

Summary Report

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



European
Commission



International
Olympic
Committee

PARTNERSHIP FOR
clean competition



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

UNESCO



**world
anti-doping
agency**

Raising the Visibility of Social Science Research in Sport Integrity

A Stakeholder Survey Report from

The Social Science Research Collaboration Platform

The Survey at a Glance

What is it?

A survey of stakeholders of the SSR Collaboration Platform related to social science research (SSR) and sport integrity.

Who responded?

361

individuals from universities, sports federations, anti-doping organizations, private organizations, and public authorities.

From where did they respond?

Respondents were spread across all regions, with the largest response coming from

Europe.....	37%
followed by Latin America.....	23%
Africa.....	16%
Asia.....	11%
North America.....	9%
and Oceania.....	5%

Do they engage with SSR?

Yes (81%)

How?

Mainly online searching, academic journals, and media.

Why?

To stay current and to inform programs.

Is SSR important to their organization?

Yes

(69% very, and 22% moderately important). It is less important if they are a sports federation.

Are their organizations conducting SSR in sport integrity?

Kind of...50% are, but more likely to be a university.

For what purpose?

To measure behavior and attitudes of stakeholders (36%), evaluate programs (32%) and inform policy (31%).

Funding of SSR

Are they aware of opportunities?

– moderately aware.

Where do they find out about funding opportunities?

– through their own networks, email.

Are they interested in applying for funding?

– Yes (67% very interested with 65% very likely to support an application).

Are there barriers to accessing funding?

– Generally, no (69%). Europeans more likely to identify barriers.

What are the barriers?

– Resources, time, eligibility and logistics.

Can help be provided for barriers?

– Yes. Better access to information, more support for the application process, more opportunities for collaboration.

So, what now?

The survey has proven very insightful for the SSR Collaboration Platform, but it can only be useful and impactful for stakeholders if the implications of the findings are actioned.

The findings have shown that there is an appetite to engage with SSR, that its value is seen as important for both individuals and organizations, but there is potential for it to be more widely accessible and better used. This better use can be facilitated in the first instance by funding/ supporting agencies through better access to information regarding; research findings, existing projects and funding opportunities. The first steps for the Collaboration Platform in actioning this is to provide a central website to facilitate better access to information. The members will continue to explore other initiatives that will continue to increase the visibility of SSR in sport integrity.

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Social Science Research (SSR) Collaboration Platform

The '**SSR Collaboration Platform**' is an informal community of practice for organizations that support social science research aimed at having a positive impact on clean sport.

We convene to share experience and best practices, using our collective insights to improve the benefits of research by taking action to reduce duplication and improving the way in which research is disseminated, understood and adopted by actors in the field of sport.

Our aim: to help improve public and sport policy to protect the sporting experience for all.

There are currently six different organizations who attend meetings of the Platform:

- Council of Europe
- European Commission
- International Olympic Committee (IOC) (The Olympic Studies Centre and Medical & Scientific Department)
- Partnership for Clean Competition
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)

As an informal network, other international and regional organizations who have a role in supporting social science research in sport are welcome to join us at any time. The network also welcomes private organizations and other supporters of social science research in sport integrity.

While maintaining the informal character of the network, in our work we refer to the formal requirements laid out for the organisations involved in anti-doping. The World Anti-Doping Code, on the one hand, and the international treaties of UNESCO and the Council of Europe, on the other, oblige their respective stakeholders to encourage and promote anti-doping research, as well as share the results of available anti-doping research with other stakeholders.

As part of our collective aims, we want to raise the visibility of social science research in sport, as well as help to improve policy, promote investment opportunities for researchers, raise awareness of research programs and maximize opportunities to disseminate research findings. This Communiqué profiles each organization's individual role in supporting social science research and identifies common research themes in which we are all interested.

In 2021, the SSR Collaboration Platform published a [Communiqué](#) to highlight SSR opportunities available to our stakeholders. As part of the same release, a survey was also published to gather stakeholder feedback in the area of SSR as it relates to sport integrity. Respondents from stakeholders of all members were asked to provide insight on their experience with SSR to help participating members of the SSR Collaboration Platform to improve their support and promotion of SSR in the future, both individually and as a collective.

This publication sets out some key findings of the survey and highlights initiatives that the SSR Collaboration Platform has instigated and will do in the future to support and promote SSR.

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Role and Importance of SSR to Sport Integrity

The SSR Collaboration Platform believes that research in social sciences has a key role to play in guiding the development of sport integrity initiatives. SSR can also provide important insight into the broader context within which natural science research developments occur, such as drug testing, sport science advancements and technological innovations in sport. Areas where SSR can be applied and how it can contribute to sport integrity, based on its contribution to other public health areas has been articulated through WADA's SSR Strategy (2020–2024):

→ **Clarifying the complexity of human behavior**

Social sciences investigate factors shaping people's behavior in specific domains such as health, education and, of course, sport. The understanding of these factors in the health domain, for example, has helped policymakers design more effective interventions for addressing health conditions and promoting healthy behaviors in areas such as diabetes, obesity and safe sex, which need to be comprehensively addressed at all levels of society to have the desired impact.

→ **Informing policy development and implementation**

Social sciences provide empirical findings and models that help us understand or predict human behavior. The findings of social science research can be used by policymakers to develop and implement policies. For example, social science research (including knowledge generation and monitoring and evaluation data) has informed policy for regulating the tobacco industry around the globe, thus contributing to a significant decline in smoking prevalence in many parts of the world.

