

ANNEX NO. 1

INTEGRATED ROWING, SWIMMING AND OPEN-WATER SAFETY PROGRAMME

for children and young people with mental, developmental or social challenges

Developed within the Interreg VI-A Latvia-Lithuania Programme 2021-2027 project

“Enhancing the inclusion of excluded and vulnerable children and developing safe behaviour in open water through rowing activities”

(Rowing4Confidence, LL-00032)

Related document	Memorandum of Cooperation signed on 5 September 2025
Programme status	Annex for signature by all Parties
Validity	Effective from the date of signature by all Parties. This Annex remains valid as long as the Memorandum of Cooperation remains in force, unless amended by mutual written agreement.

Panevėžys - Liepāja - Daugavpils

Developed and piloted in 2025

1. Purpose and status of the Programme

This Programme documents the common approach developed, piloted and refined by the sports institutions cooperating within the Rowing4Confidence project. It provides a practical framework for integrated rowing, swimming-related skills and open-water safety activities for children and young people who may experience exclusion because of mental, developmental or social challenges.

The Programme is adopted as an annex to the Memorandum of Cooperation signed on 5 September 2025. It supports implementation of the Parties' commitment to continue cooperation, exchange experience and provide accessible activities after completion of the project.

The Programme is not intended to replace national educational, sports, health, child-protection or water-safety requirements. Each Party shall apply it in accordance with national law, internal rules, the competence of its coaches and the conditions of the local water body.

2. Background and development process

The Programme was developed through a practice-based process during the Rowing4Confidence project. The process combined:

- theory-based training of rowing coaches in special pedagogy, psychology, non-formal education and work with children with special needs or social risks;
- cross-border traineeships and exchange of methods between Panevėžys, Liepāja and Daugavpils;
- adaptation of infrastructure and acquisition of stable boats, paddles, life jackets, rowing ergometers and other safety or accessibility equipment;
- pilot implementation of integrated rowing, swimming-related and open-water safety sessions in a river, lake and sea environment;
- practical experience gained by coaches, accompanying social or educational staff and participating children; and
- refinement of the common approach for continued use after the project.

The pilot activities demonstrated that the approach is suitable for continued use, provided that group size, pace, communication, assistance and safety measures are adapted to the needs of each participant and to local conditions.

3. Target group

The Programme is intended primarily for children and young people who may have reduced access to organised sports activities, including:

- children and young people with mental, intellectual, developmental, behavioural or emotional difficulties;
- children living in community-based foster care or otherwise lacking parental care;
- children and young people experiencing social exclusion, limited opportunities or low self-confidence; and
- other participants who require additional support to take part safely and meaningfully in water-sport activities.

The recommended age range is approximately 8-18 years. Each organisation may adjust the age range after assessing the participant's maturity, physical condition, communication needs, swimming experience and ability to follow safety instructions.

4. Overall aim and objectives

The overall aim is to promote social inclusion, confidence, responsible behaviour and physical well-being through accessible rowing and open-water activities.

The specific objectives are to:

- develop safe behaviour in and near open water;
- introduce and progressively develop rowing, canoeing, kayaking or SUP skills, depending on the equipment available locally;
- strengthen balance, coordination, endurance, mobility and general physical fitness;
- improve self-confidence, emotional regulation, independence and self-protection skills;
- encourage communication, cooperation, mutual trust and participation in a group;
- reduce institutional and personal barriers to participation in organised sport; and
- create a positive experience that may encourage continued participation in physical activity.

5. Core implementation principles

Safety first: No sporting objective takes priority over the physical and emotional safety of a participant. Activities shall be changed, postponed or stopped when weather, water, equipment, behaviour or health conditions make continuation unsafe.

Individual adaptation: Instructions, task complexity, pace, duration, equipment and level of assistance shall be adapted to the participant rather than expecting the participant to adapt to a rigid training format.

Small groups: Groups should normally consist of approximately five participants, with additional support staff where individual needs require it.

Predictability and clear communication: Coaches shall explain the sequence of activities, demonstrate tasks, use short and concrete instructions and repeat or visually support information when needed.

Gradual progression: Participants shall move from familiarisation and land-based practice to supported water activity and then to more independent performance only when they are ready.

Positive reinforcement: Feedback shall focus on effort, progress, courage, safe choices and cooperation rather than comparison between participants.

Inclusion without pressure: Participation shall be encouraged but not forced. Fear of water, sensory sensitivity, fatigue or anxiety shall be addressed gradually and respectfully.

Cooperation with accompanying staff: Social workers, teachers, assistants or carers who know the participants should be involved in preparation, communication and safety planning.

