

# KANTAR

## The role of sustainability in destination and operator choice

### Key Findings

December 2023

# Background

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**Who** undertook this research?

Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) undertook research to better understand visitor perceptions of sustainability in relation to destination holidays and operator choice.

**Why** did we do this?

This activity supports both TNZ's work to promote New Zealand as a visitor destination to maximise the long-term benefit of New Zealand, and MBIE's work in support of lifting the sustainability of the tourism sector, including becoming champions for climate and biodiversity protection.

More broadly, this work represents a desire from the tourism industry to transition to a system that gives back more than it takes – a sustainable tourism system.

**What** did we do?

**The research had two main streams:**

1. Commissioned and managed by TNZ - focused on understanding the role of sustainability on destination choice, and traveller needs around sustainable and regenerative tourism.
2. Commissioned by MBIE and managed by TNZ - focused primarily on environmental sustainability in tourism purchasing.

# Sample and Target audience

Phase	TNZ “Project Whā” - Sustainability and its role in holiday visitation	MBIE “Path to Purchase” - Role of sustainability in operator and purchase choice
Exploratory Qual	Five 2-hour focus groups in the United States of America, Australia, United Kingdom, China, Japan, Germany, India and four groups in New Zealand. n < 30 per market; total n < 240	2 x hour focus group discussions across 8 markets as part of the 5 groups in Project Whā - the United States of America, Australia, United Kingdom, China, Japan, Germany, India and New Zealand.
Quantitative sizing and validation	15-minute survey  7 markets - Australia (AU), USA (US), United Kingdom (UK), Germany (DE), China (CH), Japan (JP), India (IN)  n = 700 per market; total n = 4900	10-minute consumer survey  8 markets - Australia (AU), USA (US), United Kingdom (UK), Germany (DE), China (CH), Japan (JP), India (IN) and New Zealand  n < 450 per market; total n = 3600

# Important note on comparing results between markets

In multi-market research, we need to be careful when comparing results between markets due to potential cultural response bias. Cultural response bias is the effect of respondents from different cultures answering questions in different ways for quantitative research.

We know that it is common in some cultures to be more neutral when responding to questions, while in other cultures there is a tendency to agree with what is being asked in the survey. Specifically, for the markets we covered in this research, we need to be mindful that:

- In China and India, there is a higher tendency to overclaim, to provide more positive responses, and to agree with what is being asked in the survey (acquiescence bias). This is driven by underlying cultural traits such as being a non-confrontational society, wanting to please, wanting to avoid conflict, and "saving face."
- In Japan, respondents have a tendency towards neutrality and using mid-response on rating scales (middling bias) and often also tendency to disagree with what is being asked.

Cultural response biases in surveys are not an issue specific to our research, but it is an issue that we (and other research agencies) observe across all projects. For this reason, we need to exercise caution when comparing results between markets. For markets like China and India, it is also recommended to look at the results in relative terms (such as ranking of the results) rather than the absolute numbers.



# Sustainability and its role in holiday visitation

## Key learnings

- Audience Opportunity
- Motivations and Barriers, Meaning and behaviours
- New Zealand as a sustainable holiday
- Communications guardrails



**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,  
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT**  
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI



**100% PURE  
NEW ZEALAND**

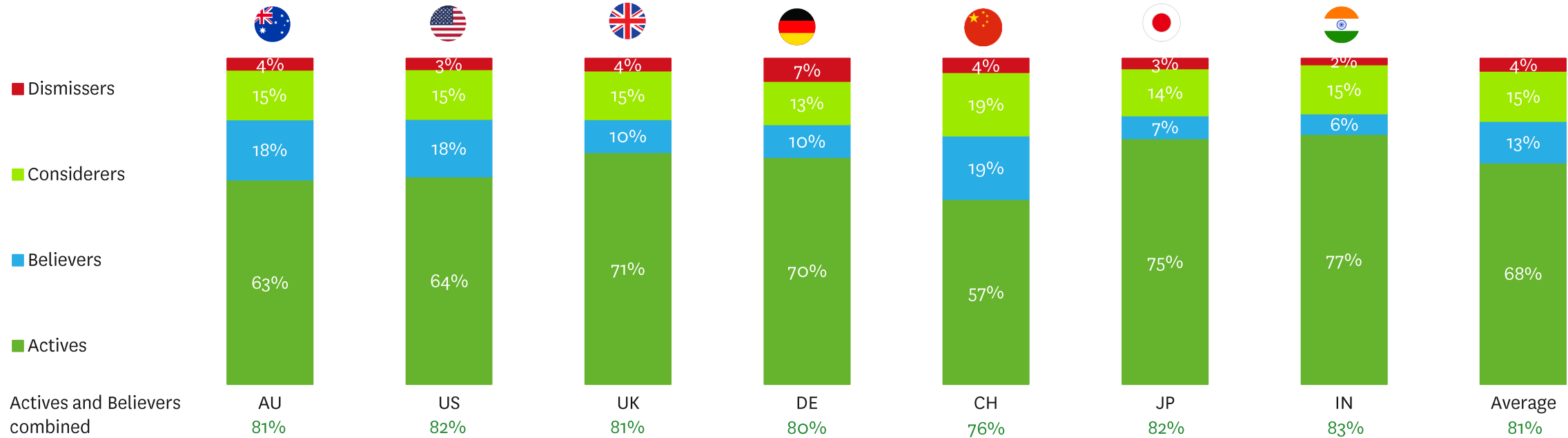
# Sustainability and its role in holiday visitation – Key Findings



- Our addressable audiences are highly sustainably minded compared to the general population. 81% of people ‘actively considering’ a trip to New Zealand have strong sustainability beliefs compared with 52% of the general population. **This presents an opportunity to develop and deliver a sustainability proposition for travellers considering New Zealand, as there is demand for it.**
- Travellers generally choose destinations that fulfil their emotional and practical needs of a holiday, where the main holiday needs include a desire to rejuvenate, escape the everyday, experience something different and participate in various experiences. Sustainability is a bonus consideration. **As a result, sustainability credentials present the opportunity to stand apart as a destination (i.e. make us more unique), and further differentiate.**
- There is agreement that sustainability represents the future of travel and that pursuing it is both inevitable and the ‘right thing to do’. Across the markets surveyed, 85% of holiday travellers express a strong intent to increase efforts to travel more sustainably in the future. **There is an opportunity for New Zealand to be proactively thinking about how to increase the sustainability of its tourism offering and communicate that sustainability potential to visitors.**
- Globally, sustainable travel options and traveller uptake of these is growing fast – there has been a significant jump in the uptake of more sustainable choices. For instance, compared to 10 years ago travellers are now 3 times more likely to choose an operator/business that has been sustainably accredited and to offset carbon emissions where possible through their traveller journey. **There are opportunities to drive sustainable behaviour by addressing key frictions.**
- Key barriers to the uptake of sustainable choices are higher cost perceptions, a lack of information, limited options, and the perceived inconvenience of behaving sustainably on a holiday.
- The most common understanding of sustainable tourism at present is related to nature and the natural world. This association is a strength for New Zealand, which is seen as unspoiled and pristine among visitors, caring for its natural environment and having a sense of cultural integrity (particularly with respect to indigenous culture) required of sustainable destinations. **We are in a strong position to amplify our efforts in this space.**
- There is an opportunity to leverage the experiences and scenery for which New Zealand is known and further differentiate in the sustainable travel space via our eco-friendly activities, opportunity to immerse with culture and heritage, high quality locally sourced and sustainably produced food, and our conservation efforts. **Delivering to these needs primarily, will be naturally aligned with enhancing New Zealand’s sustainability credentials.**
- The communication of sustainability messages needs to ensure they link to travellers’ main holiday needs and aspirations - the desire to rejuvenate, escape the everyday, experience something different, and participate in a range of experiences. **These messages also need to be coherent with our overall New Zealand brand positioning and deliver to travellers’ associations of New Zealand as a destination with amazing landscapes, authentic and unique culture, genuine, friendly and welcoming people.**

# The audience TNZ targets is highly sustainably minded

## Sustainability segments distribution across markets among ACs










General population (Kantar Barometer 2023):								
Actives	33%	33%	33%	31%	26%	30%	33%	31%
Believers	20%	22%	21%	22%	20%	19%	22%	21%
(combined)	53%	53%	53%	53%	46%	49%	55%	52%

# Consumers still mainly choose holiday destinations based on the need for relaxation, new experiences, discovery, and adventure

## Emotive needs from a holiday by market (% ACs)

Consumers in China and Japan have stronger need for freedom and spontaneity while less need for adventures, compared to other markets








	 AU	 US	 UK	 DE	 CH	 JP	 IN	Average
To unwind and rejuvenate	51%	44%	51%	51%	56%	63%	57%	53%
To expand my horizon	48%	55%	53%	57%	63%	38%	58%	53%
To go on an adventure and have new experiences	61%	62%	57%	55%	39%	33%	63%	53%
To do activities that bring joy and happiness	50%	46%	45%	44%	51%	36%	60%	48%
To escape the everyday routine	56%	53%	54%	35%	28%	38%	52%	45%
To have a sense of freedom and be spontaneous	33%	34%	36%	44%	63%	43%	48%	43%
To engage in personal growth and self-discovery	28%	38%	30%	26%	46%	19%	56%	35%
To reconnect with people and create memories together	28%	24%	30%	19%	24%	40%	45%	30%
To revisit beloved places or create nostalgia	22%	18%	15%	18%	22%	26%	41%	23%
To make a positive impact on the environment and local communities	14%	13%	17%	19%	27%	14%	41%	21%

Weakest need  Strongest need  
Heat map shading is across columns, i.e. compares within the market



