Feeback surveys and results report

LIFE SeaBiL (Action B3)

Saving SeaBirds from marine Litter

LIFE20 GIE/FR/000114

Coordinator

Beneficiaries

Financial partners

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FEEDBACK ON TOOLS FOR BEACH CLEAN UPS

REPORT December 2023

SeaBiL *"Saving Seabirds from marine Litter"* LIFE20 GIE/FR/000114

Coordinating beneficiary

Associated beneficiaries

This report presents a comprehensive analysis of the feedback received through different actions (beach clean ups and trainings; action B3) on the "Low Footprint" tools (actions B1 and B2) developed under the LIFE SeaBiL project for beach clean-ups.

The LIFE SeaBiL project - *Saving Seabirds from marine Litter* - is co-funded by the European Commission.

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1. CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT LIFE SEABIL

According to estimates, almost 90% of seabirds have plastic in their stomachs. When they are not killed by ingestion, plastic threatens their survival and affects their habitats and their reproduction.

Within the context of the fight against marine pollution, the LIFE SeaBiL Project "Saving SeaBirds from marine Litter" aims to evaluate and reduce the impact of plastic pollution on seabirds. The project involves 5 pilot sites in 3 countries:

- France: Gironde estuary and Pertuis sea Marine Natural Park (PNMEGMP)
- Portugal: Berlengas Natural Reserve
- Spain: Ebro Delta Natural Park (Delta Ebro), Urdaibai Biosphere Reserve (Basque Country)/ Santoña Marshes Natural Park (Cantabria); Cabo de Gata-Níjar Natural Park (Almería).

2. OBJECTIVES

The LIFE SeaBiL project aims to address the increasing disturbance caused by beach clean-ups on fragile species and habitats. In response, we have developed "low footprint" tools, including a guide with good practices, risk maps for nesting Kentish plovers (*Charadrius alexandrinus*), and an improvement of mobile application (ICAO app) for recording stranded seabirds during beach clean-ups.

The objective of the SeaBiL project is to improve awareness among beach clean-up organizers, N2000 managers, and citizens involved in beach cleaning activities. The project seeks to achieve this by training managers and stakeholders on best practices for low-impact beach clean-ups through both physical and virtual training, as well as beach clean ups in the different pilot sites. The training aims to enhance understanding of seabirds' lifestyles, organize low-footprint clean-ups, and use the ICAO app for better monitoring of stranded birds.

To ensure the effectiveness of the tools, training initiatives and, beach clean ups, the project emphasizes continuous improvement through stakeholder feedback received on the "Low Footprint" tools for beach clean ups developed under the LIFE SeaBiL project. This report presents a thorough analysis of the feedback received from surveys conducted among key participants, including natural area managers, beach clean-up organizers, and other stakeholders.

3. GENERAL OUTCOMES AND METHODOLOGY

The Life Seabil project has conducted online and physical trainings with participants from several countries. The dissemination of the events was done through social networks and mailing lists to the different target groups of the training. The online sessions were recorded and can be found in the resources tab of Life Seabil website (Fig.1).

French training session: https://lifeseabil.fr/ressources/outils-sensibilisation/

Spanish training session: https://lifeseabil.com/recursos/herramientas-sensibilizacion/

Portuguese training session: https://pt.lifeseabil.eu/recursos/ferramentas-de-sensibilizacao/