→ **Evaluating programs and initiatives**

Rigorous evaluations of public interventions provide feedback on the effectiveness of programs and initiatives, leading to improvements. For example, research and evaluation of the US drug intervention campaign 'Just Say No' provided evidence of its ineffectiveness. This provided information on how public health programs can be delivered more effectively.

→ **Creating cultural change**

Done well, social science research generates knowledge and understanding of real-world challenges and opportunities that can be implemented in policies and practices to bring about societal change. For example, road safety messages related to seat-belt usage and drunk-driving behaviors, in conjunction with regulatory changes, have led to a significant reduction in traffic-related injuries and fatalities. The positive impact of social science research in the advancement of public policies and programs can best be achieved through buy-in from industry and other societal stakeholders. Building mutual understanding between researchers and policymakers is critical in bridging the research to policy gap.

SSR can contribute positively to sport integrity through the same areas. However, understanding the current landscape within which SSR is being used by organizations involved in sport integrity is an important first step and was a key aim in conducting the survey. Getting this deeper understanding of how stakeholders use and engage SSR provides a starting point for devising strategies to better support and promote its use.

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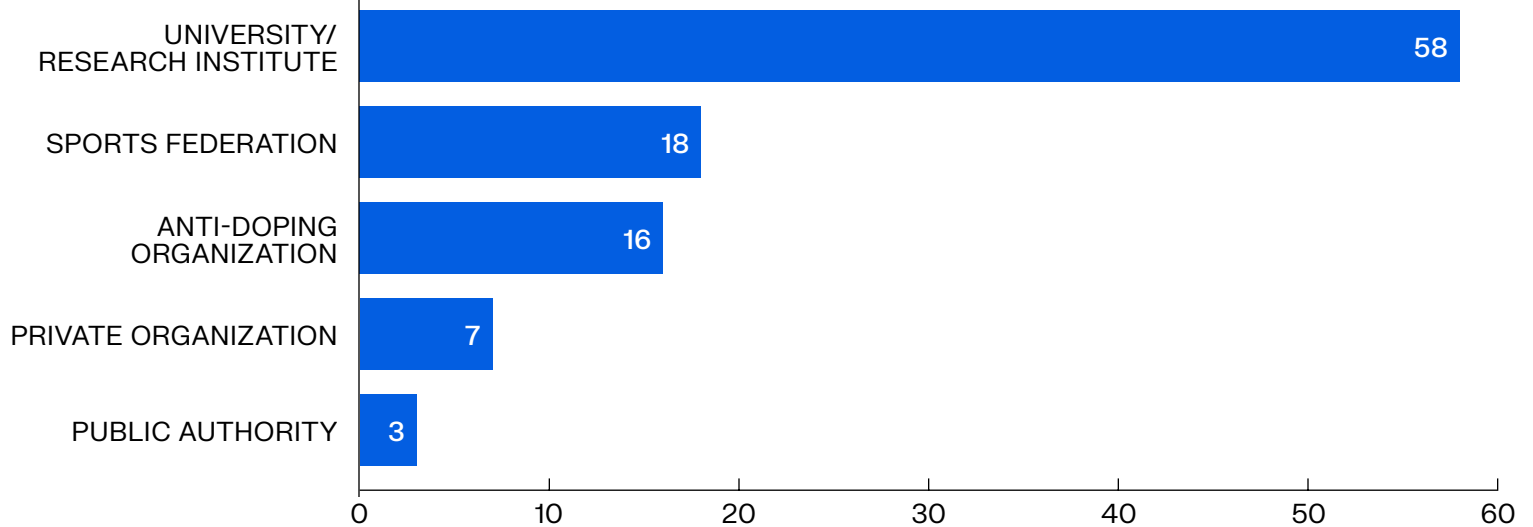
Stakeholder Survey: Key Findings

4.1 Profile of Respondents

The survey was administered between April and June 2021 to stakeholders of members of the SSR Collaboration Platform. There were 361 responses to the survey representing a number of different types of organizations with an interest in sport integrity research.

