Expert Group Meeting on Sustainable Tourism: Ecotourism, Poverty Reduction and Environment
United Nations - October 29-30th, 2013

:*Certification of Sustainable Tourism In Costa Rica*

Glenn Jampol, President
Costa Rica National Association of Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism

CANAECO

Travelers are Fleeing From

Uncontrolled Tourism

Mass Tourism Often Brings Mass Destruction of Destinations

Tourism without a consciousness of best practices and sustainability creates an environment of dichotomy and the destruction of the history and culture.

CONDITIONS THAT ATTRACT VISITORS

CONDITION	MOST IMPORTANT
Excellent Local Guides	74%
Small Groups	56%
Areas with Controlled Visitation	56%
Education	35%
High Quality Lodging	32%
High Quality Food	29%
Conservation	15%
Relaxation	9%
Dedicated Sports	9%
Low Cost	3%

Source: INCAE 2011

Contemporary Short History of Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism in Costa Rica

1970s and early 1980: Costa Rica was the pioneer in nature-oriented tourism, originating from more than 100 years of environmental research and twenty years of conservation efforts.

- ❖ Environmental and ethical principles to be fundamental to their philosophy and success.
- ❖ Intrinsically sound industry practices
- ❖ Willingness by the industry itself to adopt environmental standards
- ❖ Mario Boza and Alvaro Ugalde create strong and healthy system of national parks

1990s: Rapid expansion of the tourist foments the need to establish some sort of ethical standard for ecotourism

- ❖ Tourism was producing more income for Costa Rica than coffee production and by 1993, it had surpassed bananas,
  becoming the most important industry in the country.
- ❖ The kidnapping of a German Tourist and the press complaints led to the utter collapse of the German market for Costa Rica in less than six months. Although numbers of visitors increased, the loss of German tourism, combined with the construction of new, unnecessary rooms, led to a serious decline in room occupancy. The private sector and the government became active in looking for ways to protect and promote nature tourism and Costa Rica's image. From this effort grew the official program of Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST), intended as a general world standard.

"Without exception, tourism develops in a physical space in which the attractions that are its marketable product are a fine mix of natural (natural resources), cultural, and social elements. For this reason, the activity cannot be isolated from its context, as often happens in industrial or agricultural activities, where negative externalities do not directly affect the quality of the product. In tourism, on the contrary, the quality of the product is highly dependent on environmental quality, natural resource conservation, the stability of ecological processes, and social development around it." Rodolfo Lizano 1999

Box. 4.1. Facility Ratings Criteria Used in *The New Key to Costa Rica*

Environmental variables emphasizing environmental impact and energy and natural resource use

Tier One:
- Solid waste disposal
- Sewage treatment
- Does the lodging own a reserve; what percentage of total land owned is set aside as a natural reserve?
- What type of protection is given to the reserve (the lodge's own or a nearby public/private reserve used for tours)
- Participation in conservation projects

Tier Two:
- Real impact on the site by construction
- Number of persons per tour
- Erosion of trails
- Use of biodegradable cleaning products
- Energy conservation
- Construction materials
- Information for visitors
- Wild animals in captivity
- Employee training on environmental topics

Tier Three:
- Introduction of exotic species
- Water conservation
- Impact studies

Economic variables examining how much money stays in the local community and how much flees to the country's capital or international investors

Tier One:
- Employees' origin
- Owners' origin/residence

Box. 4.1. Continued

Tier Two:
- Contracts with local providers
- Where are purchases made
- Are Local handicrafts sold?
- Year-round employee contracts
- Employee incentives

Tier Three:
- Which major purchases for the lodging are imported directly?

Sociocultural variables, evaluating the owners' understanding and strengthening of local culture

Tier One:
- Takes action on culture questions
- Participates in community organizations

Tier Two:
- Makes donations (money, resources, time)

Tier Three:
- Identifies positive and negative cultural aspects

- ***Best Practice Guidelines for Ecotourism in Protected Areas***
- ***Green Deal*** is appropriate for small and very small tourist enterprises of all types.
- ***New Key*** system for small ecotourism

The Evolution of a Regional Standard for Central America: **CST - Certification for Sustainable Tourism** is appropriate for medium to large lodges hotels, tour operators, rent-a-cars and recreational parks
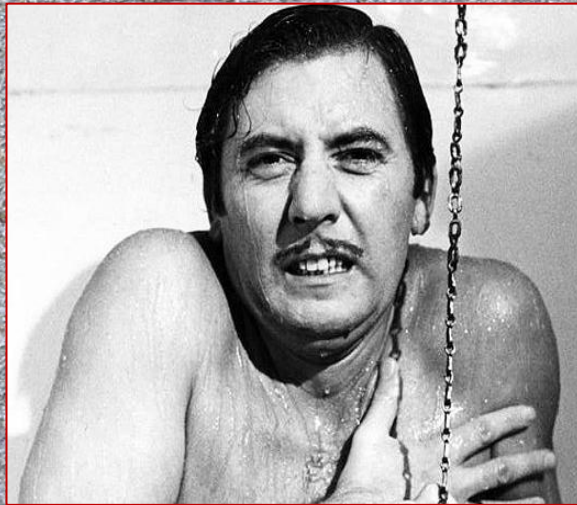
PERCEPTION: ECOTOURISM

Uncomfortable transportation, dubious hosts, incompatible co-guests, blisters and recreational drugs

Cold water showers, minimal energy, idiosyncratic guides,
uncomfortable lodgings, communal activities, insect bites.
So....

Expectations Versus Reality

What Changed?

