

# Brazil - EU Cooperation in Research and Innovation

“Fostering STI twinning activities”

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FOSTERING STI TWINNING  
ACTIVITIES BETWEEN  
EU AND BRAZIL

PUBLIC REPORT  
JUNE 2020



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Costanzo Fisogni

### **Implementing Consortium**

CESO Development Consultants/WYG/ Camões, I.P.

## **AUTHORS**

Mario Neto Borges

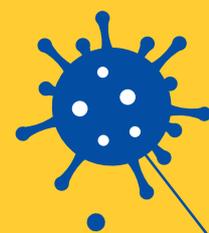
Gianluca Rossi

## **CONTACTS**

### **National Directorate for the Initiative**

[dialogos.setoriais@planejamento.gov.br](mailto:dialogos.setoriais@planejamento.gov.br)

[www.sectordialogues.org](http://www.sectordialogues.org)



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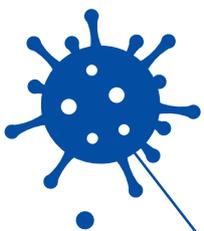
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# 1. INTRODUCTION

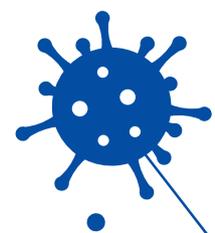
In 2004, Brazil and the European Union signed the government Cooperation Agreement on Science and Technology, which entered in force in 2007, with the objective of encouraging, developing and facilitating cooperative activities in priority areas of common interest by supporting Science and Technology in research activities. The Joint Steering Committee - JSC, which meets regularly, coordinates the agreement.

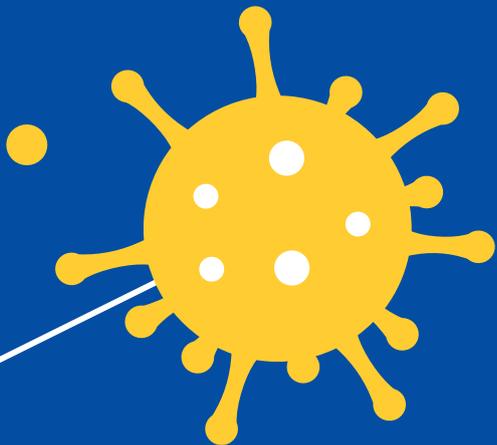
In order to provide further support to co-financing and other modalities foreseen in the cooperation agreement, in May 2018, the European Commission – Directorate General for Research and Innovation (DG-RTD) and three Brazilian agencies – the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), the Brazilian Innovation Agency (FINEP) and the Brazilian National Council of State Funding Agencies (CONFAP) signed the Administrative Arrangement - AA with the objective of stepping forward in Brazil-EU cooperation activities in research and innovation.

During the meeting of the EU-Brazil Joint Steering Committee (JSCM-9), the twinning cooperation modality was endorsed as a key mutual priority to be deepened, as a promising mechanism for achieving a greater coordination between Brazilian and European institutions, initiatives and funded actions, thus avoiding overlapping or duplication of efforts.

A further step forward has been made in the framework of the EU-Brazil Sector Dialogues in Science and Technology, which have supported strategic joint action involving the current Brazilian Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation – MCTI (former Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovation and Communications – MCTIC), and the EC – DG RTD, with the approval of the Fostering STI twinning activities between EU and Brazil project, which has led to the elaboration of the present study.

The project has carried out a pilot action for implementing the twinning modality foreseen in the AA, focusing on some key areas of mutual priority, identifying projects supported by both sides. The range of key areas chosen for twinning has been widened along the lifetime of the project, in order to include new arising priorities in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, widening the scope of research areas and projects.





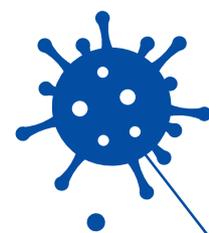
## 2. PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The activities started with the study of the documents related to the governmental agreement between Brazil and the European Union and with those produced during EU-Brazil policy dialogues meetings in this context. The Methodology was based on relevant documents such as the latest Joint Communiqué issued by the JSCM, which draws a roadmap of key mutual priorities to deepen EU-Brazil Cooperation. On such basis, key areas have been prioritized in the selection of projects for twinning, leading to the following target, within the scope of the project: Information and Communication Technology - ICT (emphasis on Artificial Intelligence); Oceans; Health; Clean Energy; Circular Economy; Agriculture and Mobility/Aviation.

