

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

“Blue gold: water tourism as a driver of growth and a bridge for cooperation”

Place: Garden of Destiny (Likteņdārzs), Koknese, Kokneses pagasts, Aizkraukles novads

Date: January 22, 2026

Time: 9.30-16.00

09:30–10:00	Arrival and morning coffee	Registration and coffee break
10:00–10:05	Event opening	Zemgale planning region, Aizkraukle municipality, Likteņdārzs
10:05–11:30	Part I: Benefits and challenges of the WaterTour project	
10:05–10:20	How the activities of the "WaterTour" project promote water and cognitive tourism in the Biržai, Anykščiai, Gražute regional parks	Evaldas Makrickas (Directorate of Aukštaitija protected areas, project coordinator)
10:20–10:35	Across Borders: International tourism project as the driving force for Zemgale's growth	Anna Builo-Holme (Zemgale Planning Region)
10:35–10:50	River Contrasts: The Tourism Potential of the Daugava and Suseja Rivers in Jēkabpils Municipality	Laura Trukšāne (Jekabpils County Municipality)
10:50–11:05	River development in Aizkraukle region: the path from potential to results	Sintija Sniedzīte (Aizkraukle County Municipality)
11:05–11:20	Watertour project in Labanoras regional park – presentation on the progress of the chain ferry across Lake Aisetas	Žydris Mukulys (Aukštaitija national park and Labanoras regional park directorate)

11:30–12:00	Accessible water leisure opportunities for people with disabilities (Project "Riverways II"); WaterWays - a project for the development of water tourism	Aija Neilande (Kurzeme planning region); Aiga Meri (Kurzeme planning region)
12:00–13:00	Lunch break	
13:00–15:15	Part II: Experience of experts and entrepreneurs in water tourism	
13:00–13:30	The development process and long-term application of the Jēkabpils Municipality Daugava River and Riverside Tourism Development Strategy for 2026–2032	Simona Sniķe (project manager)
13:30–14:00	Water tourism in Anykščiai district, an example of a tourism company (Experience with kayak rental on the Šventoji River)	Julius Biliūnas (Tourist company "TYKA" and "UPYNA")
14:00–14:30	Water tourism experience on the Nemunas and Nere rivers, cooperation and electric public water transport in Vilnius	Mindaugas Žiedelis (Passenger Ship Association "Nemunas")
14:30–14:45	Coffee break	
14:45–15:15	5 Answers to why luck, success and a happy life are predictable	Marika Rudzīte Griķe (LivLaiv KANOE, "Handmade Latgola")
15:15–16:00	Discussion and networking	Questions, answers and informal communication

**Language: Latvian, Lithuanian (simultaneous interpretation into/from Latvian/Lithuanian will be provided)*

Photography is possible for project publicity purposes.

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The conference is organized within the project LL- 00134 "Enhancement of sustainable water tourism in Lithuania-Latvia cross-border region, involving local entrepreneurs and communities / WaterTour". The project is implemented with the financial support of the European Union's Interreg VI-A Latvia-Lithuania Programme 2021-2027. More about the project: <https://ej.uz/WaterTour>. The content of the seminar is the sole responsibility of the Zemgale Planning Region and may not reflect the official position of the European Union.