• Evolution of the "hippies", "Yippies" baby boomers and environmentalists
• Baby boomers look for new ways to balance ethics **and income opportunities**
• Agricultural (i.e. natural) business opportunities (wine, coffee, marijuana)
• Movement away from the cities and to the country
• Environmental health concerns; Ramifications of agro chemicals and its toxins
• Public awareness of the danger of unregulated products
• Safety and Hygiene coupled with experiential travel
• Internet and technology aided the search for opportunities
• Search for nature, cultural and adventure/sports destinations
•Feeling of a distancing between everyday life and nature
• Guilt factor resulting in the patronization of responsible hotels (and destinations)
• Green technology
•**NEOs**
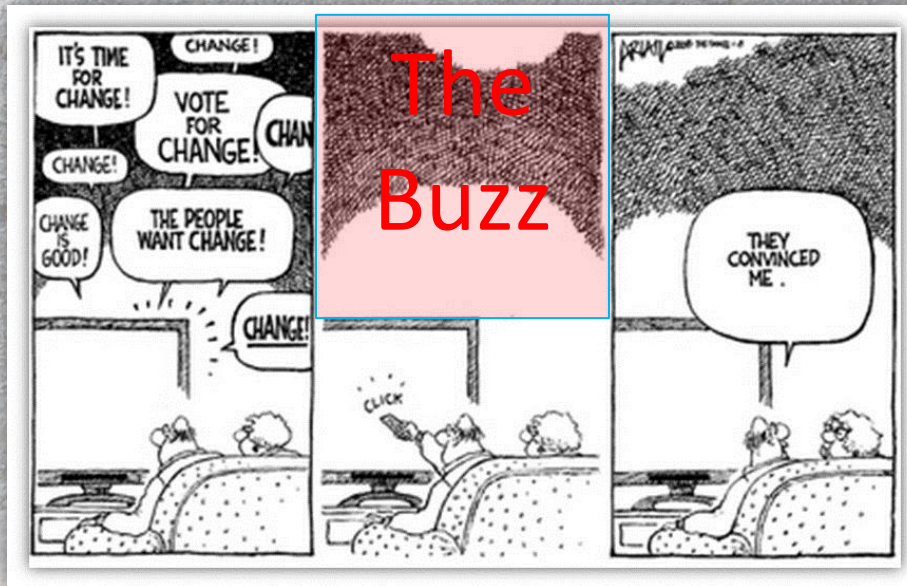
The Concept of New Economic Order- NEOs

- Have a sense of investment when they buy – a bargain for a NEO is *'something that is cheaper today than it will be tomorrow'* rather than *'something that is cheaper today than it was yesterday'*
- Have low confidence that discounts and price offers will *automatically* deliver the quality experience they expect
- Will focus on price only when they have low involvement with a purchase – when *desire* is not in play
- Have a preference for premium-lifestyle products – the well designed, high-quality products at the top of every merchandise category
- Are inconspicuous consumers – brands are *secrets* to be *whispered* to themselves and to others who share their values, rather than external symbols of who they are or what they do
- Have a high appetite for all kinds of rich information and rich content – they read more, know more, expect more and will pay more
- Are more willing than anyone else to try something new, to *take the path least travelled*
- Are individualists with a high locus of control – they believe success is determined by planning rather than by luck
- Regularly use, and are comfortable with, the internet – are happy to adopt new technology, but only when it delivers a service that matches their expectations and aspirations
- Are socially active, have a strong sense of social and ethical responsibility, and like to convince others of their opinions

Best Practices:
What Does This Require?

1. Change in Attitude

2. Change in Equipment and Instalation
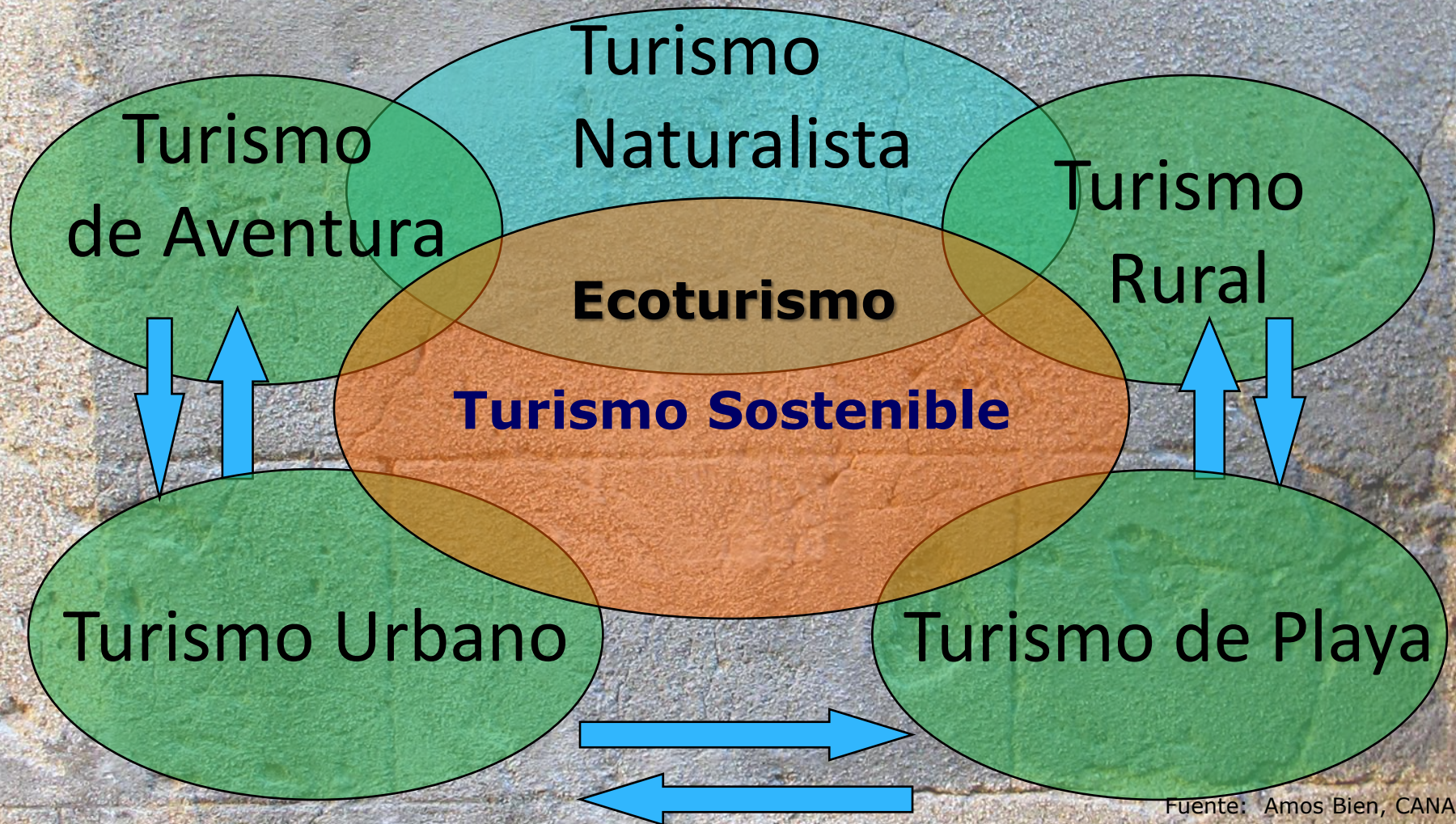
3. Make Operational Changes with Pragmatic Designs

