

## IDENTIFYING LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE OBSTACLES

Identifying obstacles is the first step towards removing them and this step should not be overlooked. Obstacles may be identified through surveys, calls for papers, interviews, seminars and working groups. It is vital to survey not only regional and local authorities, but also chambers of commerce and industry, development agencies, employer organisations and trade unions and businesses themselves.

It is important to analyse the nature of the problems, their consequences (territories and structures affected) and their causes in as much detail as possible. Identifying obstacles is a regular, even continuous process and it is necessary to track the issues to see how they evolve over time.

### EXAMPLES:

**The Economic and Social Committee of the Greater Region** listed the administrative obstacles to economic and sustainable development in this region in the final Report of the Greater Region's 14th Summit (2013-2014). The list of obstacles is compiled and updated by the Trier European and Innovation Centre (EIC Trier GmbH).

<http://www.granderegion.net/fr/documents-officiels/reso-doc-cesgr/Rapport-final-2013-2014.pdf>

**As part of the work of the economy pillar of the Trinational Metropolitan Region (TMR)**, a study was conducted in 2013 with over 350 Upper Rhine businesses to pinpoint obstacles to their development.

In 2005-2007, **the French-Belgian parliamentary working group** (made up of six members of parliament on each side of the border) identified the impediments to cooperation along this border; the economy was one of the areas studied.

Following a call for contributions (which received over 300 responses), thematic technical consultation meetings and plenary sessions with the members of parliament, nearly 80 obstacles were listed in this area. This process was updated in 2013-2014 at the initiative of the of the Nord-Pas de Calais Region prefecture and with the support of the MOT.

<http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/bdd-territoires/territoires/territoire/show/groupe-de-travail-parlementaire-franco-belge/>

## THINKING ABOUT SOLUTIONS AND HELPING TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS

While partners who collaborate to further the economic development of cross-border territories do not in general have the power to remove legal obstacles, their in-depth knowledge of the field enables them to play a crucial role in proposing solutions. Continuous information feedback and liaison with national authorities are essential. In this regard, inter-governmental committees and parliamentary working groups are good fora for local-national dialogue.

**Working groups** that bring together the relevant institutions (at local, national and European levels), as well as stakeholders, are particularly important in identifying possible solutions.

Before thinking about solutions, it is vital to jointly define the ultimate goal of the removal of the obstacle. This makes it possible to not only ascertain that there is consensus among the partners, but also provides

indications about the types of solution to be devised and whether or not resolving the problem is a priority.

To ensure that the meetings of these groups are effective, the first few meetings should be devoted to a general overview of the obstacles. Subsequent meetings should spotlight one obstacle at a time. Having a limited agenda makes it possible to focus in detail on defining

solutions. It is useful to review progress made and attempts to resolve issues as a basis for reflection. The relevance, feasibility and effectiveness of the solutions proposed must then be assessed. Lastly, it is important to agree on a precise timetable for the resolution of the problem, to allocate appropriate human and financial resources and to clarify the tasks to be carried out by the different partners.

### EXAMPLE:

A series of nine workshops on identifying solutions were organised with the support of the MOT as **part of the process of updating the list of obstacles to French-Belgian** cooperation in 2013-2014.