

YOUR ENTITY	Euroregion
MEMBERS OF THE CROSS-BORDER STRUCTURE	Euroregion Silesia Euroregion Silesia was established in 1998 as one of the first institutionalised platforms for cross-border cooperation along the Czech-Polish border. At the time of its establishment, the legal instrument of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) did not yet exist, and therefore the Euroregion was created as a cooperation framework based on two separate legal entities representing local and regional authorities on each side of the border. Today, Euroregion Silesia consists of two associations of local and regional governments – one established under Czech law and one under Polish law – which jointly form the Euroregion and coordinate cross-border cooperation within its territory. Over more than twenty-five years of operation, the Euroregion has become one of the key actors in the implementation of cross-border projects and territorial development initiatives along the Czech-Polish border. The Euroregion Silesia is primarily composed of municipalities and regional authorities from both sides of the border. In addition, its partnership structure includes associated members and stakeholders such as universities, Local Action Groups, and other socio-economic partners from the region, reflecting the broad multi-sectoral character of cross-border cooperation in the territory. The detailed lists of members of both associations are attached in the annex to this application. The current initiative to establish the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) Euroregion Silesia represents a natural continuation of this long-term cooperation and an important step towards creating a more integrated and permanent governance structure for the cross-border territory. In this context, the proposed b-solutions project is expected to contribute to the process of establishing the EGTC by identifying practical governance solutions and addressing legal and institutional barriers that currently hinder the long-term management of cross-border tourism products and related public services.

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TITLE OF THE PROPOSED ADVICE CASE	Silesia Cross Tour
TOPIC OF THE ADVICE CASE	Public services (tourism)
Nature of the thematic area	
CRITERIA FOR SELECTION 1: DESCRIPTION OF THE OBSTACLE	The cross-border area of the Euroregion Silesia is generally considered one of the well-integrated border regions between the Czech Republic and Poland. For more than twenty-five years, intensive cooperation has taken place among public administrations, regional institutions, tourism organisations and local communities. Thanks to the support of Interreg programmes and other European and national funding instruments, numerous joint initiatives aimed at tourism development have been implemented, including the „Silesianka - network of observation towers“, cross-border cycling products, thematic tourist routes and joint marketing campaigns promoting the region as a single destination. Although these initiatives are frequently perceived by the public as cross-border tourism products, from an institutional and legal perspective they are, in reality, a set of separate national products that are only jointly promoted or coordinated through projects financed by European funds or national funds. Once project funding ends, there is no legal or institutional framework enabling their joint long-term management, financing, certification, monitoring and further development. As part of the preparation of this initiative, the applicants carried out extensive desk research and reviewed a wide range of previous b-solutions case studies and recommendations. Although no directly applicable or tailor-made solution addressing the specific challenges of cross-border tourism

product governance was identified, the analysis proved highly valuable in helping to frame the issue in a comprehensive manner and to better understand its legal, institutional and governance dimensions. According to UN Tourism and OECD approaches, a tourism product is not merely a collection of attractions. A genuine tourism product constitutes an integrated system combining attractions, services, accessibility, information systems, quality standards and governance arrangements. In cross-border areas, this requires a stable institutional framework allowing stakeholders on both sides of the border to jointly plan, manage and finance the product as a single functional system. The identified obstacle lies in the absence of a compatible institutional and legal framework between the destination management systems of the Czech Republic and Poland. This incompatibility currently prevents the creation of a genuine cross-border tourism product with joint management, shared responsibility, common financing mechanisms and unified quality standards.

The identified obstacle concerns the comprehensive governance of tourism products in its broad European understanding/standards, which includes not only the management of attractions and tourism services but also the coordination of closely related public services that are essential for the functioning of a tourism destination as a single integrated product (cross-sectoral functional approach). The initiative therefore aims to remove the barriers preventing the comprehensive management of cross-border Czech-Polish tourism products and their associated public services, particularly in areas where effective cross-border coordination is currently absent.

On the Czech side, destination management is based on a system of certified destination management organisations coordinated by the CzechTourism agency and the Ministry of Regional Development. The system operates primarily through methodological documents and voluntary cooperation among stakeholders. The Czech Republic has not yet adopted a dedicated national Tourism Act defining the legal status, competences and financing rules of destination management organisations.

