

OCCUPATIONAL MAP FOR SPORT OFFICIATING IN EUROPE

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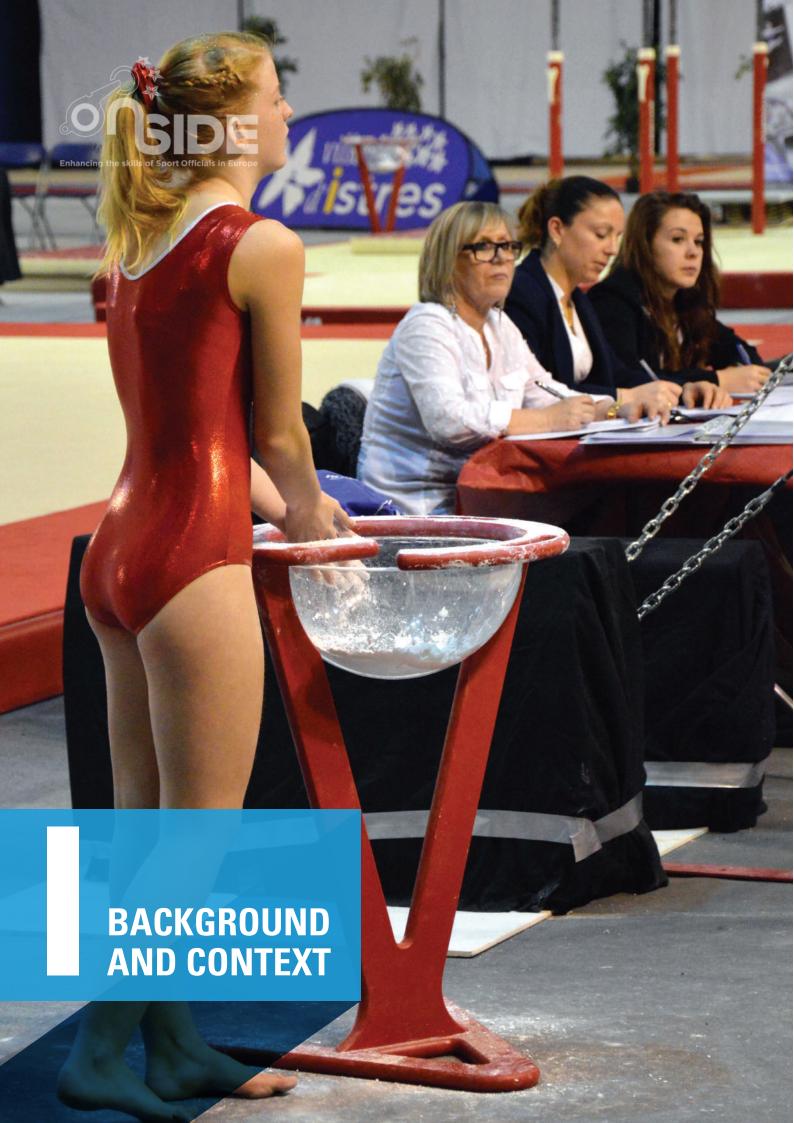


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A. THE ONSIDE PROJECT

The ONSIDE project (full title: 'Innovative Education to Enhance the Skills of Sport Officials in Europe') brought together key stakeholders from the world of sport officiating for the first time at the European level to develop a strategic approach to training and development.

Working under the leadership of the European Observatoire of Sport and Employment (EOSE, www.eose.org), the ONSIDE partners represent a unique combination of stakeholders dedicated to the advancement of sport officiating — three international/European sport federations, two national sport federations, one national sports council, one national Olympic committee, one university and two national associations of sport officials.

PARTNERSHIP OF THE ONSIDE PROJECT



COORDINATOR OF THE PROJECT

France / Europe

European Observatoire of Sport and Employment



France

Association Française du Corps Arbitral Multisports



United Kingdom

Sports Officials UK



Malta

SportMalta



United Kingdom

British Wheelchair Basketball



Switzerland / Europe

European Athletics



Luxembourg / Europe

European Table Tennis Union



Austria / Europe

European Handball Federation



Bulgaria

National Sports Academy «Vassil Levski»



Romania

Romanian Football Federation



Netherlands

Dutch Olympic Committee* Dutch Sports Federation

The partners worked together through an intense three-year programme of meetings and activity which culminated in an International Event on Sport Officiating, held online on 20 November 2020, which attracted 250 participants from 39 countries in Europe and beyond.

EOSE and the ONSIDE partners are particularly proud that their efforts have helped establish the International Federation for Sports Officials (IFSO, www.ifso.sport), founded at The Peace Palace in the city of The Hague (Netherlands) in March 2019. It is the first global membership organisation whose aim is to enhance officiating across all sports and nations. The ONSIDE partners see IFSO as the perfect vehicle to continue to promote the project's outputs to member organisations and the international sport sector on a sustainable basis. It was unanimously agreed, therefore, that IFSO should become the ONSIDE 'Legacy Partner'.



The ONSIDE project officially operated from January 2018 to December 2020 with funding from the Erasmus+ Sport Programme of the European Union, although the partners, along with the legacy partner IFSO, will continue to pursue its aims and promote the implementation of the innovative outputs through an agreed sustainability action plan.

Further information about the project can be found at www.onside-sport.eu and about IFSO at www.ifso.sport

B. PROMOTING AND DEVELOPING THE VITAL ROLE OF SPORT OFFICIALS

Sport officials are known by a variety of titles, but whatever they are called; organised sport cannot exist without them. The majority of sport officials work on a voluntary basis or only receive a nominal fee for their services, yet these are the people who keep almost all competitions from grassroots participation to elite level performance happening all year round. The simple message is 'NO SPORT OFFICIAL = NO SPORT' and that applies everywhere.

The sport official's exact title and role will depend on the sport in which they operate. Some of the main examples include:

Despite the importance of sport officials, they face many challenges. Their vital role is often not given the attention it deserves, and when they are noticed, the degree of respect they receive from competitors, coaches and spectators is rarely equal to the preparation, concentration and effort they put in when working under close scrutiny and huge pressure, often heightened by the increasing use of technology.

Thus, the fundamental work which sport officials do in keeping sporting events going, week by week and year by year, has generally been overlooked, undervalued and sometimes harshly and unfairly criticised. In many sports, their training and development can focus too narrowly on the technical aspects of their sport at the expense of broader competences such as communication, teamwork, conflict management and continuous improvement. They are often isolated within their specific sport and have few, if any, opportunities to learn from relevant practices in other sports.

ONSIDE, therefore, has worked tirelessly to increase the visibility, recognition and development of sport officials through the following activities:

- Conducting and disseminating reliable and valid research to underpin European sector-wide activity in the area
 of sport officiating;
- Boosting the profile of sport officiating to all key stakeholders in the world of sport;
- Encouraging networking so that officials in different sports can learn from each other;
- Defining the generic skills, knowledge and competences of sport officials, which are common across all sports and nations;
- Promoting education in the area of sport officiating and proposing new training pathways and development opportunities for sport officials to enhance their skills through innovative learning methods, including e-learning modules.

Finally, the ONSIDE project also promotes sport officiating as a voluntary activity in sport that enhances social inclusion and equal opportunities for all.

C. THE LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGY FOR SPORT – "THE 7 STEP MODEL"

A Systematic Approach to Developing Standards and Training Programmes for Sport Officials

In order to realise its ambitions for sport officiating, the ONSIDE Project has implemented the Lifelong Learning Strategy for Sport, known as the "7 Step Model". This model was devised by EOSE and has been tried and tested through other similar projects in the sport and physical activity sector.

The model provides a strategic framework which ensures that appropriate education, training and qualifications exist to support the development of the sector's workforce of paid staff and volunteers. It was developed in response to the main education and employment challenges in the sector and aligns with the main EU policies and tools in the fields of sport, employment and vocational education and training (VET).

