



Soft skills in practice

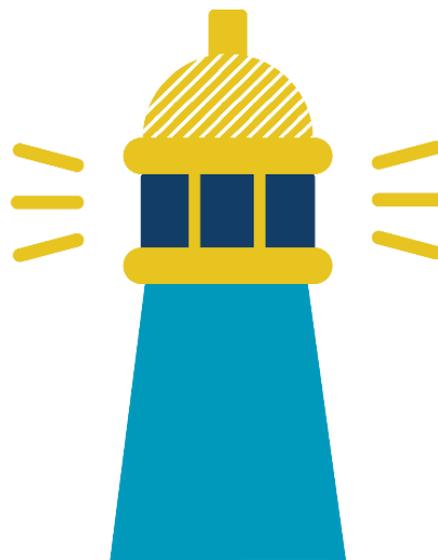


20-21 May 2026

Soft skills in practice: How people work, communicate, and collaborate in Interreg

Danish Architecture Center

Bryghuspladsen 10, 1473 Copenhagen, Denmark





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Outline

Successful cooperation relies on knowledge and people. Interreg professionals are skilled managers. While hard skills matter, in Interreg soft skills are even more important. Soft skills are not “optional extras”; they are the foundation of effective cooperation. Soft skills are how we interact and communicate clearly, work in teams, handle conflicts and remain respectful to one another. They help us lead processes and tackle challenges effectively. They build trust and help us navigate complex, multicultural contexts.

Interact supports Interreg programmes in building their capacity for cooperation, including developing soft skills. In this event, we will focus on *communication as a key skill for better cooperation between us*.

“Strong relationships are based on trust and communication. But if there is no communication, there can be no trust” - Simon Sinek.

We invite you to join us, and together we will look at how we can better human-to-human interaction in the Interreg context. The event invites participants to share their experiences and discuss different ways to handle tough situations. It will provide an opportunity for mutual learning and training in soft skills.

Objective

The goal of this pilot event is to help Interreg practitioners to practise and improve their communication skills in their daily work. Participants will explore how their communication style influences trust, collaboration and problem-solving. The event creates a safe space to test new approaches, learn from peers and reflect on personal communication habits. By the end of the event, participants will gain practical ideas that they can use in their daily communication.



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Day One

Wednesday, 20 May 2026

09.00 – 09.30

Registration and welcome coffee/tea

09.30 – 10.00

Welcome and introduction

Baiba Liepa, Interact

10.00 – 11.00

Setting the ground: Why communication fails and how trust breaks down

Jon Bergthorsson and Nebojsa Nikolic, Interact

Objective of the session: To explore why effective communication is essential, why it isn't always easy, and why it plays such a key role in Interreg cooperation.

11.00 – 11.15

Coffee/tea break

11.15 – 12.45

How I show up in conversations: active listening and feedback

Baiba Liepa, Interact

Objective of the session: To practice active listening and feedback in ways that deepen understanding, build trust, and support better collaboration with peers.

Soft skills: active listening, giving and receiving feedback, asking better questions, awareness of self and context.

12.45 – 14.00

Lunch break

14.00 – 15.30

How do I communicate across cultures: respect, clarity, and awareness

Satu Hietanen, Interact

Objective of the session: To gain more insight into communicating across cultures by exploring how clarity, respect, and self-awareness support understanding and trust.

Soft skills: cultural awareness and sensitivity, managing assumptions and unconscious bias, respectful communication in a multicultural environment, awareness of self and context.

15.30 – 15.45

Coffee/tea break

15.45 – 16.45

When things don't land: addressing misunderstandings early



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Baiba Liepa and Jon Bergthorsson, Interact

Objective of the session: To learn how to recognise and address misunderstandings early, before they affect trust and collaboration.

Soft skills: active listening for clarification, respectful inquiry and response, addressing misunderstandings, awareness of self and context.

16.45 – 17.15

What does this change in my daily work: reflection and integration

Baiba Liepa, Interact

Day Two

Thursday, 21 May 2026

08.00 – 08.45

Registration and welcome coffee/tea

08.45 – 09.00

Welcome, reflection and introduction

Baiba Liepa, Interact

09.00 – 11.00

How I communicate clearly with others: respect and clarity

Linda Ring, Interact

Objective of the session: To strengthen clear and respectful communication, with a focus on plain language in a multicultural working environment.

Soft skills: plain language, clear and structured communication, communicating with intention and in a multicultural environment, awareness of self, audience and context.

11.00 – 11.15

Coffee/tea break

11.15 – 13.15

Confidence in speaking: public speaking and presentation

Nebojsa Nikolic, Interact

Objective of the session: To strengthen confidence in public speaking by practising clear, engaging presentations. To learn how to manage emotions and nerves.



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Soft skills: public speaking, clear and structured presentation, communicating with clarity and intention, managing nerves and emotions, awareness of self, audience and context.

13.15 – 14.30

Lunch break

14.30 – 16.15

Meetings that work: purpose, structure and confident facilitation

Jon Bergthorsson, Interact

Objective of the session: To strengthen facilitation skills that support purposeful and engaging meetings.

Soft skills: facilitation, meeting design, leading the group, clear and respectful communication, awareness of self, audience and context.

16.15 – 17.00

From learning to action: wrapping up the event

Baiba Liepa, Satu Hietanen, Linda Ring, Nebojsa Nikolic, and Jon Bergthorsson, Interact