



# HANG GLIDING / PARAGLIDING Data Summary



**SEE** SUSTAINABILITY AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION  
IN OUTDOOR SPORTS



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# Hang Gliding / Paragliding Data summary



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## Project Partners

Leave No Trace (Ireland)  
 CREPS Rhone Alpes (Lead partner) (France)  
 Technical University Munich (Germany)  
 Sport Northern Ireland (UK)  
 INEFC (Catalonia, Spain)

Surf Clube de Viana (Portugal)  
 EUROPARC Federation (Europe Wide)  
 Folkungaland (Sweden) Tara  
 Mountain Club (Serbia)  
 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.

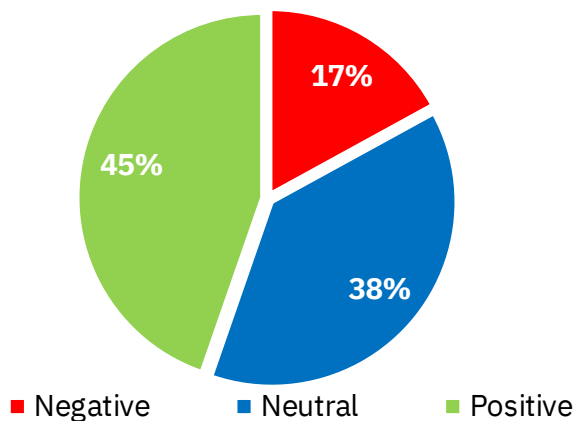
The outcomes of the data analysis will contribute to the preparation of a toolkit for outdoor sports' trainers and educators to ensure a more sustainable, respectful and enjoyable experience of being active in nature.



## 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 paragliding / hang gliding and perceived level of impact

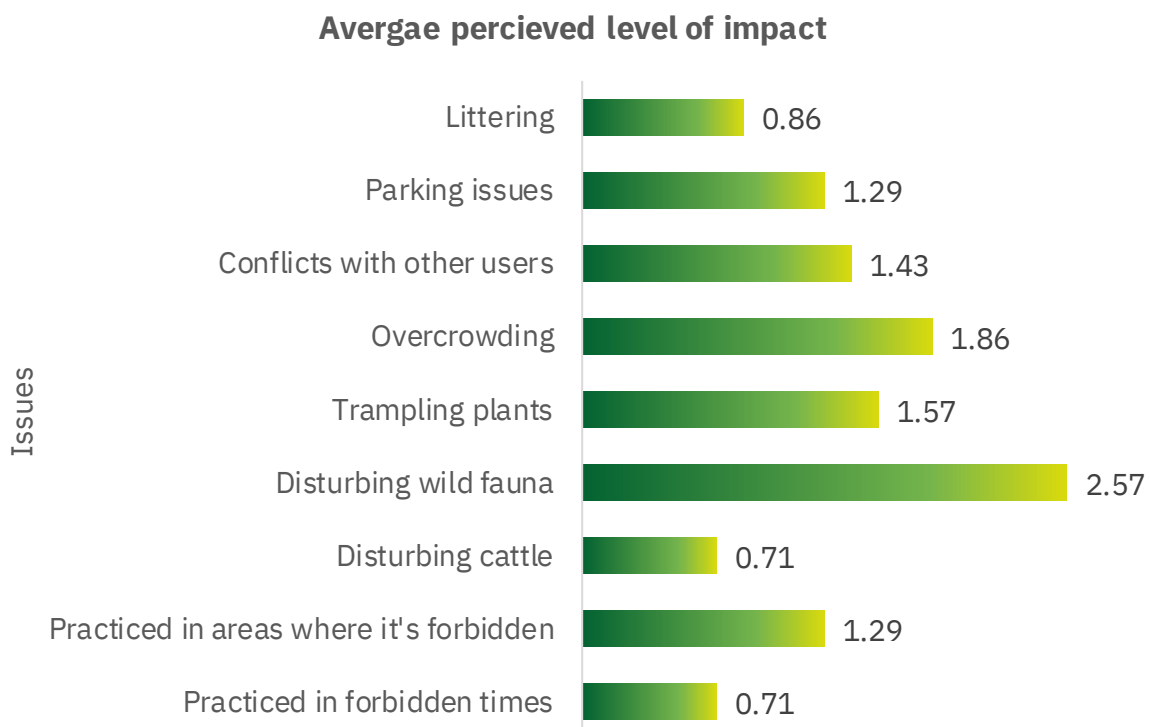
7 of the Protected Areas (4%) that responded to the survey indicated that paragliding or hang gliding are one of the main activities within the area.

Protected Areas were asked the type of impacts that the sport had on the environment and 9 categories were created and ranked from 0 (no impact) – 6 (major impact).

Overall, the sport had an average score of 1.37 out of 6 in terms of the impacts that it creates.

