



Cycling / Mountain Biking Data Summary



SEE SUSTAINABILITY AND
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
IN OUTDOOR SPORTS



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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Project Partners

Leave No Trace (Ireland)

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Sport Northern Ireland (UK)

INEFC (Catalonia, Spain)

Surf Clube de Viana (Portugal)

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IMBA Europe (Europe Wide)

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INTRODUCTION

The Sustainability and Environmental Education (SEE) Project has been developed by member of the European Network of Outdoor Sports to develop mechanisms for training of leaders, instructors and guides in a range of outdoor sports in environmental issues. The training toolkit will be developed in Work Package 2 of the project. However, the first stage of the project was to understand what the issues are and also what federations and training organisations currently do provide.

Desktop research and surveys were developed to collect inputs from Protected Areas across Europe, to learn about the various impacts of outdoor sports and from federations to find out what information they provide on training courses.

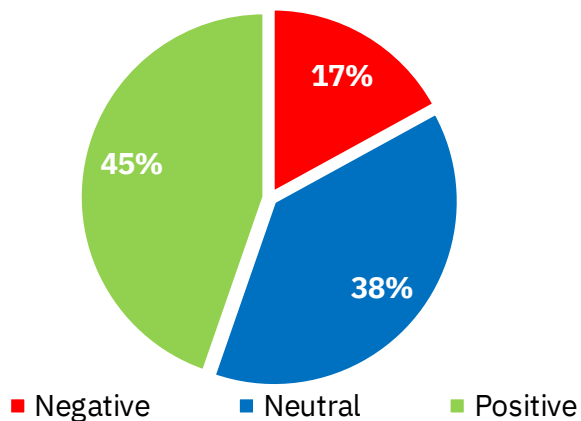
The outcomes of the data analysis will contribute to the preparation of a toolkit for outdoor sports' trainers and educators to ensure a more sustainable, respectful and enjoyable experience of being active in nature.



1. The Protected Areas Survey

The SEE project partners received data from 94 Protected Areas from 24 countries. Of these 97% have implemented some form of regulations to manage outdoor sports – most frequently permit requirements (69%) and restriction of access (67%). The majority of respondents (65%) also indicated that the authority of their Protected Area engages with the outdoor sports sector in decision-making for related regulations.

Chart 1 Overall perception of Outdoor Sports (%)



Overall, most respondents perceive outdoor sports in their Protected Area as a positive (45%) or neutral (38%) phenomenon, but each sport has unique impacts on habitats and ecosystems (see chart 1).

To examine the issues, a scale was used with a rating of 0 (no impact) to 6 (major impact). The respondents were asked to rate each sport’s impacts under a series of issues that were relevant for that specific sport such as littering, disturbance to fauna, trampling of plants etc.

Within all outdoor sports disturbance to wild fauna was identified as the most prominent issue (average rating 2.5), while issues related to wildfires were identified as an issue of least concern (average 0.8) among the issues listed. Issues arising from high visitor numbers (overcrowding parking issues) and from irresponsible behaviour (littering, conflicts, practice in restricted areas or times) were all common but ranked relatively low in terms of concern.

Most respondents (80%) indicated that through the pandemic, outdoor sports became more popular and that overall there is a higher level of irresponsible usage by their practitioners.



Issues connected to Cycling/Mountain Biking and perceived level of impact

The survey asked respondents to highlight issues associated with cycling, mountain biking and E-biking all separately. However, it is likely that there has been some inadvertent cross over between these. Therefore, data below is presented for all three.

50 of the protected areas (53%) that responded to the survey indicated that cycling is one of the main activities within the area.

53 (56%) indicated that mountain biking is one of the main activities within the area.

33 (35%) indicated that E-biking is one of the main activities within the area.

Protected Areas were asked the type of impacts that the sport had on the environment and 13 categories were created and ranked from 0 (no impact) – 6 (major impact) for cycling and 12 for both MTB and e-biking. (Damage to facilities was the additional category for cycling).

Cycling had an average score of 1.83 out of 6 in terms of the impacts that it creates.