# Sustainability can be a bonus, a differentiator once underlying needs are met

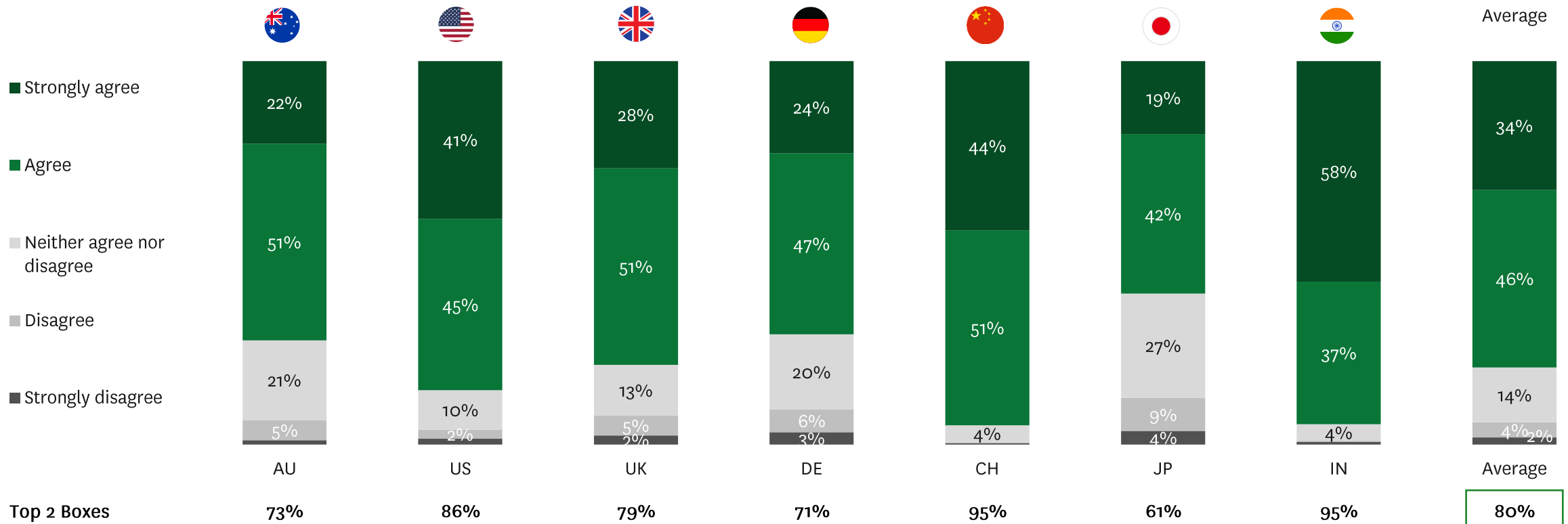
## Functional needs from a holiday by market (% ACs)

	 AU	 US	 UK	 DE	 CH	 JP	 IN	Average
Natural landscape	55%	55%	56%	58%	58%	54%	55%	56%
Local food, culinary experiences	47%	49%	40%	43%	52%	58%	38%	47%
Safety (e.g., low crime rates, safe to travel alone or at night)	41%	46%	38%	38%	51%	45%	43%	43%
Cultural attractions, historical landmarks, museums, etc.	46%	44%	44%	43%	38%	37%	44%	42%
Weather / climate of the destination	44%	43%	52%	39%	36%	31%	43%	41%
Affordability	57%	52%	41%	27%	25%	32%	42%	40%
Ease of travel / convenience	41%	35%	37%	24%	38%	35%	42%	36%
Wildlife experiences	37%	33%	40%	39%	27%	23%	41%	34%
Opportunities to immerse in local culture	34%	33%	32%	36%	30%	21%	29%	31%
Good travel infrastructure	28%	23%	24%	23%	39%	30%	44%	30%
Outdoor activities	25%	32%	24%	28%	14%	20%	34%	25%
Bustling city / vibrant urban experience	19%	18%	24%	22%	29%	26%	28%	24%
Relaxation and wellness experiences	26%	31%	23%	16%	13%	9%	32%	22%
Luxury accommodation and services	21%	24%	22%	10%	18%	16%	27%	20%
Responsible travelling that minimizes environmental impact	13%	16%	16%	15%	32%	8%	31%	19%
Festivals and events held at the destination	19%	24%	13%	10%	17%	9%	27%	17%
Local wineries, breweries, and distilleries	17%	18%	15%	16%	14%	14%	23%	17%

■ Weakest need ■ ■ Strongest need  
 Heat map shading is across columns, i.e. compares within the market

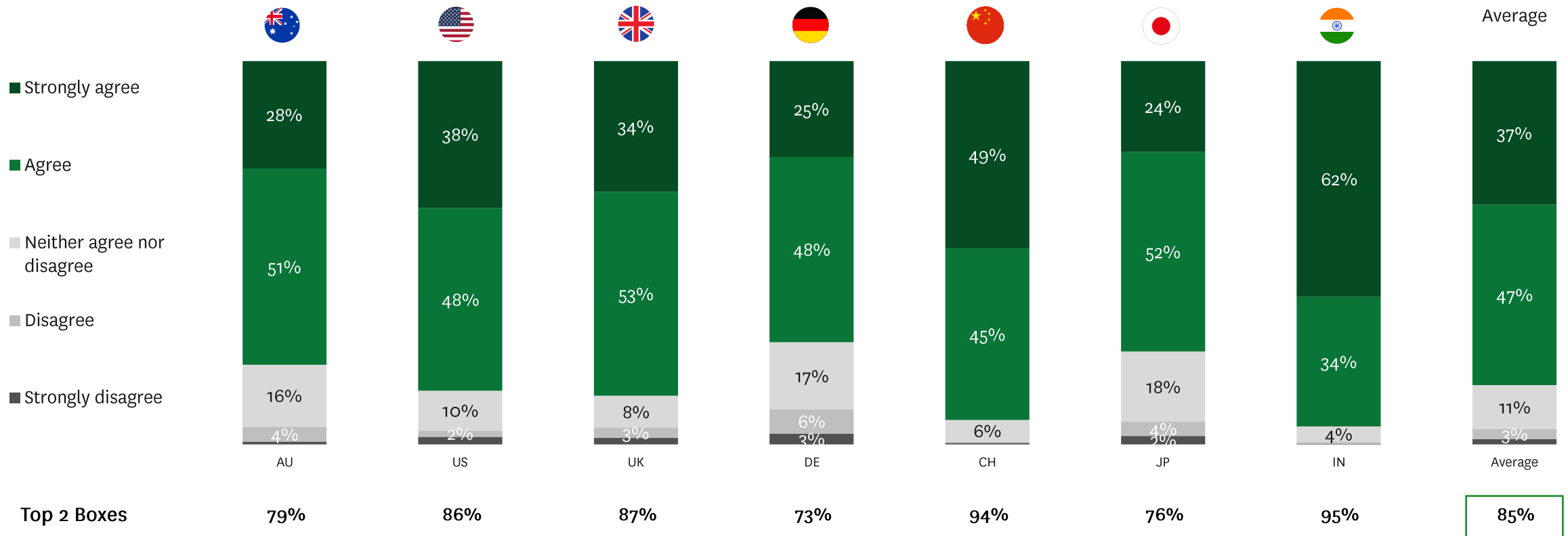
# Currently, most consumers are receptive to the concept of sustainable travel...

Agreement with the statement: 'I am willing to invest my time and money to make sustainable choices when travelling' (% ACs)



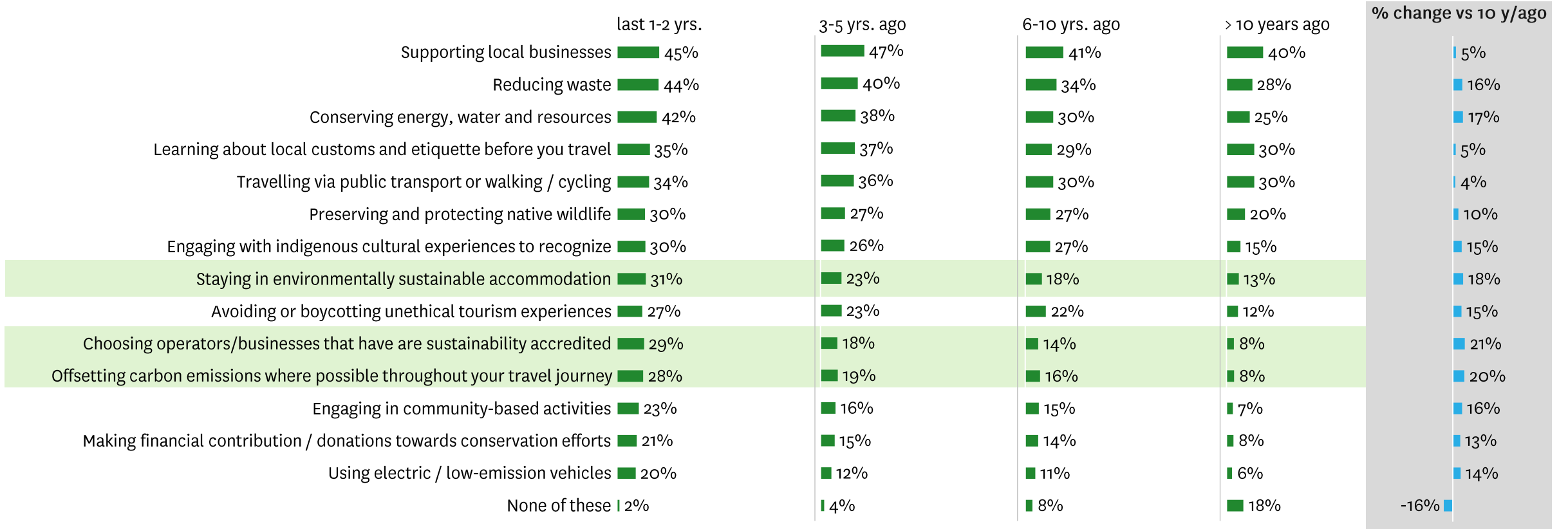
# ...And it is likely to play a bigger role in the future across all markets

Agreement with the statement “In the future, I believe I will have to increase my efforts to travel in a more sustainable way” (% ACs)



# The rate of behavioural change in this space has been rapid...








## Actions and travel choices made during the last significant international holiday (by timing of the last significant holiday)



## ...but there are barriers to overcome

The key barriers are higher cost perceptions, lack of information, limited options, and inconvenience