Following the identification of the above-mentioned areas, a pre-selection of the Brazilian and European projects took place. From the Brazilian side the focus was within the scope of the National Institutes of Science and Technology (INCTs) which are suitable for the twinning methodology approved by the Technical Steering Group of the AA. On the European side, the selection was based on some major projects supported under the Horizon 2020 Programme. The correspondence of such projects identified on both side has been possible due to their common characteristics: being medium to large scale collaborative projects, involving a network of institutions around joint objectives and activities.

The methodology included the preparation of a questionnaire, sent to the Project Coordinators on the Brazilian and the European side. Based on the responses received, a selection of research projects have been invited to participate in the twinning online event, that took place on May the 22nd with the participation of the Brazilian (MCTI) and European (DG-RTD) authorities.

The event, has been made on a remote-based modality, due to the unexpected pandemic, but nevertheless allowed a rich and productive interaction among the projects, institutions and participants, opening to future cooperation opportunities and confirming the high potential of the twinning modality.





## Response from Brazil and European Union – Change on the Methodology

The scope of the project had to be re-adapted in its key priority areas in response to the pandemic, which occurred during project implementation. This has widened and enriched the areas of cooperation, highlighting new common challenges.

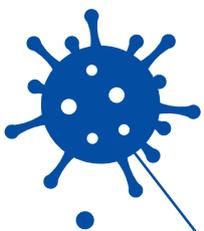
To face the coronavirus (Covid-19) challenge, the MCTI is investing €20 million. The MCTI and the Ministry of Health - MS are investing €10 million in research on new methods of diagnosis, treatment and interruption of transmission in the country of the Covid-19. Of this total, €6 million are funded by the MCTI and the remainder comes from the Ministry of Health budget. This action is carried out through the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development - CNPq. The lines of research projects were defined in conjunction with the Ministry of Health, observing guidelines from the World Health Organization - WHO.

In addition, MCTI announced seven technological research projects with the total amount of €10 million awarded through the Brazilian Innovation Agency - FINEP, public company linked to MCTI. The action was named “Rede Vírus” (Virus Network). The supported actions are focused on sequencing of the virus genetic code; clinical trial protocols with patients using drugs to combat Covid-19; a study using Artificial Intelligence to select molecules that can inhibit viral replication; innovative research for diagnostic tests; development vaccines and social project.

Similarly, European Union’s investment in research is one of the pillars of the EU's response to the coronavirus crisis (Covid-19). In addition to several previous and ongoing research initiatives, the ministers responsible for research and innovation (R&I) from the 27 EU Member States together with the European Commission endorsed 10 priority actions in the European Research Area - ERA Action Plan for Covid-19. The Plan covers short-term initiatives to jointly coordinate, share and increase support for R&I, in line with ERA's objectives and tools. In January, an emergency call for proposals within the Horizon 2020 programme of €48.2 million was launched, which selected 18 projects.

Considering the Brazilian and European Union initiatives related to coping with the coronavirus, the authorities responsible for this Project decided to adjust it so that, without escaping the concept of twinning established in Administrative Arrangement, to include projects on coronavirus in the scope of the Project **Fostering STI twinning activities between EU and Brazil.**

As a result, research projects on Covid-19 that would be suitable for twinning were also selected for the matchmaking event held in May the 22nd, thus opening to future collaborations also in these emerging fields of common interest.





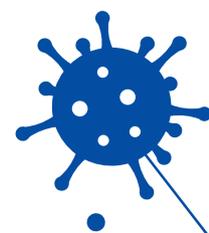
## 3. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

As above-mentioned, it was decided to prioritize in the selection of projects for twinning reaching the following: Information and Communication Technology - ICT; Oceans; Health; Clean Energy; Circular Economy; Agriculture and Mobility/Aviation. The pre-selected Brazilian projects within the scope of the National Institutes of Science and Technology – INCTs, from the Brazilian side, and within the Horizon 2020 Programme from the European side.

101 INCTS projects and 166 European projects were analysed. After several iterations, the projects were consulted on their interest and possibility of participating in the twinning event. 39 INCTS projects and 36 Horizon 2020 were pre-selected. Hence, 9 projects on each side were selected, following responses to the questionnaires to participate in the twinning activities.