On the Polish side, a different model operates, based on the Polish Tourism Organisation (Polska Organizacja Turystyczna), regional and local tourism organisations and, more recently, the Polish

Tourism Brand (Polska Marka Turystyczna) system. This framework relies on different institutional instruments, financing mechanisms, quality standards and governance arrangements.

As a consequence, there is currently no entity or mechanism capable of assuming responsibility for managing a tourism product that extends beyond the state border. Nor is there a clearly defined model enabling the two national destination management systems to jointly operate and govern a single product.

The obstacle extends far beyond tourism marketing. A genuine tourism product also encompasses a broad range of public and private services enabling its use, including visitor infrastructure, information services, reservation systems, digital tools, wayfinding systems and, above all, transport accessibility. Transport accessibility represents one of the most significant practical consequences of the identified obstacle (ESPON, OECD reports). Cross-border tourism products require the coordination of public transport services, transport connections, fare systems and seasonal lines serving tourist attractions on both sides of the border. The current legal and institutional setting does not allow for the identification of an entity responsible for coordinating these services or for establishing a stable financing model (two national destination management systems coexist, but neither is designed to finance or govern a genuinely integrated cross-border tourism product).

The problem therefore does not lie in a lack of tourist attractions, insufficient demand or unwillingness of institutions to cooperate. The key barrier is a governance gap, namely the absence of a legal and administrative framework enabling the transformation of existing project-based cooperation into a long-term system of cross-border management of tourism products and related public services.

The Czech and Polish parts of the Euroregion Silesia (the legal entities and partners of this project) have decided to establish a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), building on the existing territorial and institutional framework of the Euroregion Silesia, and the process of its creation is currently underway. From the perspective of managing joint tourism products and related public services, future EGTC appears to be the most suitable institutional and governance solution, as it could provide a permanent framework for joint planning, management and financing beyond project-

	based cooperation. However, there is currently neither a methodological nor a legal model defining how an EGTC can connect the Czech and Polish destination management systems and create the conditions for fully-fledged cross-border tourism products. The proposed b-solutions initiative therefore aims to deliver concrete recommendations on how to address the identified cross-border obstacle within the existing legal and institutional framework and to assess whether the future Bridge for EU Regulation could provide one of the potential mechanisms for implementing the proposed solutions. The initiative is expected to identify feasible governance, legal and institutional arrangements that would enable the long-term management of cross-border tourism products and related public services.
CRITERIA FOR SELECTION 2: POTENTIAL INCREASE IN CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION	The removal of the identified obstacle would represent a major qualitative shift in cross-border cooperation along the Czech-Polish border. At present, cooperation in tourism is predominantly project-based and relies on Interreg and other national and European funding sources. Although these projects have delivered significant results, their long-term impact remains limited because no mechanism exists for the joint management of the products created. Addressing the obstacle would make it possible to move from project-based cooperation towards institutionalised cross-border governance. It would create conditions for establishing and managing tourism products as a single functional system, irrespective of the state border. Such an approach would significantly increase the effectiveness and sustainability of investments already implemented through Interreg programmes. Infrastructure, tourism routes, observation towers, visitor services and other project outputs could continue to develop within a common management framework rather than under the current fragmented system of separate national management. According to UN Tourism and the OECD, the governance of tourism products also includes the coordination of related services, particularly transport, information systems and visitor services, as these are integral components of a competitive and functional cross-border tourism product.

The removal of the barrier would also create favorable conditions for the development of cross-border public services that are strongly linked to tourism products, particularly in the field of public transport and accessibility. A substantial body of scientific literature demonstrates that transport accessibility is one of the key determinants of tourism competitiveness, visitor satisfaction and destination attractiveness. Transport is increasingly recognised not merely as a supporting service but as an integral component of the tourism product itself, directly influencing tourists' destination choices, length of stay and spatial distribution within destinations (Prideaux, 2000). Studies on destination competitiveness further identify transport systems as one of the fundamental pillars of tourism development and regional attractiveness (Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013).