Learning through practice: Games, pair work, demonstrations, repetition, simulation and real-life safety situations should be used alongside formal instruction.

6. Staffing and responsibilities

Each Party shall appoint suitably qualified staff and define responsibilities before activities begin. The recommended team includes:

- a lead rowing or water-sport coach responsible for the session plan and technical instruction;
- an assistant coach or instructor, especially when participants require close physical or behavioural support;
- an accompanying social worker, teacher, assistant or carer familiar with the participants; and

- a person responsible for rescue support and the safety motorboat where required by local rules or risk assessment.

The programme should be delivered by qualified rowing coaches familiar with inclusive coaching principles and water safety requirements. Roles, communication signals and emergency procedures shall be agreed before each session.

7. Recommended programme format

The common pilot model consisted of small-group sessions organised regularly during the summer. For continued implementation, a cycle of 10 sessions per group is recommended. The frequency of sessions may vary depending on local circumstances and participants' needs. To ensure effective learning, safety and sustained engagement, the duration of a single session is recommended not to exceed 90 minutes.

Element	Recommended approach	Adaptation options
Group size	A flexible group size is recommended. As a reference - about 5 participants	Smaller or larger group depending on participants' need, support level, available coaches and safety considerations
Frequency	Flexible. Sessions may be organized once per week or more frequently	The frequency is adapted to participants' needs, fatigue levels, motivation, transport possibilities, school schedule and local conditions.
Session duration	A standart session should not exceed 90 minutes. Shorter sessions (45-60 minutes) may be used when appropriate.	The duration is adapted to participants' age, attention span, physical and emotional well-being, weather conditions and activity content.
Programme duration	A cycle of 10 sessions per group is recommended	The number of sessions is adapted to summer holidays, school schedule and other commitments. A longer (up to 15 sessions) cycle may be implemented.
Implementation period	The programme is intended to be implemented during the rowing season from April to October (approximately).	Exact dates are adapted to local weather conditions, water safety considerations and participants' availability.

Element	Recommended approach	Adaptation options
Locations	Land training, pool where available, and open water	Open water activities may take place in a river, lake or sea, depending on local context, water safety assessment and available infrastructure.

8. Standard session structure

Arrival and emotional check-in (5-10 min) - Greeting, confirmation of readiness, short explanation of the session, individual concerns and equipment check.

Safety briefing (5-10 min) - Rules for the location, weather and water conditions, boundaries, use of life jackets, communication signals and actions in an emergency.

Warm-up and land-based preparation (10-20 min) - Mobility, balance, coordination, imitation of paddle movements, ergometer or bench practice, teamwork games and familiarisation with equipment.

Swimming-related and water-confidence component (10-20 min) - Activities appropriate to the setting, such as safe entry and exit, floating with a life jacket, controlled movement in shallow water, recovery after falling into water, breathing and confidence-building. Activities shall be led only within staff competence and local safety rules.

Rowing or paddling practice (30-55 min) - Progressive practice of boat entry and exit, posture, paddle grip, propulsion, steering, stopping, turning, maintaining distance, working in pairs or teams and responding to changing conditions.

Cool-down and reflection (5-10 min) - Calm return to shore, equipment handling, short discussion of achievements, safe choices, emotions and the next step.

9. Indicative 10-session content plan

The following 10-session model is provided as an example of good practice based on the pilot implementation carried out within the Rowing4Confidence project. It is not intended to prescribe a fixed sequence of activities. Implementing organisations and coaches may modify the number, order, duration and content of sessions according to participants' individual needs, local circumstances, weather conditions and available facilities, while maintaining the overall objectives and principles of this Programme.

Session	Main focus	Indicative content	Expected progress
1	Introduction and trust	Meet the group; assess experience and fears; explain rules; fit life jackets; introduce boats and paddles; simple land games.	Understands basic rules and becomes familiar with staff and equipment.
2	Balance and body control	Warm-up; balance and coordination tasks; paddle grip; basic stroke imitation; safe behaviour near the water.	Improves body awareness and follows simple safety instructions.

