

Intro to title

Tackling border obstacles B-solutions for Interreg

Besiana Ninka, Daniela Minichberger | Interact | 07.03.2023, 9.00-10.00

Interact



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Welcome to the Interreg Knowledge Fair

This is the **second edition** of the Interreg Knowledge Fair, it is still a new approach for us.

The **Conference Support** stand in the Exhibition Room is a one-stop shop for your questions.

At the end of this session, you are asked to rate the **session experience**.

At the end of the event, you will be asked your **overall feedback**.



Agenda

01

Setting the scene

02

What can b-solutions do for Interreg?

03

Outlook and next steps



Objectives of the session

- Offering a overview of the agenda concerning border regions and the significant policy issues related to them;
- Presenting b-solutions as an approach to identify and address specific border obstacles;
- Exploring the necessity for complementary tools to establish enduring consultation mechanisms



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Tackling cross-border obstacles: *b-solutions* for Interreg

7 March 2024, Riga

Cinzia Dellagiacomma, Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)

What is *b-solutions*?



Launched by EU Commission's DG REGIO

Managed by AEER

Addresses legal and administrative obstacles
hindering cross-border cooperation in the EU

What is *b-solutions*' objective?



Support local actors in border regions
to **solve obstacles**

of a legal and/or administrative nature

along EU borders, inclusive along borders with EFTA and
IPA countries

Because:

- 40 land borders between the 27 EU Member States, the EFTA countries and the UK
- 448 regions (NUTS 3 level) located alongside at least one border;
- 30% of Europeans live in these regions

“Going beyond obstacles in yachting internship and training”

A *b-solutions*’ case by Province of Lucca (Regional Contact Point of Interreg Maritime)



Obstacle:

Different regulatory **requirements** for the recognition of **diploma** and **internship** conditions in Italy and France blocked the completion of the Interreg project “E-JOB” – Excellence Job on Board

“Going beyond obstacles in yachting internship and training”

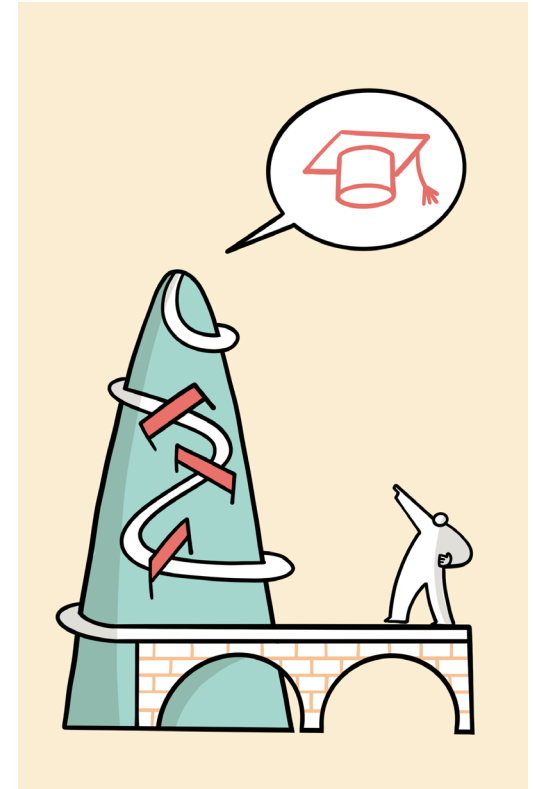
A *b-solutions*’ case by Province of Lucca (Regional Contact Point of Interreg Marittimo)

Support included:

- Discussions with representatives of the schools involved in Italy and in France
- Analysis of legal framework to establish a dual diploma to recognise skills across the border
- Concrete suggestions to harmonise common rules and trainings

Actions taken to solve the obstacles:

Launch of the project ‘I-YEP’ under the Interreg programme Italy-France Maritime!



Questions:

Are you aware of similar obstacles in your programme area?