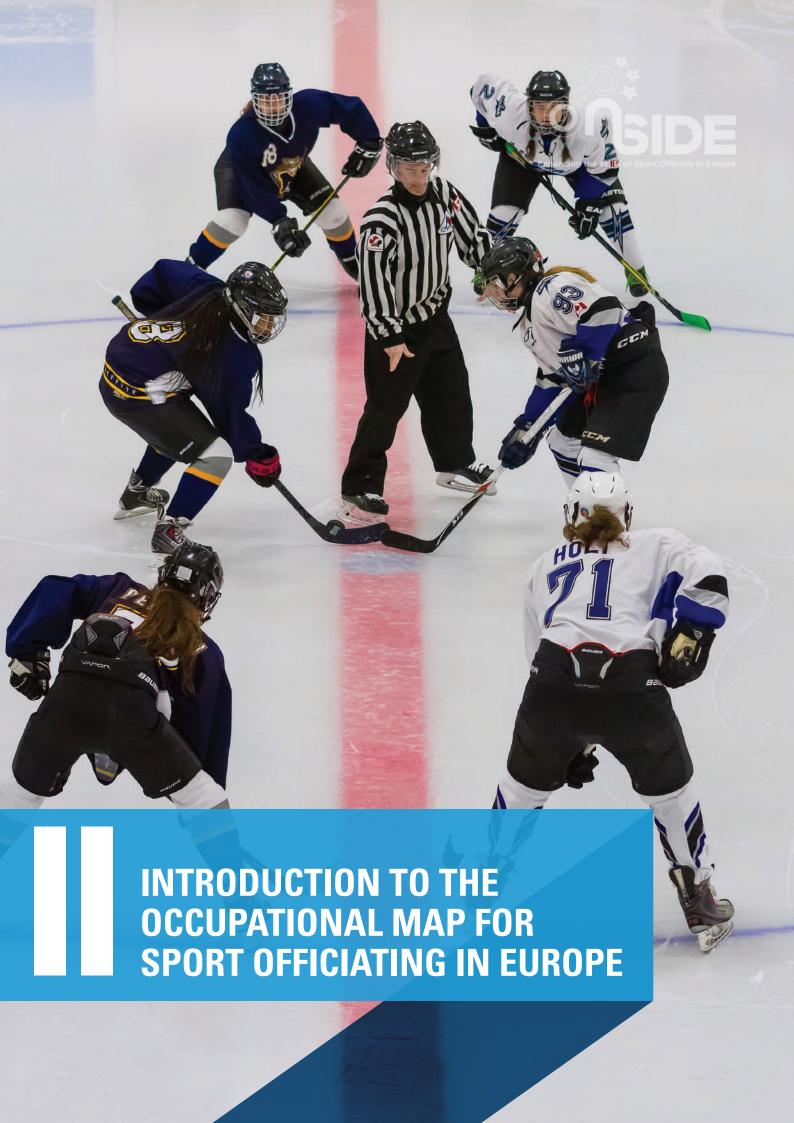
Implementing the 7 Step Model within the ONSIDE project has united the worlds of employment and education and built on the expertise of many experienced sport officials from a range of sports to ensure that the innovative education and training provision is fit for purpose and consistent with the needs and expectations of sport officiating.

The project has adopted a generic approach to sport officiating, i.e., it has tried to identify all of the main features of sport officiating, regardless of the individual sport, and identified all of the functions a competent sport official should be able to carry out at any level and in any context.

STEP 1	The model began with the collection of Labour Market Information (LMI) by conducting wide desk and primary research into the realities, characteristics and tendencies in sport officiating.	
STEP 2	The next step in the model produced an Occupational Map which further expands on the key characteristics of the sport officiating workforce of paid staff and volunteers.	
STEP 3	The model then described the different roles in sport officiating and facilitated the development of an Occupational Descriptor for sport officiating.	
STEP 4	The project supported the sport officiating employment and education stakeholders and expert partners to develop a Functional Map outlining all of the main functions a competent sport official should be able to carry out.	
STEP 5	The stakeholders and expert partners in sport officiating developed the functional map to a greater level of detail to produce Occupational Standards . These standards take each of the functions in the functional map and add performance criteria which will enable an official's performance to be evaluated, and requirements for knowledge and understanding which will be used to underpin future education and training for the sector.	
STEP 6	This step requires the development of qualifications and learning outcomes. For ONSIDE, the partners agreed the most appropriate and useful product for sports officials would be a Handbook of Training Modules . This contains 13 generic (i.e., not sport specific) module outlines and learning outcomes based on the occupational standards and knowledge requirements. This Handbook also includes advice to organisations wishing to develop education to support the generic competence-based development of sport officials.	
STEP 7	Quality assurance is the final step. To address quality assurance, the project has created a Guide for Sustainability and Quality Assurance Strategies to ensure the occupational standards and training modules are optimally implemented going forward.	







INTRODUCTION TO THE OCCUPATIONAL MAP FOR SPORT OFFICIATING IN EUROPE

This Occupational Map describes the main features and characteristics of the sport officiating sector and contributes to defining and better understand the context and background for the development of occupational standards and education and training strategies (Steps 5 and 6 above).

The Occupational Map provides a concise overview of the sector and increases the overall level of understanding of sport officiating in Europe by collating key information which is organised under the following sections within this report:

▲ SPORT OFFICIATING POSITIONS AND MAIN FUNCTIONS

Understanding the main sport officiating positions and the functions they carry out is vital to enable future development of occupational standards, learning outcomes and education/training strategies to focus on the priorities within sport officiating.

■ THE ROLE OF KEY ORGANISATIONS IN SPORT OFFICIATING

An enhanced knowledge of the key organisations in the sector of sport officiating helps to identify those primary stakeholders who can be consulted and contribute to the development of occupational standards, learning outcomes and innovative education and training strategies. It also provides support to better understand how future training and development can be delivered.

▲ CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PEOPLE ENGAGED SPORT OFFICIATING

Information regarding the numbers and characteristics of people engaged as paid staff or volunteers in sport officiating and how they are engaged helps to identify the work that needs to be undertaken and to focus for recruitment, retention, training and development.

■ SPORT OFFICIATING FRAMEWORKS AND PATHWAYS FOR PROGRESSION

Researching the typical levels of performance expected of sport officials and how they enter and move forward in their careers is extremely important to designing future occupational standards, learning outcomes, and relevant training to optimise clarity and progression opportunities.

▲ ETHICS. SKILLS. COMPETENCES AND ATTRIBUTES FOR SPORT OFFICIALS

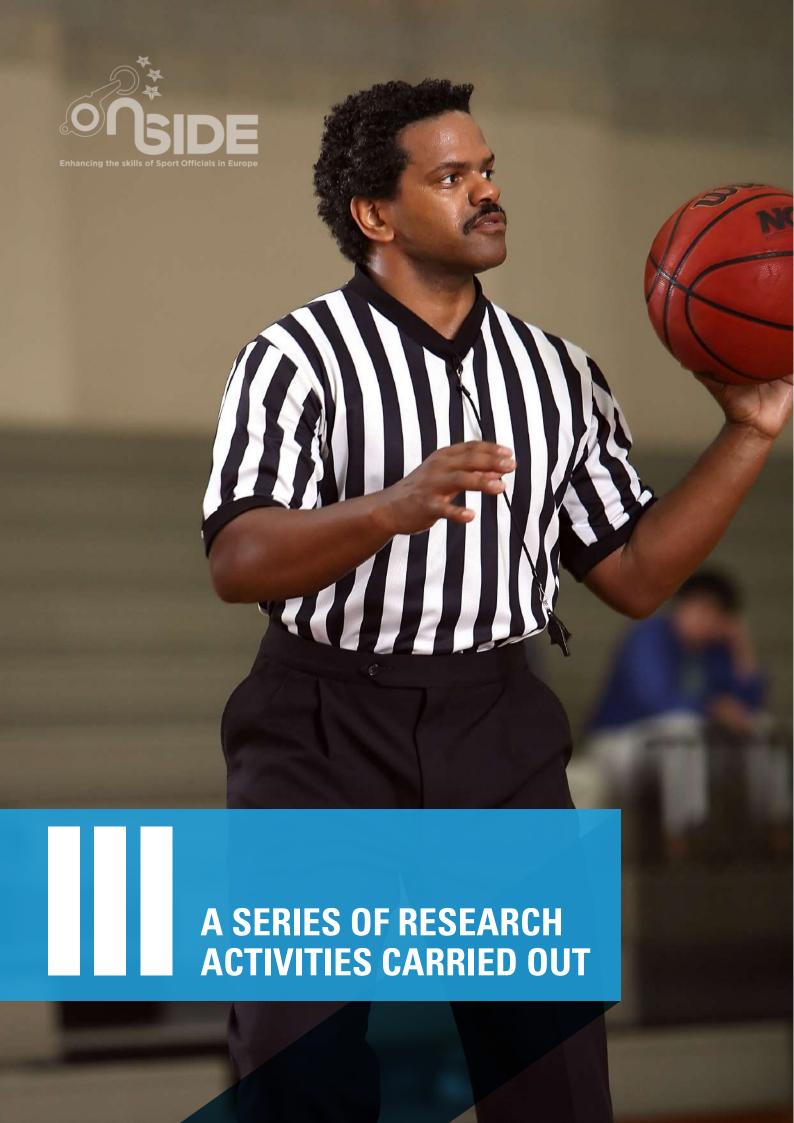
Identifying the ethical base and skills, competences and attributes expected of sport officials to perform is a vital step in the process of developing occupational standards, learning outcomes and the content of future training and education initiative.

▲ EDUCATION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR SPORT OFFICIALS

Knowing more about current arrangements for education, training and development in sport officiating provides key information about how future training can complement existing arrangements and be delivered in a way that is appropriate to sport officials.

▲ CURRENT CHALLENGES AND FUTURE TRENDS FOR SPORT OFFICIATING

Understanding the trends and challenges affecting sport officiating helps to ensure that occupational standards and innovative training initiatives are 'future proofed' and address the highest priorities.



A SERIES OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT

This Occupational Map was developed following the research phases of the ONSIDE project carried out as Step 1 of the 7 Step Model described earlier in this report. The early stages of the ONSIDE project focused on developing a research protocol and data collection through four separate but linked research activities.

The opportunity to research, collect and analyse available qualitative and quantitative data and information concerning sport officiating from various sports and from different countries provided an accurate and representative snapshot of the area of sport officiating reflecting the whole of Europe and a wide diversity of sports.

