



# S3 Community of Practice

## Kick-off meeting Working Group 4 on Interregional Collaboration

Virtual

8 June 2023

S3 CoP Secretariat

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# 1. Agenda

Time (CET)	Agenda item	Lead
9:00- 9:30	Welcome & round table of participants	Vincent Duchêne (WG leader) and Chair
9:30 – 9:45	Objective, methodology, time line of activities, role of participants	Vincent Duchêne
9:45-10:00	Q&A	All – animated by Vincent Duchêne
10:00-10:30	What is Interregional Cooperation? Main implementation challenges (presentation of the concept note)	Vincent Duchêne
10:30-10:45	<i>Coffee break</i>	
10:45 -11:30	Discussion on implementation challenges	All – Lead by WG Chair
11:30 -11:45	Interactive part: prioritisation of implementation challenges	All - Animated by Vincent Duchêne & Chair
11:45-12:00	Selection of 2 implementation challenges	All - Animated by Vincent Duchêne & Chair
12:00-12:15	Conclusions & next steps	Vincent Duchêne & Chair

## 2. Meeting participants

Role	Surname	Name	Country	Region
<b>WG Leader</b>	Vincent	Duchêne	Belgium	/
<b>Chair</b>	Richard	Tuffs	Belgium	/
<b>Rapporteur</b>	Claire	Nauwelaers	Belgium	/
<b>WG Support</b>	Federico	Bley	Belgium	/
<b>WG Members</b>	Jose Carlos	Caldeira	Portugal	Norte
	Florence	Hennart	Belgium	Wallonia
	Wim	De Kinderen	Netherlands	South Netherlands
	Martina	Marignani	/	ECRN - Catalonia, Drenthe, Emilia Romagna, Flanders, Groningen, Limburg, Lombardy, Mazovia, Saxony-Anhalt, South Holland
	Agatha	Filimon	Romania	North-East Romania
	Valeria	Bandini	Italy	Emilia-Romagna
	Francesca	D'Angelo	Italy	Tuscany
	Lucila	Castro Rovillard	Spain	Extremadura
	Maria	Hili	Malta	Malta
	Philippe	Holstein	France	La Réunion
Katalin	Kovacs	Hungary	Central / South Hungary	
<b>Lead WG on industrial transition</b>	Yari	Borbon	/	/
<b>Lead all S3CoP WG</b>	Susana Elena	Perez	/	/
<b>DG REGIO</b>	Gergana	Stancheva	EU	/

Two WG members were excused:

- Pirita Lindholm (ERRIN)
- Harri Kuusela (Päijät-Häme, Finland).

### 3. Discussion on presentations

Following a round table of introduction, the WG's objective, methodology, timeline of activities, role of participants and the concept note were presented by the WG leader. The core of the meeting consisted in a discussion of the challenges and priorities for inter-regional collaboration by all participants. That discussion was based on the concept note circulated in anticipation of the meeting, as well as on the participants' own prior suggestions, submitted in a questionnaire and summarised at the meeting.

Some of the key concerns raised include:

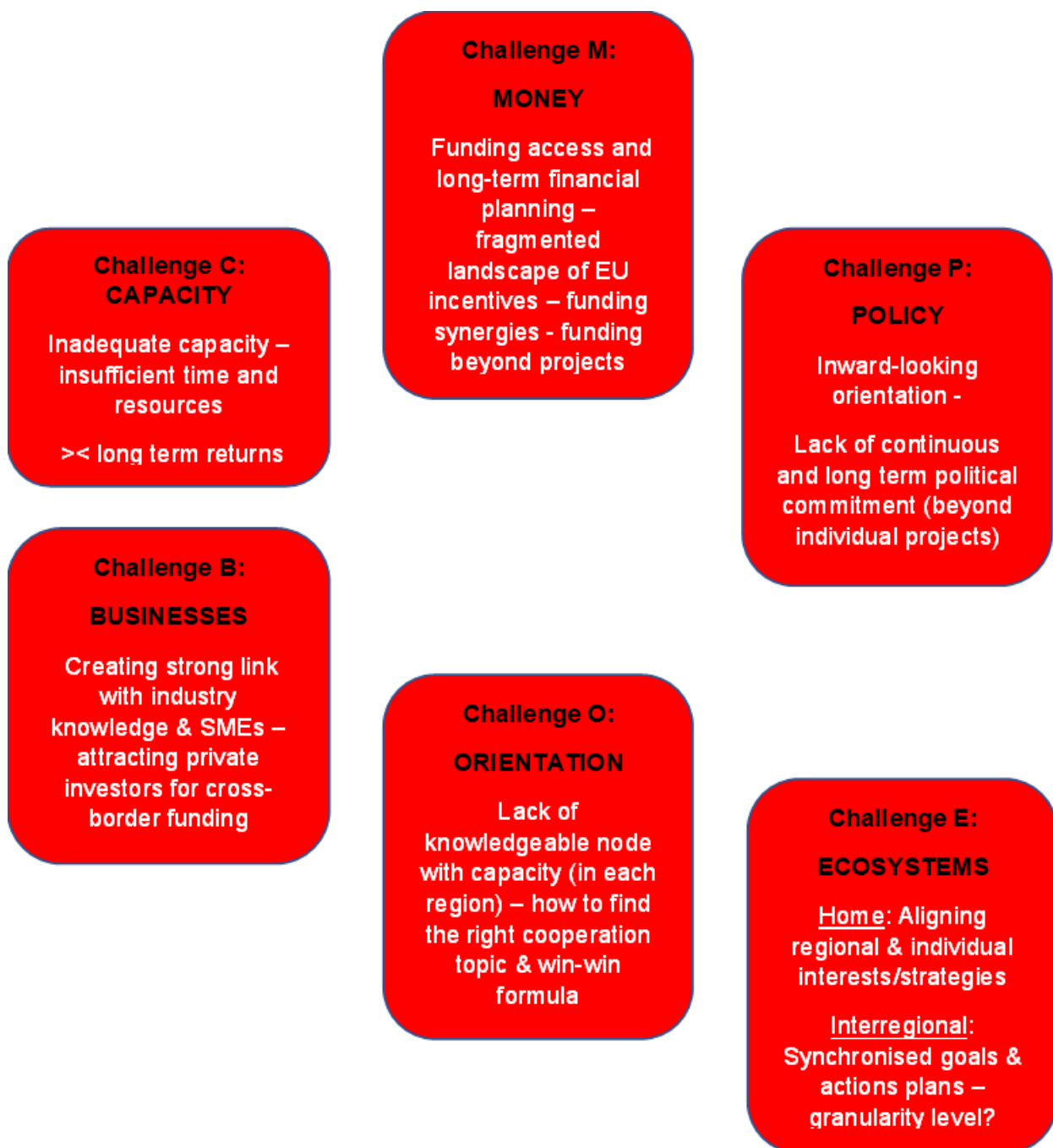
- Regional governments are facing 'lights' as well as 'shadows' in their experiences with implementing interregional collaboration.
- Interregional collaboration is a new area of work in several regions and is hampered by a too inward-looking attitude. Changing mindsets is a necessity to move forward.
- Aligning regional and EU policies is complex and leads to difficulties in designing interregional collaboration.
- The case of Interreg was pointed out as a good opportunity for relatively easy-to-access support – in particular the cross-border programmes - leading to positive experiences. However it was also noted that Interreg might be misused, as a source for 'survival' for domestic organisations, and also that a risk exists to generate a lot of standalone projects lacking synergies and leverage effects towards sustainable collaboration.
- Success depends on the will to go beyond borders right from the strategic planning stage. It is important to first define a strategy and then ensure that money will follow rather than the reverse.
- Regional authorities find it difficult to follow up on the many initiatives and developments that are ongoing on this front in their regions; the use of intermediaries such as clusters was pointed out as a way forward to address this issue.
- Not many regions have engaged in interregional specialisation strategies involving exchange and collaboration beyond their own borders.
- Interregional collaboration efforts often depend on the work of a few key people, whose knowledge might not be properly relayed to other colleagues at home.
- Interregional partnerships differ according to level of maturity, and the challenges they are facing vary accordingly.
- There is a need for joint understanding and use of concepts and words across territories engaged in interregional cooperation.

Note: the various comments made concerning the 'capacity' challenge are brought into a note prepared as a background for the next meeting rather than in these minutes (see point 5 below).