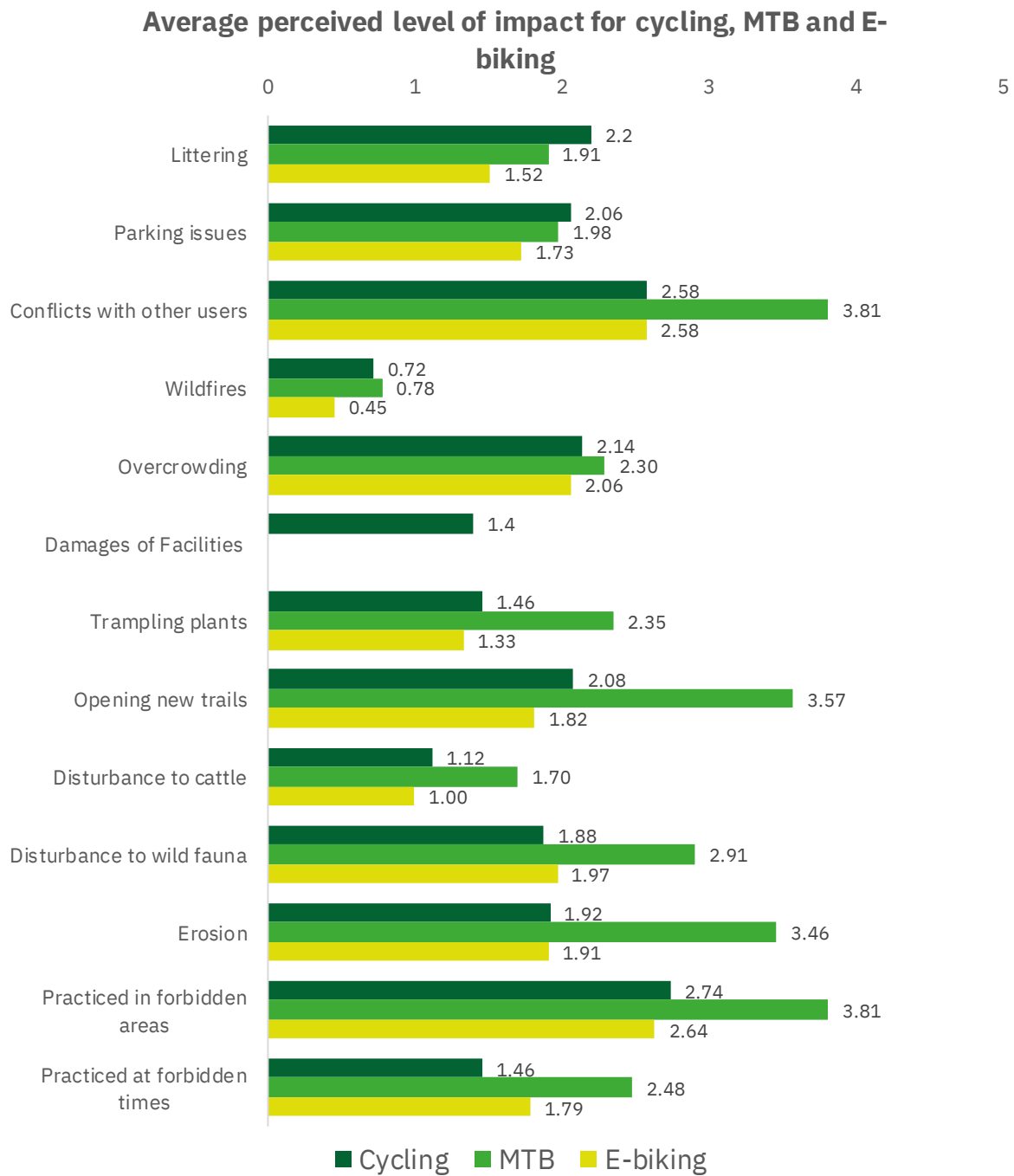
Mountain biking had an average score of 2.59 out of 6 in terms of the impacts that it creates.

E-biking had an average score of 1.73 out of 6 in terms of the impacts that it creates.



Chart 2 Average scores for perceived issues

(Scale from 0 = no impact to 6 = major impact)



Cycling

8 respondents (8.5%) identified cycling as one of the least compliant sports with rules, regulations or policies.

5 respondents indicated that they engage most with cycling while 3 indicated that they engage least with the sport.

There were 5 additional issues mentioned which highlighted issues of conflict and also safety for the users themselves.

Table 1 Average score and frequency of scores for each issue for cycling

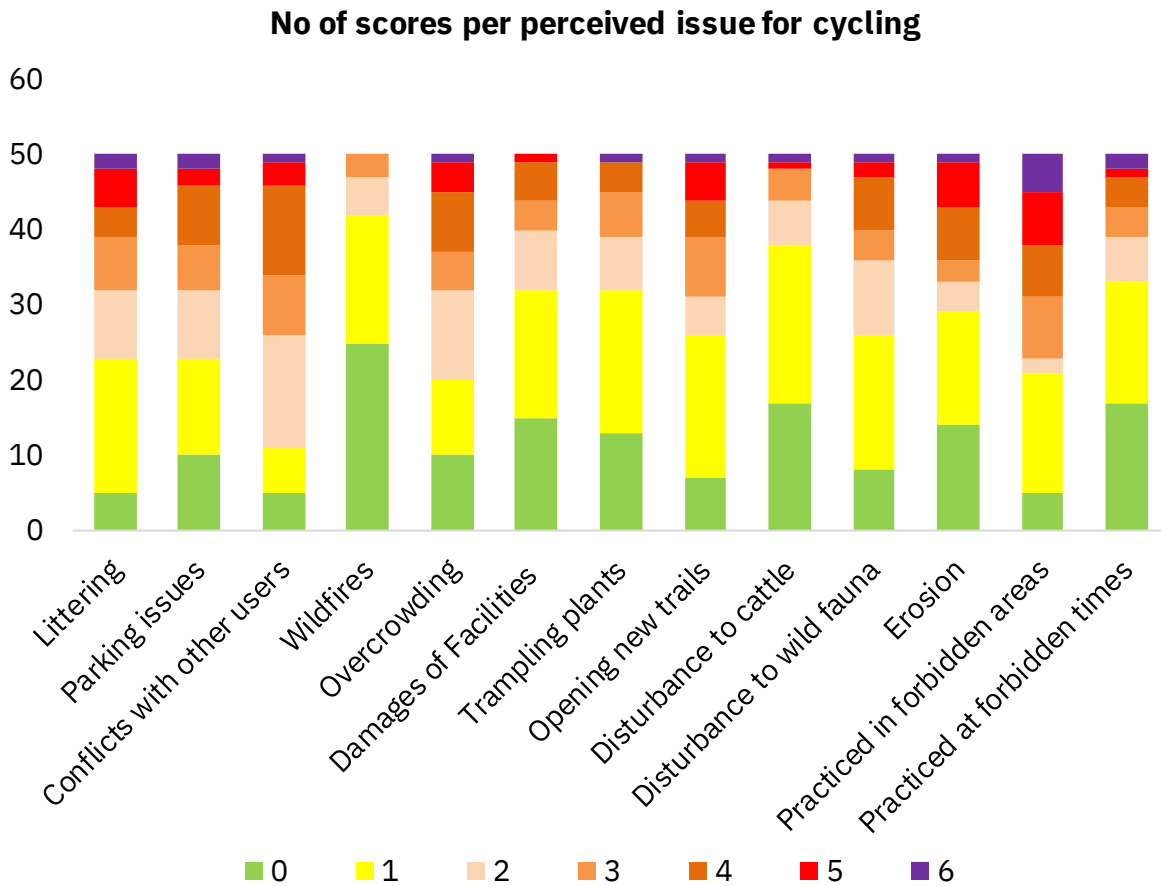
(scale from “0 = no impact” to “6 = major impact”)

