



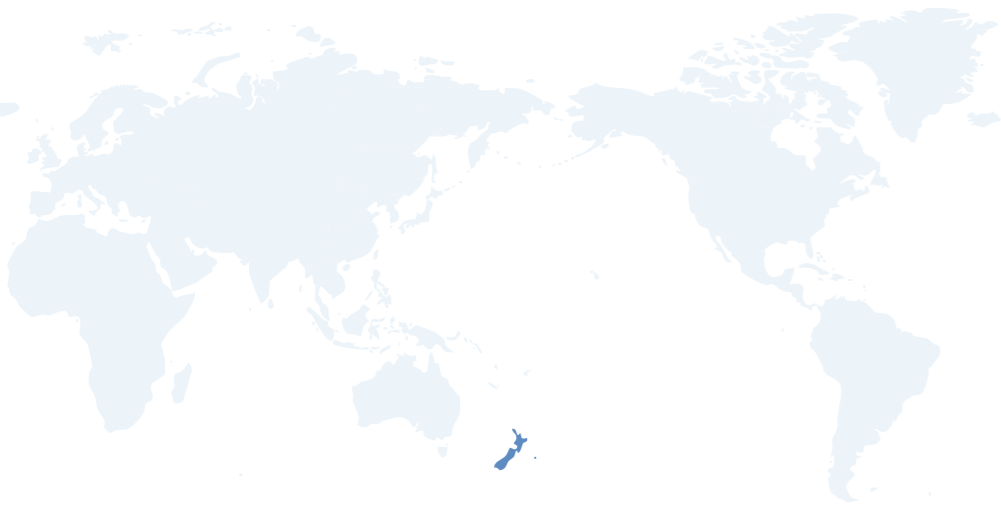
Evidence at a glance: Global connections

For a more detailed exploration of this topic, see the full evidence brief: [Global Connections | Ngā Hononga ā-Ao \(Manatū Taonga\)](#)

New Zealand’s cultural system plays an important role in advancing New Zealand’s relationships with the global community, generating broad value across a range of outcomes. Evidence indicates impact at a high level and potential for further growth.

Cultural diplomacy

New Zealand has a long track record of engaging in cultural and sports diplomacy. There are strong examples of the importance of global cooperation, collaboration and exchange in enhancing the value of our cultural system and strengthening New Zealand’s presence on the world stage (although impact measurement in this area is limited).



Examples of international collaboration:



\$2.8m invested by Creative New Zealand in 2023/24 to enable 700 opportunities for audiences to experience New Zealand artistic works internationally (Creative New Zealand, 2024)



Artists supported by Outward Sound funding collectively achieved **over 1.5 billion streams globally** (2022–2023), with 23 artists surpassing 50 million streams each (2023–2024) (New Zealand Music Commission, 2024)



The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa touring exhibition *Bug Lab* has attracted **almost 1.7 million visitors** across museums in Canada and the United States since 2019 (Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2025b)

Foreign investment and trade

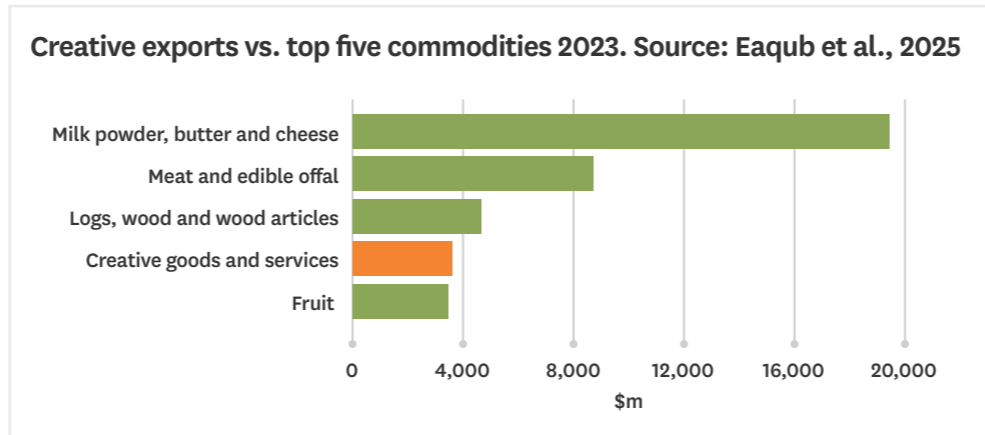
Foreign investment—often leveraged by New Zealand government investment—supports New Zealand to showcase talent internationally, increasing access to global markets.

\$22m in funding through the Game Development Sector Rebate (GDSR) 2024/25 **generated \$711m** in revenue for the 40 GDSR-supported studios (NZGDA, 2025; NZ On Air, 2025)

14 international productions supported by the NZ Screen Production Rebate Grant started shooting in New Zealand in 2024/25, **generating \$647m** in qualifying production expenditure (New Zealand Film Commission, 2025)

In 2022, **\$78 million** in grants from international sport and recreation governing bodies supported local organisations, clubs and facilities, and services in New Zealand (Sport New Zealand and NZIER, 2023)

In 2023, creative exports were New Zealand’s **4th largest commodity** worth **\$3.8 billion** (Eaqub et al., 2025; UNCTAD, 2025)



Over \$700 million in annual exports per sector for the New Zealand game development and screen sectors (NZGDA, 2025; NZIER, 2017)

Reputation, brand and soft power

The cultural system contributes to New Zealand’s global reputation and brand, reflected in measures such as soft power. ‘Soft power’ is a nation’s ability to influence others through attraction and persuasion (Council of Foreign Relations, 2023).

In 2026, out of 193 UN member states, New Zealand ranked (Brand Finance, 2026):

- 26** New Zealand’s Global Soft Power Index ranking
- 25** Media and communication
- 30** Culture and Heritage

Pacific regional identity

Within the Pacific region, collaborations and agreements are helping to strengthen identity, preserve culture and heritage, and improve wellbeing.

24 Pacific Island countries and territories included in the *Pacific Regional Culture Strategy 2022–2032*, endorsed by New Zealand in 2022 (Pacific Community [SPC], 2022)

Collaborative programmes such as the Pacific Sporting Partnerships Programme (2017–2022) contribute positively to:

- **building connections** (social cohesion) in and between individuals, families, and communities
- **strengthening Pacific mana**
- **learning important life skills** (IOD PARC, 2021).

Locally, **17% of New Zealanders** attended a Pacific cultural festival in 2025, an increase from 7% in 2022 (Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2026).

Tourism

There is consistent demand for New Zealand cultural activities among international visitors, with Māori cultural experiences featuring strongly.

\$2.3 billion visitor spend on cultural, recreation, travel and tour services in 2024 (Stats NZ, 2025b)

\$1.2 billion contribution of Māori tourism to New Zealand’s GDP in 2023 (New Zealand Māori Tourism, 2025)

72% of international viewers say, “watching New Zealand content made them consider visiting the country” (NZIER and Verian, 2025)

In the year to December 2025:

- **39.0%** of international visitors visited a public museum or art gallery
- **25.4%** visited a film location, tour or experience
- **24.2%** visited a place that is significant to Māori
- **19.1%** saw Māori artefacts, arts or crafts in an exhibition
- **13.2%** visited a marae
- **12.4%** watched a live Māori performance

(Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2026)