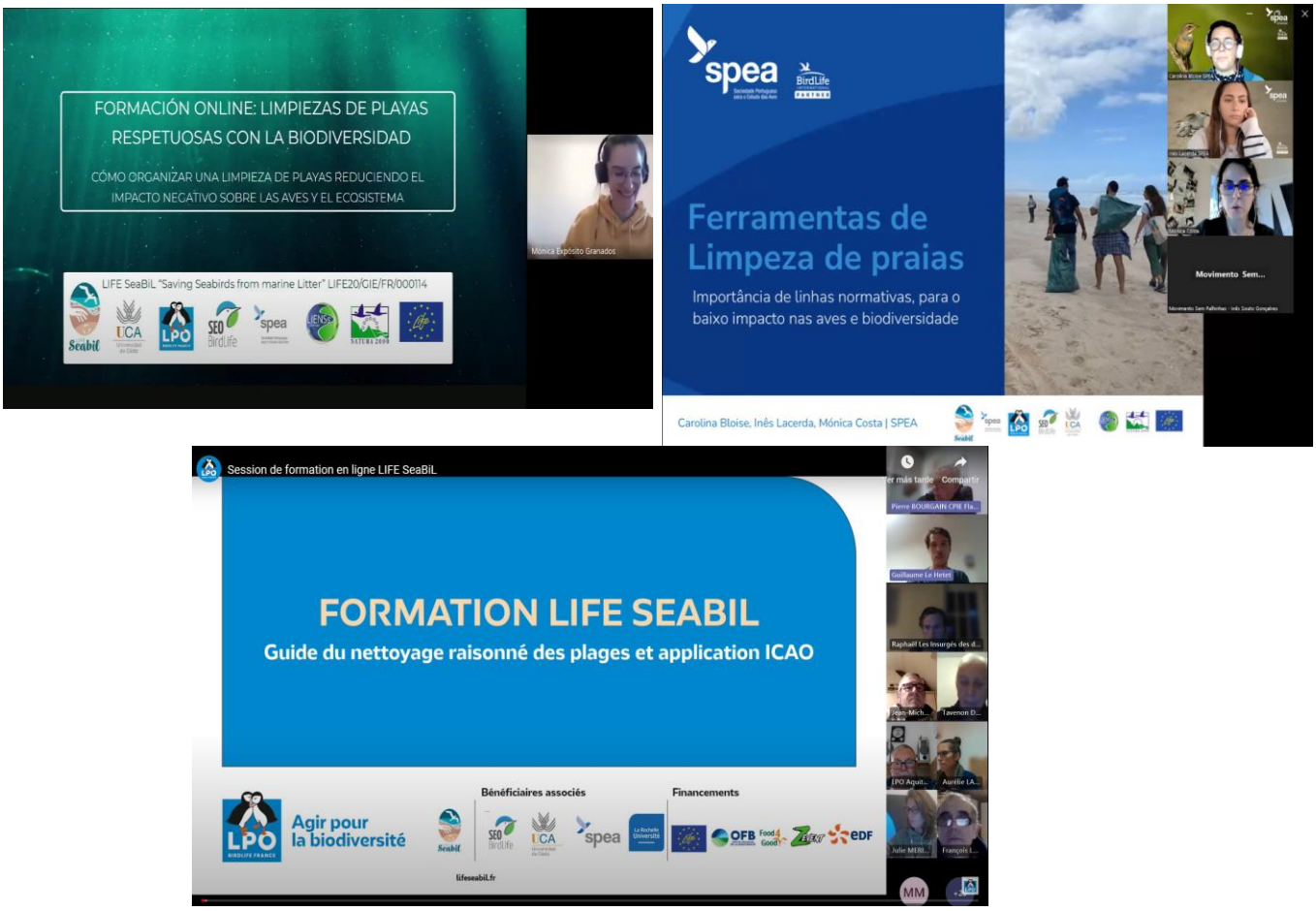

Figure 1. Sessions of online trainings conducted by partners of the project.

In terms of the total number of people who attended the online training, the number of participants was almost 140. Breaking down participation by country, there were 45 participants from France, 40 from Portugal and two sessions in Spain, with 26 and 28 participants, respectively.