■ PHASE 1: Online search

Phase 1 of the research protocol was to conduct a wide online search for information and relevant data in the area of sport officiating. Using a selection of key words and search terms, the partners responsible for this research activity were able to gather valuable data at all levels in areas such as definitions, key organisations, codes of conduct, existing occupational standards, existing training programmes and courses, and required skills, competences and attributes through the collection of a range of job profiles and role descriptions.

A key source of information was the findings of the European Employer Skills Survey for the sport sector carried out for the ESSA-Sport project and published at the end of the year 2019². This survey included data from employers concerning the expected skills of sport officials and other aspects relevant to the ONSIDE project such as views on recruitment and retention of sport officials. The ESSA-Sport project was funded by the European Commission under the Erasmus+programme and was coordinated by the European Observatoire of Sport and Employment (EOSE).

▲ PHASE 2: Wide desk research from partners

Phase 2 of the research protocol was a wide desk research carried out and submitted by the ONSIDE partners themselves. A common template was used and each partner was responsible to complete the form by responding to each question of the document. The mix of partners in the project provided a range of different perspectives on sport officiating being from different countries, different levels and different types of organisation. Using their own knowledge, experience and understanding, and carrying out a new primary research, each ONSIDE partner was able to compile a detailed report covering topics such as entry and progression of sport officials, occupational standards and courses, available surveys and reports, and characteristics and tendencies in sport officiating in their country and/or sport.

▲ PHASE 3: Telephone interviews

Phase 3 was made up of a series of telephone interviews which took place in early 2019 with sport official representatives from the following European or international federations:

- Badminton Europe
- Confédération Européenne de Volleyball (CEV)
- European Handball Federation (EHF)
- European Hockey Federation (EHF)
- European Table Tennis Union (ETTU)
- International Federation of American Football (IFAF)
- ✓ The R&A (Golf)
- Union of European Football Associations (UEFA)
- World Rugby

²See https://www.essa-sport.eu/library/resources/european_report/

A common script was developed and used to conduct these interviews and this gathered a large amount of information relevant to the ONSIDE project related to entry and progression in sport officiating, the role of federations, skills, and education standards.

▲ PHASE 4: Online survey of national sport federations

Phase 4 of the research protocol was the launch of an online survey of national sport federations focusing on the topic of sport officiating. The ONSIDE partners developed and tested the online questionnaire to be used for the survey and it was translated in to four languages to reduce language barriers. The survey took place at the beginning of 2019 and a total of 224 responses were received from national sport federations from a range of sport and from 36 countries across Europe and beyond. The number of responses by country and by sport can be seen in Annex 1 to this report.

The survey was organised as a valuable additional activity during ONSIDE that was not planned for at the application stage. It focused on the countries and sports that are represented in the ONSIDE partnership but also received wide support from beyond those networks. The questions in the survey focused on recruitment and retention in sport officiating, skills and attributes of sport officials and key tendencies and challenges in the area of sport officiating.

The whole ONSIDE partnership would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took part and were consulted in these research phases and in particular those who accepted to be engaged in a telephone interview and those who completed a response to the online survey of national sport federations.

This engagement during the first phases of the project was essential as it provided the necessary knowledge and laid the foundation for the implementation of the next steps of the overall process towards the development of occupational standards and innovative training for sport officials in Europe.



THE OVERALL SPORTS SECTOR

According to the Council of Europe (2001), sport can be defined as: "all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels."

In this report and through the whole ONSIDE project, when the term "sport" is used it has the meaning of the broad sector of sport and physical activity.

Sport is a people-facing sector, where the engagement of others, whether this is at the grassroots or high performance end of the spectrum, is paramount to its success. Sport is embedded within all communities, affecting a large percentage of the population, and is increasingly used to address wider European and national government agendas including health, social inclusion, regeneration and education.

Sport participants can range from well-known professional athletes to those who return to sport after a long period of inactivity. Participants can come from all sections of society, and different groups such as women, disabled people, seniors and ethnic minorities are sometimes targeted to increase participation in sport. There is also a wide diversity in the expectations and motivations of participants, and these can include health, fitness and social engagement as well as the desire to take part in competition and achieve sporting success.

Two in five Europeans (40%) exercise or play sport at least once a week, including 7% who do so regularly (at least five times per week)³, and sport is one of the largest sectors for volunteering. Indeed the sector would not be able to operate without a large army of volunteers performing all of the roles needed for sport to take place.

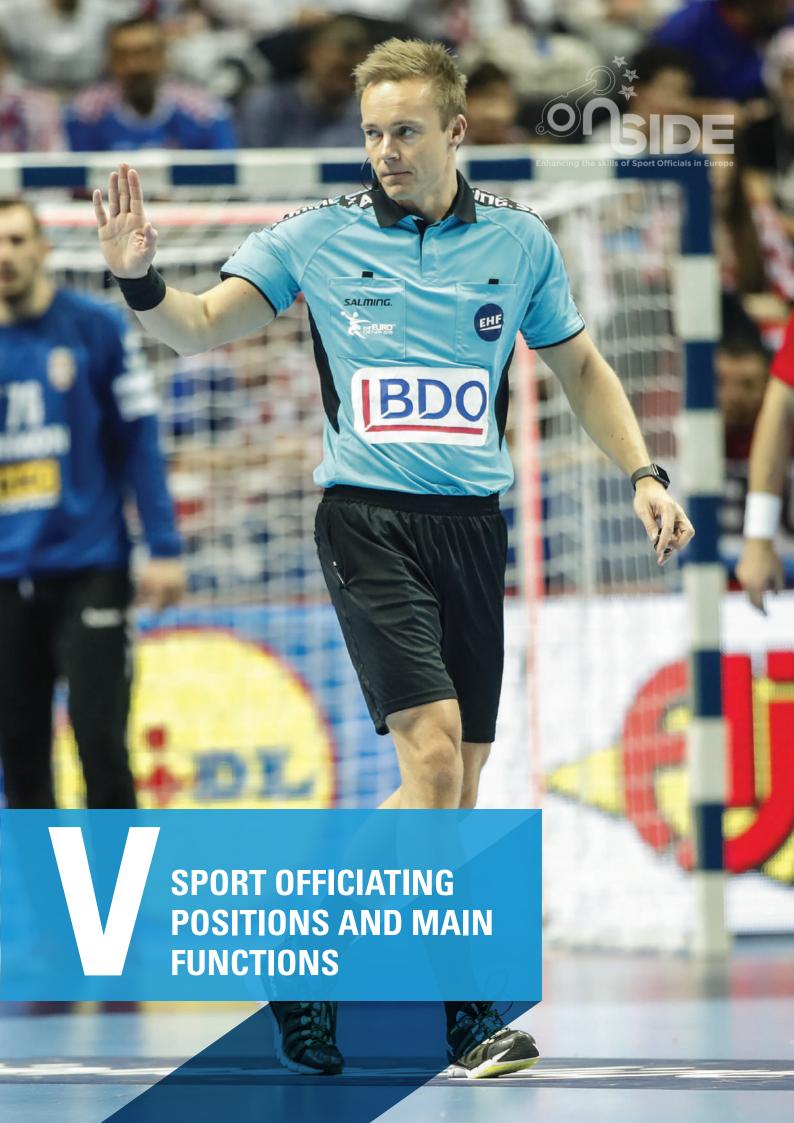
In different parts of Europe, the sector is evolving from its voluntary or state-led roots to a mixed economy of public, private and voluntary organisations offering a growing range of services with increasing expectations from participants and governments alike.

There are a further range of drivers facilitating the evolution of the sector, including links to the health sector to reduce obesity in the population, to cater to an aging population, to enhance social inclusion, and to ensure transparency and fight corruption.

As this Occupational Map is published at the end of 2020, the dominant issue of the past year has been the Covid-19 pandemic, which has had a severe negative impact on the operation of the whole sport sector at all levels and all over the world. It remains to be seen if the sector and levels of participation and volunteering will bounce back to pre-pandemic levels if and when the health situation in Europe returns to normal.

It is too early to measure and analyse the real impacts of the pandemic on the sport sector and on sport officiating, and this will be further explored carefully by the group of partners after the end of the funding period.

³Special Eurobarometer 472 on "Sport and Physical Activity", European Union (December 2017), see https://ec.europa.eu/sport/news/2018/new-eurobarometer-sport-and-physical-activity_en



NO SPORT OFFICIALS = NO SPORT

The role of the sport official is extremely important in sport; without sport officials across Europe giving up their time, sport would grind to a halt and be unable to function. Sport officials (umpires, referees, judges, etc.) provide necessary guidance and support, so that participants and spectators can have a safe, positive and enjoyable sporting experience.

Sport officiating is central to developing, sustaining and increasing participation in sport by offering a fair, safe and enjoyable environment for participants. Sport officials also undertake an important role in the staging of sport competitions, providing leadership and guidance to participants, as well as ensuring that the competition is conducted in a safe and fair manner. Sport officials are the guardians of standards for sport.

The importance of sport officiating can be seen by the fact that in at least one European country, France, officiating in sport has a legal status. According to national law, judges and referees are representing a mission of "public service" when they are at work which means that in case of physical aggression they are protected like a policeman or a fireman.⁴

B. SPORT OFFICIATING POSITIONS

Sport officials operate under a variety of different titles and names. What a sport official is called and their role will be determined by the specific sport they are involved in.