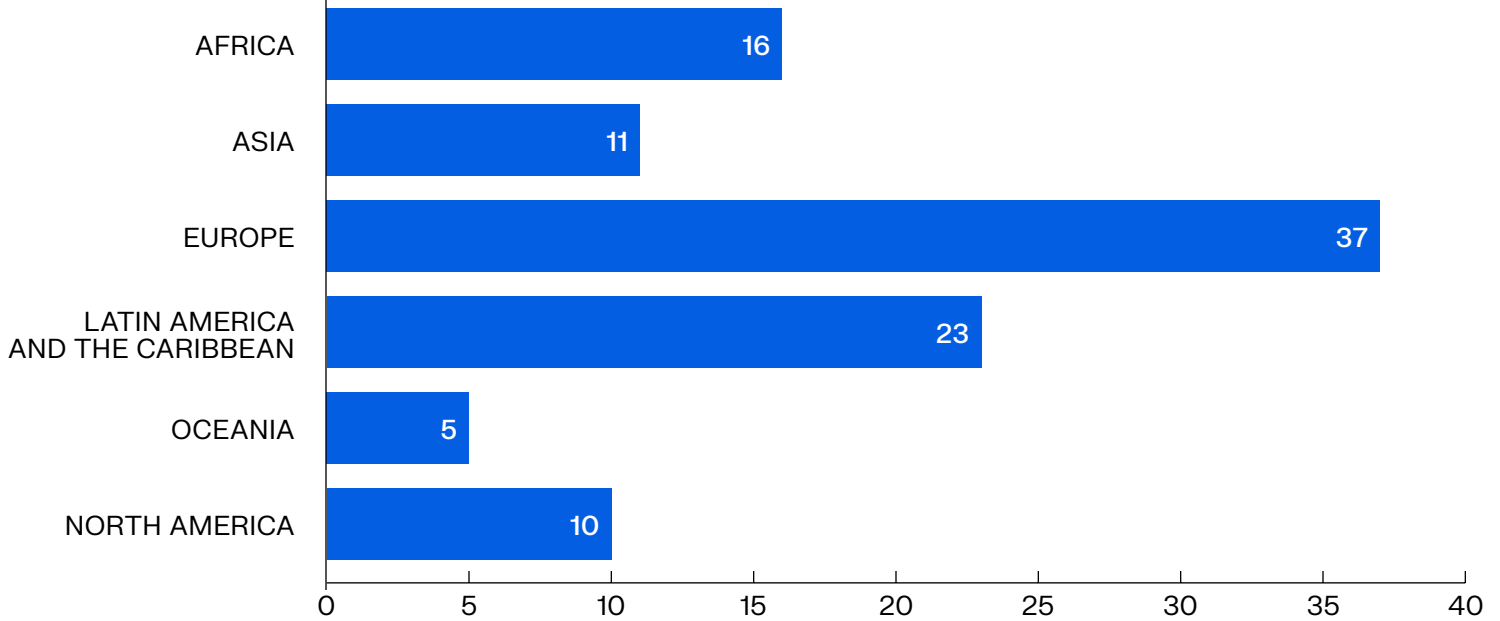
The responses were grouped into five different categories of organization: University/Research Institute, Sports Federation, Anti-Doping Organization, Private Organization and Public Authority. Figure 1 provides an outline of the responses by organization type.

Figure 1: Category of Organization (n = 361, total valid responses = 355)



Respondents were also asked to identify their region from one of six possible choices. Figure 2 shows the spread of the responses across all regions.

Figure 2: Region (n = 361, total valid responses = 355)



The survey was made available in 5 languages. English was by far the most popular with 331 responses, followed by French (15), Spanish (11), Russian (2) and Portuguese (2).

4.2 Engagement with Social Science Research (SSR)

4.2.1 Personal Engagement with SSR

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they engage with SSR findings related to sport integrity issues. 81% indicated that they engaged with SSR as illustrated by Figure 3. When asked what activities they use to engage with SSR, searching online was indicated as the main method, followed by academic journals and the media shown in Figure 4. When asked about their confidence in finding research, only 26% of respondents indicated that they were very confident. Respondents from non-university setting were less confident in finding relevant research.

Figure 3: Personal engagement with Social Science Research Findings by Organization Type

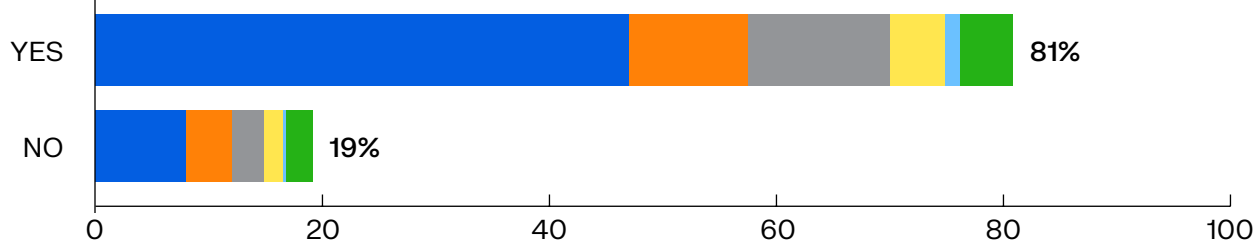
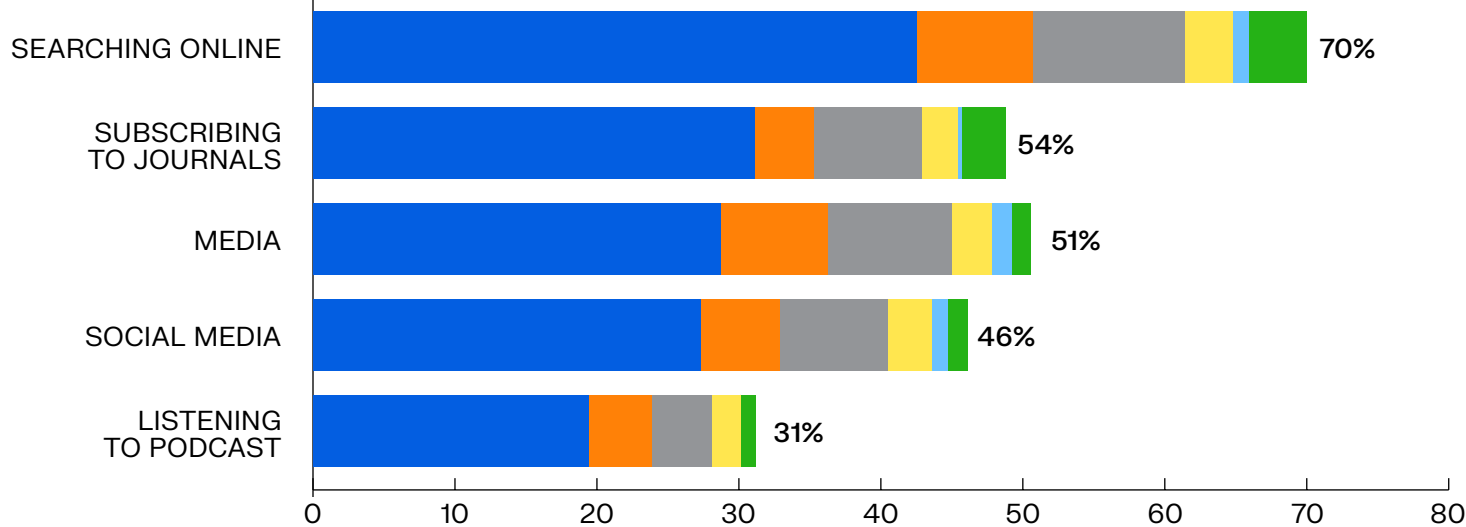