Issue	Average score	Frequency of scores						
		Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4	Score 5	Score 6
Littering	2.20	5	18	9	7	4	5	2
Parking issues	2.06	10	13	9	6	8	2	2
Conflicts with other users	2.58	5	6	15	8	12	3	1
Wildfires	0.72	25	17	5	3	0	0	0
Overcrowding	2.14	10	10	12	5	8	4	1
Damages of Facilities	1.4	15	17	8	4	5	1	0
Trampling plants	1.46	13	19	7	6	4	0	1
Opening new trails	2.08	7	19	5	8	5	5	1
Disturbance to cattle	1.12	17	21	6	4	0	1	1
Disturbance to wild fauna	1.88	8	18	10	4	7	2	1
Erosion	1.92	14	15	4	3	7	6	1
Practiced in forbidden areas	2.74	5	16	2	8	7	7	5
Practiced at forbidden times	1.46	17	16	6	4	4	1	2



Chart 3 Perceived Issues related to Cycling and associated impact

(Scale from “0 = no impact” to “6 = major impact”)



Mountain biking

29 respondents (30.8%) identified mountain biking as one of the least compliant sports with rules, regulations or policies.

7 respondents indicated that they engage most with mountain bikers while 6 indicated that they engage least with the sport.

There were 5 additional issues mentioned which highlighted issues of conflict and also safety for other users. There was also concern raised about noise levels especially music from mobile phones.

Table 2 Average score and frequency of scores for each issue for mountain biking

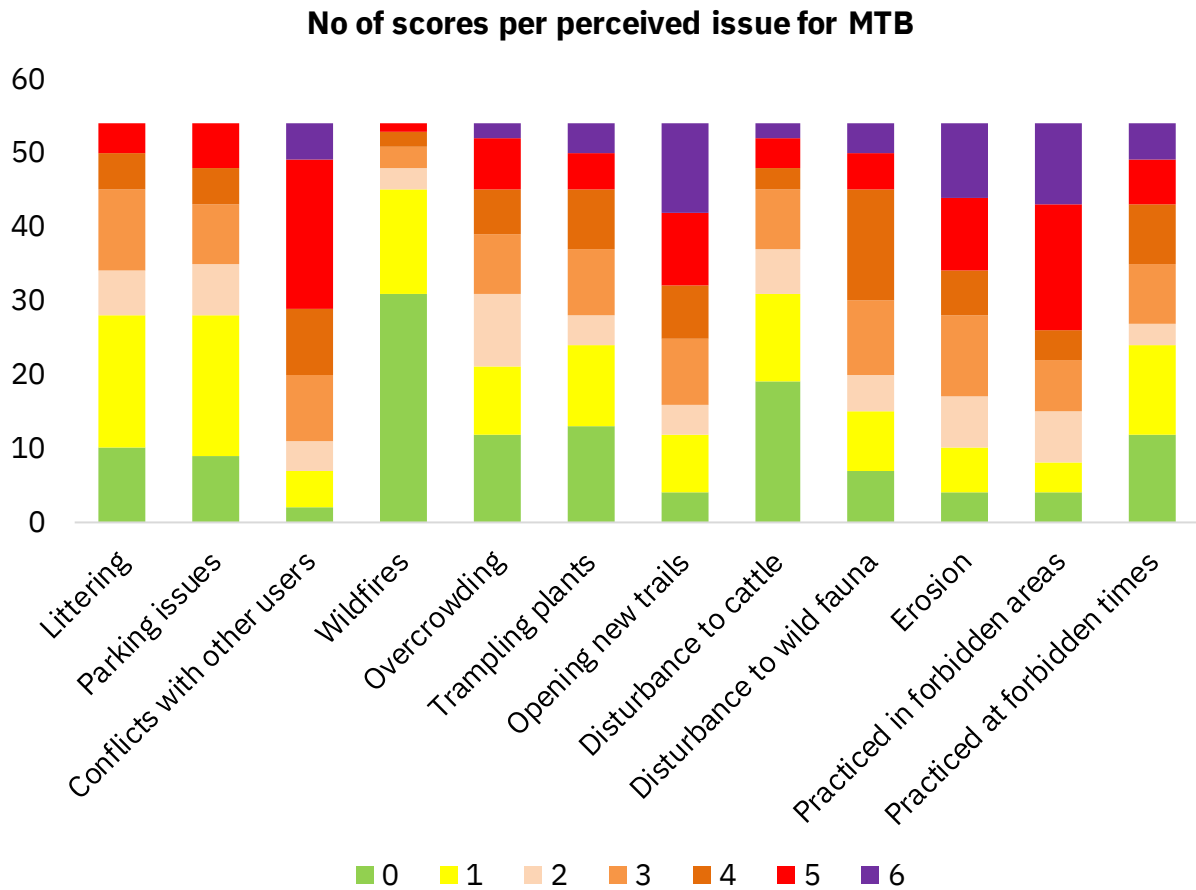
(scale from “0 = no impact” to “6 = major impact”)

Issue	Average score	Frequency of scores						
		Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4	Score 5	Score 6
Littering	1.91	10	18	6	11	5	4	0
Parking issues	1.98	9	10	7	8	5	6	0
Conflicts with other users	3.81	2	5	4	9	9	20	5
Wildfires	0.78	31	14	3	3	2	1	0
Overcrowding	2.30	12	8	10	8	6	7	2
Trampling plants	2.35	13	11	4	9	8	5	4
Opening new trails	3.57	4	8	4	9	7	10	12
Disturbance to cattle	1.70	19	12	6	8	3	4	2
Disturbance to wild fauna	2.91	7	8	5	10	15	5	4
Erosion	3.46	4	6	7	11	6	10	10
Practiced in forbidden areas	3.81	4	4	7	7	4	17	11
Practiced at forbidden times	2.48	12	12	3	8	8	6	5



Chart 4 Issues related to mountain biking and associated impact

(scale from “0 = no impact” to “6 = major impact”)



E- biking

5 respondents (5.3%) identified E-biking as one of the least compliant sports with rules, regulations, or policies.

