

# POLICY FACTSHEET

## Twinning for Europe's Competitiveness Keeping Excellence Connected Across All Regions



### CONTEXT

Twinning is one of the EU's most effective and affordable tools for closing the research and innovation (R&I) performance gap between Widening and established research systems.

Through structured partnerships between one Widening coordinator and at least two excellence institutions, Twinning achieves measurable improvements in scientific excellence, proposal success, and institutional maturity at a fraction of the cost of other WIDERA actions.

The absence of calls in 2024–2025 risks reversing these achievements, undermining staff retention and institutional capacity, just as many Widening countries have reached competitiveness.

### STRATEGIC VALUE

Twinning accelerates convergence within the European Research Area, spreading excellence and enhancing Europe's strategic autonomy.

It fosters talent mobility, secure data management, open science, and gender equality – all essential to the objectives of the Green Deal, Digital Europe, and FP10.

### POLICY IMPLICATIONS EUROPEAN LEVEL

- Reinstatement of annual Twinning calls with stable budgets and predictable timetables.
- Anchor Twinning as a permanent instrument in FP10, complementing Teaming and ERA Chairs.
- Introduce KPI-based monitoring to track excellence, mobility, and management improvements.
- Link Twinning outcomes with Cohesion Funds, Excellence Hubs, and Pillar II instruments for continuity.
- Strengthen synergies with the EU Competitiveness Compass and ERA Policy Agenda.

### EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Independent evaluations by the European Commission and the European Court of Auditors confirm Twinning's cost-effectiveness and lasting results:

- Highest publication output per euro spent among all WIDERA measures (EC, 2021).
- Enhanced proposal success rates and improved institutional management maturity.
- Cross-disciplinary success stories: neuroscience (GEMSTONE & HybridNeuro), environmental monitoring (EarthBridge), innovation (REMODEL), digital humanities (REMOTE XUAR), and sustainable technologies (TwinVECTOR).
- Low cost, high leverage: average €1.4M per project – 20× cheaper than Teaming.



*Keeping Excellence Across All Regions*



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### POLICY IMPLICATIONS NATIONAL LEVEL

- Integrate Twinning outputs into national Smart Specialisation (S3) and innovation strategies.
- Establish national co-funding schemes (ERDF/ESF+) for sustaining staff posts, digital infrastructures, and open-science systems.
- Create training pathways for research managers to professionalise project design, finance, and communication.
- Promote cross-sector collaboration – universities, SMEs, public authorities, and NGOs.
- Encourage family-friendly mobility and virtual co-mentoring models to support inclusiveness.

### IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLES

- Maintain bottom-up design – openness for all disciplines and institutions.
- Support regional synergies to convert capacity building into innovation and employment.
- Monitor sustainability via baseline / mid-term / post-project reviews.
- Include measurable KPIs (mobility, open-science compliance, proposal success rate, staff retention).

### KEY MESSAGES TO POLICYMAKERS

- Reinstate annual Twinning calls without interruption.
- Guarantee long-term continuity under FP10 as a recurring excellence measure.
- Adopt transparent KPI-based monitoring to show clear returns on investment.
- Ensure synergy with regional and national instruments to translate excellence into jobs and innovation.
- Invest in people – staff exchanges, co-mentoring, and skills development are Europe's true strategic capital.

***“Support  
what works,  
partnerships that  
make excellence  
possible”***

### COORDINATED BY SISTER TWINNING PROJECTS



Earth  
Bridge

