



Towards a rainbow certification system for tourism: Priority key sectors

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Method

Online survey administered via Qualtrics in January 2025.

Sample: Global Prolific participants who:

- Met the eligibility criteria (18+ and LGBTQIA+) specified for this study

In-field with 543 click throughs (only 397 responses qualified).

Survey structure:

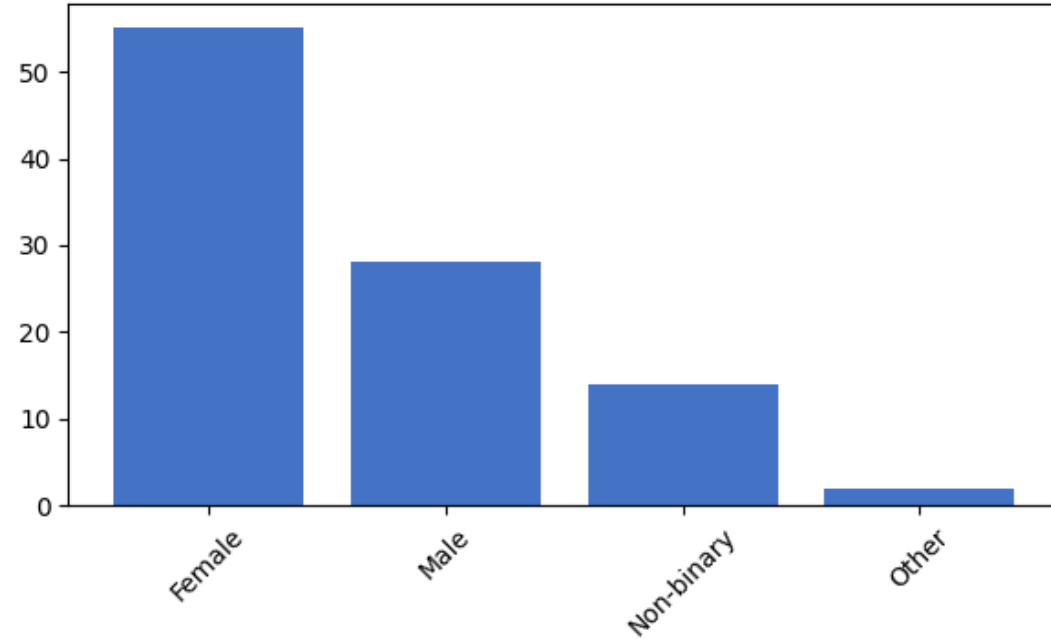
- Socio demographics & travel characteristics
- Awareness and influence of accreditation on LGBTQ+ people
- Perceived importance and implications of accreditations for different tourism service providers

Open-ended question on what an accreditation system should include.

