

# RESEARCH TWINNING PROJECT

*Handbook 2019*



LET'S IMPROVE  
OUR  
ACADEMIC  
QUALITY



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# 1. INTRODUCTION



Dear NCs, LCs, Project Coordinators and Twinning enthusiasts,

As European Integration and Culture and Medical Science Teams, we are pleased to share with you this Research Twinning Project Handbook.

We hope that this handbook will help you make the first steps towards the realization of this project or bring fresh ideas into your ongoing exchanges. Many members started their journey in EMSA with a Twinning Project and we would like you to use this handbook and increase the academic quality of exchanges, by entering the amazing world of research.

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## 2. WHAT IS RTP?

The Research Twinning Project (RTP) is a new, innovative and academic oriented project which is a collaboration between the European Integration and Culture Pillar (EIC) and the Medical Science Pillar (MS). During the past years, we have observed a growing interest for research and everything related to it from our members. That is why the EIC and MS Pillars have decided to put the basis for a different and unique kind of Twinning Project.

With this project we wish to bring our members closer to the "science" behind research in a fun and culturally rich environment.

The Research Twinning Project (RTP) is an intercultural exchange of 7 to 10 days. This exchange is organized by two EMSA FMOs, who both select around 9-12 participants. The RTP consists of an educational, cultural and social program. As in a typical Twinning Project (TP), the food and accommodation should be provided by the hosting FMO along with the daily activity plan. In contrast to the regular TP, the RTP is more focused on the educational program than the cultural part of the exchange. It forms a highway to the Research World.

Title of Project

Research Twinning Project

Organisation

European Medical Students' Association; European Integration and Culture Pillar (EIC) and Medical Science

Type of Activity

Research Exchange

Location

The city of the OC's FMO(s)

Target Group

Medical students interested in research

Objectives

To be an event focused mainly on the health-related education of the members;

To increase the diversity of healthcare information provided;

To increase member's involvement in education-oriented EMSA activities;

To engage students in research related activity and promote the field;

To facilitate peer-to-peer education.



# 3. BENEFITS OF RTP

## **Benefits for the university**

As a university, the benefits of being part of the RTP are tremendous. Firstly, by having another European university partner you get the opportunity to showcase your developments in the research field and department. Secondly, you have the right set of circumstances to make long term partnerships with another European university if you find it appealing.

## **Benefits for the students**

As a student the benefits are numerous. Starting with entering the world of research in another university, and by extension to another culture, to the charm of receiving a first-hand insight from professionals. The RTP promises to give you a once in a lifetime experience from which you will go home accompanied by plenty of new things learned no matter who your partner is.

## **Benefits for the teachers**

As a teacher tutoring during the RTP, you get to meet fresh minds from all over Europe, talk to them about the methods they approach in their home countries which may maybe lead to new ideas while discussing. Fewer students take an interest in the research field either because of the lack of information, or the lack of financial support from the university/government. This project makes a great opportunity to shape and get new minds captivated by this area of activity.



# 4. HOW TO FIND A PARTNER

## Twinning Map and Database

The Twinning Database is the best place for you to look for suitable partners organize your exchange with. In it you will find all the basic information that is useful to know in order to find a twinning partner for your faculty:

- Useful links and material about the FMO;
- Direct contacts for TP;
- Availability periods.

On the [Twinning Map](#) you will have a quick overview of our FMOs Europe and their info. Both Database and Map can be easily found on our webpage and they are regularly updated. If your FMO is still missing, you can request to add it by filling out this [form](#). If you want to make any changes to your existing-information, please let us know by using this [form](#).

## Twinning Project Market at EMSA General Assemblies

The Twinning Project Market is a gathering of the participants during an EMSA General Assembly where each FMO has the chance to have a stand where they can present the Twinning projects they have already organized and promote their faculty, hospital and hometown.

### What is the purpose of this?

To find a twin, of course. The Twinning Project Market helps you identify the most suitable partners for future collaborations in exchanges. When you walk around this market, you can see what everyone has to offer and you can develop preferences about which FMO you would like to visit. The same goes for all the FMOs that will be seeing your presentation. They will see that you have an interesting town, a good hospital or faculty and awesome fellow students. Don't miss this opportunity, because the best connections are made in person!

### What I need for promotion?

You can take whatever material represents best what you have done so far within the EMSA Twinning program. You can show videos of your Twinning projects, pictures of your city, school and hospital: whatever you prefer. Prepare a nice, inviting handbook of your FMO and amaze your future partner! If your FMO hasn't done any Twinning Project yet, you can present your faculty, hospital and town, and use this opportunity to show to the General Assembly's participants or in a mail sent to other FMOs how much they would enjoy a Twinning project with your FMO.

