



WP6

Deliverable 10

Guidelines for Twinning activities

With a specific focus on Organ Donation and Transplantation



This document represents the output of Work package 6 of ACCORD Joint Action (deliverable 10; Grant agreement n 2011 21 02) which has received funding from the European Commission in the framework of the Health Programme.

The sole responsibility lies with the author, the Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein”.

Content

PREFACE	P 4
INTRODUCTION	P 5
I – PREPARATION OF TWINNING PROPOSAL	P 6
1.1. Call for Twinning activities and Twinning concepts	P 6
1.2. Twinning hierarchy	P 7
1.3. Procedure for project proposal	P 7
II – TWINNING SELECTION	P 9
III – TWINNING IMPLEMENTATION	P 10
3.1. Working in the project mode	P 10
3.2. Example with a 33 months Twinning	P 11
IV – MAIN PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED	P 12
4.1. Organisation	P 12
4.2. Time	P 13
4.3. Information / communication between Twinners	P 13
4.4. Budget	P 14
4.5. Quality	P 15
4.6. Risks	P 15
V – BOTTOM LINE AND KEY POINTS	P 16
5.1. Bottom line : added value of twinning activities	P 16
5.2. Key points	P 17

PREFACE

ACCORD Joint Action and Twinnings

ACCORD "Achieving Comprehensive Coordination in Organ Donation" is a 3-year Joint Action (designed for dedicated Competent Authorities of Member States which were all invited to participate), co-funded by the European Commission Health Programme and led by the Organización Nacional de Trasplantes (ONT) in Spain.

ACCORD "is aiming to strengthen the full potential of Member States in this field, to improve cooperation between them and to contribute to the effective implementation of the Organ" Directive 2010/53/EU and the 2009-2015 European Commission Action Plan on Organ Donation and Transplantation".

Within ACCORD, one section was devoted to Twinning activities led by the Agency of biomedicine in France. Such Twinning activities concern the provision of operational, direct and cost-efficient transfer of expertise from an experienced supporting Member State to a seeking supported Member State.

Twinning activities in ACCORD were anticipated to promote that the expertise, knowledge or practical tools developed by one Member State are transferred to other(s) who need and request such transference. Depending on each Member State, different aspects of the system can be reinforced through cooperation, but areas to be addressed were to be in line with the above mentioned Action Plan and/or the Directive. Also, as a result of the experience gained through the design, implementation and results of the twinning initiatives developed in ACCORD, a guideline for further twinning actions was proposed to be drafted, in order to facilitate new initiatives once the ACCORD Joint Action would be completed.

Accordingly, Twinning activities were defined as a direct support to Member States from one to another by the mean of practical collaborations. Twinning concepts herein were developed as a complement of actions usually provided by EU projects or joint actions that are rather more theoretical than practical, and that do not target a specific Member State (MS) to transfer an operational expertise (on site implementation), but that rather aim at a global EU impact and also at a more long-term implementation of tools, outcomes and guidance generated.

INTRODUCTION

This document is aiming at providing guidance in the setting of Twinning activities which could be developed for example as a dedicated section (work package) or as full content of a project or a joint action co- or any similar kind of format funded by the European Commission in the framework of the Health Programme.

Twinning activities concepts guidance herein was generated by the twinning experience gained through ACCORD Twinning activities and Twinners feedbacks. This guideline was created to act as a complement of already existing manuals and guidelines for Twinning:

- The Institution Building in the Framework of European Union Policies, Common twinning manual¹(Revision 2012, Update 2013-2014);
- ROM Handbook, Result Orientated Monitoring² ;
- AREOL³;
- How make your Twinning a success⁴ ;
- Practical guide for Twinners⁵.

Twinning was defined as "*a concrete and direct transfer of expertise from volunteered and matching supporting Member State to a wishing and willing supported Member State*". Indeed expertise and/or tool developed by a given Member State can meet the need of others. Therefore, the building up capacities by sharing of Twinning activities could be considered as complementary and necessary actions to strengthen the development of a Member State health care system by addressing identified disparities, lack and weaknesses.

The following points collected in the framework of Twinning activities under the ACCORD joint action are offered here to facilitate further twinning activities at large since problems encountered were not specific to Organ Donation and Transplantation, but could be nevertheless also applied to strengthen the profitability and the efficiency of the setting of collaborations in this field.