Some of the main titles and positions in sport officiating can be listed as follows (non-exhaustive list):

Referee

Touch Judge

Starter

Umpire

Assistant referee

Third Umpire

Judge

Scorer

Fourth Official

Marshal

✓ Time Keeper

Sport officials holding the same title can sometimes perform a different role depending on the sport. Therefore, the decision of the ONSIDE partners has been to focus on the role of sport official as a whole and the skills, competences and attributes that are common/generic to all titles and positions in sport officiating across all sports and levels. ONSIDE has not focused on the sport-specific technical skills and competences of sport officials but on the generic ones common to all sports, levels and positions.

⁴Law No. 2006-1294 of 23 October 2006 adopted at the initiative of Minister of Sports Jean-François Lamour.

C. MAIN FUNCTIONS FOR SPORT OFFICIALS

Despite the variety of titles and the names of positions in sport officiating, and the different sports involved, discussions and consultations have revealed it is possible to develop a generic map of the functions required⁵ to be competent in the role of a sport official.

Following consultation with the whole sector the ONSIDE partners have put forward the following as the key purpose / mission for sport officials:

KEY PURPOSE / MISSION FOR SPORT OFFICIALS

«Enable participants to compete within the spirit of the sport through the impartial application of the rules/laws and ethics of the sport»

In order to achieve this key purpose, sport officials have to perform tasks under the following **key roles**:

KEY ROLE A: PERSONAL COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT

Evaluate and develop own performance as a sport official

KEY ROLE B: RELATIONSHIPS

Establish and maintain effective relationships with other sport officials, with competitors and others involved in the competition, including the media

KEY ROLE C: COMPETITION

Manage competition within the rules/laws and ethics of the sport

KEY ROLE D: INFORMATION

Manage information as required by the officiating role

These functions apply generically to all officials, including referees, judges, starters, umpires and timekeepers etc. across all sports.

The role of key organisations is explored in the next section of this report from the information and data collected and analysed from the ONSIDE research activities.

⁵This analysis is elaborated further in Step 4 of the 7 Step Model and can be found in the Functional Map for Sport Officials in Europe.



A. NATIONAL SPORT FEDERATIONS

In all countries in Europe, and indeed in the world, individual sports are run by national federations, also sometimes known as national governing bodies (NGBs).

National sport federations are key bodies in the operation and management of sport officiating.

Normally, national sport federations take sole responsibility for the education and training of sport officials in their sport/ country. Often, they are involved in the drive for recruitment and retention of sport officials. A further important responsibility of many national sport federations is the registration, tracking and monitoring of sport officials, as well as setting overall strategy for officials in the sport at the national level.

The survey of national sport federations (Phase 4 of the research protocol) that took place in the ONSIDE project provided a crucial opportunity to gather the views and opinions directly from representatives of national sport federations and learn about how they operate and their main issues and challenges in relation to sport officiating.

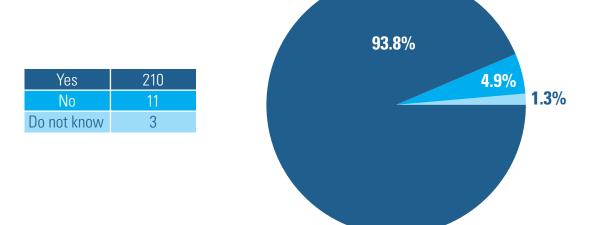
Some questions in the survey referred to the key responsibilities of national sport federations in the overall management, operation and development of sport officiating.

Information like this increases the level of understanding of training priorities and the institutional context in which they need to be addressed.



GRAPH 1: NATIONAL SPORT FEDERATIONS WITH A COMMITTEE OR PERSON DEALING SPECIFICALLY WITH SPORT OFFICIATING

(n = 224)



Source: ONSIDE National Sport Federation Survey (2019)

This result shows that national sport federations are allocating human resources to the crucial area of sport officiating and it indicates that most of them have a structure to address the development of sport officials.

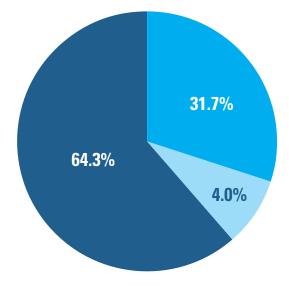


GRAPH 2: NATIONAL SPORT FEDERATIONS WHERE THE AREA OF SPORT OFFICIATING HAS ITS OWN BUDGET

(n = 224)

Yes	144
No	71
Do not know	9

Source: ONSIDE National Sport Federation Survey (2019)



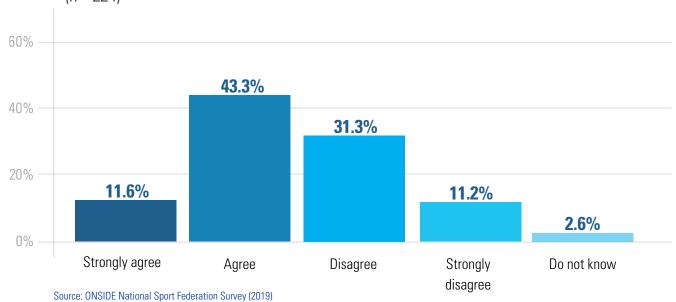
Source: ONSIDE National Sport Federation Survey (2019)

31.7% is a high percentage of national sport federations without a dedicated budget for sport officiating, the ONSIDE partnership feels it shows officiating is not always given the importance it deserves or adequately funded.



GRAPH 3: LEVEL OF AGREEMENT THAT SPORT OFFICIATING IS CONSIDERED AS A PRIORITY IN RESPONDENT'S NATIONAL SPORT FEDERATION

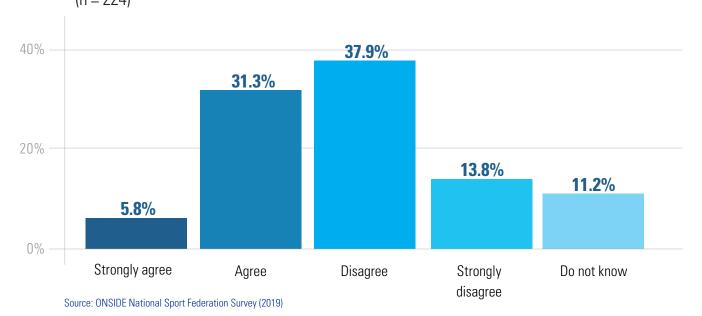
(n = 224)



Given the importance of sport officiating to competitions and the development of sport, 42.5% is a high percentage of officiating representatives who disagree or strongly disagree that officiating is considered as a priority in their federation. Leaders of national sport federations may wish to explore this further within their own organisation to maintain levels of motivation and development of sport officiating staff.



GRAPH 4: LEVEL OF AGREEMENT THAT RESPONDENT'S NATIONAL SPORT FEDERATION IS IN REGULAR CONTACT WITH OTHER SPORT FEDERATIONS ABOUT SPORT OFFICIATING (n = 224)



The multi-sport ONSIDE project and the emergence of dedicated organisations for sport officials at the national and international level demonstrates the value of federations from different sports working together. These survey results show that the majority of national sport federations are not working with other sport federations as much as they could be in order to improve sport officiating across all sports and learn from best practice and experience of other sports.

Many national sport federations have an officiating committee acting independently, and in some cases an independent officiating body has been established by the federation with its own management committee. Often these committees are elected by the membership of the sport federation.

Although the exact role of national federations in sport officiating can differ between nations and sports some of the common roles include:

- National education and certification programme
- Registration, monitoring and tracking of officials
- Appointments for competitions
- General administration of officiating in the sport
- Policies, regulations and guidelines for the practice of officiating
- Liaison on officiating with European and international federation
- Technical guidance on officiating to regional associations, clubs, and other relevant bodies
- Management of an officials' database
- Performance evaluation processes.

B. EUROPEAN SPORT FEDERATIONS

One activity in the research phase of the ONSIDE project involved telephone interviews with officiating representatives from nine European or international sport federations.

European sport federations manage the framework and competitive structures within which the national federations operate.

Some general themes can be taken from the results of this ONSIDE research activity.

The European sport federations reported that officiating is not normally stated as a main area or theme in the strategic plan but is usually included under wider themes of sustainability, governance, development or education. It was reported that officiating is seen as important in all international federations, but respondents would like it to have higher strategic priority. Some federations do mention officiating in strategic plans and support that with key performance indicators.

A key theme in research with the European sport federations is that national federations are autonomous and take care of education and appointments at the national level. However, all the respondents described the services they provide to national sport federations to support their development in the area of sport officiating. Services provided include putting on courses, providing lecturers, e-learning and video clips, and funding.

A positive relationship with the global federation in support of sport officiating was reported by all European federations. European federations often follow the policies and rules set by the global body (International sport federation). Many European federations nominate officials to the world level. Some European federations promote manuals, courses, or officiating competences set at the world level.

All European federations who took part in the ONSIDE research agreed about the benefit of working across sports and as such gave support to the ONSIDE project which fosters cross sport cooperation.

C. NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS FOR SPORT OFFICIATING

Two examples from Europe of national organisations which serve the area of sport officiating are Association Française du Corps Arbitral Multisports (AFCAM) from France and Sports Officials UK (SOUK) from the United Kingdom.