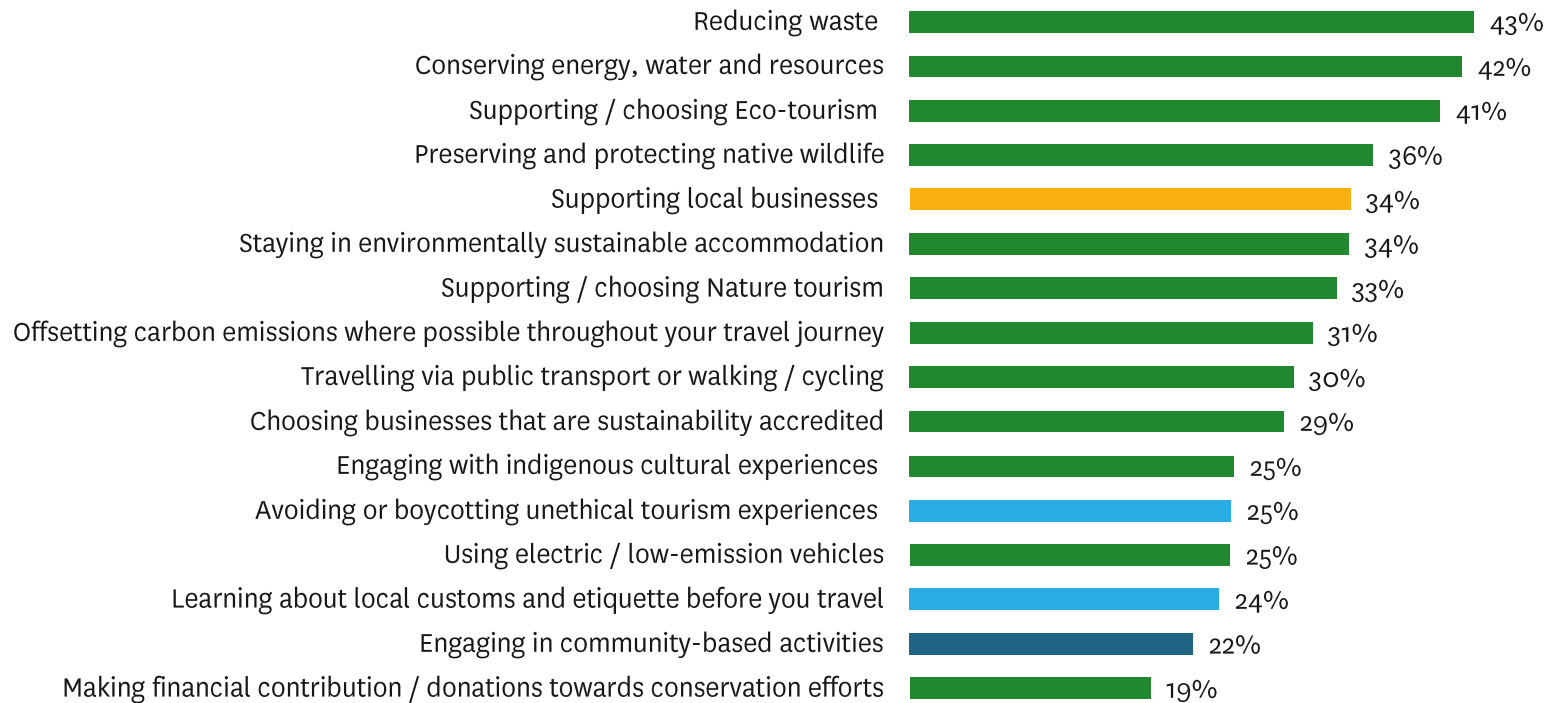
### Barriers that prevent travelling sustainably for an international holiday (% ACs)

	 AU	 US	 UK	 DE	 CH	 JP	 IN
Sustainable travel options are more <b>expensive</b>	39%	27%	35%	31%	27%	32%	35%
It is <b>hard to identify</b> whether tourism operators / businesses operate sustainably	32%	24%	31%	29%	29%	26%	37%
Destinations <b>lack sustainable infrastructure</b>	24%	22%	25%	25%	38%	19%	47%
Sustainable travel options are more <b>time consuming</b> and <b>less convenient</b>	23%	25%	26%	21%	33%	21%	41%
<b>Quality and comfort</b> are a higher priority for me when taking an international	18%	20%	19%	17%	26%	25%	35%
I'm <b>not</b> sure if the sustainable claims made are <b>trustworthy</b>	26%	18%	23%	25%	14%	23%	26%
Not many people around me are making sustainable travel choices	19%	19%	18%	18%	19%	17%	33%
I don't have much information on how to travel sustainably	26%	19%	20%	18%	21%	17%	19%
It is <b>too much of an effort</b> to practice sustainability when on a holiday	15%	14%	11%	14%	25%	14%	34%
<b>Don't see the impact</b> of the sustainable choices I make when I am on holiday	10%	12%	13%	19%	25%	18%	21%
Even when I'm not travelling, I don't have a habit of practicing sustainability	10%	14%	10%	10%	14%	13%	27%
I <b>don't</b> think sustainable choices <b>offer better experiences</b>	11%	8%	9%	12%	20%	11%	18%

Weakest barrier     Strongest barrier  
Heat map shading is across columns, i.e. compares within the market








# Sustainable travel is currently understood through the lens of environment

## Meaning of 'sustainable travel' in an international holiday context, total by market – ACs



# This understanding of sustainable travel is generally consistent across markets

## Meaning of 'sustainable travel' in an international holiday context (% ACs)

	 AU	 US	 UK	 DE	 CH	 JP	 IN	Average
Reducing waste	47%	40%	40%	44%	47%	40%	44%	43%
Conserving energy, water and resources	39%	41%	40%	46%	53%	30%	48%	42%
Supporting / choosing Eco-tourism	33%	38%	38%	35%	59%	31%	51%	41%
Preserving and protecting native wildlife	39%	32%	36%	44%	33%	28%	37%	36%
Supporting local businesses	39%	31%	32%	36%	28%	29%	41%	34%
Staying in environmentally sustainable accommodation	35%	31%	36%	28%	35%	27%	44%	34%
Supporting / choosing Nature tourism	28%	28%	26%	29%	40%	28%	49%	33%
Offsetting carbon emissions throughout your travel journey	30%	27%	32%	29%	37%	21%	40%	31%
Travelling via public transport or walking / cycling	33%	25%	35%	18%	28%	28%	39%	30%
Choosing businesses that are sustainability accredited	26%	21%	26%	22%	45%	24%	37%	29%
Engaging with indigenous cultural experiences	22%	24%	22%	27%	24%	15%	39%	25%
Avoiding or boycotting unethical tourism experiences	25%	17%	23%	27%	32%	14%	33%	25%
Using electric / low-emission vehicles	22%	22%	24%	21%	26%	24%	34%	25%
Learning about local customs and etiquette before you travel	25%	25%	20%	19%	23%	21%	33%	24%
Engaging in community-based activities	20%	21%	21%	18%	24%	10%	37%	22%
Financial contribution / donations towards conservation efforts	16%	16%	16%	12%	17%	21%	31%	19%

■ Less mentions ■ Most mentions  
 Heat map shading is across columns, i.e. compares within the market

# New Zealand is spontaneously mentioned as a sustainable travel destination in all markets

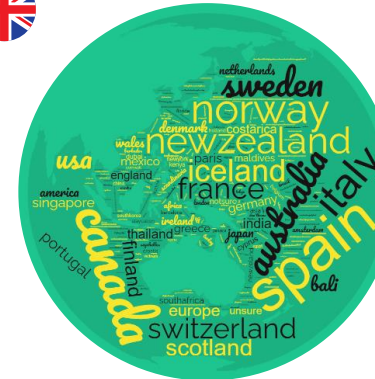
Destinations that come to mind when you think about sustainable travel (unprompted)



NZ	14%
JP	4%
AU	3%



NZ	7%
AU	6%
JP	4%



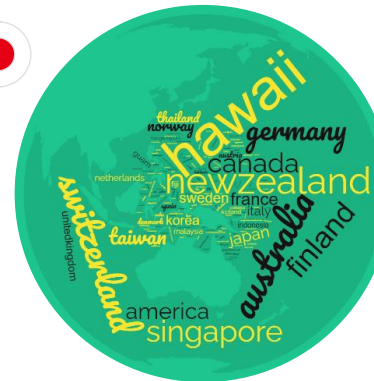
NZ	10%
AU	7%
Spain	4%



NZ	6%
Sweden	5%
DE	4%



NZ	18%
AU	8%
JP	6%



NZ	15%
AU	12%
Hawaii	5%

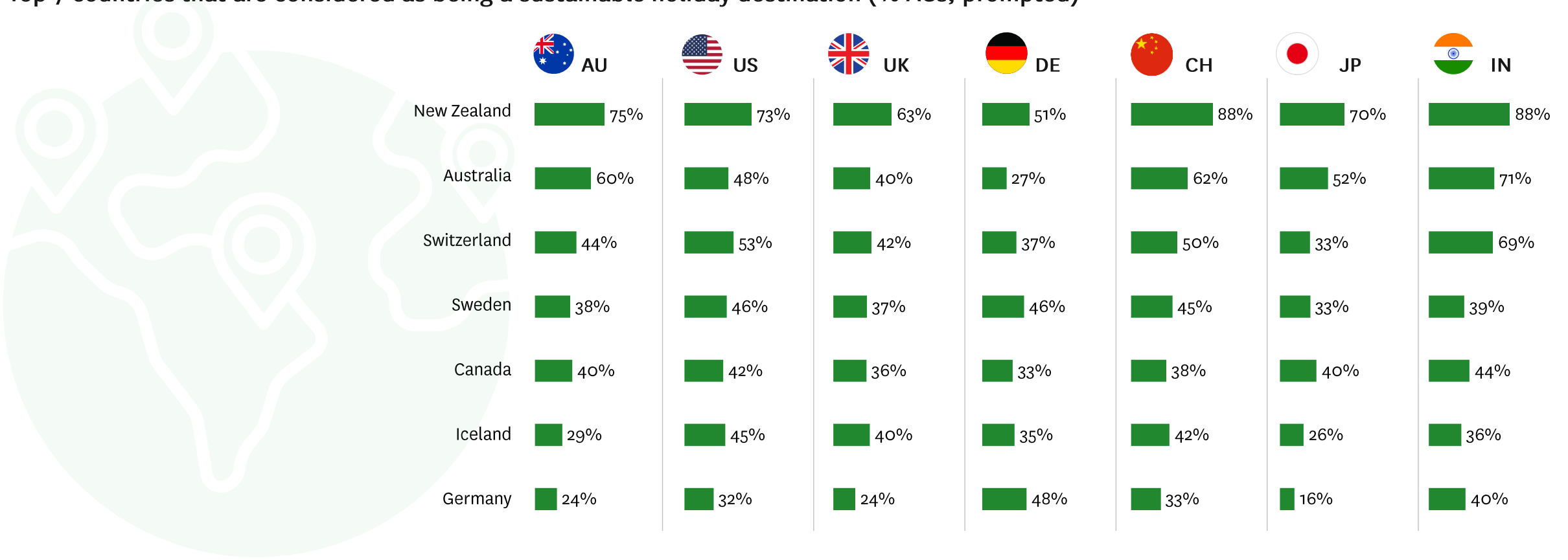


NZ	10%
AU	9%
SG	5%



# New Zealand seen as a leading sustainable holiday destination among our target audience

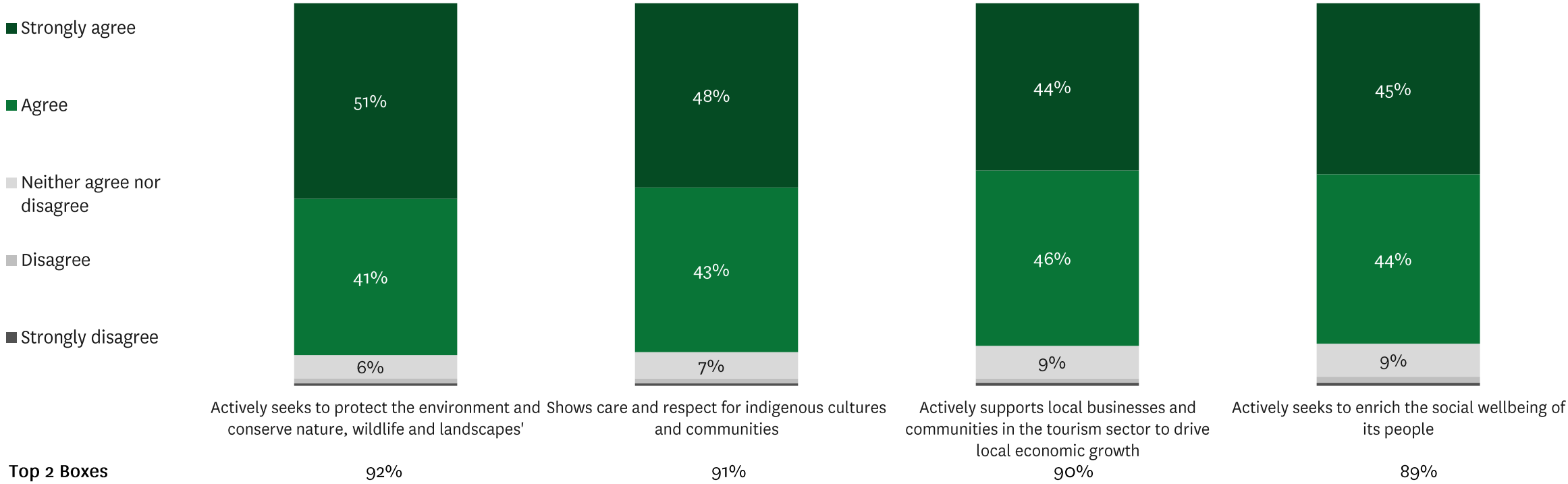
Top 7 countries that are considered as being a sustainable holiday destination (% ACs, prompted)