It is guidance for Twinning pilots/ managers and project managers, experts and Institutionals who wish to get involved and organised for such transfers of expertise and to whom our experience could be profitable.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/tenders/twinning/index_en.htm

² http://www.google.fr/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CDIQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fcapacity4dev.ec.europa.eu%2Fsystem%2Ffiles%2Ffile%2F28%2F10%2F2013_-_1159%2Fec_rom_handbook2012_en.pdf&ei=sJZQVZKkMoGoUtawgPgK&usg=AFQjCNE6FHdYOMXLqkJ1UMhl1NHxrGB96w&bvm=bv.92885102,d.d24&cad=rja

³ Areol: action research and evaluation on line. http://www.aral.com.au/DLitt/DLitt_P38areol.pdf

⁴ www.eurosite.org/files/twinning_guide_en.pdf

⁵ http://www.safu.hr/datastore/filestore/10/Practical_guide_for_Twinners_2.pdf

I. PREPARATION OF TWINNING PROPOSAL

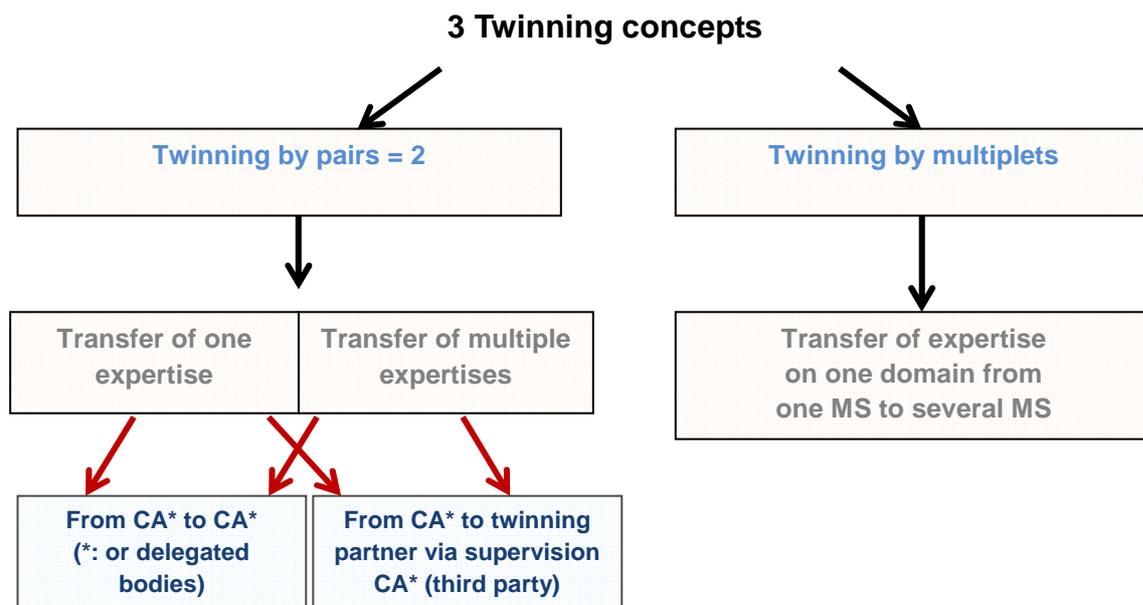
A call for twinning can be either send ahead of starting a project like it is for TAIEX⁶ for instance, or even call for participation for twinning sub-projects can also be arranged ahead of a project to avoid delays due to the selection and allows rather to evaluate sustainability like it was the case for Twinning sub-project activities under ACCORD⁷, or a call for twinning can be send after the beginning of a project (not advisable).

1.1. Call for Twinning activities and Twinning concepts:

The concept has to be clear: Member States can come forward alone as supporting or supported country, or as already twinned by pairs or by multiplet or both status could be eligible. Likewise, the Twinning could cover that one country would either transfer one expertise to another country or several expertises to the very same country, or. a country could transfer the core of one of its national expertise to several countries at the same time (multiplet concept). This transfer could be piloted or supervised by the Competent Authority of twinner or by one Competent Authority on one side and a third party under the supervision of the counterpart Member State Competent Authority (It is important to keep an official and institutional level of involvement for political, legislative and also sustainability reasons).

When possible, it is valuable to compare different strategies of twinings: either to work by pairs on several specific aspects or to work in multiplet, implementing the same expertise in several countries at the same time.

Irrespective of the Twinning concept strategy chosen, Twinning activities shall concretely promote more homogenous practices and processes among Member States.



* CA: Competent Authority

⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/tenders/taix/>

⁷ For further information see ACCORD Deliverable 9 – Twinning activity results

If coming forward alone, a level of Twinning coordination/ leadership is required, this can be the case in a structure of multiple Twinning sub-projects activities in which a partner would then rely on a leader for the matchmaking.