AFCAM was created in 1985 by a group of international French judges and referees from 12 different sports; now there are 72 sports and 236,000 individual members of AFCAM. The Association is officially a member of the CNOSF (French National Olympic Committee). AFCAM also has strong links with the French Ministry of Sports and several other Ministries.

SOUK is recognised in the UK sport sector as the umbrella organisation responsible for representing and supporting the education and development of sport officials across all sports. SOUK is a membership organisation comprising national governing bodies (NGBs) of sport and associated organisations. Many of the representatives have a clear responsibility for officiating and the volunteer workforce within their specific sport or activity.

SOUK's overall vision is for every sporting performance, event or activity to have an appropriately trained match official, with the practice of officiating and volunteering in the UK recognised alongside playing and coaching in the development of sport.

The new global organisation, the International Federation for Sport Officials (IFSO), described in the introduction is encouraging the development of national associations for sport officials in other countries.

National officiating bodies can play a key role in the landscape of sport officiating and sport as a whole through implementing objectives such as the following:

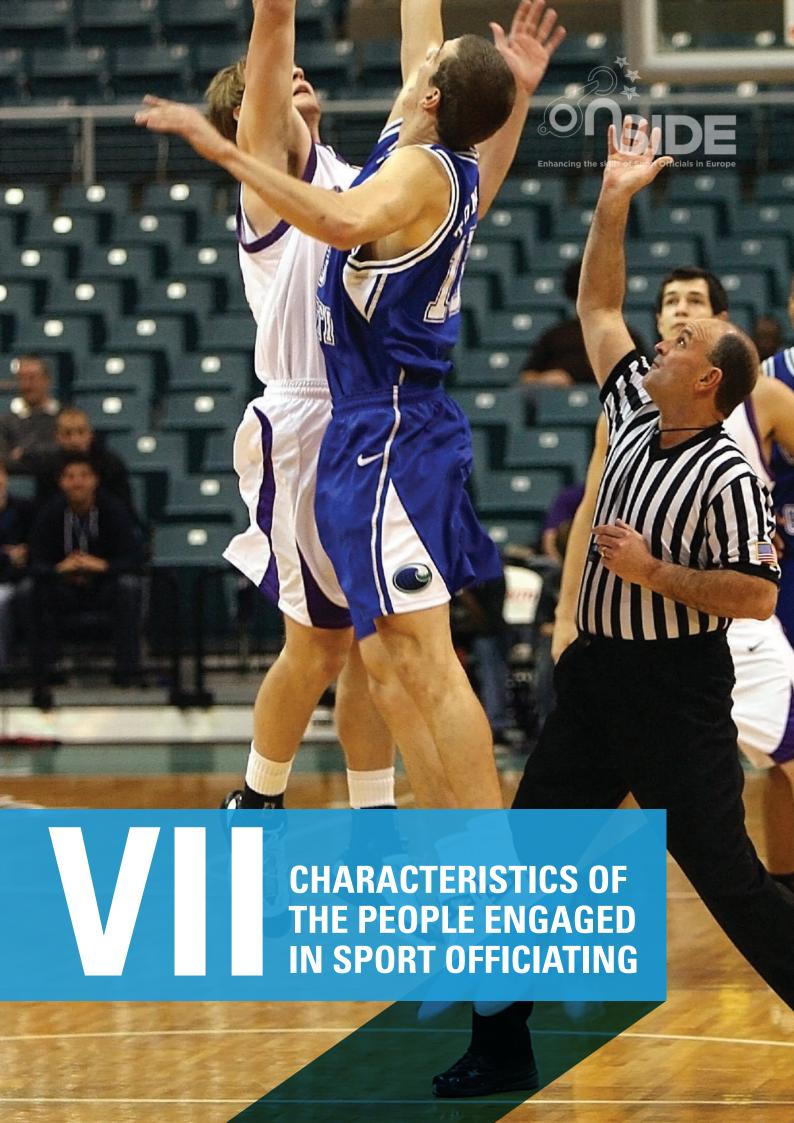
- Achieve wider recognition of sports officiating
- Enable the exchange of good practice between sports
- Develop and introduce training procedures
- Raise the profile of sports officials
- ✓ Work at the governmental level and on legal issues and matters of law

D. NATIONAL SPORT ORGANISATIONS

The final type of organisation to highlight in this section is national sport organisations such as Sports Councils and national Olympic committees. There are a number of examples from across Europe where bodies such as these are active in the area of sport officiating.

Their role may include encouraging and facilitating federations to work together on a common national officiating framework as is the case with National Olympic Committee*National Sport Federation (NOC*NSF) from the Netherlands who are a partner in the ONSIDE project. Other roles of national sport bodies include promotion activities and organising training courses.





A. NUMBERS OF SPORT OFFICIALS

According to a study published by the European Commission⁶, in 2016, there were 1,467,699 sport officials in Europe, with the largest numbers being in Germany, United Kingdom and France. The same study also reported that the countries with the highest percentage of officials within the overall population are Austria, Germany and the United Kingdom.

B. PAID VERSUS VOLUNTEER AND SELF-EMPLOYED STATUS

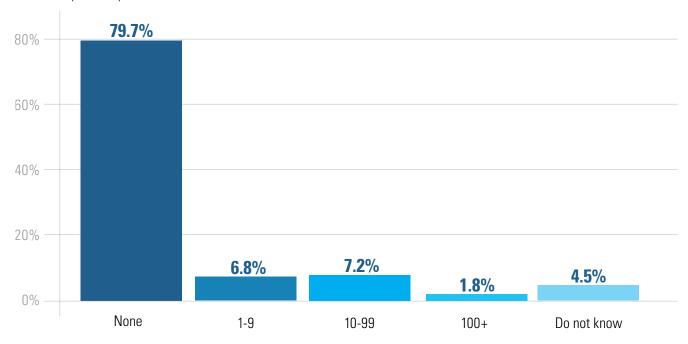
The vast majority of sport officials are unpaid volunteers, at the grassroots level there could be travel expenses paid or a small fee up to 20 euros. As officials progress to national and international level, payment is very dependent on the sport. In some larger sports, sports officials can make a living at the national level in some countries but it is rare. At international level, a system of per day payment and travel expenses is the norm in some sports. In many cases people take the role of sport official for love/ involvement in the game rather than financial reward.

This can be seen in the results of the online survey of sport federations:



GRAPH 5: VIEW OF RESPONDENTS ON NUMBERS OF SPORT OFFICIALS PAID TO BE A SPORT OFFICIAL AS THEIR FULL TIME JOB / MAIN OCCUPATION WITHIN THEIR SPORT IN THEIR COUNTRY





Source: ONSIDE National Sport Federation Survey (2019)

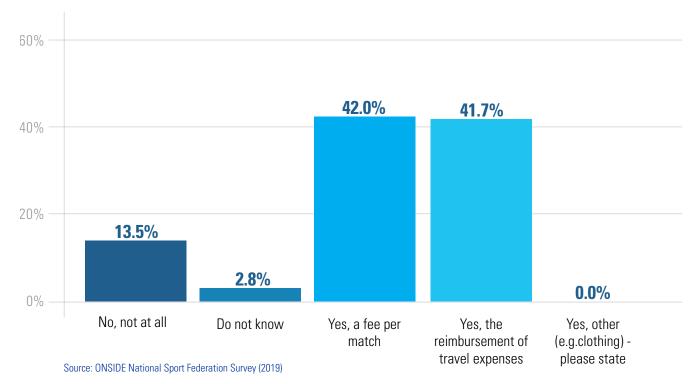
Although, to some extent the number of paid officials is dependent on the sport and the country, it is clear that overwhelmingly sport officiating is a volunteer led activity. The drive towards enhanced skills and greater levels of competence has to be seen in this light.

It is also interesting to note the type of payments officials receive at the grassroots level:

⁶Study on Sport Qualifications Acquired Through Sport Organisations and (Sport) Educational Institutes, European Union, 2016



GRAPH 6: NUMBERS AND TYPES OF PAYMENT / REIMBURSEMENT OF SPORT OFFICIALS AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL (RESPONDENTS TICKED ALL THAT APPLY)



Despite being led by volunteers, it is clear that in many cases there is the payment of some expenses, either in the form of a match fee or travel expenses.

C. TRACKING THE SPORT OFFICIALS WORKFORCE

Within the results of the ONSIDE survey of national sport federations, it was found that 59% of respondents stated they knew exactly how many certified sport officials are in their country in their sport. This was felt to be a high percentage by the ONSIDE partners but positive in relation to tracking sport officials if it was replicated across a broader range of sports and nations.

Furthermore, 44% of respondents stated they know exactly how many active officials there are in their sport in their country, with 45% stating they know approximately. In this question, "active" meant having officiated at least once in the past 12 months. The ONSIDE partnership felt it was a high percentage with exact or approximate knowledge which may not be replicated across the board but is positive, nonetheless.

83% of national federation respondents keep a national database of officials. This was also a positive result with a good level of knowledge of who is officiating and federations being in a good position to be able to communicate with them. The ONSIDE partnership felt this result may not be replicated in some of the larger sports in some countries.

Measuring and recording matches/ events of sport officials nationally appears to be prevalent with 49% of national federation respondents recording all matches/ events and 34% recording some matches of officials. This could also see a variation between sports and countries.