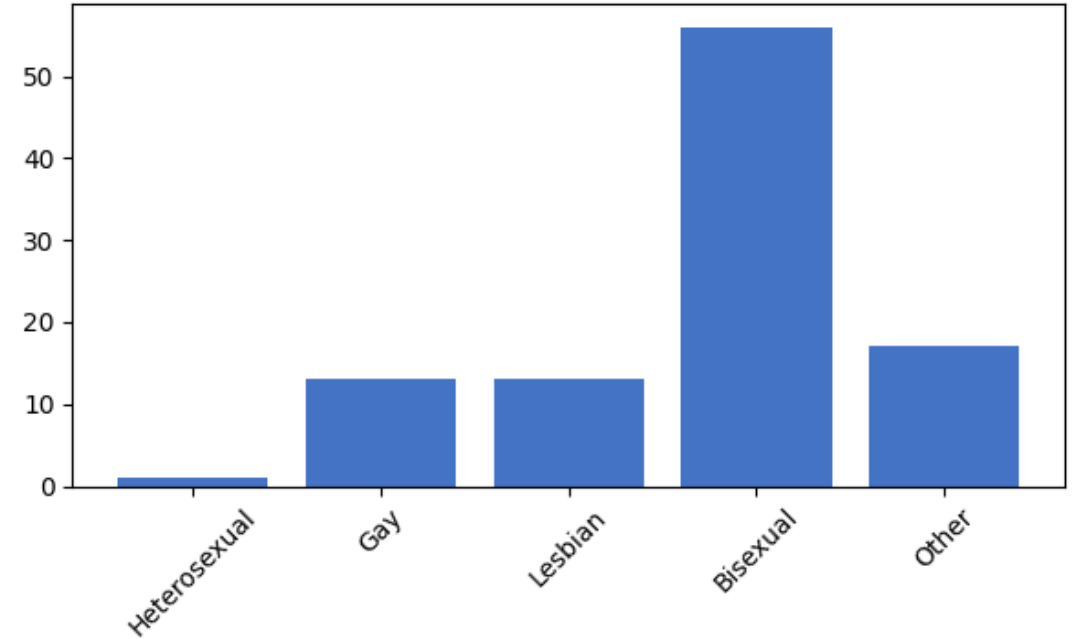


Sample profile

Sample Gender Distribution

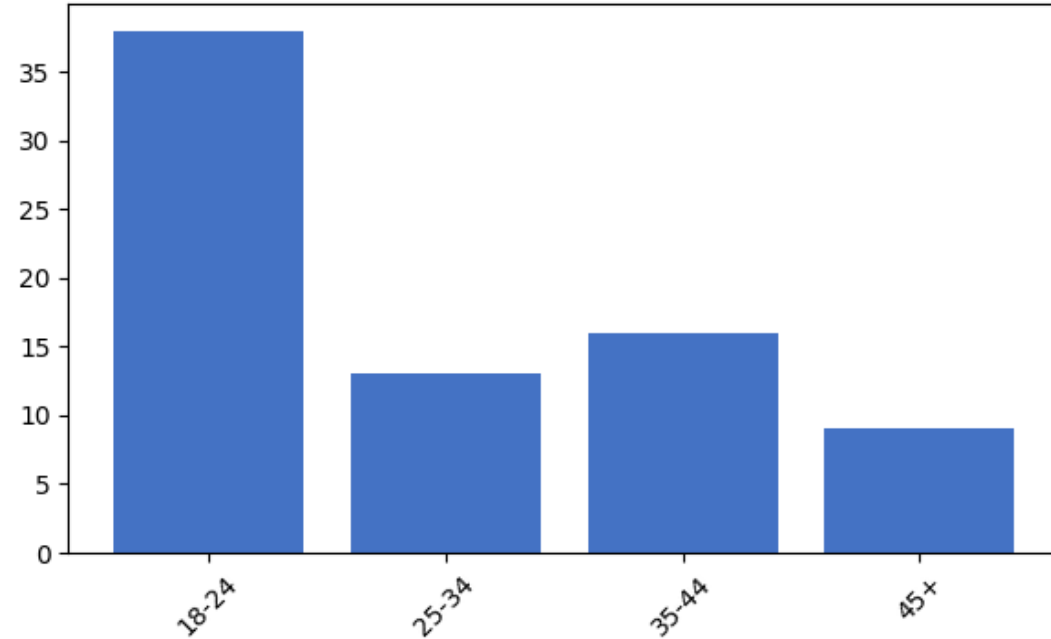


Sample Orientation Distribution