Essential Needs for Tourists

Cultural & Environmental Consciousness

Quality of Experience

Access

Security and Hygiene

All Must Meet or Exceed the Expectations of the Client

Cortesía Ecobrasil- Ariane Janer

Tourism Sectores, Sustainability & Ecotourism

Turismo Naturalista

Turismo de Aventura

Turismo Rural

Ecoturismo

Turismo Sostenible

Turismo Urbano

Turismo de Playa
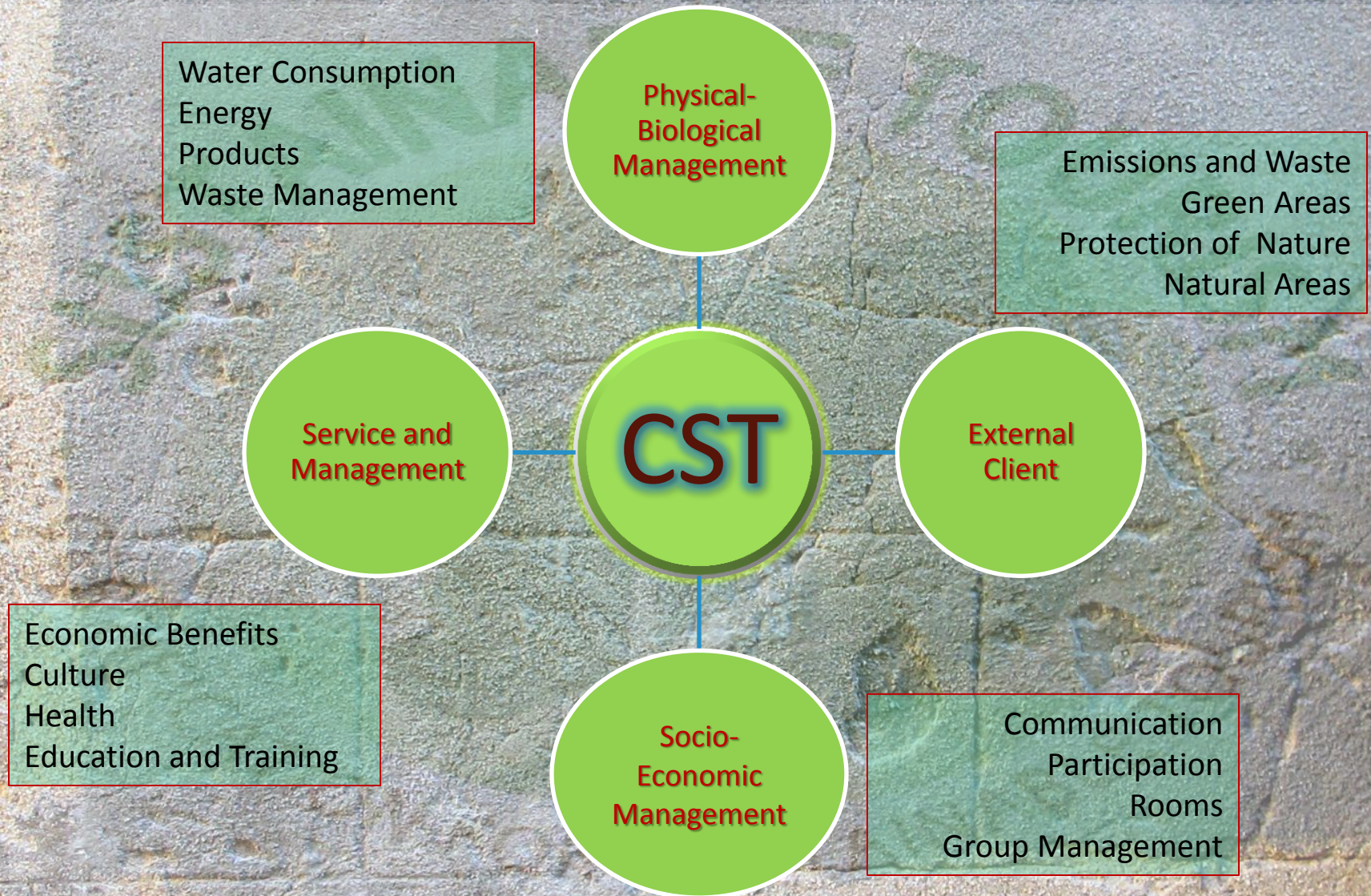
Fuente: Amos Bien, CANAECO

CST

The **Certification for Sustainable Tourism Program** - CST - is a product of the **Costa Rican Tourism Board** (ICT). The **CST** was designed to differentiate businesses of the tourism sector, based on the degree to which they comply with a sustainable model of natural, cultural and social resource management.

CST is regulated by the Costa Rican National Accreditation Commission and consists of a scale of 5 "levels" of sustainable tourism achievement.

HOW TO EVALUATE THE CST

**Water Consumption
Energy
Products
Waste Management**

**Physical-
Biological
Management**

**Emissions and Waste
Green Areas
Protection of Nature
Natural Areas**

**Service and
Management**

CST

**External
Client**

**Economic Benefits
Culture
Health
Education and Training**

**Socio-
Economic
Management**

**Communication
Participation
Rooms
Group Management**

CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

➢ SERVICE

➢ EXTERNAL CLIENT

➢ SOCIOECONOMIC CONCERNS

➢ PHYSICAL/BIOLOGICAL CONCERNS

Area	Points
Physical Biological	95%
Service Platform	93%
External Client	75%
Social Platform	**45%**