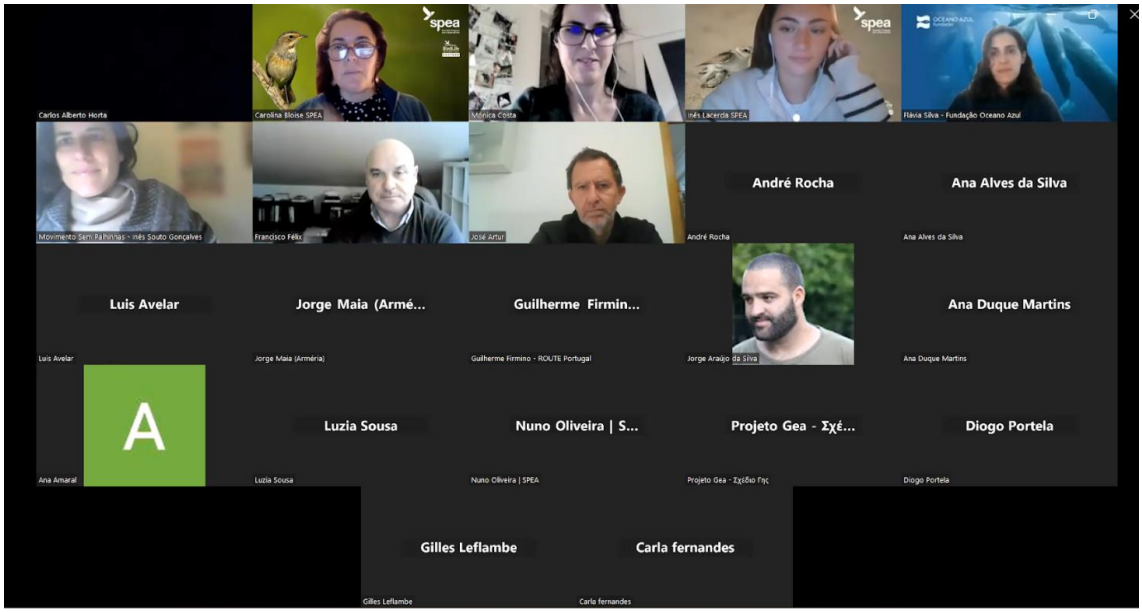

Figure 2. Image captured of participants involved in the Portuguese online training session.

Interactive discussions and real-time feedback opportunities

Activities were designed to foster debates and discussions during both online and physical training sessions. Participants were encouraged to actively share their thoughts, experiences, and suggestions regarding the "Low Footprint" tools and beach clean ups activities. Facilitators utilized interactive tools such as polling features and voting tools to collect instant feedback and ideas. Dedicated time slots were allocated during each session to provide participants with real-time opportunities to offer improvements on the tools (Fig. 3 and 4).

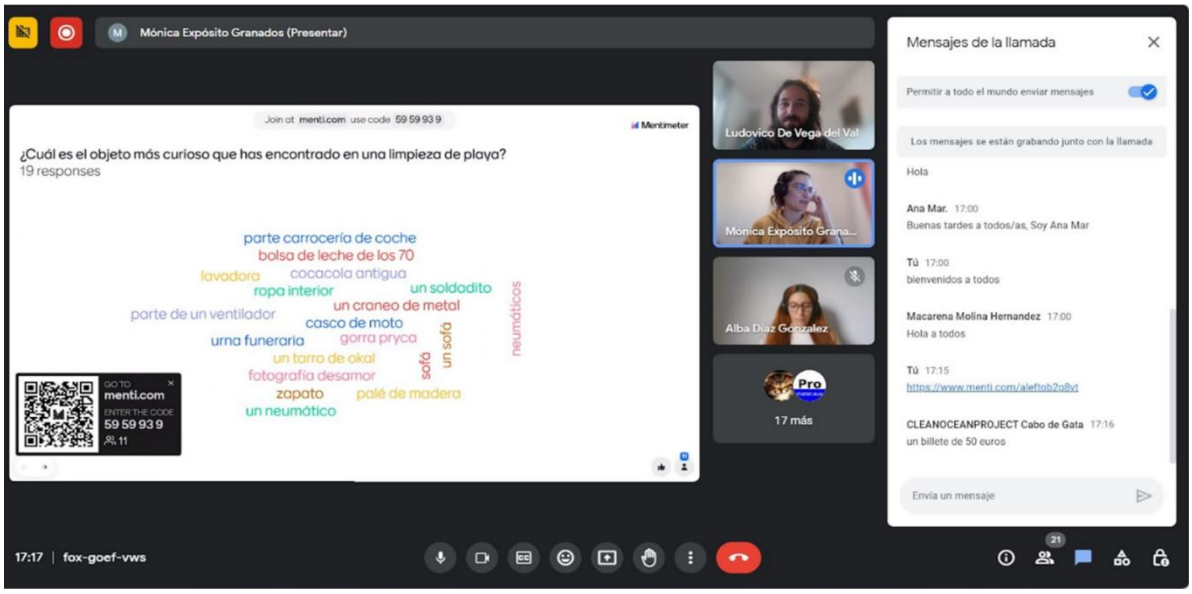

Figure 3. Image captured during an online training session, illustrating the successful utilization of interactive tools to promote the active involvement of participants.

Figure 4. Image captured during an online training session, showcasing the effective use of interactive tools to capture the real-time feedback of participants.

Post-Training surveys

Participants were directed to post-training surveys distributed after the completion of each training program. These surveys were designed to gather qualitative feedback on the effectiveness of the training sessions and to identify specific areas for improvement. The survey comprised four sections to collect diverse information: general information of the participants (affiliation, proximity to pilot site), suggestions for guide improvement, recommendations for risk maps, and suggestions and improvements for ICAO app. A final section was included for participants to provide any additional comments or general suggestions. Anonymity was ensured for participants providing feedback to encourage honest responses (Fig. 5).

Figure 5. Survey in different languages distributed among stakeholders to receive feedback and suggestion for improvements of "Low Impact" tools for beach clean ups.