Are there projects in your programme that needed to be adapted because of legal or administrative issues which came up during implementation?

Are there projects in your programme that address legal obstacles?

b-solutions 2.0: A call for proposals to support solutions

Goal : identify and promote further 120 cases and sustainable methods of resolving border obstacles of a legal and/or administrative nature

Target : Public bodies in border regions (including public equivalent bodies); and
Cross-border structures (EGTCs, Euroregions)

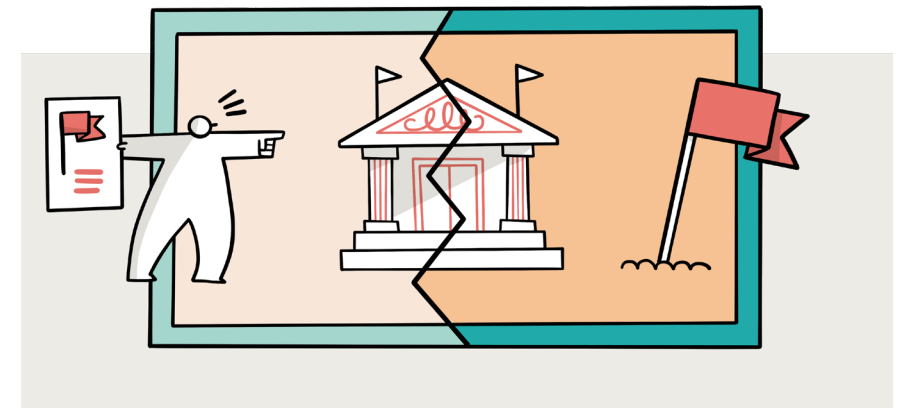
Scope: border regions along EU internal **land and maritime borders** and along EU borders with EFTA and IPA countries

Themes: institutional cooperation, public services, labour markets and education and European Green Deal

Which kind of border obstacles do we look at?

Legal and administrative obstacles which arise because of:

- lack of coherence of legislation applicable on the different sides of the border
- inconsistencies, non-existence, or overlapping of different administrative procedures
- applicable European, national or regional legislation or administrative procedures do not take into account the specificity of cross-border interaction



Which kind of support is provided?

b-solutions provides technical support

> Participants receive advice by legal experts who cooperate with them to:

- define the obstacle;
- identify a possible solution to it.

Output:

Report by the expert with clear explanation of the obstacle and suggestions for concrete solutions



How does it work?



Through field visits, experts carry out the analysis.

Experts are assigned to participants for 9 days within a period of a maximum of 3 months.

Costs and administration are managed by AEBR.

The expert writes a report about the obstacle and suggests solutions to overcome it.

How to apply?

Proposals should be submitted via an online form, accessible here:

<https://www.b-solutionsproject.com/call-for-proposals>

Timeline

Deadline: As long as the are resources available

Applications are reviewed on a **rolling basis** with immediate implementation.

What do you obtain from *b-solutions*?

- A full report with a detailed analysis of the specific obstacle faced in the region, and proposals for concrete solutions
- Participation in a compendium illustrating a variety of obstacles and possible solutions to enhance cross-border cooperation

>> Support to:

- Demonstrate the cross-border obstacles you face
- Move towards solutions
- Raise awareness of cross-border cooperation
- Be part of a European project to bring European integration forward



“On safe legal ground - cross-border cooperation in disaster response”
A *b-solutions*’ case by EGTC South Tyrol – Tyrol - Trentino

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9dTs8vEbZc>
Discover: what is *b-solutions*

Why *b-solutions* and Interreg can join forces?