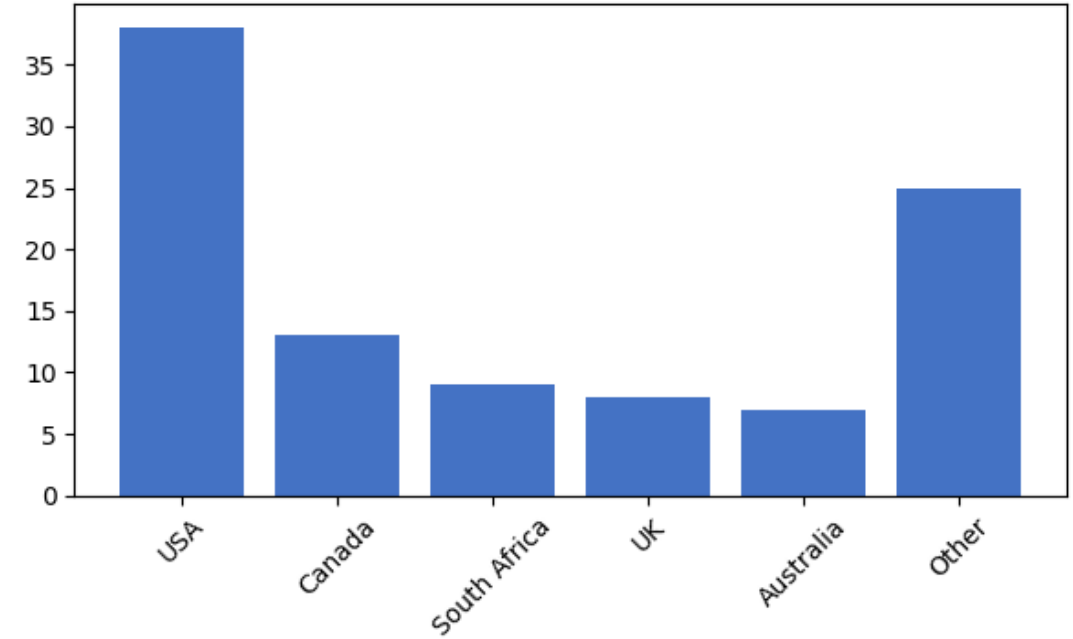


Sample profile

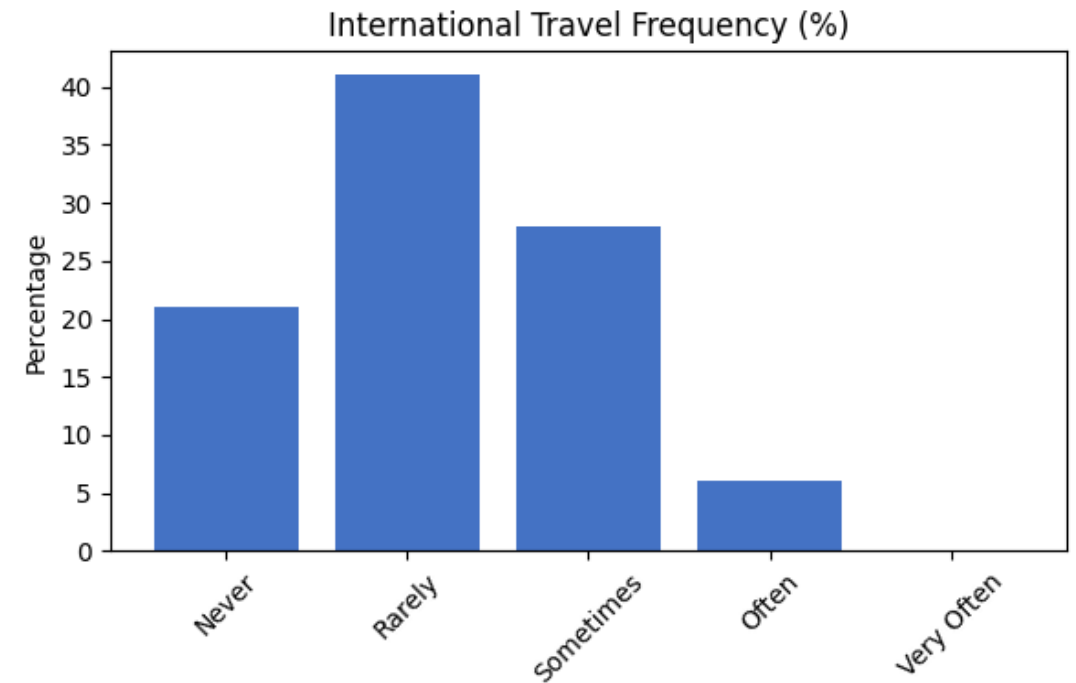
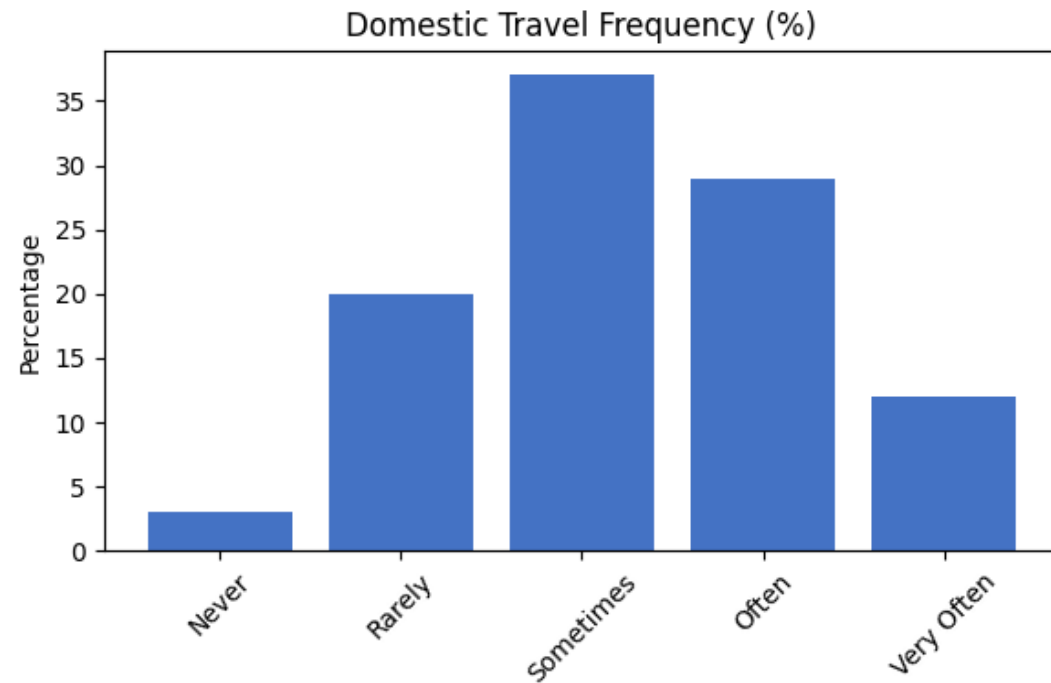
Sample Age Distribution