### Chart 2 Average score for perceived issues

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



No additional issues were mentioned by respondents.

No respondents indicated that they engage most with paragliding but three indicated that they engage least with the sport.

1 respondent identified paragliding or hang gliding as one of the least compliant sports with rules, regulations, or policies.

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

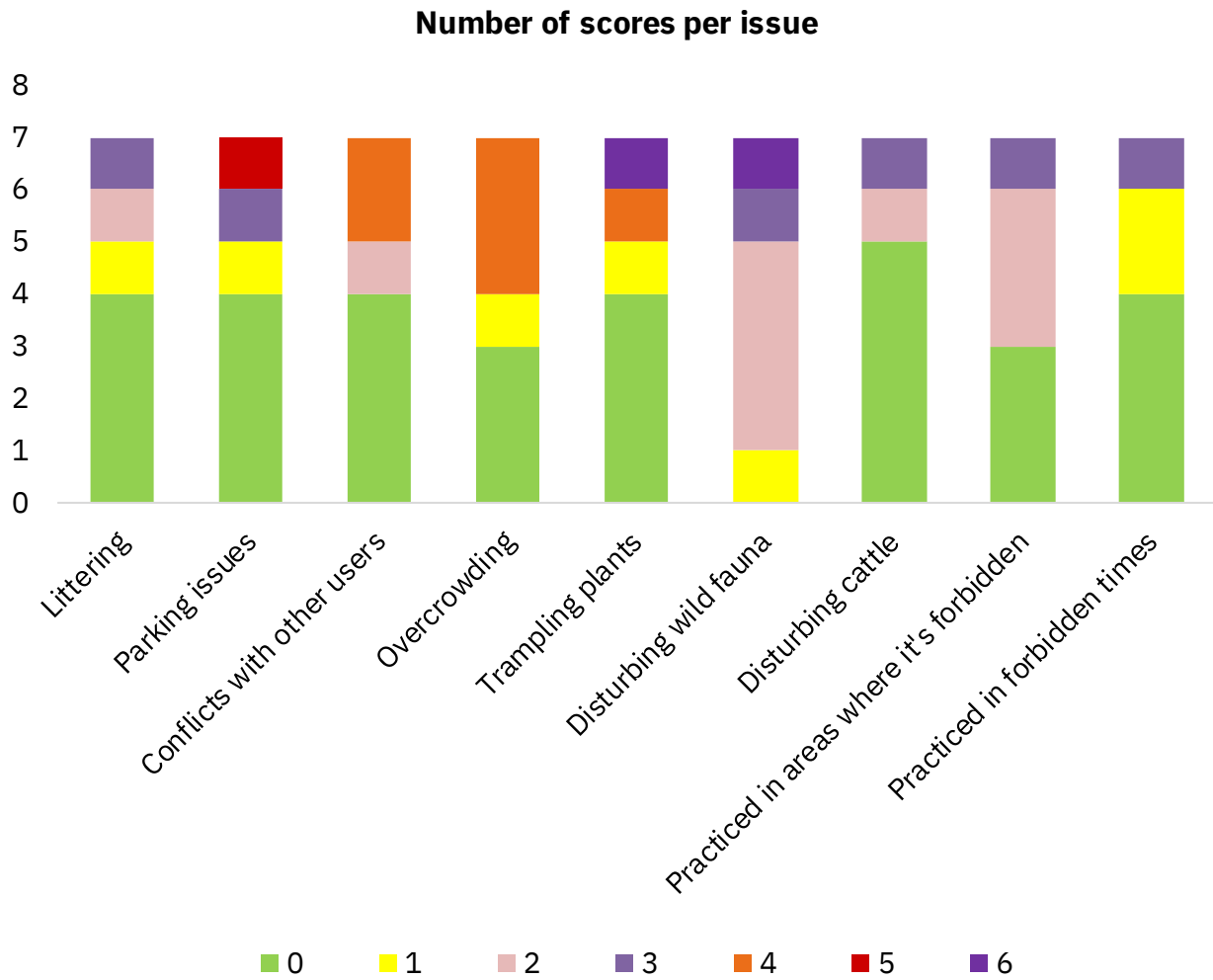
(scale from “0 = no impact” to “6 = major impact”)

Issue	Average score	Frequency of scores						
		Score 0	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4	Score 5	Score 6
Littering	0.86	4	1	1	1	0	0	0
Parking issues	1.29	4	1	0	1	0	1	0
Conflicts with other users	1.43	4	0	1	0	2	0	0
Overcrowding	1.86	3	1	0	0	3	0	0
Trampling plants	1.57	4	1	0	0	1	0	1
Disturbing wild fauna	2.57	0	1	4	1	0	0	1
Disturbing cattle	0.71	5	0	1	1	0	0	0
Practiced in areas where it's forbidden	1.29	3	0	3	1	0	0	0
Practiced in forbidden times	0.71	4	2	0	1	0	0	0