The results of the participant profile, based on those who completed the Life Seabil survey, reflect a diversity of affiliations and roles. With a percentage of 38.10%, participants affiliated with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that organize beach cleanups are the majority within the sample of respondents. This highlights the active participation of these entities in the Life Seabil project. N2000 managers, who are involved in the management of natural areas and protected spaces, constitute a significant proportion of the sample (28.5 % of the total). On the other hand, there was also representation of volunteers involved in beach cleanups (19%) and people from academia (14.2%) (Fig. 6).

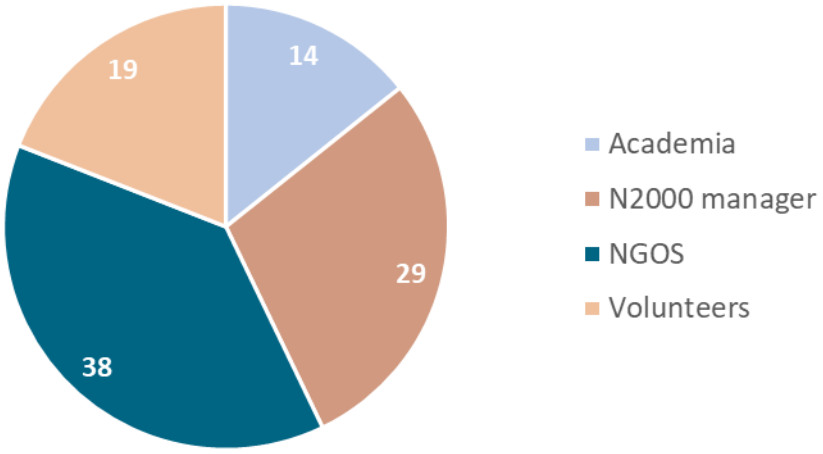

Figure 6. Percentage of profile of participants who completed the survey. Percentage based on a total of 22 respondents.

4. TRAINING INITIATIVES IMPACT AND FEEDBACK ON TOOLS

Stakeholders who participated in the training programs reported an increased understanding of best practices for low-impact beach clean-ups. The tools presented in the virtual and physical trainings were well-received.

Low footprint guide feedback

Participants appreciated the "Low Footprint" guide, highlighting its clarity and practicality (Fig. 7). Positive feedback emphasized the guide's effectiveness in providing actionable recommendations for minimizing ecosystem disturbance, especially around beach-nesting birds (Table 1).

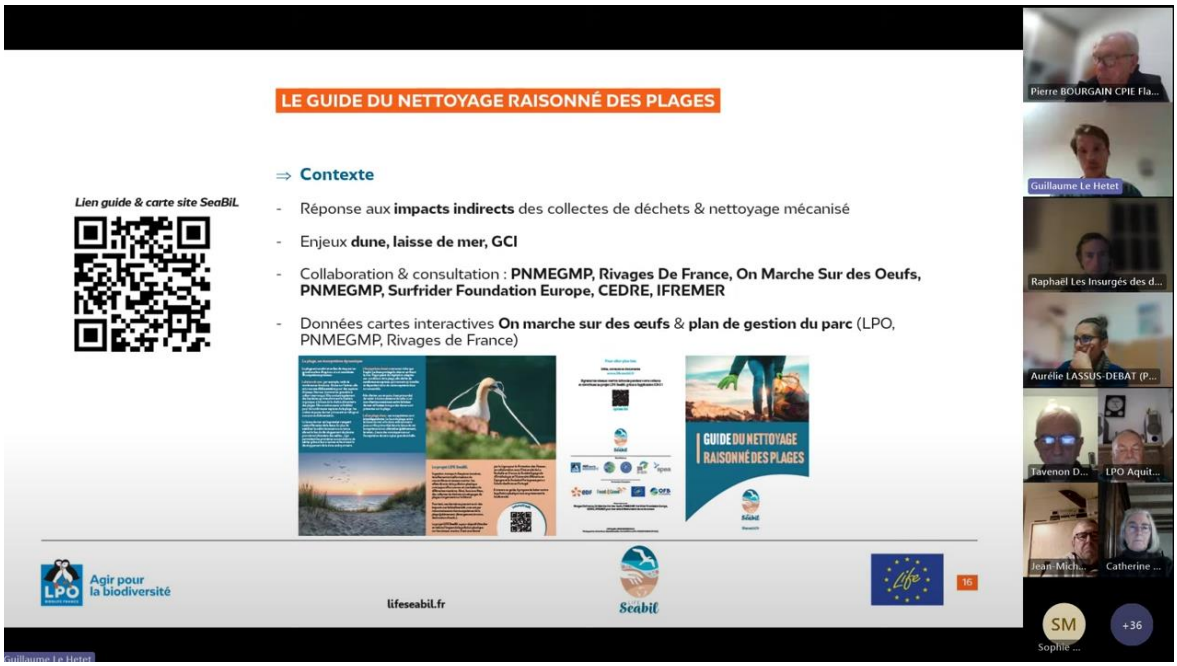

Figure 7. Presentation of low footprint guide in French online session of training with stakeholders.