Sample Country Distribution



Sample profile



Sample profile

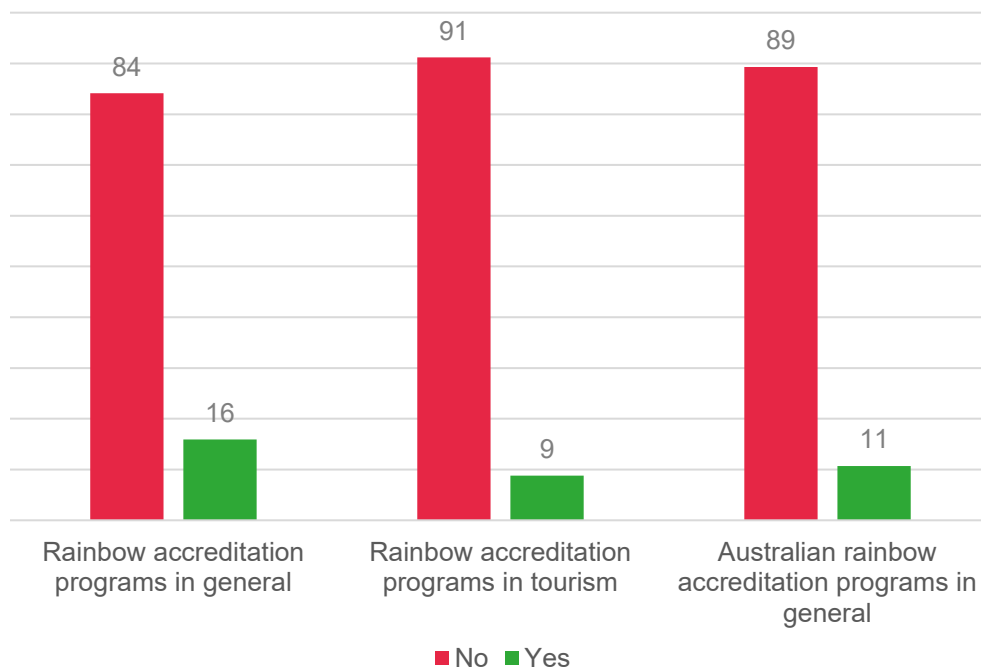
397 participants with diverse characteristics across gender, sexual orientation, age, and country of origin.

- **Gender Identity:** Most participants identified as cisgender (80%), while 14% identified as non-binary, 4% as transgender, and 3% chose "other" or preferred not to say.
- **Sexual Orientation:** A significant portion identified as bisexual (56%), while 13% identified as gay and another 13% as lesbian. Only 1% identified as heterosexual, and 17% selected "other."
- **Age Group:** The largest age group was 18-24 years old (38%), followed by 35-44 years old (16%) and 25-34 years old (13%). The older age groups (45+) represented only 9%.
- **Country of Origin:** The largest proportion of participants were from the United States (38%), followed by Canada (13%), South Africa (9%), the United Kingdom (8%), and Australia (7%). A quarter of the participants (25%) were from other countries.
- **Travel experience:** Most participants travel domestically sometimes (37%) or often (29%), while 12% travel very often and 3% never travel. In contrast, overseas travel is less frequent, with 41% traveling rarely, 28% sometimes, and only 6% often. Notably, 21% never travel internationally, highlighting a preference for domestic trips.