Linked to the issue of tracking the workforce, it is interesting to note that around half (49%) of national federation respondents charge officials an annual fee. Further research in this area could explore if the fee is simply a registration fee or if they receive some benefits or items in return for the fee.

D. DYNAMICS OF THE WORKFORCE

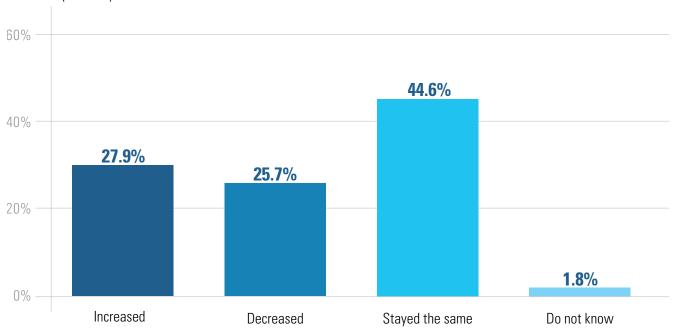
The ONSIDE partners felt it was interesting to enquire about trends in numbers of sport officials within the survey of national sport federations.

The result was as follows:



GRAPH 7: VIEW OF RESPONDENTS ON THE TRENDS IN INCREASING OR DECREASING NUMBERS OF SPORT OFFICIALS IN THEIR SPORT IN LAST TWO YEARS

(n = 222)



Source: ONSIDE National Sport Federation Survey (2019)

This is linked to issues of recruitment and retention. It is positive to note that more respondents reported an increase than a decrease in numbers of officials; it would be interesting to further interrogate these figures by sport and country. It reminds us that if a sport wishes to increase levels of participation of players and if competition is part of the sport there also needs to be a rise in numbers of officials to meet the competition demands of new players.

E. LICENSING AND CONTRACTS

At the level of the European federations, around half of the sports interviewed were aware of a licencing scheme for officials at the national level; this can be linked to qualifications and insurance.

The licensing or tracking of officials at national level would depend on the sport and role of the federation. European federations work with a smaller number of elite officials and will sometimes run a licensing scheme at different levels. Contracts for sport officials are rare, in some larger sports officials could have a contract to officiate at the national level. Normally, there is no contract at grassroots or international level, but they would stick to regulations, operating procedures and a code of conduct.



SALMING

A. FRAMEWORKS

An important component in the development of sport officials is the development and implementation of sport officialing frameworks and pathways. These can be developed at the national level by a sport federation, cross-sport sport organisation or sport officials' organisation. A framework can also be developed at the international level by European or international federations to support officiating in their sport.

One example from the ONSIDE research is from the Netherlands and the work of ONSIDE partner NOC*NSF working with a range of sport federations to implement a five level model for sport officiating:

- ▲ Level 5: international and top national official
- ▲ Level 4: very experienced and good official, national level
- ▲ Level 3: experienced official in a club or in a region
- ▲ Level 2: club official, leading matches of youth or low senior level
- ▲ Level 1: official in training situation or with a mentor.

Another example from the research is the Officiating Development Pathway originally developed by MacMahon et al (2014) and used by Sports Officials UK to develop sport officiating in the UK. This model has nine levels covering active lifestyles, sport participation and sport excellence. It also has three identified roles from casual volunteers through to recreational sport officials and up to elite pathway sport officials.

As with most models of sport officiating, those mentioned have a clear line of progression from participation at local and national level, to elite performance at national and finally international level.

B. PATHWAYS FOR PROGRESSION

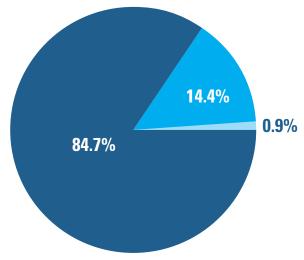
The extent of implementing an officiating pathway from grassroots/ local to elite level was also covered in the ONSIDE survey of national sport federations.



GRAPH 8: NATIONAL SPORT FEDERATIONS WITH A SPORT OFFICIATING PATHWAY FROM GRASSROOTS/ LOCAL LEVEL TO ELITE LEVEL

(n = 222)

Yes	188
No	32
Do not know	2



Source: ONSIDE National Sport Federation Survey (2019)

It is positive to note that this high number of national sport federations with pathways to elite level shows there is a structured approach to the development of officials in many sports' national federation.





ETHICS, SKILLS, COMPETENCES AND ATTRIBUTES FOR SPORT OFFICIALS

ETHICS, SKILLS, COMPETENCES AND ATTRIBUTES FOR SPORT OFFICIALS

Steps 4 and 5 of the 7 Step Model, presented earlier in this report and being implemented in the ONSIDE project, defined the set of skills and competences expected for sport officials in Europe using a systematic approach known as functional analysis. In preparation for the functional analysis process carried out in the project, the research phase gathered key data on ethics, skills, competences and attributes.

A. CODES OF CONDUCT FOR SPORT OFFICIALS

Where codes of conduct for sport officials exist for the performance of duties, these can often reveal the types of skills, competences and attributes required of the person to whom the code applies.

From the ONSIDE desk research, it was clear that many sport organisations have a Code of Conduct for sport officials, setting out the ethical framework for sport officiating and describing their responsibilities and obligations and what can be expected from them.

Some of the examples collected in the ONSIDE research phase included:

- General Code of Conduct of New Zealand Sport (Officials Code of Conduct)
- National Association of Sports Officials (NASO) Code of Conduct For Sports Officials
- British Gymnastics Code of Conduct
- International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) Match Officials Code of Conduct
- ▲ AFCAM Code of Ethics of Sport Officials in 10 Points

Many federations have a code of conduct for sport officials and studying some of the common features is useful to appreciate the ethics and values base behind the area of sport officiating.

Common themes from a sample of sport officiating codes of conduct:

- Ensure safety and welfare of athletes
- Be impartial, consistent, objective and courteous when making decisions
- Accept responsibility for actions and decisions
- Avoid any situations which may lead to or be construed as a conflict of interest
- Be a positive role model in behaviour and personal appearance
- Support other officials
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all people involved in the sport/ competition/ event
- Engender public confidence in sport
- Be free of obligation to any interest other than the impartial and fair judging of sports competitions
- Exercise authority in an impartial, firm and controlled manner
- Display and execute excellent communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal.
- Adequately prepare both physically and mentally
- Be punctual
- Work with other officials and the federation in a constructive and cooperative manner.

ONSIDE

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- ✓ Never gamble on any sporting event in which they have either a direct or indirect involvement
- Accept responsibility for all actions taken.
- Be prompt for all assignments
- Maintain strict impartiality.

B. EXISTING MODELS OF SKILL/COMPETENCE FOR SPORT

As noted earlier, despite the diversity of sports and sport officiating roles, it is possible to analyse the generic competences required of the sport official. Two such models were identified as part of the ONSIDE desk research.

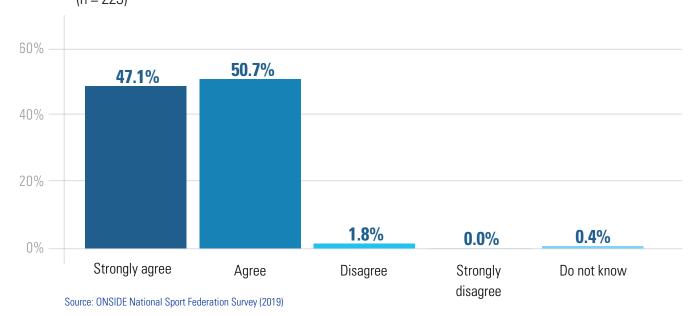
A model of occupational standards was developed by the UK Sector Skills Council SkillsActive and ONSIDE partner Sports Officials UK (SOUK), in 2007, and widely adopted by SOUKS's members and stakeholders in subsequent years. It was useful to gather and study as part of the desk research for the ONSIDE project in support of the ONSIDE standards which were eventually developed and published alongside this Occupational Map. Some of the key areas of competence in this model included developing yourself, health and safety communication, applying rules and laws, relationships, and developing other sport officials.

As part of the ONSIDE desk research, the Training Package for Sport Officials from Australia (2013) was analysed. Like the SOUK framework, this model of competences can be applied generically to all sports and activities. The main key areas in this Autralian competence framework are officiating games and competitions, judging competitive situations, developing and updating officiating knowledge, communication, officiating in high performance, and self-management.

It was confirmed in the ONSIDE survey results that national sport federations feel it is important to develop generic skills of sport official:



GRAPH 9: RESPONDENTS VIEW ON IMPORTANCE TO DEVELOP GENERIC SKILLS OF SPORT OFFICIATING AS WELL AS KNOWLEDGE OF THE RULES AND SPORT-SPECIFIC SKILLS (n=223)



The ONSIDE partnership decided to test some of the generic skills and competences (identified through the desk research) that are performed by sport officials within the online survey of national sport federations. The results are shown below in descending order of what respondents felt was Essential.



TABLE 1: NATIONAL FEDERATION RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: LOOKING AT THE ROLE OF SPORT OFFICIALS, HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE NEED FOR THE FOLLOWING SKILLS AND COMPETENCES?