The results of our survey show that the majority of participants consider the guide to be useful during beach cleanups. The vast majority, 72.7%, rated it as very useful (maximum score). 22.7% of the participants gave it a fairly positive rating. Finally, 4.5% of the participants rated it as moderately useful (Fig. 8).

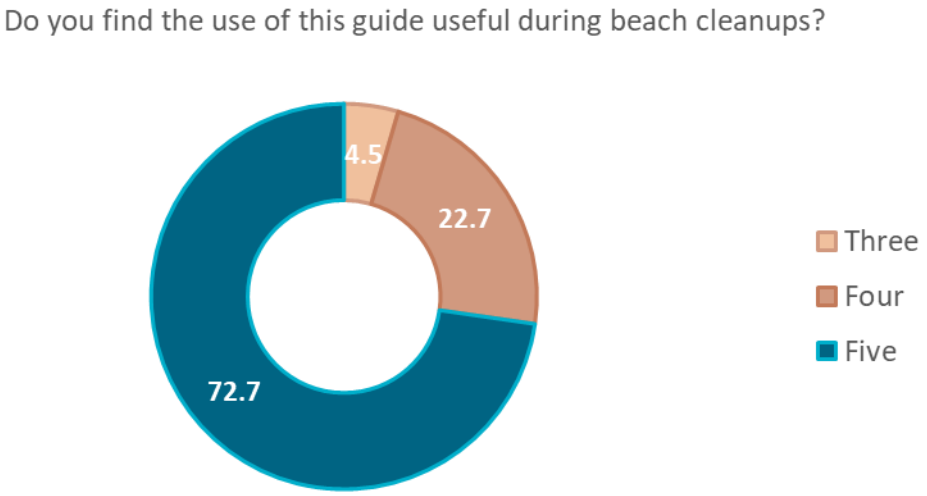

Figure 8. Percentage of responses to the question "Do you find the use of this guide useful during beach cleanups". The ratings are on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being not useful and 5 being very useful. Percentage based on a total of 22 respondents.

Most of the participants consider that the guide is complete and comprehensive in information. Participants rate the guide as very complete (54.4% of respondents) and complete (40.9% of respondents) while 4.5% of the participants rated it as moderately comprehensive (Fig. 9).

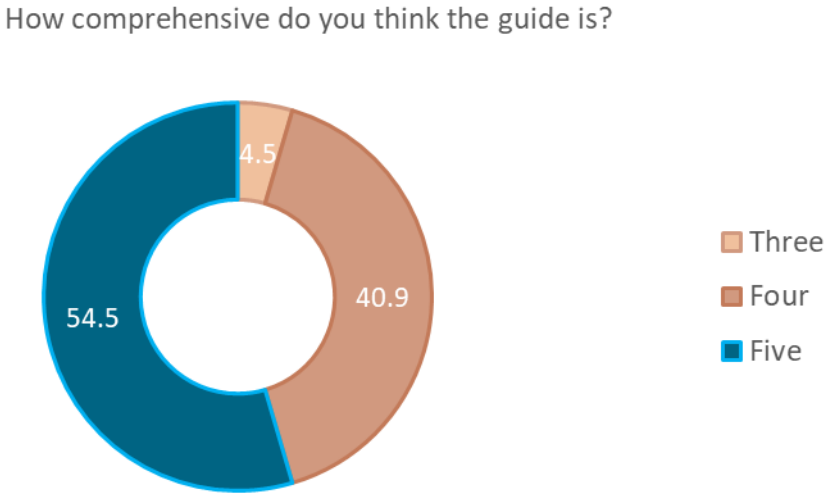

Figure 9. Percentage of responses to the question "how comprehensive do you consider the guide is?". The ratings are on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being not very complete and 5 being very complete. Percentage based on a total of 22 respondents.

Overall, the feedback is generally positive, emphasizing the guide's completeness and usefulness. Participants provided constructive suggestions for enhancements, particularly in terms of visuals and additional relevant information. In this context, some participants suggested a desire for more graphics and educational diagrams, with some participants finding the text-heavy nature of the guide a drawback (Table 1). Some suggestions were made to integrate symbology indicating areas to be avoided or critical, and guidelines for handling stranded seabirds. Additionally, some participants raised the question of whether permission is required for cleanups, suggesting it would be valuable to include such information in the guide (see Table 1).