Figure 4: Activities undertaken to engage with research by Organization Type

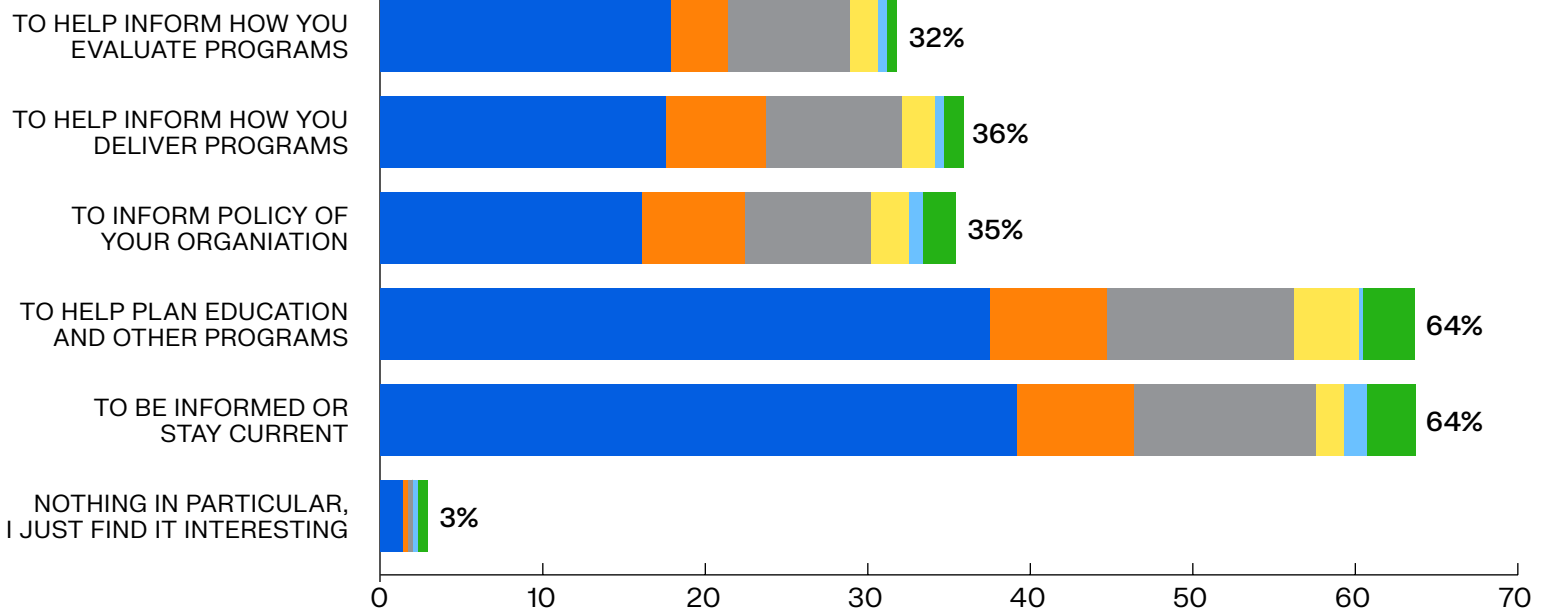


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Respondents were asked to indicate how they use social science research findings by choosing all responses that apply among six different choices. Respondents were invited to select all that apply. Being informed and staying current, and planning education and other programs were chosen as the most popular responses with 63.7% of respondents each choosing these options as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: How Social Science Research is Used by Organization Type



