Online event

Smart Support - Stronger Projects

Monika Balode, Lamprini Tsoli | Interact | 11.02.2026

Interact

**Co-funded by
the European Union**
Interreg

Warm welcome
Smart Support – Stronger Projects

Take your time to arrive in this online space.

While we're gathering, feel free to:

Add your name and organisation in the participant window

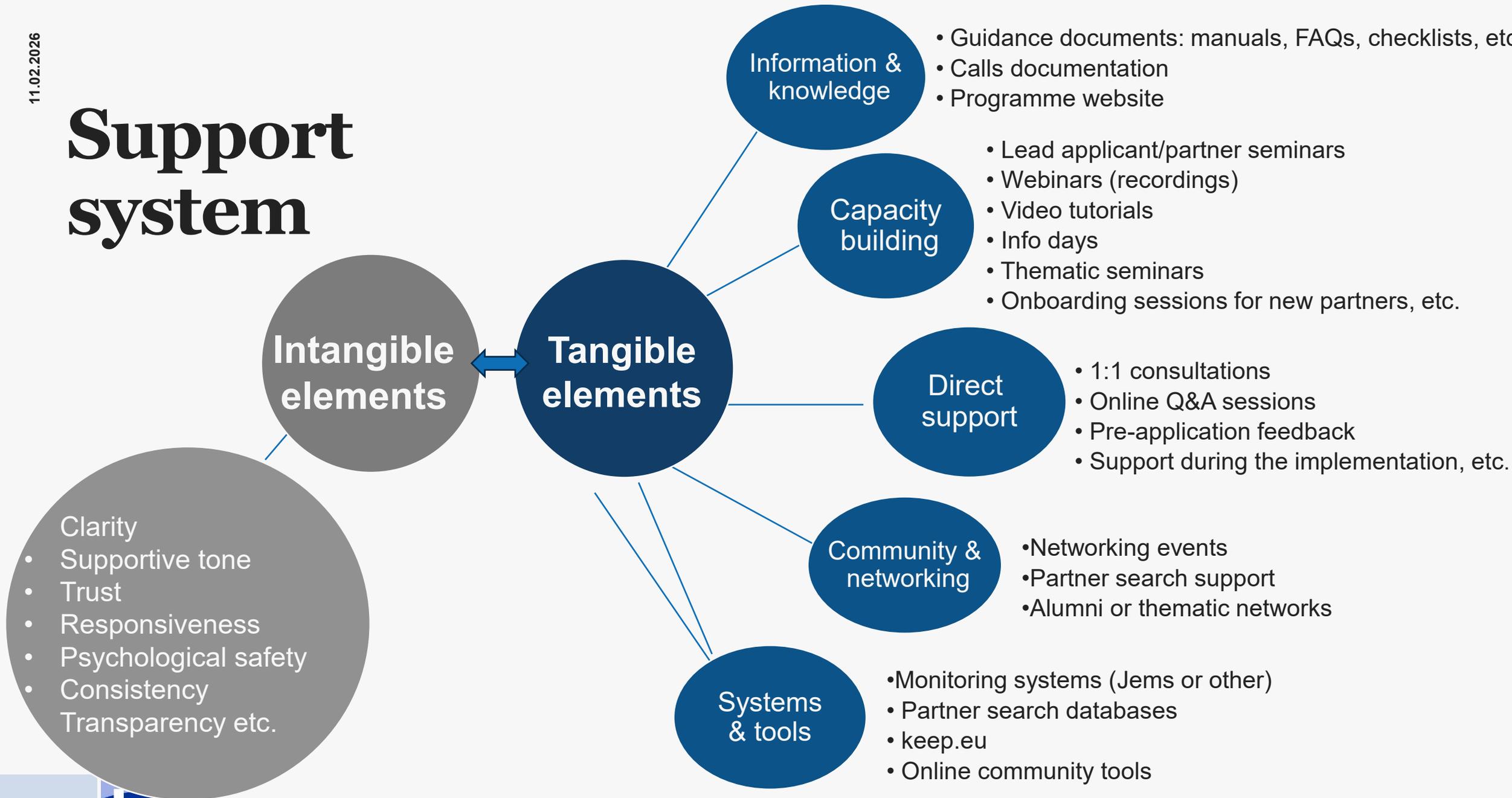Check your camera and microphone

Grab a coffee or tea

Take a moment to write down anything on your mind – a task, an email, or concern – then give yourself permission to fully enjoy this event!

set of services, tools, processes, and practices that enable stakeholders to understand the programme, to prepare quality applications, to implement projects effectively, and to be supported throughout the lifecycle.