The level awarded is based on the _lowest_ point score granted

2 Levels

Every category has the same weight of importance; 25%

Level	Range
0	<20%
1	20-39
2	40-59
3	60-79
4	80-94
5	>94%
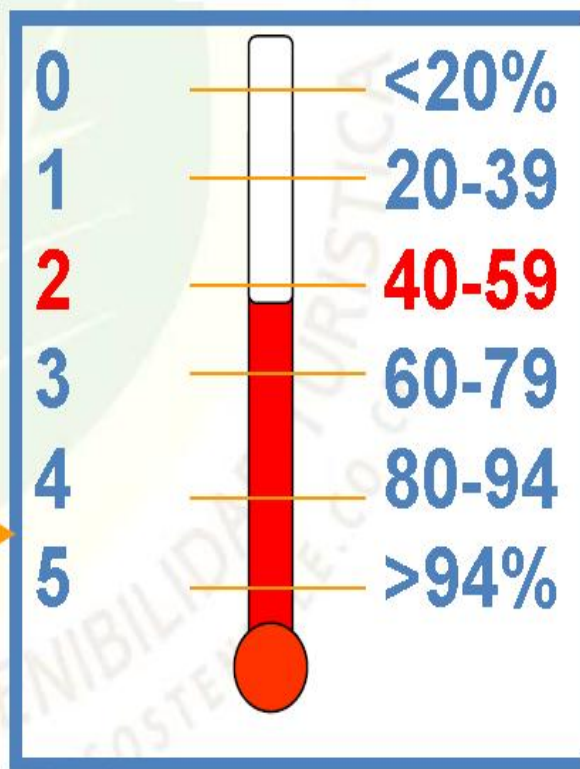
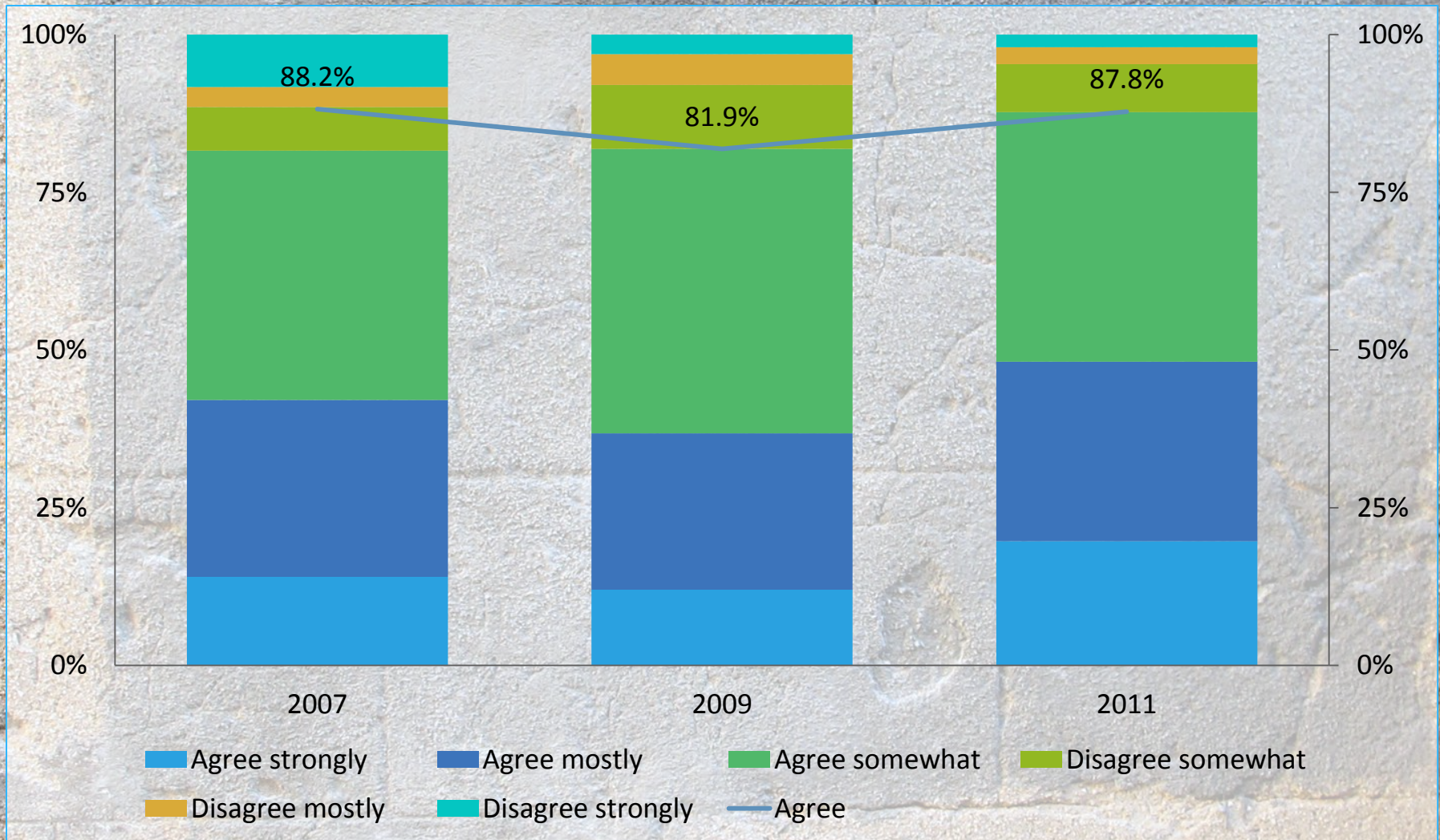Percentage of Best Prospects based on the phrase:
"I am inclined to visit a country that practices sustainable tourism." 2003-2011
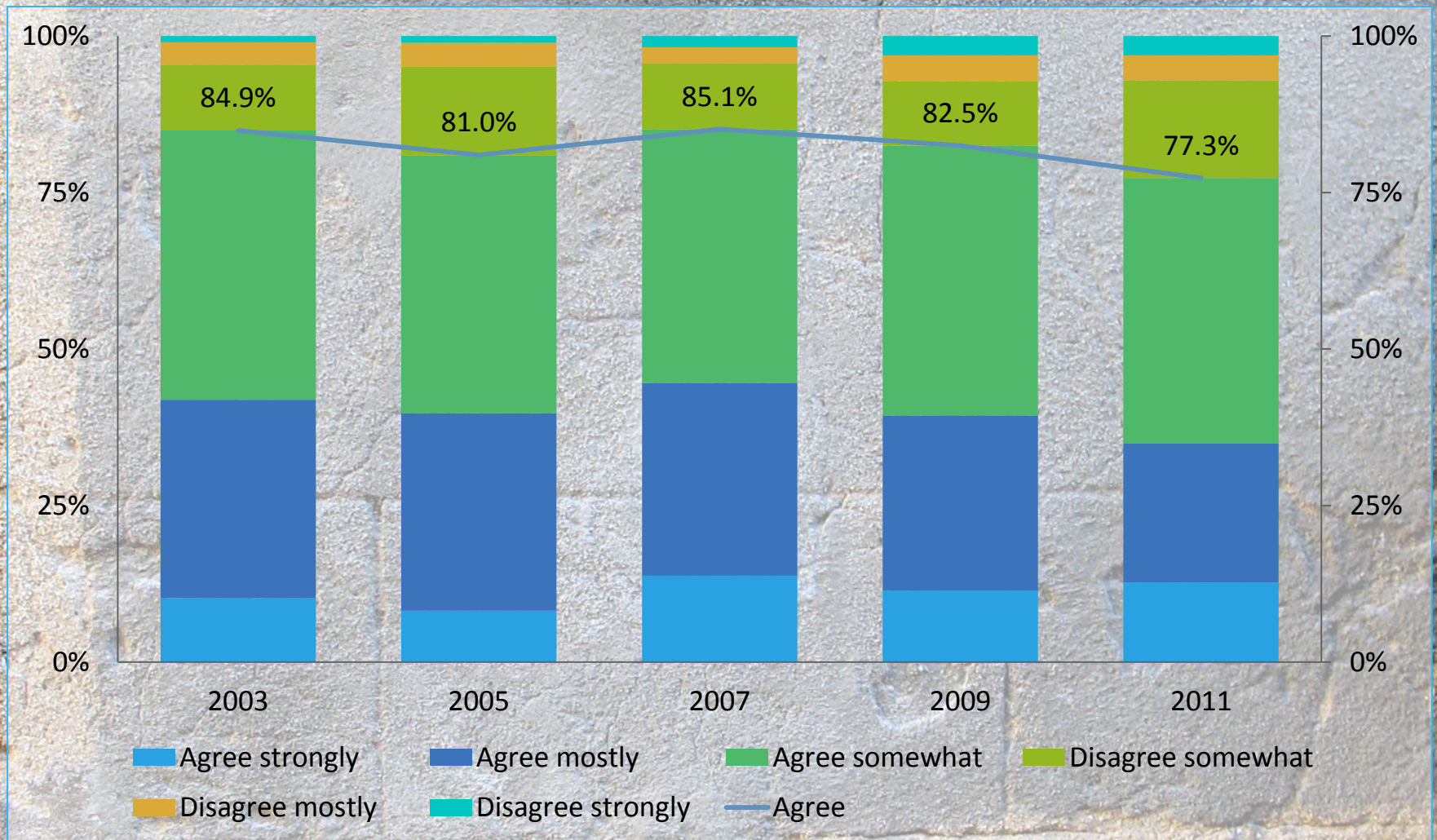
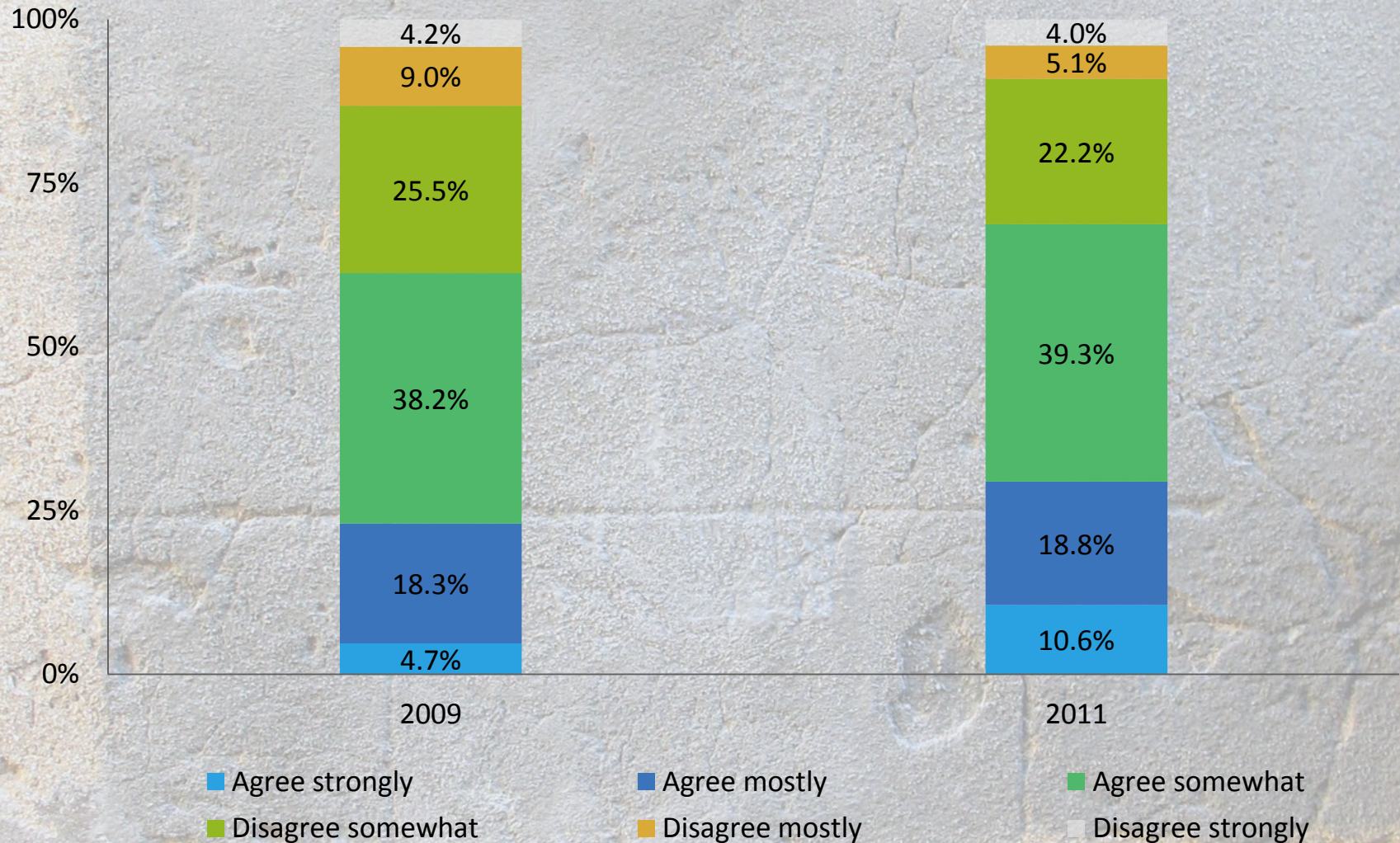Percentage of Best Prospects based on the phrase :
"*I consider myself to be an environmentally conscious consumer.*" 2007-2011