Because of the decision made on widening the scope to pandemic related topics, project on coronavirus were included. The source of projects from the Brazilian side was the Rede Vírus (Virus Network) and from the European side, the European selected projects are an outcome of emergency funding action for coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 outbreak, under the EU Horizon 2020 programme.

In order to fit in the context and timing of the online matchmaking event, the first step was to reduce from nine previous selected projects to three focusing on Energy, Agriculture and Environment. As far as the projects about coronavirus were concerned, from the seven Brazilian projects and eighteen European projects, three from each side have been selected focusing on Diagnostics, Vaccines and Treatment, which presented their main objectives and findings on an online event on May the 22nd.





## 4. RESULTS

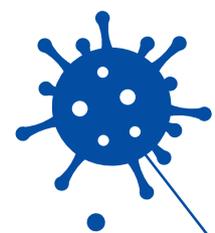
A total number of 75 questionnaires were sent to the EU and Brazilian coordinators in order to have their inputs and suggestions on how to facilitate and enhance the collaboration and exchanges between the projects selected in priority areas of common interest with the aim to support research and development activities and engage researchers on both sides. The feedback was very positive, 15 EU and 23 Brazilian coordinators and partners sent the questionnaires completed.

Analyzing the answers received, all coordinators are very interested to take part in the twinning activities initiative and they consider the co-operation with the corresponding projects and researchers of the EU/Brazilian counterpart a success factor.

In particular, most of the coordinators from both sides stated that the scientific and technical collaboration is considered a benefit, particularly to extend the impact of the research lines in other different countries, to exchange experience and knowledge and to replicate process and good practices in both directions.

Regarding the co-operation modalities, the majority agrees that all procedures are very important starting from the basic information exchange, technical networking and to the collaboration on specific technical/research initiatives under the ongoing projects.

Responses to the questionnaires have led to the identification of nine projects, which were invited and accepted to take part in the twinning activity. They are presented in the table below.



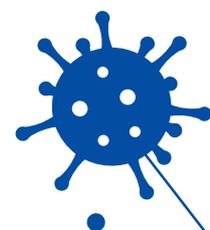


Brazilian INCT Projects	European Horizon 2020 Projects
<b>ENERGY</b>	
INCT on Electrical Power Distributed Generation <a href="http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/">http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/</a>	FLEXIGRID – Interoperable solutions for implementing holistic FLEXibility services in the distribution GRID Info: <a href="http://www.flexigrid-h2020.eu/">http://www.flexigrid-h2020.eu/</a>
National Institute of Electric Energy – INERGE <a href="http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/">http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/</a>	ERIGrid 2.0 - European Research Infrastructure supporting Smart Grid and Smart Energy Systems Research, Technology Development, Validation and Roll Out Info: <a href="https://erigrad2.eu/">https://erigrad2.eu/</a>
<b>AGRICULTURE</b>	
INCT for the Dairy Production Chain <a href="http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/">http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/</a>	DEMETER - Building an Interoperable, Data-Driven, Innovative and Sustainable European Agri-Food Info: <a href="https://h2020-demeter.eu/">https://h2020-demeter.eu/</a>
INCT MIDAS Environmental Technologies for wastes and renewable materials valorisation <a href="http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/">http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/</a>	B-FERST - Bio-based FERtilising products as the best practice for agricultural management SusTainability Info: <a href="https://bferst.eu/">https://bferst.eu/</a>
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	
INCT Amazonian Wood <a href="http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/">http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/</a>	B4EST - Adaptive BREEDING for productive, sustainable and resilient FORESTs under climate change Info: <a href="http://b4est.eu/">http://b4est.eu/</a>
INCT for Studies of Adaptations of Aquatic Biota - ADAPTA II <a href="http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/">http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/</a>	Microbiome Support - Towards coordinated microbiome R&I activities in the food system to support (EU and) international bioeconomy goals Info: <a href="https://www.microbiomesupport.eu/">https://www.microbiomesupport.eu/</a>
<b>Information and Communication Technology - ICT</b>	
INCT for Cooperative Autonomous Systems Applied to Security and Environment <a href="http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/">http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/</a>	SeaClear - SEarch, identificAtion and Collection of marine Litter with Autonomous Robots Info: <a href="https://seaclear-project.eu/">https://seaclear-project.eu/</a>

<p>INCT in Medicine Assisted by Scientific Computing (INCT-MACC)  <a href="http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/">http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/</a></p>	<p>Feature-Cloud Privacy preserving federated machine learning and blockchaining for reduced cyber risks in a world of distributed healthcare  Info: <a href="https://featurecloud.eu/">https://featurecloud.eu/</a></p>
<b>OCEANS</b>	
<p>Brazilian National Institute for Cryospheric Sciences  <a href="http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/">http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/</a></p>	<p>TRIATLAS - Tropical and South Atlantic climate-based marine ecosystem predictions for sustainable management  Info: <a href="https://triatlas.w.uib.no/">https://triatlas.w.uib.no/</a></p>

Brazilian-EU projects selected in other R&I strategic areas which have not returned the questionnaires.

