TWINNING ADVANCED (Twinning+)

Traditional “Twinning” is a flexible instrument, which can take place between two or more entities/organizations and it can focus on a whole range of issues, and can involve a wide range of personal actors. A good twinning partnership can bring many benefits to the participating organizations by bringing people together from different parts of Europe, it gives an opportunity to share problems, exchange views and understand different viewpoints on any issue where there is a shared interest or concern. In this case, one actor in the twinning is the teacher, and the other actor(s) is(are) the student(s), thus in this sense we can define the actors as non-equal.

During the Inno Partnering Forum Twinning it has been confirmed, that twinning works better when a meeting takes place between equals who collaborate together. The INNO PARTNERING FORUM does not recommend a pure "student-teacher" relationship since copycat strategies do not work in transferring good practices.

INNO PARTNERING FORUM extended the original twinning method to support the transfer of good practices from one or more agencies to many others that desired to learn and implement the practices of more experienced agencies. This was done by designing a process in which peer-reviewing was used to identify, assess and analyse good practices within a certain theme, e.g. innovation procurement, or growth support of SMEs. The results of the peer-review process was then compiled into a design options paper that was supposed to guide an implementing agency in making use of the good practices in designing the addressed programme/initiative. The design options paper together with support of the agencies contributing to the design options paper was then offered to interested agencies in a dissemination process aiming at spreading the learning to many others.
Experience from the work on the PCP Design Options Paper and other peer reviews undertaken by IPF suggests that it is not possible to just identify a good practice and transfer it. As countries and their institutional contexts may differ greatly there is a need for comprehensive analysis which give the basis for design options. These identified options allow adapting schemes to the specific national / regional environment.

It was equally import to recognise that the design options paper is not enough in transferring good practices. The tacit knowledge of those providing the good practices is needed during the transfer process while at the same time the receiving part needs to apply its knowledge and expertise of the context in which the practices are to be used. This, the actual transfer is a not a one way process, but an interactive process where all participants contribute and tune the leanings collected in the design options paper.

This confirmed one of the assumptions behind applying the twinning approach: Twinning would allow for getting hold of tacit knowledge at host agencies.

**The Twinning Advanced Process**

*Twinning Advanced* is an extension of the original IPF twinning method. It is not limited to transferring good practices among agencies, but it provides opportunity to the design and implementation of better practices. The basic idea of *Twinning Advanced* is to have innovation support organisations collaboratively address a common innovation support challenge. By using their collective experience and knowledge, the idea is to develop and test an approach to address the support challenge in a new and better way. The result of the effort is documented in a *Design Option Paper* that identifies and documents the implementation options, guidelines and implementation alternatives that the partners in the challenge have experienced and would recommend an agency which is interested in implementing the proposed better practice. An agency without prior experience to address the specific challenge is however not seen as recipient of good advice but contributes its experiences and framework conditions to co-create even better approaches for a wider range of conditions.
The initiative facilitates the cooperation between innovation agencies. Based on the envisaged results it facilitates the establishment of project based cooperation not for sharing experience but for developing better approaches. Proposals for joint activities shall address all elements of the ‘Service delivery system’ (see below) of innovation support.

An innovation support initiative is implemented by a service delivery system, which has three major cornerstones: the (1) target groups for the initiative, the (2) framework conditions and organisations within which an initiative must work, and (3) the process(es) by which the initiative operates.

The process of delivery of innovation support can be broken down in four typical steps starting with the (1) initial design of the programme, (2) market / sale respectively motivation of the target group and intermediaries, (3) the actual delivery within the agency including selection and contract management and (4) monitoring, evaluation and impact analysis the scheme; that might lead to a redesign of the programme.

A innovation support challenge to be addressed jointly in a Twinning+ project shall analyse and address the whole ‘Service Delivery System’ but it can be defined in various ways, for example:
As providing ‘better support to a specific target group’ - like young entrepreneurs, specific sectors of industry etc –;

or as ‘enhancement of the quality of the specific innovation support service’ - like incubation, growth financing, knowledge transfer, IP enforcement.