# There are very strong perceptions that New Zealand actively supports sustainable tourism








## Agreement with statements that New Zealand... (ACs)

Perceptions are consistently strong across all markets



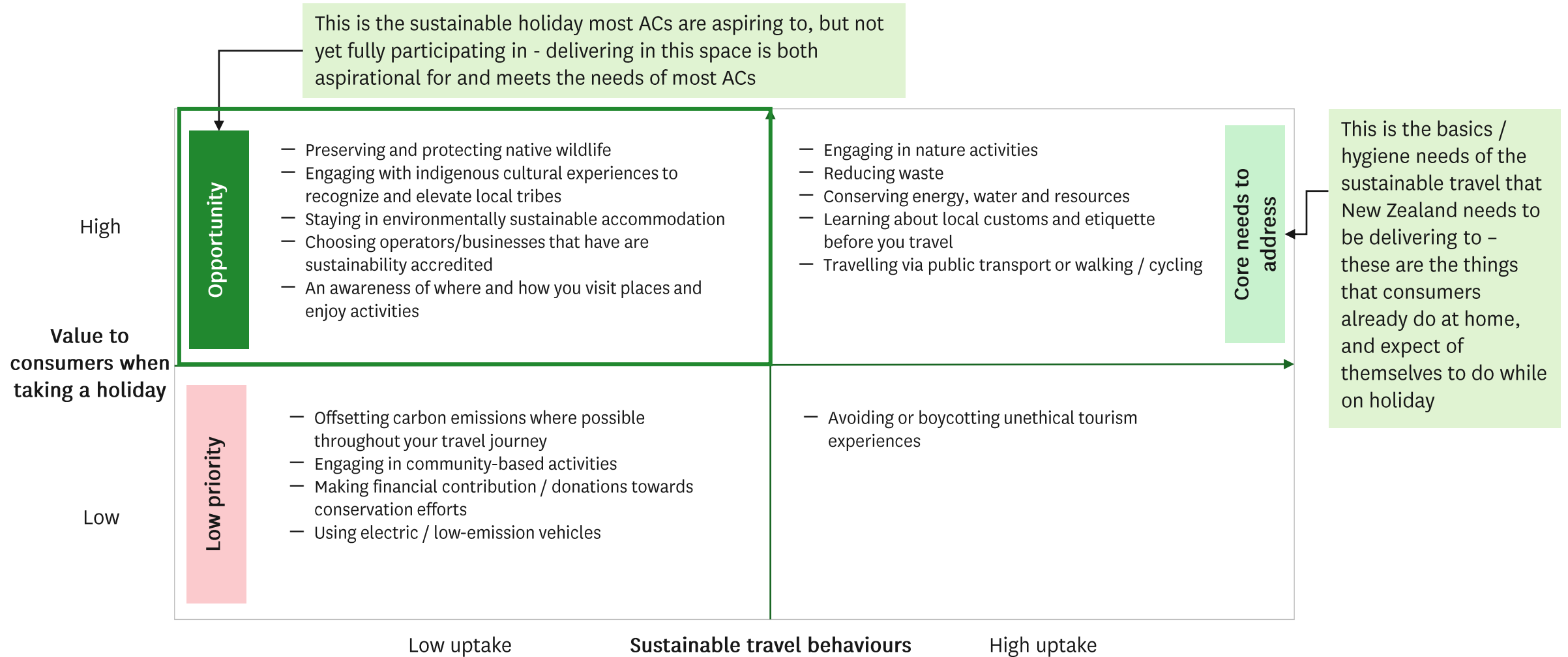
# Nature is a strength for NZ, which is associated with having unspoiled environments, authentic cultural experiences and high quality food/ beverage options, and meaningful conservation efforts

## Perceptions of New Zealand as holiday destinations by market (% ACs)

	 AU	 US	 UK	 DE	 CH	 JP	 IN	Average
Has beautiful and unspoiled natural landscapes	80%	71%	72%	69%	66%	76%	71%	72%
Offers many eco-friendly activities	78%	68%	68%	61%	64%	66%	71%	68%
Offers opportunities to engage and immerse with culture and heritage	73%	63%	65%	58%	60%	62%	70%	64%
Takes meaningful actions to protect the environment	66%	64%	63%	52%	62%	60%	70%	63%
Offers a great range of locally-sourced and sustainably-produced food and drink options	69%	61%	62%	47%	63%	52%	71%	61%
Supports local businesses (locally-owned hotels, tour operators, community-based tourism that involve local communities)	64%	60%	62%	49%	62%	51%	69%	60%
Provides many choices for environmentally sustainable accommodation	62%	61%	56%	48%	60%	52%	71%	59%
Offers sustainable transportation options and infrastructure	54%	60%	53%	39%	58%	49%	68%	55%
Is responsible for having effective waste management systems in place	56%	57%	52%	46%	58%	40%	69%	54%
Has an easy system in place to identify operators / businesses that operate sustainably	53%	56%	49%	37%	59%	47%	64%	52%

Weakest  Strongest  
Heat map shading is across columns, i.e. compares within the market

# There is an opportunity to enhance the appeal of New Zealand with a sustainable holiday offer



# In summary - to deliver to the sustainable holiday space, there are two jobs to be done

TNZ's 2030 Aspiration: All visitors are high quality visitors and lead to a more productive and regenerative Aotearoa New Zealand.

## STRATEGIC BRAND (TNZ)

### Job 1:

Crafting a **sustainable brand narrative** that:

- a. drives top of mind awareness and appeal of sustainable leisure travel **now**
- b. **future-proofs** New Zealand's sustainability leadership
- c. **is coherent** with the overall New Zealand brand positioning
- d. Is authentic to who we are and delivers to the needs of travel



## TACTICAL EXECUTION (TNZ + INDUSTRY)

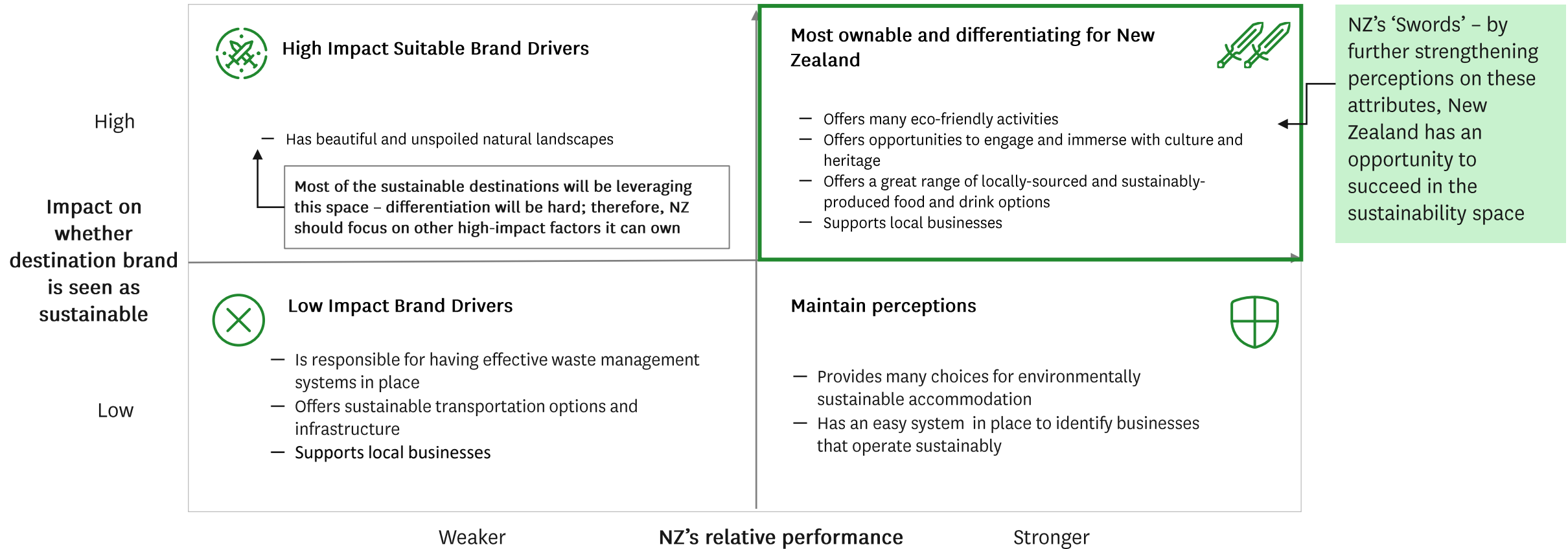
### Job 2:

Supporting the sustainable brand narrative:

- a. ensure a sufficient number of **credible hero product offers** that meet the Sustainable Holiday definition
- b. address the priority **barriers** to sustainable travel through out path-to-purchase
- c. make it **easy, meaningful & rewarding** for consumers to choose New Zealand and make sustainable choices once here