Brazilian INCT Projects	European Horizon 2020 Projects
<b>MOBILITY/AVIATION</b>	
<p>INCT - GNSS technology to support air navigation  <a href="http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/">http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/</a></p>	<p>ReMAP - Real-time Condition-based Maintenance for Adaptive Aircraft Maintenance Planning  Info: <a href="https://h2020-remap.eu/">https://h2020-remap.eu/</a></p>
<p>INCT - Catalysis in Molecular and Nanostructured Systems  <a href="http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/">http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/</a></p>	<p>BIO4A - Advanced sustainable BIOfuels for Aviation  Info: <a href="https://bio4a.eu/">https://bio4a.eu/</a></p>
<b>CIRCULAR ECONOMY</b>	
<p>INCT - MIDAS Environmental Technologies for wastes and renewable  <a href="http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/">http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/</a></p>	<p>NextGen - Towards a Next Generation of Water Systems and Services for the Circular Economy  Info: <a href="https://nextgenwater.eu/">https://nextgenwater.eu/</a></p>
<p>INCT - Tropical Marine Environments  <a href="http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/">http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/</a></p>	<p>Blue-Cloud - Piloting innovative services for Marine Research &amp; the Blue Economy  Info: <a href="https://www.blue-cloud.org/">https://www.blue-cloud.org/</a></p>
<b>ICT – ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE</b>	
<p>INCT - Future Internet Science and Technology Research Institute  <a href="http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/">http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/</a></p>	<p>ATELIER - AmsTERdam BiLbao citizen drivEn smaRt cities  Info: <a href="https://smartcity-atelier.eu/">https://smartcity-atelier.eu/</a></p>





AGRICULTURE	
INCT - National Institute of Science and Technology of Semiochemicals in Agriculture <a href="http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/">http://www.cnpq.br/web/guest/inct/</a>	AFarCloud - Aggregate Farming in the Cloud Info: <a href="http://www.afarcloud.eu/">http://www.afarcloud.eu/</a>
OCEANS	
Brazilian National Institute for Cryospheric Sciences	SO-CHIC Info <a href="http://www.sochic-h2020.eu/">http://www.sochic-h2020.eu/</a>

After the Covid-19 pandemic spread all over the world spoiling the twinning activity planned to take place in Brasilia, in March, the project was adjusted to take into consideration projects, which tackled the coronavirus issue, as described in Project Methodology item.

Because of the change made, the final selection of the projects arrived at the examples described below – selected for the twinning process on remote form. The first three ones come from the preliminary selection and the three last ones have been selected on the coronavirus set.

### EXAMPLE 1

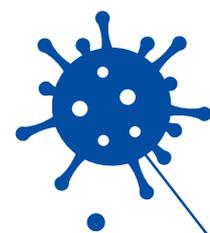
PROJECTS SELECTED ON ENERGY	
Brazilian Project	European Project
National Institute of Science and Technology on Electrical Power Distributed Generation	FLEXIGRID – Interoperable solutions for implementing holistic FLEXibility services in the distribution GRID
OUTCOMES – Grid Scale Energy, Electric Vehicles. Transactive Energy. Machine Learning Techniques. Digitalization and smartening of distribution systems. Integration of distributed energy resources. Management of new flexibility sources. Protection and control strategies for improved system security. Scalability and replicability analysis, cost –benefit analysis (CBA). Elaboration of roadmaps for Smart Grids Technologies & Renewable Energies integration. Info: <a href="http://www.flexigrid-h2020.eu/">http://www.flexigrid-h2020.eu/</a>	