No respondents indicated that they engage most with e-bikers while 1 indicated that they engage least with the sport.

There were 2 additional issues mentioned which highlighted issues of higher speeds associated with e-bikes and the risks that this can pose to other users.

Table 3 Average score and frequency of scores for each issue for mountain biking

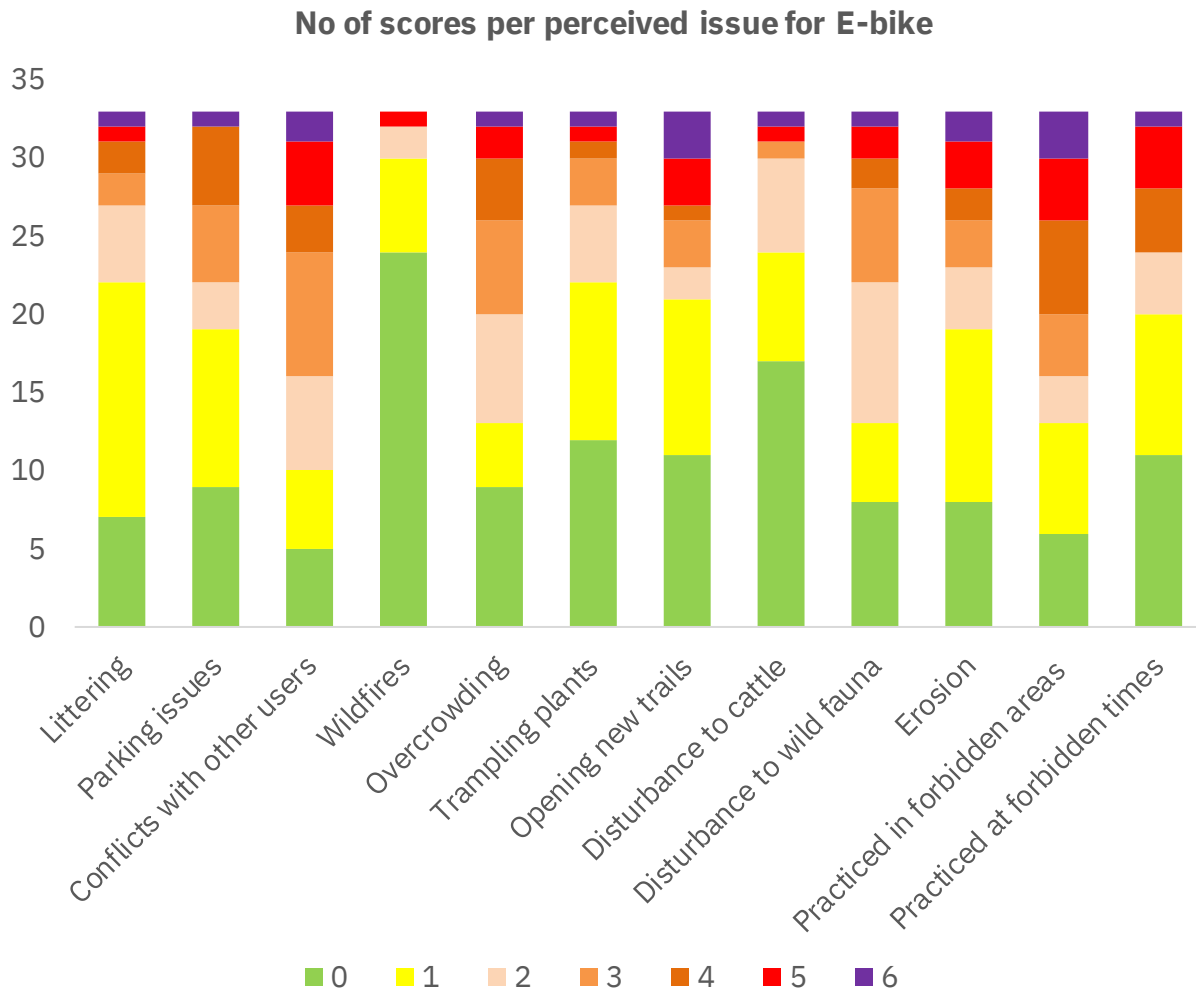
(scale from “0 = no impact” to “6 = major impact”)

Issue	Average score	Frequency of scores						
		Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4	Score 5	Score 6
Littering	1.52	7	15	5	2	2	1	1
Parking issues	1.73	9	10	3	5	5	0	1
Conflicts with other users	2.58	5	5	6	8	3	4	2
Wildfires	0.45	24	9	2	0	0	1	0
Overcrowding	2.06	9	4	7	6	4	2	1
Trampling plants	1.33	12	10	5	3	1	1	1
Opening new trails	1.82	11	10	2	3	1	3	3
Disturbance to cattle	1.00	17	7	6	1	0	1	1
Disturbance to wild fauna	1.97	8	5	9	6	2	2	1
Erosion	1.91	8	11	4	3	2	3	2
Practiced in forbidden areas	2.64	6	7	3	4	6	4	3
Practiced at forbidden times	1.79	11	9	4	0	4	4	1



Chart 5 Issues related to E-biking and associated impact

(scale from “0 = no impact” to “6 = major impact”)



Common features and quotes

66% of respondents find that OS in their Protected Area are linked to better awareness of nature and environmental issues, and 65% believe that their Protected Area is more valued by OS practitioners.

“Outdoor recreation plays a key role in building awareness of the natural world - it's much easier to foster an ethos of care for resources that people can experience at first hand.”

“Many outdoor sports enthusiasts are nature lovers and therefore enjoy coming to the national park. This is an opportunity to raise awareness of our goals among these groups.”