Support system

Support system

Intangible elements

Tangible elements

- Clarity
- Supportive tone
- Trust
- Responsiveness
- Psychological safety
- Consistency
- Transparency etc.

Information & knowledge
- Guidance documents: manuals, FAQs, checklists, etc
- Calls documentation
- Programme website

Capacity building
- Lead applicant/partner seminars
- Webinars (recordings)
- Video tutorials
- Info days
- Thematic seminars
- Onboarding sessions for new partners, etc.

Direct support
- 1:1 consultations
- Online Q&A sessions
- Pre-application feedback
- Support during the implementation, etc.

Community & networking
- Networking events
- Partner search support
- Alumni or thematic networks

Systems & tools
- Monitoring systems (Jems or other)
- Partner search databases
- keep.eu
- Online community tools

Agenda

09.00 – 9.30	9.30 – 10.30	10.30 – 10.40	10.40 – 11.40	11.40. – 11.55
Welcome and Introduction	**Programme snapshots – what works in practice and what are the challenges?**	**Comfort break**	**Your voice in action: a collaborative space for shared learning**	**Wrap up**

Break

Stretch

Grab tea/coffee

From knowledge to behaviour change

From knowledge to behaviour change

Information-knowledge gap

Having the **right amount of information at the right time**

Skills

Something is accomplished when the **learner uses the information**

Can learner use it just hearing once during the event or reading in guidance document?

Motivation

People are rarely unwilling Instead having **competing prorioties, overhealmed, distracted**, not understanding **why** it is important, etc.

Behaviour change

We can either lower or raise the effort required to act by design of our support system.

We cannot control individual choice but we can influence behaviour through designing support systems.

Challenges – your say

New ideas for events

Tools, skills and structures for well developed webinars
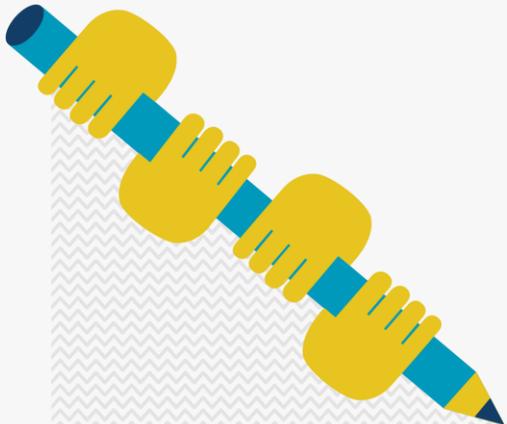
How to use AI

How to use more tailored support from AI

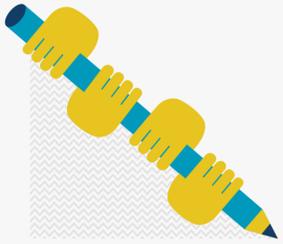Integrating AI functions within the support system for the partners

Tender procedures

Visibility requirements and overly complicated procedures

SCOs and indicator reporting

Eligibility rules. Modifications. Public procurements.

Challenges – your say

guides are available, but easier to write a question

```
a short coincise way delivering
the huge amount of regulations and
expectations
```

Several documents

with a lot of information

but do not read

```
to read them all documentation before
```

huge differences in expertise levels of applicants and partners

```
Addressing very different needs while still providing
quality support
```

hard to convey why quality matters

finding balance between supervision and giving PPs change to reach out full potential which could not be predicted then applying for funds.

engage project, motivate

set and improve the way they impact policymakers and other stakeholders

encourage them to think beyond the typical outputs

Brain friendly learning: challenges and opportunities

- Cognitive load theory $\rightarrow$ keep it short and simple

- Forgetting curve $\rightarrow$ help to remember

- Attention span $\rightarrow$ capture and retain attention

- Emotions and environm. $\rightarrow$ motivate and establish trust

how we design support to work with brain not against it

Cognitive load theory

✓ **Less is more**

Simpler support

✓ Some efforts are unavoidable (rules are complex)

✓ Some efforts help learning (practising discussing, applying)

