

Are you ready to B Corp?

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Introduction

B Corps harness the power of business to create a more equitable and sustainable global society. It is the gold standard certification for responsible business.

Central to the B Corp movement is a community of progressive leaders who believe business can and should be a force for good in the world. Are you ready to join this inspiring community?

In this report we will take you on a deep dive into the B Corp certification process, looking in detail at the nuances of the B Impact Assessment (BIA). If you are a business starting your B Corp journey this guide will give you advice and insight on how to navigate the BIA successfully.

Become a B Corp - join a global community of like-minded businesses who are changing the world for good.

Who are Seismic?

We are an international team of sustainability experts on a mission to help businesses prosper by becoming increasingly impactful and influential forces for good.



What is B Corp certification?

B Corp certification says that your company meets the highest standards of social and environmental performance.



There are **7000+** B Corps globally.



B Corps are **for** profit companies.



Balancing **people**, **planet** and **profit**.

Certification Process



RECRUITMENT

70%

of candidates recruited
by B Corps mention it in
their interview process

INVESTORS

44%

of B Corps found
certification helped
attract investors

CUSTOMERS

76%

of people think business
has a responsibility to
people and planet

GROWTH

15%

growth rate for B Corps
vs the national average of
1% between 2018 and 2021

RESILIENCE

88%

of research shows solid
ESG practices result in better
operational performance

FRAMEWORK

200k

companies are using
the B Impact Assessment
to measure their impact

Are you ready to start your B Corp journey?

Here are a few questions that can help you gauge how ready your company is to start your B Corp journey.

- 1 Do you have senior management buy in?
Do you know who will be your Exec Sponsor?
- 2 Do you have a B Team? Have you decided who will
be included in your cross-functional working group?
- 3 Do you have dedicated resource in place to
manage this project?
- 4 Do you have a B Corp advisory service in place?
[Get in touch with Seismic.](#)

52%

of companies do
not achieve B Corp
certification on
their first attempt

100%

of clients Seismic
supports through
verification certify on
their first attempt

B Corp Checklist

The **B Impact Assessment (BIA)** is an excellent framework for any business wanting to understand and improve their impact. But it can feel a bit overwhelming at first and getting it wrong can set you back.

Follow our B Corp Checklist to set you on the path to certification success.

1

Manage the B Impact Assessment (BIA)

What is the B Impact Assessment?

The B Impact Assessment, commonly referred to as the 'BIA', is a useful online management tool that a company can use to measure its impact on its workers, community, environment and customers. To certify as a B Corp your business must achieve at least 80 points on the BIA.



5 E's to make it easy!

- ① **Engage** stakeholders from across the business to help.
- ② **Excite** your team so they're true advocates for B Corp.
- ③ **Ensure** there is one Project Manager overseeing.
- ④ **Endorsement** from Senior Leadership is key.
- ⑤ **Export** the BIA to excel so you can work on it offline and tailor to your needs.

“A project manager is essential! A pitfall we often see is companies that have had different people looking at the BIA over a number of months or even years, with no single person who understands what answers are current and why they have been answered in that way.”

Amy Bourbeau, Cofounder and Chief Impact Officer, Seismic

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Get on the right track from the outset

What is an Assessment Track?

The BIA questions and their weighting are tailored to companies based on their size, sector and location. These three factors will influence the types of questions you see in each section of the BIA assessment. This is your identified 'Track'.

Even though a track might seem straightforward, it often isn't. There are nuances that can mean the track you should be on isn't what you expected.

“ We know that a significant portion of companies only learn they are on the wrong track during the evaluation phase, at which point they will need to respond to new questions and / or some of the questions they have already answered may go away - which often results in an unexpected fire drill to try and manage a change in your score.”

Andy Schmidt, Cofounder and Chief Community Officer, Seismic

Here's how your track is determined based on Size, Sector and Market.