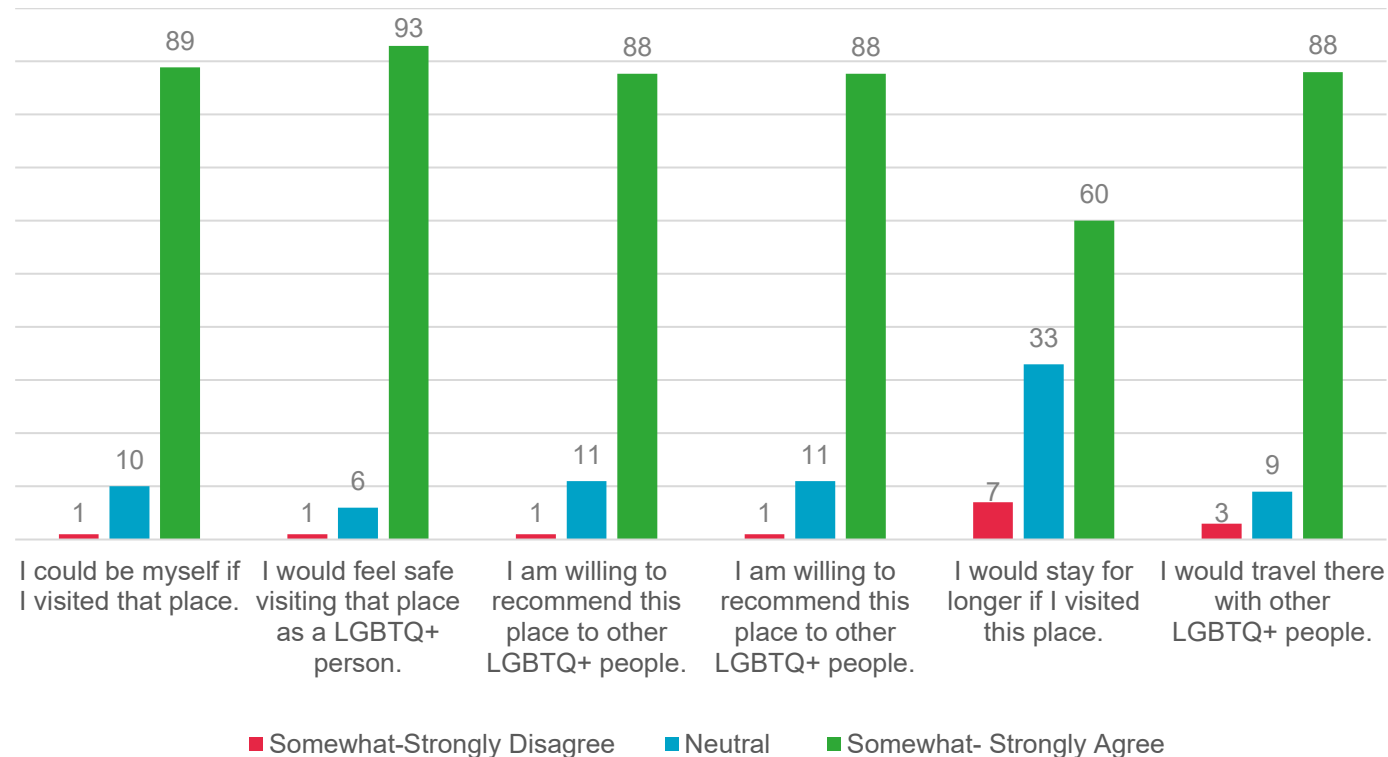
Characteristics	Percentages (% of N=397)	
Gender (Sex recorded at birth)		
Female	55 (35)	
Male	28 (65)	
Non-Binary	14	
Other (including prefer not to say)	2 (1)	
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual	1	
Gay	13	
Lesbian	13	
Bisexual	56	
Other	17	
Diverse gender identities		
Cisgender	80	
Transgender	4	
Non-binary	14	
Other (including prefer not to say)	2	
Age group		
18-24 years old	38	
25 -34 years old	13	
35-44 years old	16	
45 - over 60 years old	9	
Country of origin		
United States of America	38	
Canada	13	
South Africa	9	
United Kingdom	8	
Australia	7	
Other	25	
Frequency of leisure travel	Domestic	International
Never	3	21
Rarely (once every few years)	20	41
Sometimes (1-2 times per year)	37	28
Often (3-4 times per year)	29	6
Very often (5+ times per year)	12	8

