Arbeitsgemeinschaft Europäischer Grenzregionen (AGEG)
Asociación de Regiones Fronterizas Europeas (ARFE)
Association des régions frontalières européennes (ARFE)
Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)
Comunità di lavoro delle regioni europee di confine (AGEG)
Europæiske grænseregioners Arbejdsfællesskap (AGEG)
Werkgemeenschap van Europese grensgebieden (WVEG)
Associação das Regiões Fronteiriças Europeias (ARFE)
Σύνδεσμος Ευρωπαϊκών Συνοριακών Περιφερειών (ΣΕΣΠ)
Stowarzyszenie Europejskich Regionów Granicznych (SERG)
Ассоциация Европейских Приграничных Регионов (АЕПР)
Európai Határ Menti Régiók Szövetsége (EHMRS)
Associació de les Regions Frontereres Europees (ARFE)

The b-solutions initiative, its genealogy, activities and results so far

Art of Co-operation Conference

Budapest, 14th November, 2024

Caitriona Mullan, AEBR Cross-Border Co-operation Expert/Advisor for B-Solutions project

Association of European Border Regions (AEBR/ARFE/AGEG)

B-Solutions – What and How?

- Longitudinal initiative funded by DG REGIO Border Focal Point and delivered by Association of European Border Regions; identification – mitigation (if you can't name it you can't manage it);
- Has delivered:

a) An evidence base of solutions for legal and administrative obstacles to cross-border co-operation, mobility, harmonisation (making the EU work to its fullest extent for the greatest number of citizens) and

b) Softspace facilitation and multilevel brokerage/governance processes, increased capacity for multilevel development cooperation and optimising potential of border regions for Member States; softspace working delivers hard results e.g cross-border operational protocols, legislative amendments, regulatory harmonisation to facilitate growth; **offering a new space for national government stakeholders to work on obstacles that cannot be conceptualised or solved without multilevel working; innovation in public service;**

c) Small innovations to release bigger potential; whole systems solutions to embrace complexity;

- Geneaology: EUROPEAN COMMISSION Brussels, 20.9.2017 COM(2017) 534 final COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT Boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions com_boosting_borders.pdf
- Commitment and pioneering mindset – DG REGIO and AEBR

Border Regions- Living Labs of European Integration

- **July 2021 – COMMISSION Brussels, 14.7.2021 COM(2021) 393 final REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS EU Border Regions: Living labs of European integration**
- Recognised the role of EU Border Regions in delivering the full impact of the European project for all citizens;
- Border regions – places of diversity, intersectional identify, flexibility, creativity, places where innovation can grow- new solutions to problems of service delivery, new markets, new l
- i: Resilience through deeper institutional cooperation
- ii: More and better cross-border public services
- iii. Vibrant cross-border labour market
- iv. Border regions for the European Green Deal
- Functional areas which cross jurisdictional boundaries – historical cohesion, cultural affinities and diversities, where the next country is your locale
- Border Regions- how they function = a microcosm of how Europe can work now and in the future
- REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION

B-Solutions as a tool for regional development cooperation (and EU integration)

While there are many EU level frameworks, these are not always transposed by Member States in a way which works for border regions. The EU needs the solutions that border regions can offer, in order to function to its full potential.

B- Solutions offers the following to border regions and their local, regional and national Governments:

With Objective 1 (Expert case study – the first step):

- Evidence-based solutions for cross-border obstacles of a legal and/or administrative nature;

With Objective 2 (implementation, capacity building for embedding solutions, building trust and working relationships which must underlie successful development cooperation):

- Expert support to host organisation – facilitation, multilevel stakeholder brokerage and buy-in, key enabling products e.g. draft legal text, protocols for co-operation- and a facilitated space to build the necessary relationships for the solution to take hold;
- Support and engagement from AEBR – amplification of policy issues, scaling-up of issues, connection with other border regions and institutional stakeholders- added value; we follow the pathway with you towards a solution.