Table 1. Feedback and suggested improvements of Low Footprint guide for beach clean ups obtained from participants.

Feedback and improvements on Low Footprint guide for beach clean up
A really good summary
I believe it addresses all the information necessary for any initiative of this nature.
It gives information to know what care to take when cleaning according to breeding seasons. I will use it...
different species of biodiversity that nest and inhabit the cleanup zones
There will always be points of improvement, but overall, it is very well done. I'm just waiting to see the final product based on the changes/improvements based on the European standards that have been mentioned, which may lead to improvements.
Very complete and straightforward information
Many other guides exist on our territory (PNM, IODDE, Rive & Rivages de France, Guide des Plages CARA, Guide des Plages Royan...). Some are highly illustrated, with schematics and educational plates. On site, BAM also provides simple information on the benefits of manual collection, how to carry out these operations and the importance of the surrounding biodiversity.
I find it a very complete and useful guide for beach cleaning.
It seems to me a very interesting guide that can help the conservation of beaches and the biodiversity that is in it. I think it should be made known in universities, institutes and schools to reach more people.
Very complete
Is it necessary to ask permission to carry out cleanups? If so, it would be interesting to add it to the guide. Apart from that I find it very complete and visual, thank you.
It provides very useful information and is very well explained.
Too much text and not enough graphics
I would add an explanatory plan of the actions
I would add more graphic information and remove some text.
For non-experts, it could be interesting to have a diagram of the beach to visually understand what is the sea leash / the beach / the dune.
Integrate a symbology to show the areas to be avoided / at stake (and what should or shouldn't be collected according to their location on the beach).
It should include how to act in the presence of stranded seabirds
I can't think of any improvements to add. Everything is fine
Smaller text and educational diagrams; More illustrations.
Information on collection alternatives (BAM, bags, etc.), existing networks and initiatives to combat plastic waste (TARA Ocean, TEO company, etc.).
Visual and simple. Sufficient for the volunteers who do cleanups during our walks.

Risk maps feedback

Stakeholders found the risk maps for nesting Kentish plovers to be valuable in identifying sensitive nesting areas (Fig. 10). The visual representation of nesting sites on the maps was particularly praised for aiding in strategic planning during beach clean-ups.

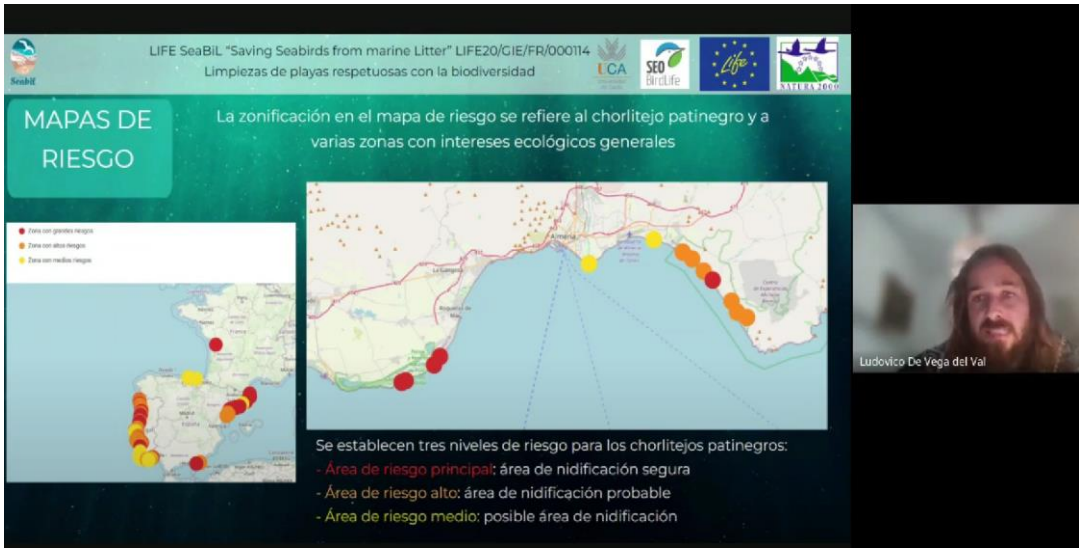

Figure 10. Presentation of risk maps on Spanish online session of training with stakeholders.

When we asked about the usefulness of the risk maps, most of participants consider the risk maps to be useful to promote respectful beach clean ups. The vast majority, 68.2%, rated it as very useful (maximum score). 22.7% of the participants gave it a fairly positive rating. Finally, 4.5% of the participants rated it as moderately useful o poorly useful (Fig.11).