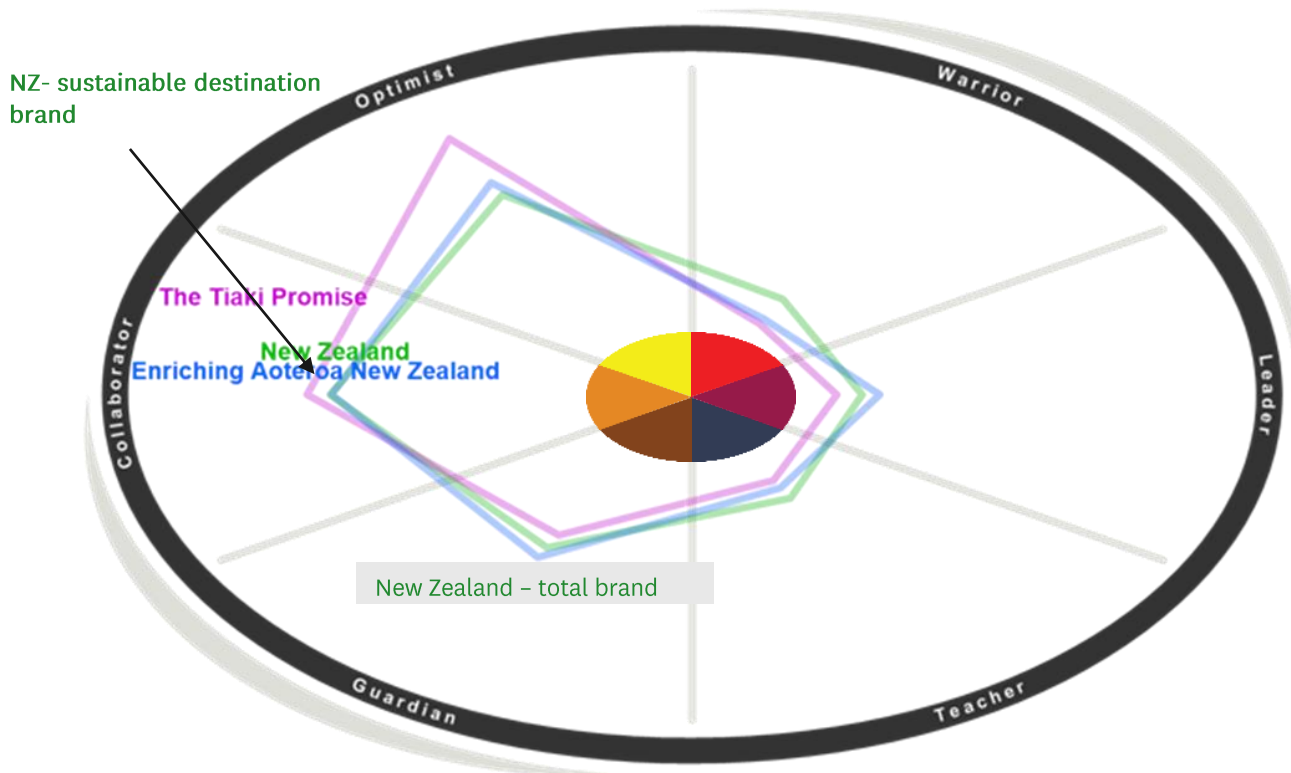
# Job 1: crafting a sustainable brand narrative

Both the motivation to holiday sustainably and the specific, functional offer must be positively linked to what is already great about New Zealand



# Job 1: Guardrails for crafting a sustainable brand narrative

Important to ensure that sustainability is built into emotional storytelling in such way that supports its destination brand positioning



NZ- sustainable destination brand

The Tiaki Promise

New Zealand  
Enriching Aoteroa New Zealand

New Zealand - total brand

NEEDSCOPE®

New Zealand Image [New Zealand], (ACPC (Active Considerer))  
 The Tiaki Promise Image [The Tiaki Promise], (ACPC (Active Considerer))  
 Enriching Aoteroa NZ Image [Enriching Aoteroa New Zealand], (ACPC (Active Considerer))  
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- In previous brand positioning work, we looked at brands through a travel lens. In doing so, New Zealand was all about our care for people and place- pristine, clean, friendly people, welcoming, safe communities, etc. As such, its brand position is in between the Guardian space, pulling towards the Collaborator
- In this project, we had a sustainability lens, where our destination footprint as a sustainable destination is slightly different to the destination brand. The overall destination brand positioning and sustainable brand positioning are not at odds – the Collaborator space and the Guardian space are quite similar in their expression (affiliative), **but more could be done to execute sustainability through our distinct destination identity.**
- To ensure that sustainability messages support the existing brand positioning, the tonality and emotion of the sustainable messages need to follow these principles:
  - **Authentic and genuine** - It is not about big gestures, but making meaningful differences in small ways.
  - **Humble and nurturing** - Sustainability is about making **modest** changes and adopting a **real** and authentic approach (avoiding Confident & Bold tonality).
  - Getting back to **basics**, living sustainably, and **caring** for our environment in our everyday life.
  - Sustainability is making **thoughtful** and personal choices; taking the time to make a difference starts at home

## Job 2: Tactical reduction in barriers along path to purchase

Sustainable travel often perceived as a compromise rather than an inspiration

Anything requiring consumers to do even a small amount of work is likely to be unsuccessful unless there is a clear benefit

Therefore, we need to make sure we are offering something meaningful to consumers to enable them to make the right choice



Easy

### Remove the FRICTIONS:

- Provide more information and transparency
- Leverage certifications to build trust
- Provide more options
- Make it convenient
- Show me how – proactively drive actions to address habitual behaviours
- Drive advocacy – reviews are hugely important but are lacking



Meaningful

### Motivate to FUEL the change:

- Make sustainable travel reflect what is important to consumers
- Link sustainability with authentic and meaningful experiences
- Dispels myths that sustainable travel is a compromise in quality, comfort, value
- Sustainable travel is a good thing to do
- Show the impact of traveller choices
- Assure traveller it is trustworthy
- Offer better value (experience)



Rewarding

### To cement the new behaviour:

- Offer better value (not price)
- Reassure about quality
- Showcase people undertaking these practices – more people doing this
- Make it a habit
- Drive advocacy





# Role of sustainability in operator and purchase choice

## Key learnings

- Sustainability's role in the path to purchase
- Influence of information sources
- Paying a premium
- Greenwashing concerns
- Accreditation and certification.

# Role of sustainability in operator and purchase choice – Key findings

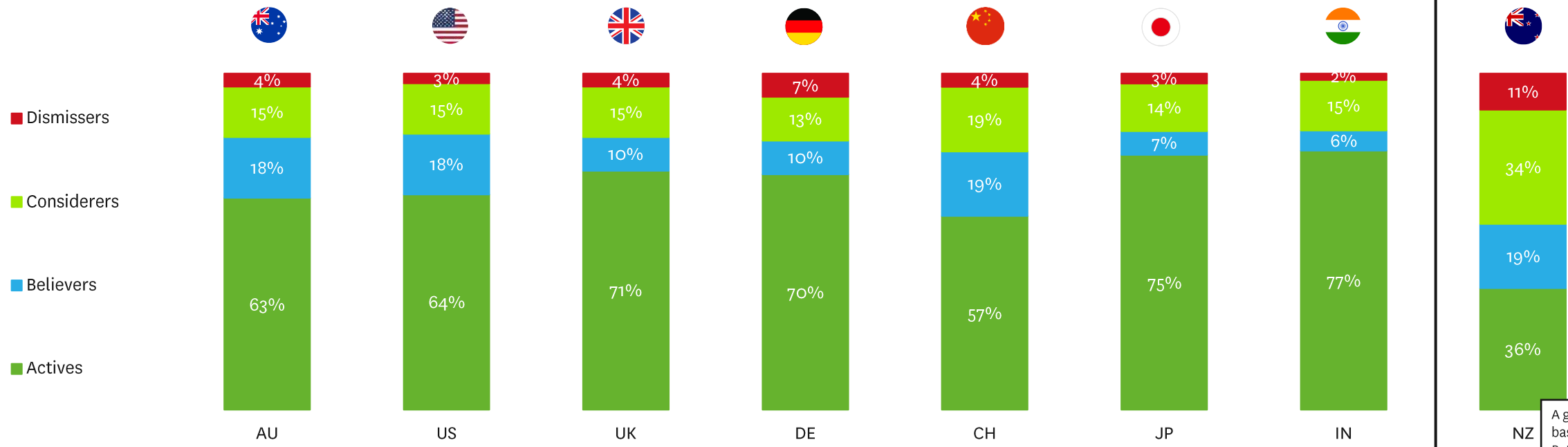


- While sustainability is not the primary driver of holidays or tourism purchasing for most visitors, if an operator can demonstrate sustainable credentials or practices in a way that is meaningful to consumers, this can be an effective differentiator from other operators.
- To leverage their sustainability credentials, operators must address consumer frictions/barriers with sustainable travel. A key negative bias to overcome is that sustainable behaviours are viewed as a part of everyday life and behaving so on holiday can be ‘work’, where a holiday represents an escape from everyday chores.
- Given that sustainability can often be perceived as a compromise, operator propositions need to ensure there is a clear benefit, where we are offering something meaningful to consumers to enable them to make the right choice – sustainability needs to be seen as enhancing their experiences/holidays, and not as a compromise in quality, value, comfort, etc.
- Consumers are willing to pay a reasonable premium for sustainability credentials, where they are linked to enhancing experiences or making the holiday better in some way. This presents an opportunity for operators that have verified sustainability practices in place to charge a premium, however this needs to be strategically and meaningfully communicated to visitors and be shown to enhance their experience.
- 90% of international holiday travellers say they are willing to pay a premium for sustainable tours and activities, and 73% of domestic New Zealand travellers are willing to do the same. Similarly, 90% of international holiday travellers say they are willing to pay a premium for sustainable accommodation, compared to 69% of New Zealand holiday travellers. There is less of an opportunity to charge a premium for common ‘everyday’ practices such as recycling, implementing water saving procedures, and waste management as these are expected and are not perceived to tangibly enhance a visitor experience.
- Certification can signal trustworthiness and can positively influence decisions. This can be an easy way for consumers to identify sustainable tourism providers, where consumers gain confidence in choosing a provider with proven credentials. Chinese consumers are more likely to say they use certifications to make purchasing decisions that can be trusted and avoid greenwashing. US and European markets are more likely to view schemes as a ‘bonus’ point of difference between operators.
- Certification schemes aren’t widely known yet, with 86% of respondents not aware of any. This makes it challenging to differentiate between schemes and what they represent. This shows there is room to leverage accreditation schemes to have a bigger impact as sustainable travel demand increases.
- Sustainable certifications are important, but the main levers of credibility are transparent information and advocacy from other customers, including official information from Government websites. This tells us that reviews are highly influential and trusted throughout all stages of the travel path to purchase. However, the absence of operator product/experience reviews is a significant barrier when it comes to selecting a sustainable operator.
- The insights indicated that within operator propositions, the energy and tone needs to reflect the desires of someone’s holiday experience – positive and uplifting.

