



Federal Ministry  
of Food  
and Agriculture



# Twinning Projects

in the Field of Food and Agriculture

[bmel.de](http://bmel.de)

## What is Twinning?

Twinning projects are aimed at assisting countries seeking to join the European Union in adopting the collected body of EU law („Community acquis“) and building the necessary administrative capacity („institution building“). They are also intended to help countries without accession prospects in bringing themselves into line with EU standards. Under the EU Financial Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II) and the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), experts from the administrations of EU Member States pass on their knowledge and experience regarding the implementation of EC law to colleagues in the respective partner country.

Within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Twinning programme is accessible to the EU neighbouring states, among others: Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria. The IPA programme includes the EU candidate countries, such as Turkey, and the potential candidate countries, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The duration of a Twinning project is usually one to two years. In addition, so-called ‘Twinning Light’ projects are implemented for smaller, less complex activities with a shorter duration of normally six months. These projects have no Resident Twinning Advisor (RTA) but rely on short-term and medium-term experts in the partner country.

## From the call for Twinning proposals to the project

The potential partner countries, in consultation with the European Commission, develop the Twinning projects; the authorities of the EU Member States then submit their proposals in competition with one another. Each Member State has a National Contact Point for Twinning (NCP) which coordinates the Twinning activities. The NCP – in Germany located at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy – channels new calls for Twinning proposals to the competent ministries, for example to the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL).

The preparation and submission of proposals for projects in the field of food and agriculture is coordinated by the

BMEL. The Twinning fiches are circulated to the relevant federal authorities and the Länder in order to find suitable experts. For the proposal's prospects of success, it is of key importance that a submitted proposal includes an excellent expert team and in particular a suitable long-term expert. The proposal has to be received by the EU delegation of the beneficiary country by the deadline and an oral presentation of the proposal must be made in English (in French in the Maghreb) a few weeks later.

If the application of a Member State or a consortium of up to three Member States for the project has been successful, the contract between beneficiary country and EU Member State for the Twinning project is drafted. The project starts, at the latest, within one month after the official notification of the contract.

## Twinning Project Cycle

<b>Project development, drafting of Twinning fiches (beneficiary country in consultation with the EU Commission)</b>	
<b>Submission of Twinning fiches to the National Contact Points in the EU Member States (with deadline)</b>	
<b>Circulation of the fiches among the competent ministries</b>	
<b>Elaboration and submission of proposal (EU Member States in competition)</b>	approx. 1 month
<b>Presentation of the Twinning team in the partner country (RTA, project leader), BMEL and, as appropriate, representative of the German Embassy</b>	approx. 1 month
<b>Selection of the Twinning partner by the beneficiary country</b>	approx. 1 month
<b>Drafting of the Twinning contract between EU Member State and beneficiary country including preparatory talks in the beneficiary country (detailed work plan and budget)</b>	4–5 month
<b>Project implementation (RTA in place, projects are monitored and progress is measured by Interim Quarterly Reports and a Final Report)</b>	approx. 12–24 months max. 36 months
<b>Project evaluation (initiated by the EU Commission)</b>	parallel to project implementation and, if necessary, after the end of the implementation period

## Example of a Twinning project

### – Summary –

#### Supporting the Kosovo Food and Veterinary Laboratory – KS 14 IB AG 01

**Budget:** 700.000 Euro

**Duration:** 24 months

**Start:** Februar 2016

**Partner:** Kosovo Food and Veterinary Laboratory (KFVL),  
Pristina/Kosovo

This twinning project supports the establishment of the veterinary and food laboratory at the government veterinary services in Kosovo. The aim of the project is to enhance the capabilities of the laboratory so that the chemical-analysis tests can be carried out on the samples of the National Control Plan independently with the quality required by the EU.

In order to fulfil the required quality standards and rules all chemical tests have to be performed by sufficiently trained staff, using validated methods and appropriate analysis equipment.

In order for the accreditation and recognition of the laboratory by the EU (laboratory audit) all laboratory areas must fulfil the required standards and be integrated into the quality system.