b-solutions 3.0: Solving Border Obstacles to Facilitate Cooperation

European Commission

DG REGIO

AEBR

SOLUTIONS

Experts

Causes of obstacles

Possible solutions

CB region applicant

Solution for specific case

Knowledge on obstacles

Results

- 165 cases analysed (90 between 2018-2021 and 75 between 2022-2024)
- 4 compendiums of reports
- 3 thematic booklets
- 2 illustrated storytelling booklet

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

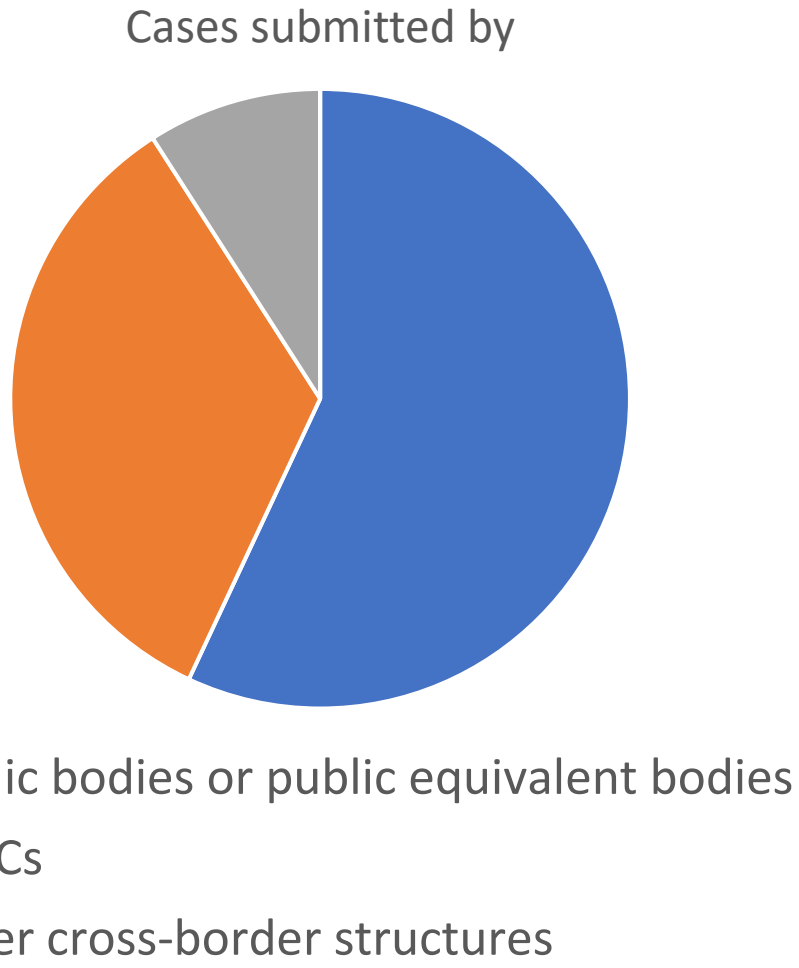
For what purpose? Sectors impacted by B-Solutions (what border regions need is what the EU needs)

- Cross-border trade, investment & SME development; rural and urban economic ecosystems;
- Cross-border place-based leadership for development and growth – combining totality of a border region's assets- release a potential greater than the sum of the parts (strengthen and add to national economies – everyone benefits)
- Cross-border labour markets; cross-border arrangements to support mobility of trade and workers - labour markets: skills, education, taxation, social insurance, healthcare access, transport;
- Cross-border healthcare access and innovation to tackle health inequalities: co-operation on economies of scale, cross-border patient catchments and population health outcomes; EU post-Covid priorities of Mental Health, tackling health inequalities, and creating more resilient health systems- regional territorial ecosystems are key; in border regions this can be even more innovative;
- Cross-border connectivity- physical infrastructure, multimodal transport, energy, digitalisation;
- Cross-border social cohesion- local development systems, urban and rural development networks; information and support for citizens to access their rights; support for vulnerable groups; multilingualism; cultural collaboration;
- Civil society – participative and deliberative democracy; border regions can model democracy in action;
- Institutional relationships – trust, mutual support, shared visions and actions.