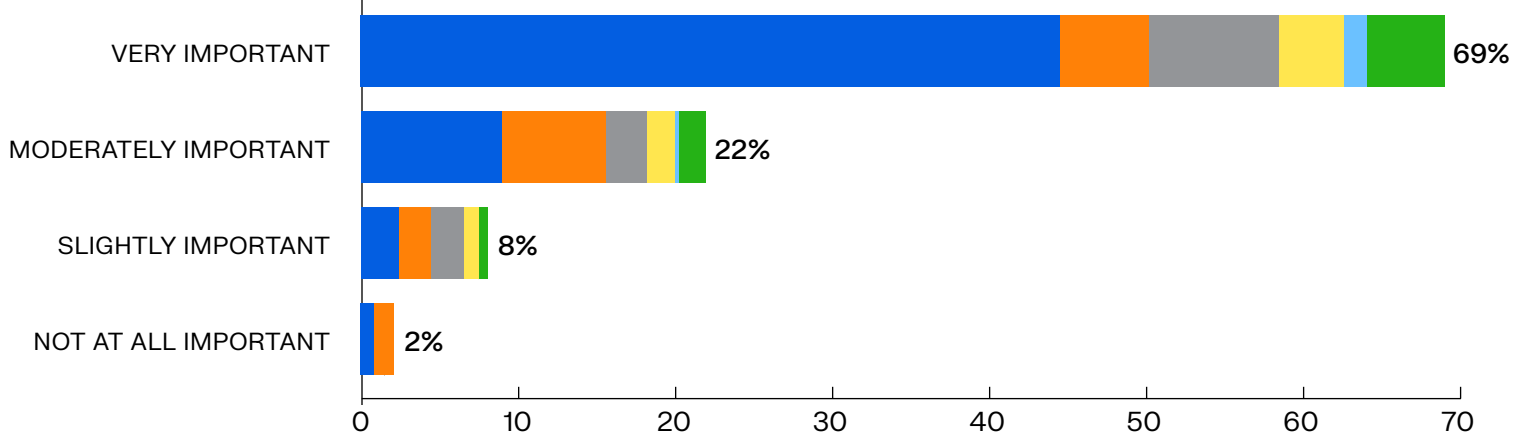
LEGEND

- University/ Research Institution
- Sports Federation
- Anti-Doping Organization
- Private Organization
- Public Authority
- Other

4.2.2 **Organizational Engagement with SSR**

At the organizational level, respondents were asked about the importance of SSR to their organization. 69% indicated that it was very important. Those from sports federation were proportionately more likely to select moderately important as illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Importance of SSR to Organization

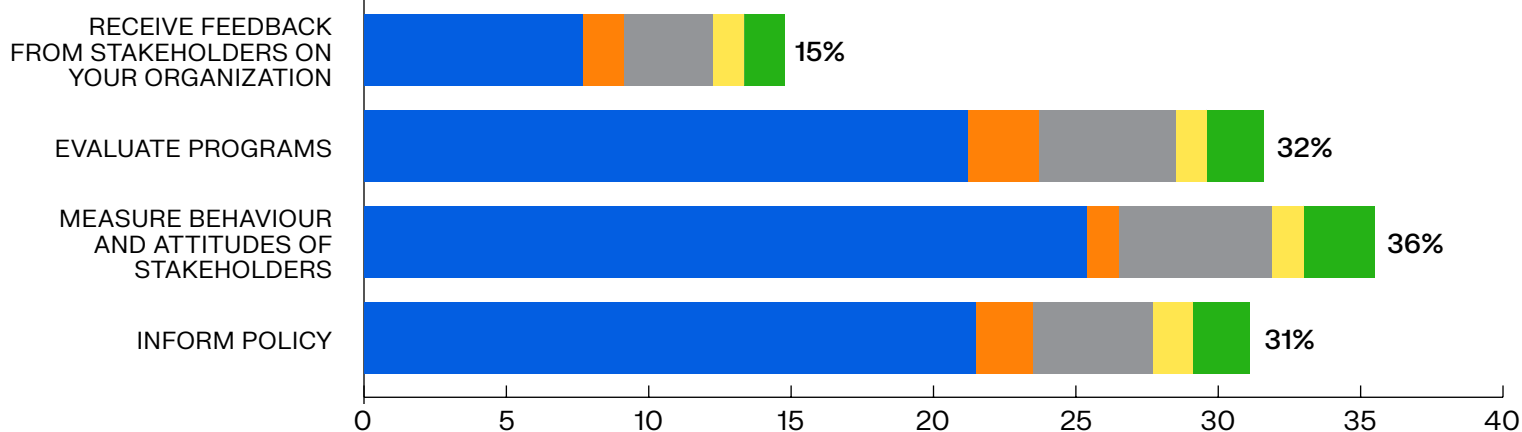


LEGEND

- University/Research Institution
- Sports Federation
- Anti-Doping Organization
- Private Organization
- Public Authority
- Other

Respondents were asked to identify the purpose of social science research within their organization by selecting all that apply among four possible choices: inform policy, measure behaviour and attitudes of stakeholders, evaluate programs, and/or receive feedback from stakeholders on your organization. Measuring behavior and attitudes was cited as the most common reason. Sports federations were more likely to select the evaluation of programs. Informing research and practice were the two most cited by respondents when asked about other purposes.

Figure 7: Purpose of Social Science Research by Organization Type



4.2.3

Takeaway

Despite the acknowledgement of the importance of SSR in all respondent categories and that it is used for a variety of different purposes, the majority of sports federations, anti-doping organizations and public authorities indicated that they are not currently conducting SSR. Only 12% of respondents specified that their organization had a budget for SSR.

This would indicate that there is a gap between the desire to access and use SSR, and the resources to find the research as well as conduct it effectively. External funding may be a way to help bridge this gap.

LEGEND

- University/Research Institution
- Sports Federation
- Anti-Doping Organization
- Private Organization
- Public Authority
- Other

4.3 Funding Opportunities

4.3.1 Interest and Awareness of Funding Opportunities

Respondents were asked to indicate how interested they are in applying for funding for social science research in the next year. Two thirds of respondents indicated that they were very interested, as shown by Figure 8. Awareness of funding opportunities was less than optimal with over 80% of respondents selecting that they were moderately aware, or less as illustrated in Figure 9.

