eu/dnn4/News/tabid/56/Default.aspx?mid=372&ctl=red&ItemID=36>

A Second Twinning Workshop on Food and Health, Food Safety and related science issues:  
(<http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1260991545330&lang=eng#Toc247507747>)

EU – Argentina: Twinning opportunities of mutual benefits for developing cooperation in FAFB sector:  
<http://www.biocircle-project.eu/dnn4/News/tabid/56/Default.aspx?mid=372&ctl=red&ItemID=32>

List of presentations from the Buenos Aires meeting:  
[http://www.mincyt.gov.ar/index.php?contenido=coopinter\\_archivos/multilateral/argentina\\_ue](http://www.mincyt.gov.ar/index.php?contenido=coopinter_archivos/multilateral/argentina_ue)

Twinning opportunities in Soil, Plant and Food research Between the European Union, Argentina and MERCOSUR website: <http://www.ec-argentina.eu/buenos.html>

Senior Managers EU-FP7 Discuss Twinning Cooperation with Canada: <http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1253577352217&lang=eng#anc3>

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[http://www.viajeo.eu/en/meetings\\_events/viajeo\\_seminar\\_rio\\_de\\_janeiro\\_2\\_june\\_2010.htm](http://www.viajeo.eu/en/meetings_events/viajeo_seminar_rio_de_janeiro_2_june_2010.htm)  
Senior Managers EU-FP7 Discuss Twinning Cooperation with Canada: <http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1253577352217&lang=eng#anc3>

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY-RUSSIA SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION, A ROADMAP FOR ACTION 2009-2011;  
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