Session	Main focus	Indicative content	Expected progress
3	Water confidence	Safe entry/exit; shallow-water orientation; floating and movement with a life jacket; breathing and calm response.	Shows increased confidence and can use a life jacket correctly.
4	Boat entry and exit	Supported entry and exit; seating position; stabilisation; communication between participant and assistant.	Can enter and leave equipment with appropriate support.
5	Basic propulsion	Forward stroke; rhythm; short controlled distances; stopping on command.	Moves the craft forward and responds to basic commands.
6	Steering and stopping	Turning, reverse stroke, braking, keeping within boundaries; simple route.	Controls direction with support and maintains safe distance.
7	Falling-in and recovery skills	Controlled simulation where appropriate; holding the craft; staying calm; assisted return to shore or craft.	Knows what to do after entering the water unexpectedly.
8	Pairs and teamwork	Two-person or team boat work; role allocation; synchronised paddling; communication games.	Cooperates with others and understands shared responsibility.
9	Skills circuit	Stations on land and water: balance, steering, stopping, rescue signals, equipment handling.	Consolidates several skills in a structured sequence.
10	Final practical session and reflection	Friendly competition or skills demonstration; individual feedback; recognition of progress; invitation to continue.	Demonstrates acquired skills and identifies personal achievements.

10. Local adaptation for different water bodies

River environment - Panevėžys: Pay particular attention to current, entry and exit points, downstream boundaries, route control and rapid recovery support. Use stable equipment and maintain clear communication between shore and water staff.

Sea environment - Liepāja: Assess wind, waves, water temperature and changing weather. Define a restricted activity zone, use easily visible groups and ensure rescue support suitable for sea conditions.

Lake environment - Daugavpils: Assess depth changes, distance from shore, recreational traffic and weather. Use marked routes and progressive distance from shore based on participant confidence.

Local adaptation does not change the common objectives of inclusion, safety, confidence and progressive skill development.

11. Equipment and accessibility

Equipment shall be selected according to participant needs and local conditions. The following may be used:

- stable kayaks, canoes, SUP boards or team boats;
- appropriately sized paddles and spare paddles;
- properly fitted life jackets for every participant and staff member on the water;
- stabilising or adaptive accessories for beginners or participants with disabilities;
- rowing ergometers, benches, mats and other land-training equipment;
- a safety motorboat or other rescue support where required;
- visual markers, whistles, communication devices and first-aid equipment; and
- accessible changing, storage and sanitary facilities where available.

All equipment shall be inspected before use. Damaged or unsuitable equipment shall be removed from service immediately.

12. Safety and safeguarding requirements

Before implementation, each organisation shall assess the risks covering the location, weather, water conditions, participant needs, staffing, equipment, transport, emergency access and communication.

At minimum, the following requirements apply:

- participants shall wear suitable life jackets during water activities;
- attendance shall be checked before entering and after leaving the activity area;
- weather and water conditions shall be assessed immediately before and during the session;
- a clear emergency and rescue plan shall be known to all staff;
- staff shall use respectful, non-discriminatory and safeguarding-compliant communication; and
- any incidents shall be managed in accordance with the internal procedures of the implementing organisation.

13. Monitoring and evaluation

The Programme does not require formal participant assessment. Implementation may be monitored through participant attendance sheets (or participant lists) maintained by the implementing organisation. Coaches should adapt activities according to participants' individual needs and abilities throughout the programme.

14. Expected results

After completing an appropriately adapted cycle, participants are expected to have:

- improved understanding of safe behaviour in and near open water;
- acquired introductory rowing or paddling skills;
- increased confidence, self-control and willingness to take part in group activities;
- improved physical abilities, including balance and coordination;
- strengthened teamwork and communication skills; and
- a positive experience of accessible sport and social inclusion.

15. Continuity and cooperation

The Parties intend to use this Programme as a common framework for continuing integrated rowing, swimming-related and open-water safety activities after the Rowing4Confidence project. Each Party may develop its implementation arrangements while preserving the common objectives and principles set out in this Annex.

The Parties shall exchange experience, challenges and practical improvements and may jointly update this Programme by mutual written agreement in accordance with the Memorandum of Cooperation.

16. Adoption and signatures

This Annex forms an integral part of the Memorandum of Cooperation signed on 5 September 2025. It enters into force when signed by all Parties. Any amendment to this Annex shall be made by mutual written agreement of all Parties.

Panevėžys sports center:

Saulius Raziūnas

Director


Signature

Panevėžys, Lithuania, 18-01-2026

Daugavpils sports school:

Ēriks Ševčenko

Director

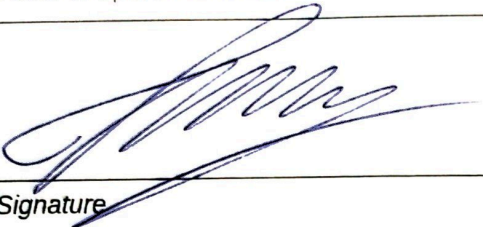
Signature

Daugavpils, Lithuania, 25-01-2026

Liepāja city municipality institution "Liepāja City Council Sports Administration":

Aivis Tints

Head of Sports Administration



Signature

Liepāja, Lithuania, 21-01-2026