In any case, make sure that all MS / stakeholders received the call for Twinning and that all potential candidates received the same information and set a clear deadline for participation.

1.2. Twinning hierarchy:

Twining management responsibility shall be laid under the supporting country, having more experience in the field and having already tested and learnt from the actions to be implemented in the supporting country.

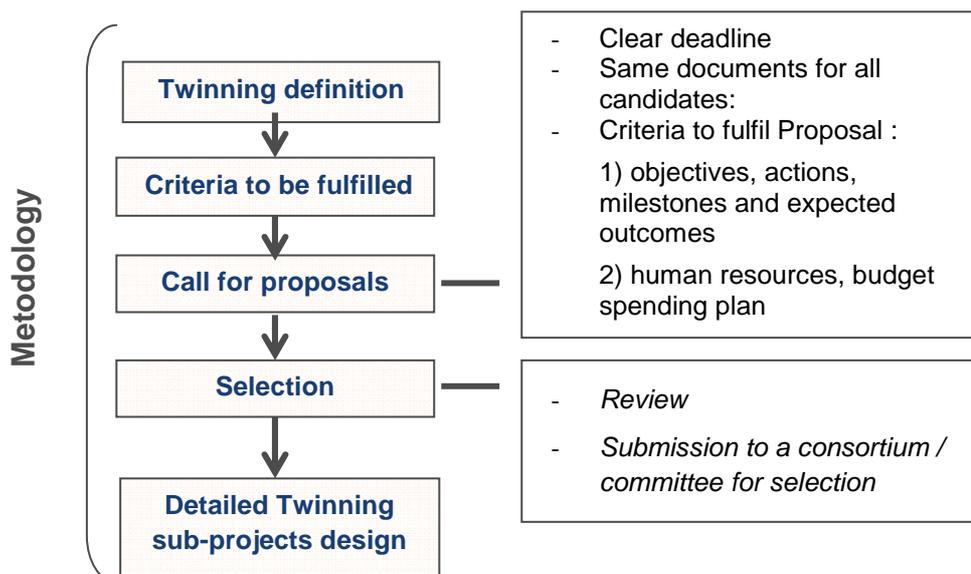
The supporting country has to name a Twinning manager whom should supervise all Twinning activities and to whom each expert will report. The Twinning manager has to have to full view of the on-going Twinning.

Likewise, the supporting country shall name a Twinning pilot supervising all activities on his side, and has to report to the Twinning manager.

If in a structure of several Twinning subprojects, on the top of coordinating supporting experts and managing the overall twinning, the Twinning manager also has to report to the Twinning leader of all twinning activities (in the frame work of a section in a joint action for example).

1.3. Procedure for project proposal:

A Twinning outline document with clear expectation, selection criteria (if any), budget and deadlines has to be provided by Member State showing interest. Those Member States would then either be invited to contact leader in order to build up both scientific and budget (financial sheet) proposals in the frame work of a section in a joint action for example; or to directly answer the call with their proposal.

