



Beyond the Experts

Visitors view of sustainability in Copenhagen
Condensed version

September 2023



Introduction & Approach

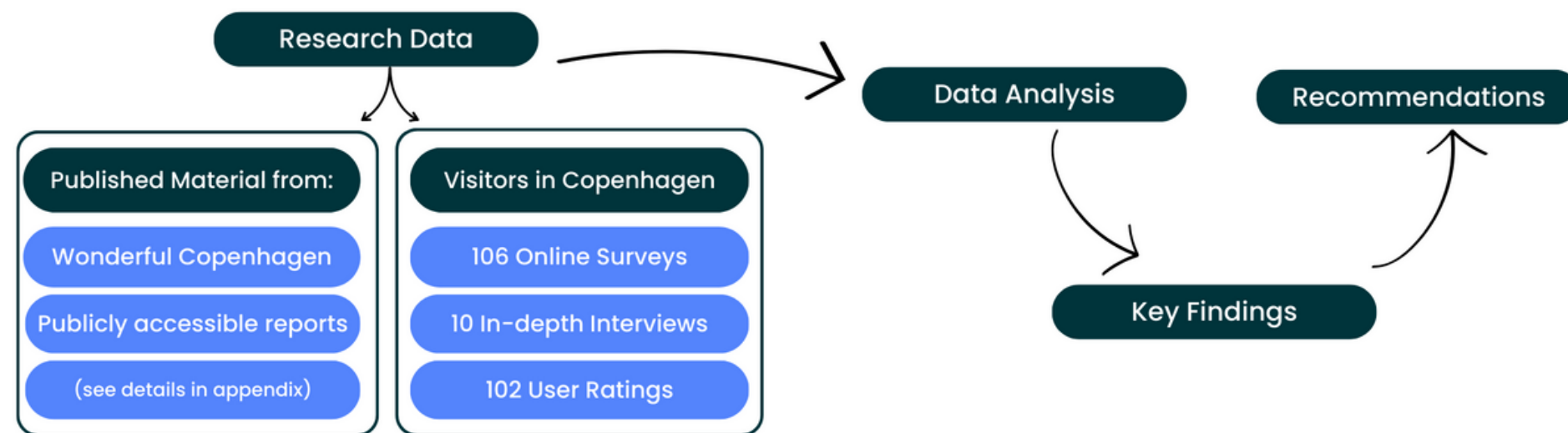
With tourism making up 10% of the global GDP,⁽¹⁾ the impact on the planet and people coming from tourism is significant.

Equally so is our opportunity to bring change simply by changing the way we travel. And the talk on sustainable transition is very present in the industry.

Hence sustainability is fast becoming a competitive parameter. Still, only 53% of smaller businesses communicate their sustainability efforts.⁽³⁾

Wonderful Copenhagen is interested in understanding how visitors perceive sustainability when visiting Copenhagen as this research investigates. Leading to new inspiration for the tourism establishments at the destination, enabling them to continue on their sustainability development journey.

The report explores the sustainable interests of visitors deploying the approach shown below to provide recommendations for tourism establishments in Copenhagen.



A flowchart of the research approach used by TripDoodler

The sustainability user rating mentioned is conducted on TripDoodler.com.

In short; TripDoodler is a user-rating platform that enables visitors to identify, acknowledge, and share sustainability actions at accommodations, restaurants, and cafes. Visitors are presented with simple "Yes, No & I don't know" questions on objective parameters of sustainability, e.g., "Recycling bins are available to me." or "I can opt out of cleaning."

See references on page 7.





Visitors interest goes beyond their carbon footprint

While environmental concerns are sustainable tourism's most prominent and tangible aspect (90% of respondents), socio-cultural and economic impacts are also significant (59% answering yes to one than more aspects).

Source: Online Survey

“When I’m traveling, I always try to try local food, and I hope that local food is made by using local products”

Visitor from Italy

“Sometimes I don’t have the knowledge and the information to really understand if what I’m doing is sustainable, and most of all, I don’t know what are the sustainable options around me...”