Questions:

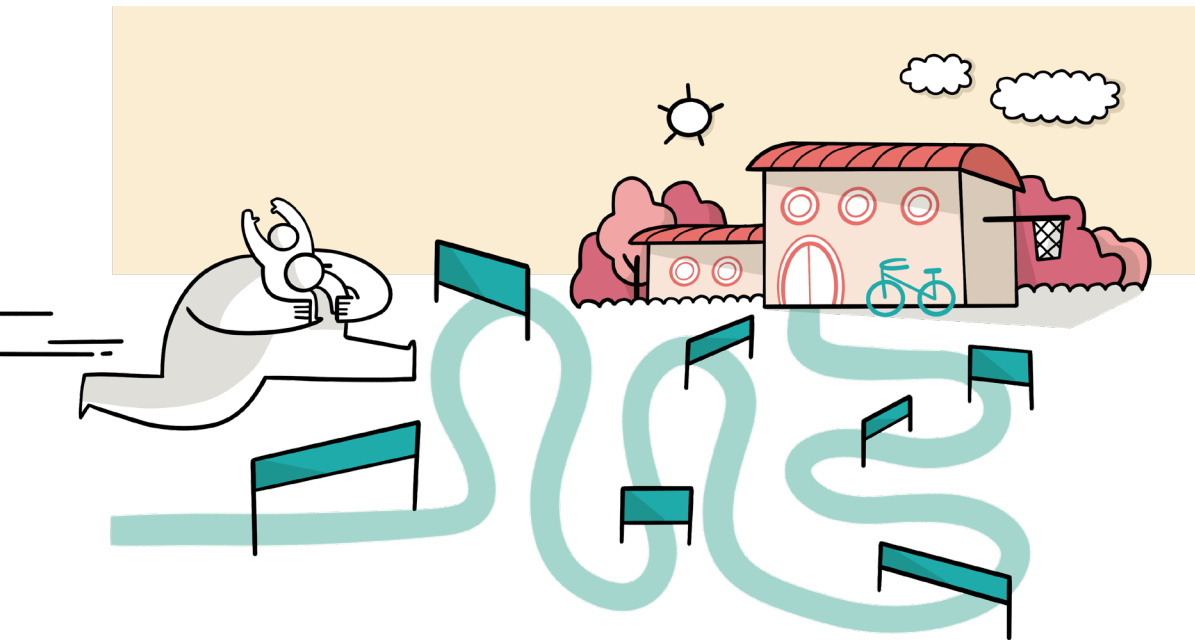
Has your programme made a study on legal cross-border obstacles in your programme area?

How is your programme implementing ISO 1?

How, in your opinion, could Interreg and *b-solutions* “join forces”?

How do Interreg and *b-solutions* complete each other?

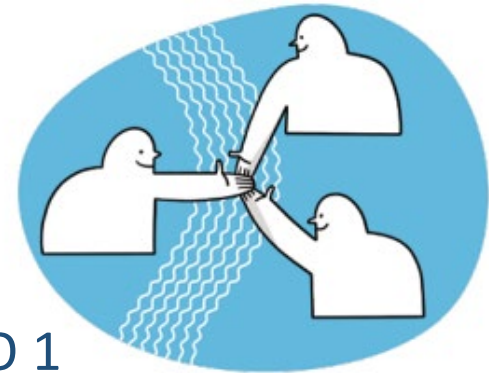
Interreg as the financing instrument for ETC has had an enormous impact on CBC in Europe, BUT **border obstacles persist** and affect many aspects of life in border regions such as:



- **access to public services:** offer of public transport, reimbursement of healthcare costs;
- **access to the labour market:** administrative burdens, slow recognition, limitation to working remotely;
- **management of common resources or natural areas** (parks, rivers, etc.): lack of governance, incompatible regulations on the protection of biodiversity or on the sharing of energy.

b-solutions for Interreg

- It increases the effectiveness of Interreg:
providing expert support analysis to follow up on the implementation of Interreg projects that stalled because of legal and/or administrative obstacles
- It expands the potential of Interreg:
Offering a first step towards approaching legal and administrative obstacles to cross-border cooperation which can be developed as Interreg projects under ISO 1
- It supports regional development and promotes cooperation:
removing 1/5 of border obstacles could lead to GDP +2% in border regions and 1 million new jobs and promoting European integration



A comprehensive toolbox to tackle border obstacles and build Europe together

Bilateral treaties (e.g. Aachen, Barcelona...)