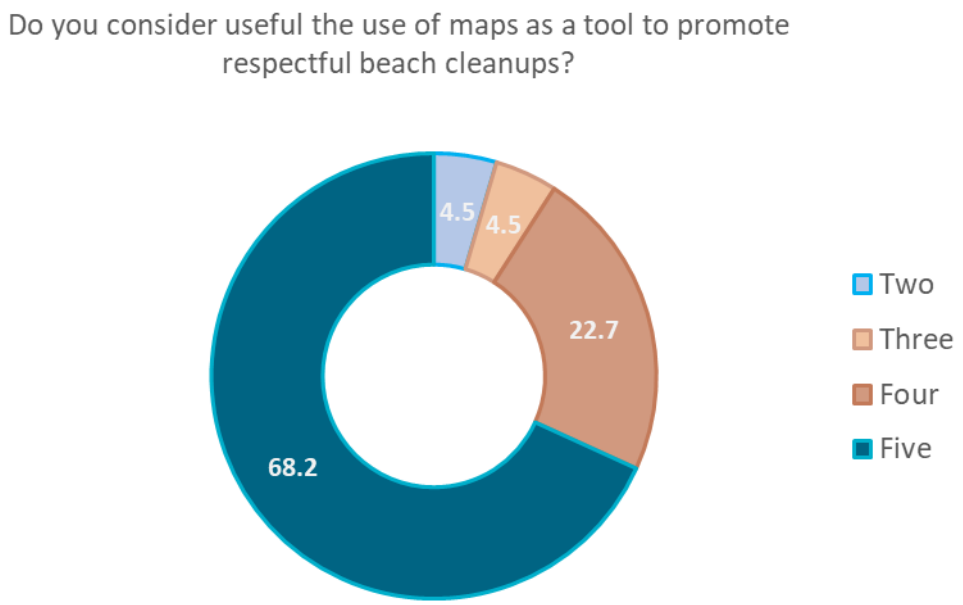

Figure 11. Percentage of responses to the question "Do you consider useful the use of maps as a tool to promote respectful beach cleanups?". The ratings are on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being not useful and 5 being very useful. Percentage based on a total of 22 respondents.

In summary, the feedback highlights the positive impact and utility of the risk maps, along with constructive suggestions for improvements and additional features to enhance their effectiveness. Several suggestions were made for further enhancing the tools, including additional information on specific bird behaviors and nesting periods (see Table). Participants considered this tool essential; the maps help individuals, including those cleaning or enjoying the beach, to exercise caution and avoid damaging protected areas. Suggestions were made to increase visibility, possibly through more signs in the areas covered by the maps. Some participants inquired about the project's plans to collect information on the types and frequency of beach cleaning interventions in defined high-risk areas with nesting. Additionally, some requests were made on specifics pilot sites to include risk areas for Kentish plover and other species (Table 2).

Table 2. Feedback and suggested improvements of risk maps obtained from participants.

Feedback and improvements on risk maps
It helps a lot in some cases
Help to locate biodiversity and avoid harming them
They provide a lot of necessary and quickly information
These maps are essential because people who are going to clean or simply enjoy the beach will be able to know the areas to maintain caution and not to damage the protected areas.
It is very useful to have a composition of the site and to know which environments are more degraded or at risk.
It is a good resource
It will be even more useful when the data from the Parc Naturel Marin de l'Estuaire de la Gironde et de la mer des Pertuis is updated. However, the data is simple to understand and accessible to all.
I think the risk map is very important and I would like more people to know about it. More signs could be put up in the areas.
Very necessary
I would add other colors such as green
No respectful cleaning without information. Also useful for town councils, cdc and maintenance departments, both for practical purposes and for targeting beaches to be made "dog-free", etc. for example.
Relevant to the Kentish plover problem, but does not in itself constitute an aid to the general promotion of more respectful cleaning practices.
They are useful but I think they should be able to have more zoom.
All the information is relevant and contributes greatly to the success of the initiatives
Does the project plan to collect information on what types/frequency of beach cleaning interventions in defined high risk areas with nesting?
It is necessary to include the area of the Strait of Gibraltar (Cadiz), as it is an area of passage and rest for migrations.
Are you going to make risk maps of other species?
La Arena beach, in Zierbena and Muskiz. It is usually crowded and the Barbadun marshes are always at risk of waste disposal.