# Globally, New Zealand considerers are more strongly sustainability-minded vs. population as a whole, and about half of our domestic audience express strong sustainability beliefs

## Sustainability segments distribution across markets

Important to note the difference in sample composition: international market results are among Active Considerers, those who are more predisposed to NZ, while NZ results are among the general population



A growing segment based on Kantar's Better Futures study

General population (Kantar Barometer 2023, Better Futures 2023):		AU	US	UK	DE	CH	JP	IN	NZ
Actives		33%	33%	33%	31%	26%	30%	33%	35%
Believers		20%	22%	21%	22%	20%	19%	22%	22%

# There are four stages along the path-to-purchase for holidays where consumers' sustainable holiday choices and behaviours can be influenced



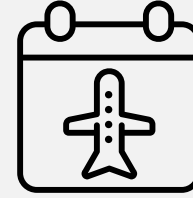
## Dreaming

This stage is all about inspiration, igniting excitement, curiosity, intrigue and a desire to find out more



## Planning

This stage is all about trade-offs – forced choices between competing options and preferences



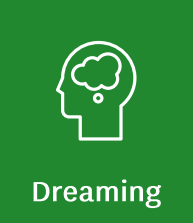
## Booking

This stage is all about ease, communication, responsiveness and cost










## Visiting

This stage is all about maximising experience, including taking advantage of local knowledge

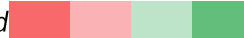


# To spark initial interest, sustainable tourism product offers need to appeal to primary holiday needs

Emotive needs from a holiday by market (% Active Considerers)

							
	AU	US	UK	DE	CH	JP	IN
To unwind and rejuvenate	51%	44%	51%	51%	56%	63%	57%
To expand my horizon	48%	55%	53%	57%	63%	38%	58%
To go on an adventure and have new experiences	61%	62%	57%	55%	39%	33%	63%
To do activities that bring joy and happiness	50%	46%	45%	44%	51%	36%	60%
To escape the everyday routine	56%	53%	54%	35%	28%	38%	52%
To have a sense of freedom and be spontaneous	33%	34%	36%	44%	63%	43%	48%
To engage in personal growth and self-discovery	28%	38%	30%	26%	46%	19%	56%
To reconnect with people and create memories together	28%	24%	30%	19%	24%	40%	45%
To revisit beloved places or create nostalgia	22%	18%	15%	18%	22%	26%	41%
To make a positive impact on the environment and local communities	14%	13%	17%	19%	27%	14%	41%









There is an opportunity to communicate sustainability during the Dreaming stage, aiming to resonate with a niche (yet likely growing) segment of consumers. However, this messaging should be explicitly tied to the consumer benefit of feeling good and making a positive impact

Weakest need  Strongest need  
Heat map shading is across columns, i.e. compares within the market

# Travellers consider tourism providers based on basic holiday needs, but sustainability can be a strategic differentiator



## Key drivers in choice of tourism provider

								
	AU	US	UK	DE	CH	JP	IN	NZ
Value for money	73%	65%	64%	74%	42%	48%	61%	74%
Quality of services / products	50%	57%	58%	59%	54%	49%	66%	50%
Affordable prices	72%	62%	57%	40%	25%	42%	48%	71%
Safety and security measures in place	45%	57%	44%	52%	57%	58%	61%	28%
Great customer service	54%	49%	52%	42%	54%	36%	58%	48%
Convenience	45%	45%	44%	45%	49%	41%	54%	48%
Online review	41%	36%	39%	24%	34%	28%	55%	43%
Accessible	33%	36%	31%	35%	35%	40%	53%	17%
Services / products can be customized to my needs	30%	42%	31%	35%	33%	31%	50%	23%
Recommended by family / friends	33%	33%	30%	29%	23%	20%	43%	39%
A well-known brand	30%	30%	33%	18%	39%	20%	49%	24%
Sustainable practices	17%	28%	23%	30%	42%	16%	51%	11%
Industry accreditations and awards received	17%	18%	21%	10%	29%	13%	31%	10%









Weakest driver     Strongest driver  
Heat map shading is across columns, i.e. compares within the market

# Sustainability offers need to be explicitly linked to consumer benefits and value – making them more authentic, contribution to conservation is also meaningful



## Key motivations for choosing a sustainable tourism provider

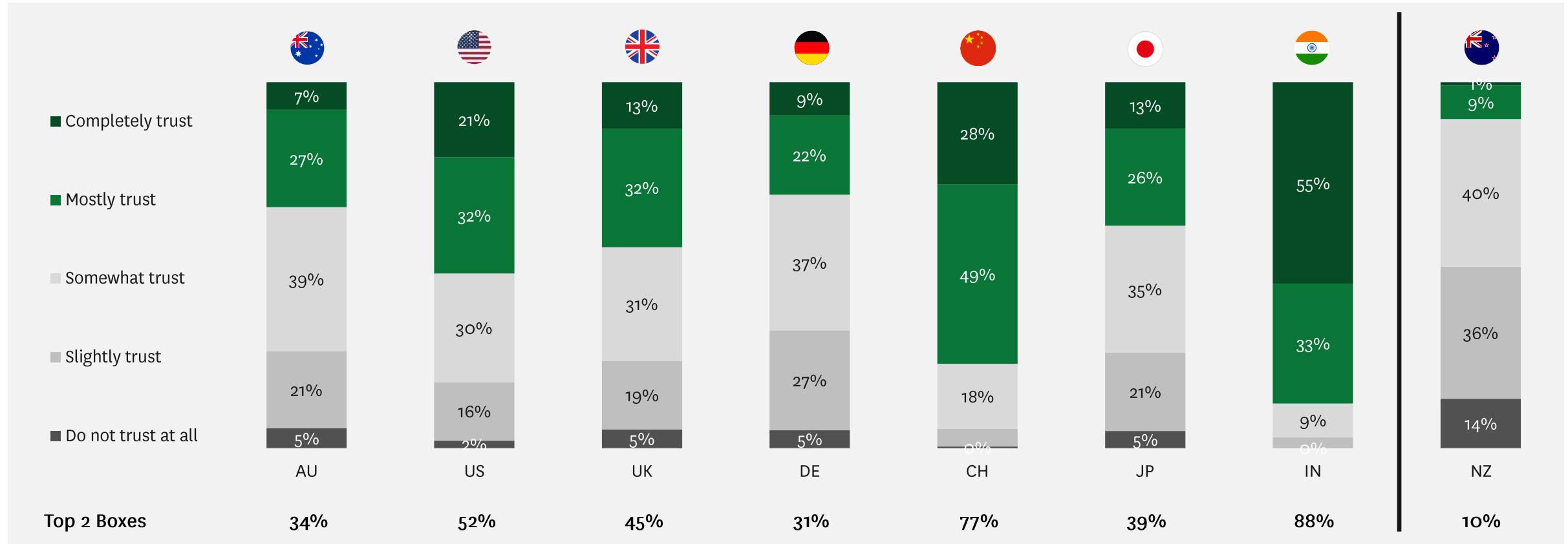
While most western markets consider a collective benefit in choosing a sustainable tourism provider, for China and India the motivation is more self-driven

								
	AU	US	UK	DE	CH	JP	IN	NZ
Contribute to <b>conservation</b> of the land, nature and wildlife	35%	36%	37%	48%	48%	43%	43%	36%
Support <b>local businesses</b>	44%	38%	36%	45%	30%	29%	46%	55%
Have a <b>unique and authentic experiences</b>	39%	46%	42%	39%	33%	31%	45%	27%
Fulfil <b>social responsibility</b> & contribute to a more sustainable tourism industry	23%	30%	27%	24%	50%	33%	52%	20%
Experience a <b>deeper connection</b> with the destination	28%	31%	26%	29%	36%	33%	46%	19%
Contribute to the <b>long-term sustainability</b> for future generations	32%	28%	31%	24%	28%	24%	51%	25%
Prioritize <b>ethical considerations</b> , fair treatment of employees, communities	24%	31%	26%	29%	33%	22%	42%	23%
Engage with <b>indigenous cultural experiences</b>	28%	33%	33%	41%	23%	19%	38%	14%
Support <b>health &amp; well-being</b> with organic food options, nature experiences	24%	30%	24%	18%	44%	22%	52%	15%
Align with my <b>personal values and beliefs</b> in commitment to sustainability	20%	26%	23%	22%	41%	21%	44%	19%
Educate myself and learn about conservation	24%	28%	26%	17%	25%	23%	41%	15%
Engage in <b>community-based activities</b>	18%	27%	20%	21%	22%	12%	48%	13%
Offset carbon emissions throughout your travel journey	19%	20%	23%	26%	28%	11%	39%	12%

Weakest motivation  Strongest motivation  
Heat map shading is across columns, i.e. compares within the market

# Scepticism (greenwashing) a key barrier to the perceived benefit of a sustainability product proposition

## Level of trust consumers have in tourism providers' claims about their sustainability practices













# Sustainability certifications are among the levers to establish credibility, advocacy is key



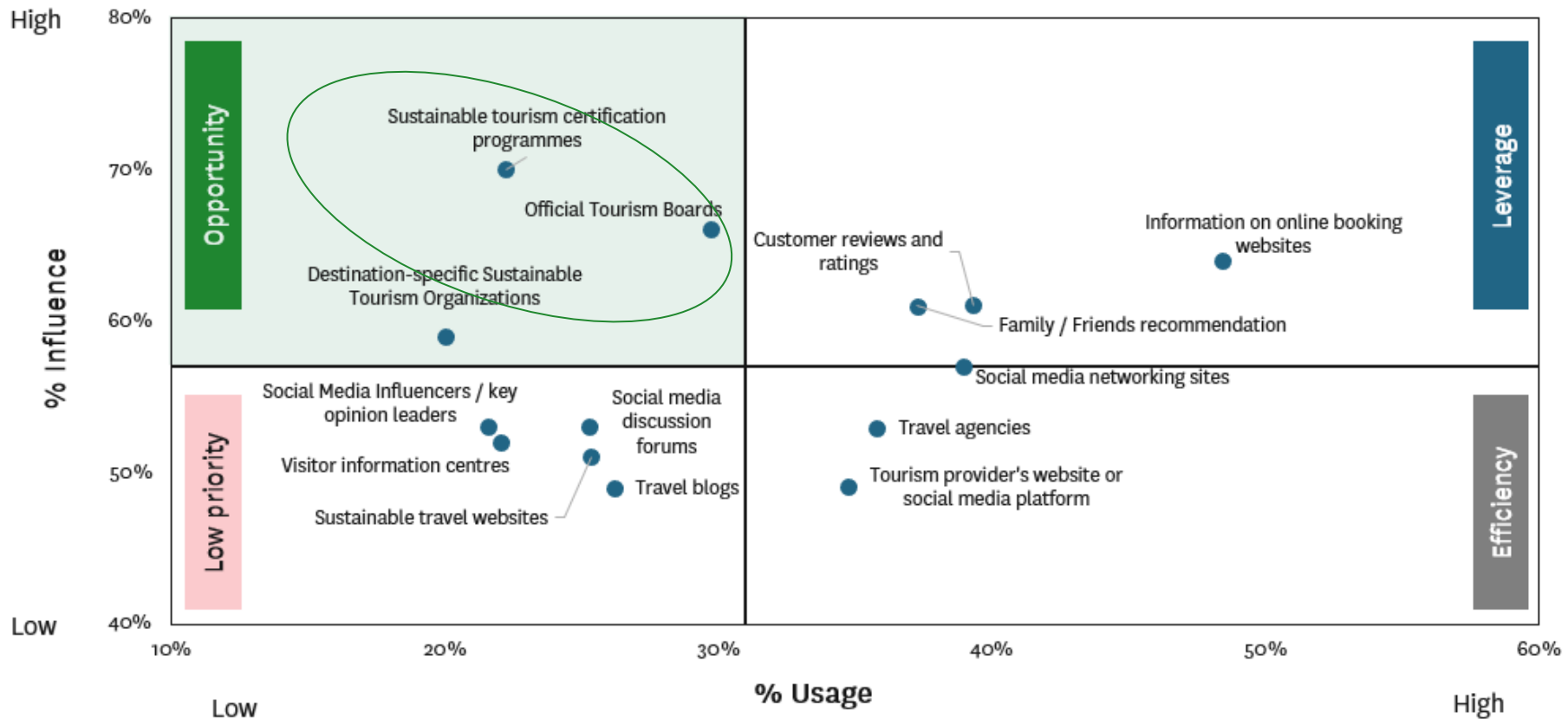
## Ranking of actions that tourism providers can take to build trust in their sustainability claims