## 4. Prioritisation of implementation challenges

Challenges identified by participants prior to the meeting were sent to the consultants (all participants without exception had provided input on beforehand), who clustered and summarised the most popular under six broad main challenges, as follows (Figure 1). These six broad challenges were presented and discussed.

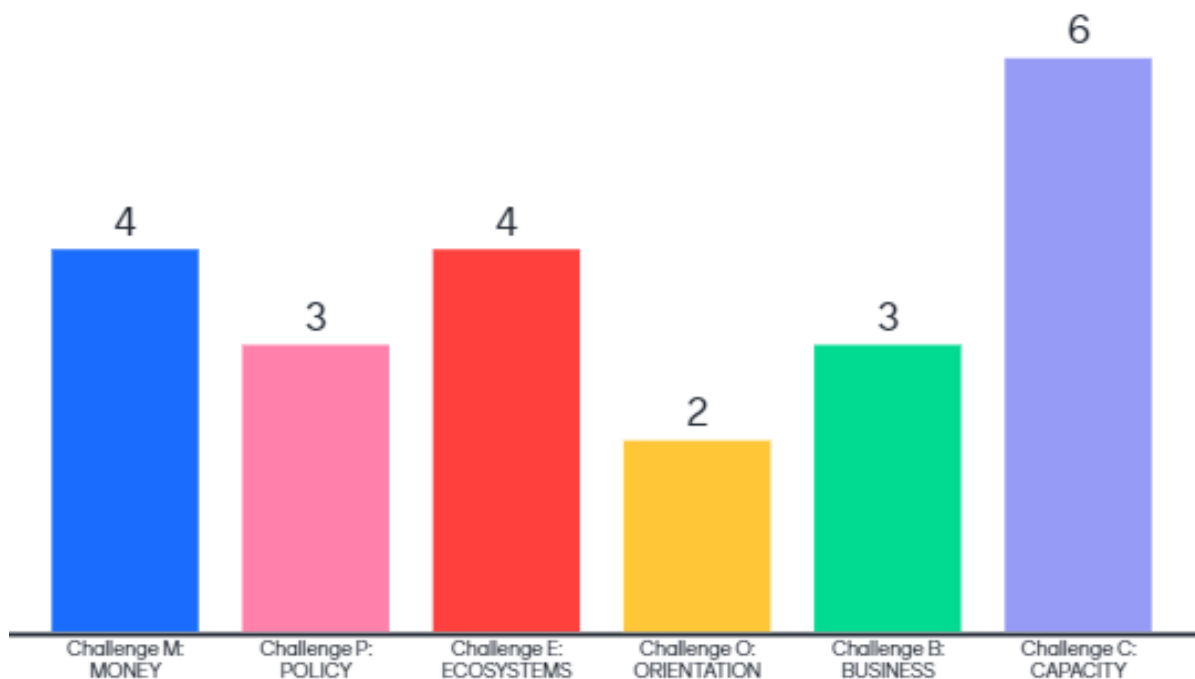
Figure 1 Implementation challenges identified by the WG members prior to the Kick-off meeting



Source: Consultants based on WG members' input

During the meeting, participants were invited to vote on challenges they believed were most relevant<sup>1</sup>. The results of the voting are shown below (Figure 2) and indicate that the challenge of building capacity for interregional cooperation stands out as the most popular one. Nevertheless, all challenges received some votes, indicating that all are seen as important. While being relevant, participants found the ‘ecosystems’ challenge too broadly defined to become a workable focus for the WG.

Figure 2 Prioritisation of implementation challenges by WG members during the kick-off meeting



Source: Meeting participants voting on Mentimeter

## 5. Conclusion and next steps

The first WG session in September 2023 will focus on capacity for interregional cooperation. The consultants will circulate a reformulated concept on how to address this challenge, in advance of the meeting, and participants will be invited to react to it, prepare themselves for the discussion and possibly propose presentations on both success and difficulties.

During the meeting in September, a decision will be taken on the refinement of the second subject for the subsequent meeting to take place in November, based on the second-ranked topics of ‘Ecosystems’ and ‘Money’ as next most popular priorities.

<sup>1</sup> Each participant could select two challenges, hence the total number of points equals the double of the number of voting participants. Only WG members were allowed to vote.