ICAO mobile application feedback

The ICAO mobile application received positive feedback for its user-friendly interface and ease of recording nesting seabirds during clean-up activities (Fig.12). Users highlighted the app's contribution to better monitoring of stranded birds, enhancing the overall effectiveness of beach clean-ups (Table 3).

Figure 12. Training of the ICAO app during the Portuguese online session with stakeholders.

When we asked about the ease of use of the ICAO mobile app, most of participants consider the app easy to use. The majority of participants rated it as very easy or easy to use with 40.9 % and 54.4% of respondents, respectively. Finally, 4.5% of the participants rated it as moderately easy to use (Fig.13).

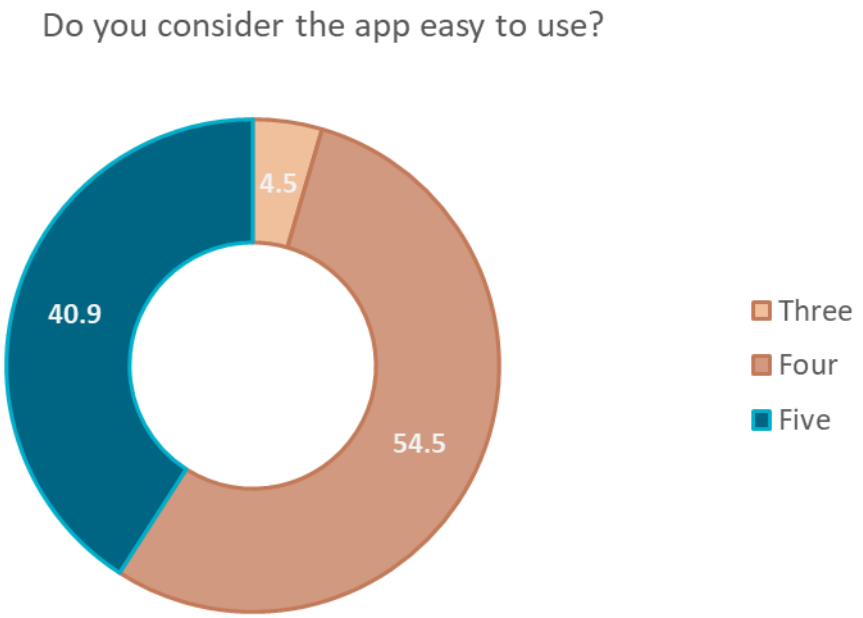

Figure 13. Percentage of responses to the question "Do you consider the app easy to use?". The ratings are on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being not useful and 5 being very useful. Percentage based on a total of 22 respondents.

In summary, the feedback highlights a mix of positive aspects and areas for improvement in the ICAO app. Improvements include enhanced administrative controls, features for volunteers, and additional monitoring information. However, there are reported issues such as bugs, translation quality, and limitations in account creation and password management (Table 3). Addressing these concerns can contribute to a more effective and user-friendly ICAO app.

Table 3. Feedback and suggested improvements of ICAO app obtained from participants.

Feedback to ICAO app
ICAO improvements suggested
We should add an option to erase an observation (only administrator can for now I think)
Add transects names and sections to the French beach list
Volunteers should be able to collect the transect ID when validating an observation while doing an ICAO survey. That would allow them to identify directly the birds they collect.
If ICAO monitoring is done on the website after the actual monitoring, it would be great to add a departure point and an arrival point
Andes 40 = to be replaced by Landes 40
Track and show the distance made while doing an ICAO survey (we ask our volunteers to do 3 kms)
The app does not update automatically
Some bugs of ICAO
During an ICAO monitoring, IAO goes back to main menu after entering an observation. Happened only once.
ICAO asks to activate the GPS so they can track the position while entering an observation, while the GPS is actually already activated. Some cases.
Translation to be improved.
If the password is forgotten on the website, ICAO sends a Spanish mail, while it should be in French. In general, we need mails from ICAO in French cause volunteers won't click them otherwise.
Lots of account creation problems – one of the main problems is the limitation to 8 characters of the password. We should be able to have a bigger password.
Not possible to change the website language once connected

5. CONCLUSIONS

The SeaBiL project acknowledges the importance of the feedback received and commits to a continuous improvement process. Plans are in place to incorporate valuable recommendations into future iterations of the tools, ensuring their relevance and effectiveness.

The feedback on the "Low Footprint" tools for beach clean-ups under the LIFE SeaBiL project has been overwhelmingly positive. Stakeholders appreciate the project's efforts to minimize the negative impact on seabirds and their habitats. The constructive feedback received will be instrumental in refining and updating the tools, contributing to the long-term success of the SeaBiL project's conservation initiatives.