	 AU	 US	 UK	 DE	 CH	 JP	 IN	 NZ
Providing transparent information on their sustainability practices	1	3	1	1	3	1	1	1
Customer feedback and reviews online	2	1	4	2	6	2	3	3
Collaborating and working in partnerships with other sustainable organizations	3	2	2	3	4	3	2	4
Acquiring third-party certifications	4	6	6	4	1	5	6	2
Having clear sustainability goals	5	4	5	6	2	4	4	5
Providing consumer education around sustainability	6	5	3	5	5	6	5	6

# Certifications have the potential to be a highly influential source during the planning stage...



Sources used to search for information when choosing a tourism provider and their influence on choices: International markets total





...but awareness of specific certification schemes is very low at the booking stage.

Unprompted mentions of certification and/or accreditation schemes awarded to tourism providers

86% were not aware of any certification/accreditation awarded tourism providers

Top mentions ( 3-5% of respondents mentioned )





## Audiences would rather see a certification than not

- We learned ambiguity is seen as a barrier to confident selection between sustainable products and that there is a perception of insufficient information
- Here, a certification can play the role of a powerful heuristic or mental shortcut - allowing people to make judgements quickly and easily.
- While no specific travel operator certifications appeared to be widely known or understood, travellers **would generally rather see one than not** – as something is seen as more effective than nothing
- Therefore, just the presence of a certification mark – even without recognition – prompts a heuristic response in the traveller i.e. this signifies some minimal level of compliance and values and trustworthiness
- 100% Pure in China is the most recognised and salient quality mark – with most markets registering far lower recognition and Qualmark effectively none
- In Japan, official government websites played the same role – providing sufficient and instant symbolism that this source is credible and trustworthy

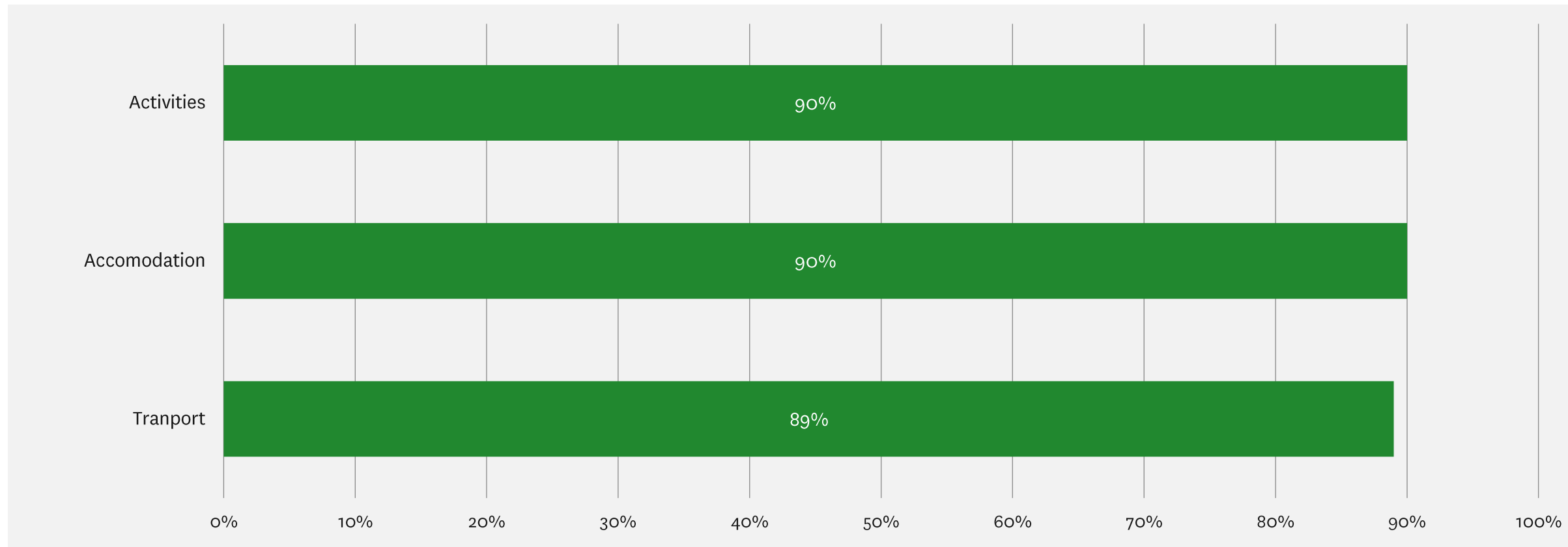
- Consumers are not aware of any certifications, and as a result none hold significant meaning to them
- While **Qualmark** is mostly an unfamiliar certification to consumers, it presents a "clean slate" opportunity
- Investing in Qualmark to enhance its awareness and significance among consumers could assist them in navigating sustainable operator choices along the path-to-purchase. This, in turn, has the potential to create opportunities for operators to capitalise on the Qualmark certification





# Willingness to pay a premium for operators that emphasise sustainable practices

## Willingness to pay a premium for sustainable practices of tourism providers



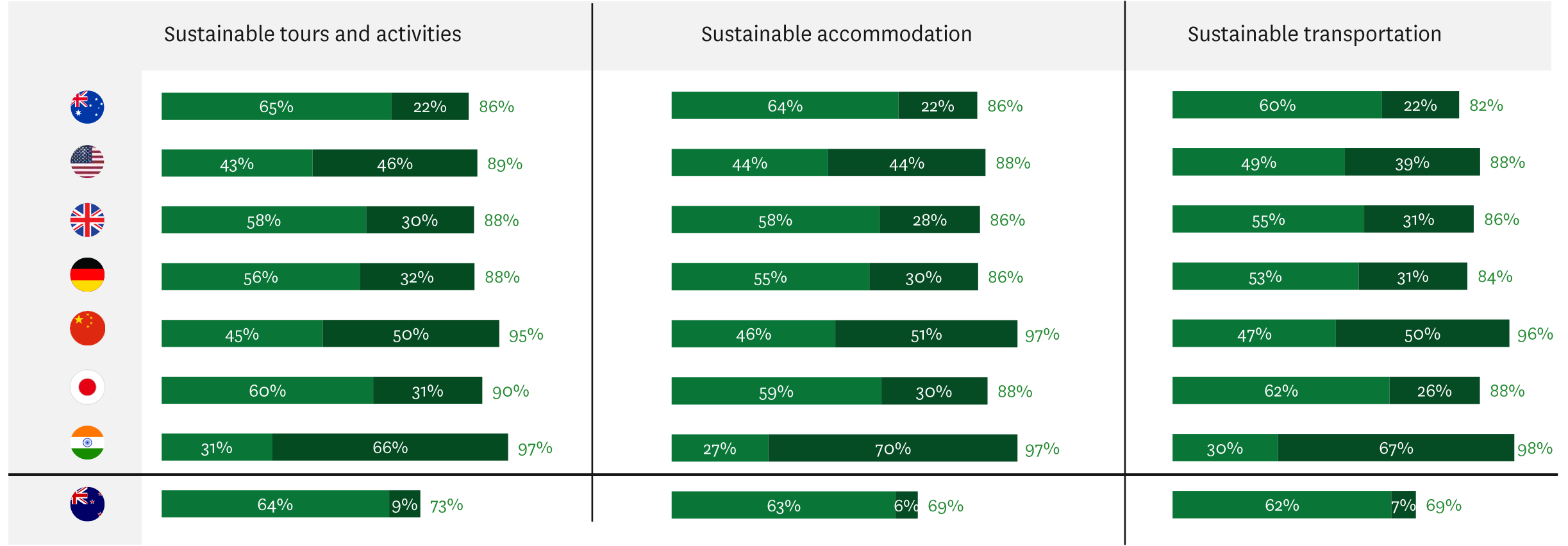
# Opportunity for tourism operators to monetise their sustainability efforts



Booking

xx% Total yes

## Willingness to pay a premium for sustainable practices of tourism providers











# Consumers will pay a premium for sustainability if there is tangible benefit to their experience



Booking

## Willingness to pay a premium for (% who claim to be willing to pay more for this activity / credentials )

								
	AU	US	UK	DE	CH	JP	IN	NZ
Promoting <b>local culture</b> and traditions through <b>authentic experiences</b> and <b>cultural initiatives</b>	30%	44%	37%	39%	47%	33%	65%	20%
Supporting <b>local communities</b> through fair wages and community development projects	26%	45%	39%	42%	42%	28%	62%	28%
Prioritising <b>locally sourced products</b> , ingredients and services to support local economies	26%	46%	35%	40%	44%	32%	60%	28%
Using <b>renewable energy</b> sources such as solar or wind power, promoting clean energy solutions	24%	40%	31%	32%	47%	28%	65%	16%
Having efficient <b>waste reduction</b> systems including <b>recycling</b> programmes and minimizing single-use plastics	22%	44%	30%	35%	43%	25%	61%	16%
Partnering with conservation organizations to support <b>conservation efforts</b> , such as tree planting and pest control	21%	42%	29%	37%	44%	29%	58%	14%
Implementing <b>water-saving</b> measures and promoting responsible water usage	17%	40%	33%	35%	43%	28%	60%	16%
<b>Carbon offsetting</b> programs for guests to counterbalance their travel-related carbon emissions	21%	42%	29%	30%	47%	28%	63%	9%
Using <b>low-impact transportation</b> options such as electric vehicles or bicycles	20%	38%	29%	34%	40%	27%	57%	15%
Providing <b>opportunities for visitors to get involved</b>	20%	39%	31%	24%	43%	28%	59%	12%
Offering <b>educational programmes</b> and activities to promote environmental awareness and sustainability	22%	34%	30%	24%	45%	26%	62%	12%