Visitor from Italy

It's a personal choice!

Overall, 36% consider sustainability very important when choosing an accommodation, restaurant, or cafe.

The respondents view the importance of sustainability slightly higher when choosing a place to eat (restaurant or cafe) compared to a place to sleep (accommodation)

Around 11% find sustainability irrelevant.

Source: Online Survey

“I tend to look for vegan or vegetarian places that I think are a part of being sustainable just because of the harm a meat diet can do”

Visitor from England

Conscious visitors are more likely to raise their voice

76% say a user rating on sustainability would help guide them through making more sustainable choices.

16% are highly likely to rate the sustainability efforts

Source: Online Survey

Environmental sustainability 90%

More than one aspect 59%

All three aspects 32%

Source: Online Survey

Report

Sustainability made easier

When visitors rated sustainability actions through TripDoodlers user rating, there was an overall high level of acknowledgment (Yes answers across the parameters).

- In accommodations, the most recognized parameter was promoting the local community (65%), which is closely followed by encouraging the reuse of towels (61%) and the ability to turn off heating/cooling (51%).
- For restaurants and cafes, the most acknowledged parameter was establishments with local dishes on the menu (49%), closely followed by organic ingredients (47%) and promoting the local community (45%).

Source: User Ratings

“Knowing that employees are treated well and provided with fair working conditions is important.”

Visitor from France

“I choose this hostel because it was near public transport.”

Visitor from Vietnam

Certifications were difficult to recognize

Interestingly only 23% acknowledged they see certifications at restaurants and cafes, and only 22% at accommodations.

Source: User Ratings

Sustainability user ratings at a glance

TripDoodlers user rating holds a set of objective parameters of sustainability actions, carefully selected based on impact level, visibility, interest, and expected EU implementation level.

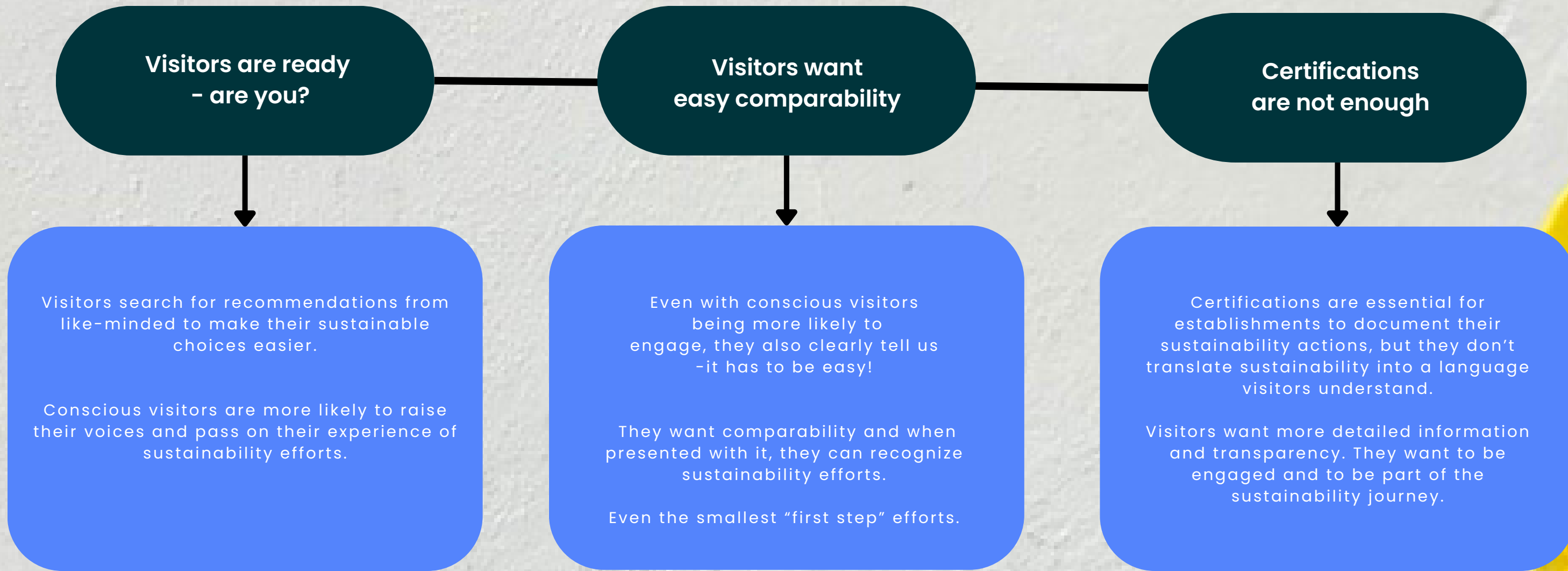
The parameters are presented to the raters in two steps - a set of mandatory core parameters and a complete list divided into categories.