“Better informed, sportsmen and women often become actors of nature and landscape conservation.”

However, 8.5 % said that they don't see any significant benefit in OS for their Protected Area, and in total 17% of respondents perceive OS as a negative phenomenon in their Protected Area. The partners in the SEE project believe that this can be changed through environmental education and focus on sustainability in OS. In the survey, respondents were asked to share important features or messages they would like OS practitioners to know, which would inspire them to take better care of the Protected Area.

In general, respondents would emphasise features of natural heritage (such as characteristic habitats and vulnerable species), issues related to soil (e.g. erosion, vulnerability of sandstone or dead wood and associated soil processes) and demands related to responsible and respectful behaviour.

“Be responsible for your own actions, show consideration to other users and don't allow your activities to damage the area.”

If you want to read the full report or find out more about the SEE project you can follow us on the project website <https://www.see-project.eu/> or our social media account [SEE-project | Facebook](#) @SEE.Project.Europe



2. Examination of Cycling (INCLUDING Mountain-biking) Federations' websites

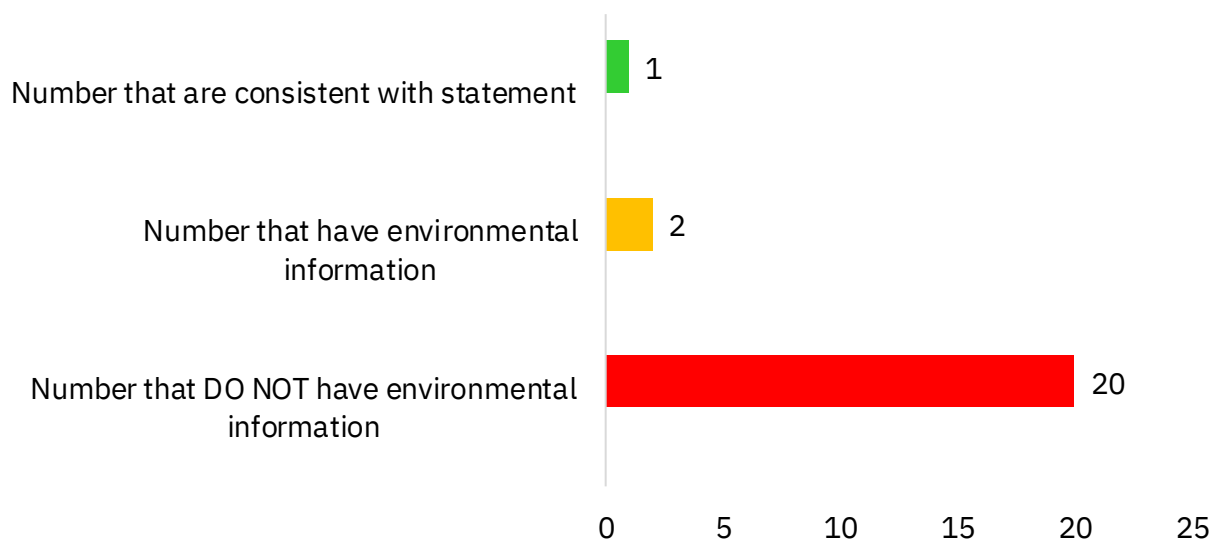
Following on from this work, partners to the project examined the websites of the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) and the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) as well as the websites of the federations in 18 countries including the partner countries.

The UCI has no information on sustainability and the environment but IMBA has some very good information with a section of the website dedicated to sustainability issues and good guidance on responsibility for riders. <https://www.imba.com/ride/responsible-riding>

Of the 18 countries examined, 22 national cycling federations' websites were found (some countries have more than 1 federation) and of these 4 (18%) had any form of environmental information. Of these 4 only 1 was of a standard that was consistent with the statement for sustainability and environmental education that the SEE project partners had developed. (See Appendix).

Chart 6

Cycling federations' websites and environmental information



3. Survey of Federations and Training Organisations

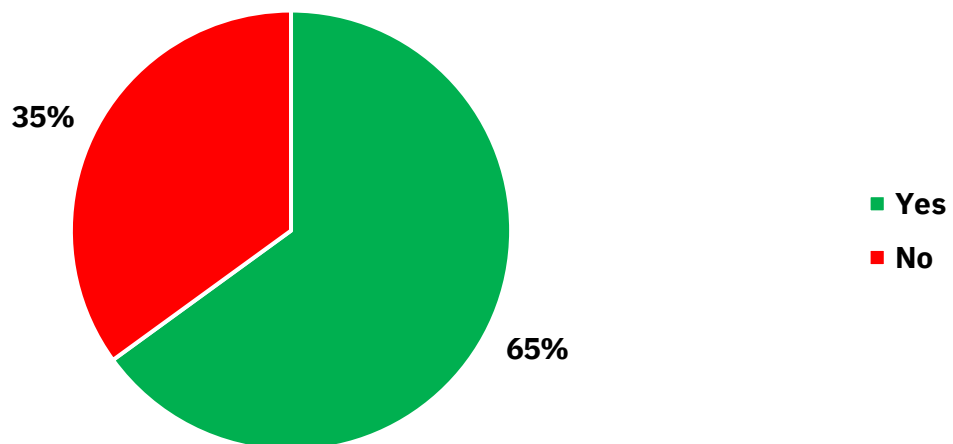
A survey was then carried out with outdoor sport federations in the partner countries and 20 cycling/MTB federations responded to this survey. While the data provided does provide some interesting information it should not be taken as representative of cycling and mountain biking federations across Europe.

Respondents provided answers on how they undertake environmental education (if at all) within their leadership training programmes and this included the amount of time spent on courses. However, the first question was on the provision of environmental training for outdoor leaders / guides / instructors as a required part of the training course.

Of the 20 responses received, 13 (65%) indicated that they do provide environmental training as part of the course while 7 (35%) do not provide this training.