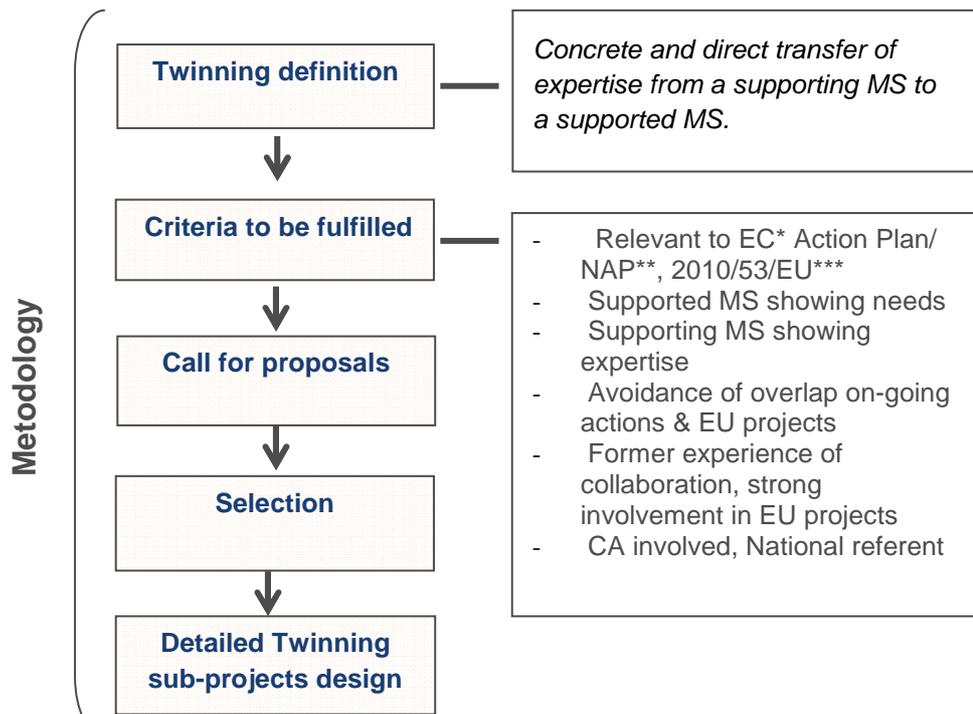


- Sub-project: benchmarks include
 - 1) objectives, actions, time frame (Milestones and duration), expected outcomes
 - 2) human resources, budget spending plan

- Reporting of problems encountered and troubleshooting

Either ways, a Twinning outline document has to be provided to each candidate coming alone or with a partner.

Example of a Twinning outline document send for the Twinning activities of the ACCORD joint action:



*EC: European Commission; * NAP: National Action Plan; *** EU: European Union.

“Member State had to write their Project proposal according to recognized area of development for Member State seeking support and in recognition of Member State expertise for the supporting Member State. According to Member State project proposal, preferences to Member State pairs” shall be given to:

- Supported Member State showing a need for support on specific areas in organ donation and transplantation;
- Supporting Member State providing experience and concrete practices to support Member State in meeting their needs shall show expertise in the targeted area; Supporting Member State' abilities to provide expertise and know-how could be partly reflected by the level of transplantation activity, strong involvement in EU projects, status of the expert (*i.e.* Competent Authority, delegated body, National Reference).
- Pre-existing relations between the coupled Member State, mutual knowledge of counterparts and former experience of cooperation is considered as an advantage to assess capacities on both sides.
- The content of the Project proposal shall preferably be i) in line with the Action Plan on Organ Donation and Transplantation (2009-2015), ii) follow area of development set in National Action Plan, iii) possibly be designed toward the application and/or implementation of the Organ Directive.
- However, the Twinning project proposal shall exclude activities related to the other core WPs of ACCORD *i.e.* the development of registries for living donation (WP4) and the strengthening of the

relationship between intensive care units and transplant donor coordinators (WP5) and shall avoid overlapping with other ongoing EU funded projects;

Supported Member State not already participating in the other WP of this Joint Action.

Twinning projects shall be programmed for a maximum two year period with a maximum budget of app. 80 000 Euros per pair (indicative budget, that might be subject to changes).

Agreement was set on clear deadline for proposal submission and transparent procedures.

NB: Potential twins have all been provided with the very same information in order to ensure clear and transparent processes and so equity for all applicants.

Proposals are to be submitted to and worked out with the Twinning activities leader. Twinning proposals are to be evaluated by ACCORD Steering Committee. Projects are to be selected based on the following: supported Member State has concrete identified needs and requests specific support; supporting Member State owns the expertise and abilities to provide such support; pre-existing relations between the coupled Member State, mutual knowledge of counterparts and former experience of cooperation.

Stage 1: Refinement and organisation of twinning proposals between Twinners and Twinning activities leader.

Stage 2: Execution of Twinning: Twinning activities implementation; close follow-up of collaborations will be ensured by continuous reporting, evaluation and input from other participants (WP meetings will address specific problems encountered and propose concerted solutions); each twinning will be comprehensively described, enclosing results achieved.

Stage 3: Development of guidelines for twinning, based on the knowledge gained⁸.

II. TWINNING SELECTION

The selection has to notably be based on criteria listed on the Twinning outline provided to candidates and has to respect the available budget.

Twinning proposal have to be concise and had set:

- Objectives: clear, realistic in i) the time frame, ii) abilities of supporting country to mobilize the right expert, iii) abilities of the supported country to implement this transference;
- Actions: detailed, entailing mobilized experts and Milestones;
- Expected outcomes: along with indicator enabling to monitor progresses and measure outcomes;

The GANTT has to be balanced between actions of the supporting and supported country and Milestones are to be relevant and realistic compared to planned actions.