‘Administrative and ‘back-office’ aspects in the management of innovation support programmes’ - would generally be addressed as part of ‘Processes’. Some overarching aspects like enhanced use of ICT in client interaction; client feedback; creation of synergies between European, national and regional level innovation support might however merit to be addressed as challenges in itself.

Design Option Paper - The expected outcome from a twinning+ project

What is expected from a Design Options Paper?
The DOP is intended as a guide or tool for the innovation agencies, department or similar organisations for the development of an innovation support activity. It shall identify and explore options to address the identified challenge and show that certain decisions made in the design
preclude some other options. It is expected that most of the knowledge directly applicable in the agencies is created while working jointly on the DOP.

The DOP should as well serve as guide and source of inspiration for other agencies that become interested in the topic only later and did not participate in the initial Twinning+ project. The DOP should therefore be drafted as a self-standing document; it should not take the form of minutes or a documentation of the work undertaken jointly during the twinning.

The DOP shall focus on the following:
The first part of the DOP should contain a background on and description of the challenge addressed by the DOP. This part should outline the need for a governmental intervention, state the rational for addressing the challenge and give contextual information for the solution or approach presented.

The introductory part should also state and define the concepts used in defining the challenge and the proposed approach to address the challenge.

The introductory part should be followed by a description, evaluation and analysis of related measures that have been studied and an overall guide to the applicability of the document: e.g. target audience, contextual requirements (experiences or current schemes that helps, commitments politically, legally and economically to make the effort feasible etc) . When it is possible the discussion should be confirmed by examples, charts, tables and pictures. The objective is to have as much as possible of the critical DOP recommendations validated through practical experiments/pilot initiatives. Hence, the DOP should contain information on which aspects have been tested and give a description of the validation/verification procedures used and the results of those procedures..

The DOP needs to include the (estimated) costs and other resource needs of the initiatives.

The DOP also shall include the following: glossary, appendix, recommended reading, bibliography, annex, (optional: list of tables and figures)

Preparing a twinning+ project
The European Commission expects proposals for joint actions from groups of 3-5 innovation agencies, departments or similar organisations. They are invited to propose any topic within the focus described above.

- Identification of a common challenge and formation of a consortium addressing a challenge. (At least 3 European agencies\(^1\) can propose to include a maximum of 2 non-European agencies in the twinning+ process, in particular if insufficient experience with respect to the joint topic of interest exists in Europe). The Partnering platform for Peer learning of Innovation agencies is provided for this step.

- The application for a twinning+ project is done via the Horizon2020 participants’ portal. The proposal shall describe the challenge and the joint initiative taken to address it, which includes the rationale for challenge; joint objectives and effort committed to the twinning process, draft budget and plan. Detailed planning and initial scoping study that includes related schemes (including from agencies not participating in the action) that should be peer reviewed.

**Working jointly in Twinning+ project**

- Peer-reviewing of the service delivery system of instruments or programmes addressing the jointly identified topic or certain specific aspects related to it.

  Objective: Identification and analysis of elements good practice and their further development. Piloting new approaches in the context of the project is welcome but is not a precondition for support. Partners are invited and encouraged to report insights from piloting new approaches at any time also after the conclusion of the project.

- Synthesis of the lessons learnt for analyzing good practices. Output in a Design Options Paper that guides and helps agencies designing, re-designing and implementing a programme.

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\(^1\) ‘European’ in this context includes all countries participating or associated to Horizon2020. ‘Non-European’ includes all other countries. The general Rules for Participation of Horizon2020 apply, in case ‘European’ agencies would like to include a ‘Non-European partner’ in the twinning it should be argued why the participation of this partner is indispensable to achieve the project’s impact.
Design Options Papers are handed over to EASME that launches the payment procedure for the lump sum grant to the coordinator. EASME maintains a repository of Design Option Papers, publishes a summary and makes the full paper available upon request to other European agencies.