Chart 7

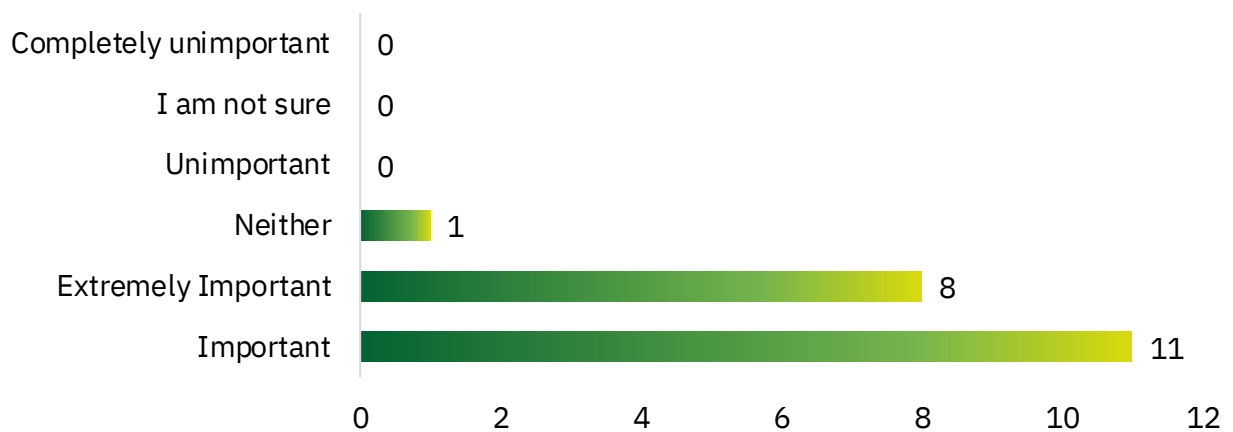
Do you provide environmental training for outdoor leaders / guides / instructors as a required part of their training course?



The survey asked federations how important they felt that environmental knowledge and awareness was for their sport’s leaders, guides, or instructors? 95% (n=19) indicated that it was either important or extremely important (See Chart 8).

Chart 8

How important in your federation is environmental knowledge and awareness for your sport’s leaders, guides or instructors?



This led on to a question to try to understand what the main reasons for not providing environmental training were. In recognition that there was probably no single reason why environmental education is not included within training regimes a scoring system was established for federations to rate the reasons. A score of 1 = least important reason while a score of 5 = most important.

The survey provided five options of reasons as follows:

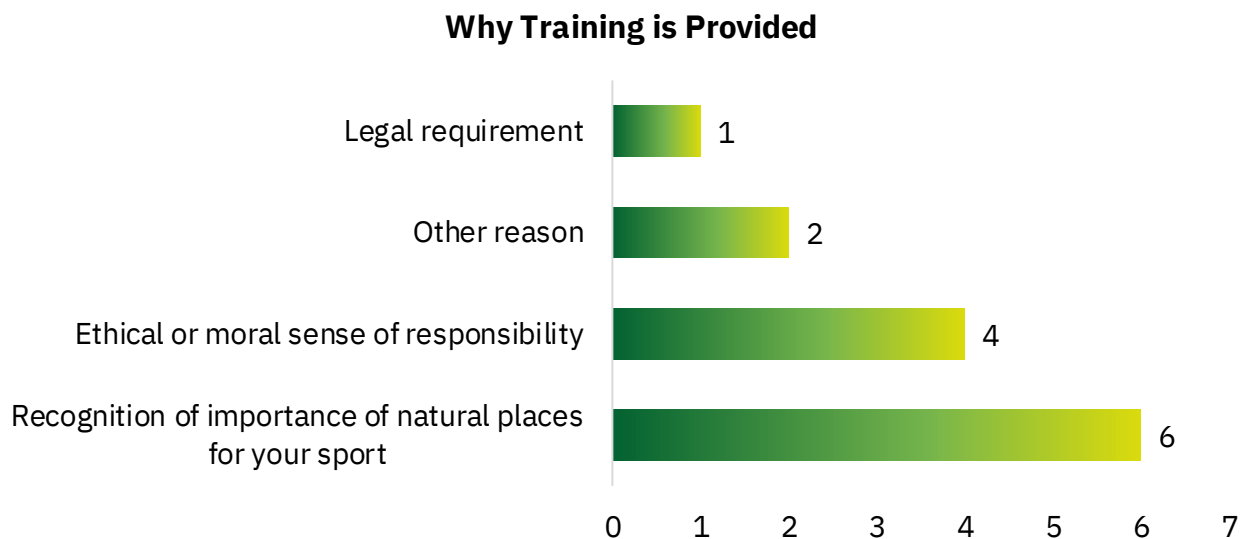
1. Not enough time on courses
2. Different priorities
3. Lack of knowledge by training providers
4. Not seen as important
5. Other reason (with the opportunity to state this)



The main reasons why the six federations out of the twenty do not provide training were primarily different priorities, not enough time on courses and to a lesser degree lack of knowledge by training providers. “Not seen as important was deemed to be the least important reason. “Other” reasons which were associated with it not being required to access a National Park and not having adequate resources to develop environmental training.

Thirteen out of the twenty federations did provide this training and the main reasons for this were as per chart 9.