Regarding the Twinning under the ACCORD joint action, attention focused on proposals dealing with areas related to national priority actions (based on the European Commission Action Plan on Organ Donation and Transplantation) and on the "Organ" Directive, Supported MS showing a need for a such

⁸ From the ACCORD Twinning outline document.

transfer, Supporting MS showing an expertise for the given transfer, fields of action not on-going in other similar actions or projects. Additionally, a former experience of collaboration between twinning was considered as an asset, as well as a strong involvement in EU projects *i.e.* being familiar with such a structure, with the required reporting and dissemination. Above all, one of the main selection criteria was the involvement of the Competent Authority of the field or of the National referent.

If in the structure of the Twinning involve a Twinning activities leader/ or coordinator, proposals shall be evaluated at that level first and then by a Steering Committee.

Under ACCORD, proposals were evaluated by the Twinning activities leader at first, who drafted a review. And then each proposal was discussed by the ACCORD Steering Committee who performed the selection.

Twinning proposal refinement:

Once the projects have been selected, refine proposal further in details with leader/coordinator of Twinning activities. This is a step that you can have for instance in a structure of Joint Action or project with a Twinning leader/ coordinator.

Recommendations and suggestions for your detailed proposal:

- A twinning may be easier to initiate with an onsite visit of the supported country (if financially possible). Trust and confidence, communication flow, commitment of both counterparts, important feedback from the supported country, even with Twinners whom had previous connections and collaborations.*
- Establish the programme mi-term to long-term implementation in a document and in a GANTT as well. Do not forget when facing different languages, to provide for budget and time for translations to national languages.*
- If dealing with Twinning projects under a Twinning Work Package the leader of all twinning activities shall provide guidance, channelling, support in decision making, troubleshooting, and overall guidance.*
- A Twinning agreement if full joint action on twinning and bigger collaborations projects, although not legally binding, it shall highlight mutual duties, and provide the Twinning foundations.*
- List as well the strengths and weaknesses of Twinning, try to build on strengths and try to assess ways to deal with the potential risks and weaknesses. When dealing with multiple Twinning or several sub-projects for Twinning, it is advisable to measure progresses and evaluate results not only from a cost-effective point of view (so according to budget spending), but also Twinners activities should be evaluated in accordance to own merits taking into account Twinning challenges (environment). Evaluation has to be done on a case by case basis and not following a standardized frame. Countries resources and environments differ so an individual approach is rather a realistic, fair and pragmatic method.*
- Allow flexibility and environment adaptations.*

III. TWINNING IMPLEMENTATION

3.1. Working in the project mode:

The Twinning success rely on strong input of twinning pilot, and of supported country, twinning activities rely on feedback from supported country as well. For monitoring, regular progress reports (every 6 months progress reports) are advised to be drafted and shared between partners. These reports contents shall be defined ahead. Also, make room for regular phone conference.

If ever you are facing a too high staff/ experts turn over in a country, you always have the possibility to seek some help and support from the dedicated National Focal Point⁹ or to the European Commission officer should you face an important problem.

The transfer of expertise shall be sustainable at the end of the Twinning, if ever it is not the case, organise a sustainability plan.

3.2. Example with a 33 month Twinning:

Within a 3 year project, allow for a 2 year Twinning and the remaining year to cope with delays and to ensure sustainability.

Activity 1: Twinning WP meeting/phone conference

M2: All Twinning partner will meet with the WP leaders to finalize their sub-project and initiate their cooperation.

M7, M31: Specific phone conference between WP leader and each twinning partners. Discussions for specific twinning follow-up and potential problems encountered.

M 11, (18: ACCORD interim Meeting), 23, 29: Regular meeting for follow-up, experience sharing and progress report. Implementation of Twinning Guidelines/Models.

Each WP Twinning meeting will address specific problems encountered by Member State couples, practical aspects of troubleshooting. The effective collaboration will be useful to monitor each collaboration progresses, and to propose concerted solutions for troubleshooting if necessary. These meetings and all collaborative Member State experience will be fruitful in implementing the deliverable of the Twinning Guidelines/Models.

Activity 2: Implementation of the transfer of expertise and reporting

M3: First draft of twinning report which shall include sub-project proposal, objectives, detailed GANTT, proposed milestones for planed actions and expected outcomes. The twinning pilot of the supporting countries delivers the report, supporting and supported countries jointly implement report.

M10: Preliminary Twinning report for each project and reporting of troubleshooting. The twinning pilot of the supporting countries delivers the report, supporting and supported countries jointly implement report.

M16 and M22: Progress Twinning report for each project and reporting of troubleshooting. Implementation of the Twinning Guidelines/ Models. The twinning pilot of the supporting countries delivers the report, supporting and supported countries jointly implement report.