- **reduce extra**
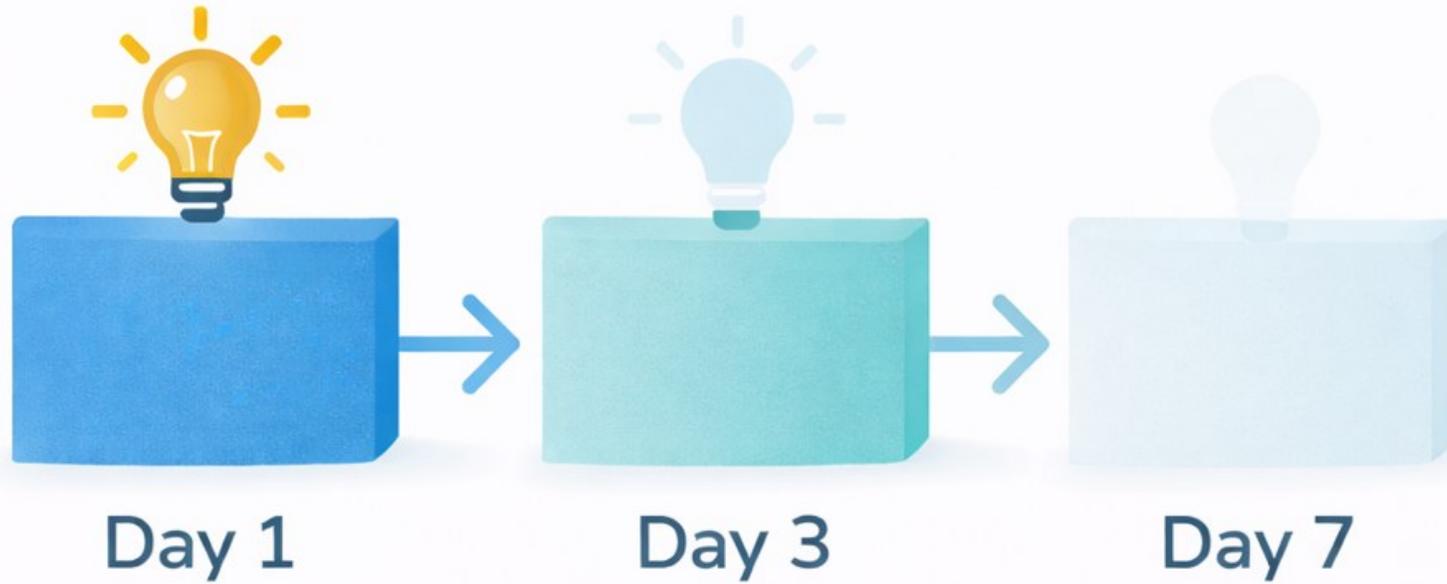- **accept complexity**
- **focus on what helps**

Ebinghaus's Forgetting Curve

We forget up to **70–80% of new information within a week** without practice and any other additional measures to increase retention

We forget most information quickly

Without use or practice

Day 1   Day 3   Day 7

Attention is limited

Drops after 10–15 min in person

Even sooner online

Emotions and environment

Safety and connection

⟶ Improve learning

Stress

⟶ reduce learning

Implication 1

Cognitive load
Less is more

Right information at the right time

Chuncking

For example, presentation: per slide max 3-5 points, not more than 30-40 words, new concepts per session 5-7 max (4?), repeat key ideas, design the practice and application etc.

Implication 2

Forgetting curve
Learning journey to help to remember

- **Spacing:** pre event material, event, follow up meeting, reminder before the reporting, short recap after longer period
- **Repetition:** recap slides, quizzes, reminder emails, checklists, key messages
- **Practice** converts knowledge into skills: analyse an example, simulate a real task, provide a problem solving ase (**use it or lose it**)

Implication 3

Attention
Designing for attention

- Help to connect and recognise that distractions are normal

- Interaction helps to reset the focus (various methods, break out rooms online)

- No tech in the room for in person

- Physical movements, game elements, energisers, etc.

Breakout groups: 20 min.

Exchange shortly
How does your support system work today: knowledge vs skills and motivation

Generate
2-3 concrete ideas how to improve the support (written guidance/events etc.)

ThePhoto by PhotoAuthor is licensed under CCYYSA.