88.2%
81.9%
87.8%

100%
75%
50%
25%
0%

100%
75%
50%
25%
0%

2007   2009   2011

Agree strongly   Agree mostly   Agree somewhat   Disagree somewhat
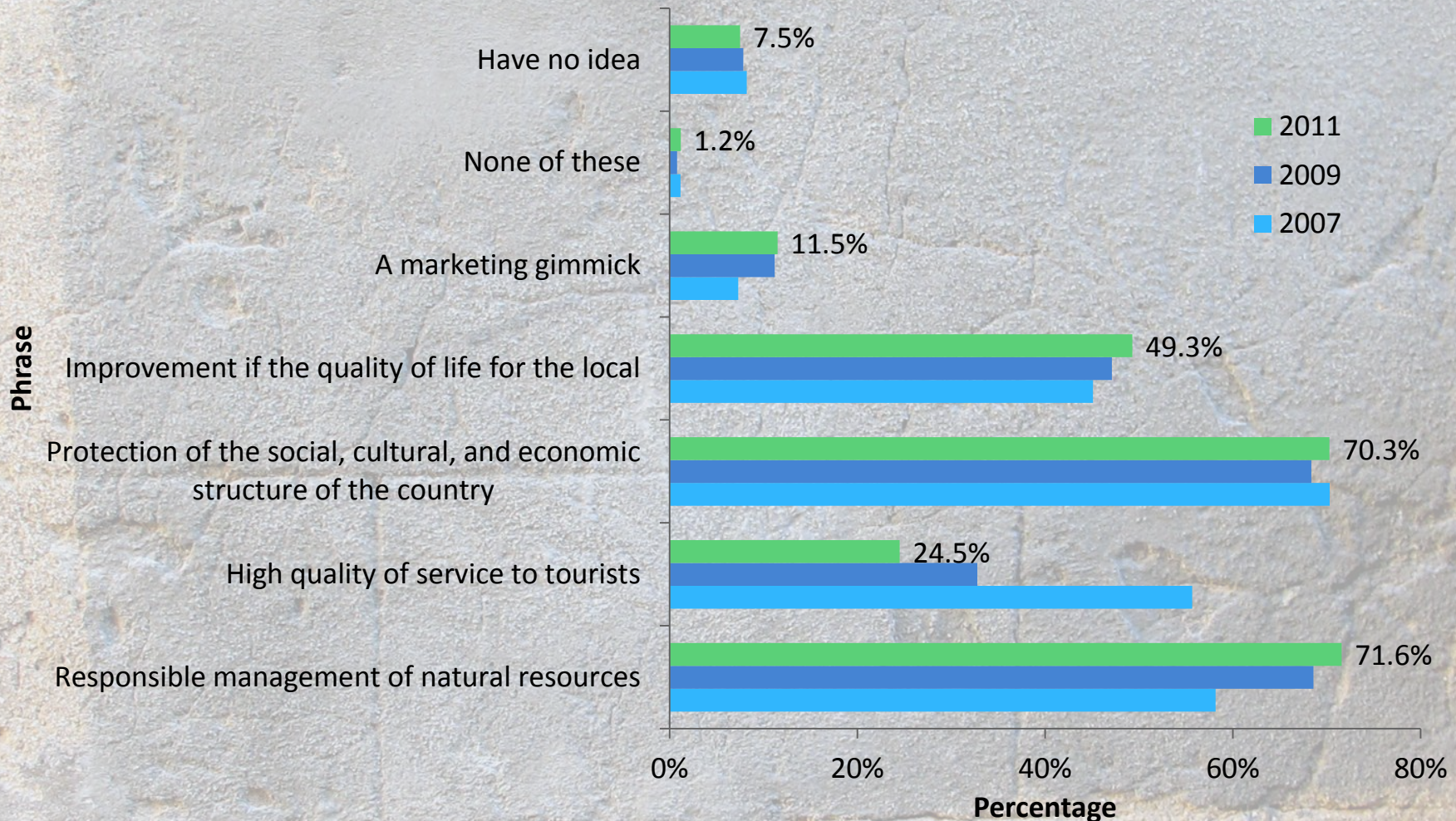
Disagree mostly   Disagree strongly   Agree

Percentage of Best Prospects based on the phrase :
"I travel in a way that reflects my commitment to the environment." 2009-2011

Percentage of Best Prospects based on the phrases associated with the term *Sustainable Tourism* - 2007-2011

Basic Services; Change After Joining the CST

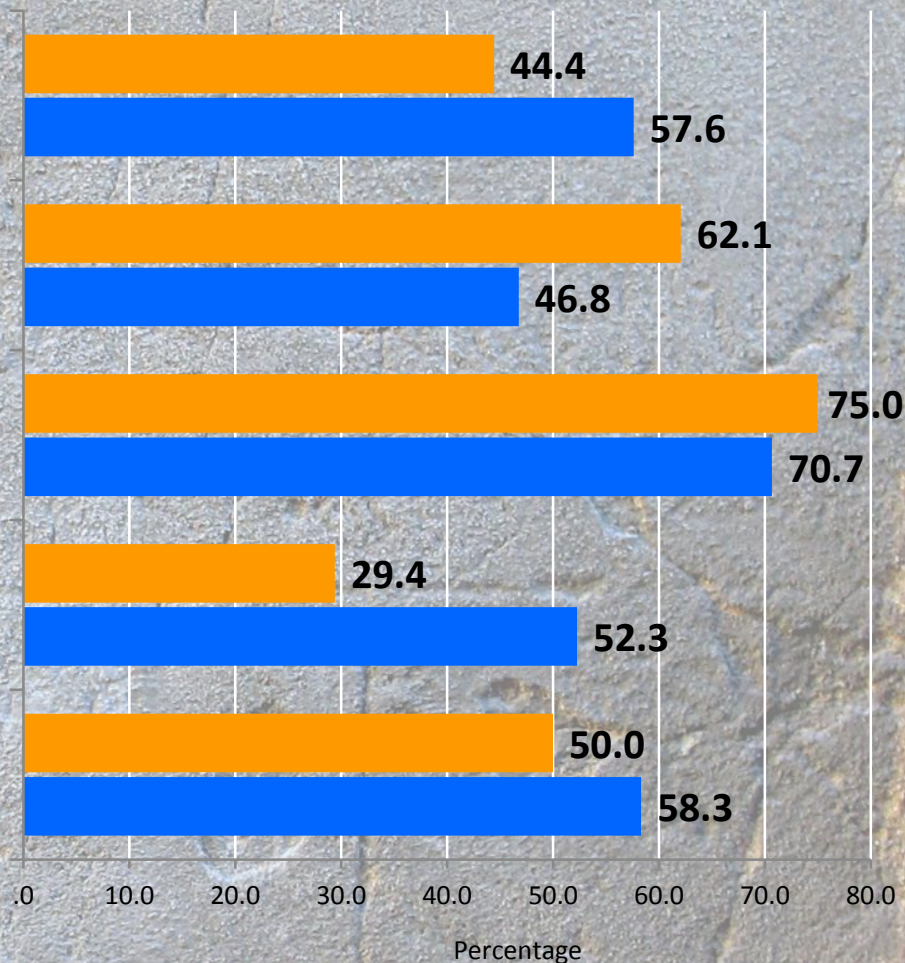# Products or Items Used Change after CST.

