

Interreg “a smarter Europe” Network Meeting



15 December 2025

Online (Teams)





Interreg Smarter Europe (PO1) Network Meeting

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Outline

Join us for an engaging online meeting exploring the bridge between Interreg and EU-wide innovation funding. This session brings together European Commission representatives, funding agency experts, and successful project practitioners to discuss pathways for scaling interregional innovation for SMEs across Europe.

The morning will feature presentations from EISMEA on the i3 instrument, followed by a real-world case study from BALTIC MUPPETS on their journey from Interreg to i3 funding. After a comfort break, we'll dive into community updates with insights from DG REGIO on the current programming period and PO1 developments in the upcoming MFF proposal. The Interact team will wrap up 2025 achievements and present the proposed 2026 workplan, opening the floor for your feedback and input

Objectives

The meeting aims to:

- **Introduce the i3 instrument** as a strategic funding opportunity for Interreg projects ready to scale beyond their regions, with practical guidance on application processes and eligibility criteria;
- **Learn from practice** through a case study, demonstrating how European territorial cooperation projects can successfully transition to EU-wide innovation initiatives;
- **Foster peer exchange**, enabling direct dialogue with speakers and facilitating knowledge sharing among Interreg programme representatives and project partners.

Registrations

We welcome registrations from Interreg programme and project representatives, who are working on Policy Objective 1 (a smarter Europe) and from anybody interested in finding out more about the support that Cohesion Policy offers to innovation in SMEs, within and outside Interreg.



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Agenda

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| 10:00 – 10:05 | Check-in to virtual meeting room and technical settings |
| 10:05 – 10:10 | Introduction to the meeting
<i>Interact</i> |
| 10:10 – 10:30 | Support to interregional innovation projects – i3 instrument
<i>Kirill DIMANOPOULOS – European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA)</i> |
| 10:30 – 10:45 | BALTIC MUPPETS – from Interreg to i3 instrument
<i>Angela SCHULZ-ZEHDEN, CEO of SUBMARINER Network for Blue Growth</i> |
| 10:45 – 11:00 | Q&A with the guest speakers |
| 11:00 – 11:15 | Comfort break |
| 11:15 – 12:00 | Interreg Smarter Europe community
<i>Blagovestka RIISER (DG REGIO unit D1) - Insights from the European Commission on the current implementing period and updates on PO1 in the MFF proposal.</i>

<i>Valeria CIBRARIO, Nebojsa NIKOLIC and Guilherme JOHNSTON (Interact):</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- wrap-up of the activities and tools delivered in 2025- preview and feedback on the proposed workplan for 2026 |
| 12.25 – 12.30 | Next steps for the Smarter Europe community
<i>Interact</i> |