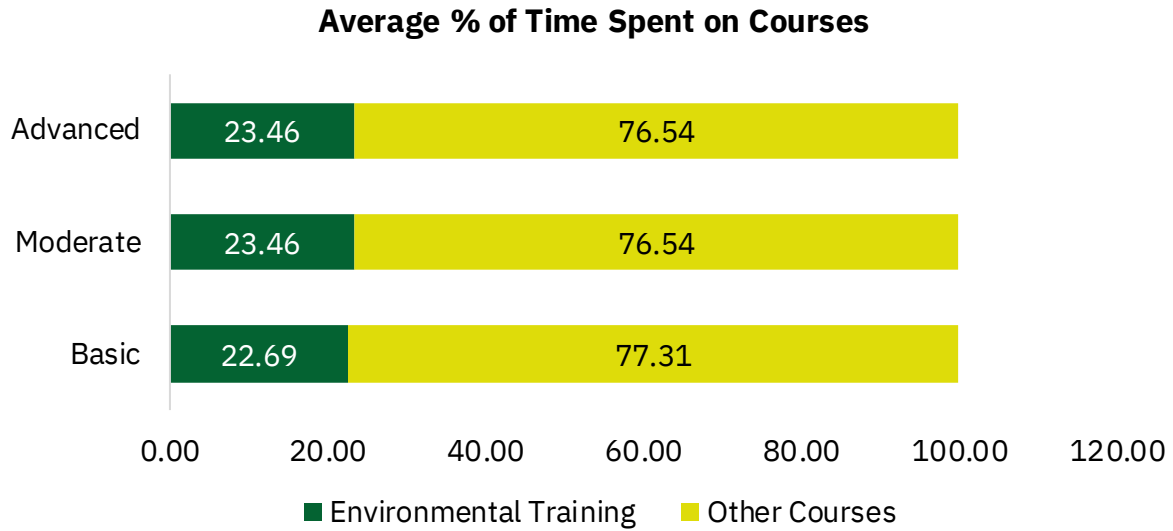
Chart 9



They had also been asked how much time was spent on this at basic, moderate and advanced levels and there is slightly more time spent on this at moderate and advanced levels.



Chart 10

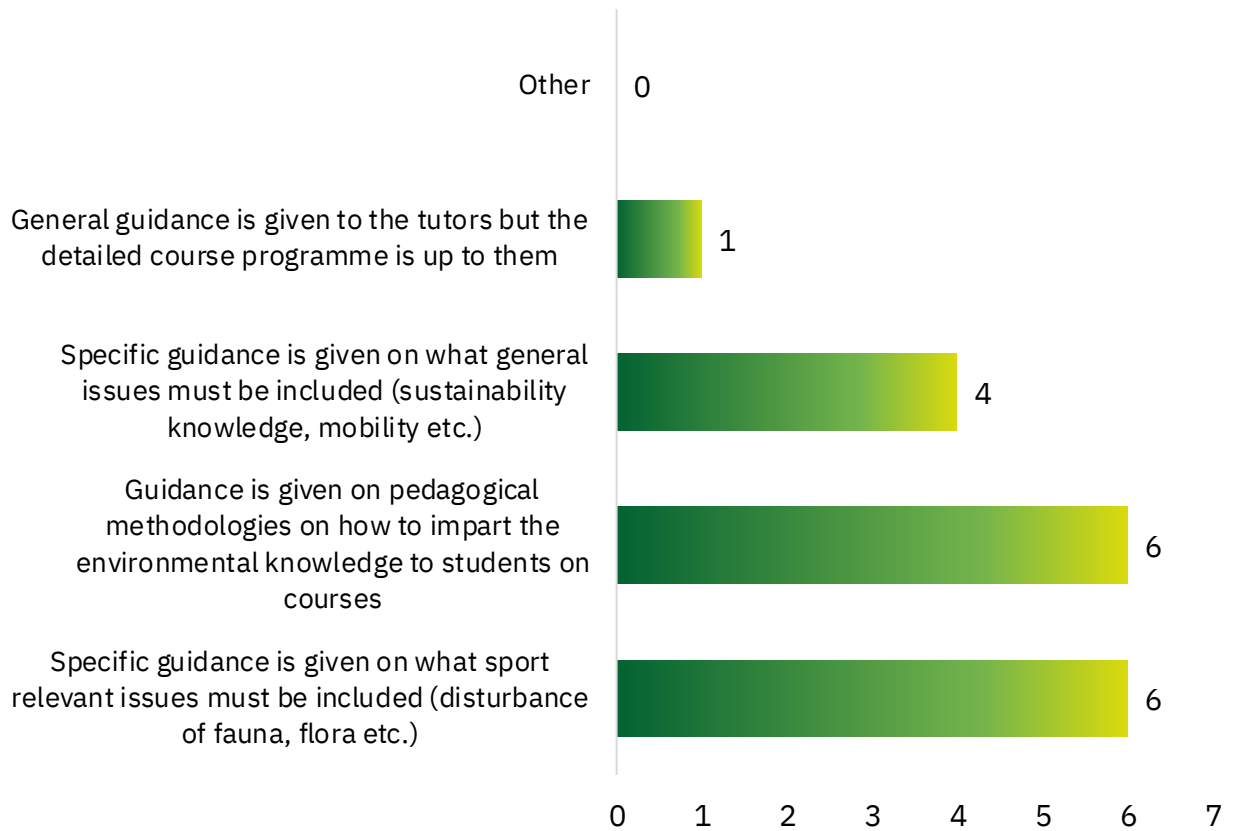


The next question asked was on what type of guidance is provided to the tutors who impart the training and for the two top responses were ‘Specific guidance is given on what sport relevant issues must be included (disturbance of fauna, flora etc.)’ and ‘Guidance is given on pedagogical methodologies on how to impart the environmental knowledge to students on courses’.



