

ICF Paracanoe – Informative Communication to National Federations Development of the Intellectual Impairment (II) Pathway 2026–2028

Dear National Federations,

The Paracanoe Committee of the International Canoe Federation (ICF) is establishing a structured international pathway for athletes with Intellectual Impairment (II) within Paracanoe.

This initiative, coordinated through the ICF Paracanoe II Working Group, aims to develop in the coming years a sport-specific classification system aligned with the framework of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC).

Background

The participation of athletes with intellectual impairment in both sprint and marathon disciplines has increased significantly in recent years. However, there is currently no formal Paracanoe classification system aligned with the *IPC Classification Code*.

Therefore, the ICF is developing a long-term, evidence-based structure that will:

- Use Class II1 (Intellectual Impairment) as the international reference for eligibility.
- Build a Paracanoe-specific classification system reflecting how cognitive limitations influence paddling performance.
- Provide, in the short term, a safe and controlled participation framework for national and international exhibition or promotional competitions.

Short-term implementation (2026–2027)

While the classification system is being developed, II athletes may participate in demonstration or promotional races during selected ICF and ECA international events.

These activities will follow a controlled admission process, temporarily replacing formal classification procedures. National Federations will be asked to ensure:

- Submission of a documentation package including the *Certificate of Diagnosis*, the *Training and Sport Activity Limitations form (TSAL)*, and the required consent forms.
- A medical declaration confirming that the athlete presents an intellectual/cognitive impairment and can participate safely under supervision.

As a first step towards this objective, we kindly request your collaboration by

completing a short survey designed to help the ICF better understand the current situation in each country and the level of interest in participating in the II development pathway.

The results of this survey will guide the future actions of the Working Group and support effective international collaboration.

Role of National Federations

National Federations are invited to:

- Support II athlete participation in demonstration events under the interim admission procedure.
- Nominate a technical contact or coach to liaise with the Working Group during pilot phases.
- Provide structured feedback on feasibility, clarity of procedures, and athlete experiences.

The ICF thanks all Federations already supporting this initiative and looks forward to continuing, together with Virtus and IPC, to build a transparent, inclusive, and evidence-based pathway for athletes with Intellectual Impairment in Paracanoe.

For more information or to express your Federation's interest in participating as a pilot country, please contact:

ICF Paracanoe Committee – II Working Group:

- Ismael Uali- ismael.uali@canoeicf.sport

Please fill out the following 2 (two) surveys to facilitate the process;

1. [Mini-TSAL for athletes.](#)
2. [Survey on the situation of National Federations.](#)

Regards,
John Edwards
Chair ICF Paracanoe Committee

Cc Michael T Okubo
Athlete and Entourage Manager ICF

01 May, 2026