## EXAMPLE 2

PROJECTS SELECTED ON AGRICULTURE	
Brazilian Project	European Project
NIST Dairy - National Institute of Science and Technology for the Dairy Production Chain	DEMETER - Building an Interoperable, Data-Driven, Innovative and Sustainable European Agri-Food
<p>OUTCOMES - Enhancement of milk production – dairy industry. Sustainability of the environment. Respect to people, animals and nature. Advancement in the knowledge. Establish an EU/Brazil ICT-AGRI working group. Develop a suite of white papers/ publications. Identification and (potential) reuse of early code releases across projects. Establishment of a common platform for communication. Agreement to cross pollinate our social media content. Joint stands/booths at relative events. Utilise open calls to get our pilots trialled with different technology sets from other projects.</p> <p>Info: <a href="https://h2020-demeter.eu/">https://h2020-demeter.eu/</a></p>	

## EXAMPLE 3

PROJECTS SELECTED ON ENVIRONMENT	
Brazilian Project	European Project
INCT Amazonian Wood	B4EST - Adaptive BREEDING for productive, sustainable and resilient FORESTs under climate change
<p>OUTCOMES - Possible synergies and co-operations with other R&amp;I projects in the sector. Ideas and suggestions for future collaboration with Brazilian projects and programmes in this field. Technology and innovation. Exchange of Genetics Knowledge. Expand knowledge of tree species and forest reproductive material sensitivity to key abiotic and biotic stresses. Speed up the release of new genetic diversity with enhanced adaptive capacity and added-value for the wood industry. Develop easy-to-use and open-access decision-support tools tailored to specific forest types, bioclimatic regions, and breeding and management scenarios. Evaluation of economic performance of collaborative genome-based breeding strategies, increased genetic diversity in afforestation, adaptive forest management strategies fulfilling forest industry and society demands.</p> <p>Info: <a href="http://b4est.eu/">http://b4est.eu/</a></p>	





#### EXAMPLE 4

CORONAVIRUS PROJECTS SELECTED ON DIAGNOSTICS	
Brazilian Project	European Project
Science and innovation to face the Covid-19 pandemic, through actions linked to the diagnosis of SARS-CoV2	CoronaDX – Three Rapid Diagnostic tests (Point-of-Care) for Covid-19 CoronaThree Rapid Diagnostic tests (Point-of-Care) for Coronavirus, improving epidemic preparedness, public health and socio-economic benefits
<p>OUTCOMES - Technology for stable probe production. Technology for stable and high performance qPCR MIX. Monoclonal antibodies are still not available (Hybridomas). Improved antigens for rapid test platforms. NGS platform adapted for diagnosis and mass testing. Scale up of reagents and kits (production set up of and training of personal). Support the selection, specific diagnosis and laboratory testing of patients. Develop and submit for approval three Rapid Diagnostic tests (Point-of-Care) for Covid-19. Conduct clinical and molecular epidemiological studies on the characterization and spatio-temporal evolution of the epidemic. To assess the socioeconomic impact of the Covid-19 public health emergency in Italy and at the European level.</p> <p>Info: <a href="http://coronadx-project.eu/">http://coronadx-project.eu/</a></p>	

#### EXAMPLE 5

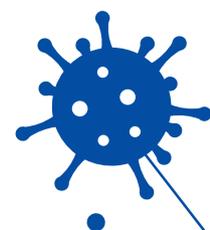
CORONAVIRUS PROJECTS SELECTED ON VACCINES	
Brazilian Project	European Project
Development of vaccine against SARS-CoV2	OPENCORONA – Rapid therapy development through Open Coronavirus Vaccine Platform
<p>OUTCOMES - Two Covid-19 vaccine prototypes: VLP- and Influenza-based. Vaccines that induce neutralizing antibodies and specific T cells. Safety tests in rodent and rabbit. Scale-up. Dose escalation, safety and immunogenicity tests in humans (Fast delivery of crucial supplies and biological tools. Manufacture technology. Confirmation of safety tests in animals. Multi-centre phase III Clinical trials.Phase 1 and 2a). Immunogenicity tests and protection (Phase 3). Industrial production and distribution. Development and evaluation of a vaccine against Covid-19 in a phase I clinical trial. Preparation for a phase II clinical trial. Plan for a phase III clinical trial. Identification of parameters related to cross reactivity to animal Coronaviruses. Evaluation of the identified vaccine gene in different delivery systems. Evaluation of combination vaccines (so called prime-boost).</p> <p>Info <a href="https://ki.se/en/research/opencorona">https://ki.se/en/research/opencorona</a></p>	