In order to do so in one first step:

→ the existing analysis equipment and chemicals including standard substances are checked for their suitability in implementing the relevant analysis method and are restored or acquired.

In the second step:

- the screening and confirmatory methods already available can then be validated
- and widened to cover the required test spectrum.

Parallel to this staff are trained on how to use the equipment and carry out analyses.

Experts from Germany and Kosovo work together on establishing the requirements that are to facilitate the export of safe products and to guarantee food safety. The BMEL which heads the project, and the Lower Saxony State Office for Consumer Protection and Food Safety (LAVES), responsible for the project implementation, want this project to add to the successful twinning projects from previous years in the field of food safety and for it to intensify the longstanding partnership and close cooperation between authorities. In the project LAVES is supported by experts from the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) and the Federal Office for Consumer Protection (BVL).

In addition to seminars and workshops in Kosovo, the project will also carry out study trips for Kosovan colleagues to the corresponding authorities in Germany.

## Role allocation in Twinning

The BMEL is politically responsible for the Twinning project. For the most part, the projects are implemented by higher federal or Länder authorities. The implementing authority provides the project leader who is responsible for the project. The project leader manages the project from the authority in his/her home country, is responsible for adherence to the project budget, recruits short-term experts, participates regularly in the Project Steering Committees in the partner country and reports project progress to the BMEL.

The long-term expert serves as the “backbone” of the project. Throughout the entire project, he/she is staying in the partner authority and assumes the technical advice and coordination of the project. His/Her tasks include, among others: designation of expert missions, evaluation of the project’s progress, reporting and organisation of study trips. Various short-term experts from the authorities of the Member States travel regularly to the partner country for (usually) a few days to share their expertise with the project partners by giving training courses, seminars or workshops.

The partner authority also has a project leader and a so-called RTA counterpart as an expert contact point for the German RTA. The project partners meet up every three months in the partner country with EU Commission representatives (steering committee) to discuss progress and problems and decide on necessary adjustments of the project.



## How do I become a Twinning expert?

Twinning projects give you the opportunity to extend your professional competence and to gain interesting work experience abroad. Short- and long-term Twinning experts are usually civil servants or public sector employees. In addition, members of so-called mandated bodies may also be seconded to work in Twinning projects. The institution seconding the long-term expert will be reimbursed for his/her salary plus incidental expenses. In addition to his/her normal salary, the RTA will, for instance, receive expatriation allowances and rental fees for accommodation.

The secondment for short-term experts will generally take the form of an official trip to the partner country. A short-term mission can last from a few days to several weeks and will be subdivided into a number of visits over the entire duration of the project. Short-term experts receive fees for their services and per diem payments.

### General requirements for long-term experts (RTA)

- Several years of experience in the implementation of the relevant EC legislation,
- good knowledge of English and IT skills, knowledge of French in the Maghreb,
- good organisation and communication skills,
- ability to manage a complex project with many different partners and institutions,
- capacity for teamwork and flexibility,
- work experience abroad would be beneficial.

The concrete requirements are listed in the relevant calls for proposals. The calls for proposals can be found on the website of the BMEL: [www.bmel.de](http://www.bmel.de)



*Steering group meeting for the twinning project on the Ukraine land market*

## Twinning projects of the BMEL

Since the beginning of the Twinning programme (1998), there have been more than 3,200 calls for proposals with a financial volume of approx. € 2.4 billion EU-wide.

Germany has submitted Twinning proposals for over 1,300 projects, about 750 of which have been selected. It is thus the most active EU Member State within the Twinning system.

Within the Federal Government, the BMEL is one of the most dedicated ministries with more than 155 implemented projects.

The BMEL is currently conducting Twinning projects in two countries.

Twinning projects may focus on the following subjects:

- Food inspection
- Veterinary services
- Plant protection
- Rural areas

## Twinning objectives in the field of food and agriculture

- Raising the standards for the complete adoption of EU legislation (in the case of accession countries) or convergence towards EU standards (in the case of countries without accession prospects)
- Strengthening of cross-border cooperation in the field of food and agriculture
- Deeper political and economic cooperation

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