Figure 8: Interest in Applying for Funding for SSR, by Organization Type

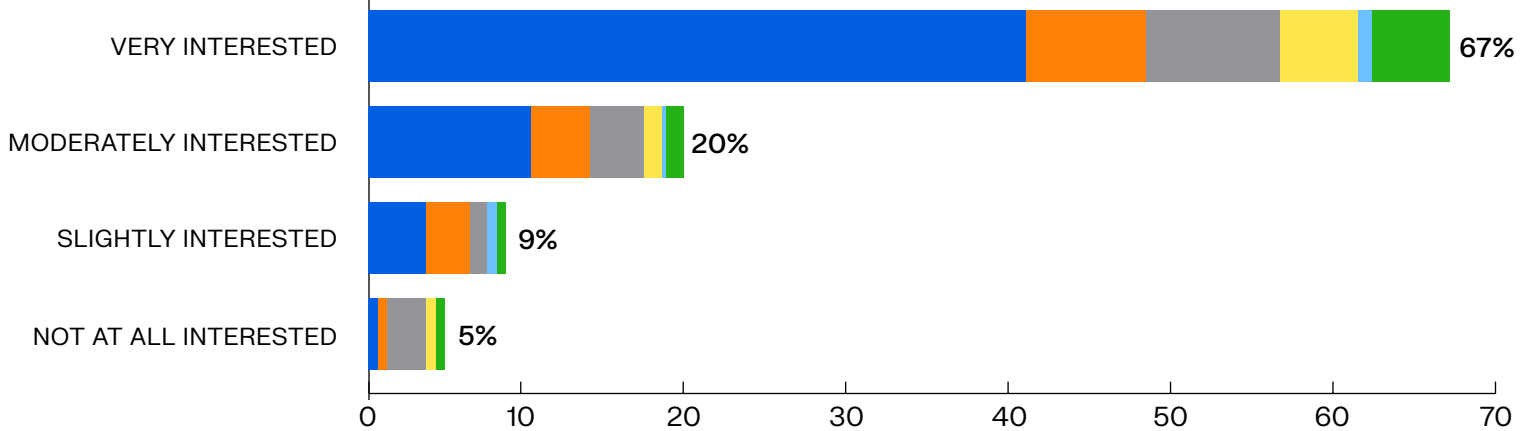
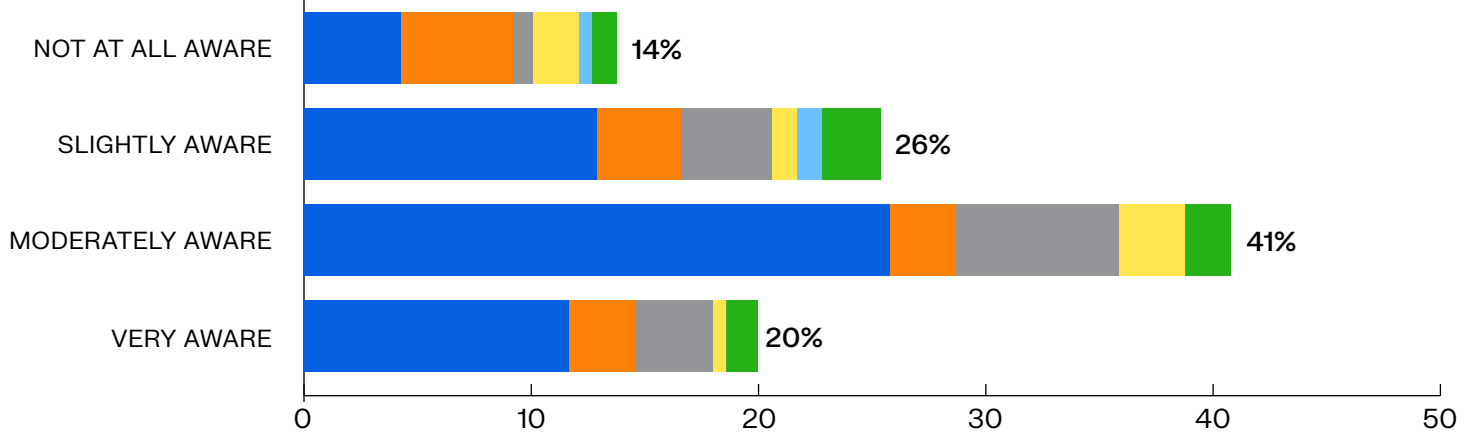