## EXAMPLE 6

CORONAVIRUS PROJECTS SELECTED ON TREATMENT	
Brazilian Project	European Project
Treatment of patients with covid-19 with convalescent plasma transfusion: a multicenter, open, randomized and controlled study	CoroNAb - Nanobodies and antibodies against 2019-nCoV
<p>OUTCOMES - Assays: Pseudovirus neutralization assay. Serum ELISA. Reagents: Expression plasmids: Spike Receptor and Binding Domain. Obtain and optimize multiple protein therapeutic candidates. Impact depends on how fast we are, or how potent the therapeutics are. Incidence of acute adverse events. Evaluation according to an ordinal scale of 10 categories in D7, D14 and D28. Detection of SARS-CoV-2 in nasopharyngeal swab on days 0, 1, 3, 7, 14 and 28 after transfusion in groups B and C, and 24 hours after randomization in the group A (control). Specific IgS, IgM and IgA titers for SARS-CoV-2 on days 0 (before transfusion), 1, 3, 5, 7, 14 and 28 after transfusion in groups B and C, and 24 hours after transfusion randomization in group A. Detection of neutralizing antibodies on days 0 (before transfusion), 1, 7, 14 and 28 after transfusion in groups B and C, and 24 hours after randomization in group A. Info <a href="https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101003653">https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101003653</a></p>	

After the twinning activities event, the fourth meeting of the Technical Steering Group of the Administrative Arrangement (TSG-4 meeting) took place on May the 27th. In this context, the twinning initiative was presented by MCTI, highlighting the recent implementation of this type of cooperation, together with the European Commission, in the context of the EU-Brazil Sector Dialogues project targeted to such scope. The institutional actors involved in the AA have appreciated the positive results of the pilot action implemented within the Sector Dialogues Twinning project.

In fact, the project has successfully “tested” the Twinning cooperation modality foreseen in the AA, thus performing a first mapping of EU - Brazil large scale projects, attending key mutual priorities. All the institutions agreed that the twinning modality should be reinforced and expanded and that future actions should be taken in such direction. Especially in this crucial moment of Covid-19 emergency, all agreed on the fact that this cooperation option can be the most flexible and efficient solution to approximate projects and research groups.





## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The project Fostering STI twinning activities between EU and Brazil has demonstrated that the twinning activities can be an important and strong pillar for supporting the cooperation between EU and Brazil in Science, Technology and Innovation.

The webinar was the final meeting of the sector dialogue project endorsed by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation – MCTI and the Directorate General for Research and Innovation DG-RTD of the European Commission, and implemented under the Foreign Policy Instrument - FPI of the European External Action Service - EEAS.

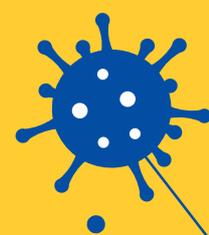
The EU-Brazil Sector Dialogues contributed to reinforcing the strategic partnership between the EU and Brazil based on the principles of reciprocity, complementarity and mutual interest, thus promoting the exchange of knowledge, experiences and best practices at technical and political level in policy areas of interest for both sides.

Twinning of ongoing projects is also one of the cooperation modalities foreseen in the Administrative Arrangement, signed by European Commission DG-RTD and the Brazilian agencies: National Council for Scientific and Technological Development - CNPq, the Brazilian Innovation Agency - FINEP and the Brazilian National Council of State Funding Agencies - CONFAP.

In this context, the webinar presented synergies and complementarities between six pairs of identified projects comprising areas of agriculture, energy and environment, as well as diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines to Covid-19. The objective was to advance in further concrete collaboration tackling jointly common challenges. All EU projects are funded by the EU research and innovation Programme, Horizon 2020. The three Brazilian National Institutes of Science and Technology - INCTs are funded by CNPq and the State Funding Agencies from Amazonas, Rio

Grande do Sul e Paraná, while the Brazilian Covid-19 projects are funded by FINEP and the State Agencies from Minas Gerais and São Paulo.

This webinar preceded networking and matchmaking event, organised by the European Union with international partner countries, to promote collaboration among research projects and programmes engaged in Covid-19, and covering vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics and societal aspects. This event took place on June the 10th. In this context, the contribution of the discussions between Brazilian and European researchers was an excellent basis and an important step to enhance and enlarge the bilateral scientific cooperation with new developments and projects. In the same direction, further actions are being planned by the EU and Brazil, in the common areas of interest and will to replicate and widen such cooperation modality.



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