Awareness and influence of accreditation

Awareness of rainbow accreditation programs (%)



Influence of rainbow accreditation programs (%)



Despite **low awareness** of rainbow accreditation programs (**84%-91% unaware**), most LGBTQ+ travellers recognise their importance. Around **88%-93%** believe these programs make them feel safe and respected and promote inclusivity. Additionally, **60%** are more likely to visit businesses with rainbow accreditation, while **33%** are somewhat influenced by it. However, a small percentage (**1%-11%**) feel accreditation has little to no impact on their travel decisions.

Q1: Are you aware of any rainbow accreditation programs in general

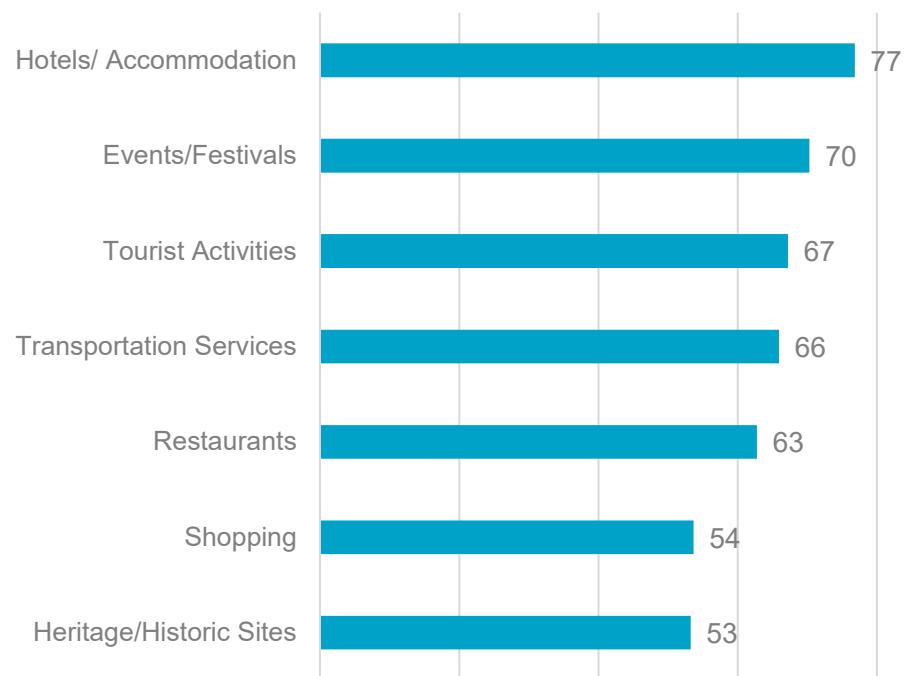
Q2: Are you aware of any rainbow accreditation programs in tourism (that is tourism-related businesses such as attractions, accommodation, transport, etc.)?

Q3: Are you aware of Australian rainbow accreditation programs in general?