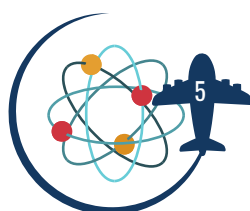


# 5. PARTICIPANTS

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Finding the right people to become twins is a key point in the project. It is not always an easy task for a Twinning Coordinator to choose the participants among the possible candidates. The participants are medical students who are interested in research. The participants can be selected similarly as in a typical Twinning Project or however the Organising Committee of RTP considers. It is however important to note that the study year of the participants is not a criterion to take into consideration during the selection of the participants.

Before anything else, only medical students are acceptable to take part in the project. The members should also be part of your FMO and good English speakers. The last point is very important as it makes for smooth conversation between twins, tutors and so on. You should not consider the study year of the candidate. It is more important to take their motivation in mind. We suggest to rather organize 10 minute interviews with the candidates, rather than simply asking for their motivation in a google form.



# 6. SIGNING THE CONTRACT

In order for the Research Twinning Project to be recognized as an EMSA RTP, it is necessary to use the standard Research Twinning Project contract. We recommend you to use this contract in order to prevent and to handle smoothly any kind of trouble that may arise during the organisation of the RTP.

Before signing the contract there needs to be decided on the following matters:

- **Exchange dates:** It is recommended to decide upon this matter as early as possible, so the project can be organised as soon as possible and so the transportation ticket prices can be booked earlier in order to save money;
- **Number of participants:** We recommend deciding on searching for 9-12 participants (three groups consisting of three participants, four groups consisting of three participants; or three groups consisting of four participants) but, at least, 2 of them have to be EMSA members;
- **Representative students:** These students shall at all times be the contact person and responsible for all issues concerning the Twinning Project;
- **Educational programme:** One of the main purposes of the Research Twinning Project is to enrich its participants with a different approach to the medical education and research world. Therefore, the organizers will strive to have the project consist of at least 20 hours of educational programme.
- **Accommodation:** This can be arranged in many ways. You can use your own homes to host the twins, use dormitories or even hotels if you have sponsors. However, the participants will bond more with their twins if they host them in their houses and this is the most recommended option.
- **Meals covered daily by both FMOs:** Regarding the meal distribution, you can agree in various ways. The meals covered by the hosting FMO can be one, two or three: make sure this will apply for both delegations.
- **Transportation:** Incoming twins will pay for their ticket to your city, and you will pay for the transportation costs during the by your organised Twinning Programme. You can discuss with the partner FMO if you will cover the transportation expenses from the airport/train station/bus station to your FMO.





# 7. ORGANISING COMMITTEE

The Organising Committee (OC) should consist of a minimum of five members, as the following roles should be divided: president, secretary, treasurer, programme chair and promotion chair. The programme is of big importance, and the task of organising it can thus be distributed to two members.

The tasks of the different roles in the OC:

- **President:**
  - Divides the task accordingly to the other members of the OC;
  - Supervises the tasks of every OC member and helps if needed;
  - Makes the agenda for the meetings; Organises team building activities for the OC;
  - Is the contact person for the OC, the local board, the participants and for the EIC and MS team from EMSA. The president keeps these parties updated on the process of the RTP. This is important, as the different parties can give meaningful input on certain tasks due to looking at the organisation of the project from a distance.
- **Secretary:**
  - Is responsible for writing down the minutes;
  - Helps the promotion chair with the promotional material.
- **Treasurer:**
  - Makes the budget;
  - Searches for sponsors.
- **Program Chair:**
  - Organises the educational, social and cultural program;
  - Searches for researchers whom are interested to guide a group of twins at their department during the RTP Programme.
- **Promotion Chair:**
  - Makes the posters for the project promotion;
  - Writes the promotion text.

The tasks, responsibilities and time plan should be known before making the call for the OC. During the first months of the organisation of the project, the meetings should be once in the two weeks, while having contact through intermediates in the meantime. When the start of the project is coming nearby, then the meetings should be more often.

Do not forget to also organise team-building activities during the organisation of the project, so the committee gets to know each other better. Involvement on a personal level keeps people motivated and creates a more comfortable environment to work as a team for a common greater goal.



# 8. PROGRAMME

## Scientific Programme

The scientific programme, the center of this project, can consist of laboratory, working group hours and trainings/workshops in order for every incoming twin to be prepared for a Final (Poster Case) Presentation which will be held at the end of the exchange.

Firstly, the incoming twins should be split into three or four groups (each consisting of at least three to four people). All three or four groups will be guided daily by (at least) one host twin. Depending on the possibilities of the hosting FMO, each group will be placed at a different medical department (e.g.: genetics, immunology, histology, morphopathology, genomics, biochemistry, pharmacology, etc...), and will receive a topic from the responsible research, on which they need to work during the exchange week. The topic should be based on the specialization they were assigned to. Each working day the team should spend around three to four hours in the laboratory discovering the insights of their topic.