Figure 9. Awareness of Funding Opportunities by Organization Type



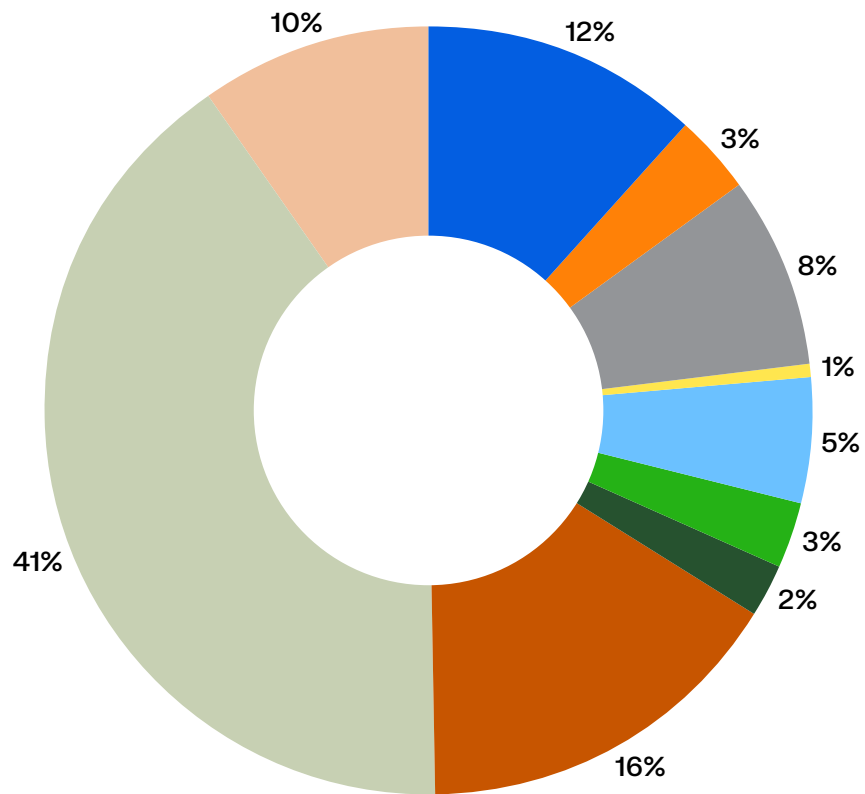
LEGEND



4.3.2 **Locating Funding Opportunities**

Respondents were asked to describe how funding opportunities for SSR are located. This was an open-ended question. Responses were coded and grouped into themes revealing a total of nine themes; five themes focused on the type of organization people look to when seeking funding, specifically anti-doping organizations, public authorities / governments, private / non-profit and sport organizations. The remaining four were related to how participants locate funding, specifically through their networks, searching online and internally within their own institution (general). Figure 10 below shows a breakdown of responses by theme.

Figure 10: Where to Locate Funding Opportunities



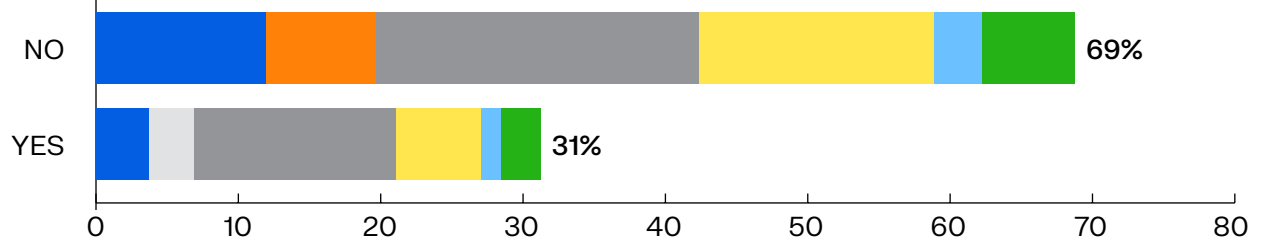
LEGEND

- Anti-Doping Organizations
- Research Councils
- Organizations (Funding, International, Professional)
- Governments
- Sports Organizations
- Stakeholders
- Sports Entities
- Search Tools
- Networks
- General

4.3.3 **Barriers to Funding and Support to Overcome**

When asked if they perceive any barriers in applying for funding, 69% of respondents said No. Figure 11 shows the breakdown by region. European respondents indicated a higher likelihood to perceive barriers.

Figure 11: Barriers in Applying for Social Science Research, by Region

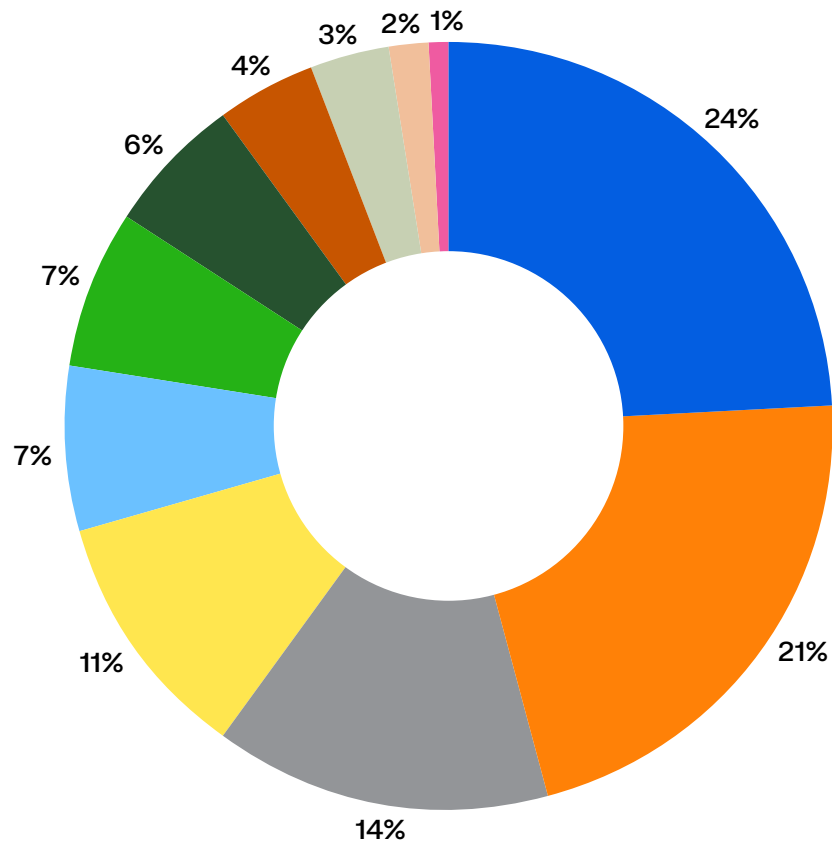


LEGEND



Respondents were asked to identify barriers they face when applying for social science research funding through an open-ended question. Responses were reviewed and organized into twelve themes or categories. The three most common reasons identified are Resources / Human Resources (n = 29), Time (n = 26), and Eligibility (n = 17).