M30: Final Twinning report of each project and reporting of troubleshooting. The twinning pilot of the supporting countries delivers the report, supporting and supported countries jointly implement report.

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/chafea/health/national_focal_points.html

Implementation of the Twinning Guidelines/Models.

Activity 3: Final WP meeting and Deliverables synthesis

M29: Final Twinning WP meeting

M31: Specific phone conference with WP leader. Discussions for specific twinning follow-up and outcomes once completed, feedback from the supported countries and reporting of potential problems encountered.

M33: Deliverable synthesizing results of all Twinning projects (D9)
Deliverable of the Twinning Guidelines/Models (D10)

IV . MAIN PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED:

Following the different ACCORD Twinning implementations, Twinners had to face several and different problems. These problems are generalised here and some solutions and recommendations were issued based on Twinners experiences.

Problems (P), solutions (S) and recommendations (R) are summarized here and categorized under the following headings: Organisation, Time, Information/ Communication between Twinners, Budget, Quality, and Risks.

4. 1. Organisation:

P1. A project starts initially with an agreement between two parties, between a supporting country and a supported country. What to do when such Twinning shall involve the relevant Competent Authority and do not?

S1. At the stage of the building up of project proposal, make sure that all relevant stakeholders are involved. It is at the setting stage that all officials should be made aware and shall be contacted to get involved or to approve the proposal.

R1. Seeking for validation of approval after the beginning of the twinning actions would be risky and may lead to less implementation and less cost-efficient results and would have lower chances of sustainability.

P2. It can be challenging for the supported country to sustain implemented actions and/ or tools once the twinning has ended (especially if ever some stakeholders withdrawn before the end). What to do to avoid as much as possible supported country to step backwards to their former practise?

S2. If ever your twinning activity is compatible with a Train-the-Trainer method, it endeavours further transfer of expertise and would facilitate the continuation of the given activity.

If not, a fair level of dissemination and as mentioned above of involvement of the competent authority could be a way to ensure sustainability.

R2. It is again here advisable to involve stakeholders during the early stages of the project. In the most ideal situation stakeholders formulate a vision together and a strategy to accomplish it. When stakeholders agree on a clear vision, it will be easier to ensure continuity after the project end. Besides a vision, the continuity of changes could also benefit from a strategy how to deal with disconformities.

For this, in the supported country, an independent party or commission could be nominated and be involved with the monitoring of the compliance of agreements and possibly in charge of handing out penalties or rewards. A penalty may include, for example, the comparison of local situations by a commission of supervisors. Nobody wants to perform poor compared to peer-colleagues. A stronger penalty could be that an independent party/commission sends out a letter to the Leader of the organisation/ Institution/ Competent authority.

4. 2. Time:

P3. The timeline of the activities in the project schedule could not always be met. An action organized a few months later than initially planned, could be caused by an underestimation of work to be done to meet the political, legal and financial conditions.

S3. A project GANTT is usually estimated one to two years ahead of a project (and sometime the given action can also have been scheduled to be performed even 3 years ahead). The environment is under constant changes and was different compared to what was planned. Therefore, priority of the relevance and quality of the action shall be given before the respect of any milestone. In any case, delays or postponing actions shall be discussed openly between twinning partners in order to set a new realistic deadline or milestone.

R3. Additionally to the environment changes, the planning of activities is frequently based on the estimation and workload experiences of the supporting country. The supporting country should realize that situations in the supported country can differ significantly and foreign difficulties might occur that the supporting country is not familiar with. Countries disparities shall also be taken into account to schedule activities.

4. 3. Information / communication between Twinners:

P4. National documents are not suitable for another country: different languages, different systems.

S4. Do plan for translation should it be necessary. To English to ease the communication between the twinning countries (should English had been the chosen working language), and also in the different national languages should it be necessary, especially for the supported country either for implementation (within a software of instance) or for dissemination or training.

R4. For the collaboration between European Member States, it is important that at least the direct involved participants master English both spoken and written.

P5. A Twinning can involve many partners which makes it difficult to keep up with everyone involved and informed in a timely matter.

S5. The supporting country could create an online communication platform to which all parties would have access and where relevant documentation and exchanges could be posted. News could be published through this platform and supportive e-mails sent. Likewise, the sharing of a progress report among partners with a constant update of activities and results that would be circulating by e-mail and implemented by all actors is an easy way to keep up with all activities and to have the broad picture of the Twinning.