Multilateral framework (Benelux)

Ad-hoc bilateral agreements

Interreg funding

EGTC

b-solutions

Other mechanisms under EU law?





Cross-border Public Services



OBSTACLES

LEGAL

- Regional and local levels do not have legislative competence to set up or operate services
- Laws do not provide for automatic recognition of foreign diplomas of service professionals
- The presence of different national rules that regulate services
- Technical standards/requirements for the functioning of services are regulated differently
- Laws regulating the provision of services do not take into account the cross-border dimension
- Conflicting transposition of EU Law in cross-border regions

OTHER

- Lengthy diploma recognition procedures
- Absence of joint administrative mechanisms that facilitate the operation of services
- Lack of knowledge of border stakeholders about facilitative legal frameworks regulating certain services
- Different approaches to data collection as a preliminary step towards implementing public services
- Presence of many actors with varying levels of administrative competence in certain fields



Green

OBSTACLES

LEGAL

- The joint establishment and management of infrastructure
- Diverging national rules on permits to design and build infrastructure
- Inconsistent legal competence on spatial planning
- Different regulations on necessary technical requirements
- The lack of revision of the law
- The lack of specific provisions considering the cross-border dimension
- The lack of EU-wide standardised norms

ADMINISTRATIVE

- Different spatial dataset references for mapping and collecting data
- Different technical standards for environmental management criteria
- The absence of an ad-hoc cross-border structure or entity in charge for the coordination of the natural site
- The absence of a joint mechanism to regulate the exchange of data