Capture
Choose a note-taker
Share results in chat

From reflection to action

Schedule a short follow-up meeting after the event

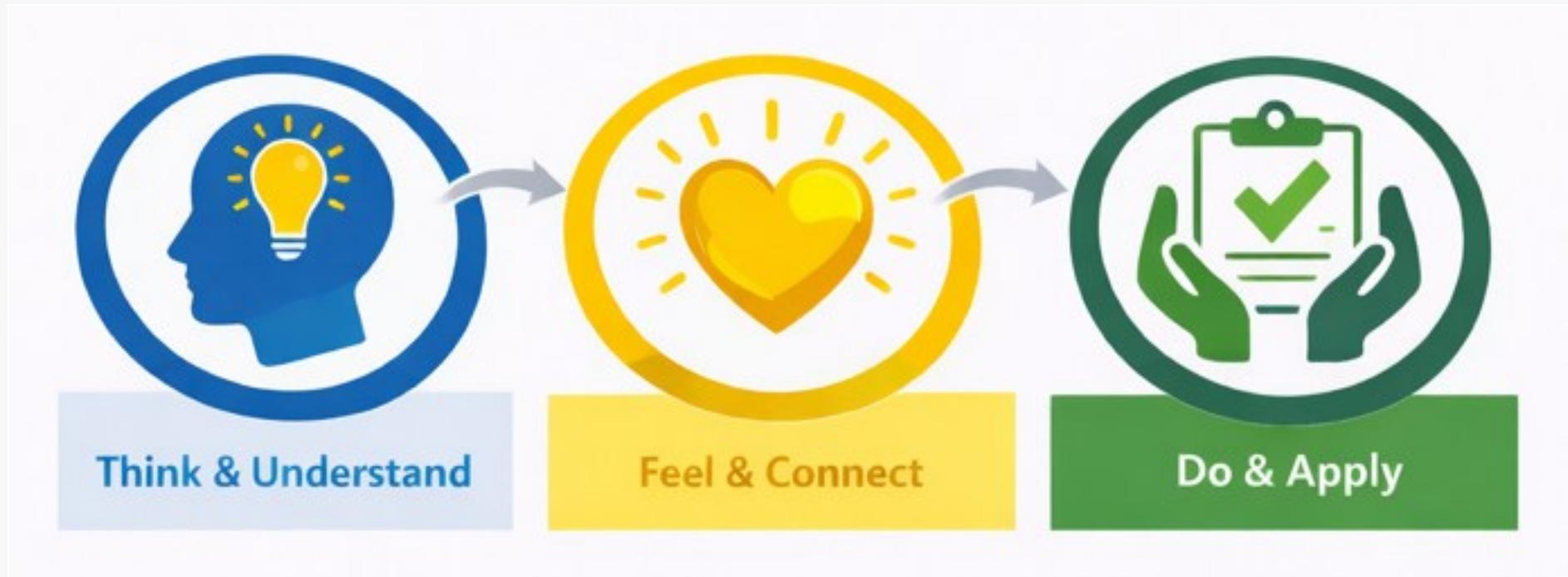Block 30 minutes in your calendar to come back to your idea

Share takeaways with colleagues

Have a "responsibility buddy" to check in with each other

Head, Heart and Hands principle:
engage mind, emotions and action

Soft skills are not soft –
they hold cooperation together

11.02.2026

ACADEMY 2026

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Summer break	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Interreg Programme Management: Strategic Perspectives	9.1.										
Video Making in Interreg		2.2.									
Simplified Cost Options: Practitioners		4.2.									
Interreg Evaluation: Foundations		25.2.									
Interreg Management Verifications			2.3.								
Interreg Project Management			6.3.								
Generative AI for Interreg Communication				16.4.							
Storytelling in Interreg				20.4.							
Fundamentals of Programme Communication						15.6.					
Plain Language for Interreg - an Introduction									19.10.		
Interreg Evaluation: Practitioners										5.11.	
Programme set-up and start-up										6.11.	
Interreg Project Assessment, Monitoring and Verification										16.11.	

Please note | All trainings are maximum 20 hours over several weeks
This is the provisional plan for the calendar year 2026, check the latest news on Academy.Interact.eu

Photo by Olia Danilevich, Pexels

Soft skills in practice: join our pilot event

Purpose
To train soft skills, such as active listening, cultural awareness, plain language, clear communication, public speaking and facilitation, to become better at our daily work.

Target group
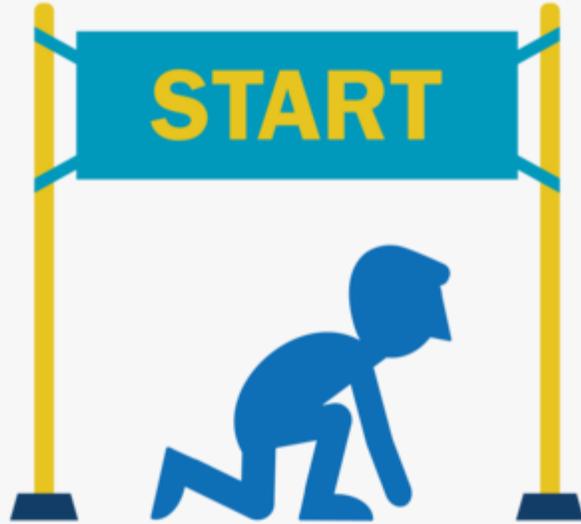Interreg programme and project managers, including those with content and finance roles.