Expected Change

Compra de abonos inorgánicos — 76.3 (Hoteles)

Compra de abonos orgánicos — 55.3 (Hoteles)

Compra de productos orgánicos — 61.9 (Tour operadores); 66.7 (Hoteles)

Consumo de productos de limpieza biodegradables — 60.7 (Tour operadores); 68.9 (Hoteles)

Consumo de productos de cocina y restaurante amigables con el ambiente en envases grandes — 52.6 (Tour operadores); 72.7 (Hoteles)

Consumo en la cantidad de resmas de papel. — 82.1 (Tour operadores); 76.3 (Hoteles)

Porcentaje

Tour operadores   Hoteles
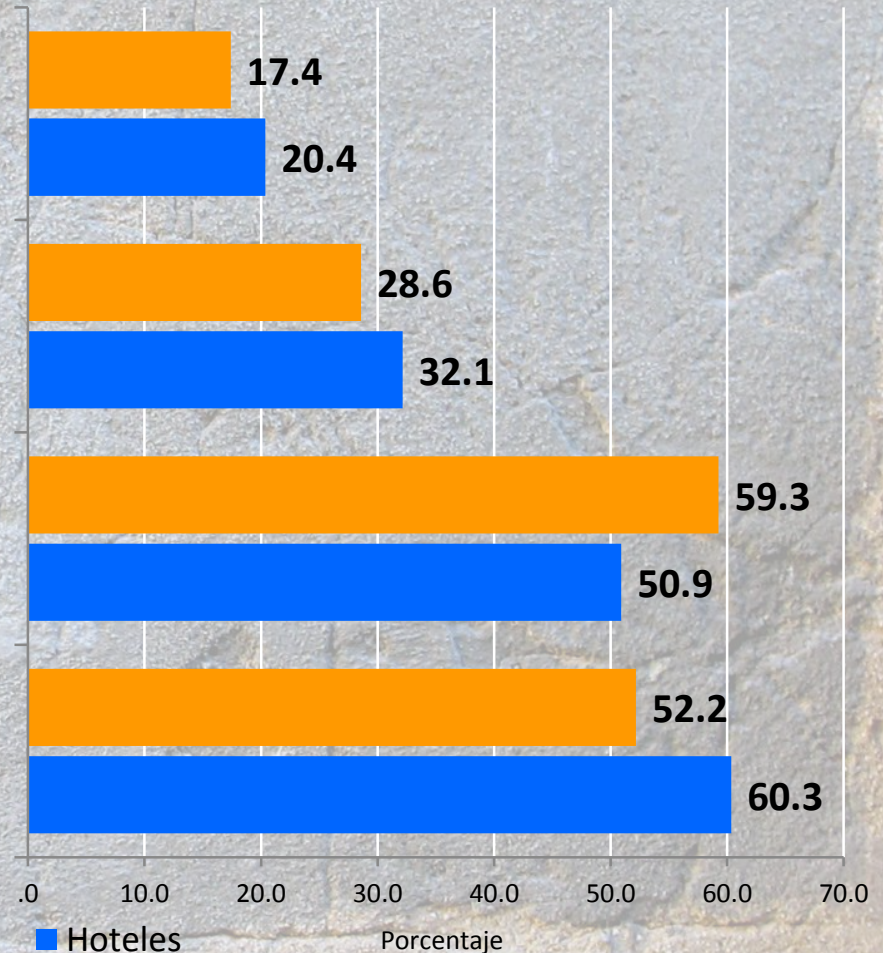
Products or Items Used Changes After the CST.

Expected Change

Compra de otros artículos producidos en el resto de país (artesanías, muebles, artículos de limpieza, etc.)
- Tour operadores: 17.4
- Hoteles: 20.4

Compra de alimentos producidos en el resto del país o el exterior
- Tour operadores: 28.6
- Hoteles: 32.1

Compra de otros artículos producidos localmente (artesanías, muebles, artículos de limpieza, etc.)
- Tour operadores: 59.3
- Hoteles: 50.9

Compra de alimentos producidos localmente
- Tour operadores: 52.2
- Hoteles: 60.3

■ Tour operadores ■ Hoteles   Porcentaje

.0 10.0 20.0 30.0 40.0 50.0 60.0 70.0

Within the Company: Changes After the CST

Cambio esperado

	Tour operadores	Hoteles
Cantidad de unidades de transporte prestadoras del servicio de tours	24.0	
Cantidad de habitaciones		25.0
Contratación de personal de la localidad	37.0	41.0
Transporte de colaboradores o sobre salarios por contratación de funcionarios de otras regiones	4.8	27.3
Contratación de personal	24.1	24.1