Recent research confirms a strong relationship between transport accessibility and tourism performance, showing that the efficiency, reliability and connectivity of transport systems directly affect the competitiveness of destinations and their ability to attract visitors and distribute tourism benefits across wider territories (Pavlyuk, 2018). Accessibility is increasingly regarded as a key competitive advantage, particularly for peripheral and rural areas, where tourism development often depends on the availability of efficient public transport connections. Improved accessibility also contributes to more sustainable tourism patterns by reducing dependence on private cars and increasing the use of public transport and active mobility solutions (Pavlyuk, 2018).

In cross-border regions, the importance of transport accessibility becomes even more pronounced. Tourism products extending across national borders require coordination of transport services, timetables, ticketing systems and visitor information across different administrative and legal systems. Without such coordination, many attractions remain functionally disconnected despite their geographical proximity, limiting the economic potential of tourism investments and reducing the overall attractiveness of the destination. Recent studies on tourism accessibility demonstrate that the ease with which visitors can reach attractions through public transport significantly influences travel decisions and the overall tourism experience (Boros et al., 2025).

The ability to coordinate transport services at cross-border scale would therefore provide direct

benefits not only to visitors but also to residents, commuters and businesses (i.e. supporting local labor market in tourism sector). Better connectivity would increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of the Euroregion Silesia as a single destination, improve accessibility of peripheral areas, strengthen territorial cohesion and contribute to the long-term sustainability of tourism development. It would also create favorable conditions for the development of integrated cross-border tourism products based on sustainable mobility principles, in line with broader European objectives related to green transition, territorial cohesion and sustainable tourism (Samkova, L. & Navratil, J., 2023).

The proposed solution would also allow the region to better utilize the potential of major population centres located within its catchment area, particularly the Upper Silesian Metropolitan Area and the Ostrava Metropolitan Area, while simultaneously improving the accessibility and attractiveness of peripheral territories. The region could be promoted and managed as a single destination with a coherent portfolio of services and attractions, which is currently difficult to achieve under the existing institutional framework.

The long-term impacts would include increased economic attractiveness of the border region, support for entrepreneurship in the service sector, creation of new jobs, improved quality of life for local communities and greater territorial accessibility. The initiative would also contribute to wider European objectives related to territorial cohesion, sustainable tourism, green mobility and integrated territorial development.

**CRITERIA FOR SELECTION 3:
APPLICANT'S OR PARTNER'S
MANDATE TO DEVISE
SOLUTIONS**

The applicants are the Czech and Polish parts of the Euroregion Silesia, currently organized as two associations that jointly form the Euroregion. For more than two decades, they have acted as the key institutions coordinating cross-border cooperation within the region.

Both organizations have extensive experience in the management of projects financed by European funds, participate in the implementation of the Interreg Czech Republic-Poland Programme and currently perform the role of administrators of the Small Projects Fund. They also constitute the

principal platform for cooperation among municipalities, regional institutions, tourism organisations and other relevant stakeholders.

In 2025, a joint initiative was launched to establish the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) Euroregion Silesia. The working group preparing the establishment of the EGTC identified the development of cross-border tourism products as one of the priority areas of its future activities. The working group responsible for preparing the establishment of the EGTC consists of several dozen members from both the Czech and Polish sides of the border and brings together representatives of local and regional authorities, organizations and institutions and other relevant actors. As such, it provides a broad territorial and sectoral representation of the entire Euroregion Silesia and constitutes a strong bottom-up mandate for identifying and addressing cross-border challenges. The governance model of the working group is inspired by the principles and good practices of Community-Led Local Development (CLLD), relying on participatory and multi-level governance and active stakeholder involvement. The need to remove barriers affecting cross-border tourism products and related public services therefore does not originate from a top-down policy initiative but directly reflects the practical needs and priorities formulated by local and regional stakeholders within this participatory process (i.e. SWOT analysis).

Euroregion Silesia possesses unique knowledge and expertise in this field because it has been involved in the creation and development of most major cross-border tourism initiatives in the region. At the same time, it maintains long-term partnerships with tourism organizations, regional authorities and public institutions responsible for territorial development and transport accessibility on both sides of the border.