As the RTP is mostly based on the educational program, the hosting FMO should prepare a couple of academic activities such as trainings and workshops on research subjects for the incoming twins for at least two hours per day. Examples of research trainings and workshops are:

- Workshop on how to “Read a scientific article”;
- Workshop on how to “Write a Poster Case Presentation/Oral Presentation/scientific abstract”;
- Workshop on how to “Design a Poster Presentation”;
- Workshop on how to “Present a scientific abstract”/ Soft skills training on public speaking.

Working group hours should also be a part of the educational agenda, so that the research teams can prepare for the final presentation properly. For this activity the hosting FMO should provide laptops/computers, paper, pens, books and of course Wi-Fi. Incoming twins are encouraged to make use of sites such as PubMed, UpToDate, Medline, Embase, Ovid, Cochrane Library, Oncoline, and Web of Science, etc.. The twins should be allowed around two to three hours per day to prepare for their final presentation. Location could be the university’s library or any room properly equipped that the hosting FMO can allocate for this activity.

More information about the final presentation can be found at the chapter “Competition”.





## Cultural and Social Programme

The RTP will also consist of social and cultural activities, like in a typical Twinning Project. Learning about different cultures and experiencing a different lifestyle is very interesting, but it is also very important as culture has a big impact on the health care system and the way the research team work and interact with each other.

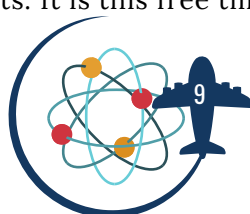
Examples of cultural activities to let the incoming students experience local culture could be eating traditional food, going to a traditional concert, visiting popular buildings and museums, and watching a movie from the hosting country.

The social activities might lead to long-term friendships, but might also improve the teamwork and boost the motivation for the assignment. One of the best things about a Twinning Project is the chance students get to bond with each other and to create new friendships. This can be achieved by spending time together in many ways:

- Dancing at music bars;
- Barbeque parties and outdoors/ parks;
- Movie night;
- Escape Rooms/Bowling/Paintball.

One full day can be dedicated entirely for the social and cultural program, such as a nice trip together on the city's surroundings or even visit another close city for a cultural stimulus.

Do however not forget to also give the participants some free time, so they can explore the city on their own, or so they can rest if needed. It sounds obvious and once you start organizing, you get so enthusiastic that you will plan every minute for the students. It is this free time that students appreciate very much.



# 9. THE COMPETITION

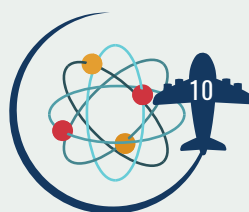
The Final Presentation or The Competition consists in Poster or Powerpoint Presentation contest judged by the doctors and/or teachers whom guided the groups, and two members of the Twinning Project committee. Every group should give a presentation for a couple of minutes for which they have been preparing the entire week, which is related to the specialization of their laboratory work.

The jury shall note all groups according to a Feedback Noting System as exemplified before and grant constructive feedback for each team. Each member of the jury shall receive a feedback form and the final results shall be calculated according to all the jury members.

The hosting FMO should provide an award for the winning team such as scientific magazines, books or any educational/research materials.

**Good luck!**

[Link to the example of the noting system](#)



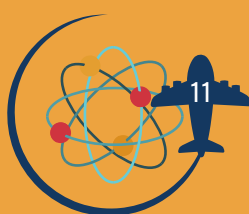
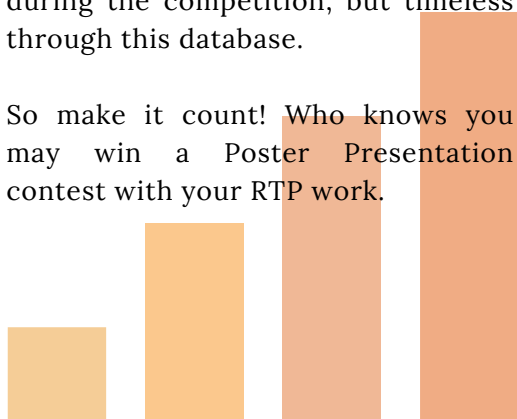
# 10. AFTERMATHS

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The beauty of the Research Twinning is knowing that your work is useful long after the project is over. You will not only gain knowledge in the research field, but you will also gain knowledge about the host's culture. In addition to the whole experience the participating twins can use their presentations both at the EMSA GAs during the Poster Case Presentation, and also at other conferences/congresses.

Furthermore, the posters will be collected by the MSD and EICD and preserved in a database created by EMSA. By this, all members will be able to access the information provided through the twinings. Therefore, an EMSA library of knowledge will be created in time for all future generations to read and learn from. This will also give you recognition not only at the moment, during the competition, but timeless through this database.

So make it count! Who knows you may win a Poster Presentation contest with your RTP work.