All parameters are acknowledged through simple yes, no, I don't know answers.

GH Sustainability A/S assesses the rating.



Key Findings



Visitors are ready - are you?

Visitors search for recommendations from like-minded to make their sustainable choices easier.

Conscious visitors are more likely to raise their voices and pass on their experience of sustainability efforts.

Visitors want easy comparability

Even with conscious visitors being more likely to engage, they also clearly tell us -it has to be easy!

They want comparability and when presented with it, they can recognize sustainability efforts.

Even the smallest "first step" efforts.

Certifications are not enough

Certifications are essential for establishments to document their sustainability actions, but they don't translate sustainability into a language visitors understand.

Visitors want more detailed information and transparency. They want to be engaged and to be part of the sustainability journey.



Recommendations

Ask your visitors

As the report states, sustainability is an increasingly important factor for many visitors, and the urgency to be on the map is higher than ever. But to stand out, your sustainable actions at your accommodation, restaurant, or cafe must be easy to find, accessible, and visible to potential new visitors.

Do your customers see all the sustainability actions you're implementing?

You can meet the growing demand for sustainability information simply by being transparent. No matter how small the effort might seem.

Whether you are just starting or well on your sustainability journey, getting your conscious visitors to acknowledge your efforts is an essential and effective tool in building trust with new customers and attracting new employees too.

Communicate in layers

When communicating sustainability, you should always be guided by the Danish Marketing Act, EU Green Claims, and The Consumer Ombudsman rules.

Then you can just consider the information you have on your sustainability management platform and turn your actions, verified data, certifications, etc. into meaningful and personalized stories visitors can relate to. Bringing your sustainability journey to life.



Communicating the sustainability efforts of your business in three distinct layers. Source: TripDoodler

One way is structuring your information into three distinct layers, each communicating a different aspect of your sustainability efforts, based on where you are. Continually monitor and evaluate progress to keep moving the needle on your sustainability development so that your visitors see and appreciate your journey.





Recommendations

It takes a village

Communicating sustainability actions is more than just a one-person job. Through the report, we see how important it is to be transparent and communicate to visitors efficiently and quickly. For this, your full team needs to be engaged.

Your team are the ones who directly communicate your message to your visitors and therefore, they need to have a solid understanding of your efforts and goals.

When your team members are knowledgeable about your sustainability actions they will be more comfortable in talking about sustainability with visitors.

4 considerations to get started

1. Build a culture where it is okay for your employees to be on their own sustainability journey. Some will be among the 11% who don't care personally.
2. Talk about what your sustainability strategy means to them in their different roles so they understand how to implement it. Be very concrete.
3. Appoint a group of ambassadors who can bring back new ideas from the organization and engage.
4. Let your employees share the stories - Allow them to make it personal. Also, the challenging ones. Maybe the sustainability transformation didn't go smoothly all around. Be transparent.

References & Methodology

This version of the report is condensed to highlights, key findings, and recommendations. For further details on references, methodology etc. we refer to Wonderful Copenhagen & TripDoodler.

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