R5. A tool to disseminate information between various parties can be an online platform. However, the 'pull' factor of such a system requires motivation and alertness from participants to frequently go to this platform to search for information. It is therefore necessary to also encourage them to use the system *i.e.* to actively send and inform participants about the project, *e.g.* updates by e-mails, newsletters and

so on. Depending of the budget one of the above solution could be chosen or both proposals could be used as a complement.

4.4. Budget:

P6. Underestimation of time and resources required to carry out the twinning activities. This is can be due to an unplanned mobilisation of expert(s) or can be due to an extra load of work but also could be due to an underestimation of time to be dedicated accountancy and accountability according to the funding guidelines.

S6. If ever you cannot claim some experts' mobilisation, there is no solution and the country: organisation involved has to cover it under its permanent staff. Concerning any expert mobilisation planned under the project, asses if budget transfer from one heading to another is possible, to allow for the coverage of expenses, have this modification of budget validated by the checking financial officer to whom you have to refer to in accordance to your grant agreement.

R6. Advanced administrative support should be deemed necessary when appointing resources for carrying out an international project. International financial regulations require advanced accountancy. Furthermore contract management, project accountability (progress reports) and practical hands-on should not be underestimated.

P7. The costs of modifying a tool to be transferred or a planned activity within the Twinning could exceed the project planned budget or could simply as well not have been planned at first. Indeed, along the twinning development, some new specifications could appear, or new needs.

S7. Again, if you have some budget left under the given financial heading that was not used, then the possibility of a simple modification shall be assessed. The possibility of budget transfer from one heading to another shall be assessed as well, to allow for the coverage of expenses, have this modification of budget validated by the checking financial officer to who you have to refer to in accordance to your grant agreement. If these solutions cannot be applied, the last resource is to seek for this cost to be directly covered by one of the partners.

R7. If developing or modifying a product, it is advisable to have some flexibility to change specifications based on new insights, needs and demands during the lifetime of a project.

P8. A given activity or travel can be paid for and cancel at the last minute. If the payment for the costs cannot be claimed back then it is problematic, especially since to have to pay a second time to indeed have this action fulfilled.

S8. If you have enough budget left, simply check with financial officer to whom you have to refer to in accordance to your grant agreement, to have this second spending validated to the cancellation of the first action and impossibility to get a refund. If you do not have any budget left, some funds are given with some overheads that are part of the budget that are given for e.g. "supplies and petty office equipment, communication and connection costs, postage etc. And costs connected with horizontal services (...)" ¹⁰, since they do not need to be supported by any accounting document, you may as well use it for necessary unplanned costs that you have no other option to cover it with. If you do not have overhead sections, then seek for either a potential complementary funding (if possible and compatible with your grant), the possibility for one of the partners to have it covered by their own budget or if this

¹⁰ Executive Agency for Health and Consumers Infopack: Joint actions, 2011.

action is really a priority then assess the possibility to cancel another less important action that was planned and budgeted instead.

R8. Incidents such as illnesses or accidents are impossible to plan. However, when possible making prior arrangements with partner organizations regarding cancellation and reclamation policies could be helpful. Also, if this action had to be cancelled because of an impossible last minute participation of one expert, try to have an extra expert as a backup.

4.5. Quality :

P9. Some of the actions of a twinning may target improvements of quality (and safety) aspects. Those aspects require time to be implemented and present a risk to not be in place at the end of a twinning

S9. A complete quality (safety) circle in the supported country should be mapped in order to plan twinning actions that would be secured by realistic milestones and would result in significant change. This quality circle includes the establishment of criteria and also involves the definition of standards and agreed criteria.

Secondly how deviations that are going to be tolerated and handled and lead or not to sanctions shall also be discussed ahead. Supported countries have there the advantage to gain from the experiences, problems and solutions that were encountered by the supporting country.

R9. It is not always realistic to implement such a quality circle within the lifespan of a Twinning. In the supporting country these processes evolved step by step, but those aspects can be part of a detailed and scheduled sustainability plan validated by all stakeholders and "officials" that shall be set and agreed on during the twinning and presented at the end of the Twinning.

4.6. Risks:

P10. During the implementation, some resistance could appear among some stakeholders, especially if the project involves organizational changes, affect the national structure and possible shifts to the discourse of power among actors.

S10. Increase the support from "officials": Competent Authorities, the Ministry *etc.* . Facilitation of Twinning implementation can be increased by the competent authority through meetings with stakeholders. Again, experience from the supporting country in this matter that previously went through the same process, can be valuable highlighting problems that then occurred and which solving resolutions were implemented.