**Chart 3 Issues related to paragliding or hang gliding 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 Hang Gliding / Paragliding Federations websites

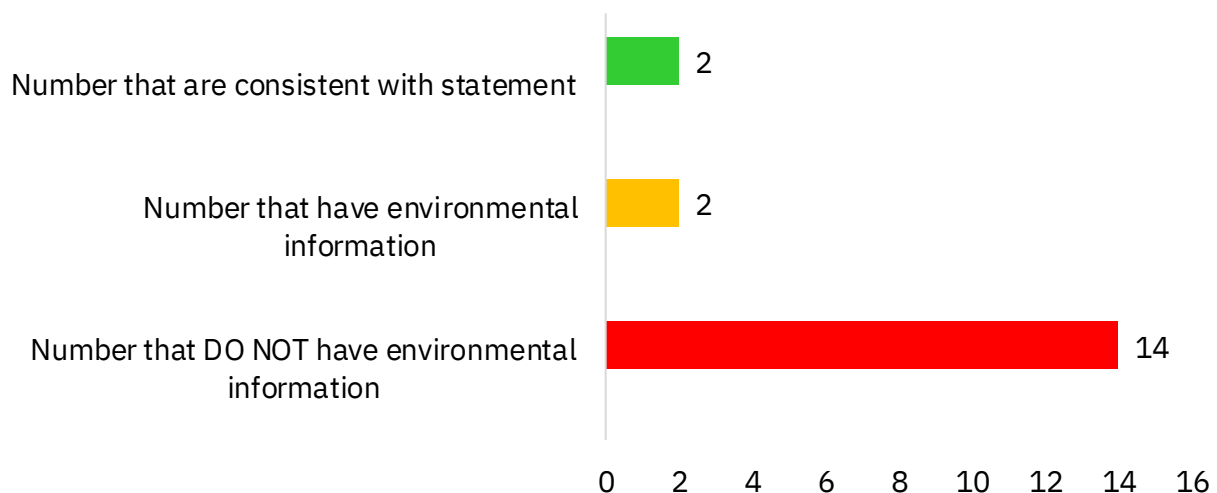
Following on from this work, partners to the project examined the websites of the World Air Sports Federation and the websites of the federations in 18 countries including the partner countries.

The World Air Sports Federation has good information on sustainability and the environment and this can be viewed at <https://www.fai.org/environment>. This includes a code of conduct and FAI also has an environment commission that has a stated aim to study air sports interactions with the natural environment.

Of the 18 countries examined, 16 federations' websites were found and of these 2 (13%) had any form of environmental information. Both of these 2 were of a standard that were consistent with the statement for sustainability and environmental education that the SEE project partners had developed. (See Appendix).

**Chart 4**

**Hang gliding / paragliding federations' websites and environmental information**



### 3. Survey of Federations and Training Organisations

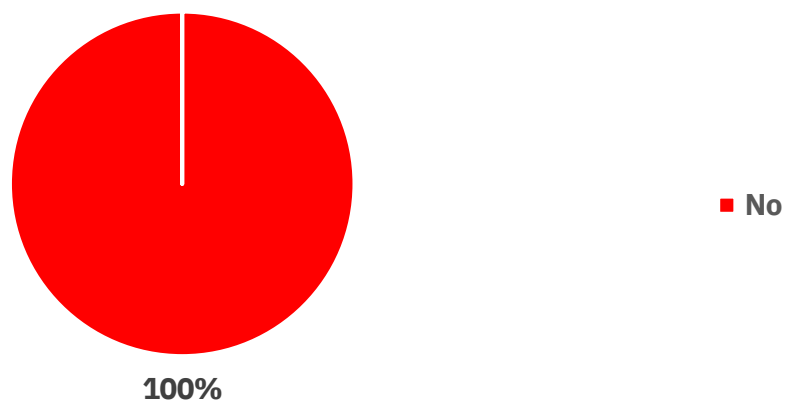
A survey was then carried out with outdoor sport federations in the partner countries and 1 hang gliding/para gliding federation responded to this survey. While the data provided does provide some interesting information it should not be taken as representative of hang gliding / paragliding federations across Europe.

The Respondent 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.

Regarding the 1 response we received, they indicated that they do not provide environmental training as part of the course.