# 11. BUDGET

You will need to create a detailed program to be able to calculate your expenses, so you can decide on an adequate participation fee which will cover all the expenses. A detailed program will also be needed as groundwork while searching for sponsorships. The points to be decided on while preparing your budget include expenses such as accommodation and meals; and your income such as funds and sponsorships.

## Meals

You should try to make meals as affordable as possible. You may try to make a deal or ask for in-kind sponsorship from local restaurants, bakeries or markets. Making meals for the participants is not only a way to save money for meals, but it can also be a social activity (by making the meal together) and cultural activity (by preparing traditional food). When making meals for the participants you should consider buying brandless drinks and snacks to save money. If participants are staying in houses with local FMO members, they might make their own meal at home from time to time. At the same time, please be considerate about the environment by trying to not waste too much plastic, paper, food and by offering vegetarian/vegan meal options.

## Accommodation

Just like with a regular Twinning Project, it is wished upon to house the students at their host twins if possible. This is not only a good way to save money, but it will give the students a special insight in your culture as well.

## Funds and sponsorships

It is very important to start in time with this part as a lot of funding institutions and companies plan their funding at the start of the year and give their funds only a couple of times a year. Therefore, you need to be on time with sending an application. To apply for a fund, you will need to make a detailed plan of how much money you will need. While making the plan you should do a research about the funding companies see if their aims match with the aims of Research Twinning Project. A lot of companies will request a general program of what you are going to do during the project so it will be helpful if you prepare a promotional booklet/presentation before you ask them for sponsorship. You can also send them this booklet, so they can have a general image of the vision of the Research Twinning Project. It is also possible to ask local stores for support of your project, by asking them for funding in-kind. This could for example be food from the local supermarket. Before reaching out to local stores you need to have a detailed plan on what you need and you need to think about why it would be beneficial for them to sponsor you. Making deals with the local museums or tourist offices might be a good idea, as they might provide you some discount or free tickets. You should therefore check the tickets beforehand, especially if you estimate that the lines for historical sights and/or museums will be long. In that case, you should also consider “skip the line” tickets.





## 12. CERTIFICATES

After the presentations, all participants will be given a certificate which is recognised by EMSA, only if the Twinning Project coordinators have filled out the Educational Programme Evaluation form and sent the signed contract to the EICD and/or MSD. The certificate will be signed by the teacher who guided the team, by the European Integration and Culture Director (EICD), the Medical Science Director (MSD) and the President of EMSA. In order for participants to receive the certificate, the coordinators need to:

- Send the signed contract to the EICD and/or MSD;
- Send the posters/presentations in PDF to the EICD and/or MSD;
- Fill in the Research Twinning Project Report form;
- Organize at least 20 hours of educational programme.

Each host FMO should also provide official certificates recognized by EMSA for the volunteering researchers in order to motivate and give official recognition to the tutors. This might also help with finding researchers available for your Research Twinning Project week.



# 13. FINAL WORD

We really hope you enjoyed reading this handbook and that you will find it useful. Should you have any questions or doubts, do not hesitate to contact us at:

EIC: EMSA European Integration and Culture Director ([integration@emsa-europe.eu](mailto:integration@emsa-europe.eu)) or the EIC Twinning Assistant ([eicd.twin.asst@emsa-europe.eu](mailto:eicd.twin.asst@emsa-europe.eu));

MS: EMSA Medical Science Director ([science@emsa-europe.eu](mailto:science@emsa-europe.eu));

MS Research and Internal Affairs Assistant ([msd.res.asst@emsa-europe.eu](mailto:msd.res.asst@emsa-europe.eu)).

*“With the observable fact that scientific knowledge makes our lives better when applied with concern for human welfare and environmental protection, there is no question that science and technology can produce abundance so that no one has to go without.”*

*-Jacque Fresco*





# 14. APPENDIX

Example of an entire educational programme with timetable

	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7
9:00	Laboratoy work	Laboratoy work	Cultural field trip	Laboratoy work	Laboratoy work	Individual working time	Sightseeing and Departure day
10:00							
11:00							
12:00	Lunch break	Lunch break		Lunch break	Lunch break	Final Presentations and Competition	
13:00							
14:00	Workshop on how to "Read a scientific article";	Workshop on how to "Write a Poster Case Presentation/Oral Presentation/scientific abstract";		Workshop on how to "Design a Poster Presentation";	Workshop on how to "Present a scientific abstract"/ Soft skills training on public speaking.	Lunch break	
15:00						Final Presentations and Competition	
16:00	Individual working time	Individual working time	Individual working time	Individual working time	Individual working time		
17:00							
18:00	Barbeque welcome party	Movie night	Traditional Dinner	Bowling/ Escape room	Festive dinner and awards ceremony		
19:00							
20:00							
21:00							