	Essential	Desirable	Not important	n
Apply rules and laws of the sport	98.6%	1.4%	0.0%	221
Keep up-to-date on the changes and evolutions of the rules/laws	93.2%	6.8%	0.0%	221
Maintain self-control and respond appropriately to pressure	86.8%	12.7%	0.5%	220
Act in the limits of their authority and treat all participants equitably	86.4%	13.1%	0.5%	221
Ensure technical understanding of rules/ laws of the sport	85.9%	13.6%	0.5%	220
Work as part of a team	77.4%	21.3%	1.4%	221
Contribute to health and safety of participants and others	73.8%	23.1%	3.2%	221
Identify incident and emergencies	71.7%	23.7%	4.6%	219
Maintain effective working relationships with other officials	65.0%	33.2%	1.8%	220
Continuously develop as an official	63.8%	35.7%	0.5%	221
Ensure participants equipment and material is safe	62.4%	28.5%	9.0%	221
Communicate and interact with participants and others (e.g. coaches, spectators)	60.6%	38.0%	1.4%	221
Understand, review and use assessments and observations/feedbacks of their performance	59.7 %	38.0%	2.3%	221
Receive and act on feedback	57.9%	39.8%	2.3%	221
Ensure optimum positioning and movement	52.9%	36.7%	10.4%	221
Make judgment about performance	48.4%	47.5%	4.1%	221
Lead/ Manage other people	38.0%	51.6%	10.4%	221
Maintain general level of fitness (physical/mental) appropriate for the role of official in their sport	37.6%	47.5%	14.9%	221
Develop other officials	33.0%	62.4%	4.5%	221
Apply administrative skills	29.4%	62.4%	8.1%	221
Work with the media and communicate clearly and concisely	15.0%	50.9%	34.1%	220
Apply principles of diet and nutrition	5.4%	43.0%	51.6%	221

Source: ONSIDE National Sport Federation Survey (2019)

These ratings for generic skills and competences provided by national sport federation respondents to the ONSIDE survey in the research phase proved useful later in the ONSIDE project when the partners began to develop generic competences for sport officiating. It served as a benchmark of which skills and competences respondents felt essential or desirable to the role of the sport official (across all sports) and helped make sure competences developed during the ONSIDE project matched industry requirements.



C. ATTRIBUTES FOR SPORT OFFICIALS

Attributes are a quality or feature regarded as a characteristic or inherent part of an individual and their behaviours. A number of attributes of sport officials were tested with respondents of the online survey. Again, these attributes were derived from the desk research and are listed in descending order of what the respondents felt was essential.



TABLE 2: NATIONAL FEDERATION RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE NEED FOR THE FOLLOWING ATTRIBUTES IN A SPORT OFFICIAL?

	Essential	Desirable	Not important	n
Calmness and in control	87.2%	11.9%	0.9%	218
Focus / Concentration	86.8%	13.2%	0.0%	219
Self-control	85.3%	14.7%	0.0%	218
Awareness	80.8%	18.7%	0.5%	219
Positive attitude	78.9%	20.6%	0.5%	218
Strong decision making	78%	21.5%	0.5%	219
Courage under pressure	77%	22.5%	0.5%	218
Trust	75.3%	23.3%	1.4%	219
Communication	73.9%	26.1%	0.0%	218
Conflict management	73.4%	25.2%	1.4%	218
Confidence	72.0%	27.1%	0.9%	218
Problem solving	71.1%	27.1%	1.8%	218
Mentally prepared	70.5%	28.1%	1.4%	217
Patience	67.6%	31.5%	0.9%	219
Anticipation	63.8%	33.9%	2.3%	218
Belief in own ability	59.6%	39.0%	1.4%	218
Leadership	53.7%	41.7%	4.6%	218
Resilience	53.7%	42.6%	3.7%	216
Energetic / dynamism	45.5%	49.5%	5.0%	218

Source: ONSIDE National Sport Federation Survey (2019)

These ratings for attributes were also useful in planning and developing the innovative Occupational Standards and education and training aspects of the ONSIDE project.



A. RESPONSIBILITY FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Education programmes for sport officials at grassroots and up to national level are normally organised by national sport federations. In some sports they will use internationally set guidance for education levels. There is support provided from the European or international federation at the national level in some sports, including facilitation of courses.

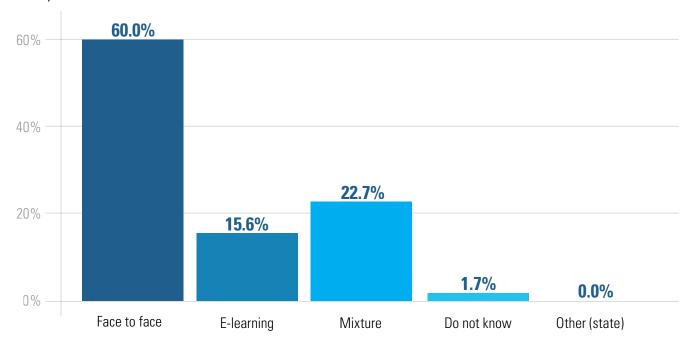
Most European federations reported in the ONSIDE research phase that the quantity and quality of continuing education for officials is poor, with some exceptions. It was reported that there is not much training for generic skills and therefore the ONSIDE occupational standards and education content will be welcome. Some sport federations already provide online resources including e-learning for their sport officials.

The results of the ONSIDE survey of national sport federations supported the desk research around education of sport officials. A total of 70.7% of respondents reported their federation is fully responsible for the initial education and training of officials, with a further 23.9% partially responsible. Only 12.7% reported that an external provider is involved in the delivery of education programmes.

B. TRAINING DELIVERY METHODS AND CONTENT

It is interesting to note from the following graph that delivery methods are becoming more varied with the use of e-learning in some cases.

GRAPH 10: HOW TRAINING COURSES FOR SPORT OFFICIALS ARE DELIVERED BY NATIONAL SPORT FEDERATIONS



Source: ONSIDE National Sport Federation Survey (2019)

Furthermore, 84% of respondents believed their sport federation would be interested in e-learning courses covering generic skills developed through a project such as ONSIDE.

The desk research in the ONSIDE project also brought up examples of generic skills courses delivered to officials across different sports. In France, a two-day course run by ONSIDE partner AFCAM covers issues such as communication, conflict and stress, topics which in French fall under the term "tronc commun".

One partner in the ONSIDE project, European Athletics, includes more generic topics (*such as risk management, Code of Ethics and Leadership*) in the programme of its Technical Delegates Course.

Finally, in the Netherlands, examples of short courses include a resilience course for referees and a course for coaching referees.

While sport specific initial education courses will remain the norm in sport officiating due to the specific nature of the rules/ laws and specificities of the sport; there is clearly also a place for the acquiring of generic, cross-sport, skills and knowledge through continuing education courses developed to serve the development needs of officials from one or more sports learning together.



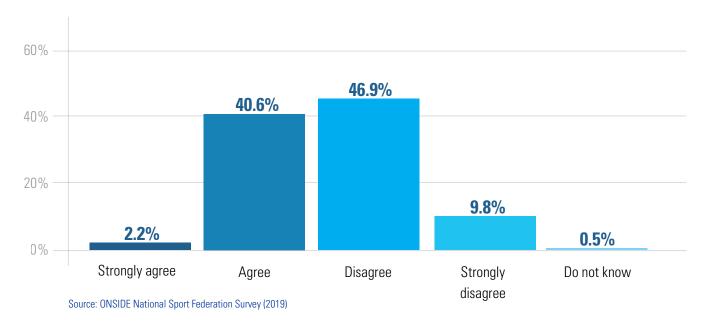
A. CHALLENGES

One major challenge highlighted through the research phase of the ONSIDE project is how to improve the recognition and respect for sport officials among the public. As can be seen in this chart, over half of national sport federation having responded to the online survey disagreed with the statement that overall in society there is good recognition and respect for sport officials.



GRAPH 11: OVERALL IN SOCIETY THERE IS GOOD RECOGNITION AND RESPECT FOR SPORT OFFICIALS AMONG THE PUBLIC

(n = 224)



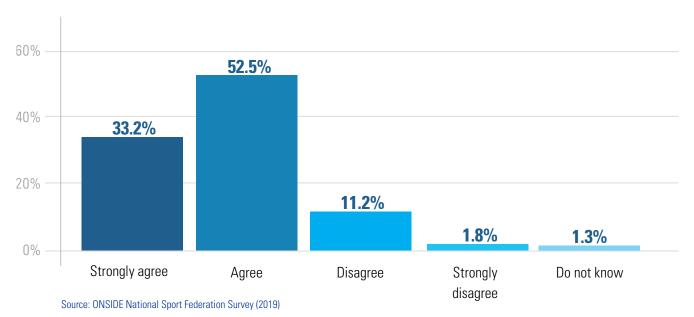
While these figures may vary by sport, it is disappointing but not surprising that respondents from national sport federations felt there is not good recognition and respect for sport officials among the public. This strengthens the case for respect campaigns being targeted more widely than just within the sporting community. It is felt team sports may have more of an issue in terms of respect for officials although this can also vary by sport.

One trend that was strongly stated through the ONSIDE research is that the demands and expectations on sport officials are increasing. This has implications for what is mostly a volunteer workforce and how to increase training, skills and levels of competence to meet the increasing demands.





GRAPH 12: THE DEMANDS AND EXPECTATIONS ON SPORT OFFICIALS ARE INCREASING (n = 223)



The research carried out with ONSIDE partners and through telephone interviews with European sport federations also put forward a range of challenges for the sector.