Chart 11

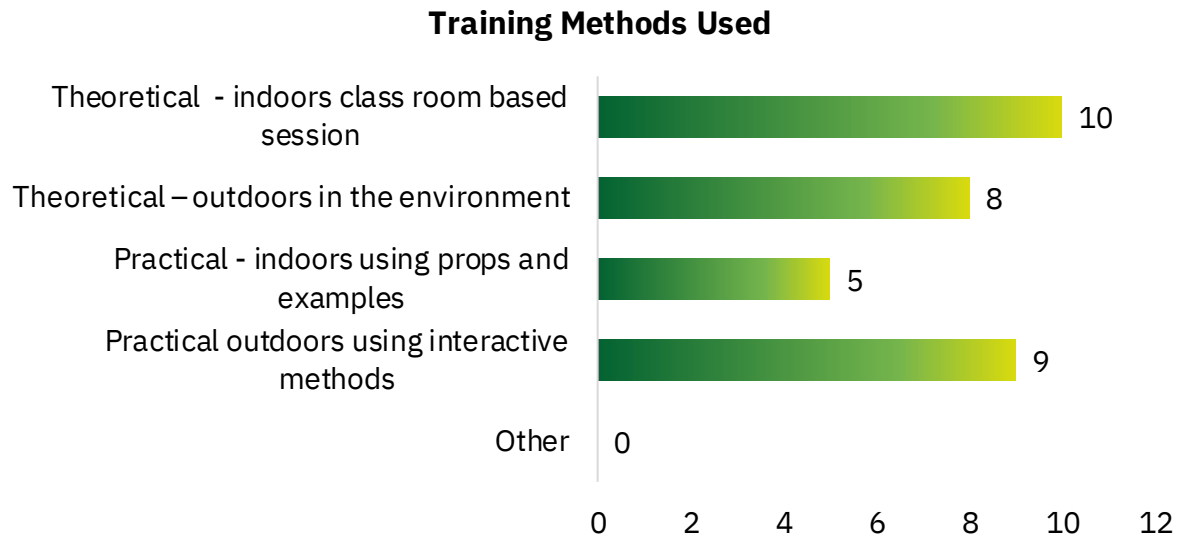
What Guidance is Provided



It was interesting to find out whether they employed theoretical or practical methods to impart the environmental information. As can be seen from chart 12, the majority of the methods used were theoretical rather than practical (18 versus 14)



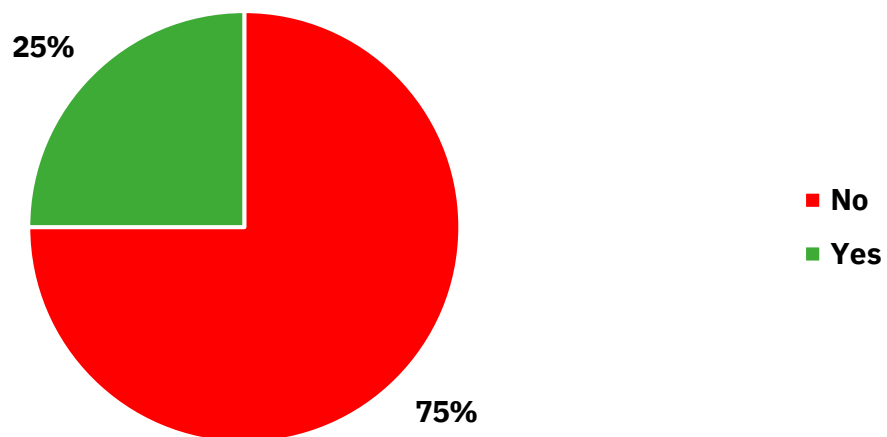
Chart 12



25% (5) of the Cycling and Mountain Biking federations who returned a response indicated that they had some form of key ambassador or champion for the environment while 75% (15) did not.

Chart 13

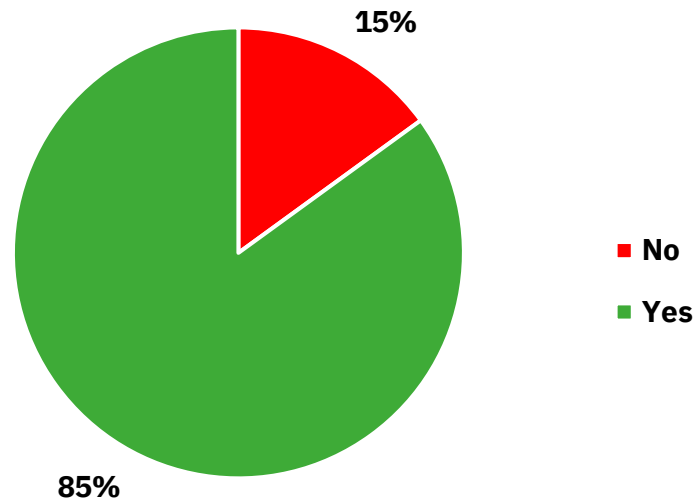
Do you have any key ambassadors or champions for the environment in your federation?



When asked if they would like to be kept informed of the SEE project, 85% said that they wished to be kept informed which is very positive for the project's dissemination.

Chart 14

Please keep me informed about the SEE project's developments



Appendix – Definition and Statement

As the SEE project has been developed through the European Network of Outdoor Sports (ENOS), the partners have adopted the ENOS definition for outdoor sports.

ENOS Definition of Outdoor Sports

We have defined outdoor sports as activities

- that are normally carried out with a (strong) relation to nature and landscape and the core aim is dealing with natural elements rather than with an object

- It may include activities that have their roots in natural places but use artificial structures designed to replicate the natural environment.

- where the natural setting is perceived by users, as at most, only minimally modified by human beings*

- that are perceived as (at least minimally) physically demanding

- that are based on man or natural element power and are not motorized during the sport itself

- that may use some form of tool (for example a surfboard, bicycle, skis etc) or just involve the human body

- * does not have to be wild, just perceived as natural

SEE Project Statement on Sustainability and Environmental Education

This project focuses on how outdoor sports training organisations educate their leaders and instructors on issues of sustainability and the natural environment.

This is not about teaching participants about how the natural environment affects us whereby the focus is safety (e.g. avalanche risk, floods in rivers etc.) Rather it is focused on how our activities affect the environment.

Sustainability for this project is the notion that the activity or consumption of resources in the present does not compromise the ability of future generations to also participate.

The term of Environmental relates to the local natural setting, protected areas that are highly used for activities and the global issues facing our natural environment and the planet as a whole.





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