Size Identify this based on the number of full time-equivalent employees in your business.	0
	1-9
	10-49
	50-249
	250-1000
	1000+
Sector This is determined by where your revenue comes from. Here are some rules to help determine the right track for you...	Service with Significant Environmental Footprint: A company that requires a physical space or equipment to deliver their service - ie Hotel, Landscaper, Hairdresser.
	Service with Minor Environmental Footprint: A company that delivers a service and doesn't need any special equipment etc - ie an advisory like Seismic.
	Retail/Wholesale: A company that earns 10% or more of their revenue from selling products (which they have not manufactured themselves, even if they have been involved in the design).
	Manufacturing: A company that earns 10% or more of their revenue from the sale of products they have manufactured themselves in their own facilities.
	Agriculture: A company that earns revenue from products grown in their own fields, only land-based agriculture (not animal), or that buys 50% or more of their products directly from farmers/growers.
Market You do not need to know the answer to this, the country you enter when creating your BIA profile for the platform automatically determines this for you.	Developed Market (US)
	Developed Market (Global)
	Emerging Market



Case Study: innocent drinks

Innocent has been flying a flag for the B Corp movement since they certified in 2018. They recertified in 2022 and experienced a different BIA for each certification, originally certifying on v5 and then re-certifying on v6. Innocent design their products but originally outsourced all production, which put them on the Retail/Wholesale track.

In 2021 they built a new sustainable production facility - known as 'the blender' - which will likely transition the company to the Manufacturing track once their manufactured product revenue exceeds 10%. For a company in constant growth the BIA continues to challenge innocent to ensure they are gathering the right answers from their various offices and sites.

“Seismic has been an integral part of embedding our B Corp efforts and our certification success.”

Karina O’Gorman, European Head of Force for Good, innocent Drinks

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Correctly interpret the questions

Top tips...

- **Look out for the nuances in questions** - Pay attention to every single word in the question - it sounds obvious but they’re in there for a reason!
- **Note the time frame** - Some questions relate to performance in the last fiscal year, some the last 12 months, some are about current performance right now.
- **Always read the “Learn More” function** - It will often have useful information regarding how to answer the question.
- **Be aware of thresholds** - Certain answers can only be selected if they are true of 80% or more of workers or facilities.

“As a rule answer questions objectively and conservatively - only give yourself credit for things you have in place and are doing consistently. The devil is often in the detail - get your thresholds right (ie % of employees, square meters, etc.)”

Amy Bourbeau, Seismic Cofounder and Chief Impact Officer



Case Study: Lily's Kitchen

Lily's Kitchen is an inspirational member of the B Corp community. They first certified in 2015 and since then have successfully recertified two more times, increasing their score on the BIA from 86.9 to 92.3 over the years.

The pet food company has an organic range which opened up a Toxin Remediation IBM on their BIA. This type of IBM recognises products or services that reduce resource use, such as energy, water, waste, emissions etc. For Lily's Kitchen, their organic ingredients are recognised for putting less toxins into the earth.

“ [B Corp recertification] wouldn't have been possible without the support from our friends at Seismic who guided us through our impact assessment.”

Lily's Kitchen

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Factor in Impact Business Models (IBMs)

What is an IBM?

IBMs are a great way to gain significant points on the BIA, but they are rare and not easy to earn. There are specific requirements that need to be met for an IBM to be relevant to you, so they only appear in your assessment once a number of gating questions that will enable or disable other questions have been answered. It is not uncommon for companies to misinterpret questions and find themselves in an IBM that isn't relevant, which can lead to over-inflating scores by as much as 30 points.

Here's some tips on tackling IBMs:

- IBMs are rare, tough to verify and heavily scored.
- Be careful not to double count your impact (ie. capturing the same impact in two different sections).
- Don't try to fit a square peg into a round hole.
- Try not to depend on IBM points.
- Speak to an expert who understands the nuances of IBMs.
[Get in touch with Seismic.](#)

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Gather evidence as you go

Why is evidence so important to the BIA?