Types of applicants

Since 2018, 165 cases :

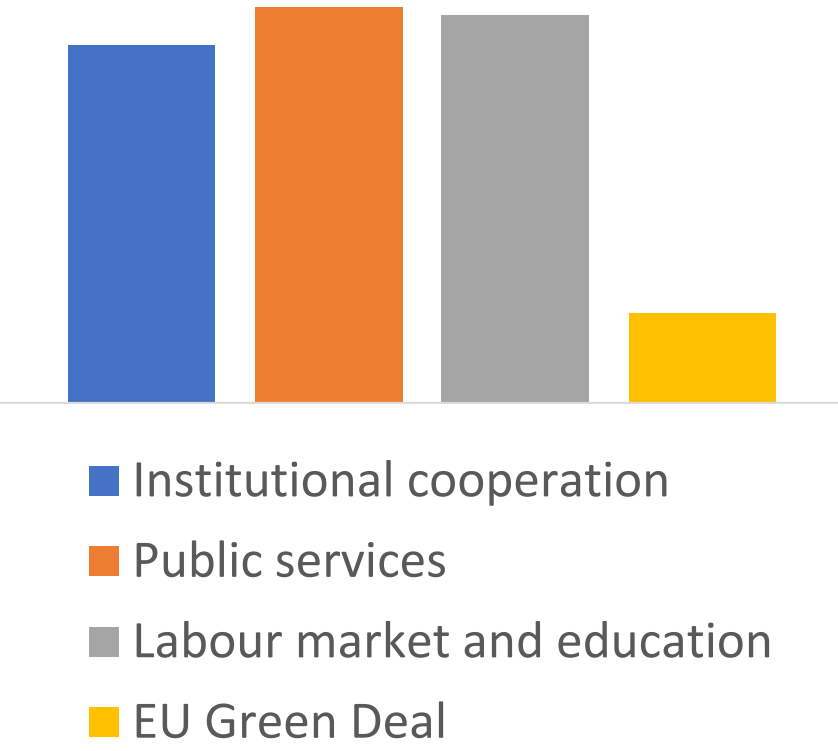
- 94 cases submitted by public bodies or public equivalent bodies
- 56 cases submitted by EGTCs
- 15 cases submitted by other cross-border structures (Euroregions, Eurodistricts, etc.)



Thematic covered

Since 2018, 165 cases :

- 48 cases related to institutional cooperation
- 53 cases related to public services
- 52 cases related to labour market and education
- 12 related to the implementation of European Green Deal



Borders covered

Since 2018, 165 cases :

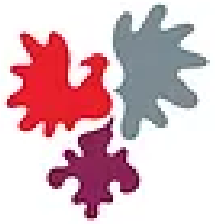
- covering 34 different land and maritime borders;
- between EU-EU countries, EU-IPA countries and EU-EFTA countries.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2022 - 2024

17

EGTCs benefitted from *b-solutions*



How B-Solutions influences conditions for EU Cohesion and Integration:

- The daily work of cooperation for integration; a tool for border regions; a tool for transformation and reform of public governance, modelling smart approaches to the lateral issues of integration; deepening cohesion;
- Active subsidiarity- supporting productive dynamics of interaction between regions and national governments; brokering and supporting multilevel communities of practice necessary for European integration that is meaningful and equitable; releasing the full potential of border regions as components of national economies/polities and domains of transnational activity and interaction which EU needs; address social and economic needs on a whole of society model;
- Solution by solution- value-based improvements for a Europe closer to citizens;
- Stability, security, resilience – cooperation builds cohesion builds resilience builds multidimensional human and environmental security; cooperation increases the ability to withstand and transcend shocks;
- Transforming border regions from the scars of history into strong, flexible, interlocked, overlocked seams of the pavilion, strong connective zones = transforming the future and leaving a legacy of choice and opportunity for those generations who have yet to come.

Thank You for your Attention

B-solutions@aebr.eu

For information on B-Solutions Project Opportunities for support to solve cross-border obstacles *call currently open – visit

Home | b-solutionsproject

For further information on AEBR's overall activities visit

www.aebr.eu or email info@aebr.eu