Least willing to pay  Most willing to pay  
Heat map shading is across columns, i.e. compares within the market

# In summary, sustainability messages can be interwoven through path to purchase



## Dreaming

- Low focus on sustainability in this stage - spark interest by appealing to the key emotive drivers, such as:
  - Rejuvenation / Escape
  - Meaningful experiences
  - Experience something new
  - Feel good
- Some opportunity to message **sustainability** to resonate with ACs of NZ
- However, messaging must be **explicitly tied to the consumer benefit** of feeling good and making a positive impact



## Planning

- **Sustainability credentials** is an **opportunity to differentiate** and to be shortlisted, provided hygiene needs like value, quality, safety are met
- Showcase how sustainability credentials **enhance** consumers' **experiences**, i.e., explicit link to consumer benefits and value
- **Build trust** with transparent and easy to access information, partner with KOLs and consumers to drive advocacy
- **Certifications** are useful and signify trust -among the key levers to build credibility - opportunity to leverage **Qualmark Sustainable** – but big job to be done to increase awareness and understanding



## Booking

- An **opportunity to monetise sustainability credentials** - if primary experience needs are met, consumers would pay more to use operators that are emphasising sustainable practices
- Where sustainable product offers are linked to **tangibly enhancing consumer experience**, consumers are willing to pay a price premium
- Sustainable practices, such as recycling, waste reduction, and water use reduction are expected and less likely to be monetised unless explicitly linked to consumer benefits and value



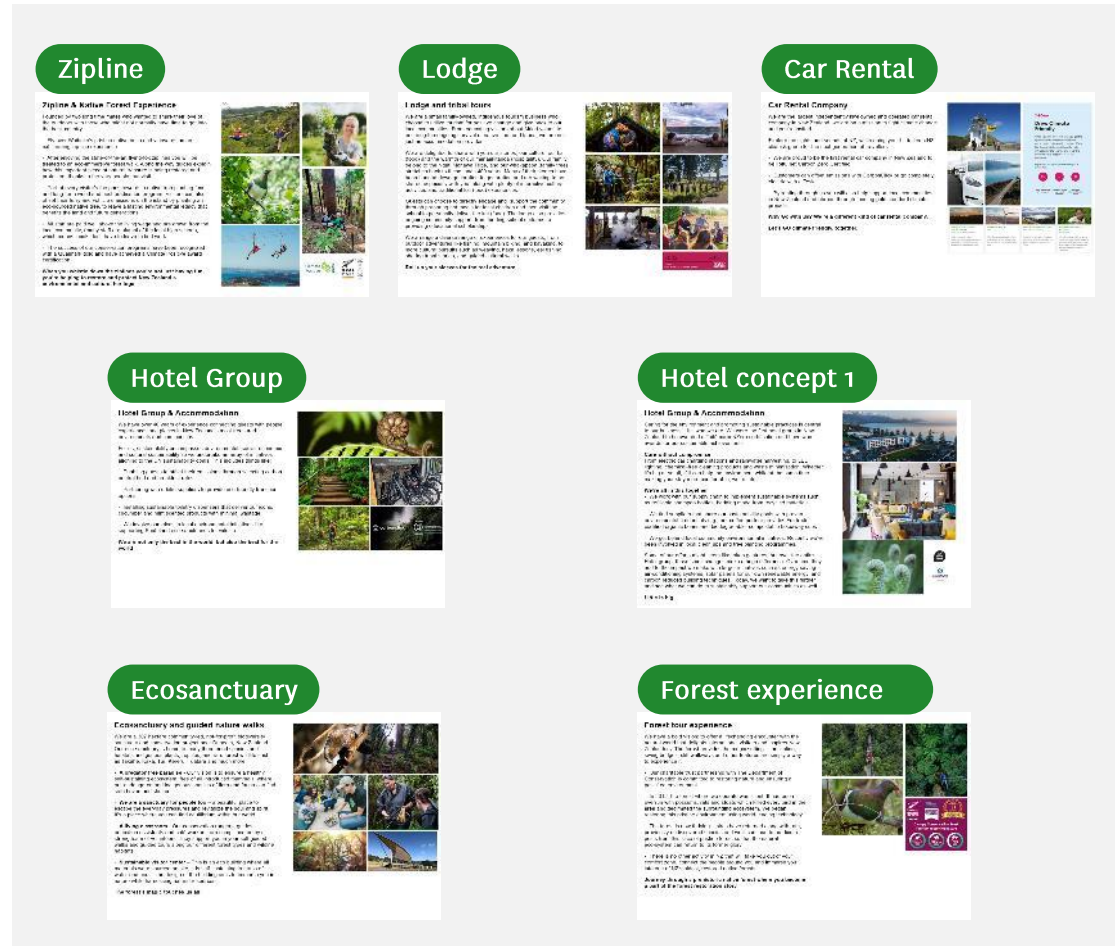
## Visiting

- **Deliver on promise**
- **Drive advocacy** – reviews are highly influential and trusted throughout all stages of the path-to-purchase. However, the absence of operator product/experience reviews related to sustainability is a significant barrier when it comes to selecting a sustainable operator



# Operator concepts tested spanned the entire tourism experience

Respondents were presented with 3 concepts and asked evaluate them across a number of criteria



Each concept / idea was evaluated on the following criteria:

- Likeability
- Uniqueness
- Credibility Relevance
- Relevance
- Visit
- New Zealand is a sustainable holiday destination
- New Zealand is a regenerative holiday destination
- Overall opinion of New Zealand as a holiday destination
- Qualitative feedback on likes / dislikes, tension points, areas for further development

# Authentic experiences involving nature performed highest across the board

## Overall summary of concepts performance (% Across International markets)



Ecosanctuary      Zipline      Forest experience      Hotel concept 1      Lodge      Hotel Group      Car Rental

	Ecosanctuary	Zipline	Forest experience	Hotel concept 1	Lodge	Hotel Group	Car Rental
<b>Likeability</b> '(% like a lot + like somewhat)	90%	89%	89%	86%	84%	84%	83%
<b>Uniqueness</b> '(% somewhat unique + very unique)	95%	93%	95%	88%	95%	91%	86%
<b>Credibility</b> '(% very credible + somewhat credible)	90%	90%	90%	85%	88%	85%	84%
<b>Relevant</b> '(% very relevant + somewhat relevant)	85%	81%	83%	81%	79%	79%	76%
<b>Visit</b> (% significantly more likely to consider + more likely)	83%	81%	83%	77%	78%	76%	73%

Note: results are not reported by market due to small sample sizes

# Principles to enable tourism operators to communicate sustainability credentials meaningfully and credibly

There are also some key principles that can be applied to creating the content for the Dream and Planning stages

## Experience comes first



The proposition needs to **address a key aspect of holiday desires** – ultimately, it's about the experience holidaymakers are seeking

## Storytelling appeals



Sustainability weaved into the **storytelling is effective**, but needs to be based upon a strong holiday value proposition within it and consumers need to be able to visualise the experience they will have

## Provide a learning opportunity



One of the core desires of holidaymakers is expanding their horizon and learning something new – include **an educational** piece into the proposition

## Meaningful experience



The narrative should appeal to **the key motivations** for consumers to choose a sustainable product, such as explicit contributions to conservation, opportunities to support local businesses, unique and meaningful experiences, and a deeper connection with the destination

## Increase credibility through accreditation



**Certification/accreditations** can be an easy way for consumers to identify sustainable tourism providers – consumers gain confidence in choosing a provider with proven credentials

## Show the impact that visitors are making



Consumers want **reassurance** that the operators' efforts and their actions are genuinely contributing to a positive impact – provide more details and be transparent about the impact it has across the 4 capitals

## Manage price perceptions



One of the key barriers to choosing sustainable tourism providers is price, there is an innate perception that sustainable options are more expensive – be clear on value for money, the **value should always have a focus on the experience**



# Next Steps

For TNZ and MBIE

# Four key action areas for TNZ post-research

## 1. Showcasing sustainable product to consumers

- Build sustainability into the New Zealand destination brand
- Sustainable product selection and promotion
- Incorporate more sustainable product into campaign activity and famils and events
- Make sustainable product more visible on newzealand.com
- Incorporate information about New Zealand's sustainable destination offering in travel trade communications.

## 2. Grow & Leverage Qualmark

- Position Qualmark as an accreditation that gives consumers the assurance of a sustainable tourism experience (GSTC recognised)
- Significantly grow the pool of certified sustainable tourism business to provide greater selection for visitors.

## 3. Support Industry

- Inform industry about what the visitor is looking for in a sustainable holiday, to support them to communicate their sustainable offering

## 4. Promote Tiaki – Care for New Zealand

- Work with partners to embed Tiaki in the visitor experience in New Zealand
- Reinforce NZ's sustainability credentials and inspire positive visitor behaviour

## What will MBIE do as a result of this work?

MBIE has provided the incoming Minister of Tourism with a summary of the findings from this research, and how it could support broader work to address the environmental impact of tourism.



# Appendix

# Target Audience and Sample Structure in detail

Phase	Project Whā	MBIE Path to Purchase
Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 2 hour online focus group discussions with self-complete pre-tasks</li> <li>– Markets covered - Australia (AU), USA (US), United Kingdom (UK), Germany (DE), China (CH), Japan (JP), India (IN) and New Zealand (NZ)</li> <li>– 5 groups per market (4 in NZ) 2 x groups with Active Considerers 1 x group of Passive Considerers was included in offshore markets only 2 x groups of Eco Travellers (those travellers who either have or would seriously consider choosing an overseas destination based on sustainability credentials)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 2 hour online focus group discussions with self-complete pre-tasks</li> <li>– Markets covered - Australia (AU), USA (US), United Kingdom (UK), Germany (DE), China (CH), Japan (JP), India (IN) and New Zealand (NZ)</li> <li>– 2 x groups of Eco Travellers per market (as part of the 5 groups in Whā) (those travellers who either have or would seriously consider choosing an overseas destination based on sustainability credentials)</li> </ul>
Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 15 min online survey to size the demand, appeal of sustainable travel, size risks and opportunities with concepts/ideas</li> <li>– Markets covered - Australia (AU), USA (US), United Kingdom (UK), Germany (DE), China (CH), Japan (JP), India (IN)</li> <li>– Approx. 700 respondents per market, with a mix of 500 as Active Considerers (ACs) of New Zealand<sup>(1)</sup> and 200 Passive Considerers (PCs) of New Zealand<sup>(1)</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 10 min online survey to size role of sustainability in consumer choice of tourism operators, evaluate provider concepts.</li> <li>– Markets covered - Australia (AU), USA (US), United Kingdom (UK), Germany (DE), China (CH), Japan (JP), India (IN)</li> <li>– Approx. 450 respondents per market Active Considerers (ACs) of New Zealand<sup>(1)</sup> answered the survey in an international holiday context</li> <li>– New Zealand (NZ) : Those who intend to take a domestic holiday in the next 12 months answered the survey in a domestic holiday context</li> </ul>