Porcentaje

■ Tour operadores   ■ Hoteles

Within the Company: Changes After the CST

Production:. Changes After the CST.
Hotels

Expected Change

Reforestación con especies nativas — **73.6**

Recuperación de áreas verdes — **60.0**
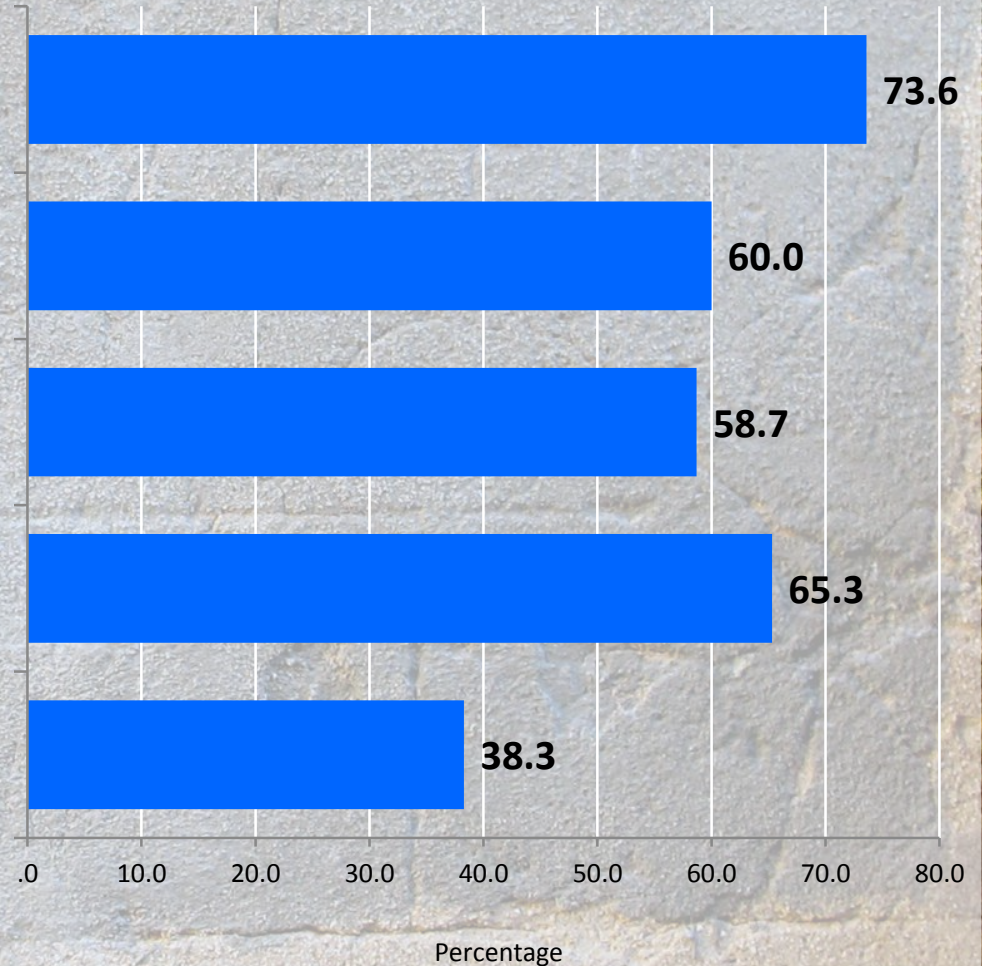
Producción de artículos y alimentos orgánicos — **58.7**

Producción de compostaje — **65.3**

Producción de energía limpia — **38.3**

.0   10.0   20.0   30.0   40.0   50.0   60.0   70.0   80.0

Percentage

CST - 2011 - 2016

	New	%	Re Evaluated	%	Total	Accumulated	
2010	49	69,01	22	30,99	71	183	
2011	59	65	42	35	101	240	
2012	54	60	36	40	90	289	
2013	50	50	50	50	100	339	
2014	50	45	60	55	110	389	
2015	48	40	72	60	120	437	
	254		246		500		

Current CST Data

1. Currently certified; 310 - 31% being the total of hotels with a declaratory for tourism in 4 sectors; (lodging + rent a car + theme parks+ tour operators). After adding all the other sectors, there are almost 1500 companies with the declaratory and 3000 in total

- 1997: private Initiative
- 2001: first Companies
- 2005: tour Operators
- 200 hotels (23 with 5 Levels)
- 61 tour operators (9 with 5 Levels)
- 4 rent-a-car companies
- 70% small companies
- 16% large companies
- 14% middle sized companies

2. It is a free program

3. Duration of evaluation; 2 years, with surprise inspections 2 or 3 times a year

4. 265 new companies, however:

– Hotels: 443 evaluations in hotels; 192 certified and 251 re evaluations

– Tour operators: 85 evaluations; 58 certified, 27 re evaluations

– Rent-a-cars: 5 evaluations; 4 certified, 1 re evaluation

SYNOPSIS

ACCUMULATED DATA UP TO 2012

➤ **285 companies certified**

➤ **Almost 700 Evaluations; new and re-evaluated some have been re-evaluated up to 5 times)**

➤ **217 -Lodging companies**

➤ **67 -Tour Operators/Agencies**

➤ **6 -Rent-A-Car Agencies**

➤ **3 -Sustainable Theme Parks**

➤ **93 evaluations, 45 new, 48 re evaluations Support for the activation of the new guidelines for Sustainable Theme Parks**

Mainstream Versus Boutique

Denominators (Illustrative/Speculative Values)	Conventional Hotel (50 rooms+)	"Boutique" Hotel (Less than 50 rooms)
Minimum # of rooms to "break even"	20	<20
Minimum # of rooms to "turn a profit"	50	<20
Minimum occupancy to "break even"	45%	<40%
Minimum occupancy to "turn a profit"	60%	> 45%
Employees per room	1.0 (avg)	2.5-3.0 (avg)

Find a Niche;

Sustainability +

Creativity +

Personalization,

=

ADDED VALUE

What Is Gained from Sustainable Tourism?

- Creating an image of responsibility: Over the past 5 years more than 82% of the visitors to Costa Rica were *inclined to visit a country that practices sustainable tourism*

- Green technology has created a win/win model: investments in sustainable development through products, practices and equipment pay for themselves over a relatively short period of time through the lowering of the cost of energy use, durable materials, minimizing the carbon footprint, creating new methodologies for lowering the company's expenditures all while simultaneously creating the profile of a responsible company

- Good practices of sustainable tourism educates and informs (interprets) the tourist creating a prolific and cost free marketing entity as they become your best advocates through social media, word of mouth and personal recommendations.

- Sustainable certification programs foment an autodidactic system of self analysis for the company and provide a pragmatic manual for consistent maintenance of the company's financial and low impact sustainability. Sustainable companies show a decrease in the use of water, electricity, waste and carbon footprint; all of which equals financial savings.

- A strong and participatory relationship with the community which increases local political strength, provides for a vehicle to *recycle* income within the community and ultimately creates pride and reinforces interest by the citizens to pursue employment in your company.

- Through the support of local merchants and services the company lowers their transportation costs, is able to help bring more desirable products to the community and find willing allies in projects that improve the ambience of the community

Conveying your message by using the right words and fomenting the right core values

International Conference
of Sustainable Tourism

COSTA RICA

November 3-6, 2013

www.PlanetPeoplePeace.com   info@planetpeoplepeace.com

Thank You…

Glenn Jampol

glenn@FincaRosaBlanca.com

www.FincaRosaBlanca.com
www.CANAECO.org