Providing evidence of your impact is the backbone of B Corp certification. It shows that the particular good practice you are claiming to have is truly embedded in your organisation.

Here's our advice on how to manage your evidence:



Be prepared to verify responses

Only choose responses for questions when you're confident you can verify them with evidence.



Keep notes

Ensure you keep notes on the rationale behind each answer, so that if someone new joins you in the process, or it's been a few months since you gathered the answer to the question, it's still easy to understand why it is answered in that way.



Wait for evidence requests

Don't upload evidence to the BIA before it's requested - it's not required so is an unnecessary administrative burden that you likely cannot afford. Do ensure you know that evidence for each answer exists should you need it down the line.

“B Corp is so valuable for two things. It gives you a framework and a structure, and the certification gives you a rubber stamp to show you are definitely doing what you say. Working with the experts (Seismic) who know what questions to ask and what evidence to find in the BIA really really helped us.”

Joanna Gluzman, Chief Sustainability Officer, PZ Cussons



Case Study: Avon

Avon is a large multinational company, employing 7200+ people in over 48 countries. A particular challenge with huge global companies is that B Corp can request multiple assessments across different sites. After an initial scoping process, Avon is completing four separate assessments, a significant undertaking.

For large global companies like Avon, documenting everything is essential to measure impact, but it's a daunting task. B Corp provides a valuable framework to capture this and implement meaningful change.

"We see the B Corp accreditation journey supporting our broader ambitions to embed sustainability into everything we do and helping us to develop an all-encompassing sustainable business model that gives back more than it takes."

Louise Scott, Chief Scientific Officer, Avon



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Identify improvements

5 Quick Wins to improve your BIA score:

- ① **Aim for 85+ points on the BIA** - To provide a buffer for any points lost during verification.
- ② **Use the Question Filter** - (found in the menu on the left hand side of the BIA platform) Here you can identify gating questions (and therefore opportunities to earn points) as well as flag questions that have a high point score.
- ③ **Use Excel export** - Exporting to excel can be a helpful way of tracking plans, keeping notes and assigning specific questions to members of the team.
- ④ **Policies & formalising processes** - Often companies will be doing impactful things in practice, but they're not formally embedded into the business - quick wins lie in formalising these, putting them into writing and communicating them to the organisation.
- ⑤ **Actions which are not time bound** - Do things that you can earn credit for straight away, for example, conducting an employee satisfaction survey, switching energy suppliers, increasing maternity/paternity leave.

“While the BIA is a powerful, practical management tool and a library of global best practice - it is open to misinterpretation. At Seismic we have created data templates that allow companies to provide raw data about employees, suppliers, etc which our team use to calculate responses to a number of questions - reducing impact on a company's internal time and increasing accuracy. Our aim as an advisory is to help you navigate the BIA and certify first time.”

Paul Lewis, Cofounder and CEO, Seismic

Five things you can do right now:

- 1 Hear from other B Corps about their certification journey on our [podcast](#).
- 2 Watch this video from [B Lab](#).
- 3 Speak to an [expert](#) to arrange a B Corp Diagnostic.
- 4 Read our [B Corp FAQs](#).
- 5 Join the Seismic Community – [sign up](#) to our newsletter for more advice and to hear about our events, to make your B Corp journey a success.

“Seismic have in-depth knowledge of everything B Corp and I recommend them for any organisation looking to use the BIA to better understand their impact in the world and developing a strategy to improve.”

Katie Hill,
Former B Lab Global Board Member and Executive Director
at B Lab UK & Europe

Seismic exists to help change society for the better and fix our planet. We are an international team of sustainability experts on a mission to help businesses prosper by becoming increasingly impactful and influential forces for good. We are B Corp experts, Net Zero advisors, communications consultants and sustainability strategists. We are your partner for change.

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www.seismic-change.com
weare@seismic-change.com

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