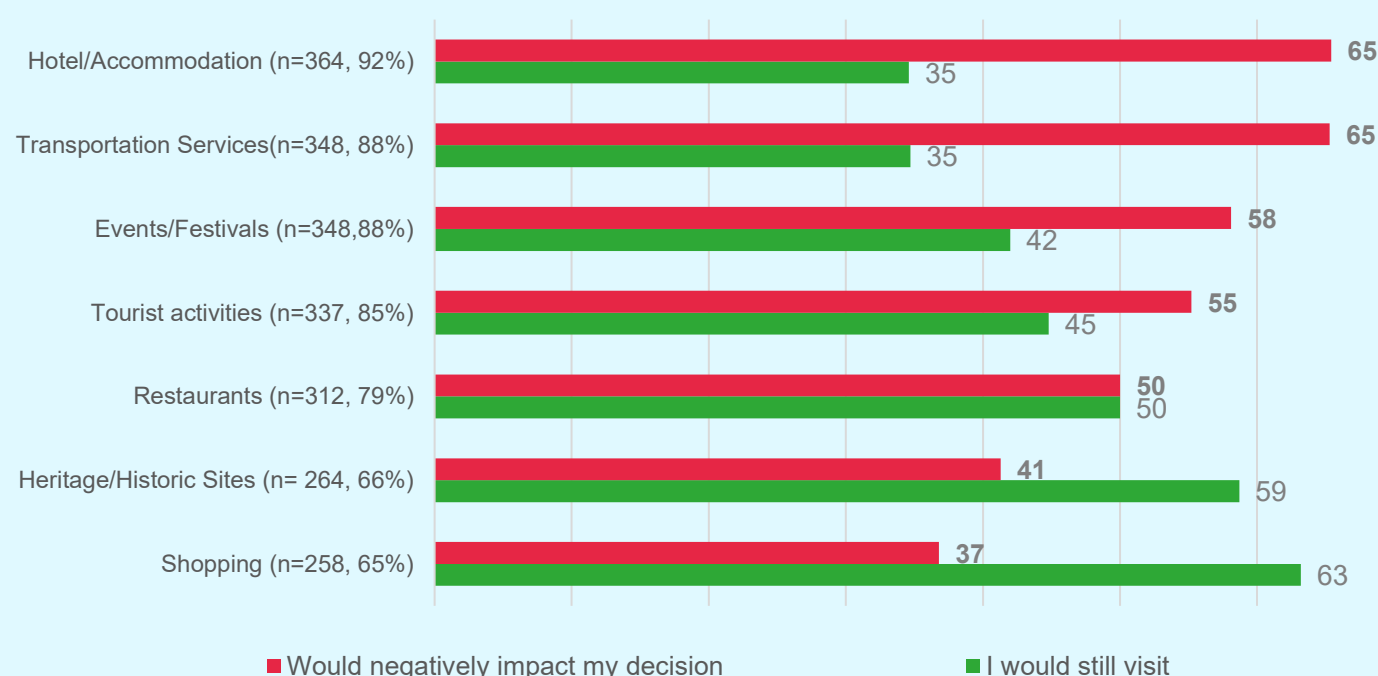
Base: Total Sample N= 397

Importance and implications of accreditations

Average importance of accreditations for tourism operators



Average importance of accreditations for tourism operators



Rainbow accreditation is particularly important for **hotels (77%)**, **transportation services (70%)**, and **event spaces (67%)**, significantly influencing LGBTQ+ travellers' decisions. The absence of accreditation would negatively impact the decision to visit for **65% of travellers for hotels/transportation**, **58% for events/festivals**, and **55% for tourist activities**. However, accreditation is less critical for **heritage sites & shopping**, where **59% & 63% of respondents**, respectively, would still visit without accreditation.

Q13: How important is it for the following types of tourism businesses to be accredited in a tourism destination rainbow accreditation system?

Q14: You have selected "[insert service]" as important to you in a tourism destination rainbow accreditation system. Would you reconsider visiting a destination if this element is missing from its tourism destination rainbow accreditation system?

Base: Q13 Total Sample N= 397, Q14, Only those who rated the importance of each item 50% or more at Q13

Preliminary components of an accreditation system

1. Internal practices

- Recruitment and training
 - Staff training is key to feeling welcome
 - Treat your customers equally well
 - Respond to negative interactions
- Be visibly allied
 - Businesses need to be open and proud of rainbow affiliation

2. External initiatives

- Beyond the core business area, LGBTQ+ inclusion and allyship are imperative
- Inclusivity is more than just the LGBTQ+ communities

Most respondents indicated that **staff, being frontline employees, were fundamental** to their experience at a destination. Many specified that they did not want special treatment for identifying as LGBTQ+ but expected to be **treated as well as any other customers**. Businesses needed to **communicate their allyship** to LGBTQ+ communities openly, including open displays of the rainbow flag and firm responses to negative interactions with LGBTQ+ customers, whether these interactions were with staff or other customers. Allyship also extended beyond individual tourism businesses: **partnering with other LGBTQ+-friendly stakeholders** and **solidarity with other marginalised communities** such as Indigenous communities was also important.



Thank you

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