Dates
20-21 May 2026

Location
Copenhagen, DK or Malmö, SE (tbc)

More information: here

New in Interreg: What can Interact do for you?

Purpose

An online event designed for newcomers to Interreg, offering an introduction to the Tools, Services and Learning Opportunities Interact provides. During the event, we will tell you about our Tools and Services available to you and your projects.

Target group

This event is designed for programme staff who are new to Interreg, and who want to learn about Interact's tools, services and learning opportunities.
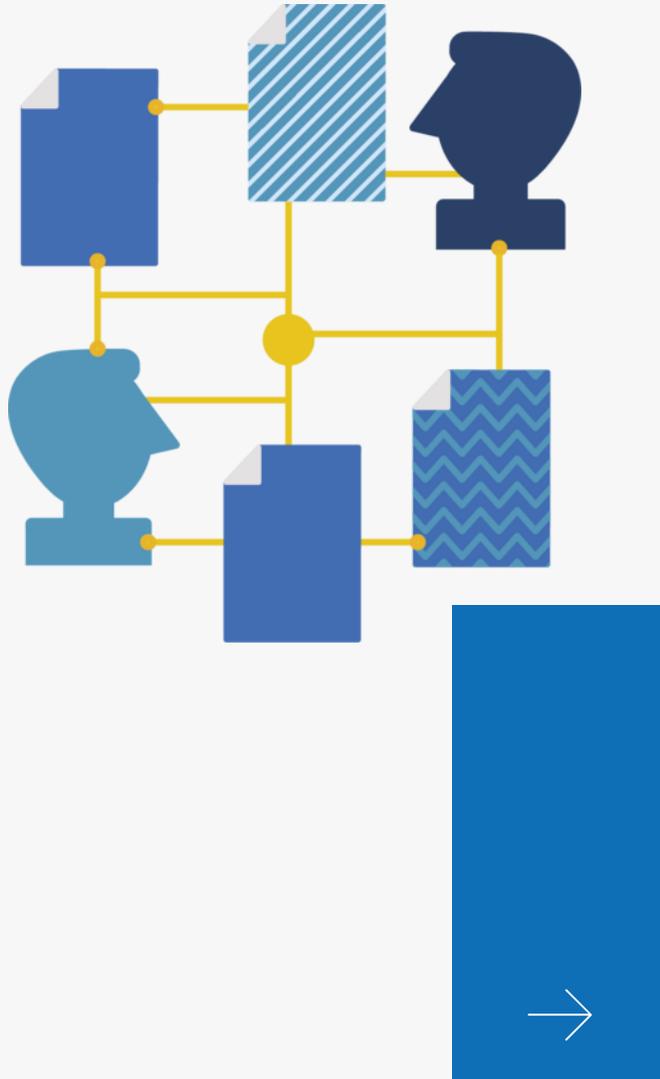
Dates

20 February 2026, 09:30 – 11:00

Location

Online

Performance in progress: the P-BA journey so far and what's next

Purpose
To share progress on performance-based approaches and reflect on lessons learned so far.
To outline next steps and invite programmes to engage and contribute going forward..

Target group

This webinar is open to all colleagues working for Interreg programmes, interested in the P-BA topic.

Dates
20 February 2026, 09:30 – 11:00

Location
Online

MONITORING

Navigating project monitoring: practices, challenges and new perspectives

Purpose

Two-day workshop on project monitoring and reporting, managing project changes, identifying and mitigating risks. We will explore emerging trends that are shaping project management today. We will have several sessions dedicated to trust-building and effective conflict management, both essential in our daily work (lead by external expert Marta Karlsone)

Target group

Experienced Interreg programme and project managers

Dates

17-18 March 2026

Location

Helsinki, Finland

More information: here

Cooperation works

All materials will be available on:
Interact.eu/Library

Want to discuss it? **Join our MS Teams environment!**
Portal.Interact.eu | Programme and Project Management

Your opinion matters to us

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

Thank you

Small changes in how we support people can lead to big changes in what they are able to achieve.

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Disclaimer

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