



## ***From barriers to bridges: engaging SMEs and the private sector in Interreg***

**11 May 2026, 10:00am CET**

Teams Link: [Here](#)

Meeting ID: 315 266 728 343 46

Passcode: yx6fh623

The European private sector, made up mainly of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) is an engine of innovation, economic resilience, and a key actor of the green and digital transitions across European regions. The active participation of the private sector in Interreg projects strengthens the relevance, sustainability, and real-world impact of cooperation results. Many programmes have already demonstrated this successfully.

At the same time, although many challenges have been removed over the years, obstacles persist. Administrative complexity, co-financing barriers, public procurement and State aid rules, difficulties in finding suitable cross-border or transnational partners are repeatedly highlighted by programmes and stakeholders. Strengthening private sector and SME involvement is therefore both a strategic opportunity and a shared need across the Interreg community. This webinar aims at enhancing the debate on the topic as the need to engage with the private sector grows now and particularly beyond 2027.

### **Monday, 11 May 2026**

**10.00 – 10.10**

#### **Welcome and Introduction**

*Guilherme Johnston - Interact*

**10.10 – 10.25**

#### **Setting the scene: why private sector engagement matters**

*Raoul van Lennep - EIT Urban Mobility*

**10.25 – 10.40**

#### **Presentation of ongoing Interact work on private sector engagement – Overcoming Challenges Overtime**

*Przemyslaw Kniaziuk - Interact*

**10.40 – 11.30**

#### **Interactive debate – What is already working? What are the main challenges? Inputs from Interreg programmes and beneficiaries**

*Programme Representative from North-West Europe*

*Project representative from Impact4Mar Atlantic Area*

*Representative from STIPP Mechanism Meuse-Rhine tbc*

**11.30 – 11.40**

#### **Introducing Interreg's Private Sector Engagement Roadshow**

*Valeria Cibrario and Guilherme Johnston – Interact*

**11.40 – 12.00**

#### **Meeting closing and next steps**