Employment and Education



OBSTACLES

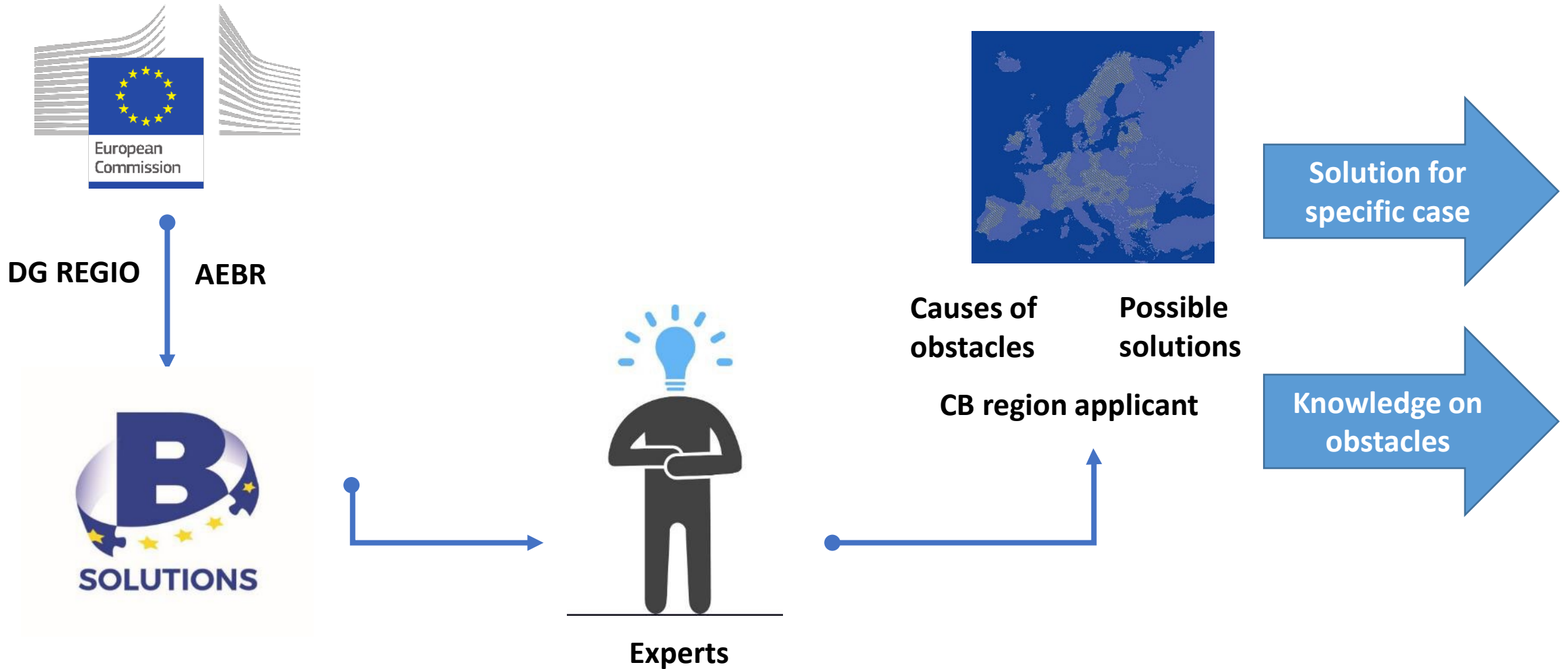
LEGAL

- The EU framework contains general provisions, leaving room for interpretation
- The provisions in place are not adapted to the complexity of cross-border contexts
- National provisions on contracting, taxation and financing are not aligned
- The regulations in place do not provide for automatic recognition of diplomas/certificates
- The provisions regulating new fields/conditions of work and life are insufficient or outdated

OTHER

- The presence of complex/unclear bureaucratic procedures
- The absence of joint administrative mechanisms
- The existence of different protocols and administrative approaches
- The lack of knowledge of the already facilitative nature of the framework(s) in place

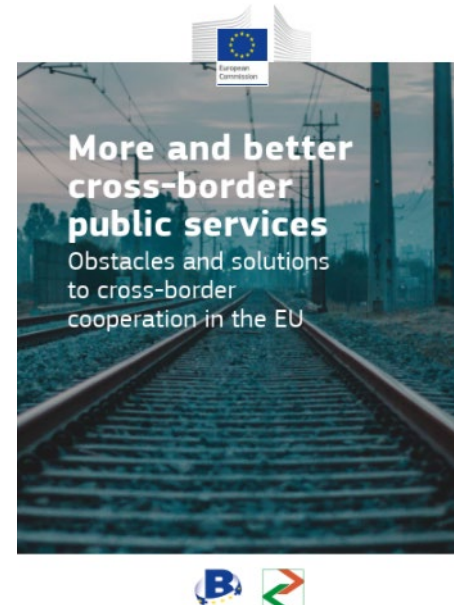
b-solutions: Solving Cross-Border Obstacles



Outputs: 4 calls for proposals (2018-2021) leading to 90 cases showcased in:

- 2 compendiums of reports
- 3 thematic booklets
- 1 illustrated storytelling booklet

Accessible at: <https://www.b-solutionsproject.com/library>



New outputs: 2 calls for proposals (2022-2023) leading to 41 cases showcased in:

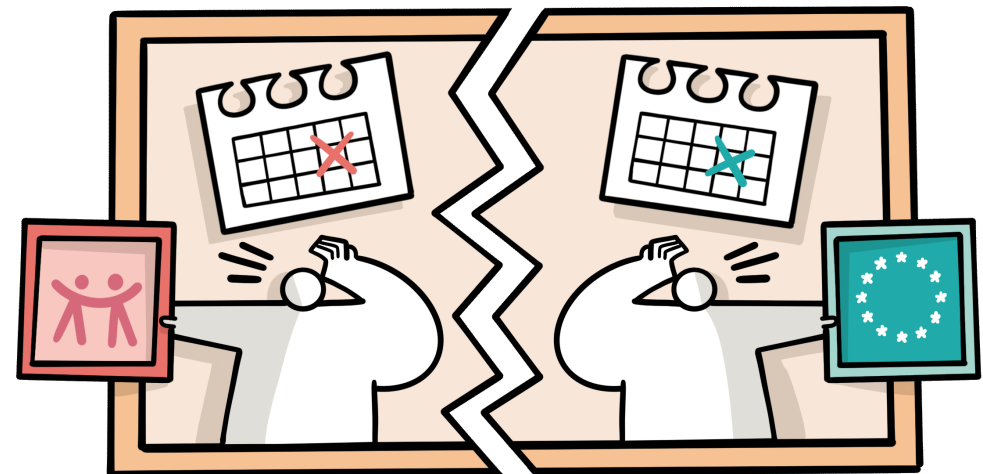
- 1 new compendium of reports
- 1 illustrated storytelling booklet