R4. When starting a Twinning, it is recommended to explore the willingness for change among stakeholders in the supported country, apart from a prior expressed desire of the supported country to achieve a particular goal. Especially when the project includes many parties it can turn to be an uncertain factor when the supporting country relies on one or a few opinions of the supported country and not all stakeholders are represented. The supporting country should take the lead in this first process, since this country has the knowledge and experience with the possible consequences and (side) effects of implementing such a programme. When the supporting country provides information about the effects, consequences and conditions of a programme, the supported country will be able to make an informed decision about participating in a Twinning project. This does not imply that a Twinning cannot be started if stakeholders vary in their opinions, but prior studies will definitely help to draft a plan of action in order to be able to cope in time with resistance that is expected to occur and to carry out the project successfully.

P5. To maintain and further improve actions and tools that were implemented during the lifetime of a Twinning, sustainable assurance of stakeholders is necessary. Once the Twinning ends and in the absence of the supporting country, the risk occurs that successive arrangements to that were set regarding continuity and optimization may not take place. This may be caused by a shift of attention to daily practices, other programmes or projects and re-occurrence of resistance for further (significant) changes.

S5. The Competent Authority of the supported country has to be provided with all information (in National language if necessary) in order to maintain and further improve actions and tools implemented. This can possibly include the setting of an organizational system (appointing a national commission that includes a representative policy maker of the Competent authority and the supervisors of the abdominal organ procurement teams) a financial model (for the necessary payments if applicable), a legal position (mandate of the Ministry), involvement of allied organizations (and Authorities), and potential formal value to tools implemented (e.g. accreditations, if applicable).

R5. When starting a Twinning project, the Competent Authority of the supporting country should already focus on how to ensure the continuation of a programme after the completion of the Twinning. For this, close cooperation between both countries is necessary and requires open discussions of sensitive topics and issues if any. This openness enables the supporting country to adequately help the supported country and to take appropriate actions. To create openness, the supporting country must be considered as a trustworthy partner. Conditions for the supporting country are to act respectfully, tactfully, cooperative and to be piled with experience and knowledge about the specific domain of the programme. For the process of the project, it therefore makes sense to discuss the expectations of each other and to decide on how the collaboration will be carried out.

P7. When your Twinning involves training, how to aim at sustainable training of staff when you have a limited budget?

S7. A solution could be to apply a Train-the-trainer method. By applying a Train-the-Trainer method, trained expert will in turn be able to pass on the knowledge and train in turn some trainers. Another methodology could be to find a sponsor to be able to organise the very same training when necessary.

R7. The Train-the-Trainer session is an efficient and cost-effective method. The method helps to introduce new elements on a local level and to learn from these experiences before implementing these elements on a regional and national level. By using local resources to distribute the new tools to their peer-colleagues in other centres, the likelihood of successful implementation increases. Notably through the positive experiences and enthusiasm of peer-colleagues, tools can be accepted more easily and embraced.

V . BOTTOM LINE AND KEY POINTS

5.1. Bottom line: Added value of Twinning activities :

The first aim of Twinning activities is to develop Donation and Transplantation system in a Member State seeking to implement or improve a targeted area, thanks to a concrete and direct transfer of expertise from a supporting Member State. Nevertheless, developed tools have the potential to be shared at EU level and adopted by other Member States.

Additionally, on the top of reporting results of twinning activities in a Deliverable, the Agency of biomedicine and the Twinners shall as well generate a Twinning Guide building up on the experience gained through twinning activities by pairs and by multiplet. This guide is aiming at facilitating new initiatives once the ACCORD Joint Action will be completed.

And indeed Twinners expressed interest for further Twinning activities. These activities include a wide range of topics from organ donation to transplantation and patients' follow-up: Twinning in organ donation (more specifically donor detection), donor maintenance, authorisation and audits of Transplant Centres, vigilance systems, follow-up of living donors, follow-up recipients, activity data management and analysis, kidney perfusion machine, split liver, management of uncontrolled DCD.

5.2. Key points:

However, benefits from Twinning activities are broader than evaluated under a result section secured by milestones and concrete indicators. Partners learnt from each other's and seized this Twinning opportunity to extend their view on various approach of practices.

Last but not least, Twinning influence behaviours, practices, culture, management, communication, etc. Twinning activities and so closer collaborations strengthen the network between partners. These results and successes are not measurable but no less valuable.

Acknowledgements:

The authors would like to highlight that The European Commission, by co-financing projects under the Health Programme, is greatly contributing to the field and is promoting a better, safer and wider National and European landscape for organ donation and transplantation.