These can be listed here:

- The notion of respect is disappearing in some countries which is a big problem
- Abuse of referees and effect of that on recruitment
- Judges are volunteers who have to demonstrate a high skilled technical expertise and behave in a professional way a paradox!
- Need in future to offer better education and opportunities to certify the beginners and to put in place a mentoring system
- Need in future to spread the knowledge throughout the community: implement e-learning, use new tools/ technologies available, share of experience and best practices
- Need in future to manage attitudes and behaviours development /education on soft skills and appliance of code of ethics
- ✓ The main challenge is the coaching of the officials. There is a shortage of coaches. So most starting referees have to develop by themselves.
- It is a challenge to develop the official from a 'policeman' to a 'facilitator of the game on an educative way',
- ✓ The population of officials is aging. So we have to invest in recruiting young officials. Also, the recruitment of more women for officiating is an issue.
- The funding and importance of officiating department in federations is not high enough.

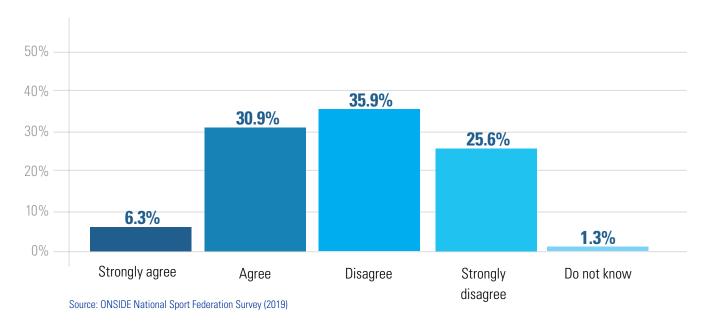
B. GENDER BALANCE

A final issue which was explored and taken account of in the ONSIDE project, and is an increasing priority for the sport officiating sector as a whole, is that of gender balance. Firstly, this was covered in the national federation research survey:



GRAPH 13: IN OUR SPORT, THERE IS A GOOD GENDER BALANCE OF SPORT OFFICIALS (WOMEN AND MEN)

(n = 223)



This chart shows that among the respondents there is a perception of a gender imbalance in sport officiating with over 60% feeling there is not a good gender balance in their sport. The ONSIDE partners feel sometimes this could depend on the sport; however, it is a useful snapshot from the respondents of the survey.

A survey in the Netherlands found that 75% of sport officials are male, and that in most sports the percentage of female athletes is higher than the percentage of female sport officials. In "jury" sports, such as equestrian and swimming, the percentage of female sport officials can be higher (65% and 40%), showing the level of representation is not the same across all sports.

Although women can be underrepresented in sport officiating, it was encouraging to hear in the research phase of the ONSIDE project about the female officiating development programmes in some federations, driving the gender balance message and planning, programming and funding accordingly is happening in some federations.

The following are some examples from different sports.

- In badminton, roughly one third of higher level umpires are female. At world level, 6 out of 30 are female. The European federation tries to stimulate female umpires, with a women's support programme.
- In football, two years ago, UEFA started trying to develop female referees to support the women's game. It is part of the Convention to mention women at all times. Money can be made available immediately for women referees courses. UEFA promote women's football they believe it follows that they also promote development of women referees.
- ✓ The European Hockey Federation is launching a gender balance strategy, quotas have been considered. Sometimes, there is cultural issue with national associations only nominating male officials. The main aim is to drive a gender balance message across the sport.

A follow-on project to ONSIDE called the WINS project "Raising the growth and participation of female sport officials in Europe" with focus on gender equality in sport officiating will begin, funded under Erasmus+ Sport, in January 2021. The WINS project will address gender equity in sport officiating by undertaking comprehensive research in to the issues affecting female sport officials and producing indispensable products to support organisations who are responsible for the recruitment and retention of female officials.





CONCLUSION

This occupational map draws on available data and information on the background, characteristics, organisations, workforce, key drivers and tendencies in the area of sport officiating. Much of the data and findings were drawn from the expertise within the ONSIDE partnership and the primary research carried out for the project.

There is a lack of data at the European and national levels in regards to sport officiating, so it is clear that the ONSIDE project will provide a legitimate and beneficial first attempt to systematically analyse sport officiating which is so vital to the credibility and overall functioning of the sports sector.

The occupational map provides a broad frame of reference for the area of sport officiating and lays the foundation for the development of occupational standards and education strategies, including e-learning courses in generic skills for sport officials.

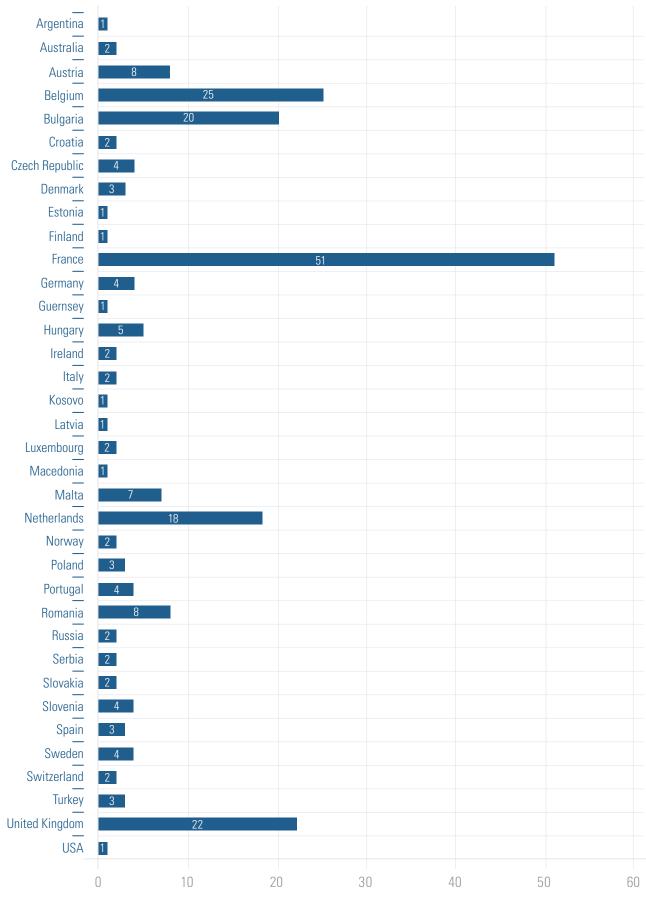
Sport officiating is a vital component in the operation of sport in Europe, and the development of the skills and competences of the workforce, and effective education and training strategies, will benefit sport as a whole and its wider aims to impact on individuals and communities.



ANNEX 1 SUMMARY OF THE ONSIDE NATIONAL SPORT FEDERATION SURVEY



NUMBER OF RESPONSES COLLATED PER COUNTRY (n = 224)



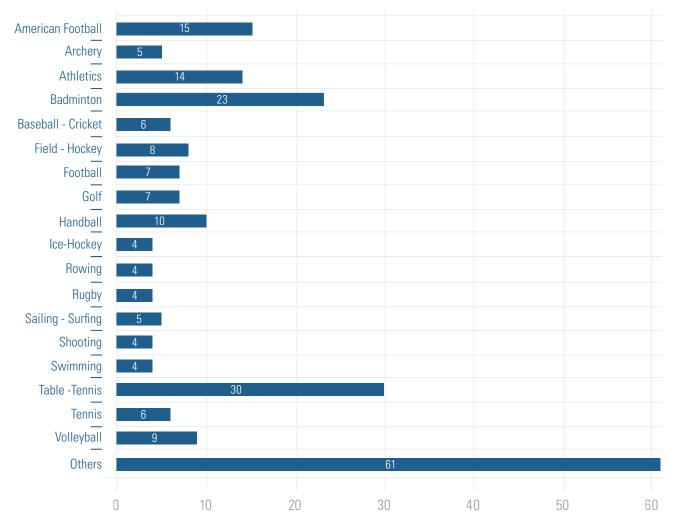
The countries with the highest response rate corresponded to countries where there is an active ONSIDE partner organisation who could distribute and promote the survey to national federations. There are partners in the project from Bulgaria, France, Netherlands and the UK as well as a strong link with the Olympic Committee in Belgium – these countries account for most of the responses although it was positive to see 36 countries represented in the responses.

The response from within the European Union was 208 (92.9%).



NUMBER OF RESPONSES COLLATED PER SPORT

(n = 224)



Similarly the sports with the greatest representation in the survey were those where there is an active ONSIDE partner or supportive international federation. Table tennis was particularly well represented due to the efforts from colleagues at the European Table Tennis Union (ETTU). Partners of good contacts in handball, athletics, American football, volleyball, badminton, hockey and golf also resulted in good representation in these sports.

The survey was aimed at national sport organisations, which by their nature are sport-specific. 31 "multisport" organisations also completed the survey, while the partnership appreciated this level of input; these responses have been removed from the analysis presented in this paper.

ONSIDE PARTNERSHIP



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United Kingdom

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Malta

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Romania

Romanian Football Federation



Bulgaria

National Sports Academy «Vassil Levski»



Netherlands

Dutch Olympic Committee * Dutch Sports Federation





ONSIDE Coordinator
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