#### Chart 5

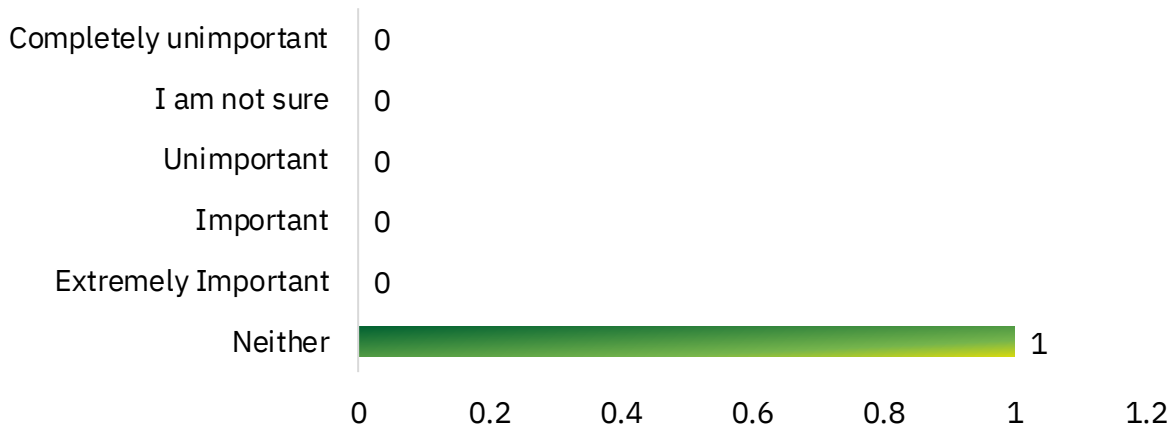
**Do you provide environmental training for outdoor leaders / guides / instructors as a required part of their training course?**



The survey asked federations how important they felt that environmental knowledge and awareness was for their sport’s leaders, guides or instructors? 100% (n=1) indicated that it was neither important nor unimportant (See Chart 6).

**Chart 6**

**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)



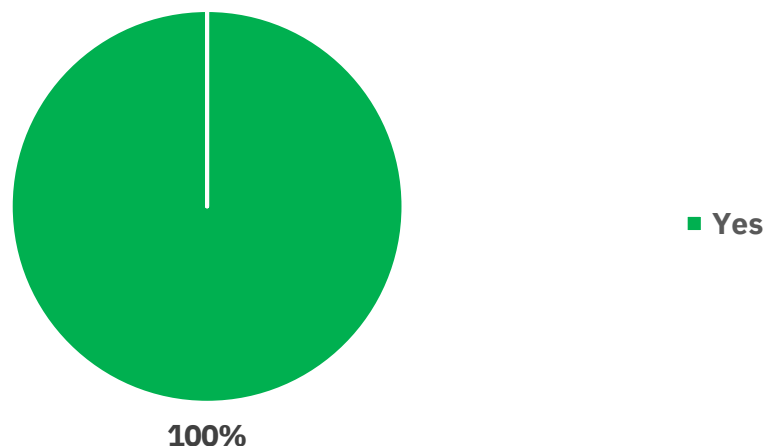
The main reasons why the federation did not provide training were primarily a lack of knowledge by training providers and to a lesser degree courses were not seen as important. Different priorities were deemed to be the least important reason. “Other” reasons were also a common choice and key reasons given were, “the training time does not allow to deal with this subject satisfactorily” & “no intervention (provision) on the subject in the federal qualifications”

The respondent federation did not provide this training so we cannot analyse the main reasons for providing training. Due to this lack of data, we also cannot analyse the percent of time spent on environmental training at basic, moderate, and advanced training, what guidance may have been provided, or training methods that may have been used.

The singular respondent federation indicated that they had some form of key ambassador or champion for the environment, (1, 100%) as seen from Chart 7 below.

#### Chart 7

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

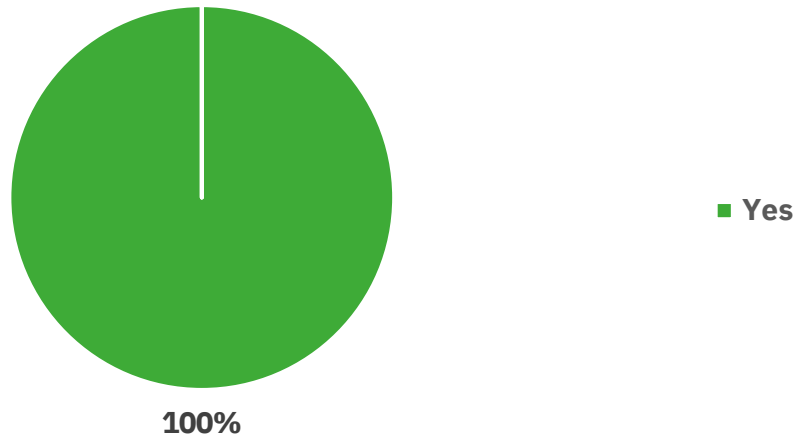


When asked if they would like to be kept informed of the SEE project, 100% said that they wished to be kept informed which is very positive for the project’s dissemination.



Chart 8

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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