Soon Accessible at: <https://www.b-solutionsproject.com/library>



What have we learned so far?

- Legal and administrative obstacles are many and different, as are their root causes
- There are no off-the-shelf solutions! Solutions must be tailored to the specificities of the territories involved – every region, every country is different
- Solutions can involve several options:
 - Change in legal frameworks
 - Harmonise administrative practices
 - Use of complementary tools such as INTERREG, EGTC
- It is important to have:
 - Deep analysis
 - Political commitment
 - Information sharing
 - Multi-level engagement
 - Capacity building





“There are two major outcomes: one, for the specific border, we get the solution for the specific case – and this may be a game-changer. Secondly, from a macro-perspective, looking at the whole Europe, we get knowledge on obstacles – and this helps us shape policies”

Ricardo Ferreira, European Commission

Questions:

Can Interreg actors benefit from *b-solutions*?

What would your programme need to address legal and administrative obstacles to cross-border cooperation?

And... what do you think about the proposal for a 'Regulation on Facilitating Cross-Border Solutions'?

Share the obstacle you face: make of a specific problem a European solution!

Thank you!

<https://www.b-solutionsproject.com/>

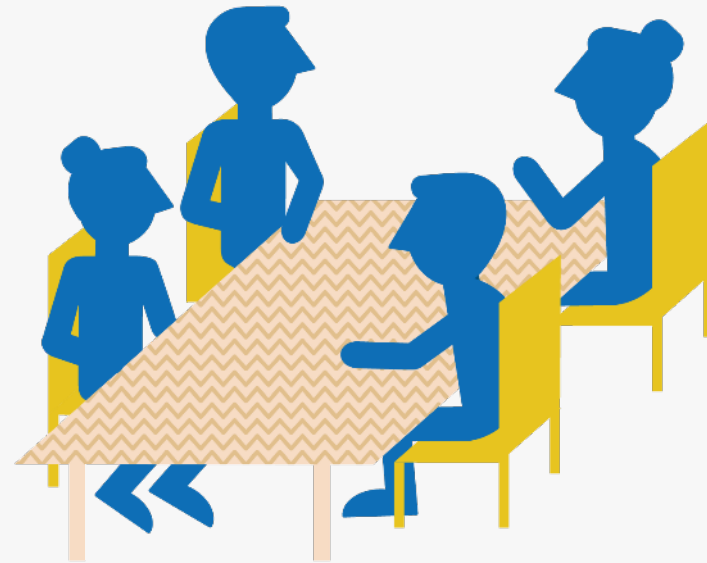
Contact us

Email: b-solutions@aebr.eu

Telephone: +49 176 42 090 666

Book a slot for an individual call: <https://calendly.com/b-solutionsaebr/30min>

Floor is open for discussion



Thank you for being here!

Your opinion matters to us.

Please take a few minutes to provide us with feedback to help us improve our services.

Log into the **Whova app** and tell us what you think in the **session Q&A, from 1 (bad) to 5 (amazing)**

Please check which session you are in!

You can also talk to us at the Conference Support stand in the networking area.



Cooperation works

All materials will be available on:

[Interact / Events / Interreg Knowledge Fair \(5-7 March 2024\)](#)