This combination of experience, institutional position and the ongoing establishment of the EGTC provides the applicants with a strong mandate not only to identify the obstacle but also to actively participate in designing, piloting and implementing potential solutions. The applicants are therefore

	uniquely positioned to develop practical recommendations that could subsequently be operationalised through the future EGTC and potentially supported by the Bridge for EU instrument.
CRITERIA FOR SELECTION 4: REPLICABILITY	Although the obstacle has been identified within the territory of the Euroregion Silesia, its significance extends far beyond the area concerned. Similar situations exist along the entire Czech-Polish border and in many other European border regions. Numerous cross-border tourism initiatives have been developed with the support of Interreg programmes, yet only a limited number of them possess an institutional framework allowing their long-term joint governance. The added value of the proposed project lies in the fact that it will not seek solutions only for a specific tourism product but rather for the governance mechanism of cross-border products and related public services. The initiative aims to develop recommendations enabling the alignment of Czech and Polish destination management systems through a supra-national governance model that could be applied by an EGTC. The proposed solution could be replicated not only in tourism but also in other policy fields where cross-border cooperation encounters similar institutional barriers. The experience and recommendations generated by the project may therefore be relevant for other Euroregions, EGTCs and regional authorities across the European Union. Particular importance lies in the project's potential contribution to the future Bridge for EU instrument. The initiative may provide practical evidence and policy recommendations demonstrating how cross-border governance gaps can be addressed through new European mechanisms aimed at removing legal and administrative barriers. The project therefore has the potential to generate solutions of European relevance and to contribute to the broader debate on cross-border governance, integrated territorial development and the long-term sustainability of cross-border public services.

BORDER

The project concerns the Czech-Polish border within the territory of the Euroregion Silesia, covering primarily the Moravian-Silesian Region on the Czech side and the Silesian and Opole Voivodeships on the Polish side. By approaching tourism products as a function of the territory rather than merely a collection of attractions, the initiative also opens opportunities for broader forms of cross-border cooperation in the future, including the joint governance of related public services and other integrated territorial development activities.

The territory is characterised by long-standing cross-border cooperation, supported by numerous institutional partnerships, joint projects and frequent interactions between communities on both sides of the border. However, despite this high level of integration, further development increasingly encounters legal and administrative barriers that fall outside the competences of local and regional authorities. As a result, the full potential of cross-border cooperation and of the region as an integrated tourism destination cannot be fully realised.

At the same time, the area possesses exceptional tourism potential based on the combination of natural, cultural and industrial heritage and on a significant number of tourism products that have been jointly developed through more than two decades of cross-border cooperation and substantial investments from Interreg and other public funding sources.

The identified obstacle arises directly from the existence of the state border and, in particular, from differences between the Czech and Polish institutional and legal frameworks governing destination management and related public services. The border itself no longer represents a physical barrier to cooperation. However, it continues to constitute an institutional and administrative barrier that prevents the establishment of genuinely integrated cross-border tourism products with common governance, long-term management and coordinated public services.

As a result, the Euroregion Silesia is currently unable to fully capitalise on the significant investments already made in cross-border tourism development and to manage the territory as a single tourism destination. Removing this obstacle would therefore contribute directly to the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of existing cross-border initiatives and strengthen the functional integration of the

region.

Although the challenge has been identified within the Euroregion Silesia, similar conditions exist along most sections of the Czech-Polish border. The proposed initiative therefore has the potential to provide practical recommendations and governance solutions that could be adapted and applied by other Czech-Polish border regions facing comparable challenges in the management of cross-border tourism products and related public services.

The project is expected to generate a transferable solution for the entire Czech-Polish border by proposing an innovative model for the joint governance and financing of cross-border tourism products and their related public services, with a particular focus on cross-border transport, connectivity and accessibility.

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Background Information - File Upload	
AGREEMENT	By submitting this application I declare that the proposed advice case will not be simultaneously financed by other sources from the EU budget.
DECLARATION OF VALIDITY	I declare that the information I have included in this application form is real, valid and true.
PERMISSION TO USE THE INFORMATION PROVIDED	I hereby give permission to AEBC and the European Commission to utilise and publish the information submitted in this application for purposes of research, even if the proposed case is not selected within the b-solutions initiative.