Figure 12: Identified Barriers to Applying for Social Science Research Funding

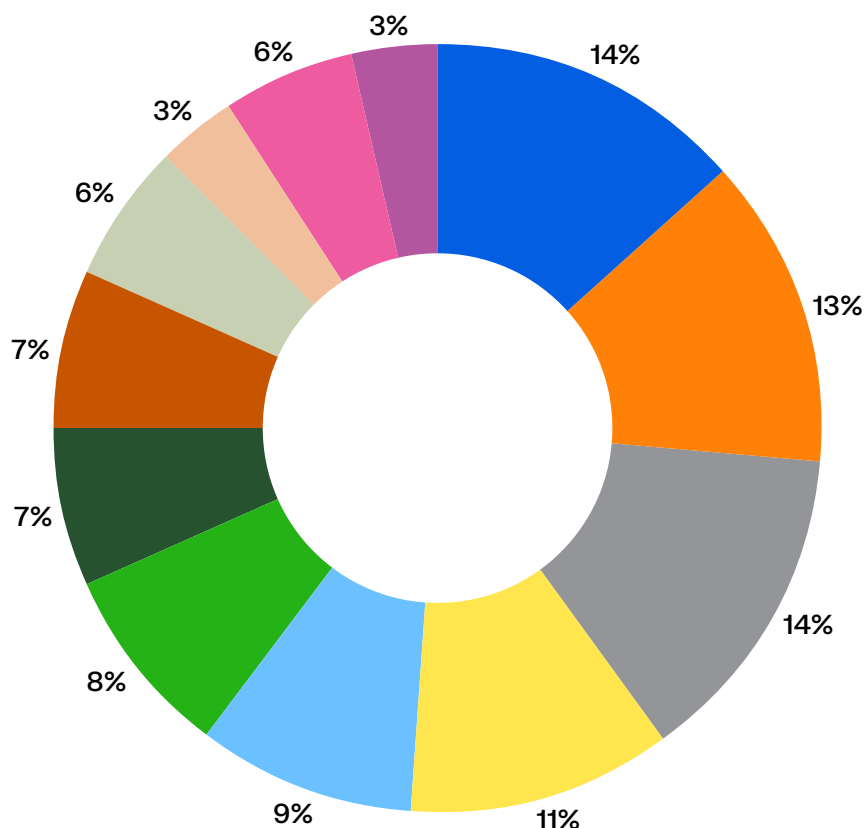


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- Ressources/ Human Ressources
- Time
- Eligibility
- Research Logistics
- Infrastructure
- Lack of Information Regarding Opportunities
- Money
- Bureaucracy
- Language
- COVID-19
- Obligations

Respondents were also asked to identify ways to overcome these barriers. Responses revealed 12 broad themes as outlined in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Identified Ways to Help Overcoming Barriers



4.3.4

Takeaway

A significant majority of respondents (69%) did not see any barriers in applying for funding for sport integrity related research. For those who did, the barriers were mostly related to them personally or their organization (i.e. resources and time). However, there were also a number of items highlighted where funding agencies could provide additional support in promoting funding opportunities, increasing access to information and providing support during and after the application process.

LEGEND

- Additional Staff, Researchers, and/or Expertise
- Access to Information
- Support
- Application Process
- Mentoring
- Increase Collaboration
- Increase Interest
- Increase Scope/Flexibility
- Money
- Time and Planning
- Political Barriers
- Language

4.4 Summary and Next Steps

4.4.1 Personal Engagement with SSR

- Of the 361 responses to the survey, 81% personally engaged with SSR findings.
 - This engagement mainly occurred through online searching.
 - Academic journals were also a popular way to engage with SSR, unsurprisingly this was more likely to occur in academics. The media was also a popular channel for other types of respondents.
 - The main motivation for engaging with SSR was to stay current and to help plan programs.

4.4.2 Organizational Engagement with SSR

- 91% indicated that SSR was very important (69%) or moderately important (22%) to their organization.
 - A minority of non-academic organizations were conducting SSR, with only 12% of all organizations specifying that they had a budget for conducting SSR.
 - The purpose of SSR is varied; informing policy, measuring behavior and evaluating programs.
 - There is room to add value to organizations' use of SSR, only one third of organizations used SSR for each of these purposes and, of course, there are other purposes within organizations where SSR can be used effectively.

4.4.3 Funding

- 60% of respondents are either very aware (20%) or moderately aware (40%) of funding opportunities, indicating room for improvement.
- Respondents highlighted a broad range of places to go for funding opportunities, they would generally find out about opportunities from within their own existing networks, particularly directly via email.
- The majority of respondents (69%) said that there were no perceived barriers to applying for funding. European respondents were more likely to perceive barriers than any other region.
- Unsurprisingly, resource-related reasons (funding, staff, time) were referenced as the biggest barriers to accessing, conducting and using SSR.
 - Funding agencies can help alleviate some of these challenges by promoting funding opportunities, increasing access to information and providing support during and after the application process.

4.4.4

Conclusions and Next Steps

- The findings underpin the idea of a collective approach to promoting and facilitating research.
- There is a very positive perception about SSR and its potential to add value for individuals (staying current) and organizations (measuring behavior of stakeholders and receiving feedback).
- Although positive, there is an opportunity to improve access to research, generating awareness of funding opportunities and supporting quality applications.
- A centralized resource for all members of the Collaboration Platform would help facilitate this and raise visibility of SSR.
- The SSR Collaboration Platform will endeavor to provide a centralized website that can signpost and promote funding opportunities, research findings, existing live research projects, an opportunity to receive direct information on SSR as well as wider SSR resources.



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